

EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN AN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM: A CASE STUDY ON PRE-
SERVICE TEACHERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

HALİL İBRAHİM ÇINARBAŞ

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

SEPTEMBER 2016

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ABSTRACT

THE EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM: A CASE STUDY ON PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

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M.A., English Language Teaching

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Cendel Karaman

September 2016, 195 pages

This qualitative case study aimed to explore the experiences of two pre-service teachers with visual impairments in an English language teaching teacher education program in terms of inclusive practices, accessibility, need accommodation, and institutional issues.

Two pre-service teachers with visual impairments, four teacher educators, six peers, and three administrators participated in this study. The data were collected through individual and focus group interviews, observations, reflective journals, and documents. The qualitative analysis of data was done with the utilization of MAXQDA software. The themes “definition of a teacher”, “inclusive practices”, “attitudes to disability”, and “institutional issues” emerged from the data analysis.

This study found that pre-service teachers with visual impairments are not considered to fit in the language teaching profession by teacher educators, and if they are to be in the teaching profession, they are expected to work at School for the Blind. In addition, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments experience accessibility issues in

transportation and curricular activities, and the teacher educators in this study could not fully accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Thus, teacher educators need professional development programs to learn how to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Besides, the institution in which this research study was conducted only followed the regulations of the Council of Higher Education, and the administrators stated if there were not the likelihood of economic sanctions, the institution would not provide any additional accommodation for students with disabilities. Finally, the study revealed that the peers were aware of the challenges linked to disability and they had empathy for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

Keywords: ELT, Teacher Education, Pre-service Teachers with Visual Impairments, Higher Education

ÖZ

ENGELLİ ÖĞRENCİLERİN BİR İNGİLİZ DİLİ ÖĞRETMEN YETİŞTİRME PROGRAMINDAKİ DENEYİMLERİ: GÖRME ÖZRÜ OLAN ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARI ÜZERİNE BİR DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

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Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. A. Cendel Karaman

Eylül 2016, 195 Sayfa

Bu nitel durum çalışmasında, İngilizce öğretmenliği öğretmen yetiştirme programındaki görme engelli öğretmen adaylarının deneyimleri kapsayıcı uygulamalar, erişilebilirlik, ihtiyaçların karşılanması ve kurumsal konular açısından araştırılmıştır. Bu çalışmaya iki görme engelli öğretmen adayı, dört öğretim elemanı, altı öğrenci ve üç yönetici katılmıştır.

Bu çalışmada veri bireysel ve grup görüşmeleri, gözlemler, yansıtıcı günceler ve belgeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Toplanan veri MAXQDA programı kullanılarak nitel olarak analiz edilmiş. Veri analizi sonucunda “öğretmenin tanımı”, “kapsayıcı uygulamalar”, “engelliliğe karşı tutumlar” ve “kurumsal konular” tema olarak belirlenmiştir.

Çalışmaya katılan öğretim elemanlarının görme engelli öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğine uygun adaylar olmadığını düşündükleri saptanmıştır. Eğer görme engelli öğretmen adayları öğretmenlik mesleğini icra edecekse, Görme Engelliler Okulunun bu adaylar için en uygun yer olduğu belirtilmiştir. Bununla

birlikte, görme engelli öğrenciler ulaşım konusunda ve akademik etkinliklerde erişilebilirlik problemleri yaşamaktadır, ve çalışmaya katılan öğretim elemanlarının bu öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarını tam olarak karşılayamadığı saptanmıştır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmadaki öğretim elemanları görme engelli öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarını nasıl karşılayabileceklerini öğrenebilmek için mesleki gelişim programlarına ihtiyaç duydukları belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca, bu çalışmanın yapıldığı üniversitede Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu'nun engelli öğrenciler konusundaki kural ve yürütmelikleri takip ettiği gözlenirken, yöneticiler ekonomik yaptırımların olmaması durumunda, engelli öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarının karşılanması için her hangi bir uygulama yapılmayacağını belirtmişlerdir. Son olarak, çalışmaya katılan öğrencilerin ise engellilik durumunun getirdiği zorlukların farkında oldukları ve görme engelli öğretmen adaylarına empati duydukları saptanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngiliz Dili Öğretimi, Öğretmen Yetiştirme, Görme Özürlü Olan Öğretmen Adayları, Yüksek öğretim

To my mother Sultan, my sister Vildan and my brother Veysel

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people supported me while I was writing this thesis and I am indebted to all of them. First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Cendel Karaman for his continuous guidance, support, and encouragement during this process. Thanks to him, I have learned to appreciate autonomy in conducting research. Without his detailed feedback and invaluable suggestions, this thesis would not have been completed. I also want to express my deepest gratitude to my committee members Assoc. Prof. Dr. ıgdem Saėın-Şimşek and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kemal Sinan Özmen for their valuable comments and suggestions.

I owe my sincere gratitude to Dr. Rabia Hoş, who has been an inspiring academic to me and worked with me throughout all stages of my thesis. She has definitely been a mentor with her invaluable efforts and encouragements. I thank her for always being there for me. I also would like to thank Dr. John Ashdown-Hill for his linguistic feedback and encouragement.

I would like to give my deepest gratitude to my mother Sultan, my sister Vildan, and my brother Veysel for their endless love, moral support and believing in me all the time. No words in the world can be enough to describe how much they mean to me. I believe they all contributed to me greatly.

Lastly, I want to thank A. Kadir Saėır, Sezer Bilgin, Mahmut Karaşahin, Engin Pamukçu and Osman Altınyüzük for their support and encouragement as well as joyful conversations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ	vi
DEDICATION	ix
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	x
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. The Declaration of Human Rights and Turkish National Education Law	1
1.2. Special Education in Turkish Education.....	2
1.3. Definitions of Terms	3
1.4. The Aim of the Study.....	5
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	8
2.1. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol.....	10
2.2. Disabilities in Higher Education.....	11
2.3. Inclusive Practices	12
2.3.1. Accessibility.....	12
2.3.2. Support, Dependency and Advocacy.....	15
2.4. Disclosure of Disability	17
2.5. Teaching and Learning Experiences of Students with Visual Impairments	20
2.6. Assistive Technology.....	25
2.7. Assessment and Evaluation.....	26

2.8. Other Issues Related to Experiences of Students with Visual Impairments	27
2.9. The Turkish Context	28
2.10. Purpose of the Study	30
2.11. Significance of the Study	31
2.12. Theoretical Framework.....	32
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	37
3.1. Qualitative Research Methodology.....	37
3.2. Case Study Approach.....	38
3.3. Setting	41
3.4. Participants.....	42
3.4.1. Sultan	42
3.4.2. Kemal.....	43
3.4.3. Academic Staff.....	44
3.4.4. Administrators.....	44
3.4.5. Classmates.....	44
3.5. Data Collection Methods and Data Sources	44
3.5.1. Observation and Field Notes.....	45
3.5.2. Reflective Journal	46
3.5.3. Interviews.....	46
3.6. Data Organization and Preparation.....	47
3.6.1. Transcription	49
3.7. Data Analysis	49
3.7.1. Qualitative Data Analysis	50
3.8. Trustworthiness of the Research.....	51
3.8.1. Prolonged Engagement and Persistent Observation	52
3.8.2. Triangulation.....	52
3.8.3. Rich and Thick description	53
3.8.4. Positioning as a Researcher	53
3.8.5. Transferability and Confirmability	54
3.9. Ethical Considerations	54
4. FINDINGS.....	56

4.1. Sultan	56
4.2. Kemal	58
4.3. Emerging Categories.....	60
4.3.1. Teaching and Learning Experiences of Pre-service Teachers with Visual Impairments	62
4.3.1.1. Meeting with the Teacher Educators, Individual Effort and Early Intervention	62
4.3.1.2. Participation, Differentiation and Materials	67
4.3.1.3. Testing and Evaluation	71
4.3.1.4. Use of Technology	72
4.3.2. Inclusive Practices	74
4.3.2.1. Dependency, Advocacy and Support.....	75
4.3.2.2. Accessibility.....	81
4.3.3. Attitudes to Disability	85
4.3.3.1. Assumptions about Disability and Sources of Disability	86
4.3.3.2. Willingness to Accommodate	90
4.3.3.3. Feelings and Awareness.....	93
4.3.3.4. Identity of Disability	99
4.3.4. Institutional Issues	103
4.3.4.1. Institutional Policy	104
4.3.4.2. Disability Office.....	106
4.3.4.3. Need for Professional Development	108
4.3.4.4. Lack of Knowledge about Regulations.....	109
4.3.5. Definition of a Teacher	110
5. DISCUSSION.....	116
5.1. Definition of a Teacher	116
5.2. Teaching and Learning Experiences of Pre-service Teachers with Visual Impairments	117
5.3. Inclusive Practices	122
5.4. Attitudes to Disability	126
5.5. Institutional Issues	130

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS	133
6.1. Conclusion	133
6.2. Implications.....	138
REFERENCES	143
APPENDICES	165
A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS	165
B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE ADMINISTRATORS	168
C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE TEACHER EDUCATORS	169
D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PEERS.....	171
E: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL.....	172
F: LIST OF CODES	173
G: SCREENSHOTS FROM DATA ANALYSIS	175
H: TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET	176
I: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU	195

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will first present educational issues in the Declaration of Human Rights and Turkish National Education Law. Then principles of the Turkish education system and special education will be explained. After discussing special education, definitions of the terms will be provided. At the end of the chapter, the aim of the study will be set forth.

1.1. The Declaration of Human Rights and Turkish National Education Law

Human beings are bestowed with strengths and weaknesses, and the society we live in is the sum of all our individual strengths and weaknesses. The society we live in is a world of norms (Lamichhane, 2015). Each of us strives to be normal or deliberately endeavors to avoid being abnormal because we consider what the normal person does, how s/he thinks, earns or consumes. We rank our intelligence, our physical qualifications, and bodily dimensions. We rank our children in schools and test them to determine where they fit into a normal curve of learning and of intelligence. When a student is deficient in strength in a taken for granted aspect for normal people, instead of celebrating diversity in schools, we tend to forget that each of us is blessed with different and sometimes complementary strengths (Davis, 2014).

Even though the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights suggests providing equitable chances and opportunities for all students, such deficiency can cause inequalities between persons in accessing education. According to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights Article 26, “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary

education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit” (p.7). Being a member of the United Nations (U.N.), Turkey follows the declaration.

The Turkish education system is based on the principles of universality and equal rights to education for all members of society. In alignment with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights Article 26, education is compulsory in K-12 and the right to education is protected by law in Turkey. As specified by Law 3797 issued in 1992, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) is responsible for planning, organizing, implementing and controlling education and training services targeted at teachers and students in the educational institutions, which are affiliated at all levels to the Ministry (MoNE, 2005). Based on human rights, the law aims to educate individuals to be democratic and secular, to welcome differences, and to be respectful to themselves and others. In addition, the law requires the Ministry of National Education to provide necessary accommodation, nutrition and financial support for all students on the basis of universality, which is welcoming and accepting all students and equality.

1.2. Special Education in Turkish Education

Although there are principles of universality and equality in the Turkish Education Law, the set-up of the Turkish education system does not include all students because the Turkish education system is organized based on an assumption that students should show similar intellectual, psychological, and physiological development (Ataman, 2009; Eurydice, 2016, September 25). The Turkish education system arranges educational processes according to students’ needs resulting from their similarities and differences (Diken, 2013). If a student does not fit into these commonalities and standards, s/he is labelled as a student with special needs or an exceptional student. The term “special needs” refers to a student’s learning, functioning or adjusting difficulty caused by physical, sensory, mental or other psychological deficiencies

(Savvidou, 2011). Such students are educated through special education services, and the aim of special education, according to the Ministry of National Education, is to provide the best educational opportunities for individuals with special needs in the least restricted environment to include them in society and enable them to gain professional skills (Ataman, 2009; Diken, 2013; Eurydice, 2016, September 25).

According to the Law, special education services are offered to eight distinctive groups of students with disabilities: visual, hearing, orthopedic, and mental disabilities, linguistic and speaking difficulties, adaptation problems, long-term illnesses, and the gifted (Ataman, 2009; Aral, 2009; Diken 2013; Eurydice, 2016, September 25). Ozgur, 2015). To provide special education services, the schools specifically designed for students with disabilities such as the School for Impaired of Hearing, the School for the Visually Impaired, the School for those with Intellectual Disabilities, etc., serve for special education services (MoNE, 2016).

Special education is a type of education that is provided for students with special needs to help them reach their potential, gain necessary and survival skills, and prevent impairment from turning into disability (Ataman, 2009; MoNE, 2005). Advocates of special education argue that special education services intervene to improve the student and the setting of special education is appropriate to meet the needs of students with disabilities. However, students who experience special education often have a narrow education, achieve low levels of academic attainment and have high dropout rates (Lipsky & Gartner, 1996). Students who utilize special education services are then labelled according to their impairments and the process of labelling students can have disabling effects (Ataman, 2009).

1.3. Definitions of Terms

It is crucial that the terms disability and impairment which are associated with special education should be defined and clarified. According to the Australian Disability Discrimination Act (1992), an impairment can be permanent or temporary, total or

partial, lifelong or acquired. Impairment covers physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric, neurological and learning disabilities; it also includes physical disfigurement and serious illnesses (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2012; Disability Discrimination Act 1992). Thus, impairment is defined as partial or full loss of intellectual, physical, behavioral or sense organs (Ataman, 1997; Connor, Valle & Hale, 2015; Goodley, 2011; Riddell, Tinklin & Wilson, 2005; Shakespeare, 2015). Also, impairment is a situation in which a person cannot use his/her organs, or senses temporarily or permanently. Impairment is related to bodily functions and qualifications and it is important to realize that even though impairment itself has disabling effects, it does not necessarily result in disability, yet there is a close relationship between impairment and disability.

Disability, on the other hand, is defined as problems and barriers a person with an impairment experiences when interacting with society (Ataman, 2009; Eripek, 2002; Ozgur, 2015; Riddell, Tinklin & Wilson, 2005; Shakespeare, 2014). Disability can be referred to as the outcome of an interaction between an individual with impairments and other entities which do not accommodate the needs of the individual. Thus, “disability is a complex dialectic of biological, psychological, cultural and socio-political factors which cannot be extracted except with imprecision” (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001, p.22) and it can be said that disability is contextual, environmental and attitudinal social construction. In this study impairment and disability are defined as follows:

“impairment as lacking all or part of a limb, or having a defective limb, organism or mechanism of the body and disability as the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organization which takes little or no account of people, who have impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities” (Oliver, 1996, p. 22).

As mentioned in the Special Education in Turkey section, legally there are eight

peculiar groups of students with disabilities. Among these groups, this study specifically focuses on students with visual impairments, and it is essential to define visual impairments. In the field of visual impairments, professionals use more than 20 different terms to describe blindness and vision loss of students who are visually impaired. Visual impairment is a far-reaching term used to define wide range of vision loss (Zimmerman & Zebehazy, 2011). As visual impairment has a more positive connotation than blindness, it is widely accepted among educators (Ataman, 2009). In addition, it is an overarching term which includes students with low vision and others with blindness (Hodapp, 2014).

Most students with visual impairments are partially sighted, and it means that they can use some vision (Puri & Abraham, 2004). However, in this study, the term ‘pre-service teachers with visual impairments’ is defined as follows: pre-service teachers with visual impairments, even with the best correction, have difficulty in completing visual tasks but can enhance their ability to complete visual tasks with accommodations such as assistive technology and environmental arrangements (Corn, DePriest, & Erin, 2000; Corn & Lusk, 2010).

1.4. The Aim of the Study

The number of people with visual impairments in the world is known to be 285 million (WHO, 2015) and, according to the statistics presented by the Turkish Statistical Institute in 2010, of the 280.014 people with disabilities in Turkey, 8.4% were visually impaired or blind (Coskun, 2013; TUIK, 2010). In K-12, the total number of students is 17,5 million and the number of students with disabilities is 288.489 (MoNE, 2016). In higher education, however, the total number of students with disabilities is 59,161, which constitutes 1% of the total population in higher education.

These statistics have several short-comings. First, National Education Statistics do not provide detailed demographic information about students with disabilities so the proportion of students with visual impairments is unknown. In addition to this, the

Council of Higher Education (HEC) has recently provided demographic statistics of students with disabilities but the statistics are only available for the last two years.

Widening access to higher education for all students is an important duty of the political agenda in many countries because attending a higher education institution is considered to be a basic human right and is usually associated with better life conditions. But there are groups of people in higher education, who are marginalized, isolated or underrepresented. Students with disabilities are one of the marginalized groups in higher education (Archer, Hutchings, Leathwood, & Ross, 2003; Riddell, Tinklin, & Wilson, 2005).

Students with visual impairments are one of the subgroups of the students with disabilities in higher education. Although, the statistics show that such learners constitute a significant number as a social group, Donley (2002) points out that students with visual impairments are likely to find themselves marginalized and isolated from in the world.

Since the social and political revolutions of the eighteenth century, the trend in western scholarship had been to refuse to take for granted inequalities and marginalization between persons or groups (Baynton, 2013). In the last few decades, scholars in education have studied and often challenged the explanations for inequalities and marginalization based on identity such as gender, race and ethnicity. However, disability has rarely been the subject of educational inquiry (Goodley, 2011; Shakespeare, 2014).

Furthermore, there is a slight increase in the participation of students with disabilities in higher education in recent years (Cunnah, 2015; Eckes & Ochoa, 2005; Getzel 2008; Gibson, 2012; Hadjidakou & Hartas, 2007), though there has not been much effort in including students with disabilities in higher education in Turkey until the past fifteen years. Two main reasons are considered to be influential on the increased number of students with visual impairments in higher education. The first reason is related to the

legislation and identification policies that ensure inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education. The other reason is the increase of inclusive practices and available resources (Konur, 2006).

Inclusive practices are relatively new in the Turkish education system even though including students with disabilities in higher education has a longer history in Europe and the United States (Rakap & Kaczmarek, 2010). Although there are policies in place, the enactment of the policies is often not followed accordingly (Madriagai 2011). Due to the mismatch between the theory of inclusion and the practice of it, experiences of students with disabilities during their higher education have received the attention of researchers in recent years. As a result, there is a need to explore the experiences of students with disabilities in higher education with qualitative research methods to capture a more holistic picture of the phenomenon.

In this qualitative case study, the experiences of pre-service teachers with visual impairments in an English Language Teaching (ELT) Teacher Education Program are explored. The experiences of pre-service teachers with visual impairments in higher education are explored from perspectives of teacher educators, administrators, peers, and pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

The first chapter of the thesis introduces background of the study and provides information about terms and services related to students with disabilities. In the second chapter, political developments in the field of disability in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia are provided. Political developments in Turkey are also presented. Then, relevant literature is reviewed thematically. In the third chapter, the design of the study is explained and concerns related to ethical considerations, reliability and validity are clarified. Subsequent chapters include findings and discussions. In the last chapter, conclusions and limitations of the study are provided. Implications for further research and practice are explained, as well.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter starts with a description of political developments of disability in international contexts. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and options and their importance are discussed. Then, the Turkish context is presented. The influence of developments on the Turkish context is discussed. Lastly, relevant literature about disability in higher education is thematically provided.

People with disabilities become recognized when they start to ask for their rights politically. Different countries responded to their demands in different ways. In this section, developments in law in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia are shown.

In the United States, the first disability civil rights law to be enacted was Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act. The act protects any person who has a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities considerably. The major activities include seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, and walking. The Act forbade discrimination against people with disabilities in federally funded program, and led to enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The American with Disabilities Act (1990) expanded the areas of possible discrimination and prohibited discriminatory acts on the basis of disability by employers, state and local governments. In addition to this, the needs of people with disabilities in public and private transportation, and in telecommunication should be met according to ADA enactment. The last law to be enacted is Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1990) previously known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. IDEA ensures for children with disabilities a free, appropriate public education in the

least restrictive environment. According to IDEA, children between ages 3-21 are eligible to special education services and it is the first law that organized the special education programs. The law was reauthorized in 2004, and its regulations were released in 2006.

In the United Kingdom, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1995) is the first law, which prohibits discrimination against disabled persons in connection with employment, accommodation, facilities and services. The DDA specifies the meaning of disabled person and the situations of discrimination. After some years, a Disability Rights Commission (1999) was founded. The purpose of the commission was to promote equalization, and the elimination of discrimination, to review DDA, and to arrange support services. Two years later, a Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001) was enacted to regulate educational services for students with disabilities. The Act requires parents to be informed about available services in respect of disabilities, reviews the educational needs of students with disabilities at the request of the person concerned, and prohibits discrimination against students with disabilities in schools. Lastly, the DDA was revised in 2005 and its coverage has been extended.

In Australia, the Disability Services Act was amended in 1986. The Act aimed to assist persons with disabilities to receive necessary services to participate as members of the community. In 1992 the Disability Discrimination Act was amended and the Act sought to eliminate discrimination on the ground of disability. The act of elimination includes work, accommodation, education, clubs and sport areas. The Aged and Disabled Persons Care Act was enacted in 1995 to provide care services in hostel care facilities through authority assessment for aged and disabled people. In 2005 the Disability Discrimination Act was revised for educational purposes.

In Turkey, the first legislative step was taken in 1926 even though historically there were some earlier developments about the situation of persons with disabilities. According to article 743, parents were responsible for their disabled children's education. In 1955 the Counseling and Research Center was founded to examine and

counsel children with disabilities (Diken, 2013). Examination by the Center served for the labelling of children with disabilities, for classifying them according to their needs, and for counseling them, providing a timetable and rehabilitation process for making them beneficial for the society (Aral, 2009; Ataman, 2011). In 1962, the first special education regulations were prepared. Article 222 states that special education schools and classes are a part of compulsory education and that persons with special needs are to be educated in these schools and classes. The item 12 of Article 222 states that even though students, who are at the ages of compulsory education may be mentally, physically, emotionally and socially disabled, they are to be educated in special education services. According to the 1982 Constitution, it is the government's duty to integrate persons with special needs into the community and make them beneficial citizens. With an increasing need for special services for persons with disabilities, the Department of Special Education Counseling and Rehabilitation was founded in 1992, on the grounds of Article 3797. Later, Delegated legislation in 1997 specified special education services. Persons who are eligible for those services, and definitions of disability and other terms were provided. In 2005, Legislation about Persons with Disabilities redefined disability, discrimination, and extended the scope of services, and promoted the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community.

2.1. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol

A Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was held on the basis of Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Equality (2006). The Convention was concerned that persons with disabilities still face barriers and obstacles in their participation as equal members of society even though there are various instruments and campaigns. In addition to this, the importance of international cooperation for improving the living conditions and standards of persons with disabilities, and awareness-raising and promotion of non-discriminatory acts especially in developing countries were emphasized.

The main purpose of the Convention was to “promote, protect, and ensure the full and

equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their dignity” (p. 4). Persons with disabilities are defined as those “who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (p. 4). Furthermore, the Convention recognized that disability is an evolving concept, and that disability is caused by the interaction between persons with impairments and society.

The importance of the Convention is that it obliges State Parties to “ensure and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities without discrimination of any kind on the basis of disability” (p. 5). 163 countries signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and 88 countries signed and ratified the Optional Protocol (The United Nations Programme on Disabilities, 2015). Turkey signed the convention in 2007 and ratified the Optional Protocol in 2015 (Ratifications and Signatories of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, 2007). The Optional Protocol defines how the rights and freedoms apply to people with disabilities, points out where adaptations are required for people with disabilities, and states that people with all types of disabilities should be able to enjoy all the rights and freedoms devoted to human beings.

2.2. Disabilities in Higher Education

Students with disabilities in higher education have been a research focus due to the legislation processes and the attendance of increasing number of students with disabilities at higher education institutions for approximately two decades (Cunnah, 2015; Getzel 2008; Gibson, 2012; Hadjidakou & Hartas, 2007). In this section, empirical research conducted in the area of disability in higher education concerning the experiences of students with visual impairments is thematically provided. Then, the current situation of students with visual impairments in Turkey is discussed.

2.3. Inclusive Practices

Inclusive learning environments promote participation in the learning process; they offer equal opportunities and quality learning for students with visual impairments (Morina, Cortes, & Melero, 2013). In a learning environment, where the students with and without disabilities attend higher education, the promotion of inclusive practices is regarded as one of the vital motivational conditions for academic and social success of the students with visual impairments (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009).

As the inclusive practices for the students with visual impairments do not radically change the dominant procedures within a higher education institution (Hanafin, Shevlin, Kenny, & McNeela, 2006), there is a need for the understanding of inclusive practices since the number of students with visual impairments in higher education has increased (Savvidou, 2011). Inclusion helps students with visual impairments be intellectually capable and positive in thinking. In this study, inclusive practices encompass accessibility, support, advocacy and dependency issues that the students with visual impairments experience.

2.3.1. Accessibility

Access to higher education for students with visual impairments has been a long ongoing concern across the globe (Miranda, 2014) and accessibility practices are important for the inclusion of such students in higher education. Accessibility means welcoming all students with diverse needs to university. An accessible university is reachable in terms of transportation, curriculum and attitudes. In disability studies, accessibility is often linked with the infrastructure of the university campus and its buildings, transportation and provided services related to educational practices. In terms of the physical structure of a university, accessing the university is problematic for students with visual impairments for two main reasons (Gibson, 2012). Firstly, no guidance is offered to help students with visual impairments understand the university structures, how the university operates, and so on (Gavira & Morina, 2014). In the absence of guidance, students with visual impairments can easily lose their way since

their movements are based on regular patterns followed on a daily basis. Thus, access to facilities is often regarded as one of the more straightforward areas to deal with (Borland & James, 1999).

Secondly, the structure of the buildings can limit access to classroom and facilities (Gavira & Morina, 2014), and students with visual impairments consider physical access as the main barrier against inclusive education (Genova, 2015). If the students with visual impairments cannot reach classrooms, or facilities, they have high a chance of low academic achievement, and attendance problems. As a result, students with visual impairments ask for adaptation, re-arrangement and conversion of the existing architectural barriers, and the students need practical solutions that encourage social inclusion and more welcoming environment for them (Babic & Dowling, 2015). While the architectural accessibility of university premises is reported as a major barrier, students with visual impairments often mention a lack of accessibility to curricular activities (Vlachou, & Papananou, 2014), as well.

Accessibility is one of the vital elements in teaching and learning in higher education (Alias *et al.*, 2012). Lack of access to curriculum content, teaching strategies and pedagogical material restricts the education of the students with visual impairments in higher education (Vlachou, & Papananou, 2014). Thus, curricular activities should be prepared consideration of students with visual impairments and accommodating the curricular needs of students with visual impairments should be one of the primary concerns of faculty members. In addition, studies on the experiences of student with visual impairments show extensive accessibility issues in respect of learning and participation (Gibson 2012; Goode 2007). In order to eliminate learning and participation barriers, access to learning and teaching for students with visual impairments should be individualized and differentiated (Goode, 2007) because students with visual impairments are a heterogeneous group and each student experiences visual impairments in a different way.

Access for students with visual impairments is often considered with respect to environmental and curricular aspects as mentioned above. These are also substantial barriers to access. A student with visual impairments has to navigate the inaccessible environment of a university as well as the disabling attitudes towards their abilities (Hearn, Short & Healy, 2014). The attitudes of faculty and staff show differences and Collins (2000) reports that students with disabilities have identified attitudinal issues as the most significant barrier to progress in higher education because attitudinal issues are directly related to the inclusion of students with visual impairments in social groups, willingness to accommodate their academic needs, and access to the university. Positive attitudes towards students with visual impairments foster accessibility in the learning process and offer equal opportunities and quality learning as well as a sense of belonging for all learners (Moriña, Cortés, and Melero 2013; Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya, 2015).

As a result, it is important to realize that accessibility is a multi-dimensional issue encompassing the physical, structural, attitudinal and curricular activities (Hanafin, Shevlin, Kenny, & McNeela, 2006; Miranda, 2014) and it is extremely complex for students with visual impairments. Thus, accessibility is an interaction between bodies, spaces and social areas varying from context to context. In the case of students with visual impairments, access to and participation in higher education can significantly increase opportunities for high academic attainment (Tuomi, Lehtomäki, & Matonya, 2015). What is more, an accessible university affords students with visual impairments inclusive opportunities (Berry, 2011; Liasidou, 2014) and the aim of inclusive higher education is to implement transformative changes in order to ensure the fair participation of students with visual impairments in educational domains. It is highly possible that students with visual impairments choose a particular university for its accessible environment and curriculum, as well as positive attitudes of faculty and staff.

However, higher education institutions remain unaware of the challenges faced by students with visual impairments due to accessibility issues as they go about their daily business (Beauchamp-Pryor, 2012). Also, adapting the physical environment can be costly (Tinklin & Hall, 1999) and universities can be unwilling to re-arrange and adapt the existing physical environment due to funding limitations. Also, sometimes it is not possible to re-arrange old buildings. If re-arranging the infrastructure of buildings and facilities of a university is not possible, practical solutions are vital to include students with visual impairments in higher education. In addition, awareness of accessibility issues at the institutional level is necessary, and institutional policies for accessibility have vital importance for students with visual impairments. Lastly, it is worth noting that students with visual impairments experience accessibility issues on the first hand, and they are well aware of the areas needing particular attention or development (Riddell, Tinklin & Wilson, 2005) so students with visual impairments should be included in the decision making process about accessibility issues.

2.3.2. Support, Dependency and Advocacy

Along with accessibility issues, the students with visual impairments should be supported in academic and social areas and the main objective of the support is to help the students with visual impairments become independent individuals. In many cases, there is support and encouragement available for the students with visual impairments (Skill, 2008), yet even when the students with visual impairments are provided with support, they often remain marginalized and disempowered (Alias *et al.*, 2012; Holloway, 2001). Thus, a consistent support system is necessary for academic success of the students with visual impairments because there is no universal support for the students with visual impairments and the support they receive often depends on individual efforts (Fuller, Bradley, & Healey, 2004).

Even though inconsistent and dependent upon individual efforts, support from the instructors and the peers is emphasized (Gibson, 2012). Also, the peers witness the experiences of the students with visual impairments at the first hand, so the support

given by the peers is a key factor in the academic success of the students with visual impairments (Puri & Abraham, 2004). On the other hand, the instructors emphasize general collaborative support (Claiborne, Cornforth, Gibson, & Smith, 2011) and they suggest that the students with visual impairments should be provided with support at the beginning of the university experience (Gavira & Morina, 2014). Otherwise, the support the students with visual impairments receive is negatively affected if the quality of the support is not ensured (Miranda, 2014).

However, the support of the students with visual impairments can threaten their independency, and they can become reliant on the support they may get. Supporting the students too much can cause dependency, which is against the main objective of the support system. The support of the instructors and the peers is extremely important in circumstances where the support system is weak (Bezmez & Yardimci, 2015). Thus, the skills for independency should be taught to the students with visual impairments (Ghosh, 2015) in order to avoid dependency on the support given. In order to teach the skills for independency, higher education permits the students with visual impairments to acquire important life skills, which can enable them to function more independently in society (Lamichhane, 2015). Also, if a supportive environment is provided, the students with visual impairments can become independent individuals and the students with visual impairments think that being independent can improve the quality of their lives and create opportunities to participate in society (Rice, Björnsdóttir, & Smith, 2015).

In terms of advocacy, there is a limited research conducted about experiences of the students with visual impairments. In general, the students with visual impairments take the initiative to advocate for themselves about their conditions (Hadjikakou & Hartas, 2007). Scholars in the disability research suggest that it is necessary to promote emancipatory forms of disability research in order to advocate the students with visual impairments so that they can actively contribute to the transformative changes in schools (Barnes, 2007; Barton, 2005). Additionally, it is vital that educators should learn and become aware of the struggles the students with visual impairments have

been experiencing in the educational settings (Oliver & Barnes, 2010; Tinklin & Hall, 1999) because the experiences of the students with visual impairments in higher education is dependent on the advocacy they can get. Although the relevant literature is limited in terms of advocacy issues, it is clear that creating advocacy and increased awareness is fundamental for academic achievement and social inclusion of the students with visual impairments.

2.4. Disclosure of Disability

Students with disabilities are not eligible for special education services unless they disclose their disabilities and by law students with disabilities in higher education are required to disclose their disabilities if they want to receive special education accommodations based on their disabilities (Eckes & Ochoa, 2005). Accommodations, such as assigning a reader, preparing learning materials in braille, differentiating examination process, etc., are guaranteed on the basis of disclosure of disability.

Disclosing one's disability is a complex and complicated process as it deals with identity (Vickerman & Blundell, 2010) and students with visual impairments have different approaches and attitudes to disclosing their disabilities. In general, students with visual impairments feel uncomfortable and insecure about disclosing their disabilities when they enter into higher education institutions (Thoma & Wehmeyer, 2005). The insecurity results from the idea that students with disabilities are expected to experience social awkwardness, discomfort and stigma (Green, 2007). Moreover, students with visual impairments can have the perception that they are devalued and stigmatized so these could be the reasons why some students are concerned about disclosure in case it results in negativity and lack of accessibility (Jacoby & Austin, 2007).

Students with visual impairments can become 'invisible' if they do not disclose their disabilities. There are a number of reasons that account for non-disclosure of disability. First, students with visual impairments may not know that they are entitled to

accommodation by law, and may decide not to disclose their disabilities (Tinklin & Hall, 1999). Lack of law knowledge stems from previous school experience and institutional policies. If students with visual impairments are not informed about their rights when they transition to higher education, they will not disclose their disabilities and ask for accommodations. Also, institutions can avoid determining students with visual impairments who require accommodation because the institution may not be prepared to accommodate the needs of students with visual impairments. Secondly, students with visual impairments do not perceive themselves as having special needs or disabilities, they choose not to disclose their visual impairments since they believe they will be disadvantaged and stigmatized, and consequently become invisible (Goode, 2007; Hadjidakou, & Hartas, 2007).

In other circumstances, students with visual impairments choose not to disclose their impairments because students with visual impairments are trying to avoid dealing with labels, prejudice and ignorance (Stojanovska–Džingovska and Bilić 2012; Van Jaarsveldt, & Ndeya-Ndereya, 2015). The higher education environment is a context where students with disabilities may fear disclosing their impairments because of concerns that such disclosure may disadvantage them due to their disabled identity (Hanafin, Shevlin, Kenny, & McNeela, 2006). Unwillingness to identify themselves as students with disabilities is reflective of negative views of disabled people in society (Beauchamp-Pryor, 2012). Thus, students with disabilities need to work toward overcoming negative labelling and stigmatization, and trying to deal with being ascribed negative identities (Cunnah, 2015). Non-disclosure of disability for the reasons mentioned result in students with disabilities not being provided special education accommodations and their needs remain unmet. Moreover, students with disabilities have to accommodate their needs by themselves in order to avoid negative attitudes and beliefs of others.

On the other hand, if students with visual impairments have to decide to make their needs known they can become ‘extravisible’ (Goode, 2007) because they can be labelled and stigmatized because of their needs. When accommodation is required for

students with visual impairments, faculty members can approach them with suspicion (Brandt, 2011) as if students with visual impairments do not need any accommodation and they use their disability to gain an unfair advantage. Otherwise, faculty members and peers can over-help students with visual impairments, which causes extra-visibility of students with visual impairments. Over-helping students with visual impairments can create an environment in which dependency upon others is encouraged, as well. Consequently, disclosure acts as a symbol of and repository for a complex nexus of issues and social relations and students with disabilities have different approaches and attitudes to it.

Literature suggests that students with disabilities prefer waiting to disclose their disabilities until they experience academic or social problems (Burgstahler & Doe, 2004; Getzel & McManus, 2005). Such preference can be interpreted as an act of avoiding extra-visibility. Or students with visual impairments disclose their disability on the condition that they want accommodation or use special education services (Miranda, 2014). If a need for accommodation does not arise, students with visual impairments will remain invisible for the university. Students with disabilities share experiences of non-disclosure of disability, failure, and then choosing to disclose their disability and advocate for services they need (Getzel & Thoma, 2008). In either case, students disclose their disabilities unless a safe and welcoming environment is provided (Claiborne *et al.*, 2011). Some settings, like university, are safer environments for those wanting to disclose their disabled identity and having a place at a university and progressing academically help students with disabilities transform negative self-identities to positive ones (Cunnah, 2015). Acquiring positive self-identities can take place at the university where they can feel they belong to the teacher education program (Getzel, 2008; Macleod & Cebula, 2009). However, disability is considered to be a possible identity for students with disabilities who can relate and find commonalities across their experiences of exclusion, marginalization, and invisibilization due to their impairment (Kafer, 2013; Linton, 2010). Students with visual impairments may not come to university with positive self-identities if they have experienced negative consequences associated with labelling and stigma attached to

their impairments in their past (Cunnah, 2015). Unfortunately, it is apparent that one bad experience is often enough to over-turn positive experiences.

As a consequence, disability poses a myriad of complexities that interact in the life processes of students with visual impairments (Miranda, 2014) and disclosure of disability is more complicated than is generally assumed because it deals with many factors (Vickerman & Blundell, 2010). Students with disabilities enter the university unacknowledged and unprepared to disclose their disability or they lack the understanding of how to access special education services on campus (Getzel & McManus, 2005). Students with disabilities become ‘invisible’ when their needs are not met and they are disabled by the environment from full participation and disappear from view. In other circumstances, students with visual impairments either get too much attention, or become labelled due to their needs, which leads to extravisibility of disability.

To overcome difficulties/problems of non-disclosure or disclosure of disability, students with visual impairments should be encouraged to ask for accommodation and know their rights (Randolph, 2012) so it is imperative that students understand what the special education laws provide for them (Eckes & Ochoa, 2005). Also, information about available services should be made widely available to students with disabilities (Hill, 1996) and it is important to realize that the decision to disclose a disability is a process rather than a one-off declaration, and is a highly personal choice based on past experiences of being labelled as disabled (Macleod & Cebula, 2009; Stanley, Ridley, Manthorpe, Harris, & Hurst, 2007; Valle, Solis, Volpitta, & Connor, 2004).

2.5. Teaching and Learning Experiences of Students with Visual Impairments

More recent literature has concentrated on the teaching, learning and assessment experiences of students with visual impairments to inform inclusive curricula (Adams & Brown 2006; Fuller, Bradley, & Healey 2004, Hanafin *et al.*, 2007; Madriaga 2011; Waterfield, West, & Parker 2006). As students with visual impairments often miss the

subtle cues and concepts that occur in classroom settings, they experience learning and assessment barriers. Thus, they need to seek information and available resources and then apply for accommodations (Randolph, 2012). Teaching and learning materials should be designed and arranged according to the needs of students with visual impairments. The population of visually impaired students is so heterogeneous that it is impossible to identify a single educational setting or set of services that is suitable to the entire population (Al-said, 2010). Regardless of their differences, students with visual impairments must be involved in authentic learning experiences (Sousa, 2013) because students with visual impairments find themselves left out of classroom activities and thus deprived of valuable opportunities to negotiate meaning through interaction with their instructors and classmates due to the fact that classroom activities are not usually designed with students with visual impairments in mind (Donley, 2002).

In order to engage students with visual impairments in authentic learning experience, it is helpful for them if their instructors meet them and explain their rights and resources available (Claiborne *et al.*, 2011). In such a meeting, students with visual impairments can explain the areas that requires accommodation, their previous learning experiences, and their academic expectations. After determining the needs of students with visual impairments, the instructors can provide more guidance about accessible resources (Gavira & Moraña 2014) because students with visual impairments, who enroll in teacher education programs, are unaware of existing accommodations which can help them in an academic setting (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009). However, such meetings cannot take place with ease since many instructors at university distance themselves from the responsibility of providing students with visual impairments support (Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya, 2015). The act of distancing marginalizes students with visual impairments and shows a lack of respect for their differences, which creates a learning environment where students with visual impairments and their instructors do not communicate. A lack of communication between students with visual impairments and the instructors can have a detrimental effect on the academic performance and attainment of such students.

The instructors avoid communicating with students with visual impairments for some reasons. Firstly, the instructors can be ignorant about ensuring how to accommodate the needs of the students based on laws and regulations (Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya, 2015). Others can be unaware of available resources provided and assistive technologies at the institution (Hearn, Short & Healy, 2014). Many educators are not trained to work with visual impairments or they do not think such students need individualized attention (Sousa, 2013). In order to eliminate unawareness, there is a need for trained academic staff (Randolph, 2012) and it is vital for instructors to know legal obligations and available resources at the university in order to provide accommodation. Professional development programs can be offered in order to eliminate unawareness about services, and lack of legal knowledge about students with disabilities in higher education and consequently provide trained academic staff. It is obvious that personnel at the university are not prepared to work with students with visual impairments and professional development programs can effectively encourage instructors to meet the needs of students with visual impairments (Fuller, Bradley, & Healey 2004). Scott and Gregg (2000) suggest that these programs raise awareness of legal obligations, offer to assimilate specific learning approaches and understand insights of the experiences of students with visual impairments.

Secondly, the instructors can be unwilling to provide learning accommodations because it is time-consuming to prepare and adjust teaching materials for students with visual impairments and teaching such students presents many challenges (Orsini-Jones, 2009). Many of the instructors use the same teaching materials for years and the instructors need to adjust teaching materials according to the needs of students with visual impairments. This can cause unwillingness to accommodate the needs of the students with visual impairments because it increases the work-load of the instructors. When the workload of the courses is too intense (Moriña, Cortés, & Melero, 2013), the instructors prefer not to differentiate teaching resources.

Thirdly, the instructors need adequate and appropriate training to develop strategies to accommodate the needs of the students, and improve available resources on the basis of disability (Berry, 2011; Singh 2002; Smith & Smith 2000). In such trainings, the instructors can share their experiences of eliminating learning barriers for students with visual impairments and shared experiences can raise awareness and inform others about the condition of the students with visual impairments. Leyser and Greenberger (2008) report that most instructors acquire necessary skills and knowledge to make necessary accommodation for students with visual impairments, and they show willingness to provide requested accommodations by the students after having training sessions at the university.

What is more, there is no guidance on how to accommodate the needs of the students with visual impairments at institutional level, so each department brings its own understanding of accommodation and this results in inconsistencies between provided accommodations (Holloway, 2001). Riddell, Tinklin, and Wilson (2005) assert that accommodation for learning is provided mainly at an individual and not at institutional level. In such cases, the willingness to accommodate is determined by personal contact with the instructors and students with visual impairments emphasize the quality of interactions with their teachers as well as the level of availability of support provided to them (Vlachou & Papananou, 2014). Yet, the instructors should be encouraged to meet the needs of the students (Tuomi, Lehtomäki, & Matonya, 2015), and accommodating the needs of students with visual impairments is inevitable if academic achievement is expected.

Other issues related to teaching and learning are note-taking, participation in class discussion and curriculum arrangements. Students with visual impairments take notes during the class with the aid of assistive technology. They often use voice recorder devices. The students with visual impairments need to sit close to the lecturer in order to hear him/her better and to record the lesson. Students with visual impairments face difficulties while trying to contribute to the class discussion because of the structure of the classroom, and students with disabilities find it tough to listen to or see the

lecturer and other students, or get distressed due to the quick pace of the discussion (Fuller, Bradley, & Healey, 2004), so note-taking and participation in the class discussion are seen as problematic due to structural problems as well.

Curriculum arrangements are mostly related to assignments, attendance policy and flexibility. Students with visual impairments complain that the workload of the courses is too intense because they spend more time on their studies compared to students without disabilities (Magnus, 2009). Also, students with visual impairments suggest that individual attendance policies should be developed for them because they cannot attend classes regularly due to transportation problems (Moriña, Cortés, & Melero, 2013). Lastly, flexible course design can increase academic performance of students with visual impairments and students with visual impairments value flexibility in course design and delivery (Claiborne *et al.*, 2011; Shrewsbury, 2014) because flexible course design allows students with visual impairments to progress at their own pace, and get support according to their needs.

In conclusion, higher education institutions are required to accommodate the needs of students with visual impairments and to make necessary adjustments on the basis of individual disability (Macleod & Cebula, 2009). The goal of providing accommodation for authentic learning experiences for students with visual impairments is to modify teaching and learning materials, and to integrate assistive technologies in teaching without giving the students an unfair advantage' (Lancaster *et al.*, 2001). Even though the students with visual impairments reports a wide range of instructor responses, from highly supportive and aware, to inattentive, non-consultative and unwilling (Holloway, 2001), effective accommodation for students with visual impairments relies on a culture of acknowledging and responding to diversity by linking policy with practice at an institution level, rather than engaging in negotiations with individual students about teaching modification (Hadjikakou & Hartas, 2007).

2.6. Assistive Technology

Scholars from the field of disability studies acknowledge that use of assistive technologies has presented benefits to students with disabilities (Goggin & Newell, 2003; Kafer, 2013), so using assistive technology in the classroom setting can enhance learning experiences of students with visual impairments. Assistive technology has been defined as any item, piece of equipment, or software system which is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of students with disabilities (Sherer, 2004).

For students with visual impairments, assistive technologies can be defined as tools to navigate around his/her environment, gain equitable access to participate in social activities, and attain academic skills (Dell, Newton & Petroff, 2011; Miranda, 2014), and assistive technologies are designed to increase the functional capacity of students with visual impairments (Sousa, 2013). They are also considered vital in that they allow students with visual impairments to access learning materials without the use of print or Braille (Al-said, 2010). If teachers are concerned with enhancing the learning experiences of students with visual impairments in their classes, it is necessary to use assistive technology to meet their needs.

The availability of assistive technology in the classroom strongly improves the learning experiences of the students with visual impairments (Beckett 2010; Beckett & Buckner, 2012; McLean, Heagney, & Gardner, 2003) and assistive technologies are highly valued because they foster integration and help students with visual impairments to adapt higher education and university life (Gavira & Moriña, 2014). Although, assistive technology can improve the learning experiences of the students with visual impairments, it has some drawbacks. Wiazowski (2009) warns that the instructors should take into account environmental considerations when incorporating assistive technology into the classroom setting because the infrastructure of the classroom may not be compatible with assistive technologies. Also, it is a problematic issue that textbooks cannot be easily obtained in an accessible format (Orsini-Jones,

2009), so the instructor needs to find other ways to deliver course materials such as assigning readers, and printing the textbook in Braille.

The most common problem students with visual impairments experienced is getting their adapted learning materials on time (Brandt, 2011). In addition to technologically inaccessible materials, students with visual impairments recurringly complain about negligent use of assistive technologies like PowerPoint (Gavira & Moraña, 2014). As it is highly possible that PowerPoint presentations include pictures, videos and other visual objects, students with visual impairments can hardly understand the topic in the absence of thick descriptions of visuals. Also, students with visual impairments tend to go unobserved and uninformed in learning environments where assistive technologies are used negligently (Al-said, 2010; Heindel, 2014). Such use of technology is counterproductive for students with visual impairments. To overcome obstacles of remiss use of technology, the instructors need to be trained about how to implement effective use of assistive technologies in classrooms.

2.7. Assessment and Evaluation

In a learning environment where both students with and without disabilities participate in higher education, the promotion of inclusive practices is considered to be one of the absolutely necessary motivational conditions for academic achievement (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski 2009). Inclusive learning settings foster participation in the learning process; offer equal opportunities and quality learning as well as a sense of belonging for all learners, including students with visual impairments (Morña, Cortés, & Melero 2013). However, evaluation and assessment practices can become exclusive and disabling practices (Titchkosky, 2011) and assessment policies at institutional level carry vital importance for academic success of students with visual impairments.

Students with visual impairments choose the institution they want to attend according to assessment and evaluation policy of the institution to deal with academic barriers which they encounter (Miranda, 2014). In order to overcome such barriers, need for

alternative assessment strategies is suggested (Fuller, Bradley & Healey, 2004). Although rarely implemented, students with visual impairments are positive about alternative forms of assessment and evaluation (Brandt, 2011).

Even though students with visual impairments favor alternative forms of assessment, alternative assessment forms are considered to be an unfair advantage (Vickerman & Blundell, 2010). In a competitive higher education environment, students without disabilities seem to think that alternative forms of assessment are easier than their assessment procedures. In addition to this, the instructors may not offer alternative assessment forms due to their unpreparedness (Oslund, 2015). It is important to be prepared for alternative assessment for students with visual impairments. Additionally, the rationale of such assessment should be explained to students without disabilities in order to avoid any negative considerations about the assessment process.

2.8. Other Issues Related to Experiences of Students with Visual Impairments

Students with visual impairments experience barriers when they try to enter higher education. In order to deal with such barriers, students with visual impairments choose their department according to the disability policy of the department to cope with difficulties and problems (Alias *et al.*, 2012; Fuller, Bradley, & Healey, 2004). The students avoid going to universities, where their presence is devalued, where no differentiated instruction is provided, and where assessment policy is strict. Unfortunately, many students with visual impairments do not seem to have a real choice with regard to the university at which they want to enroll (Vlachou & Papananou, 2014). Thus, it is vital that the students with visual impairments have the opportunity to visit universities and discuss their needs so that they can anticipate their future accordingly.

While students with visual impairments are concerned with university choice, the administrators at the university think carefully about available options for students with visual impairments (Jahnukainen, 2014), and the administrators try to balance

available resources, instructors' willingness to accommodate the needs of the students with visual impairments, and the demands of the students with visual impairments. Also, the administrators emphasize the statistical significance of any disability group at the university to provide accommodation (Claiborne *et al.*, 2011; Heindel, 2014). Clearly, administrators are often reluctant to spend their funding on the needs of students with disabilities unless they form a significant group.

Along with difficulties students with visual impairments face when they enter higher education, they face employment barriers after completion of higher education, as well. Without employment, social inclusion and independency are unlikely to be achieved (Lamichhane, 2015). Teacher candidates with visual impairments are excluded from job opportunities due to the low expectations and misconceptions about their abilities to perform a certain profession (Baldwin & Johnson, 2001). Even in the absence of misconceptions, low expectations on the part of many professionals in teacher education mean that teacher candidates with visual impairments do not generally get adequate and relevant training and preparation for employment (Lamichhane, 2015; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997). Thus, teacher candidates with visual impairments gradually get accustomed to negative expressions and treatments, which lead them to thinking that they cannot do anything and to the lowering of their self-esteem (Barber, 2008).

2.9. The Turkish Context

Historically, special education services were provided in the Ottoman Empire but there were inconsistencies in services. With pioneering work of Grati Efendi, students with visual impairments were sent to Ticaret Mektebi, specially designed for students with hearing and visual impairments, in 1890 (Ataman, 2009). Ticaret Mektebi served for 30 years and was closed in 1919 (Ataman, 2009). Then, The School of the Deaf and Blind was founded in İzmir in 1921, and the Ministry of Health took over the school (Ozgun, 2015). In the 50s, Dr. Mithat Enç, who is visually impaired, founded an association called Altı Nokta Körler Eğitim ve Kalkındırma Derneği to support

integration of people with visual impairments into society. With the work of Dr. Enç and the association, the first special education regulations were included in primary school education in 1961 (Diken, 2013). In 1987, the enactment of the law 3360 İl Özel İdaresi Kanunu was passed, and the recruiting of personnel who could provide special education services was ensured with this law. After ten years, with the delegated legislation numbered 573, the standards of special education were determined (Özürlüler İdaresi Başkanlığı, 2000). In 2005, the law numbered as 5378 was accepted to improve conditions of people with disabilities. The law aimed to encourage people with disabilities to utilize basic human rights and freedoms, and to participate actively in society on the basis of equality. The law also aimed to prevent any discriminatory practices and to plan and organize necessary regulations and adjustments (“Engelliler Hakkında Kanun,” 2005). Lastly, Article 23 of the legislation in 2008 related to special education states that students with disabilities shall be educated in the ‘least restricted setting’, the needs of students with special needs in Turkey (Diken 2013).

Improvements and developments in the conditions of students with visual impairments are relatively new. Unfortunately, there is not an extensive literature about experiences of students with visual impairments in the Turkish education system. A systematic review of Higher Education Thesis and Dissertations database provides 86 master thesis and 11 dissertations. Three dissertations were in the field of education and others were in engineering, architecture, pharmacology and the medical fields. In his dissertation, Sahin (2011) developed a sound system to sustain seeing with sounds in education in high schools. In his dissertation, Tanrikulu (2010) looked at map information teaching in the 9th grade. In master’s theses, the psychological well-being of students with visual impairments in primary and secondary schools (e.g. Aydemir, 2009; Temiz, 2010; Terzi, 2011; Turk, 2007), use of technology and library services for people with visual impairments (e.g. Akkaya, 2015; Arik, 2011; Ay, 2009; Balaman, 2010; Inceoglu, 2006) are studied. In addition, the use of braille (Centik, 2009; Cetinpolat, 2006), engineering (e.g. Ablan, 2013; Baskurt, 2015; Dal, 2010; Kilicarslan, 2007), architecture (e.g. Akcali, 2015), and lastly teaching students with

visual impairments in primary and secondary schools (e.g. Acıkgöz, 2006; Bayram, 2014; Boydak, 2015; Karakoc, 2016) are researched.

In the Turkish context, the empirical studies mostly focus on inclusive education in the mainstream education. Rakap and Kaczmarek (2010) investigated attitudes of general education teachers towards inclusion in Turkey. They found that general education teachers are willing to learn new techniques and strategies in order to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. However, they do prefer to have students with physical disabilities, rather than with severe mental disabilities. In another study, Konur (2006) reviewed the key features of the major four anti-discrimination laws and outlines in order to suggest key adjustments of the curriculum for students with disabilities. Also, Konur (2007) challenged the ideas of disability rights, technology use and students with disabilities in higher education. Lastly, Coskun (2013) reports the results of a training for teaching English to students with visual impairments. The project not only enabled trainees to incorporate technology into their classes but also reduced the shortfall by providing continuous professional development to non-native instructors.

2.10. Purpose of the Study

Relevant literature about the students with disabilities in general and the students with visual impairments specifically shows that the number of students with disabilities who attend higher education has been increasing and there is a need to understand their experiences in order to provide a better higher education experiences. Even though internationally there are many empirical research studies about the students with visual impairments, the studies which seek to explore the experiences of the students with visual impairments are rather limited in Turkey. Hence, my aim was to explore the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in an ELT teacher education program at a university in the southwest of Turkey. Seeing that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments who participated in this study are undergraduate students in English language teacher education program, I aimed to

discover difficulties and challenges specific to the teacher education program and the teaching profession. Based on these purposes, the study aims to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of pre-service teachers with visual impairments in an English language teacher education program at the 3rd year of their education?
2. What are the concerns of the administrators about students with disabilities in higher education?
3. What are the experiences of the academic staff about teaching pre-service teachers with visual impairments in an English language teacher education program?
4. What are the experiences of the peers about pre-service teacher with visual impairments in teacher education program?

In order to explore the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments based on the research questions above, a qualitative case study approach, which allows the researcher to collect data from multiple sources (Flick, 2007; Flyvbjerg, 2011), to have thick descriptions (Creswell, 2013), and to focus on the participants' experiences (Simons, 2014), was used.

2.11. Significance of the Study

Even though Article 23 of the legislation in 2008 related to special education states that students with disabilities shall be educated in the 'least restricted setting', the requirements of students with special needs in Turkey may often be overlooked and not fully met (Ataman, 2011; Diken, 2013). Although there has been betterment of the programs for students with special needs to receive additional support at the K-12 level for the past ten years, and studies from different fields such as architecture, pharmacology, psychology, dentistry, and engineering, there are still problems, difficulties, and challenges with identifying students with special needs and providing the services that they may need at the university level. Since most instructors are not well equipped to teach such learners at the higher education level (Ataman, 2011;

Guinan, 1997), pre-service teachers with visual impairments fall through the cracks of the education system and remain unrecognized through their education. Thus, there is a need to explore the experiences of pre-service teachers with visual impairments in an undergraduate program for English Language Teaching in order to understand the difficulties and challenges they have in second language teacher education programs. This study aims to provide insights to the current situation of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in ELT teacher education programs in higher education. In addition, the study provides suggestions for researchers, teacher educators and policymakers to make necessary changes to accommodate the needs of pre-service teachers with visual impairments in higher education.

It is worthy of mention that understanding the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in the English Language Teaching teacher education program enables teacher educators to critically reflect on other dimensions of teacher education programs, as well. Shakespeare (2014) mentions that the students with visual impairments are not a homogenous group and each student with visual impairments has a different experience of higher education. Thus, it is significant to understand the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in order to:

- provide an equal and fair higher education (Shakespeare, 2014)
- guide them for a better higher education (Allan & Slee, 2008)
- offer chances to advocate for the students with disabilities in higher education (Florian & McLaughlin, 2008)
- and encourage new policy making processes (Adams & Brown, 2006; Davis, 2014).

2.12. Theoretical Framework

Historically, four main theoretical approaches to disability studies have been proposed, namely *the social model, medical approach, cultural disability studies, and critical approaches*. The theoretical approaches to disability define and examine disability

from different perspectives. First, I would explain the social model, medical approach, cultural disability studies, and provide reasons for adopting the critical approach.

Social models of disability put a distinction between impairment and disability. According to social model of disability while impairment is biological and universal, disability is related to particular times and places in society (Goodley, 2011; Thomas, Watson, & Roulstone, 2012). As disability is dependent on time and place, the model further suggests that social oppression and barriers cause disability. As Shakespeare (2014) emphasizes the social model highlights how people with impairments are disabled by social oppression and barriers yet fail to account for impairment, either as personal experience or as causal explanation for disadvantages. In addition, Oliver (2004) suggest that the social model is incompatible with taking an impairment-specific approach to disabled people, so blindness-specific challenges, problems, and difficulties cannot be holistically explained and analyzed by this approach.

Contrary to the social model, the medical approach to disability is based on the assumption that the individual is “disabled” by his/her impairments (Barnes & Mercer, 1997). Also, the medical approach to disability traditionally investigated issues such as adjustment to impairment on an individual basis, and explored the consequences of impairment for identity (Bhaskar & Danermark, 2006; Thomas, 2007). The approach offers helpful empirical evidence about how the impact of illness or impairment affects a person’s experience, sense of self, and their relations with others. However, it fails to explore how the impact of illness or impairment affects a person’s sense of self and their relations with others (Bury, 2000; Thomas, Watson, & Roulstone, 2012). This study will not be based on the medical approach because it emphasizes the biological consequences of impairment and ignores social and cultural aspects of disability.

Cultural approach to disability has a different perspective from the approaches mentioned above. The cultural disability studies deal with representations of disability in different languages, cultures, arts, and media. The approach also explores how disability is seen differently across cultures and times and helps to establish that

disability is locally variable, and utterly conditional (Bickenbach, 2009). Cultural disability studies draw attention to how cultural and historical variations have different ways of classifying and describing impairment, and explore psychological explanations for why impairment is threatening to non-disabled people (Shildrick, 2012).

However, in order to understand the experiences of pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study, a multi-level approach is necessary and the critical disability approach appears to offer a good basis on which the researcher can elaborate an understanding of disability from different perspectives (Thomas, 2004; Shakespeare, 2014; Watson, 2012). The critical disability approach conceptualizes disability as a complex phenomenon incorporating schoolwide multiple-layers of mechanisms with the potential to generate multifaceted issues, problems or experiences for students (Gable, 2013). In addition, the critical disability approach provides instructors with opportunities to explore the experiences of students with disabilities from a multi-level approach.

Also, the critical disability framework becomes the door to analyze the socially constructed inequalities, such as classism, racism, ableism, religious beliefs, gender relations, and sexual preferences that intercept each other across diverse social contexts (Davis, 2014; Garland-Thomson, 2005; Knoll, 2009; Miranda, 2014; Tremain, 2005). Gale and Tranter (2011, p. 38) write: ‘The current inequalities of representation and outcomes in higher education are the result of multiple social, educational and economic factors and are not due to different overall levels of ability or potential’.

Students with disabilities fundamentally have an equal right to access educational and professional opportunities on the basis of their attributes, abilities and skills, and it should be free from discrimination (Shrewsbury, 2014). In order to access to the educational and professional opportunities, emancipation and advocacy for students with disabilities is necessary. Emancipation is a cornerstone of critical disability

approach, so it is inevitable that the critical disability approach also summarizes the questions of human rights such as those identified in the recent UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that came into force in 2007 (Oliver & Barnes, 2010). The critical disability approach raises important concerns about the necessity of placing a more pronounced emphasis on understanding the overall educational experiences of students with disabilities (Liasidou, 2014).

Additionally, the critical disability approach accompanies a social, political and intellectual re-evaluation of explanatory paradigms used to understand experiences of students with disabilities and potential ways for social, political and economic change. What unites the critical disability approach theorists is an agreement that students with disabilities are undervalued and discriminated against and this cannot be changed simply through liberal or neo-liberal legislation and policy (Oliver & Barnes, 2010).

As a result, the critical disability approach suggests that disability is multi-faced phenomenon and should be examined through different perspectives in order to picture the phenomenon as a whole and it identifies meaningful courses of action (Gable, 2013; Shakespeare, 2014). In addition, Bornman (2004) claim that a critical approach is the most helpful and straightforward way of understanding the social world, because it allows for complexity. Disability is always an interaction between individual and structural factors. Rather than getting preoccupied with defining disability as a deficit or an infrastructural disadvantage or alternatively a product of cultural discourse, a holistic understanding is necessary and vital (Shakespeare, 2014).

Danermark and Gellerstedt (2004) suggest:

Injustices to disabled people can be understood neither as generated by solely cultural mechanisms (cultural reductionism) nor by socio-economic mechanisms (economic reductionism) nor by biological mechanisms (biological reductionism). In sum, only by taking different levels, mechanisms and contexts into account, can disability as a phenomenon be analytically approached (p. 350)

As seen above, the critical approach is suitable for this study because it allows complexity and analyzes disability from different perspectives to provide a holistic picture.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will first present qualitative research methodology, then explain the rationale of choosing a case study approach for this study. As a case study approach requires descriptions of the setting the research conducted and presentation of the participants (Yin, 2009), detailed information about the setting and the participants is provided. Also, the data collection procedures and data sources in this study are defined. Following the definition of the data collection procedures and data sources, the data analysis processes are described. Lastly, ethical considerations of the study are clarified.

3.1. Qualitative Research Methodology

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of pre-service teachers with visual impairments in English language teacher education program. To do so, qualitative case study was selected as a research methodology. This chapter presents my research design and rationale for using qualitative case study methods, the study participants, the research site, data collection and analysis methods, and ethical considerations and limitations.

“Qualitative research methodologies have become increasingly important modes of inquiry for social sciences and applied fields” (Marshall & Rossman, 2014, p.1). Qualitative research is used to understand and explain the meanings made by participants in an activity or context (Wolcott, 2009). More specifically, Creswell (2008) defines qualitative research as

“an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p.15).

Using qualitative research methods allowed the researcher to explore the experiences of pre-service teachers with visual impairment in an undergraduate program for English language teaching. This study helped us to understand, interpret, make connections with, and illuminate the voices of the participants.

In addition, qualitative research is appropriate when the researcher seeks: to understand, rather than explain; and to assume a personal, rather than impersonal role (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Stake, 1995). Also, Strauss and Corbin (1998) claim that qualitative research methods are ideally suited for research that seeks to explore the nature of people’s experiences. Qualitative methods also allowed the researcher to collect data through a variety of formal and informal approaches such as observation, interviews, and participant writings. Patton (1990) further adds that

“qualitative methods permit [the researcher] to study selected issues in depth and detail, and approach fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis that contribute to the depth, opened and detail of the qualitative inquiry” (p. 13).

Within qualitative methodology, case study approach is widely used when investigating a specific phenomenon. Therefore, in this study case study approach was adopted. It is discussed in the next section.

3.2. Case Study Approach

Stake (1995) defines case study as follows: “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when

the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p.13). Merriam (1988), in turn, defines case study in terms of its end product: “a case study is intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p.21). Yin (2009) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that “copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points” (p.13). A case study is identified then, not simply by its topic or as a particular data collection method, but rather should be seen as a comprehensive research strategy. Most researchers seem to agree that the single most defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of study, the case. The case may be a thing, a single entity, or a unit around which there are boundaries. The case then, would be a person such as a student, a teacher, a principal, a program, a group such as a class, a school, a community; a specific policy; and so on.

A case study therefore can be characterized as being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic: Particularistic means a case study focuses on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon. As such, case studies “concentrate attention on the way particular groups of people confront specific problems, taking a holistic view of the situation. They are problem-centered, small scale, entrepreneurial endeavors” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 2). Descriptive means that the end product of a case study is a rich, profuse description of the phenomenon under study. Wilson (1978) states “Case study uses prose and literary techniques to describe, elicit images, and analyze situations...They present documentation of events, quotes, samples and artifacts” (p. 448). Heuristic refers to the case study illuminating the readers’ understanding of the phenomenon under study. A case study can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader’s experience, or confirm what is known. Stake (1995) explains a case study’s being heuristic

“Previously unknown relationships and variables can be expected to emerge from case studies leading to a rethinking of the process phenomenon being

studied. Insights into how things get to be the way they are can be expected to result from case studies” (p.47).

One of case studies’ strengths lies in its possible range of methods. The most commonly used sources of evidence are documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Yin, 2009). Because multiple sources of evidence are necessary but can also be used in different combinations within case studies, no specific kind of source is necessarily ‘weighted’ more than others. Stake (1995) points out that, because researchers may use either quantitative or qualitative methods with case studies, they are attracted to this design mainly for the salience of the case itself more than by allegiance to particular methods.

Yin (2009) adds that case studies retain the originality of the evidence, “Case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 2009, p. 2). Moreover, case studies allow for a collaborative effort between the researcher and the participants. Crossley and Vulliamy (1984) underscore their belief that the “strength of case-study techniques as a research methodology lies in their maximization of the ecological validity of the data [That is] the extent to which behavior observed in one context is generalizable to another” (p. 198).

Crossley and Vulliamy (1984) write that case study research “offers new insights and critical perspectives on the process of school-centered innovation, to generate increased awareness and understanding of the factors that influence the functioning of such change strategies, and, through research grounded in realities of practice” (p. 201). The increased awareness helps to identify “important constraints on innovation, which may not be apparent to policy makers who necessarily lack a detailed understanding of the local context in which innovations are being attempted” (Crossley & Vulliamy, 1984, p. 199). So the case study of pre-service teachers with visual

impairments provide rich insight of their experiences both at local and international level, which would allow for positive change.

3.3. Setting

The context in which this research was conducted is a foundation undergraduate university in south-east Turkey. Prior to their undergraduate studies, all students are required to complete English language preparatory school. After successfully completing English language preparatory school, they start their department the following year. Or, the students can take a language proficiency exam after the registration and if successful, they can directly start their undergraduate education.

The specific department the pre-service teachers with visual impairments attend is a teacher preparatory program in English language teaching. The department was founded in 2010, and there are six teacher educators in the department. The department has 200 students in total. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments are on their third year in their undergraduate education and have been taking various courses that consist of both pedagogical and academic content.

Pre-service teacher with visual impairments in this study took Advanced Reading I, Advanced Writing I, Advanced Listening I, Oral Communication Skills I, Turkish I, Turkish History and Atatürk's Revolutions I, Introduction to Education, Basic Information Technologies I in the first semester. In the second semester, they took Advanced Reading II, Advanced Writing II, Advanced Listening II, Oral Communication Skills II, Turkish II, Turkish History and Atatürk's Revolutions II, Basic Information Technologies II, Educational Psychology. In the third semester, they took Translation I, Methodology in the Area of Specialization in ELT I, Linguistics I, English Literature, Lexical Competence, Community Service, Principles and Methods of Instruction, Elective Foreign Language. In the fourth semester, they took Translation II, Methodology in the Area of Specialization in ELT II, Linguistics

II, American Literature, Language Acquisition, Community Service II, Instructional Technology and Material Development, Elective Foreign Language II. In the fifth semester, they took Teaching English to Young Learners, Scientific Research Methods, Teaching Language Skills I, Classroom Management, Storytelling in ELT, Digital Literacy, School Life I, Elective Foreign Language III. Lastly, they took Novel Analysis, School Life II, Teaching Language Skills II, Language Awareness in English, Effective Communication in the sixth semester.

In the facilities at the university, there are two elevators on each edge of the buildings. One of the elevators is used by university staff while the other one is used by the students. The building where the pre-service teachers with visual impairments take their classes is at the farthest point of the campus and is located on a steep road. In addition to this, there are no ring services provided for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments so the pre-service teachers with visual impairments have to walk 500 meters and climb the stairs with 150 steps to reach the building. It is a six-floored building and the pre-service teachers with visual impairments take their classes on the 4th and 5th floors, where the main elevator only stops at the 3rd and 6th floor. The classrooms include only chairs with armrests, which can be easily scrambled during the lessons and scrambled chairs with armrests make it difficult to navigate in the classroom. Also, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments take their lessons in classes of 45 students on average. The offices of the teacher educators are on the 3rd and 6th floor and the offices are scattered around the building.

3.4. Participants

3.4.1. Sultan

Sultan is a 20-year-old pre-service teacher at the university. She was born with visual impairments but her parents did not realize its seriousness until she started school. At third grade she was referred to the school for the blind because she had difficulties in inclusion classes. The school for the blind is up to 8th grade and each student is sent to an inclusion school after middle school. In the high school, Sultan attended a regular

school. There she experienced many problems. She went to the United States during her second year in high school as an exchange student. In the United States, she learnt how to use a cane and took part in different sports events such as swimming, playing football and running. She reported that she developed her self-esteem and realized her potential in the United States. After coming back to Turkey, she completed her high school education and entered a teacher preparatory program in English language teaching.

After successfully completing language preparatory school, Sultan was selected to attend a language summer school in the United States by her university. In order to attend the language summer school, she went to the United States for the second time. She often compares all the opportunities and physical amenities that are in place for individuals with disabilities in these different settings.

3.4.2. Kemal

Kemal is a 20-year-old pre-service teacher student at the university. He was born with sight problems and he lost his vision while attending high school. Kemal entered a teacher preparatory program in English language teaching. He took language preparatory school for one year, and then started his undergraduate education. He has never been abroad or away from his family members. His family moved to the city, where Kemal gets his undergraduate education. Compared to Sultan, Kemal often relies on others to assist him. He can only take the bus to and from school to a bus stop in the city center. His father, who retired in order for him to attend this university, assists Kemal with all of his transportation and academic needs. Although Kemal was provided with a computer to enable him to complete his academic work, he still asks his father to type his work for him.

Kemal is very competitive and gets stressed easily especially during exams. Because he relies on others to help him with his academic work, if he cannot get the desired results he gets stressed. When asked about his visual impairments, Kemal is not open

to discussing it. Instead of coping with his current impairments and living independently with it, he is looking for ways to escape from it.

3.4.3. Academic Staff

Four teacher educators from the faculty of education participated in the focus group interviews. Two teacher educators have worked with Sultan and Kemal for two semesters. One of the teacher educators has one semester experience with the pre-service teachers with visual impairments and the other one has worked with the pre-service teachers with visual impairments for 6 semesters. Neither of the teacher educators have prior experience of teaching students with disabilities.

3.4.4. Administrators

Three administrators participated in individual interviews for this study. In order to have overall understanding of the institution, one administrator at the university level, one administrator at the faculty level, and one administrator at the departmental level were interviewed individually.

3.4.5. Classmates

Four of Kemal's classmates and three of Sultan's classmates agreed to participate in focus group interviews. Peers 1, 2, 3, and 4 were Kemal's classmates, while the Peers 5 and 6 were Sultan's classmates. After several observations, the peers, who were invited to the focus group interview, were selected based on their daily contact with the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

3.5. Data Collection Methods and Data Sources

The data sources for the study included observations, field notes, interviews, and collection of documents and artifacts (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009; Casey & Krueger, 2008). Here I describe these procedures.

3.5.1. Observation and Field Notes

In case studies, direct observations and participant observations are considered primary instruments in which field notes are constructed (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Heath & Street, 2008). For the purposes of this study, the researcher was involved in primarily direct observations, which did not require the researcher to be a participant in the classroom as the observations were detached from the participants. Direct observation is usually focused and may look for specific incidences of certain behavior, rather than the whole behavior.

Merriam (1998) notes the importance of observation within qualitative research, that it offers “a firsthand account of the situation under study” (p. 111). Through observations I was able to gain an understanding of the experiences of the students with disabilities, conceptualizing the pre-service teachers’ and teacher educators’ challenges, and frustrations both inside and outside the classroom environment. The observations provided a rich description of the participants’ experiences. The protocol that I used during observation sessions can be found in Appendix E.

As the researcher, it was important for me to make field notes during my observations. In addition, field notes served as an “analysis-in-description” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 8) where the focus of the observations changed with the meanings that I was able to identify. As Emerson *et al.* (2011) point out, “Writing field note descriptions is not so much a matter of passively copying down ‘facts’ about ‘what happened.’ Rather, such writing involves active processes of interpretation and sense-making” (p. 8). In this regard, field notes can be descriptive, reflective, and analytical at the same time (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Emerson *et al.*, 2011), which is what I focused on.

3.5.2. Reflective Journal

Another source of data was the reflective research journal I kept through my data collection phase. The journal allowed me to describe my thoughts about the research and relate the events mentioned by the participants during the interviews to the observation. In this study, reflection is described as “the process of making sense of one’s experiences by deliberately and actively examining one’s thoughts and actions to arrive at new ways of understanding” (Freese, 1999, p.898). Reflection also means that “continuous observation and monitoring of their own development and learning (Poulou, 2007, p.103), and “examination of personal and professional beliefs systems, as well as the deliberate consideration of the ethical implications and impact of practices” (Larrivee, 2000, p. 294). It is argued that gathering a reflective journal is a way of improving one’s existing beliefs, assumptions and practices through critical thinking (Larrivee, 2000).

What is more, according to Morrow and Smith (2000), the use of a reflective journal adds rigor to qualitative inquiry as the investigator is able to record his/her reactions, assumptions, expectations, and biases about the research process. During the data collection procedures, the reflective journal was kept after each interview and observation session.

3.5.3. Interviews

A common method used in qualitative studies to learn how people feel and think is interviewing. Individual interviews facilitate such understanding by providing a format for researchers to ask questions about individuals’ experiences and the meanings they make about those experiences. As a data collection tool, interviews are “a resource for investigating truths, facts, experience, beliefs, attitudes, and/or feelings of respondents” (Talmy, 2010, 131). Moreover, interviews can yield rich insights into people’s lives, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes, and feelings. Interviews are useful for getting the story behind participants’ experiences.

Therefore, interviewing consists not only of asking questions and getting answers but also of exchanging information collaboratively (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Interviews seek to elicit participants' descriptions of the meanings of their worlds and to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In the current study, interviews provided insights about the students', the administrators' and the teacher educators' perspectives and experiences. Thus, individual interviews are employed as a data collection tool because the researchers are interested in "understanding of the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 2013, p. 9)

Semi-structured interviews provide an open framework that allows for giving and receiving information. They start with general questions and topics and lead to more specific questions as the conversation goes on. I conducted four interviews with each student with visual impairments, one as a baseline at the beginning of the year, one at the middle of the year and one at the end of the year. The last interview served for member-checking purposes in data analysis phase. I also interviewed the classroom teacher twice during the academic year. Two focus group interviews were conducted with the teacher educators, who taught/is teaching pre-service teachers with visual impairments at the university. Lastly, two focus group interviews were conducted with the peers of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The interview protocols can be found in Appendices A, B, C, and D.

3.6. Data Organization and Preparation

In this section, I discuss the organization and preparation of my data, including how the data were managed, stored, and transcribed.

Qualitative studies generate a large amount of data, so before and during the analysis stage the data need to be organized (Creswell, 2013). The interviews were captured on audio-recordings which were entered into a log along with notes made during the

interview. The field notes were also logged and stored in a Microsoft Word file in my personal computer which was backed up on an external hard drive and on a cloud account. My research journal was also typed in electronic format and saved and backed up.

The durations of audio recordings are illustrated in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Duration of Audio Recordings

Interviewee	Duration
Administrator 1 Individual Interview	31 Minutes
Administrator 2 Individual Interview	25 Minutes
Administrator 3 Individual Interview	30 Minutes
Sultan Individual Interview I	50 Minutes
Sultan Individual Interview II	53 Minutes
Sultan Individual Interview III	75 Minutes
Kemal Individual Interview I	52 Minutes
Kemal Individual Interview II	56 Minutes
Kemal Individual Interview III	40 Minutes
Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I	40 Minutes
Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators II	30 Minutes
Focus Group Interview with Peers	66 Minutes
Peer 5 Individual Interview	40 Minutes
Peer 6 Individual Interview	16 Minutes
Total	604 Minutes

3.6.1. Transcription

Before the data can be analyzed, they need to be selected/reduced for transcription. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. Transcribed interviews were organized in a Word document and 246 pages of transcribed data were formed in total. The process of transcribing allows the researcher to become acquainted with the data and start thinking about themes that may emerge (Riessman, 1993). I created Microsoft Word format files for the interviews, observations, and journal entries, which were importable into the qualitative analysis software program MAXQDA.

The audio files as well as field notes were also imported into MAXQDA for coding and analysis. MAXQDA software was used to organize and code the interviews, field notes, and audio data. MAXQDA allowed me to transcribe and code large amounts of data.

3.7. Data Analysis

Coding is the method of connecting data, issues, and interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) so the transcribed interviews were coded line-by-line, and paragraph-by-paragraph and categories and themes were created, accordingly. After determining overlapping categories and themes, data were re-analyzed. Member checking was done throughout the data collection and analysis process.

Before the data analysis process started, all the individual and focus group interviews data was transcribed verbatim by using Microsoft Word and MAXQDA software carefully. There were no editions or corrections on the data gathered with the interviews in order to protect and preserve the authenticity of the participants' views and thoughts. The interviews were held in Turkish. The cited excerpt were first translated into English by the researcher and then the translated excerpts were confirmed by the experts from the Department of Translation and Interpreting. Pseudonyms were used only for the focal participants of the study, that is, the pre-

service teachers with visual impairments. Other participants were referred to only by numbers such as Teacher Educator 1, Administrator 2, or Peer 3.

3.7.1. Qualitative Data Analysis

Creswell (2013) argued that data analysis process involves “a preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of them” (p. 195). Using this framework, a cyclical analysis process has been used. According to the framework, the researcher first reads and writes memos. Then, the researcher codes and categorizes the emergent codes and combine them into themes. In the last phase of data analysis, the coded data were interpreted and the interpretations were finally reported.

In order to eliminate the risk of losing or missing any data that can yield important insights of the participants’ experiences, the interviews have been transcribed verbatim. After all the data were transcribed and formatted for the data analysis, the researcher started analysis of the data gathered. The concept of code is taken as “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2009, p.3). Subsequent to coming up with preliminary codes, the data have been coded by using “descriptive codes” which “assigns basic labels to data to provide an inventory of their topics” (Saldana, 2009, p.66).

After determination of the initial codes, pattern codes which are “explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify and emergent theme, configuration, or explanation. [...] They are a sort of meta-code” (Saldana, 2009, p.152) - have been assigned to the data as a second cycle coding method. This also allowed the researcher to identify categories “to organize and group similarly coded data” (Saldana, 2009, p. 8). Later, the interrelated codes were divided, and themes described as “broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea”

(Creswell, 2013, p.202), have be constructed. The underlying process for data analysis has been guided by the model below suggested by Saldana (2009).

According to Ryan and Bernard (2003), text analysis requires the following: discovering themes and sub-themes, selecting important ones, ordering them hierarchically, and relating them to theoretical models (p. 85). After determination of themes, the researcher could look for repetitions, categories, metaphors, similarities and differences (pp. 89-99). After identifying themes, pattern codes have been taken as departing points.

Throughout the data analysis process, the data were analyzed by using MAXQDA software (Version 12, Release 12.1.4), and sample screenshots of the analyzed data taken from the software program, MAXQDA could be found in Appendix G. The table below outlines the whole data analysis process employed in this study:

Table 3.2: Data Analysis Process

Step 1:	Verbatim transcription of interview data
Step 2:	First reading and memoing of interview and journal data
Step 3:	Assigning preliminary codes
Step 4:	First cycle coding: Descriptive codes
Step 5:	Second cycle coding: Pattern codes
Step 6:	Identifying themes
Step 7:	Associating themes with the research questions
Step 8:	Checking consistency among codes, categories, and themes
Step 9:	Interpreting the results and relating them to the literature

3.8. Trustworthiness of the Research

In order for research to be trusted criteria for quality need to be in play (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to these

criteria as “truth value” (p. 290). According to Creswell (2013), qualitative researcher should engage in at least two of the eight validation strategies Creswell and Miller (2000) identified: (1) prolonged engagement and persistent observation, (2) triangulation, (3) peer-review or debriefing, (4) negative case analysis, (5) clarifying researcher bias, (6) member checking, (7) rich and thick description, and (8) external audits. For this study, I utilized triangulation, clarifying researcher bias, and rich and thick description.

3.8.1. Prolonged Engagement and Persistent Observation

Prolonged Engagement and Persistent Observation within a qualitative study are demonstrated when the researcher “explores a problem or describe a setting, process, social group, or pattern of interaction” with in-depth and clear identification of the problem (Marshall & Rossman, 2014, p. 201). In the current study, the analyzed data from a semester-long study that provided in-depth understanding of the experiences of pre-service teachers with disabilities in English Language Teaching program were collected. In addition to this, the researcher planned to observe the pre-service teachers with visual impairments for 10 hours during one semester, respectively. Yet, pre-service teachers with visual impairments were observed 7 hours in one semester, respectively.

3.8.2. Triangulation

The data in this study were collected in multiple ways through individual and focus group interviews, observations, official documents and reflective journals. The purpose of collecting data from different sources is to achieve to triangulate the data sources. In addition, taking different theoretical frameworks mentioned in the literature review section into account to analyze the data allows for theoretical triangulation (Mackey & Gass, 2005). It provides opportunities for the researcher to compare and contrast findings for more accurate and precise interpretation of the data.

In addition, the researcher triangulation is done by including multiple investigators and participants' perspectives (Stake, 1995). The sample data were analyzed by different researchers to ensure the validity of the study. After comparing analysis conducted by different researchers, the data was re-analyzed. Lastly, member checking was used to clarify the meanings of the interpretation with the participants.

3.8.3. Rich and Thick description

Case studies necessitate to providing rich and thick description in order to help the reader to better understand the case researched (Yin, 2009). In order to provide a better picture of the case under focus, the context of the study, data collection site, the participants, and what they experienced during this process were described in detail. In order to achieve this, the focal participants were presented in detail in the findings section. Also, excerpts and quotes of the participants were presented in the findings section and the presented excerpts and quotes were utilized as a tool to provide rich and thick description of the case (Creswell, 2013).

3.8.4. Positioning as a Researcher

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that the reader must be informed about the researcher's position, biases, and assumptions related to the study. Thus, I, as the researcher, present my role as a researcher in this section. The researcher had a participative and insider role during the research. As a graduate of the ELT department, and having 2 years of experience as a research assistant at the university, I had knowledge about ELT undergraduate education, the operating system of the university, and other administrative procedures. I believe this made it easier to interpret the data collected through interviews and observations. I participated in several courses as a teaching assistant, and this gave me the chances to observe participants regularly and closely. In addition, during my teaching assistantship, I provide differentiation and accommodation to the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. In doing so, I developed more understanding of their experiences and

other concerns. I believe these also made it more likely that the participants felt comfortable while participating in the study.

3.8.5. Transferability and Confirmability

Transferability is demonstrated when researchers “argue that findings will be useful to others in similar situations, with similar research questions or questions of practice” (Marshall & Rossman, 2014, p. 201). Marshall and Rossman (2014) recommend “triangulation of multiple sources of data” to demonstrate transferability of the research (p. 201). Through collecting data from multiple sources, the researcher aimed to holistically picture the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. By picturing the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, the researcher can have suggestions and recommendations to the students, teacher educators and administrators in similar circumstances.

What is more, confirmability in research refers to the internal consistency of the data in relation to findings, interpretations, and recommendations. To attend to confirmability, researchers need to make “sure that the findings reflect the participants and the inquiry itself rather than a fabrication from the researcher’s biases or prejudices” (Marshall & Rossman, 2014, p. 201). To address confirmability, the findings of this study were compared with the findings in the related literature. Also, the data collected were carefully stored so that they can be re-analyzed if necessary.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

In order to clarify ethical considerations and eliminate possible ethical issues, the researcher followed all of the ethical guidelines of the Middle East Technical University (METU). The researcher applied to the Human Subjects Ethics Committee of Middle East Technical University; submitted the required documents, and carried out the study in accordance with the codes of ethics. All the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their consent was taken. The pre-service teachers

with visual impairments gave their consent orally, as they could not sign the participant consent form.

In addition, the participants were informed about the data collection and analysis procedures. The participants gave permission to be interviewed and to record the interview. In order to protect the participants' privacy, and ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the participants I took caution when recording the data and constructing documents from the data. The audio data were recorded with a digital audio recorder; digital files were saved on my personal portable computer that only I have access to and back-up files were saved on an external hard drive and a cloud account. The external hard drive and the cloud account were password-protected. All of the data were transcribed using pseudonyms for the participants and the locations then analyzed on my computer. The data on my personal computer were password-protected and the computer was locked when not in use. All of the participants were made aware that I would be careful to protect their confidentiality and privacy. As is customary, they were also offered the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time.

The participants in this study may have also felt uncomfortable discussing their experiences or personal information. During interviews, therefore, participants were informed that they may decline to answer any question without prejudice, or decline to participate in interviews at all. On the other hand, the pre-service teachers may have seen me as an assistant of teacher educators/administrators. To address these concerns I explained my role as a researcher in while aiming to obtain consent/assent from pre-service teachers, teacher educators, and administrators. Member checking (Marshall & Rossman, 2014) was also done throughout the data collection process, by asking the participating students to verify the findings I provided in draft and final versions.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, I present findings of the study that emerged from the data analysis of individual interviews, focus groups and observations. In the first part of my findings, I provide a thick description of the two focal participants in order to provide background information. Then, even though my research primarily looked at the two focal pre-service teachers with visual impairments, disability is a multi-layered issue as mentioned in the literature, and there are other contributors, namely academic staff, administrators and peers. The contributors are introduced briefly. After providing background information about the participants in this study, the themes that emerged from data analysis are presented.

4.1. Sultan

Sultan is a 20-year-old pre-service teacher at the university. She has two brothers and a sister. She is the third child of the family. Her father is working as a window producer. Her mother is a house-wife. She was born with low vision but her parents did not realize its seriousness until she started school. At third grade, upon her relatives' suggestions, she was referred to the school for the blind because she had difficulties in inclusion classes. She stated:

I went to regular school till 3rd grade. I am not sure it is a correct term but I went to “normal” school. There I learned how to read and write like my normal friends did. Nothing happened. Then, I have a cousin, who is visually impaired, as well. He went to GAP [School for Blind]. They suggested it to us. Send Sultan there, it is a good place and everything is okay there. But I did not want

to go (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

In the School for Blind, Sultan learned how to read and write in Braille. The school for the blind is up to 8th grade and each student is sent to an inclusion school after middle school. In high school, during her sophomore year she went to the United States as an exchange student to a school for visually impaired and blind. She spent one year there.

At first, she and her family had difficulty in accepting Sultan's disability. Her vision loss got deteriorated. She continuously compared her vision and she suffered from denying her disability. She stated her experiences as follows:

No families accept that their child is disabled. But my vision gradually gets worse. It is not a sudden event. Once you grow older, it gets worse. It is such an illness. How does it affect me? You do not accept it! For example, I am checking myself. Let's see what I can see? I compare my past and now. For example, I could not realize the lamppost. I said to myself: Sultan you are losing it. You are losing it, accept it. At the beginning, I was so upset. It was some years ago. I would not use cane, even at nights. This is somehow related to School for Blind. Anyway. They did not educate us how to use a cane. We don't know how to use it, how we can go out in public. Whether you like it or not, you accept that you are disabled (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

Sultan is an outgoing person; even though she likes to interact with people around her, she thinks she is disadvantaged in friendship issues. She stated:

I start my friendships one step behind. This force me to hide my disability (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

She wants to make herself known because she wants to accomplish and create a difference in people's lives. She is ambitious about her plans and dreams. Once she

decides to do anything, she does not let it go until she manages to achieve it. She loves music, travelling and theatre. She explained herself as follows:

I don't like being behind the people or being in the middle. I like to be in the front. Being front satisfies me. Yes, the one who likes to be successful. The one who says "I am here" (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

Lastly, she cares a lot about her independence, and she does not ask for help to protect her independence. She added:

I care about being independent –my family's support is of course very important—but I believe I will have a more productive life independently (Sultan, Individual Interview III).

4.2. Kemal

Kemal is a 21-year-old pre-service teacher at the university. He was born with sight problems and he lost his vision while attending high school. His father is a retired police and his mother is a house-wife. He has a brother. They live together. His father, who retired in order for him to attend this university, assists Kemal with all of his transportation and academic needs.

Kemal attended regular primary, secondary and high school. He lost his vision at the high school. Until he lost his vision, he could read and write by himself. He had difficulties in social relations. He stated:

In primary and secondary school my vision was like yours. I could read and write. Compared to my friends, I had difficulties in social and academic issues. I was behind in social relations, but my scores were good in high school (Kemal, Individual Interview I).

Kemal introduces himself as realistic, serious, fragile, emotional and ambitious but not self-confident. Kemal is very competitive and gets stressed easily especially about academic issues. His weakness is to give up when he cannot do the things he wanted. He also gets angry when he cannot explain himself. He stated:

One of the teacher educators said that he will conduct his exam in the computer lab. I said “I cannot read”. He responded “if you make it bigger, you can”. I got angry. When I get angry, it results in negativity. I shout (Kemal, Individual Interview I).

Kemal also experiences difficulties in social relations and friendships issues. Before befriending with someone, he looks for trust. Kemal stated:

I am not an easy-going person, and I cannot befriend with everyone. Once I trust someone, I always see him/her. Interacting with normal people. For example, I cannot start a conversation like you, it takes some time until I start to communicate (Kemal, Individual Interview I).

When asked about his visual impairments, Kemal is not open to discussing it. Instead of coping with his current impairments and living independently with it, he is looking for ways to escape from it. When asked about whether he wants his disability to be known, Kemal answered:

In reality, I want it and I don't want it because if it is known people may help me, if it is unknown, they will not take me seriously (Kemal, Individual Interview III).

He also self-critiqued himself saying:

When I don't accept my disability, it results in negativity because when I don't accept it, what I can do with my vision, I experience disappointment (Kemal, Individual Interview I).

Kemal values personal development but he does not attend extra-curricular activities. Kemal explained:

I want to attend extra-curricular activities, but I haven't so far (Kemal, Individual Interview III).

I wanted to learn Braille, I thought it could be useful. For example, I can take notes with it while listening to the lecture (Kemal, Individual Interview I).

4.3. Emerging Categories

Based on the interviews and observations I conducted with various parties, the following themes, as illustrated in the Figure 4.1, have emerged as being at the forefront of the experiences of the two pre-service teachers with visual impairments at the university in English language teacher education program. The themes that emerged are "Definition of a Teacher", "Teaching and Learning Experiences", "Inclusive Practices", "Attitudes to Disability", and "Institutional Issues". The categories and related themes are illustrated in the Figure 4.1.

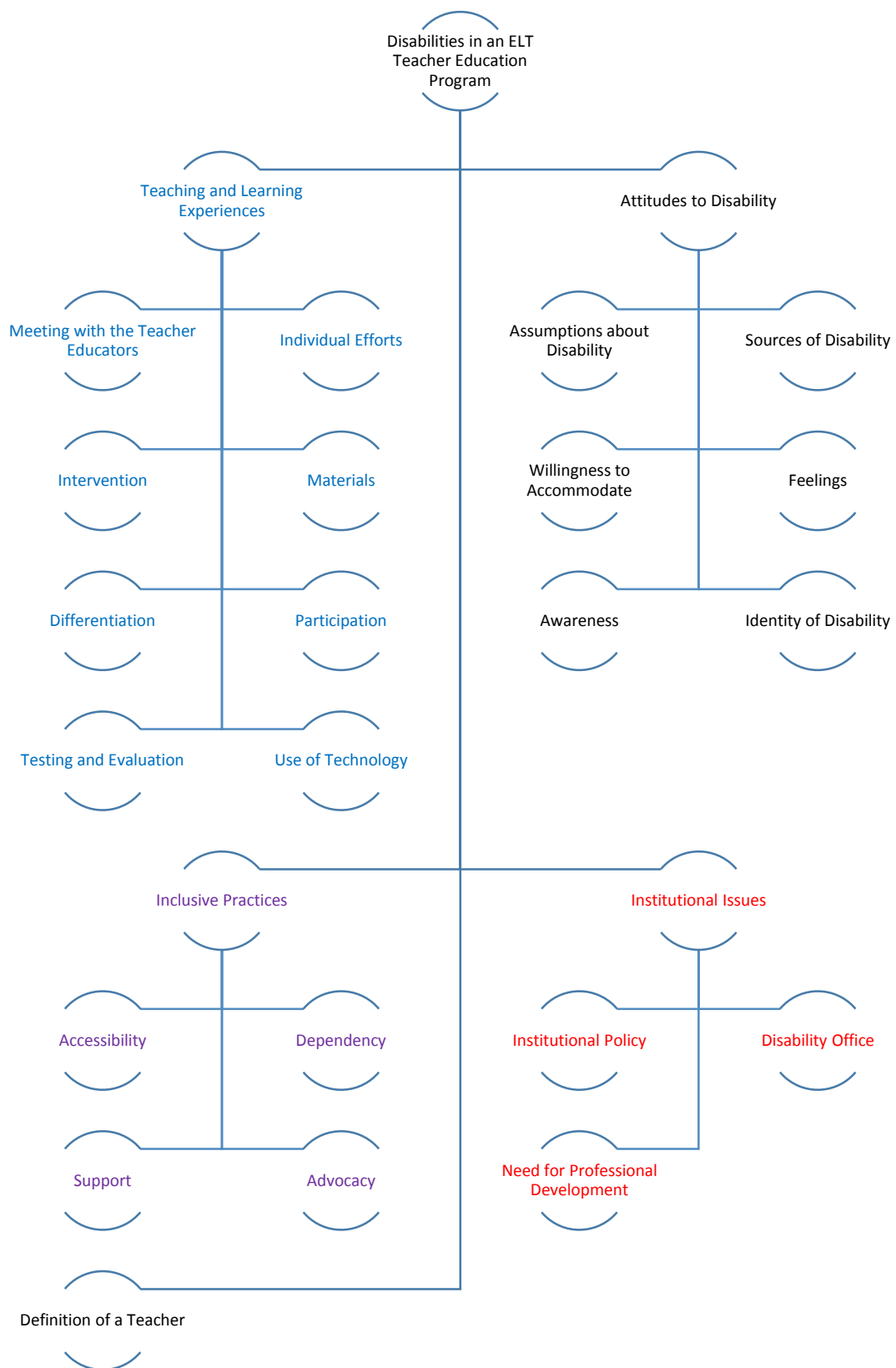


Figure 4.1: Disabilities in an ELT Teacher Education Program

4.3.1. Teaching and Learning Experiences of Pre-service Teachers with Visual Impairments

The participants in this study expressed their concerns about teaching and learning experiences of pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The main categories that emerged from this theme are illustrated in Figure 4.2. The categories are “meeting with the teacher educators”, “individual efforts”, “intervention”, “testing and evaluation”, “use of technology”, “participation”, “differentiation”, and “materials”.

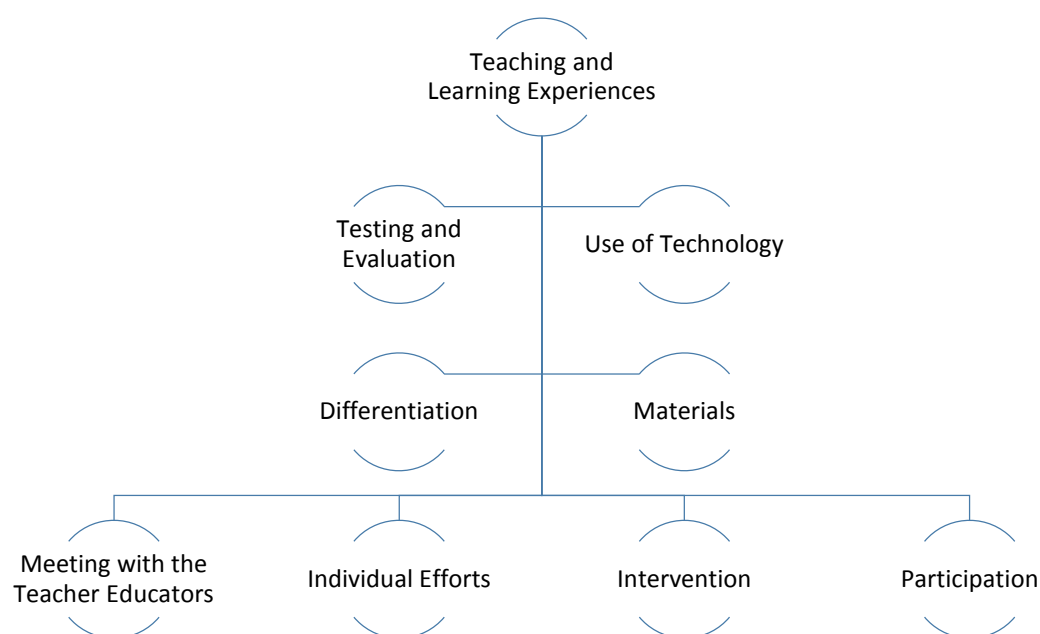


Figure 4.2: Teaching and Learning Experiences of Pre-Service Teachers with Visual Impairment

4.3.1.1. Meeting with the Teacher Educators, Individual Effort and Early Intervention

The main considerations about teaching and learning experiences of pre-service teachers with visual impairments are meeting with teacher educators, individual effort and early intervention about their needs. The administrators interviewed did not comment on early intervention and meeting with the teacher educators. General consensus from the teacher educators’ statements is that they believe they need to be

provided with information and accommodation before the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

At first, our needs should be accommodated not theirs (Teacher Educator 4, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

They need to learn how to cope with their problems. Then they should teach us about their needs first (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

Also, the teacher educators carried different concerns so they approach early intervention and meetings differently. Teacher Educator 2 noted:

We offer early intervention but I am not sure how seriously the pre-service teachers with visual impairments take it. I wrote in the syllabus: “I can make adjustments through early intervention”. Nobody asked me anything. If they did, we would do something about it. We need to be honest. We have a lot to do. If the pre-service teachers with visual impairments ask, we will accommodate their needs. Otherwise, I don’t have to sit and think about them. Yet, if they come and ask, I will definitely help them. I think the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are aware of this. I know I keep that door open. As they cannot see, they won’t understand our business (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

However, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments need early intervention, but they do not ask for it because Sultan stated:

I did not go! I don’t know but I think they gloss over (Sultan, Individual Interview III).

In addition to Sultan’s statement, pre-service teachers with visual impairments wait

until they experience a problem. Kemal stated:

They need to understand we need early intervention. In order to understand, there should be an event or problem. It should be experienced (Kemal, Individual Interview III).

In order to avoid misunderstanding or assumptions, there is a need to conduct intervention meeting to accommodate the needs of the students with visual impairments. Teacher Educator 1 suggested that:

We need to initiate early intervention meeting at the beginning of each semester (Teacher Educator 1, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

Intervention issues are related to meeting with teacher educators and individual effort because intervention cannot take place if the teacher educators' consultation are not taken. As seen from Teacher Educator 2's statement, the teacher educators think that they are busy and they accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments when they ask for help. Thus, the accommodation process is based on individual efforts of the teacher educators. Even though the accommodation process has to be systematic and legal, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments accommodate their needs through their personal contact and relations.

Accommodation process is seen as a burden for the teacher educators especially during the mid-term and final examination weeks. Teacher Educator 2 noted:

So far I solved the problems with my personal contacts. I use my personal contacts. I ask my officemate to read the exam for them. But it is a burden. (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

Teacher Educator 1 explained how she solved computer problems of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments:

Computer for example. Two of them didn't know how to use a computer. I asked the IT instructor personally. Then, the IT instructor offered them individual sessions (Teacher Educator 1, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

In addition, some of the teacher educators in the faculty showed unwillingness to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments and use their personal contact to accommodate the pre-service teachers' needs.

During observation it is realized that in the exams weeks, there are two proctors in one classroom. In the exams that Sultan or Kemal takes, one proctor stays in the classroom, and the other one conducts Sultan or Kemal's exam. One of the teacher educators who had administrative responsibilities, didn't conduct the exam by himself. He sends the proctor and the student with visual impairments to another instructor. After delivering the exam paper, and instructions for the exam, the proctor returns to the classroom where other students take the exam. The instructor leaves the classroom and goes to his office. The instructor observed used his authority and personal contacts to avoid the responsibility of accommodating the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Unfortunately, the same event occurred repeatedly on different occasions (November 2015, Mid-term Examination Week).

Due to the unsystematic accommodation process, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are dependent upon individual efforts of the teacher educators to accommodate their needs. Instead of systematic approach, individual efforts are encouraged at the administrative level.

Interviewer: For example, the system of accommodating the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments is under initiative of the heads of the departments, and it depends on their individual efforts of them, right?

Administrator 2: As they contact with such students on daily basis, it is responsibility of the heads of the departments. Their efforts are determinative in accommodating the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments (Administrator 2, Individual Interview)

The pre-service teachers with visual impairments also use their individual effort to solve their problems. If they cannot solve, they go to meet with their teacher educators. Kemal said:

I try to solve my problems individually. If I cannot, then I go to meet with my instructor (Kemal, Individual Interview I).

If there is not any problem, why should I go to meet with my instructor? (Kemal, Individual Interview III)

Additionally, even though she meets with her instructors, Sultan complains about uncompleted accommodations and unsolved problems. She states that:

Recently, we always talked about what can be done, what is missing. We talked about academic issues. But nothing happened (Sultan, Individual Interview II).

The peers are skeptical about the teacher educators' individual efforts. General consensus about the teacher educators' individual efforts is conscience. Peer 3 claimed that

No teacher wants to leave his/her comfort zone. Conscience remains only. After a while, conscience diminishes (Peer 3, Focus Group Interview with the Peers).

In addition to this, when the peers individually help to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, they question whether or not they

approach in a right way, or do the right thing.

Peer 6: Yes, it was the result of my individual effort. Maybe I did something wrong, I don't know. I try to support her, I tried to help her (Peer 6, Individual Interview)

In conclusion, it is understood from the teacher educators' statements that their needs should be met so that they can accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Also, the teacher educators wait for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to meet them and discuss their needs. Otherwise, they do not meet with the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to discuss or provide accommodations. Due to such an approach, the peers are critical about their teacher educators' efforts, so they try to meet with the pre-service teachers with visual impairments and provide help. In addition, the peers and teacher educators use their personal contacts to provide temporary accommodations. As a result, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments complain about uncompleted accommodations, and unsolved problems. Also, they think their needs are glossed over.

4.3.1.2. Participation, Differentiation and Materials

Promotion to participate in teaching and learning process in higher education for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments is possible through providing appropriate materials and differentiation in teaching and learning. In this section, findings about how teaching and learning materials are provided and differentiated is presented.

The administrators in this study did not mention about participation, differentiation or materials. However, the teacher educators, the peers and the pre-service teachers with visual impairments expressed their concerns about the issues mentioned. From the perspectives of the teacher educators, having pre-service teachers with visual impairments in the classroom results in shock and ambiguity. The teacher educators try to find ways of differentiation in their instruction, and as a result encourage

participation of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Teacher Educator 4 talked about his first experience:

When I first started to teach, I got confused for two-three weeks. How should I teach? What I can do for them [the pre-service teachers with visual impairments], because I teach in a normal way, they don't understand. They came to and said "we don't understand". When I assign other students to them, the other students showed reaction. After you get over the shock you had at the beginning, you differentiate everything. For example, I re-arrange timing for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments (Teacher Educator 4, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators II).

The teacher educators do not prepare their teaching materials keeping the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in mind and this results in less participation in class activities. Teacher Educator 2 stated:

When I get prepared for the class, I mostly forget them [the pre-service teachers with visual impairments]. The moment I start my presentation; I say "Oh no! I have them in the class (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

The typical differentiation is providing PDF format of the books, sharing PowerPoint presentations and oral explanations. However, oral explanations are not always possible as the voice of the conversation between the teacher educator and the student with visual impairments can disturb other students in the classroom. Teacher Educator 2 asserted:

I have two visuals. I expect from the students to compare and analyze them. During this stage, there should be silence. Normally. Thus, I cannot describe the visuals to the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. They wait in totally disadvantaged situation. I feel so upset. But at the same time, I want to

give other students in the classroom wait-time (Teacher Educator 1, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

The teacher educators try to differentiate their instruction and provide different form of materials to encourage participation of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. However, the peers are more judgmental about differentiation and materials. Peer 2 stated:

In Linguistics class, you need to see to understand. He [Kemal] went to one of the teacher educators and explained that he cannot see. He asked for alternative ways. The teacher educator said that it is not my problem, you are the one who can't see. Do whatever you want (Peer 2, Focus Group Interview with the Peers).

In class activities, timing is considered to be a great problem for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments and the peers think that the teacher educators do not differentiate their timing policy. Peer 3 and 4 noted:

I ask for his opinion. Then he answers and I write. Maybe he will write his answers in two hours, but I can write it in 5 minutes. It is time-limiting. And some of the teacher educators want us to complete our projects during the lesson (Peer 3, Focus Group Interview with the Peers I).

The teacher educator must think about this. The teacher educator teaches and behaves like all the students are similar. When they teach, they do not keep the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in mind (Peer 4, Focus Group Interview with the Peers I).

In absence of differentiation and materials suitable for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, the peers try to find alternative ways for them. Peer 5 explained:

Peer 5: I am trying to find materials for her [Sultan] so that she can understand the topic (Peer 5, Individual Interview).

The statements of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments about differentiation, materials and participation are in agreement with the peers. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments complain about lack of materials and differentiation. Sultan asserted that:

In reality, we don't have many teaching materials and there is not e-library for my course books (Sultan, Individual Interview II).

Kemal explained his choice for teaching orally:

There is a limited course materials and I sometimes use PDF's to listen to the books with computer. But I prefer the instructors' oral teaching because sometimes I have problems with PDFs or I don't understand given materials and there are not many alternative ways. The instructor can explain in different perspectives (Kemal, Individual Interview II).

In addition to the lack of materials, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments face difficulties in class-participation. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments suggested that their name should be called when they participate in-class discussions.

Sultan: When I raise my hand, sometimes the teacher educators forget and they look at me as if saying that I can answer. The teacher educator waits. If s/he call my name, I will continue (Sultan, Individual Interview II).

Kemal: Sometimes we remain in the back. Especially for visuals. For example, they do practice on the board. We sit and wait (Kemal, Individual Interview II).

In conclusion, the teacher educators feel confused and shocked when they have the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in their classes. To differentiate their instruction, they need some time. After some time, they claim to differentiate their instruction, vary materials and as a result to encourage participation of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. However, the teacher educators prepare their teaching materials without considering the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. In such cases, the peers help the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to find materials. Lastly, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments face difficulties or disadvantages when they participate in-class activities.

4.3.1.3. Testing and Evaluation

Testing and evaluation of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments is a multi-faceted process. Starting from administrative issues, conducting the exams, importance of the proctor and assignments need to be considered carefully in order to avoid any unfair treatment of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

The administrators have no concern about testing and evaluation process because they handed over the responsibility of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to the departments. Administrator 1 explains that:

We assign an advisor or a research assistant. The assigned staff reads the questions to the student with visual impairments. The student responds and the assigned staff writes the responses (Administrator 1, Individual Interview).

In the meantime, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments focus on problematic sides of testing and evaluation process. During the exam weeks, when observed, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments had to wait for hours to have their exams because the teacher educator remained in the class during the exam. After the exam, s/he wanted to rest for a while and the pre-service teachers with visual impairments had to wait for the exam. Sultan explains this problem;

Sultan: Because they are telling me that you come on time, we will sort it out. But at that time during exam weeks they are so busy. I ask whether or not the teacher educator is available. They are telling me “after the exam”. Or they tell me if I [the teacher educator] find a proctor, I will let you take your exam (Sultan, Individual Interview II).

Another problem the pre-service teachers with visual impairments encounter is reduction in examination questions.

Last time I was having an exam. The teacher educator himself was conducting the exam. There were 50 multiple-choice questions. He offered me 4 open-ended questions instead of 50 multiple-choice questions. You feel worried because you don't know whether you can do as well as in multiple-choice exam. But you can't reject it (Sultan, Individual Interview II).

In conclusion, testing and evaluation process seems to be problematic. The administrators do not involve in testing and evaluation process because they hand over the responsibility of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to the departments. While the teacher educators offer different forms of assessment, they have doubts about fairness of the exams. According to teacher educators, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments tend to exploit proctor's good-will. On the other hand, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments cannot take their exams as scheduled because they have to wait for the teacher educator. In addition, if the teacher educators conduct the exam by themselves, they reduce the number of questions or change the format of the examination.

4.3.1.4. Use of Technology

Use of technology can enhance higher education of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The main area that technology is used by the teacher educators is

presentations. Interestingly, none of the teacher educators know Braille, but they suggest that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments should know Braille. Sultan knows how to write in Braille, yet Kemal does not have necessary skills for Braille. He wants to learn Braille, though. Kemal said:

I went to Six Points Association for the Blind to learn Braille. But they have summer school. I want to learn because I think I can make use of it. For example, I can take notes while the teacher educator teaches us (Kemal, Individual Interview III).

The pre-service teachers with visual impairments use technology while they are taking notes, doing their assignments, preparing for the class and socializing through social media. Lastly, the peers do not encourage or help the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to use technology. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments describe their experiences with technology and the main areas they use technology in learning processes. Both of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments stated that they do not have adequate computer skills.

Kemal: My father uses it. Even my father uses computer with difficulty. How can I? (Kemal, Individual Interview II)

Sultan: I am not good at computer (Sultan, Individual Interview II).

While the pre-service teachers with visual impairments think that technology is not their strong suit, they use technology for note-taking during the class. Yet, they face difficulties when they listen to it because they record the whole lectures.

Kemal: I have voice-recording machine. When I go to home, we upload the recording to the computer. But I cannot upload it by myself, there should be someone (Kemal, Individual Interview II).

Sultan: I have word-by-word voice record. Sometimes, I catch details. But it is difficult in this sense. I record everything in the lesson. I try to stop voice recording whenever it is not necessary. But I record three hour classes, and when I listen I cannot find directly what I want. Sometimes it is time-wasting (Sultan, Individual Interview II).

Also, the participants with visual impairments complain about neglect in the use of PowerPoint presentations during the classes. Sultan stated:

All teacher educators use PowerPoint presentations. But it is totally useless for me. I only listen to the teacher educator. PowerPoint is not beneficial for me (Sultan, Individual Interview II).

In conclusion, technology is considered to be important for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to enhance their higher education experiences and the teacher educators expect from the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to use Braille. However, the main areas that technology is used by the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are note-taking, social networking, preparing assignments and during the exams. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments usually use voice-recording machines in the classroom, but it can be time-wasting when they record whole sessions of the class. Lastly, pre-service teachers with visual impairments think that use of PowerPoint presentations is neglected in the classes.

4.3.2. Inclusive Practices

Inclusive practices are important for the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments as such practices reflect identity issues, advocacy, accessibility and so on. In this section, the participants' experiences and views related to inclusive practices are presented. The categories emerged in relation to inclusive practices are illustrated in Figure 4.3. The categories are "Dependency", "Advocacy", "Support", and "Accessibility".

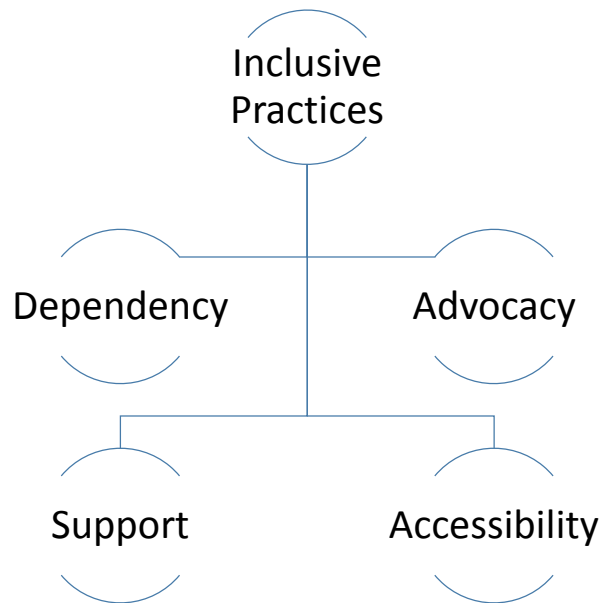


Figure 4.3: Inclusive Practices

4.3.2.1. Dependency, Advocacy and Support

Educational settings are designed to help the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to be independent individuals and advocate for themselves. In practice, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments receive support in many areas from their parents, siblings, friends and teacher educators, and receiving support can cause dependency. Also, such dependency prevents the pre-service teachers with visual impairments from advocating for themselves because they expect others to plea for their rights.

The teacher educators think that being independent individuals are essential for social and academic lives of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Yet, teacher educators accept that their practices cause dependency. Teacher Educator 3 and 1 explained their practices:

Teacher Educator 3: As we mentioned before, they are not equal. A person with

disability is not equal with a person without disability. Thus, they have to be supported by some other means. With the feeling pity, we, teacher educators, also try to do everything for them [the pre-service teachers with visual impairments] and support them more (Teacher Educator 3, Focus Group Interview with the Teacher educators II).

Teacher Educator 1: In my lesson, the students did a research project. They collected data. Wrote it. I asked other students how it was. I assigned Kemal to a good group. How did you do your research project? The students in the group said that “he [Kemal] sent us, but we changed it all. We did not mention about it”. As a result, the students also support the pre-service teachers with visual impairments (Teacher Educator 1, Focus Group Interview with the Teacher Educators II).

In addition, the teacher educators are not sure how they can advocate for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. In order to create advocacy for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, the teacher educators collaborate with the other students in the classroom. Teacher Educator 4 and 2 explained:

From my experiences, if you do this it can work for all the students in the classroom. When the pre-service teachers with visual impairments come to class, the other students become uncomfortable. You ask one of the students, that person reads for him/her. Other students get disturbed. In such a case, I do this: when the pre-service teachers with visual impairments take a break, I keep all the students inside and explain his/her situation and his/her visual impairments, consequences etc. I say I am trying to help them, and if you can support me, I will appreciate it. After informing all students and advocate for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, there are sensitive students in the class. When you give an activity, these students read 5-6 times, they discuss questions etc. (Teacher Educator 4, Focus Group Interview with the Teacher educators II).

We could include them into the lecture. For example, there is a chapter called “managing diversity” in Classroom Management course. We can advocate for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in that chapter. But it should not be only in theory, we should do something practical as well (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with the Teacher educators I).

The peers expected dependency from Kemal and they vary their support accordingly.

We did several projects and homework together. I prepared all the things and then asked for his opinion. Because Kemal can’t do it. (Peer 3, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

Kemal cannot do independently. Either he gets supported by us or by his family (Peer 2, Focus Group Interview with the Peers).

In addition, the peers expressed their thoughts and experiences about how they advocated for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

After I saw her potential and willingness, I really wanted to support her (Peer 5, Individual Interview).

In terms of support, for example. There is a project, and Kemal could not do it with ease. So we try to help him (Peer 3, Focus Group Interview with the Peer).

When I even walk outside and see a person with disability, I feel empathy. I developed this perspective due to Sultan. When you do something, you consider how their situation can be improved (Peer 5, Individual Interview).

Yesterday, we were going downstairs. I told Kemal not to hold my hand because I saw him walking before. I said I had to go and I left him there. Indeed, I was trying to support him to walk. I was right behind him. He walked carefully. His

self-confidence reflected on his face. I mean that if we want to advocate for them, we need to let them do things on their own. They need to want advocacy, and try it first. Then we can support them (Peer 1, Focus Group Interview with the Peer).

The pre-service teachers with visual impairments have different opinions about dependency, advocacy and support. While Sultan is trying to be more independent, Kemal relies on support he can get from his parents, friends and teacher educators. Sultan explained why they must be independent as follows:

People with visual impairments cannot go anywhere on their own. They are always dependent on others. I feel restricted in many areas in here. I mean by saying in here to live with my family in. Because if there are people who want to do something for you, you rely on them, or they exaggerate it. This brings laziness. But if you have to do something on your own, and there is no one to rely on, you will find a way to do it. When you ask “how can I do this?”, you somehow find a way. If you do not seek for it, you never know how you can do things independently (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

From my observation, I realized that Kemal takes support from his family and friends for granted. For academic issues, he gets highly supported by his father. Kemal mentioned his father's support:

My father prepares my homework at home and I bring them to the school. That's why I don't need to. Sometimes I ask my friends, and they help me do my homework. Mostly, my father prepares it at home, arranges materials for me (Kemal, Individual Interview II).

They always accept to support me, and I never get rejected when I ask for help (Kemal, Individual Interview III).

Furthermore, Sultan mentioned that the support they receive should be consistent. Providing consistent support helps them be comfortable in academic issues.

There is no absolute solution for me in any lesson. I have to solve my problems each time. Either we audio-record, or I suggest something else after giving it some considerations. We find a solution at that time and save the day. But if it is systematic and consistent, problems will be automatically solved. You don't have to find a solution each time. Because it is inconsistent, it is time-consuming to find a solution and tiresome (Sultan, Individual Interview III).

Lastly, in terms of advocacy, Sultan is willing to advocate for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, and she tried to start some projects several times but the results were unsatisfying. She asserted:

We wanted to do an awareness seminar, or a movement with our canes. To protest the structure of the buildings and pavements. For example, we decided to go GAP School for Blind and do a conference. "Ask for your rights. Seek success. Do not let your families restrict you". Something like these. I went to the school. The principal had his guests in his room. I waited for hours there. At that time, I visited my previous teachers. I met with new teachers as well. They talked about negative things about the principal. He tries to show off all the time. In special days, they sing, play and leave. They told me like this. I got angry. I went to the principal and asked "what are you doing for the students?" When we were talking with the principal, he showed me a magazine. We did this and that. We have a website. We are working for the students with visual impairments. I asked: "Do these activities help the students with visual impairments improve themselves? Do the students with visual impairments want them? Or do only you decide on these activities? You plan and say you recite this poem; you sing that song?" Then he started to defend himself. That's how they advocate for the students with visual impairments (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

Sultan: We went there [GAP School for Blind] to tell our projects. We talked and discussed but then nobody did anything. We really tried but it was not as I expected. Or I did not know what to expect. We only talked there. We were trying to organize something like conference. But they tried to show off with it. Advertisement. A person from Ministry of Family and Social Policies will come. We were trying to plan an awareness day. They reflected it in a different way to the person from the Ministry. Something like we are working and doing projects. After that somehow we get nothing. Without a result (Sultan, Individual Interview III).

On the other hand, the observations reveal that Kemal does not care about advocating for himself or other students with visual impairments. Kemal focuses on progressing and passing the lessons he takes. If he encounters a problem and cannot solve it, he finds individualistic solutions because he does not believe in advocacy.

In conclusion, dependency, advocacy and support are important components of inclusive practices for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The teacher educators in this study expect from the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to be independent individuals, yet the practices of the teacher educators lead to dependency. In addition, the teacher educators do not know how to advocate for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, and they use classroom dynamics to find solutions for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. What is more, the peers provide support in different aspects, and they support the pre-service teachers with visual impairments because the peers develop a sense of empathy. The peers also support the pre-service teachers with visual impairments emotionally and motivationally. Finally, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments take different perspectives in terms of dependency, support and advocacy. It is emphasized that the support they can get should be consistent and systematic. Also, Kemal depends on the support he receives and remains passive, while Sultan is trying to be more independent and advocate for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

4.3.2.2. Accessibility

Accessibility is a benchmark of the inclusion for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments because inclusion for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments cannot be ensured without accessibility. Accessibility is often linked to infrastructure of the university and transportation, yet accessibility covers curricular activities, as well. The administrators focus on structural and transportation issues. Administrator 2 stated:

I think our university is an accessible one. When we look at the campus, I know we need to do arrangements as the campus area is not flat, but I believe all the faculties make arrangements to help the pre-service teachers with visual impairments reach their classes. In this issue, the demands of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are conveyed to us, and we try to fulfill them (Administrator 2, Individual Interview).

Administrator 1 and 3 think that the university is an accessible one. Administrator 1 stated:

As far as I see, the roads and missing items for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are being completed. They can come with their cars, or use directly the elevator. For now, I think it is an accessible university (Administrator 1, Individual Interview).

Administrator 3 also mentioned:

As it is a newly founded university, we are sensitive about accessibility issues for the students with disabilities. Sometimes it can be costly but we are trying to do it (Administrator 3, Individual Interview).

From the observations, the teacher educators try to make their syllabi, assignments and examinations accessible for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, yet they usually forget that there are pre-service teachers with visual impairments in the classroom. The two incidents below show that teacher educators cause accessibility problems for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, and using PowerPoint presentations which consist of visual is not accessible for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

Teacher Educator 1 was explaining the content of the lesson. She was having a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation consists of many visual elements, which is inaccessible for Kemal (December 2015).

Teacher Educator 2 shows a triangle and explains components of a lesson plan. Then, the teacher educator shows two different carpets. Sultan cannot understand the example and asks her friend for clarification. Overall, the lesson was not accessible for Sultan (January 2016).

The peers emphasize transportation difficulties for Kemal, and curricular difficulties for Sultan. Peer 3 tells an unfortunate event about his transportation experiences with Kemal.

I would like to tell you an event about it. We were coming to the university together. He got on the bus before me. Just as I was trying to get on the bus, I saw Kemal and told him to hold here [handhold] because he could fall down. A girl from the back of the bus was shouting. Why did not he move? I turned to that girl, I cannot say Kemal is blind or anything, but I indicated with my hand gestures. She said it is none of my business, he should move. I could not stand but say why are you being so disrespectful? Another boy who knows Kemal's visual impairments reacted and warned the girl. Then someone gave her place to Kemal. Kemal sat down there. I realized that Kemal was angry. I said sorry (Peer 3, Focus Group with the Peers).

Peer 2 tried to describe how Kemal feels when the environment around him is not accessible for him. Peer 2 described:

When Kemal goes to a place, where he does not know, he feels like he is tumbling down a cliff. That's why he is being alert all the time. Because he cannot see the barriers in front of him when he walks, he is alert. When a lesson is not accessible for him, I try to explain it to him but I can be wrong, he gets lost. Because he cannot see, he misses many things (Peer 2, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

Peer 5 mentioned about an assignment, which the teacher educator tried to make accessible.

The assignment for us was to prepare a poster about language teaching methods. The teacher educator told Sultan to record a video instead of preparing a poster. We spent more than 6 hours to record that video. Without me, she could do it, but it was extremely difficult. The teacher educator thought the assignment was in an accessible format, but it was not practical (Peer 5, Individual Interview).

At the end of the semester, one of the teacher educators asked the students to observe a lesson in terms of classroom management strategies. For the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, it is almost an impossible assignment to complete. The teacher educator could not offer an alternative assignment; the observation is an inaccessible assignment for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments (January 2016).

In terms of accessibility, Sultan criticized the university about being inaccessible. She first talked about her general thoughts.

The structure of the university bothers me. If I did not memorize the places of the buildings, I cannot go to my home. I memorized so I can go. There are no signs to inform me. I cannot say there is a post, or there is roadwork. At first, they were putting a sign in front of the pavements. But not anymore. It also bothers me a lot (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

She also mentioned about difficulty in finding the places of the classrooms and how she managed to find the classrooms. She also stated some problems about the stairs inside the campus.

For example, I cannot find a classroom if I did not memorize its place. I always call my friends like I am on the 5th floor, come and take me. If I don't know the place of the classroom, I cannot find it. I cannot look at the door number. It is not accessible. There is no other way, only memorizing (Sultan, Individual Interview III).

When it is getting dark, it is getting more difficult to find the stairs in the campus. Because there is no sign of where I am going. I cannot know when the stairs finish. But I can understand when the stairs start. With my cane. When I go down from the stairs, if there is nothing to hold, you feel emptiness. It is a problem no matter how well you can use your cane (Sultan, Individual Interview III).

In addition, Kemal expressed his thoughts about classroom setting and buildings on the campus.

Sometimes I almost hit the walls. The chairs in the classroom are so disorderly and when I go out of the classroom, I crash one or two of them (Kemal, Individual Interview III).

To sum up, accessibility issues are important for inclusion of the pre-service teachers

with visual impairments. The administrators think that the university is an accessible one and the university is sensitive about accessibility issues for the students with disabilities. The teacher educators, on the other hand, try to make curricular activities more accessible, yet such attempts can turn out to be impractical for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The peers emphasize transportation problems and inaccessible environment for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. In addition, they consider that the assignments can be inaccessible and impractical for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. In addition, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments criticize infrastructure of the university because there are no signs that shows barriers or stair, which causes a sense of emptiness. Lastly, the classroom setting and positions of the chairs creates accessibility problems in the classroom, as well.

4.3.3. Attitudes to Disability

Attitudes to disability influences overall experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Attitudes to disability leads participants act in accordance with their “assumptions about disability”, “sources of disability”, and “awareness”. The “feelings” of the participants reflect their attitudes toward disability. “Identity of disability” also influences the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The emerging categories are illustrated in Figure 4.4.

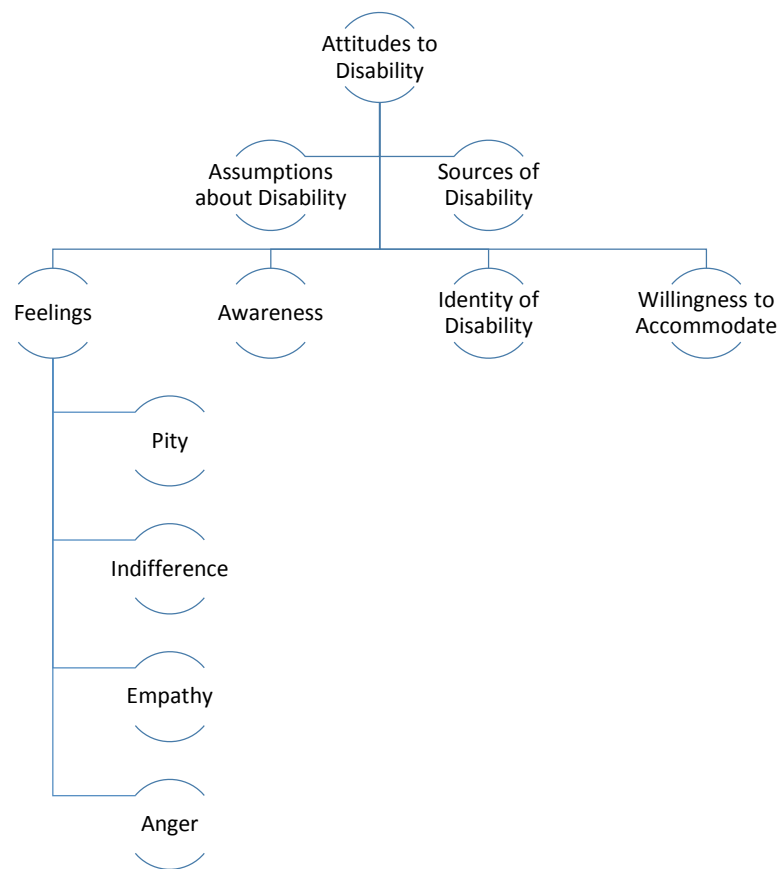


Figure 4.4: Attitudes to Disability

4.3.3.1. Assumptions about Disability and Sources of Disability

The teacher educators and the peers in this study have their own assumptions about being a person with visual impairments and such assumptions become sources of disability for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The assumptions are about job-related issues and possible areas that seem to be problematic for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Teacher Educator 3 questioned job preferences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments and poses his assumptions.

I believe in this. We say that they [the pre-service teachers with visual impairments] are teacher candidates. Of course, each individual has the right

to choose his occupation and they cannot be detained from choosing their occupation. But we have realities here. I mean, yes people with disabilities should be integrated into society, they should feel normal, they should feel achievement through their occupation. For example, employing a teacher with visual impairments is questionable even though s/he can really love teaching. I assume s/he can feel really bad after becoming a teacher. Feeling of failure. In Turkish education life and culture, students' approaches, and other teachers' approach to a teacher with visual impairments can make that person unhappy (Teacher Educator 3, Focus Group with the Teacher educators I).

Teacher Educator 2 agreed with the statement and added:

They need to know how to cope with such issues because they will not encounter with aware people but they need to somehow achieve academically (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group with the Teacher educators II).

Teacher Educator 4 suggested that:

Assuming that a student with visual impairments works at school for blind, s/he does not have worry about all the issues mentioned before including attitudes of the people in school and classroom management difficulties. Because everyone in there is like him/her (Teacher Educator 3, Focus Group with the Teacher educators II).

The peers expressed their assumptions about the teacher candidates with visual impairments.

In School for Blind, they already teach the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. In that perspective, Kemal can be more comfortable. If he works at regular schools, he will experience problems (Peer 3, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

A teacher with visual impairments can teach listening and speaking, but they cannot teach writing because writing means that you need to see (Peer 2, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

The assumptions of the participants become sources of disability for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The participants mentioned possible sources of disability for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

The environment, especially cultural environment is very important. Do we have a welcoming environment? Our school [Turkish education environment] environment is not that welcoming for diversity lately. The students in schools may not show respect to a teacher with visual impairments. This causes disability (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators II).

We don't want to increase his [Kemal's] workload because it is a miracle that he is in higher education (Peer 3, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

Peer 5: Their disability is because of society's expectations. Society approaches them like they cannot do. The sources of disability are because of this (Peer 5, Individual Interview).

The pre-service teachers with visual impairments think that the sources of disability are mostly based on others' assumptions and related to systematic and institutional issues. Sultan expressed her criticisms about their career:

We are assumed to work at school for the blind. We are imprisoned in that school. We already have visual impairments and they disable us by expecting to be in groups of people with visual impairments (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

For example, the teacher should offer you choices about assignments and materials. Then, s/he can expect us to complete assignments and other things. At least you can say that they did something for me. But saying that it is your business, go and take care of it is disabling us. If there is a system that we can ask for support for our needs, the teacher educators cannot say it is your business (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

Kemal agreed that the teacher educators leave them without choice and adds about his concerns about unwilling teacher educators.

Sometimes the teacher educators do not want to deal with you. Or they cannot find anything to offer us [the pre-service teachers with visual impairments]. There we become disabled (Kemal, Individual Interview III).

We were about to take an exam in the computer lab. I told the teacher educator I cannot read. He responded that if you make the font bigger, you can. I got angry because he was unwilling to help me. I felt disabled (Kemal, Individual Interview I).

To sum up, the assumptions held by the teacher educators and the peers can become sources of disability for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments are expected to work at School for Blind for their comfort because it is assumed that they will encounter problems due to school environment and culture. The peers agree School for Blind is a right place for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study. They add that the expectations and assumptions about the pre-service teachers with visual impairments is disabling. On the other hand, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments reject the idea of working at School for Blind. They want more choices to eliminate their disability. Lastly, unwillingness of the teacher educators to provide support for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments becomes disabling acts.

4.3.3.2. Willingness to Accommodate

Willingness to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments reflects inclusive practices in higher education. The teacher educators become (un)willing to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments for several reasons. The teacher educators are not willing to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments unless explicitly asked. Teacher educators referred to these issues as follows:

In general, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments do not ask for accommodation. If they proceed in existing system without encountering major problems, they do not come to us to ask for accommodation. Because they do not want to interfere the system (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

I did not accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. I used my regular teaching materials. Indeed, they did not ask for. I gave reading in PDF format. In Research Methods, there was no alternative for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, and they did not ask for it (Teacher Educator 1, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

It is obvious that the teacher educators do not want to offer alternative methods of accommodating the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. They rationalize their choice of not accommodating until the pre-service teachers with visual impairments ask for as follows:

We need to be honest. We have a lot to do. If the pre-service teachers with visual impairments ask, we will accommodate their needs. Otherwise, I don't have to sit and think about them. Yet, if they come and ask, I will definitely help

them. I think the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are aware of this. I know I keep that door open. As they cannot see, they won't understand busyness. (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

In addition, the peers of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments think that the teacher educators provide enough accommodation for the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

As far as I see, the teacher educators try to help Sultan even in the examination weeks (Peer 6, Individual Interview).

There are some teacher educators who directly go to Kemal and talk about his needs. They say that "you do this assignment in a certain degree, and leave it". They determine accommodations according to his needs, they adapt it so that he can catch other students in academic attainment. However, there are others saying "it is none of my business" (Peer 4, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

They do not want to deal with it (Peer 3, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

Along with the peers' confirmation of the teacher educators' unwillingness to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments express that their needs are accommodated if they ask to do so. Also, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments do not want to take on with the teacher educators when they do not want to accommodate. Sultan mentioned:

Sultan: Let me think. In general, yes they accommodate when I ask for it. Sometimes they can skip over it. They forget. They may not empathize. As long

as I remind them, they try to help me. Nobody told me you have to do this in this or that way (Sultan, Individual Interview II).

The teacher educators do not want to deal with it. Or they cannot find an alternative to offer. For example, Teacher educator 2 was not negative. I asked her: How can I do this? Because we work once a week with my peer mentor Peer 5. But we cannot complete all the assignments so I need to find alternatives. When I asked Teacher educator 2, and Peer 6 was with me. She asked Peer 6 if she is available to help me. Teacher educator 2 found a solution at that moment (Sultan, Individual Interview III).

Kemal also asserted:

In fact the teacher educators generally accommodate our needs, yet I sometimes hesitate. Because when I ask, people start complaining (Kemal, Individual Interview I).

When the teacher educators are resistant to accommodate my needs, I do not want to take on with them (Kemal, Individual Interview III).

To conclude, the teacher educators assume that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments come to ask for accommodation if they encounter a problem, so the teacher educators wait for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to ask for accommodation. The teacher educators provide a rationale for their waiting; “we are busy and have a lot to do” and “we wait for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to ask for accommodation”. The peers think that the teacher educators, in general, are willing to accommodate the needs of the students, yet there are some teacher educators who are unwilling to accommodate. Lastly, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments confirm that when they ask for accommodation, the teacher educators try to help, otherwise they can forget, or skip over it. Thus, the pre-service

teachers with visual impairments become tolerant of it, or avoid contact with the unwilling teacher educators.

4.3.3.3. Feelings and Awareness

Feelings about disability and students with disabilities are important part of attitudes towards disability and the feelings held by the participants in this study are reflected upon their actions and behaviors. The participants mentioned about “pity”, “indifference”, “empathy” and “anger”. Such feelings show the participants’ awareness level and their attitudes towards the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study. When asked, the teacher educators responded that the very first feeling that arises when they see a person with disability is pity.

Interviewer: What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you see Sultan and Kemal?

Along with pity, we, as teacher educators, try to do everything for them, over-help them (Teacher Educator 3, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

As a society, we are emotional people and when we see someone with disability, our emotions, especially pity, swell up (Teacher Educator 3, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

Peer 6 affirmed the teacher educators’ pity as follows:

In Novel Analysis lesson, the teacher educator asked us to do a presentation on a given topic. Normally, there are some noise during presentations. When Sultan was presenting, there was not any noise at all. I guess the classroom was in a state of pity. We do not make noise and let her do her presentation with ease (Peer 6, Individual Interview).

In addition, formal observation in Scientific Research Methods lesson revealed that the students in Kemal's group do not demand academic contribution from him.

Kemal was asked to do few things compared to other group members. The group members did not ask for revision. They accepted what Kemal did. Later on, they redid the parts that Kemal prepared. They did not inform him about changes they made because they say during group work when Kemal was absent that they feel pity for him (January 2016).

The pre-service teachers with visual impairments are not comfortable with people who approach them with pity. They mentioned that showing over-tolerance and pity becomes an act of humiliation for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

When people approach us with pity, it is very irritating, extremely irritating. Oh dear, what a pity! Extreme tolerance. That's how people act (Sultan, Individual Interview I)

I do not want people to have pity for me. This is disturbing (Kemal, Individual Interview II).

In addition to pity, the participants mentioned about people being indifferent about the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Especially, the peers expressed their concerns about the teacher educators' indifference towards Kemal.

When the teacher educators give us homework, we always remind Kemal's situation. Even though they know, they show indifference (Peer 3, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

If anything that Kemal cannot see is given to, and the teacher educator shows indifference, Kemal gets angry. He says “I cannot see, okay” (Peer 2, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

The teacher educators in ELT department treat him in a different way, and the teacher educators from other departments show indifference. The teacher educators who know the department are more aware (Peer 1, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

Along with indifference, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments react with anger. They expect to be treated in a way that their situation should be taken into consideration. Their anger become visible when the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are asked to do things they cannot.

In terms of helping for example. The teacher educator asks to complete a project, and in order to do it you need to see. He shouts at us and gets angry because he expects from us to help him. He says “don’t you know I cannot see” (Peer 3, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

If it is something that Kemal can do, he wants to spend his time and energy to do it. Yet, if he gets stuck with it, then he starts to get angry (Peer 2, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

In order to overcome the issues caused by pity, indifference, and anger, empathy is expected from the administrators, the teacher educators and the peers. However, only the peers expressed their empathy about the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

Peer 5: After I met Sultan, I tried to have empathy for them. I put myself in their shoes. If I was visually impaired, I would be in despair. It is not only for

Sultan. In spite of all the barriers, I start to understand Kemal, as well (Peer 5, Individual Interview).

Teaching is a matter of conscience. If an teacher educator empathizes with the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, s/he needs to question herself/himself. Because anyone can be visually impaired or his relatives, friends, etc. (Peer 2, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

Such people [the pre-service teachers with visual impairments] cannot explain themselves, and others do not understand them. We need to show empathy (Peer 1, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

Do you remember summer school? We all prepared lesson plans. Teacher educator 1 told us there is something wrong. Let's see who is going to find that mistake. We checked lesson plans several times, but we found nothing. She said that Kemal how do you adapt yourself in classes? She started to talk to Kemal. Then, she asked what would you do if you have a student with a disability in your classes? She pointed out an important issue. After this, I paid explicit attention for the students with disabilities when I prepared a lesson plan. She encouraged us to develop empathy for the students with disabilities in our classes (Peer 3, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

Awareness about the pre-service teachers with visual impairments is vital if one wants to transform negative feelings into positive ones and create an understanding environment. In this study, the administrators mentioned about general awareness and awareness raising issues. Administrators' general consensus is that people in the society must be aware of what is a disability.

We don't know who is a disabled person. What does disability consist of? What do we have for the individuals with a disability? We have minimum awareness

level. That's why we don't know what to do and when (Administrator 3, Individual Interview).

Especially rules and regulations in written documents are prepared considering people with a disability, yet we do not have enough awareness in this matter unfortunately. We need to raise awareness because it is highly probable that we can have relatives who have an impairments (Administrator 2, Individual Interview).

During the observation sessions, it is realized that even though the administrators suggest awareness-raising for the students with disabilities, there is not any awareness-raising project neither at individual nor institutional level.

The teacher educators wanted to become aware of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. They emphasized such awareness-raising should be made before teaching them and in a systematic way.

We need to be made aware first (Teacher Educator 3, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

Yes, if we, as teacher educators, are aware of their conditions, we can determine what to do and be more helpful for them (Teacher Educator 1, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

If it is systematic, I mean we should be aware of who is responsible for what. Also, we need to be provided with a checklist. This student with visual impairments can do this and that, and cannot do these things. Then, we can prepare our assignments, homework and exams accordingly. Doing so we can be more fair, and leave our assumptions aside (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators I).

The pre-service teachers with visual impairments emphasized the importance of raising awareness about their conditions. They also suggested that awareness-raising should be systematic.

You are not aware of your disability and you don't know what to expect from educational institutions. In order to create awareness, I intentionally use my cane in the school (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

Sultan: In terms of materials, the teacher educators should be aware of us, and there should be a system for that. Because it is better if we do not face with the teacher educators (Sultan, Individual Interview II).

Kemal: Before the teacher educators help us, they need to understand us, they need to be aware of us (Kemal, Individual Interview III).

Kemal: Before the semester, the teacher educators who are going to teach us should be informed about us, they need to be aware of us. Then they can arrange their teaching accordingly (Kemal, Individual Interview III).

In conclusion, the first feeling that comes to the participants' mind is pity when they see a student with disability, yet it is humiliating and irritating for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study. The peers complain about the teacher educators' indifference and they suggest that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments should be taken into consideration in the classes. Pity and indifference leads to anger for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments and their anger become obvious to their peers because they are in contact on a daily basis. Thus, empathy is necessary in order to understand the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, yet only the peers mention necessity of empathy, and it becomes a personal matter. In terms of awareness, the administrators focus on understanding disability and available resources. They suggest that awareness at societal level is necessary. The teacher educators, on the other hand, expect to be made aware of the

pre-service teachers with visual impairments, and a system is required to raise awareness. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments advocate awareness-raising and they also suggest that it should be systematic.

4.3.3.4. Identity of Disability

In this section, how the pre-service teachers with visual impairments construct their identity is provided. First, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are in “denial”. Then they start to “accept their disability” and seek solutions to their problems. Acceptance of disability leads to “disclosure of disability”.

The pre-service teachers with visual impairments deny their visual impairments for several reasons. Sultan expressed her experiences of denial.

You do not accept it. For example, still I check myself whether or not I can see. I compare past and now in terms of my vision. I did not recognize a post in front of me. “See Sultan, you lose your eyes”. “It is going, accept it!” (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

She continued to talk about her experiences and how she denied her disability.

I was not aware of my disability this much. I could not explain myself. For example, you will have lunch in the cafeteria. I do not ask for help. I go there, and take anything. Find an empty seat, sit down. I do not do many things. I try to be in daily life. I denied my disability. But now I have changed many things (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

In Kemal’s case, he is not open to discuss his visual impairments. During observations, it is obvious that he tries to act like he has no disability. He resists using Braille, or cane because they publicize his disability. According to field-notes, he has a sharp

reaction to questions related to his visual impairments. When asked explicitly, he provided following responses and then he said he does not want to talk about it.

Who wants to have visual impairments? As doctors say there is not any change to fix it (Kemal, Individual Interview I).

Kemal: When I deny it, it gets worse for me because when I deny my visual impairments, I get disappointed saying that what I am going to do with my eyes. (Kemal, Individual Interview I).

The pre-service teachers with visual impairments accept their visual impairments unwillingly because the circumstances they live in force them to accept their visual impairments. Sultan explained how she started to accept her visual impairments.

I guess everyone tries hard to hide his/her disability. Like I am normal. I am already normal yet still you hide your disability. I said to myself “but no you are what you are. Accept it” (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

Peer 5’s statement supported what Sultan says. The Peer 5 claimed that Sultan accepted her visual impairments and got used to living with it.

Firstly, she is at peace with herself. Having visual impairments does not pull her back, she can participate in society easily because she accepted her visual impairments (Peer 5, Individual Interview).

Peer 6 also mentioned about Sultan’s acceptance of her visual impairments.

Peer 6: Sultan internalized her visual impairments. She knows her strengths and weaknesses. She behaves accordingly. I guess if she does not accept her visual impairments, it is not possible to be among us (Peer 6, Individual Interview).

In case of Kemal, he has not fully accepted his visual impairments. Even though he knows that acceptance of his visual impairments will help him increase his self-confidence, he is still partially in denial.

I have to get used to it. I know if I accept it [visual impairments], it will be good for me. Maybe, acceptance will increase my self-confidence, as well (Kemal, Individual Interview II).

Kemal puts forward his visual impairments when he encounters academic or social problem. If the classes he takes go on as he expects, he does not mention his visual impairments. In opposite circumstances, he complains about constraints of his visual impairments (November 2015).

In either cases, even though the pre-service teachers with visual impairments accepted their visual impairments unwillingly, it could be inferred that acceptance of disability is beneficial for their personal growth, which leads to disclosure of disability. Disclosure of disability is prerequisite for the students with disabilities in higher education to get services specific to disability type. The administrators stated that disclosure of disability should be made personally and willingly.

The student with disability informs us himself/herself. S/he should disclose her/his disability either during registration or later on (Administrator 3, Individual Interview).

Disclosure of disability has to be stated by the student himself. Otherwise, we cannot provide any services (Administrator 2, Individual Interview).

The teacher educator thought that disclosure of disability is a personal matter, and the pre-service teachers with visual impairments disclosed their disability on the basis of their trust to the teacher educators.

Do they disclose their disability to everyone? I don't think so. They need to trust first (Teacher Educator 1, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators II).

They should not. They should be more careful about disclosing their disability (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators II).

I agree with the others. But students normally try to get advantage of their simple illnesses. In such case, we need to trust the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, as well (Teacher Educator 4, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators II).

Legally, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments did not disclose their visual impairments. They chose to show their disability in different ways, such as explaining what they can do and cannot, or using a cane.

I prefer using my cane when I go to new places because I want people to understand that I have visual impairments. Then, if they ask, I explain what is visual impairments and how it affects me (Sultan, Individual Interview II).

Kemal: I both want to and do not want to disclose my disability because if I disclose my visual impairments, people will help me. If I don't, they will not care about it (Kemal, Individual Interview I).

In addition, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments established trust issues to fully disclose their disability. To do that, they evaluate the teacher educators' attitudes, then decided to disclose their disability.

Kemal: The behaviors of the teacher educators inside the classroom indicates their willingness to help us. If I am convinced that an teacher educator is

sensitive about us, I will go to him/her to disclose my disability. Otherwise, I never tell (Kemal, Individual Interview II).

A safe and welcoming environment is necessary for us to fully disclose our disability (Sultan, Individual Interview III).

In conclusion, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments experience identity issues related to their disability and people's reaction around them. In general, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments first deny that they are visually impaired and fall in the category of disabled people. When they face with varying circumstances in which their disability needs to become obvious, they accept their visual impairments and seek solutions for their academic betterment. As stated in the literature review, the students with disabilities are eligible for the services unless they disclose their disabilities. Acceptance of disability leads to disclosure of disability for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments disclose their disability in safe and welcoming environments and they need to trust in order to disclose their disability.

4.3.4. Institutional Issues

It is important to focus on institutional issues in terms of disability because how disability is constructed depends on "institutional policies". Institutional policies include "determination of the students with disabilities", "determination of services" and providing "legal information". In addition, the services provided to the pre-service teachers with visual impairments is bound to "disability office" at the institution, and disability office is key to academic achievement of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The categories related to this theme are illustrated in Figure 4.5.



Figure 4.5: Institutional Issues

4.3.4.1. Institutional Policy

All parties in higher education have to be knowledgeable about disability laws and regulations to provide better educational experiences to the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Unfortunately, interviews, focus groups and observations revealed that only a small number of people know rules and regulations about students with disabilities. These people either are specifically interested in disability issues, or they have to know them as a part of their responsibility. Administrator 2 explained the institution's policy in terms of disability.

After the registration, we determine the students with disabilities, then we start planning what to do. Our first aim is to help such students to experience a normal higher education as much as possible. As you know, the Council of Higher Education annually checks the university's services and structure for the students with disabilities. I can say that we are a disability-free university (Administrator 2, Individual Interview).

Even though Administrator 2 said that the determination of the students with disabilities takes place at the registration, there is no guide or services provided during registration specifically for the students with disabilities. Administrator 3 said:

For the next year's registration, we need to provide wheelchair, and arrange tables and chairs accordingly. This is a kind of accessibility. Also, a member who is patient and knowledgeable about the students with disabilities (Administrator 3, Individual Interview).

It is clear from this statement that the mentioned arrangements are temporary statement. The application of such arrangements does not occur. Thus, there are unclear issues in terms of determination of the students with disabilities at the registration.

In addition, Administrator 2 claimed to have a disability-free environment, and observation reveals that the infrastructure of the university campus and buildings are not fully suitable for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The building that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments attend their classes is the farthest building in the campus and the students need to climb approximately 250 stairs in order to reach the building. In addition, the building is six-floored building, and the elevator only stops at third and sixth floor. If the pre-service teachers with visual impairments have their classes on the 5th floor, they need to take elevator, then use the stairs to reach the classroom, which is not practical and fully accessible.

The institutional policy is bound to legal obligations of the country, and the administrators in this study emphasized legal obligations and regular inspections conducted by the Council of Higher Education and Ministry of Family and Social Policies.

The universities in Turkey are overseen by the Council of Higher Education. A part of the Council of Higher Education's inspection is related to the students

with disabilities in higher education. Of course, the universities should follow their own institutional policies, but Council of Higher Education is very sensitive about the issue (Administrator 2, Individual Interview).

About this issue [the students with disabilities], there are regulations and laws that were passed recently. Ministry of Family and Social Policies conducts inspections about these regulations. The Ministry has sanctions economically. Thus, even if we do not want to follow, the ministry inspects and follows these regulations. They conduct inspections once a year (Administrator 3, Individual Interview).

However, the administrators admitted that they would not necessarily follow such regulations if there were not economic sanctions. Since the institution is not willing to pay fines, they make arrangements for the students with disabilities.

After the inspection, they can fine between 50 thousand to 500 thousands Turkish Liras. If there were not economic sanctions, we would not be willing to spend a lot of money for a small number of students. Economic sanctions push us to accommodate the needs of the students with disabilities (Administrator 3, Individual Interview).

As they are not statistically that significant, we do not want to do extra things for them (Administrator 1, Individual Interview).

As seen, economic sanctions are influential for the institution to follow regulations about the students with disabilities in higher education. The statistical significance of the students with disabilities are important to follow regulations, as well.

4.3.4.2. Disability Office

In addition to institutional policies, disability office has vital importance for the students with disabilities in higher education. Administrator 3 explained disability office as follows:

Normally, even though the disability office seems to consist of two members, each faculty has a responsible personnel, which means 13 people in total. Vice deans are responsible in each faculty or an academic who is assigned by vice dean. We are all actively engaged in solving any problems the students with disabilities encounter (Administrator 3, Individual Interview).

However, observations reveal that the disability office is inactive and structurally incomplete. When asked for support or accommodation, the response of the disability office is we do not have adequate number of staff to support.

Interestingly, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, the peers, and the teacher educators did not know that the university has a disability office.

Sultan: I did not even know that we have a disability office (Sultan, Interview II).

Kemal: Disability office? In here. No, I did not know it (Kemal, Interview II).

Even though the participants did not know that disability office exists, they defined many duties for the office.

Disability office should inform the teacher educators about us before the class and the teacher educator can arrange their teaching accordingly (Kemal, Interview III).

I would want disability office to inform us about available resources, and materials. Also, they can inform us about support system (Sultan, Individual Interview III).

Disability office should give us a list. These students can do this and that, and cannot do these things. Then, we can prepare our assignments, exams accordingly. In this way, we can differentiate our instruction and be fair at the same time. We organize our teachings based on our assumptions about them (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators II).

The office should be active and functional (Teacher Educator 3, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators II).

The disability office should not let the students with disabilities face with their teacher educators in terms of need accommodation (Peer 1, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

Disability office must inform us all about the students with disabilities. What we can do, how we can help them should be informed (Peer 6, Individual Interview).

4.3.4.3. Need for Professional Development

Even though the administrators thought that professional development seminars about the students with disabilities would be extra workload, the teacher educators, the peers and the pre-service teachers with visual impairments emphasized the importance of seminars.

We have not planned such a seminar so far. We can give a seminar but people can ask why we are doing this. Or they may not be interested in. Maybe, written

handouts could work and inform people (Administrator 3, Individual Interview).

In general, I want everyone to know basic things about the students with disabilities. In each faculty a person should be more knowledgeable about them. We are a crowded university; we cannot always hold such seminars (Administrator 1, Individual Interview).

There should be systematic informing about the students with disabilities. Who is responsible for what, where should we apply for help, etc. (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators II).

Do people at the university know about the students with disabilities? If we are not informed, we would not be aware of them. There should be seminars, information sessions or conferences for us (Peer 3, Focus Group Interview with Peers).

4.3.4.4. Lack of Knowledge about Regulations

Lastly, the lack of knowledge about laws and regulations is clear. Interestingly, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments do not know their responsibilities and legal obligations of the institution as well as other participants in this study.

Sultan: Many people do not know his/her legal rights. That's because of us. We do not ask or inquire about our rights because we are not that aware (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

Kemal: In fact, I do not know my rights, and how to ask for it (Kemal, Individual Interview I).

I do not know what I am legally responsible for. I do many things individually and without being aware of regulations about the students with disabilities (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educators II).

I do not know any laws about the students with disabilities. I tried to guide Sultan but I may have done it in a wrong way because I was not aware of her legal rights (Peer 5, Individual Interview).

In conclusion, the institutional issues about the students with disabilities in higher education include institutional policies, the disability office and the need for professional development seminars. There is not a well-defined institutional policy for the students with disabilities. Even though the university claims to be disability-free, the observations conflict with such a statement. Also, the university will not accommodate the needs of the students with disabilities if there are not fines sanctioned by the Council of Higher Education and Ministry of Family and Social Policies. The disability office, on the other hand, is incomplete and mostly inactive. The participants are not aware that there is a disability office at the university. The participants expect that the disability office should inform people about the students with disabilities, be active and functional. There is a need for seminars to inform the students and staff about the students with disabilities in higher education, as well. Lastly, the participants do not know their legal rights and responsibilities, which leads to the accommodation of the needs of the students with disabilities based on personal assumptions.

4.3.5. Definition of a Teacher

As this research has been conducted in a teacher education program, the question “who is a teacher?” was an essential focus of the interviews, focus groups, observations and discussions with participants in this study. As the focal participants of the study are teacher candidates, there are conflicting views about whether pre-service teachers with visual impairments can be teacher or not for many reasons.

When the peers, teacher educators and the administrators of the two focal participants are asked how they define a teacher, administrators focused on a teacher's guiding abilities. From administrators' perspective, general consensus about the definition of a teacher is s/he should be a facilitator.

Along with content knowledge, a teacher is a person who counsels students, guides them and prepares for real life (Administrator 1, Individual Interview I).

For me a teacher is not a person who only teaches academic content, but also gives messages about real life. S/he internalizes such messages (Administrator 2, Individual Interview I).

The teacher educators defined a teacher as follows:

A teacher is a person who tries to activate students' potentials. A teacher should activate students' potentials; s/he needs to guide students. A teacher can be defined as a person who help students discover the ways of reaching knowledge. In addition, a teacher gives instructions, creates meaning in the classroom, and actively listens to the students (Teacher Educator 3, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educator I).

A teacher is aware of classroom's with-it-ness (Teacher Educator 1, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educator I).

While the teacher educators described what a teacher is, the peers defined a teacher as source of knowledge, guide and character builder.

For me a teacher knows both teaching and learning procedures best, applies this knowledge to his/her life. In addition, a teacher is a person who re-

arranges curriculum and add things from his/her life (Peer 4, Focus Group Interview with the Peers).

Not only providing knowledge but showing students how that knowledge should be used (Peer 1, Focus Group Interview with the Peers).

The pre-service teachers with visual impairments focused on more emotional and humanistic parts of a teacher. Overlapping definition of a teacher is that a teacher should be experienced, welcoming and understanding.

A teacher is like a person from family (Kemal, Interview I).

A teacher is a person who tries to get to know his/her students, adapt his/her teaching methodologies accordingly, not a person who fails his/her students. It is not important they organize themselves 100%. A teacher is a person who is trying (Sultan, Interview I).

There are contradictory views on whether or not teacher candidates with visual impairments can fulfill the qualifications of a teacher described above by the various participants. The participants agree that teacher candidates with visual impairment will have problems and difficulties related to their profession. The main area that emerged about the possible problems of the teacher candidates with visual impairments is classroom management issues. Teacher Educator 1 told that:

When we observe teacher candidates in their practicum, students in the classroom are horsing around but the teacher are not aware of them. This is a limitation (Teacher Educator 1, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educator I, Teacher Educator).

Teacher Educators 2 and 3 agreed and added that:

Absolutely, a teacher needs to recognize mimics and gestures in students' face, yet this is a slight detail. If the teacher has visual impairments, s/he cannot see (Teacher Educator 2, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educator 1, Teacher Educator).

What could be possible outcomes of being a teacher with visual impairments in Turkey? We need to check some examples. I believe they will experience great problems. How many of the students in the classroom will accept such a teacher. As an authority. As teacher educator 1 said can s/he be aware of the classroom's with-it-ness. Also, can s/he manage to lead learning, to ensure classroom organization? (Teacher Educator 3, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educator 1).

In addition to the teacher educators' view, the peers of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments think that they will have problems in their profession. The peers carry similar doubts. They emphasized administrative issues as well as independence and acceptance.

S/he will experience great problems in the classroom. If they are teachers in regular or normal public schools, I am not sure they can manage the classroom. The students will have different approach to him/her because they will think that whatever we do, the teacher cannot see us. In the exams, if there is not another proctor, can s/he conduct the exam? In simplest way, s/he will experience a lot of difficulties. Can s/he use teaching materials? Can s/he develop materials? As a result, I believe s/he will experience many problems (Peer 5, Individual Interview).

If s/he goes to public schools, it is a risky thing. Students may make fun of her/him. Or let's think the teacher's psychology. One of the focal participant

came to me and said: I don't want to change my practice teaching school. I asked why? If I change my practice teaching schools, students can make fun of me. Because of this fear, the focal participant did not want to change the practice teaching school (Peer 3, Focus Group Interview with the Peers I).

Lastly, the teacher educators and the peers agreed that if teacher candidates with visual impairments want to avoid the difficulties and problems mentioned, they had better work at a School for the Blind.

Assuming that a teacher candidate with visual impairments works at School for Blind, s/he does not need to pay attention to the things mentioned such as classroom management, or recognizing gestures and mimics, because everyone is like him/her. Also, they can teach those who have similar problems (Teacher Educator 4, Focus Group Interview with Teacher Educator II).

A teacher with disability can teach students from similar disability group. S/he can understand thoughts and emotions of the students (Peer 1, Focus Group Interview with the Peers).

However, the focal participants have different approaches for their careers and job choice. While Sultan does not want to directly go to School for the Blind, Kemal thinks it is a protected area for them. Sultan mentioned that:

Directly going there [School for Blind] for comfort and not working... Of course those children have their needs. Maybe, you can even give them a lot. Especially you must work for them but I want to try myself. I want to challenge myself outside (Sultan, Individual Interview I).

I would like to work at the university. But my future will be like this similar to my many friends with visual impairments: I will take the State Employee Selection Examination exam. I will go to School for Blind and work there until

I retire. Without improving myself, sticking to one thing only. I will get paid. My job will be easy. Thus, I will not challenge myself in such an environment (Sultan, Individual Interview II).

Because I like English, I thought I can be a teacher. Also, there is no place in the market. If I work at public school, it will be really comfortable for me (Kemal, Individual Interview I).

In conclusion, the participants in this study define a teacher as a person who possesses academic content knowledge, guides his/her students, and shares meaningful experiences. Yet, when a teacher is defined, disability is not considered, that is, physical well-being of a teacher is taken for granted. Also, the teacher educators and the peers question whether teaching profession is suitable for the teacher candidates with visual impairments because they foresee problems in classroom management, acceptance of a teacher with disability in the school community, and administrative issues. Thus, the teacher candidates with visual impairments are expected to work at School for Blind.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this section, I present the themes which emerged from the data analysis of individual and focus group interviews, observations, and reflective journals. This chapter is organized based on the categories formed in the Findings chapter. Based on the reviewed literature, each theme is discussed referring to the participants' experiences.

5.1. Definition of a Teacher

The statements of the participants that academic staff in the teacher education program define the teaching profession with considerations, such as managing classroom, guiding students, or being the facilitator. From the definitions, it is understood that the emotional, psychological and physical well-being of teacher candidates are taken for granted. In such a case, taken for granted aspects of teacher candidates raise paradoxical questions about teacher candidates with disabilities in the profession. Even though inclusion of such teachers is desired and intrinsically encouraged, many questions still remain unanswered. Since the position of people with disabilities in society is still unclear, academic staff mostly judge with their own assumptions (Goodley, 2011). It is clear that teachers with visual impairments can have difficulties, but in many aspects they are not considered as ideal teacher candidates for the profession. Sheltered and part-time employment, which can provide the flexibility which people with disability may require, are considered to be a suitable and attractive option for them (Lamichhane, 2015).

Additionally, academia still cannot include teacher candidates with disabilities into the teaching profession. When explicitly asked about the teacher candidates with visual

impairments, the teacher educators focus on what such a teacher cannot do, instead of creating alternative ways of formulating the teaching profession (Shakespeare, 2014). Thus, teacher candidates with visual impairments are expected to work at special education institutions, where expectations from the profession are low. As the number of the School for Blind is really limited (MoNE, 2016), such an expectation becomes a way of excluding them from society.

Lastly, even though the teacher candidates with visual impairments want to experience different job opportunities, where they can improve their life quality, and they are included in normal life (Oliver & Barnes, 2010), they remain without a choice due to the expectations of people around them. The general approach to people with disabilities is to show pity and mercy, a comfort zone is created for them, where individuals with disabilities are in a special education school. Teacher candidates with visual impairments somehow internalized the comfort zone even though there are laws to ensure the employment of people with disabilities in the market.

As a result, academic staff and students in teacher education programs have questions about teacher candidates with visual impairments. Unfortunately, they are questioning teacher candidates with visual impairments, instead of problematizing the definition of an ideal teacher. Also, in the absence of programs that enable educators to recognize strength and weaknesses of the individuals with disabilities, teacher candidates in the market are negatively affected and their participation rate decreases.

5.2. Teaching and Learning Experiences of Pre-service Teachers with Visual Impairments

The teaching and learning experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments reflect the social and academic inclusion of such students. As stated in the literature (e.g. Shakespeare, 2015), inclusion of the pre-service teachers with visual

impairments is a multi-facet phenomenon, and consists of different parties, such as teacher educators, administrators and peers, during the process of inclusion.

In order to enhance teaching and learning experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, there is a need for academic staff who are trained to work with the pre-service teachers with visual impairments (Correa- Torres & Durando, 2011; Randolph, 2012; Sousa, 2013). In addition, the teacher educators should be guided to learn how to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments (Holloway, 2001). The teacher educators who participated in this study emphasized that they need training and guidance in order to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Also, they expect guidance from the pre-service teachers with visual impairments because first-hand experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments can elaborate understanding of their [pre-service teachers with visual impairments] needs and the ways of accommodating the needs.

Accommodating the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments requires early intervention. Meeting with the teacher educators and discussion of the ways of accommodating the needs of the students with visual impairments has vital importance (Claiborne *et al.*, 2011; Gavira & Morina, 2014). However, holding such meetings does not happen with ease since most of the teacher educators put forward different reasons and try to avoid the responsibility of accommodating the needs of the students with visual impairments (Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya, 2015). In a similar vein, the teacher educators in this study do not explicitly encourage the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to meet and discuss their needs. Even though the teacher educators do not avoid holding such meetings, they expect the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to come and ask for the meeting.

In the absence of training and guidance, accommodating the needs of the students with visual impairments through individual efforts is a common situation (Fuller, Bradley & Healey, 2004; Riddell, Tinklin & Wilson, 2005). The teacher educators in this study

showed a tendency to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments through their individual efforts, because accommodating the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments through individual efforts is administratively encouraged. In addition, as suggested in the literature (e.g. Burgstahler & Doe, 2004; Cunnah, 2015; Getzel & McManus, 2005), the pre-service teachers with visual impairments try to solve their problems individually. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study accommodate their needs individually, and if a problem arises, they try to solve it with their peers. If it remains unsolved, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments go to meet with their teacher educators. Importantly, their preference of individual need accommodation results from the teacher educators' uncompleted accommodations, or unsolved problems.

Differentiation of the teaching and learning process is important if academic achievement is expected from the students with visual impairments. Yet, many instructors avoid differentiation of the teaching and learning process because it is time-consuming, and challenging for the instructors (Orsini-Jones, 2009). Also, improvement of the available resources is essential for the academic attainment of the students with visual impairments (Berry, 2011). In this study, even though the teacher educators show willingness to differentiate and improve resources for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, differentiation is not encouraged at the institutional level. Also, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are not primary concerns of the teacher educators when they prepare their teaching materials.

The lack of differentiation results in leaving the students with visual impairments out from authentic classroom experiences (Donley, 2002). The inflexible teaching methodologies and activities that require active movements in the classroom restrict participation of the students with visual impairments in class activities (Fuller, Bradley, & Healey, 2004). Similarly, it is found out that the teacher educators do not prepare their teaching materials keeping the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in mind so they remember they need to differentiate their materials and

instruction during the class. In such cases, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are excluded from participation in class activities, and they are left without a choice but wait for the activity to be completed. An ideal process of differentiation and accommodation of the needs of the pre-service teachers is illustrated in Figure 5.1.

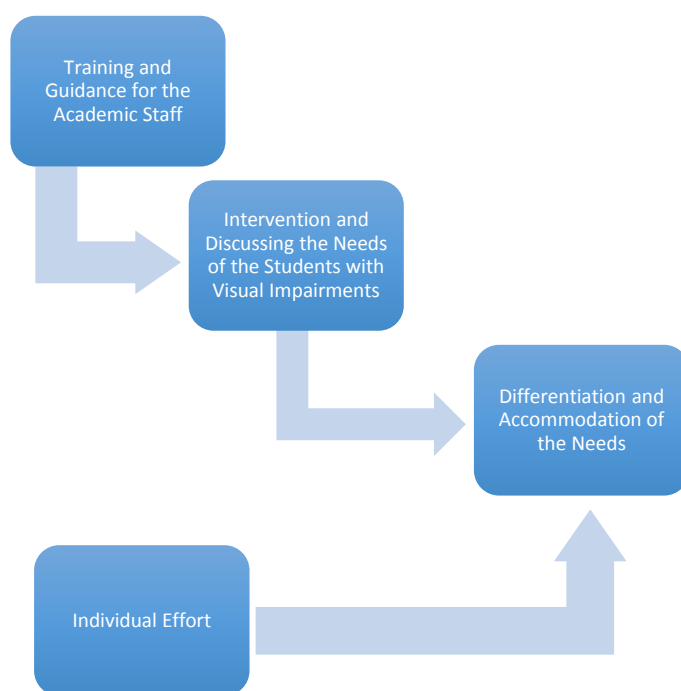


Figure 5.1: The Process of Accommodation

Furthermore, online, Braille and other forms of materials are favored by the students with visual impairments (Al-said, 2010). The materials provided in this study were only in PDF formats. Even though the teacher educators in this study encouraged Braille learning for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, no materials were provided in Braille. In addition, negligent use of technology can limit the academic experiences of the students with visual impairments (Gavira & Morina, 2014). The pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study complain about overuse of PowerPoint presentations, which includes mostly visuals. As mentioned above, the teacher educators do not prepare their instruction considering the pre-service teachers

with visual impairments, they cannot offer comprehensive explanations of the slides in the PowerPoint presentations. Thus, participation of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments is restricted.

Lastly, assessment policies at institutional level are essential for the academic success of the students with visual impairments, and testing and evaluation practices can become disabling practices (Tichkosky, 2011). In order to overcome disabling assessment processes, the students with visual impairments favor alternative forms of assessment and evaluation (Brandt, 2011). In this study, it was found that there is not an institutional policy of the assessment of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments and it becomes a disabling policy for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Even though not mentioned in the literature, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments experience problems due to examination scheduling. Even though they come on time, they cannot take their exam due to the lack of a proctor, so they have to wait for hours to take an exam. In other circumstances where the teacher educator himself/herself conducts the exam, they tend to change the structure of the examination. This change is not made for the purposes of alternative forms of assessment, the changes take place because the teacher educator wants to decrease his/her workload. Such changes take place without consent of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments and it raises ethical and procedural questions.

What is more, alternative forms of assessment are considered to cause unfair advantage for the students with visual impairments (Hadjikakou & Hartas, 2007; Lancaster *et al.*, 2001; Vickerman & Blundell; 2010). Either intentionally or unintentionally, the teacher educators in this study think that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments expect help, and they [the teacher educators] can somehow help or indicate the correct answer based on their feelings of pity for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, which causes an unfair advantage.

In conclusion, teaching and learning is a multi-faceted issue for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. To improve quality of the teaching and learning

experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, there is a need for trained academic staff, and training sessions about how to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Accommodating the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments occurs with individual effort, which can cause problems both for the teacher educators and for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Differentiation of the instruction and available resources can increase the academic success of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Use of technology during the differentiation process can lead to exclusion of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments from classroom activities. Finally, testing and assessment procedures require institutional policy, which must not let the teacher educator change examination structure without consulting the pre-service teachers with visual impairments and the faculty.

5.3. Inclusive Practices

Inclusive practices for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are related to accessibility, support, (in)dependency, and advocacy that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments receive. In order to promote inclusion for the students with visual impairments, there is a need for inclusive practices (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009). Such practices start with support provided. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments get supported by their teacher educators, family members, and peers in this study.

In this study, the participants expressed that they try to support the pre-service teachers with visual impairments for academic success in some ways, which is consistent with Skill (2008)'s findings. Although there is support for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, it was found that the support given for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study is inconsistent, and the pre-service teachers with visual impairments call for systematic and consistent support. The support the pre-service teachers with visual impairments receive is negatively affected when the quality of the support is not guaranteed (Miranda, 2014). In addition, Fuller, Bradley,

and Healey (2004) mention a consistent support system for academic attainment of the students with visual impairments, as well. Even though the students with visual impairments are expected to be independent individuals and learn survival skills, as mentioned in the literature (Ghosh, 2015; Lamichhane, 2015; Rice, Björnsdóttir, & Smith, 2015), the support provided causes dependency because the pre-service teachers with visual impairments get used to having support, and in the absence of such support they cannot become fully independent. However, individual differences should be noted because Sultan explicitly stated that she wants to be independent and to seek the ways for it. In the absence of support, she believes that she can develop her independence.

In the literature, the peer and instructor support are emphasized in the absence of systematic support (Bezmez & Yardimci, 2015; Gibson, 2012) and the peer support is seen as essential for the academic success of the students with visual impairments (Puri & Abraham, 2004). What is uniquely found in this study is that the peers develop a supporting system for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments and whenever needed they provide support with different means and the pre-service teachers with visual impairments take the support provided for granted and expect support whenever possible.

In terms of advocacy, the findings are in line with the literature (Hadjikakou & Hartas, 2007). In this study, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments initiate their advocacy. In line with the findings of Oliver and Barnes (2010) and Tinklin and Hall (1999), the teacher educators in this study expect the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to advocate for themselves and advise the teacher educators about their conditions. Also, the teacher educators are unclear about how to create advocacy for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments so they try to collaborate with other students in the classes on the basis of the teacher educators' individual efforts.

When Sultan tried to advocate for the students with visual impairments in the School for Blind, she experienced administrative barriers because what she wanted to do

required transformative changes, which is mentioned by Barnes (2007) and Barton (2005), in *School for Blind*. On the other hand, Kemal is passive in advocating for the students with visual impairments and he tries to advocate when he encounters an academic problem. If he does not encounter a problem, he chooses to progress without advocating. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments complain about getting no result after trying to create advocacy.

What is interesting is that the administrators in this study do not mention anything about advocacy issues, and they choose not to be involved in the higher education experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments if not required, which can influence the academic achievement and the social inclusion of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. This can be interpreted in this way; the administrators do not want to change or interfere with the existing structure of the university, and if they advocate for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, other existing groups of students can ask for change. In a case where resources and academic staff are limited, such changes can interrupt the structure of the university. Another possible explanation is that the administrators do not see such groups as significant enough to be advocated in higher education.

In terms of accessibility, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments experience different barriers. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments expressed difficulties they have been facing in terms of structure and transportation. As also seen in Gibson (2012)'s findings, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments have problems in finding the classroom and other facilities in the university. In addition, Gavira and Morina (2014) mention the importance of providing guidance for the students with visual impairments in order to help them to navigate in the university. In this study, the findings showed that such guidance is vital for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments because no guidance is provided about the structure of the buildings, thus the pre-service teachers with visual impairments face difficulties if they are to take their classes in different classrooms. Also, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments mention additional difficulties. As it is getting dark earlier in the

fall semester, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments have problems when they leave the university campus. Genova (2015) referred to accessibility as the main barrier, and it is one of the main barriers that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments face in the fall semester. To eliminate such a barrier, putting signs for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments can offer practical solutions, as Babic and Dowling (2015) suggest.

What is more, the teacher educators in this study try to make their syllabi and teaching accessible for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments because lack of accessibility to curricular activities is another major barrier (Vlachou, & Papananou, 2014). Even though several scholars (Alias *et al.*, 2012; Fuller, Bradley, & Healey, 2004; Gibson 2012; Goode 2007) emphasize the importance of keeping the students with visual impairments in mind when preparing curricular activities, the teacher educators in this study usually forget that they have pre-service teachers with visual impairments in their classes because the concept of accessibility for the students with diverse needs is not fully internalized by the academic staff at the university. In addition to this, Goode (2007) suggests that the instructors try to differentiate their teaching, assignments and examination processes for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments when the instructors realize them. Offering inconsiderate and ill-planned differentiation creates additional barriers in relation to accessibility issues. Thus, it is important to plan and think thoroughly about differentiation process for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in order to avoid inaccessibility.

It is also found that the administrators in this study focus on structural and transportation issues and leave curricular activities aside. Similar to Beauchamp-Pryor's (2012) findings, the administrators remain unaware of the inaccessible curricular activities. As the administrators often deal with economic issues of the university, their understanding of accessibility is structural, in which any changes necessitate funding. If the pre-service teachers with visual impairments somehow have access to the university, it is accepted that the university is accessible, which indicates a narrow understanding of accessibility.

To sum up, accessibility is a multi-faceted phenomenon, which covers structural, transportation, and curricular activities (Miranda, 2014). The focal participants in this study mention structural barriers and other difficulties, such as transportation and navigation in the university, they have been facing. The teacher educators try to make curricular activities accessible for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, but they usually forget to do so. The teacher educators try to differentiate curricular activities for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, yet ill-planned differentiation can make curricular activities more inaccessible. Thus, an accessible higher education environment can increase their inclusion, for the students with visual impairments (Berry, 2011; Liasidou, 2014; Tuomi, Lehtomäki, & Matonya, 2015).

5.4. Attitudes to Disability

The students with disabilities in higher education are assumed to experience problems with their occupation choice and future career (Baldwin & Johnson, 2001; Green, 2007). Such assumptions later become sources of disability for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in higher education. The peers and teacher educators in this study question job preferences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. As the focal participants of this study attend the English language teacher education program, they are expected to be a language teacher after completion of their undergraduate education. The teacher educators in this study think that the teaching profession is not a suitable career for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments because being a teacher requires many skills related to vision. Thus, the teacher candidates with visual impairments are not often provided with adequate and, relevant training and preparation for the teaching profession (Lamichhane, 2015; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997).

In addition, the participants specifically mention that if the pre-service teachers with visual impairments do want to be in the teaching profession, they are expected to teach in the School for Blind because the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are

familiar with the possible experiences of the students in School for Blind and have more understanding. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study are aware of such assumptions and expectations, and they somehow become convinced by such an idea. Barber (2008) cautions teacher educator that the students with visual impairments in teacher education programs internalize assumptions and expectations posed by others, and this leads them to lowering their self-esteem.

The sources of disability are considered to be cultural, societal, and environmental (Oliver & Barnes, 2010; Shakespeare, 2014). The peers and teacher educators in this study express that the cultural, societal, and environmental structure of the community they live in cause disability for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. They think that transformative changes in society do not occur easily, thus the participants also expect that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments need to get ready for such issues. On the other hand, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are well aware of the sources of the disability, and they do complain about not having choices in their higher education experiences, which is mentioned by Vlachou and Papananou (2014).

What is more, the peers and the pre-service teachers with visual impairments mentioned the teacher educators' unwillingness to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. As seen in Moriña, Cortés, and Melero's (2013) and Orsini-Jones's (2009) findings, the teacher educators in this study are not willing to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments because the teacher educators rationalize that they are busy and accommodating the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments is time-consuming. The teacher educators think that their unwillingness to accommodate and preferences for expecting the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to ask for accommodation is not visible as the pre-service teachers with visual impairments cannot see. However, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments understand such unwillingness and do not ask for accommodation.

In addition, Hearn, Short, and Healy (2014), and others (e.g. Berry, 2011; Randolph, 2012) mention that the instructors are not well aware of the available resources, thus they prefer to wait for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to ask for accommodation. Usually, the instructors forget that the students with visual impairments need accommodation (Sousa, 2013). As found in this study, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments complain that the teacher educators forget to accommodate, and when they remember they find solutions for that moment.

The teacher educators feel pity and indifference about the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The students with visual impairments in higher education are pitied (Jacoby & Austin, 2007), and this can lead people around them to over-help the students with visual impairments. Yet, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study are not comfortable about being pitied, and they think that it is an act of humiliation for them. In addition to pity, the instructors can show indifference to the students with visual impairments due to ignorance and prejudice (Stojanovska–Džingovska and Bilić 2012; Van Jaarsveldt, & Ndeya-Ndereya, 2015). In such circumstances, the peers remind the teacher educators that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments need individualized attention and a positive attitude. The reasons why the peers remind the teacher educators about the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are questionable because what drives them to remind can be result of pity, as well.

In order to eliminate unwillingness, pity and indifference, empathy and awareness are necessary (Thomas, 2004; Watson, 2012). Interestingly, only the peers in this study emphasized empathy for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. The peers' emphasis is based on the understanding they have developed after befriending the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Also, their empathy is at the individual level, and they see visual impairments as a possible scenario for people around them. In terms of awareness, the administrators in this study suggest that awareness needs to be developed and increased, yet the events for awareness-raising are missing. For the academic staff, awareness is important to accommodate the needs of the students with

visual impairments (Randolph, 2012). Similar to Randolph's (2012) findings, the teacher educators advocate systematic awareness-raising for themselves to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Additionally, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments support the idea of awareness-raising for betterment of their conditions. Yet, interestingly, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments expect others to raise awareness for them.

Having visual impairments brings up identity challenges for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. As Green (2007) suggests the students with visual impairments are expected to experience discomfort related to their identity. Also, the students with visual impairments need to overcome such discomfort and deal with negative identities ascribed (Cunnah, 2015). Thus, having a disabled identity can disadvantage the students with visual impairments (Hanafin, Shevlin, Kenny, & McNeela, 2006). In this study, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments deny their disabled identity because they want to avoid the negative attitudes of others. Denial of their disability identity causes problems in the daily lives of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments because such denial prevents finding solutions to the problems related to their visual impairments.

Denial of their disability also prevents the pre-service teachers with visual impairments from disclosing their disability to legal authorities. Without disclosing their disability, the students with visual impairments are not eligible for special education accommodations based on their disabilities (Eckes & Ochoa, 2005). Unfortunately, the participants, except for the administrators, in this study do not know that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments have to disclose their disability. The teacher educators, on the other hand, think that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments need to trust the teacher educators before disclosing their disability. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments support the idea that they need to trust first then disclose their disability. The idea of trust first then disclosure can cause some problems because the idea makes disclosure too personal, and this leads them to find

accommodation on the basis of their personal contact. Also, in such cases, no parties are legally responsible to provide accommodation.

On the other hand, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are well aware that if they disclose their disability, their needs will be accommodated. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study choose not to disclose their disabilities until they face problems within the institution, which is mentioned in Getzel and Thoma's (2008) study, as well. Also, the students with visual impairments can disclose their disabilities if a safe and welcoming environment is provided (Claiborne *et al.*, 2011). The pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study expect the university and teacher educators to be sensitive about their disabilities, and to create a safe and welcoming environment to fully disclose their disabilities. Yet, similar to Brandt's (2011) findings, some of the teacher educators in this study are suspicious that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments may use their disability to gain unfair advantage.

As seen, disclosure of disability is a complicated process (Vickerman & Blundell, 2010) and poses many complexities in the lives of the students with visual impairments (Macleod & Cebula, 2009; Miranda, 2014; Stanley *et al.*, 2007; Valle, Solis, Volpitta, & Connor, 2004). Generally, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments deny that they are disabled, but later on they get used to it, and accept it. The pre-service teachers with visual impairments need to trust before disclosing their disabilities. Yet, the teacher educators are suspicious that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments can use their disability to gain unfair advantage. Interestingly, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments do not disclose their disability to the authorities at the university so the university is not legally responsible for accommodating the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

5.5. Institutional Issues

Institutional issues have an important role in the experiences of the students with disabilities in higher education (Connor, Valle, & Hale, 2015), and higher education

institutions are expected to have an institutional policy in terms of the students with disabilities in higher education. It was found that the institution in this study follows disability policies determined by the Council of Higher Education in Turkey. The institution does not have any other policy. Hadjidakou and Hartas (2007) suggest that institutional policy should be linked with practice for the betterment of the conditions for the students with disabilities conditions. Yet, it was found that the policy of disability is not followed in practice because the students with disabilities are not statistically significant group so the institution does not plan to increase the number of provided services.

In addition, the rationale behind the institutional policy can be considered to be problematic, since the administrators think that the institution would not organize its facilities, available resources, and existing infrastructure if there are not any economic sanctions from national overseeing institutions. The institution is not particularly willing to have students with disabilities, and sees them as a burden for the institution. Even though Adams and Brown (2006) and Shakespeare (2014) suggest that higher education institutions should have welcoming, accepting, and disability-free environment for the students with disabilities, the institution, in which this study is conducted, does not provide a welcoming environment for the students with disabilities. Due to the unwelcoming environment in higher education, the students with disabilities are led to seek accommodation individually and they can feel that they are devalued and unwanted.

Most educators are not trained to work with students with visual impairments (Sousa, 2013). There is a need for professional development seminars (Randolph, 2012). It is realized in this study that although the institution follows the disability policies due to possible economic sanctions, the teacher educators and the peers emphasized the need for professional development in terms of disability. Scott and Gregg (2000) suggest that professional development programs should inform academic staff about legal obligations, offer to impart disability-specific teaching approaches, and understand insights of the experiences of students with visual impairments. In a similar vein, the

teacher educators in this study expect to learn disability-specific methods of teaching and assessment, as well as legal obligations. Oddly, the administrators in this study are resistant to the offering of professional development programs for academic and faculty staff. As the students with disabilities do not form a statistically significant group (Claiborne *et al.*, 2011; Heindel, 2014), the administrators in this study avoid planning professional development programs.

Lastly, having a disability office is a legal obligation for the universities in Turkey (Yükseköğretim Kurumları Engelliler Dayanışma ve Kordinasyon Yönetmeliği, 2014). Even though it is fully functional and proactive for the students with disabilities in other universities in Turkey such as Middle East Technical University, Gazi University and Boğaziçi University, the participants highlighted the importance of the disability office at the university this study was conducted and suggested that the disability office should employ staff from the special education department, and be more proactive for the students with disabilities at the university.

It is found that neither of the participants is aware that the university has a disability office because the disability office is inactive and provide services in theory. Also, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study did not choose to apply for the disability office after they were informed during the individual interviews. Several explanations can be offered for the choices of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Firstly, it is possible that they think that the disability office functions in theory and that the disability office does not offer any accommodation. Secondly, they do not want to disclose their disabilities to unknown and inactive authorities. Or, they simply choose not to apply as they are comfortable with their progress at the university.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, I provide an overall summary of the study, then discuss the implications of the study and point out limitations of the study by proposing recommendations for further research.

6.1. Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in the English language teaching teacher education program from the perspectives of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, their classmates and teacher educators, and the administrators of the university. The study was designed to analyze the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments through critical disability approach. The impetus to conduct this research stemmed from the researcher's personal interest in pre-service teachers with disabilities in English language teaching teacher education program.

Beginning with these aims and interests, the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairment were explored from different perspectives in order to provide a holistic picture of their experiences. In order to holistically explore the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairment in English language teaching teacher education program, four research questions are asked. Through individual and focus group interviews the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, their peers and teacher educators, and the university administrators talked about their experiences, concerns, ideas, and thoughts about the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in higher education. In addition to interviews, observations

sessions were conducted to determine any possible conflicts and contradictions and to observe the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments more closely. The following conclusions can be drawn:

- The analysis and discussion of the findings clearly demonstrated that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study experienced many challenges, uncertainties and difficulties in their higher education journey. It was clearly understood that the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments are bound to both individual and external factors. Individual factors could be self-confidence, self-resilience or acceptance of disability. External factors could be institutional policy toward the students with disabilities in higher education, attitudes of the teacher educators and peers, or accessibility practices.
- The findings revealed that being a student with visual impairments in teacher education program is a complicated phenomenon because the pre-service teachers with visual impairments were not considered to fit in the teaching profession and it was assumed that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments would experience different problems related to teaching profession. It was strongly suggested in this study that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments should work at the School for the Blind.
- In terms of the teaching and learning process of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in this study, the findings indicated that there is a need for trained academic staff, and that academic staff should be guided about how to differentiate teaching and learning process for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. It was also suggested that the teacher educators should arrange meetings and interventions with the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to discuss possible ways of accommodating their needs. In order to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments,

improvement of the available resources and teaching materials is extremely necessary.

- Interestingly, it was recommended that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments should learn Braille. Yet, it was observed that none of the teacher educators use Braille and no materials, or examinations are provided in Braille.
- The observations showed that there was no clearly defined assessment policy for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments, and the teacher educators tended to change the structure of the examinations. In other circumstances, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments arrived at the university on time during the examination weeks, but they had to wait for hours to take their exams.
- The findings also revealed that inclusive practices included support, advocacy and accessibility. On one hand, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments were supported by their family members, peers and teacher educators. Yet, the support was unsystematic and inconsistent, which caused problems for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. On the other hand, supporting the pre-service teachers with visual impairments more than needed led to dependency. When the pre-service teachers with visual impairments depended on the support given, they took the support for granted.
- It was found that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments initiated their advocacy and they individually informed their teacher educators about their needs and conditions. When the pre-service teachers with visual impairments tried to advocate at the institution level in this study, they faced barriers because the institutions were not open to transformative changes.
- The pre-service teachers with visual impairments experienced difficulties in terms of transportation and navigating around/inside the university building.

The buildings were not fully accessible for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

- Even though the teacher educators tried to make their syllabi accessible, they usually forgot to make curricular activities accessible for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.
- The sources of disability were considered to be cultural, societal, and environmental. The teacher educators in this study thought that transformative changes were not expected to occur, so the pre-service teachers with visual impairments had to prepare themselves for the worst.
- The teacher educators were unwilling to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments for some reasons. They could be busy and they preferred waiting for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to ask for accommodation. Or, they did not know how to accommodate the needs of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.
- Empathy and awareness were considered to be vital for the betterment of the conditions for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.
- The pre-service teachers with visual impairments did not legally disclosed their disability so they were not eligible for the possible services the institution provided. They did not want to disclose their disabilities in order to avoid the negative attitudes of others.
- In terms of the students with disabilities, the institution this study, at which this study conducted, followed the rules and regulations determined by the Council of Higher Education.

- The administrators admitted that they would not provide any accommodation or services for the students with disabilities if there were not economic sanctions.
- The teacher educators highlighted the importance of professional development in order to provide accommodation for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. However, the administrators were resistant to providing professional development seminars.
- Lastly, the disability office was expected to be functional, proactive and work systematically.

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments from different perspectives and relate the results to the English language teaching teacher education program. After integrating the findings of the study with the relevant literature on disabilities in higher education, it is obvious that the findings can contribute to the betterment of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments conditions.

It is hoped that this study would contribute to the limited literature exploring experiences of the pre-service teachers with disabilities in higher education in Turkey. Yet, this study has some limitations. This study was completed in two semesters. A longitudinal data collection process could enhance our understanding of the phenomenon studied. In addition, the researcher could ask the participants to keep a journal that tells about their experiences. Doing so, data collection methods could be enhanced and the data can be triangulated with multiple sources. Additionally, if more students with disabilities participate in the study, insights from different perspectives could be gained and transferability of the study could be increased. The family members of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments could be included in the study to holistically explore higher education experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

This study could be replicated with different participants and in different contexts. It would help to gain a better understanding of the experiences of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in other English language teaching teacher education programs.

6.2. Implications

Social changes can be possible through education and teacher education programs are fertile environments where more welcoming ideas can be created. In order to promote the inclusion of teacher candidates with visual impairments into the teaching profession, re-definition of the teaching profession is required. In addition, inclusion itself is not enough, awareness about students with disabilities is necessary. In several ways, inclusion of teacher candidates can be promoted in the profession. Firstly, pre-service teachers in teacher education program should do a part of their internship in special education schools. In doing so, they can increase their awareness and start questioning the profession.

According to 2015 MoNE regulations, all teacher candidates, who want to tenure, are responsible for the following areas: (1) Planning teaching process, (2) creating learning environment, (3) Classroom management, (4) Instructional techniques and methods, and (5) Testing and assessment (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Öğretmen Atama ve Yer Değiştirme Yönetmeliği, 2015). As obvious, the teacher candidates are not specifically required to possess skills to teach students with disabilities. An area related to teaching the students with disabilities can be added so teacher candidates can become familiar with special education processes.

In addition, according to English Language Teacher Competencies Handbook of MoNE (2008), English language teacher in MoNE institutions, are responsible for “collaborating with experts and families in order to determine the level, learning pace, and style of the students with special needs (English Language Teacher Competencies

Handbook of MoNE, 2008, p.67). Also, they are required to observe and record language and communication skills development of the students with special needs. It can be beneficial and productive for the students with special needs if English Language Teacher Competencies Handbook of MoNE provides specific and detailed procedures in accommodating the special needs of the students with special needs.

Beginning teachers have to work at least three years in the urban cities in Turkey. In a similar way, beginning teachers could work at special education schools as a bounden duty for the profession. Also, beginning teachers with disabilities could work at public schools as a bounden duty for the profession, where their existence would be valued. If such implications were implemented, teacher candidates could become critical about taken for granted considerations in the teaching profession.

The promotion of the inclusive practices for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments is necessary for their academic achievement. In terms of teaching and learning, training programs given by specialists are vital in order to teach the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Training programs should be continuous to inform about new technologies, methodologies and concerns. Resource pools could be created and academics could share their teaching materials for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. In addition to resource pools, the academics could share their experiences through online platforms. Institutionally, assessment procedures of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments should be observed regularly in order to avoid any unfair advantages that the pre-service teachers with visual impairments can earn.

The pre-service teachers with visual impairments should be encouraged to meet with their teacher educators to discuss their needs and find possible solutions. Such a meeting should be an institution policy for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. After the meeting, differentiation of the instruction and teaching materials should take place to increase the participation of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in higher education. The results of such meeting should be

reported to faculty to advocate betterment of the conditions for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments.

In terms of assessment and evaluation, a separate exam schedule is suggested and the same reader should be assigned for all the exams because the pre-service teachers with visual impairments experience problems with the examination process. Having the same reader for the examinations is important because the pre-service teachers with visual impairments need to adapt to the reader if the reader is changed, and this can easily influence the academic performance of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. In addition, the assessment process must be carefully inspected as some teacher educators can offer different type of assessment. Lastly, thick descriptions and precise instructions are vital in the assessment process of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. When the pre-service teachers with visual impairments have questions that include shapes, thick descriptions help them visualize the shapes in their mind. Also, as the pre-service teachers with visual impairments cannot see the examination paper, they can easily get lost if clear and precise instructions are not provided during the assessment process.

In order to help the pre-service teachers with visual impairments progress academically, consistent and systematic support is essential. Peer mentorship can be used to provide support for the pre-service teachers with visual impairments. Assigned peer mentor can help the pre-service teachers with visual impairments in completing assignments and homework. In the absence of a peer mentor, the advisor of the pre-service teachers with visual impairments can arrange additional lessons, materials and other possible resources. It should be noted that the academic staff must not leave the pre-service teachers with visual impairments to individually finding the support they need.

The pre-service teachers with visual impairments need to be provided with opportunities to advocate for their rights. In order to promote advocacy, there should a permanent member representing the students with disabilities in the student councils of the higher education institutions. The disability office should plan regular meetings

and discuss the needs of the students with disabilities. Also, the student clubs can be encouraged to plan awareness-raising events for the students with disabilities in higher education.

At the institutional level, the higher education institutions must have a disability statement, and provide information about available services, resources and accommodations. The inspections conducted by the Council of Higher Education should include to investigate any possible discriminatory actions toward the students with disabilities in higher education because the institutions may not be willing to have students with disabilities, or be insensitive about the needs of the students with disabilities.

In conclusion, as illustrated in Figure 6.1, the pre-service teachers with visual impairments can have better higher education experiences on the conditions that disclosure of disability takes place on the entrance to higher education, information about the rights of the students with disabilities is disseminated to the faculty and academic staff, information about available resources is shared, a welcoming and non-discriminatory environment is provided, consistent and systematic support is given, regular meetings with the students and the academic staff are held, differentiation and accommodation processes are organized on the basis of the suggestions and experiences of the students with disabilities, and lastly, the experiences of the students with disabilities are closely inspected.

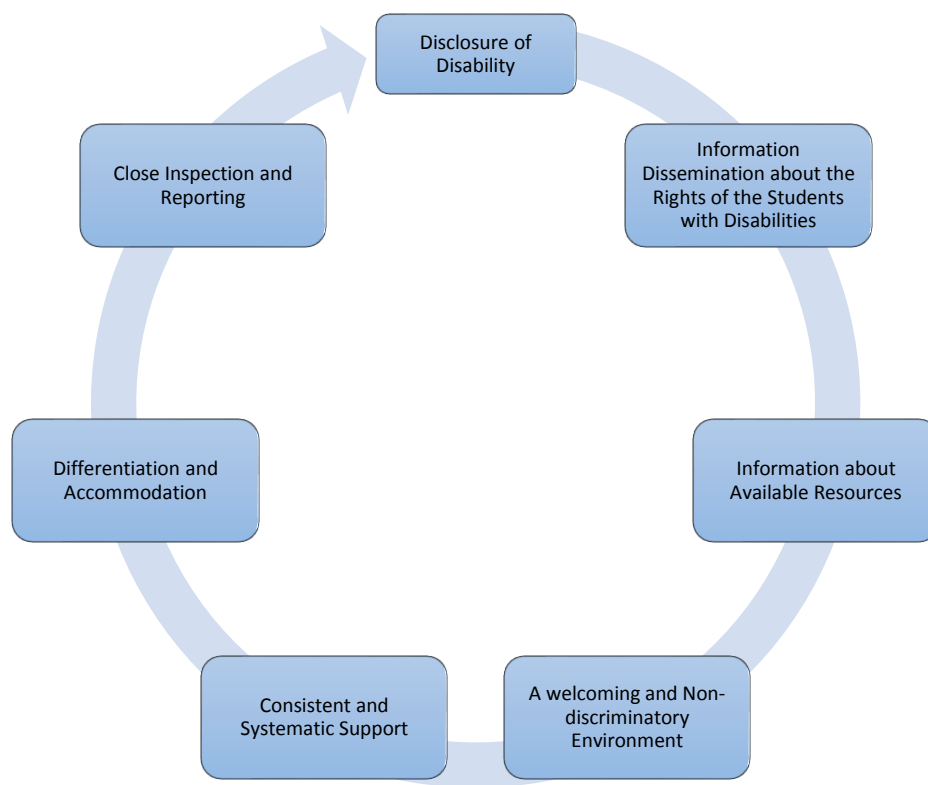


Figure 6.1: The Cycle of an Improved Higher Education Experience for the Students with Disabilities

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

Students with Visual Impairments: Interview I

1. Could you please talk about yourself?
2. How would you describe yourself?
3. How do you perceive yourself?
4. What are your strengths and weaknesses as a student?
5. Where are you from?
6. When did you lose your sight?
7. How has it affected you?
8. Where did you study? What are your schooling experiences in primary, secondary and higher school?
9. Do you know your rights and regulations at the university?
10. What does education mean for you?
11. What makes a good teacher?
12. Why do you want to be a teacher?
13. What is equality for you?
14. How do people treat you in university?
15. Can you please talk about your family?
16. What is your father/mother's occupation? Do you have any sisters or brothers?
If yes, do they have any impairments?
17. In what areas do your family support you and how?

Students with Visual Impairments: Interview II

1. What are your expectations from university?
2. How do you prepare for your classes?
3. What type of teaching/learning materials do you favor? Why?
4. Are the assignments and homework suitable for you?
5. What are your experiences while doing your assignments and homework?
6. How do you want to be assessed? What should be evaluation criteria for you?
7. Do you think it is necessary to have differentiated grading system? Why?
8. Do you like group work? What are the pros and cons of it?
9. What are the difficulties you experienced while taking notes?
10. Do you think that you need an individualized teaching?
11. How do you make use of technology? In what areas?
12. What are your opinions about instructors' use of technology?
13. How do you follow announcements/instructions?
14. How do you participate in class discussion? What are the pros and cons of it?
15. How do you ensure your personal development?
16. What are the areas that you feel you need improvement on?

Students with Visual Impairments: Interview III

1. How accessible is the university to you?
2. Can you easily move around the facilities?
3. What are the problems or difficulties you have encountered about the university infrastructure?
4. Can you represent yourself at the university?
5. Do you go to your instructors and talk about your needs? Why?
6. Do you feel socially accepted? Why?
7. How do you perceive your peers' attitudes?
8. When you have problems how do you manage it?
9. In what ways do you get supported?
10. How do you prefer your needs to be accommodated?
11. In what areas do you have family/peer/instructor support?
12. When you see that the instructor does not accommodate your needs during the class/exam, what do you do? Why?
13. Do you get any guidance and training?
14. How do your instructors/professors respond to your needs?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE ADMINISTRATORS

1. What is your definition of a teacher?
2. How do you approach to disability?
3. What are your thoughts about students with disabilities?
4. How do you apply legal regulations about students with disabilities? How often do you check applications of regulations?
5. How do you organize available resources for students with disabilities?
6. Do you think that the infrastructure of the university is suitable for students with disabilities?
7. How do you ensure accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities?
8. Do you organize in-service training for the instructors in order to teach students with disabilities effectively?
9. What are the opportunities for professional development of students with disabilities?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE TEACHER EDUCATORS

The Teacher educators: Interview I

1. What is your definition of a prospective teacher?
2. Are you aware of disability related challenges and difficulties?
3. How do you accommodate the needs of students with disabilities?
4. What are the main problems/difficulties you have encountered during your teaching? How do you manage them?
5. How do you organize your teaching materials?
6. How do you organize your assignments and requirements for the course for VI students?
7. How do you organize your evaluation and assessment for students with disabilities?
8. How do you make use of technology?
9. Do you know what legal rights of students with disabilities in higher education are?
10. How often do you ask for help from a colleague? In what areas?
11. What are your opinions about social inclusion of the students with disabilities?
12. Do you have a systematic mentoring system for students with disabilities? Why?

The Teacher educators: Interview II

1. What are the classroom management strategies you have used while teaching students with disabilities?
2. How do you ensure equal access to learning and teaching?
3. How do you manage note-taking and participation process of students with disabilities?
4. How often do you talk to the students and discuss about their needs?
5. How do you collaborate with students with disabilities?
6. How do you organize your syllabus while teaching students with disabilities?
7. In what areas are you flexible in your course design? What are your considerations for it?
8. How do you organize physical arrangements of the classroom?
9. What are your opinions about necessity of institutional policy for students with disabilities?
10. Do you think that in-service training is necessary for university instructors to meet the needs of students with disabilities?
11. How do you get professional guidance and support to better teach students with disabilities?

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PEERS

1. How do you perceive students with disabilities?
2. What are the problems you have encountered during the lessons?
3. Do you believe that students with disabilities use their impairments to gain unfair advantage during lessons and exams?
4. How can you describe your learning experiences with students with disabilities?
5. How do you collaborate with students with disabilities?
6. How do you ensure social inclusion of students with disabilities?
7. How do you support students with disabilities? In what areas? Why?
8. What are your thoughts about being in the same class with students with disabilities?
9. What are the problems you have seen during examinations with students with disabilities?
10. How often do you talk with students with disabilities about their needs?

APPENDIX E: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Date:

Duration:

Number of Participants:

Pseudonyms:

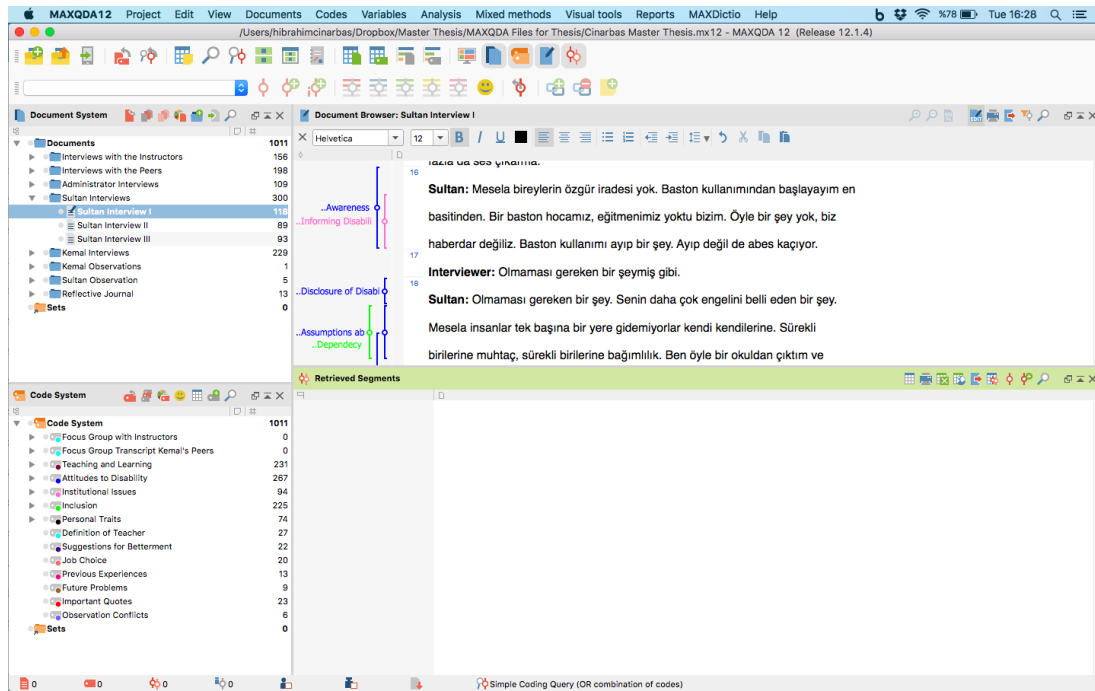
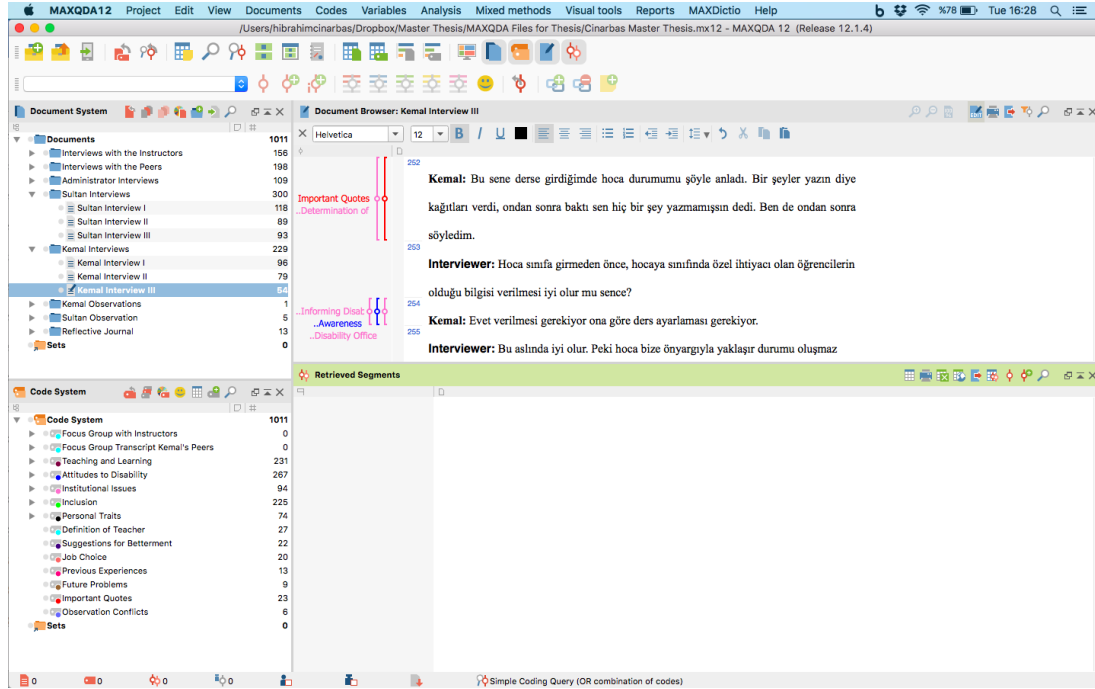
Timing/ Duration	What did Student with visual impairments do?	What did the instructor do?	What did the peers do?	Researcher's comments
0-15 minutes				
15-30 minutes				
30-45 minutes				

APPENDIX F: LIST OF CODES

Code System	
Teaching and Learning	4
Problems related to teaching/learning	21
Differentiation	21
Participation	12
Individual Effort	14
Early Intervention	15
Meeting with Instructors	13
Group Work	16
Testing and Evaluation	21
Proctor	7
Assignments	14
Use of Technology	23
Note-taking	10
Braille	6
Presentations	3
Voice Recording	5
Materials	24
Attitudes to Disability	25
Feelings	1
Pity	8
Indifference	15
Empathy	13
Anger	6
Self-Critique	18
Awareness	50
Sources of Disability	22
Assumptions about Disability	14
Willingness to Accommodate	24
Identity of Disability	5
Desire to be NORMAL	27
Disclosure of Disability	12
Acceptance of Disability	14
Denial	11
Institutional Issues	5
Informing Disability	8
Need for Seminars	7

Lack of Law Knowledge	9
Lack of Service Knowledge	8
Statistical Significance	5
Disability Office	15
Determination of Services	3
Determination of Disability	9
Institutional Policy	25
Inclusion	17
Support	12
Guidance	5
Consistency	4
Family Support	15
Peer Support	36
Accessibility	19
Practicality	8
Transportation	5
Infrastructure	10
Socialization	7
Equality	21
Fairness	12
Advocacy	15
Dependency	37
Personal Traits	57
Emotional Needs	4
Personal Development	13
Definition of Teacher	27
Suggestions for Betterment	22
Job Choice	20
Previous Experiences	13
Future Problems	9
Important Quotes	23
Observation Conflicts	6

APPENDIX G: SCREENSHOTS FROM DATA ANALYSIS



APPENDIX H: TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

1. GİRİŞ

İnsanlar güçleri ve zayıflıklarıyla hayatını sürdürür ve içinde yaşadığımız toplum bireysel güçlerin ve zayıflıkların toplamıdır. İçinde yaşadığımız toplum bir normlar dünyasıdır (Lamichhane, 2015). Her birimiz normal olmak için çabalarız ya da anormal durumlardan uzak durmaya çalışırız. Zekamızı, bedensel yeterliliklerimizi ve fiziksel özelliklerimizi derecelendiririz. Çocuklarımızı okullarda test ederiz ve normal öğrenme ve zekaya sahip olduklarını belirlemeye çalışırız.

Birleşmiş Milletler İnsan Hakları Beyannamesi (1958) Madde 26'ya göre, “Herkes eğitim hakkına sahiptir. Eğitim, en azından ilk ve temel eğitim aşamasında parasızdır. İlköğretim zorunludur. Teknik ve mesleki eğitim herkese açıktır. Yüksek öğretim, yeteneklerine göre herkese tam bir eşitlikle açık olmalıdır” (p. 207). Türkiye Birleşmiş Milletler'in bir üyesi olarak, bu beyannameyi uygulamaktadır.

Türk eğitim sistemi genellik ve eşitlik ilkesi üzerine kuruludur. Birleşmiş Milletler İnsan Hakları Beyannamesi (1958) Madde 26'yla aynı doğrultuda, eğitim ilk, orta ve lise eğitimi zorunludur ve eğitim hakkı yasalarla korunmaktadır. Türk eğitim sistemi öğrencilerin benzer zihinsel, fiziksel, psikolojik ve fizyolojik gelişimleri göstermeleri varsayımı üzerine kuruludur (Ataman, 2009; Eurydice, 2016, Ekim 25). Türk eğitim sistemi eğitim süreçlerini öğrencilerin bu benzerliklerinden ve farklılıklarından kaynaklanan ihtiyaçlar doğrultusunda düzenlemektedir (Diken, 2013). Eğer bir öğrenci bu benzerlik ve standartlara uymuyorsa, o öğrenci özel gereksinimli veya istisnai öğrenci olarak etiketlenir. “Özel gereksinim” terimi bir öğrencinin fiziksel, duyuşsal, zihinsel, veya diğer psikolojik eksikliklerden kaynaklanan öğrenme, faaliyette bulunma veya uyum sağlama güçlüğü olarak tanımlanır (Savvidou, 2011).

2. TANIMLAR

Özel eğitim ve özel gereksinimli öğrencilerle ilgili olan engellilik ve özürlülük kavramlarının tanımlanması ve açıklanması oldukça önemlidir. Avustralya Engellilik Ayrımcılık Hareketi (1992)'ne göre, özürlülük kalıcı veya geçici, bütün ve kısmi, daha sonradan edinilmiş veya doğuştan olabilir. Özürlülük fiziksel, duyuşsal, zihinsel, psikiyatrik, nörolojik ve öğrenme güçlüğüne kapsar. Ayrıca özürlülük fiziksel bozulma ve kalıcı hastalıkları da kapsar (Avustralya İstatistik Bürosu, 2012; Engellilik Ayrımcılık Hareketi, 1992). Bu nedenle özürlülük zihinsel, fiziksel, davranışsal veya duyuşsal organların kısmi veya tamamının kaybı olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Ataman, 1997; Connor, Valle & Hale, 2015; Goodley, 2011; Riddell, Tinklin & Wilson, 2005; Shakespeare, 2015). Özürlülük bedensel fonksiyonlarla ilgilidir ve özürlülüğün engelleyici etkileri olmasına rağmen engele dönüşmeyebilir.

Bir taraftan da, engellilik özürlü olan bir bireyin toplum ile etkileşimde karşılaştığı problem ve bariyerler olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Ataman, 2009; Eripek, 2002; Ozgur, 2015; Riddell, Tinklin & Wilson, 2005; Shakespeare, 2014). Engellilik özürlü olan birey ile bu bireylerin ihtiyaçlarını karşılamayan diğer birimlerle etkileşimin bir sonucudur. Bu nedenle, engellilik daha çok bağlamsal, çevresel ve tutumsal sosyal yorumlamalardır.

Bu çalışma görme özürlü olan aday öğretmenlerin deneyimleri üzerine bir çalışma olduğu için, görme özürlü kavramının da netleştirilmesi gerekmektedir. Görme özürlü literatürde görme kaybı ve bozuklukları ile ilgili bir çok kavramı tanımlamak için kullanılmaktadır (Zimmerman & Zebehazy, 2011). Görme özürlü olan bir çok öğrenci kısmi görebilmektedir ve bu durum bu durumdaki öğrencilerin bir miktar da olsa görme duyuşunu kullanabildikleri anlamına gelir (Puri & Abraham, 2004). Bu çalışmada “görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları” şöyle tanımlanmaktadır: görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları, en iyi düzeltme yapılması durumunda bile görsel işleri tamamlarken zorluk yaşarlar fakat destekleyici teknoloji ve çevresel uyarlamalar gibi

uygulamalarla bu tarz zorlukları en aza indirgerler (Corn, DePriest, & Erin, 2000; Corn & Lusk, 2010).

3. AMAÇ

Dünya üzerinde görme özürlü olan birey sayısının 285 milyon olduğu bilinmektedir (Dünya Sağlık Örgütü, 2015) ve 2010 Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (TUIK) verilerine göre 280, 014 özürlü birey arasında %8,4'nün görme özürlüdür (Coskun, 2013; TUIK, 2010). Türkiye'de ilk, orta ve lise düzeyinde 17,5 milyon öğrencinin olduğu ve özürlü öğrenci sayısının 288,489 olduğu bilinmektedir (MEB, 2016). Yüksek öğrenimde ise özürlü olan öğrenci sayısı 59,161 olarak saptanmıştır ve bu sayı yüksek öğrenimdeki toplam öğrenci sayısının %1'ini oluşturmaktadır.

Bütün öğrenciler için yüksek öğrenime erişimi artırma bir çok ülkenin politik ajandasının önemli bir görevidir çünkü yüksek öğrenime katılım temel bir insani hak olarak düşünülmekte ve genellikle daha iyi yaşam koşullarıyla ilişkilendirilmektedir. Fakat yüksek öğrenimdeki bazı gruplar marjinalleştirilmekte ve daha az temsil edilmektedir. Engelli öğrenciler bu gruplardan bir tanesidir (Archer, Hutchings, Leathwood, & Ross, 2003; Riddell, Tinklin, & Wilson, 2005).

Bu öğrenciler için kapsayıcı uygulamalar Türk eğitim sistemi için oldukça yenidir. Engelli öğrenciler için kapsayıcı uygulamalar yasal olarak mevcuttur fakat bu yasaların uygulanması genellikle yapılmamaktadır (Madriagai, 2011). Teori ve pratikteki farklılıklardan dolayı, engelli öğrencilerin deneyimleri araştırmacıların son yıllarda ilgisini çekmiştir. Sonuç olarak, yüksek öğrenimdeki öğrencilerin deneyimlerini bütüncül bir şekilde inceleyebilmek için nitel araştırma metotları ile araştırılma ihtiyacı doğmuştur.

Bu nitel durum çalışmasında, bir İngilizce Öğretmeni Yetiştirme Program'ındaki görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının deneyimleri incelenmiştir. İngilizce Öğretmeni Yetiştirme Program'ındaki görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının deneyimleri

öğretmen eğitimcilerinin, yöneticilerin, akranların ve görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayların perspektiflerinden incelenmiştir.

4. LİTERATÜR TARAMASI

Evrensel İnsan Hakları bildirgesine dayanarak Engelli Hakları Konferansı (2006) düzenlenmiştir. Bu kongrede çeşitli kampanyalara ve etkinlikler olmasına rağmen engelli bireylerin topluma eşit bir birey olarak katılımında hala sorunlar ve bariyerle karşılaştığı konusu ele alınmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra, engelli bireylerin durumlarının iyileştirilmesi, farkındalık oluşturulması ve ayrımcı nitelikte olmayan hareketlerin uluslararası işbirliği ile gelişmekte olan ülkelerde uygulanması vurgulanmıştır. Bu sözleşmeyi 163 ülke imzalamış ve 88 ülke İhtiyari Protokol'ü onaylamıştır (The United Nations Programme on Disabilities, 2015). Türkiye bu sözleşmeyi 2007 yılında imzalamış ve İhtiyari Protokol'ü 2015 yılında onaylamıştır.

Kapsayıcı öğrenme ortamları öğrencilerin öğrenme sürecine katılımını arttırmaktadır ve bu tarz ortamlar görme özürlü olan öğrenciler için çeşitli öğrenme imkanları sunmaktadır (Morina, Cortes, & Melero, 2013). Kapsayıcı uygulamaların arttırılması görme özürlü olan öğrencilerin akademik ve sosyal başarıları için önemli bir motivasyon koşuludur (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009). Kapsayıcı uygulamalar yüksek öğrenim kurumlarındaki işleyişi radikal bir biçimde değiştirmese de (Hanafin, Shevlin, Kenny, & McNeela, 2006), görme özürlü öğrencilerin sayısı arttığı için kapsayıcı uygulamalara ihtiyaç vardır (Savvidou, 2011).

Görme özürlü olan öğrencilerin yüksek öğrenime erişim uzun yıllardır eğitimcilerin ele almaya çalıştığı bir konudur (Miranda, 2014). Erişilebilir üniversite, ulaşım, müfredat ve tutum açısından ulaşılabilir üniversite anlamına gelmektedir. Engellilik çalışmalarında erişilebilirlik genellikle üniversite kampüsün yapısı, ulaşım ve sunulan hizmetlerle ilişkilendirilmektedir.

Erişilebilirlik konularının yanı sıra, görme özürlü olan öğrencilerin bağımsız bireyler olabilmeleri için akademik ve sosyal alanlarda destek almaları gerekmektedir. Görme özürlü olan öğrenciler desteklenirken hassasiyetli davranılmalıdır çünkü sistemsiz ve aşırı destek almaları, görme özürlü olan öğrencilerin bağımsız bireyler olmasını engelleyebilmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu öğrencilerin akademik başarıları içi sistemli olarak destek almaları gerekir.

Özürlü olan öğrenciler bu özürlerini yetkili mercilere bildirmediikleri sürece var olan yasal haklarından faydalanamamaktadır (Eckes & Ochoa, 2005). Fakat engelliliğin bildirilmesi kişinin benliğini ilgilendirdiği için karmaşık bir süreçtir (Vickerman & Blundell, 2010) ve görme özürlü olan öğrenciler engelliliğin bildirilmesinde farklı yaklaşımlar gösterebilmektedir. Genellikle, bu öğrenciler engelliliğin bildirilmesi noktasında kendilerini rahatsız ve güvensiz hissetmektedirler (Thoma & Wehmeyer, 2005). Bu nedenle, haklarından yararlanmak istediklerinde veya bir sorunla karşılaştıkları zaman engellerini bildirmeyi tercih ederler.

Görme özürlü olan öğrenciler sınıf içerisindeki görsele dayalı bir çok detayı kaçırabilmektedir, ve bu nedenle öğrenme bariyerleriyle karşılaşmaktadır. Ders materyallerinin, bu nedenle, görme özürlü olan öğrencilere göre tasarlanması ve uyarlanması gerekmektedir. Ayrıca görme özürlü olan öğrenciler otantik bir öğrenme deneyimine dahil edilmelidirler (Sousa, 2013).

Destekleyici teknolojilerin kullanımı engelli öğrenciler için bir çok fayda sunmaktadır (Goggin & Newell, 2003; Kafer, 2013), bu yüzden sınıf içerisinde destekleyici teknolojilerin kullanımı görme özürlü olan öğrencilerin eğitimsel deneyimlerini çeşitlendirebilir. Destekleyici teknolojiler bir nesne, ekipman, veya yazılım sistemi olabilir ve engelli öğrencilerin kapasitelerini arttırma, muhafaza etme veya geliştirmek için kullanılır (Sherer, 2004). Destekleyici teknolojilerin görme özürlü olan öğrencilerin ders materyallerine erişimi noktasında önemli olduğu vurgulanmaktadır (Al-said, 2010).

Ölçme ve değerlendirme pratikleri görme özürlü olan öğrenciler için engelleyici ve dışlayıcı olabilir (Titchkosky, 2011) ve kurumsal anlamda bir ölçme ve değerlendirme politikasının varlığı görme özürlü olan öğrencilerin başarılarını etkilemektedir.

Var olan literatür gösteriyor ki, yükseköğrenime katılan engelli öğrenci sayısı günden güne artmaktadır ve bu öğrencilere daha iyi bir yükseköğrenim deneyimi sunabilmek için, engelli öğrencilerin deneyimlerini anlamaya ihtiyaç vardır. Bu çalışmada benim amacım İngilizce Öğretmenliği Öğretmen Eğitimi Programı'ndaki görme engelli öğretmen adaylarının deneyimlerini incelemektir. Bu çalışmaya katılan görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümde öğrencidirler. Bu nedenle öğretmen eğitimi alanına ait zorluk ve problemlerin de incelenmesi hedeflenmiştir. Bu amaçlara dayanarak, aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına cevap aranmıştır:

1. İngilizce Öğretmenliği Öğretmen Eğitimi Programı'ndaki görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının eğitimlerinin 3. yılındaki deneyimleri nelerdir?
2. Yöneticilerin üniversitedeki engelli öğrenciler konusundaki ilgileri nelerdir?
3. Öğretim elemanlarının görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarını eğitirken yaşadıkları deneyimler nelerdir?
4. Görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının akranlarının deneyimleri nelerdir?

5. ÇALIŞMANIN ÖNEMİ

Görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının deneyimlerini anlamak öğretmen eğitimcilerinin alandaki uygulamaları eleştirel bir şekilde düşünmeye yöneltir.

Görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının deneyimlerini anlamak aşağıda belirtilen hususlar için önemlidir:

- Eşit ve adaletli bir yükseköğrenim sunabilmek için (Shakespeare, 2014)
- Öğretmen eğitimcilerini yönlendirmek için (Allan & Slee, 2008)
- Engelli öğrencilerin haklarının savunulması sağlamak adına fırsatlar oluşturmak için

- Ve yeni politika süreçlerinin teşviki için (Adams & Brown, 2006; Davis, 2014).

6. KURAMSAL ÇERÇEVE

Görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının deneyimlerini anlamak için çok katmanlı bir yaklaşıma ihtiyaç vardır ve eleştirel engellilik yaklaşımı araştırmacının bu konuyu farklı açılardan ele alabilmesi için güçlü dayanaklar sunmaktadır (Thomas, 2004; Shakespeare, 2014; Watson, 2012). Eleştirel engellilik yaklaşımı engelliliği karmaşık bir konu olarak ele almaktadır ve bu yaklaşım sosyal olarak kurgulanmış eşitsizlikleri analiz edebilmenin sosyal, politik ve zihinsel bir yeni değerlendirme ile mümkün olacağını ifade etmektedir ve bir yol haritası önermektedir (Davis, 2014; Garland-Thomson, 2005; Knoll, 2009; Miranda, 2014; Tremain, 2005). Bu bağlamda, eleştirel engellilik yaklaşımı engelliliğin çok katmanlı olduğunu ve bu durumun bütüncül olarak anlaşılabilmesi için farklı bakış açılarından değerlendirilmesi gerektiğini tavsiye eder (Gable, 2013; Shakespeare, 2014).

Görüldüğü üzere, eleştirel engellilik yaklaşımı bu çalışmanın amacına uygundur çünkü görme özürlü öğrencilerin deneyimlerinin bütüncül olarak resmedilebilmesi için engelliliğin farklı açılardan ele alınması gerektiği eleştirel engellilik yaklaşımı tarafından tavsiye edilmektedir.

7. YÖNTEM

Stake (1995) durum çalışmasını şöyle tanımlamaktadır: “Bir durum çalışması var olan bir durumu kendi gerçek bağlamı içerisinde inceleyen ampirik çalışmadır”. Merriam (1988) ise sonuç odaklı bir tanımla yapmaktadır: “bir durum çalışması ele alınan olgunun, konunun veya sosyal üitenin yoğun, bütüncül ve analitik bir incelemesidir”. Durum çalışması, bu yöntemin veri toplama uygulamalarından veya konusundan bağımsız olarak kendi başına bir araştırma stratejisi olarak görülmelidir.

Bu durum alışması gneydoęu Anadolu blgesinde bir vakıf niversitesinde yapılmıřtır. alıřmanın yapıldıęı niversitede, btn ęrenciler İngilizce hazırlık okulunu tamamlamak durumundadırlar. Veya, ęrenciler İngilizce dil yeterlilięi sınavına girebilir ve bařarılı olmaları durumdan blmlerindeki lisans eęitimine bařlayabilirler. Bu alıřmaya katılan grme zr olan ęretmen adayları 2010 yılında kurulan İngilizce ęretmenlięi blm 3. Sınıf ęrencileridirler. İngilizce ęretmenlięi blmnde 6 ęretim elemanı ve 200 lisans ęrencisi bulunmaktadır.

Bu alıřmaya Sultan ve Kemal adında iki grme zr olan ęretmen adayı katılmıřtır. Sultan 20 yařındadır ve grme zrl olarak dnyaya geliřmiřtir. Kendisi Grme Engelliler okuluna gitmiř daha sonrasında ise kaynařtırma ęrencisi olarak eęitime devam etmiřtir. Sultan lise yıllarında burs kazanarak Amerika'ya gitmiř ve bir yıl orada kalmıřtır. Amerika'da kaldıęı srede baston kullanmayı ęrenmiř, ve yzme, futbol ve kořu gibi deęiřik spor etkinliklerine katılmıřtır. Daha sonrasında niversiteye bařlayan Sultan, eřitli sosyal ve kltrel etkinliklere katılmıř ve lisans eęitimini bařarıyla srdrmektedir.

Kemal de 20 yařında İngilizce ęretmenlięi 3. Sınıf ęrencisidir. Kemal grme bozukluęuyla dnyaya gelmiř ve giderek ktleřen bu bozukluklar lise eęitiminin son yıllarında grme kaybıyla sonulanmıřtır. Kemal İngilizce Hazırlık okulunu tamamladıktan sonra lisans eęitimine bařladı. Kemal niversiteye bařladıktan sonra ailesi Kemal'in olduęu řehre tařınmıř ve Kemal'in ulařım ve bir ok ihtiyaını aile bireyleri karřılamaktadır. Kemal olduka hırslı bir kiřilięe sahiptir ve sınav zamanlarında olduka fazla stres yařar.

Sultan ve Kemal'in yanısıra drt ęretim elemanı bu alıřmaya katılmıřtır. Bu ęretim elemanlarının grme zr olan ęrencilerle daha nceden bir deneyimi olmamıřtır. Ayrıca, bu alıřmaya  ynetici ve altı akran da katılmıřtır.

Bu alıřmada veri kaynaklarını gzlem, bireysel ve odak grup grřmeleri ve dokmanlar oluřturmaktadır. Bu alıřmanın amaları doęrultusunda, Sultan ve Kemal

için bir gözlem protokolü oluşturulmuş ve her biri için 10 saat gözlem yapılması planlanmıştır. Fakat beklenmedik aksaklıklardan dolayı her bir öğrenci için 7 saatlik gözlem yapılabilmektedir. Gözlemlerin yanısıra, araştırmacı yapılan her görüşmenin ardından yansıtıcı günceler tutulmuştur. Yansıtıcı günceler araştırmacının düşüncelerini olgunlaştırmasında ve görüşme verileriyle gözlem verilerini birbiriyle ilişkilendirmede oldukça önemlidir.

Nitel çalışmaların yaygın veri toplama yöntemlerinden birisi görüşme yapmaktır. Görüşmelerde araştırmacı katılımcıların nasıl hissettiklerini ve neler düşündüklerini öğrenir. Bu çalışmada, görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarıyla üçer adet bireysel görüşme gerçekleştirildi. Öğretim elemanlarıyla iki adet odak grup görüşmesi yapıldı. Yöneticilerle bireysel görüşme yapıldı. Son olarak görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının akranlarıyla bir adet odak grup ve iki adet bireysel görüşme gerçekleştirildi.

Toplanan verileri elektronik olarak depolanmıştır. Yapılan her görüşme daha sonrasında yazıldı ve ayrı ayrı Word dokümanlarına kaydedildi. Toplamda 246 sayfa yazılı veri elde edildi. Toplanan veriler nitel veri analizi programı olan MAXQDA'ye aktarıldı.

MAXQDA programına aktarılan veriler analiz edilip kodlandı. Kodlamalar sonucunda tema ve kategoriler belirlendi. Kodlama yapılırken, toplanan verinin özgünlüğünü korumak adına, hiç bir değişiklik yapılmadı. Katılımcıların gerçek kimliklerinin korunması için her katılımcıya bir takma isim verildi. Sultan ve Kemal bu çalışmaya katılan görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarıdır. Diğer katılımcılar için ise Öğretim Elemanı 1, Yönetici 2, Akran 3 gibi takma isimler kullanıldı.

Bu çalışmada, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu yönergesi takip edilmiştir. Araştırmacı Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'na başvurmuş, istenen evrakları teslim etmiştir ve çalışmayı

bu çerçevede gerçekleştirmiştir. Bu çalışmadaki katılımcıların tamamı araştırma süreci hakkında bilgilendirilmiş ve onayları alınmıştır.

8. BULGULAR

Araştırmacının yapmış olduğu gözlem ve görüşmelere dayalı olarak belirtilen temalar ortaya çıkmıştır: “Görme Özürlü Olan Öğretmen Adaylarının Eğitimsel Deneyimleri”, “Kapsayıcı Uygulamalar”, “Engelliliğe Karşı Tutumlar”, “Kurumsal Konular” ve “Öğretmenin Tanımı”.

8.1.GÖRME ÖZÜRÜ OLAN ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ EĞİTİMSEL DENEYİMLERİ

Bu çalışmadaki katılımcılar görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının eğitimsel deneyimleri hakkındaki görüşlerini ifade ettiler. Bu görüşler doğrultusunda oluşan kategoriler şunlardır: “öğretim elemanlarıyla görüşme”, “kişisel çabalar”, “müdahale”, “ölçme ve değerlendirme”, “teknoloji kullanımı”, “derse katılım”, “farklılaştırma”, ve “materyaller”.

Öğretmen eğitimcilerinin ifadelerinden öğretmen eğitimcileri kendi ihtiyaçlarının daha önce karşılanması gerektiği ve bu sayede öğretmen eğitimcileri görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının ihtiyaçlarını karşılayabilecekleri anlaşılmıştır. Ayrıca öğretmen eğitimcileri görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının kendilerine gelip görüşme yapmalarını ve ihtiyaçlarını bildirmelerini beklemektedirler. Aksi bir durumda, çeşitli nedenlerden dolayı kendileri bu görüşmeleri gerçekleştirmemektedir. Sonuç olarak, görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları ihtiyaçları karşılanırken oluşan sistemsizlikten şikayet etmektedir. Ayrıca görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları ihtiyaçlarının geçirtilildiğini düşünmektedir.

Görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının derse katılımının sağlanması uygun ders materyalleri ve anlatım yöntemlerinin farklılaştırılmasıyla mümkün olacaktır.

Öğretmen eğitimcileri açısından sınıf içerisinde görme özürlü olan bir öğretmen adayının olması şok ve belirsizlikle sonuçlanıyor. Daha sonrasında öğretmen eğitimcileri anlatım yöntemlerini farklılaştırmaya çalışarak bu öğrencilerin derse katılımını sağlamaya çalışıyorlar. Fakat, öğretmen eğitimcileri ders materyallerini hazırlarken görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarını hesaba katmamaktadır. Böylesi durumlarda, akranlar görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarına ders materyallerini bulma noktasında yardım etmektedir.

Ölçme ve değerlendirme noktasında, sınavların uygulanmasından başlayarak çok katmanlı bir süreç oluşmaktadır. Bu nedenle, sınavların yapılış biçimi, sınav gözetmenleri ve verilen diğer ölçme ve değerlendirme ödevleri dikkatli bir biçimde ele alınmalıdır. Aksi takdirde görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları adil olmayan uygulamalara maruz kalmaktadır. Yaşanan diğer önemli bir sorun ise, sınav takvimine göre gelmelerine rağmen, görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları sınavlarına zamanında girememekte ve saatlerce beklemektedirler. Ayrıca, öğretmen eğitimcileri görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının sınavlarını kendileri yaptıklarında, sınav formatını değiştirebilmekte veya soru sayısını azaltabilmektedir.

Bir diğer kategoride teknoloji kullanımıdır. Teknoloji kullanımı görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının yükseköğrenim deneyimlerini daha kaliteli hale getirebilmektedir. Öğretmen eğitimcileri teknolojiyi genel olarak ders içi sunumlarda kullanmaktadır fakat görsele dayalı sunumların fazlalığı görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının akademik ilerlemesini olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir. Ayrıca, görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları ders içinde not alırken ses kayıt cihazı kullanmaktadırlar. Sunumlar, Braille, ses kayıt cihazının yanı sıra, görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları teknolojiyi sosyal paylaşım sitelerini kullanmak, ödevlerini yapmak için kullanmaktadırlar.

8.2.KAPSAYICI UYGULAMALAR

Kapsayıcı uygulamalar görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları oldukça önemlidir. Bu bölümde, bu çalışmadaki katılımcıların kapsayıcı uygulamalar konusundaki deneyimlerine ve görüşlerine yer verilmiştir. “Bağımlılık”, “Hakların Savunulması”, “Destek” ve “Erişilebilirlik” bu bölümde ortaya çıkan kategorilerdir.

Eğitimsel ortamlar görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının bağımsız bireyler olmasına ve kendi haklarını savunmasına yardımcı olmalıdır. Pratikte, görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları öğretmen eğitimcilerinden, akranlarından, ve aile bireylerinden destek almaktadır. Fakat aldıkları bu destek görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları için bir bağımlılığa dönüşebilmektedir. Bu çalışmadaki öğretmen eğitimcileri görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayların haklarını nasıl savunabilecekleri noktasında bilgi sahibi değildirler bu nedenle sınıf için dinamiklerden yararlanarak görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarına yardımcı olmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayların akranları ise sosyal ve akademik anlamda destek olmakta ve görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylara empati duymaktadırlar. Son olarak, görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları kendilerine sunulan desteğin sürekli ve sistematik olması gerektiğini savunmaktadırlar.

Erişilebilirlik görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylara yönelik kapsayıcı uygulamaların bel kemiğidir çünkü görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayların yükseköğrenime dahil edilmesi kapsayıcı uygulamalarla mümkün hale gelmektedir. Erişilebilirlik genellikle ulaşım ve kampüs yapısıyla ilişkilendirilmektedir fakat erişilebilirlik müfredatı da içine alır. Bu çalışmadaki yöneticiler üniversitenin erişilebilir bir üniversite olduğunu ve üniversitenin erişilebilirlik konularında hassasiyet gösterdiğini düşünmektedirler. Bir taraftan da öğretmen eğitimcileri müfredatlarını ve ders içeriklerini erişilebilir yapmaya çalışıyorlar fakat bu çabaları bazen pratikte uygulanması zor durumlara yol açabilmektedir.

8.3.ENGELLİLİĞE KARŞI TUTUMLAR

Engelliliğe karşı tutumlar görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının genel anlamda deneyimlerine etki etmektedir. Bu tutumlar bu çalışmadaki katılımcıların “engellilik hakkındaki varsayımlarıyla” hareket ettiği, ve bu varsayımların “engelliliğin kaynağı” haline geldiği görülmektedir. Bununla birlikte, “farkındalık” ve katılımcıların “hisleri” ve “ihtiyaçları karşılama istek” engelliliğe karşı tutumları yansıtmaktadır. Son olarak, “engelli kimliği” görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının deneyimlerine etki etmektedir.

Bu çalışmadaki öğretmen eğitimcilerin ve akranların görme özürlü olmanın nasıl bir durum olduğuna dair kendi varsayımları bulunmaktadır. Bu varsayımlar iş konusunda yoğunlaşmaktadır. Öğretmen eğitimcileri görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının kendi rahatları için Görme Engelliler Okulunda çalışmaları beklenmektedir çünkü bu adayların okul kültürü ve eğitim ortamlarından dolayı problem yaşayacakları varsayılmaktadır. Bu çalışmadaki akranlar Görme Engelliler Okulu’nun bu adaylar için doğru bir yer olduğu fikrine katılmaktadır. Ek olarak, bu tarz varsayımların görme özürlü olan öğrencileri engelleyici nitelikte olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Diğer yandan, görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları böylesi bir fikri reddetmekte ve kendilerine engellerini yenebilmek için daha çok imkan ve fırsat verilmesi gerektiğini bildirmektedirler.

Öğretmen eğitimcileri çeşitli nedenlerden dolayı görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının ihtiyaçlarını karşılarken istekli veya isteksiz hale gelebilmektedirler. Genel olarak, görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları bir problemle karşılaştıklarında, bu problem çözümü için öğretmen eğitimcilerine başvurumaktadırlar.

Bu çalışmadaki katılımcıların engelliliğe karşı hisleri onların davranış ve düşüncelerine yansımaktadır. Katılımcılar görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarına acıma hissiyle yaklaşmaktadırlar. Diğer durumlarda ise ilgisiz davranabilmektedirler. Böylesi durumlar empati veya öfke ile sonuçlanabilmektedir. Görme özürlü olan

öğretmen adaylarına karşı beslenen ilk his acıma duygusu olmasına rağmen, bu acıma hissi görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları için aşağılayıcı bir durumdur. Bu çalışmadaki akranlar öğretmen eğitimcilerinin ilgisizliğinden bahsederken, öğretmen eğitimcilerinin görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının dikkate alınması gerektiği tavsiyesinde bulundular.

Bunlarla birlikte, görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları kimlik problemleri de yaşamaktadırlar. Bu problemler kendi özürlerine ve çevrelerindeki insanların reaksiyonlarına bağlı olarak şekillenmektedir. Görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları özürlerini başta kabul etmemektedirler. Çok farklı durumlarla karşılaştıktan sonra, görme özürlerine kabul edip akademik anlamda ilerleyebilmek için çözüm aramaya başlarlar. Özrün kabul edilmesi kişinin özrünün yetkili mercilere bildirilerek var olan yasal haklardan yararlanmaya yönlendirir ve görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları güvenli ve hoşgörülü bir ortamda görme özürlerini yetkili mercilere bildirirler.

8.4.KURUMSAL KONULAR

Engelliliğin nasıl yapılandırıldığı kurumsal politikalara bağlıdır. Kurumsal politikalar “engelli öğrencilerin belirlenmesi”, ”sunulan hizmetlerin belirlenmesi”, ve “yasal bilgilerin” paylaşımını içerir. Bununla birlikte, sunulan hizmetler “engelli ofisleri” aracılığıyla verilmektedir.

Yükseköğretimdeki bütün birimlerin engellilik yasaları ve yürütmelikleri hakkında bilgi sahibi olması gerekmektedir. Aksi takdirde görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları haklarından yararlanamamaktadır. Bu çalışmadaki bireysel ve odak grup görüşmeleri bu çalışmadaki öğretmen eğitimcileri, akranlar ve görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının engellilik yasa ve yürütmeliklerini bilmediklerini göstermektedir. İlginç olan, engelli öğrenciler için kurum politikası belirlenirken ekonomik yaptırımlar göz önüne alınarak yapılmaktadır. Engelli ofisleri üniversitelerdeki engelli öğrencilerin deneyimlerine doğrudan etki etmektedir ve bu ofislerin aktif bir şekilde yapılması ve çalışması beklenmektedir. Bu çalışmadaki öğretmen eğitimcileri engelli öğrenciler

hakkında profesyonel gelişim programlarına ihtiyaç olduğunu belirtirken, yöneticiler bu tarz profesyonel gelişim programlarına daha temkinli yaklaşmaktadırlar.

8.5.ÖĞRETMENİN TANIMI

Bu çalışma bir öğretmen eğitimi programında gerçekleştirildiği için, öğretmen kimdir sorusuna bir cevap arayışında olmak bu çalışmanın amacı için önemlidir. Bu çalışmanın ana katılımcıları görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları olduğu için öğretmen kimdir sorusuna farklı cevaplar verilmiştir. Bu çalışmadaki yöneticiler öğretmenin rehberlik etme özelliği üzerinde yoğunlaşmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra, öğretmen eğitimcileri ve akranlar öğretmenin akademik bilgisi, öğrencileri yönlendirmesi, ve anlamlı deneyimleri paylaşması üzerinde durmuşlardır. Fakat, bu tanımların hiç birisinde bir öğretmenin özürlü olabileceği hesaba katılmamıştır. Açık bir şekilde bir öğretmenin özürlü olabileceği ihtimali sorulduğunda, bu öğretmenin çeşitli sorunlarla karşılaşacağı öngörülmektedir.

9. TARTIŞMA

Görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının eğitimsel deneyimleri bu adayların sosyal ve akademik kaynaştırılmasını yansıtır. Bu öğrencilerin yükseköğretimde kaynaştırılması çok katmanlı bir durumdur ve bir çok birimin aktif olarak destek olması gerekmektedir. Görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının eğitimsel deneyimlerinin kalitesini arttırmak için, bu konuyla ilgili bilgi sahibi olan akademik personele ihtiyaç vardır. Aksi halde, görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının ihtiyaçlarını karşılanması kişisel çabalara bırakılmaktadır. Bu durum ise çeşitli problemlere neden olabilir.

Görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarını ilgilendiren kapsayıcı uygulamalar erişilebilirlik, destek, bağımlılık ve hakların savunulması konularıyla ilişkilidir. Erişilebilirlik konuları yapısal, ulaşım ve müfredatla ilişkili konuları içermektedir ve bu çalışmadaki katılımcılar yapısal sorunlardan bahsetmişlerdir. Bu sorunların yanı

sıra, öğretmen eğitimcileri müfredatlarını erişilebilir yapmak için uğraşsalar da iyi planlanmamış uygulamalar sorunlara yol açabilmektedir. Kapsayıcı bir yükseköğrenim ortamı görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının katılımlarını yükseltmektedir (Berry, 2011; Liasidou, 2014; Tuomi, Lehtomäki, & Matonya, 2015).

Yükseköğrenimdeki engelli öğrencilerin kariyerleri ve iş seçimleri hakkında problemler yaşayacakları varsayılmaktadır (Baldwin & Johnson, 2001; Green, 2007). Bu varsayımlar daha sonrasında görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları için engelleyici olmaktadır. Bu çalışmadaki öğretmen eğitimcileri görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının dil eğitimi alanı için uygun adaylar olmadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Bu nedenle bu öğretmen adaylarına kendi alanlarına ait gerekli eğitim verilmemektedir (Lamichhane, 2015; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997).

Ayrıca, özrünün bildirilmesi karmaşık bir süreçtir (Vickerman & Blundell, 2010) ve görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının yaşamlarına bir çok etkisi vardır (Macleod & Cebula, 2009; Miranda, 2014; Stanley et al., 2007; Valle, Solis, Volpitta, & Connor, 2004). Görme özürlü olan öğrenciler bir problemle karşılaştıktan sonra özürlerini yetkili mercilere bildirmektedirler. Fakat bu durum bazı endişelere sebep olmaktadır. Bu çalışmadaki öğretmen eğitimcileri görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının özürlerini kullanarak adil olmayan bir avantaj sağlayabileceği kaygısını taşımaktadırlar.

Bu çalışmadaki katılımcıların ifadelerinden anlaşılabileceği üzere, öğretmenlik mesleği sınıf yönetimi, öğrencilerin rehberliği, yönlendirici olma gibi özelliklerle sınırlandırılmaktadır. Bu tanımlardan öğretmenlerin psikolojik, duygusal ve fiziksel iyi halleri garanti sayılmaktadır. Bu durum görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleği içerisinde yer alması konusunda zorluklar oluşturmaktadır.

10. SONUÇ

Toplanan veriler ışığında yapılan analizler gösteriyor ki, görme özürlü olan öğrenciler yükseköğrenim yolculuklarında bir çok problemle karşı karşıya kalmaktadır. Bu öğrencilerin deneyimleri içsel ve dışsal faktörlere bağlıdır.

Katılımcılar tarafından görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylar öğretmenlik mesleği için uygun adaylar olarak görülmemektedir. Bu adayların Görme Engelliler Okulunda çalışmaları özellikle tavsiye edilmektedir.

Öğretmen eğitimcilerinin engellilik konusunda eğitilmelerine, ve özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının eğitilmesi konusunda uzman akademik personele ihtiyaç vardır.

Öğretmen eğitimcilerinin özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarıyla görüşüp ihtiyaçlarının belirlenmesi ve olası çözüm yollarının tartışılması gerektiğini savunulmuştur.

Görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları kendi haklarını bireysel olarak savunmaktadırlar. Kurumsal anlamda haklarını savunmak istediklerinde çeşitli zorluklarla karşılaşmaktadırlar.

Görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları ulaşım ve üniversite binaları içerisinde hareket ederken sorunlarla karşılaşmaktadır.

Öğretmen eğitimcileri müfredatlarını görme özürlü olan öğretmen adayları için ulaşılabilir hale getirmeye çalışmaktadırlar, fakat genellikle sınıf içi aktiviteler görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarına göre düzenlenmemektedir.

Empati ve farkındalık görme özürlü olan öğretmen adaylarının durumlarının iyileştirilmesi için oldukça önemlidir.

Bu alıřmadaki grme zr olan ğretmen adayları zrlerini resmi olarak bildirmemiřlerdir, bu nedenle niversite ierisinde engelli ğrencilere sunulan muhtemel hizmetlerden yararlanma hakkına sahip deėillerdir.

zr olan ğretmen adaylarının eėitimi iin profesyonel geliřim programlarına ihtiyaın olduėunun altı izilmiřtir.

Son olarak, engelli birimlerinin daha etkin ve fonksiyonel olması gerektiėinin nemi vurgulanmıřtır.

11. NERİLER

2015 Milli Eėitim Bakanlığı ynetmeliklerine gre, btn adaylıklarını kaldırmak isteyen ğretmen adayları belirtilen alanlardan sorumludur: (1) ğretme srelerini planlama, (2) ğrenme ortamı oluřturma, (3) sınıf ynetimi, (4) ğretim teknik ve yntemleri, ve (5) lme ve deėerlendirme (Milli Eėitim Bakanlığı ğretmen Atama ve Yer Deėiřtirme Ynetmeliėi, 2015). Grldė zere, ğretmen adayları zr olan ğrencileri eėitebilmek gerekli olan kabiliyetlere sahip olmaktan doėrudan sorumlu deėillerdir. zr olan ğrencilerin eėitimiyle ilgili bir alanın bu ynetmeliėe dahil edilmesi yararlı olabilir.

Ayrıca, grme zr olan ğretmen adayları ğretmen eėitimcileriyle grřmeye teřvik edilmeli ve bu grřmelerde ihtiya olan alanlar belirlenerek zmler retilmelidir. Bu tarz grřmeler kurumsal bir politika haline getirilip, zr olan ğretmen adaylarının durumları sistematik olarak iyileřtirilebilir.

Grme zr olan ğretmen adaylarının akademik olarak ilerleyebilmesi adına devamlı ve sistematik olarak destek almaları gerekmektedir. Bu konuda, akran danıřmanlıėı sistemi uygulanarak bu adaylara sistemli bir destek saėlanabilir.

Son olarak, özrü olan öğrencilerin öğretmen yetiştirme programlarındaki deneyimlerini inceleyen araştırmalar arttırılmalı, ve çeşitli konularda çözümler getirilmelidir.

APPENDIX I: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enformatik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>

YAZARIN

Soyadı : ÇINARBAŞ
Adı : HALİL İBRAHİM
Bölümü : İNGİLİZ DİLİ ÖĞRETİMİ

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITIES IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION
PROGRAM: A CASE STUDY ON PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS WITH VISUAL
IMPAIRMENTS

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans ☒ Doktora ☐

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. ☒

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: