

**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF TEACHERS' BELIEFS,  
ASSUMPTIONS, AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT INNOVATIONS  
PERTAINING TO TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE:  
A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY**

**SUZAN HATİPOĞLU**

**AUGUST 2005**

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A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY**

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**SUZAN HATİPOĞLU**

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF TEACHERS' BELIEFS, ASSUMPTIONS, AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT INNOVATIONS PERTAINING TO TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY**

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The purpose of this comparative case study was to explore English language teachers' beliefs, assumptions and knowledge about learner-centeredness and the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and to see how they implement their understanding of learner-centeredness in their classrooms. The study was conducted at one public and one private primary school in Istanbul. Focus group interviews were held in each school with thirteen teachers of English and then individual interviews and observations were carried out with four volunteer teachers during the spring semester, 2004-2005. The four participant teachers were observed in their classrooms ten times along with before- and after-class observation reflections facilitated by the researcher. A follow up interview was conducted with each teacher at the end of the observations. In addition, these observations were accompanied by document analysis.

Data from the interviews and before- and after-class reflections were inductively analyzed. For the analysis of observation data and documents, a learner-centered data analysis model was constructed by the researcher. The results of the data indicated that there were differences between public school teachers and private school teachers in the way they defined and implemented

learner-centeredness. Lack of knowledge about the ELP was observed in both public and private school teachers. Results revealed that there is a need for in-service training programs that will cater for the needs of public school teachers if the aim is to implement learner-centeredness in schools.

**Keywords:** Belief, Constructivism, Learner-centeredness, Learner autonomy, European Language Portfolio.

## ÖZ

### ÖĞRETMENLERİN YABANCIDİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİMİNE İLİŞKİN YENİLİKLERLE İLGİLİ İNANÇ, GÖRÜŞ VE BİLGİLERİ ÜZERİNE DERSLİK ARAŞTIRMASI VE KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR OLGU ÇÖZÜMLEMESİ ÇALIŞMASI

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Bu karşılaştırmalı olgu incelemesinin amacı İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğrenen-odaklılık ve Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası ile ilgili inanç, düşünce ve bilgilerini araştırmak ve anladıkları biçimiyle öğrenen odaklılığı derslerinde nasıl uyguladıklarını görmektir. Araştırma İstanbul’da bir tane devlet, bir tane özel ilköğretim okulunda yürütülmüştür. Her okulda öğretmenlerle odak kümeleri oluşturulmuş, kendileriyle teker teker görüşmeler yapılmış ve gönüllü 4 öğretmen 2004- 2005 Bahar yarıyılı boyunca gözlemlenmiştir. Katılan dört öğretmenle yapılan 10’ar gözlemin her birinin öncesinde ve sonrasında bu öğretmenlerin görüşleri alınmıştır. Gözlemlerin sonunda öğretmenlerle son bir değerlendirme görüşmesi daha yapılmıştır. Bu gözlemler belge çözümlemesiyle işlenmiş, görüşmeler ve ders-öncesi ve ders-sonrası görüş alımlarından elde edilen veriler tümevarımsal olarak çözümlenmiştir.

Gözlem verileri ve döküm belgelerinin çözümlenmesi ise araştırmacı tarafından oluşturulan özgün bir model üzerinden gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın sonucunda devlet okulundaki öğretmenler ile özel okuldaki öğretmenler arasında öğrenen-odaklılığı görme ve uygulama bakımlarından

ayrılıkların neler olduđu saptanmış, Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası ile ilintili bilgi eksikliğinin düzeyi belirlenmiştir. Bu sonuçlar, okullarda öğrenen-odaklılığa doğru bir gelişimin amaçlandığı ortamda, devlet okullarındaki öğretmenlere yönelik bir hizmet-içi eğitim programının gerekliliğini de vurgulamaktadır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** İnanç, Yapılandırmacılık, Öğrenen-odaklılık, Öğrenen özerkliği, Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası



To my son Hasan Onur  
who was no more than a heart  
beating in my body at the onset of this study

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>APA</b>	American Psychological Association
<b>BAK</b>	Beliefs, Assumptions, and Knowledge
<b>CEF</b>	Common European Framework
<b>CLT</b>	Communicative Language Teaching
<b>CoE</b>	Council of Europe
<b>EFL</b>	English as a Foreign Language
<b>ELP</b>	European Language Portfolio
<b>ELT</b>	English Language Teaching
<b>ESL</b>	English as a Second Language
<b>EYL</b>	European Year of Languages
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>MONE</b>	Ministry of National Education
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction to the study

Education is one of the most crucial factors that shape the future of individuals and societies. The education system in many developing countries is, therefore, undergoing educational reforms and restructuring. One such country is Turkey. Education is a more crucial factor for social mobility for Turkey as a developing country than in industrialized societies. Reforms are inevitable in all sectors and at all levels of education system if the aim is to become a leading contributor to contemporary civilization. In particular, being at the threshold of European Union (EU) membership, the process of joining European Union set in motion enormous changes for teachers and all others involved in education in Turkey. Therefore, a series of reforms in education have been carried out over the last ten years<sup>1</sup>. These reforms are expected to accelerate the country's full membership in the EU.

The acceptance of compulsory eight year primary education in 1997 is one of the most challenging reforms initiated by Ministry of National Education (MONE). Currently, basic education<sup>2</sup> reform is the top item in the agenda of the Ministry. The Government defines the new basic education strategy as expanding the eight-year primary education up to achieving universal coverage and as increasing the quality of basic education. There is increasing interest in primary education schools in order to turn these institutions into learning centers ([www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm](http://www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm)). Accordingly, preparation of a Basic

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<sup>1</sup> An account of these reforms can be viewed on MONE official WEB site, <http://www.meb.gov.tr>

<sup>2</sup> Basic Education involves Pre-Primary and primary education

Education Program within the Ministry of National Education and successful execution of this program are imperative.

One of the targets in the 7<sup>th</sup> five year plan of the government is rearranging and reorganizing curricular programs, teaching methods and techniques, and education-training equipment materials in accord with international standards. A major premise of the new trend in education in Turkey is that pupils should be actively involved in their own learning and in the construction and development of knowledge and ideas. It is also proposed that more attention should be paid to the individual learning needs of different students so that variations in student learning styles, speeds and abilities can be better catered to. Since improvement of basic education is one of the objectives of the ministry, the programs of certain courses have been renewed on the basis of constructivist and learner-centered principals. These courses include Turkish grades 1 to 5, Mathematics grades 1 to 5, Social Sciences for grades 4 to 5, Social Sciences for grades 1 to 3, and lastly Science and Technology including grades 4 and 5. Restructuring the curriculum will be extended to sixth, seventh and eight grades ([http://programlar.meb.gov.tr/index/giris\\_index.htm](http://programlar.meb.gov.tr/index/giris_index.htm)).

Being the world's lingua franca, English has become widely used in Turkey. At present it seems obvious that English has gained prominence over other foreign languages. As an independent nation aiming at becoming a part of the EU, Turkey needs English in order to engage in international trade and cultural integration with other nations.

The increasing demand for English as an international language is no longer a new topic in the English Language Teaching (ELT) profession (Kachru, 1992; Crystal, 1997; Widdowson, 1997; Nunan 2001). In the global village, improving the quality of ELT in developing countries through teacher training programs has attracted intensive attention for some time (Prabhu, 1987;

White, 1987; Kennedy, 1988; Holliday, 1994 and 2001; Markee, 1997 and 2001).

Foreign language teaching is generally influenced by the actual political, economic and cultural needs all over the world. Among other fields, recent technological and economic changes in the world have also left their mark on foreign language education. As in many countries in Europe, the system of foreign language has undergone changes in Turkey, too. A large-scale educational reform is inclusion of foreign language teaching in primary education in fourth and fifth grades in elementary schools. The inclusion was initiated by the national government under a law that took effect in 1997 (Tebliğler Dergisi, 1997).

There has been a broadening in the scope and diversity of English language use needed for participation in today's global community. This development has been accompanied by recognition of the need to guide English language learners toward high levels of proficiency, and to do so as effectively and efficiently as possible (Morley, 1991).

The importance of a foreign language is reflected in another target of the 7<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan which suggests rearranging instruction in foreign languages at all levels of education, placing emphasis on development of an environment that would be conducive to improving effectiveness of foreign language instruction ([www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm](http://www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm)). Even though the English program at primary level has not been renewed yet, it is on the way<sup>3</sup>. The basic principles underlying the improvement of the English program are learner-

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<sup>3</sup> This was confirmed in an e-mail sent to the researcher by the Board of Training and Education (Talim Terbiye Kurulu). As a result of her attempts to gain information, the researcher was able to get an answer from the ministry through internet communication. The researcher was informed that the ministry was planning to renew English language programs at primary level. The changes will be in the direction of emphasis on learner-centeredness and learner autonomy along with the introduction of European Language Portfolio.



centeredness, learner autonomy and the introduction of an European Language Portfolio (ELP). Teachers will be required to use learner-centered methods, focus on learner autonomy and use the ELP while teaching English. Discovering the beliefs, assumptions and knowledge of current EFL teachers in Turkey is the first step in moving toward change. Therefore, it is the aim of this study to explore how teachers currently define learner-centeredness, learner autonomy and ELP and to illustrate how they implement their understanding of learner-centeredness in their classrooms.

In order to keep up with the innovations in English language teaching (ELT), language teacher education has begun to recognize that teachers, apart from the method or materials they may use, are central to understanding and improving English language teaching. Drawing on work in general education, teacher educators have come to recognize that teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills: they are individuals who enter teacher education programs with prior experiences, personal values and beliefs that inform their knowledge about teaching and shape what they do in the classrooms.<sup>4</sup>

Teachers, especially their beliefs, views and preferences about English and its teaching have to play a central role both in shaping their characteristic patterns of instructional behavior and implementing any effective program of change in schools (Clark, 1988, Clark and Peterson, 1986; Pajares, 1992; Prawat, 1992). Teachers being the most important agents of the educational reforms, their beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge (BAK) (Woods, 1996) are crucial factors in determining the effect of any educational endeavor, so it is

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<sup>4</sup> Kumaravadivelu (2001) declares an imperative need to construct a post method pedagogy as a consequence of repeatedly articulated dissatisfaction with the limitations of the concept of method and the transmission model of teacher education. He asserts that there are two mutually informing currents of thoughts: one emphasizes the need to go beyond the limitations of the concept of method to find an alternative way of designing effective teaching strategies and the other emphasizes the need to go beyond the limitations of the transmission model of teacher education to find an alternative way of creating efficient teaching professionals. This implies that there has to be greater awareness of issues such as teacher beliefs, teacher reasoning, and teacher cognition.

important to study them in the context of teacher thinking.

Teachers' activities as well as teachers' BAK with respect to the teaching profession must fundamentally change for large-scale innovations to succeed.

Not only do teachers' educational attitudes and theories have an effect on their classroom behavior, but they influence what students actually learn, and are also a potent determinant of teachers' teaching style (Pajares, 1992). In contexts in which educational innovations are being implemented, teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge take on tremendous importance. Teachers' attitudes and beliefs are the single strongest guiding influence on teachers' instruction (Reynolds and Saunders, 1987; Thompson, 1984; Doyle, 1992; Fang, 1996; Freeman, 1989, 1998).

Placing teachers at the core of educational reform brings the role of teacher to center stage. Education reforms have, as their cumulative goal, higher student achievement, more motivated learners, critical thinkers, problem solvers, and better-prepared citizens for an information-based global economy. Teachers are critical link between these reforms and student learning.

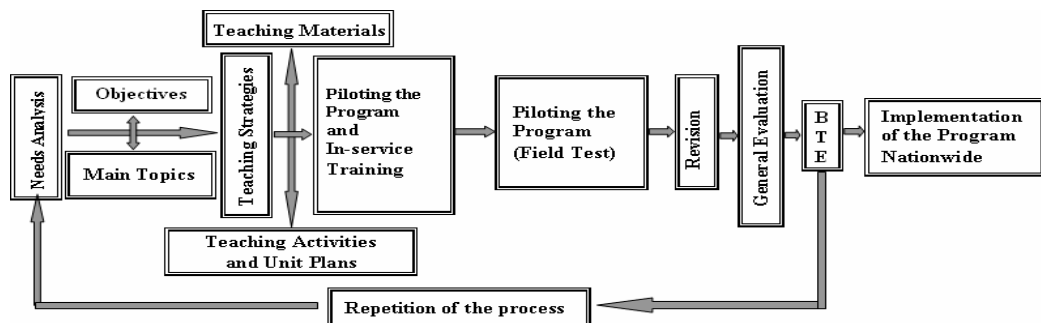
Research on teacher thinking furthers the process of understanding how teachers conceptualize their work. In order to understand how teachers approach their work, it is necessary to understand the beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge from which they operate. Therefore the purpose of this study is to examine, through a multiple case study, the BAK of teachers of English toward the innovations pertaining to learner-centeredness, and European Language Portfolio (ELP) and observe their practices to understand how they implement learner-centeredness in their classrooms in primary schools.

Given this overview of the present situation in Turkey and the goals of this research, the remainder of this chapter expands on the particulars of the research study. Specifically the following sections summarize the background, the context, and the significance of the study along with research questions,

assumptions, and definition of terms. The chapter concludes with a description of the organization of the study.

### 1.1 Background to the Study

An urgent need to improve quality of education appeared in Turkey especially with the agreement of contract EU criteria. Today, there is a new wave of effort to define effective teaching in Turkish education. This requires a reestablishment of the curriculum and the starting point is primary education. Consequently, the work of program development, which aims at redesigning of several courses, is put into practice as a continual and multi-directional process, which includes the related objectives and the behaviors that will be acquired by the students. Program preparation and development efforts are carried out by the program development commissions that consist of invited scientists from universities, and program development, education management, measurement and assessment experts and area experts ([www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm](http://www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm)). In the process of program preparation and development, after making decisions about objectives and the context, selection of learning and education methods, improvement of teaching materials and determination of evaluation are carried out. The following figure ([www.earged.com.tr](http://www.earged.com.tr)) displays the phases of curriculum development process.



**Figure 1:** *Program Development Model*

This program development model is accompanied by a supply of in-service teaching activities to enable teachers to develop their personal approach to teaching. Education is the top priority sector in this seventh planning period, aiming to catch up with the process of change going on worldwide. This process entails taking steps toward training more qualified teachers for schools. All the efforts in defining effective teaching and taking necessary steps for hiring better prepared teachers as well as improving teachers currently working through in-service training programs include the language teaching field as well.

In the Ministry of National Education, program development activities are handled and implemented as a continuous process of identifying the objectives and behavior to be taught to the students. Development of education programs is based on institutional cooperation and participation. Before the piloting phase of the programs teachers are provided with in-service training activities. By attending these activities they are informed about the learning and teaching methods selected.

The education and training programs developed focus on such approaches as meeting individual and societal needs, applying individual-centered education processes by integrating theory and practice, teaching the subjects in-depth, emphasizing the interdisciplinary aspect of the subjects and providing a rich living environment for the students. Innovations brought about by MONE reflect constructivist principles such as improvement of pedagogical skills, creating environments conducive to learning while deemphasizing transmission of theoretical knowledge and enhancing the interaction between education faculties and the schools where prospective teachers observe classrooms and practice teaching. The programs further consider the education standards of the EU countries ([www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm](http://www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm)). Foreign language programs will be improved similarly in the not too distant future.

The complex character of the innovations will have major implications for the functioning of teachers. As a result, the analysis of beliefs results in an

almost exclusive focus on the new innovations concerning English language teaching in primary education at the national level. Therefore, it is important to investigate how a learner-centered approach is defined and implemented in the classrooms where English is taught.

In the process of Turkey's nomination for full membership to European Union, using the common basis for the elaboration of language curriculums provided by Council of Europe's Common European Framework for modern languages (CEF) plays an important role in promoting both learner-centeredness and co-operation with the different educational systems in Europe. The CEF provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, and textbooks across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively (Council of Europe, 1997, p.1).

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) is part of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework for Language Teaching, which is a recent outcome of long-term commitment to promote the learning and teaching of modern languages in Europe. The work has laid consistent emphasis on a broad learner-centered basic orientation in language teaching (Kohonen, 2001). In fact, Ministry of National Education displayed the attempts at the betterment of foreign language programs first with the introduction of new guidelines in 2000<sup>5</sup> and 2002<sup>6</sup>. European language portfolio criteria, Threshold level and autonomous learning were the basic terms governing the structure of teaching English in these guidelines.

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to the decision to introduce English learning in the fourth and fifth grades at elementary level in 1997, the Board of Training and Education (Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu) approved the inclusion of English starting from the first grade in public schools in 2000 provided that the school met certain criteria. The criteria can be defined as appropriate condition in the school, and the demands of the parents. Since most of the schools could not supply these conditions, the number of schools where English is taught in the first grades is limited. (MEB Tebliğler Dergisi, 2000 Decision number 32)

Basically, the learner-centered approach to foreign language education was first articulated in 2000 in Turkey. MONE in the year 2000 published *İlköğretim Okulu Ders Programları 4. Sınıf* (Course Programs for Primary School Grade 4) and *İlköğretim Okulu Ders Programları 5. Sınıf* (Course Programs for Primary School Grade 5). In both of these books, it is stated in the the sections for teaching English as a foreign language in public primary schools that the teacher's approach to language teaching must be learner-centered.

Among the general objectives devised by MONE, increasing students' success at all levels of education is given priority. In addition, MONE asserts that to providing students with an opportunity to learn at least one foreign language, even to teach a second language is one of the ministry's special objectives.

The basic aim today is stated by the ministry as reaching the EU indicators at all levels of education. Another aim stresses the importance of improving the in-service training given to teachers qualitatively and quantitatively in order to meet the teacher requirements at all levels of education. Teacher training projects executed in collaboration with higher education institutions continue beside the existing teacher training system ([www.meb.gov.tr](http://www.meb.gov.tr)).

The qualitative and quantitative objectives for the 2000s have been determined by considering the measures of developed countries, particularly the measures of the EU and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, and the requirements of Turkey. Accordingly, both private and public schools are required to offer a foreign language among

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<sup>6</sup> The first attempts revealed themselves with the betterment of the foreign language program provided for the prep students of Anatolian High Schools. In order to reflect communication-based teaching and to guide material development and classroom practice, MONE published a new curriculum for English teaching in the preparatory classrooms of Anatolian High Schools. The guidelines devised by MONE included the terms learner-centeredness, learner-autonomy and ELP. It was the first time learner-autonomy, self-assessment and ELP were articulated in a program initiated by MONE.

the range of subjects available as compulsory curriculum options ([www.meb.gov.tr/Stats/apk2002ing/apage29-48.htm](http://www.meb.gov.tr/Stats/apk2002ing/apage29-48.htm)).

A major premise of the new trend in education in Turkey is that pupils should be actively involved in their own learning and in the construction and development of knowledge and ideas. It is also proposed that more attention should be paid to the individual learning needs of different students so that variations in student learning styles, speeds and abilities can be better catered for (ibid.). However, the most prevalent methods of teaching in Turkish contexts focus on grammar and rote memorization (Yıldırım 2000, pp.1-2). Conventional foreign language instruction is usually oriented around the teacher, textbook, and individual work in class. The teachers are the source of knowledge and take all the responsibilities in the classrooms. Students are considered passive learners who wait for the teachers to take in knowledge and information.

This kind of instruction results in students who are unable to function effectively with the language in real and unpredictable contexts. Although this traditional mode of teaching is currently an accepted paradigm for many classroom teachers, they are being influenced by educational reform to transform a transmission model of teaching into a more learner-centered model of teaching. Actually the organization of teaching and learning through student-centered approach has long been in the guidelines of MONE (Tebliğler Dergisi, 1997).

A learner-centered approach to teaching places greater demands on both teachers and students, especially the teachers (Prawat, 1992). Development of a learner-centered view of learning as a basis for instruction implies fundamental changes for most classroom teachers. Such a shift in belief about learning and learners has the potential to cause a redesign of the classroom activities (Kaufman and Grennon Brooks, 1996), a redefinition of the roles of the teacher and the students (Prawat, 1992) and a modification of the social climate and the nature of classroom interaction (Brophy, 1998).

According to Prawat (1992), teachers are viewed as important agents of change in the reform effort; however teachers are also viewed as major obstacles to change because of their adherence to outmoded forms of instruction that emphasize factual and procedural knowledge. Therefore the current BAK of the teachers who will be required to use learner-centeredness and the ELP in their teaching are the focus of this study.

## **1.2 Context of the Study**

Since 1997 (following the new system, which replaced the former system of five years of primary school, followed by three years of middle school), secondary education follows eight years of primary education<sup>7</sup> and covers general, vocational and technical high schools that provide three years of education and four in the case of technical high schools in Turkey.

Primary education, which is now eight years, includes the education and training of children in the 6-14 age group. Uninterrupted, eight year-long education is carried out in primary education institutions and a primary school diploma is delivered to graduates. The fact that primary education is compulsory for all citizens and is free of charge in State schools is guaranteed by the Constitution, the Basic Law for National Education and the Law for Primary Education and Training ([www.meb.gov.tr](http://www.meb.gov.tr)). Students may prefer to attend private primary schools that are run by individuals as well. The private education institutions carry on their activities under the supervision and inspection of the ministry just like the public schools. The main difference between public primary schools and private primary schools in terms of English curriculum is that although foreign language education starts in the fourth grade

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<sup>7</sup> Weekly course schedules have been reorganized according to the Eight Years of Compulsory Education which was put into effect in the academic year 1997-1998, and foreign language lessons for 2 hours a week are compulsorily included in the 4th and 5th class schedules of primary schools. In the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8th classes, foreign language is taught 4 hours a week.



in public primary schools with few exceptions, it starts in the first year in private primary institutions.

General high schools do not prepare students for a specific profession but rather for higher education. The following institutions are considered to fall within general secondary education: high schools; high schools with intensive foreign language teaching; Anatolian high schools where a foreign language - English, French or German - is taught during the preparatory year and the teaching of certain subjects is provided in that language in upper grades; science high schools; teacher training high schools; Anatolian fine arts schools; multi-curricula high schools; evening high schools; and private high schools.

Students in high schools where the general program is applied may choose to attend branches that specialize in the natural sciences, literature and mathematics, the social sciences, foreign languages, art or physical education in their second year,. Vocational high schools provide three-year secondary education, train people for various professions and also prepare students for higher education. Technical high schools offer a four-year program. Subjects offered in the first year are the same as in the vocational high schools. Secondary education students obtain the Lise Diploması, which is the prerequisite for entry to higher education. Admission to university is centralized and based on the Student Selection Examination (ÖSS).<sup>8</sup>

MONE states that the main purpose of the education system is to raise highly skilful, productive and creative individuals of the Information Age who are committed to Atatürk's principles and revolution, have advanced thinking, perception and problem-solving skills, are committed to democratic values and open to new ideas, have feelings of personal responsibility, have assimilated national culture, can interpret different cultures and contribute to modern

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<sup>8</sup> In the course of education in Turkey there are two central examinations; Lycee Entrance Exam (LGS) and Student Selection Examination (OSS). LGS is for adolescents who wish to attend private secondary schools, the state Anatolian schools for more intense foreign language education or vocational and technical high schools. OSS is university entrance exam. An autonomous central body, the Student Elicitation and Placement Center, administers both these exams.

civilization, and lean towards productive science and technology ([http://programlar.meb.gov.tr/prog\\_giris/prog\\_giris\\_1.html](http://programlar.meb.gov.tr/prog_giris/prog_giris_1.html)).

MONE also asserts that the comprehensive education reform which started in 1997 should ensure that student-centered education is carried out in all types and at all levels of education in line with the requirements of the time and society. In addition, the professional development and employment conditions of the teachers should be improved .

Transferring the theory of *learner-centered* teaching into actual practice is the challenge faced by classroom teachers and educational administrators. Such transfer begins with practitioners having a clear understanding of the various underpinnings of the concept – the principles that form the prerequisite foundation.

The world at present is interconnected and undergoing rapid changes. Education focusing on subject matter alone will not enable people to face the problems of the real world and learn to cope with them. It has been suggested that learning should take place in real situations and that teachers should facilitate learning as students learn from experience, activities, and real work to develop their physical, mental, emotional, social, and intellectual capacities.

In Turkey, innovations regarding programs of primary education have been going on. At the heart of all these educational reforms is the reform of learning and at the heart of the learning is the move from traditional subject- or teacher-focused instruction to student- or learner-focused instruction. Thus, using the learner-centered approach to improve instruction forms the heart of the reform. This means that teachers must change their mental perspective from a teacher-centered approach, which they have been using for many years, to a learner-centered approach, the practices of which are quite new. There is also de-emphasis of the teacher-centered approach by changing assessment methods from test scores alone to include self-assessment, which also reflects MONE's attempt to improve the scope of evaluation and assessment beyond simple standardized tests.

While changes in society have varied individual learners' language learning goals, new insights into language and language learning have also changed the understanding of what the language learning process involves. In a similar vein, learner-centeredness has developed as a kind of humanistic approach and has helped developing the idea of learner autonomy.

Nunan (2000) emphasizes the importance of learner-centered classrooms and defines learner-centered classrooms as the places where "key decisions about what will be taught, how it will be taught, when it will be taught, and how it will be accessed will be made with reference to the learner" (p.11).

In a learner-centered curriculum, information about learners from learners is used to answer when and how to teach what. Nunan (2000) elaborates several stages of negotiating a learner-centered curriculum; making instructional goals clear to learners; allowing learners to create their own goals, encouraging learners to use the second language (L2) outside the classroom; raising awareness of learning processes; helping learners identify their own preferred styles and strategies; encouraging learners to become teachers; encouraging learners to become researchers. The learner-centered curriculum also describes well how to promote learner autonomy as an educational goal at an institutional level.

Kumaravadelu (2003) points out that in the field of second or foreign language education, scholarly interest in learner autonomy "received a shot in the arm" during the late 1970s and early 1980s with the advent and advancement of communicative language teaching which sought to put the learner at the center of L2 pedagogy (p. 132). Concepts of communicative language teaching coincide with the theories on fostering learner autonomy in students as communicative language teaching, learner-centeredness and autonomy share a focus on the learner as the key agent in the learning process. Helping learners become more autonomous in their learning has become one of the prominent themes in language teaching. The concept of teaching students to

become independent and self-directed language learners has also brought new perspectives to English education in different learning cultures (Benson, 2001).

In the 1990s, the discussion of developing learner autonomy in L2 teaching received increasing attention around the world. Learner-autonomy is another concept being articulated in the guidelines prepared by MONE for the improvement of the English programs.

Moreover, Turkey is witnessing an introduction of an instrument called the European Language Portfolio, which is devised by the Council of Europe in the English curriculum. The Council of Europe, founded in 1949, is an intergovernmental organization with 48 member states at present, all of which are in the continent of Europe. Turkey was a founder member of this organization and has actively taken part in all its initiatives to date. Turkey has had close relations with the Modern Languages Section of the Council of Europe since the 1970s. In 2001<sup>9</sup> Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP) were presented to all European countries. Since then, each member state of the CoE has been involved in the ELP project and has taken up the ideas in the CEF to improve language learning.

The introduction of the CEF is conceived as an innovation in language learning. It encourages the dissemination of new ideas, principles and guidelines. The Language Policy Division of the CoE supports and disseminates this innovative movement, encouraging European citizens to learn more languages in order to attain the educational objectives of plurilingualism and multiculturalism in the continent of Europe (Council of Europe, 1998).

Turkey, as a member state of the CoE, is fulfilling the requirements for the ELP and CEF under the auspices of MONE by reforming foreign language curricula, developing the Turkish ELP model and improving the quality of language instruction in the educational system. These efforts will contribute to

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<sup>9</sup> The Council of Europe (CoE) declared 2001 The “European Year of Languages” (Sheils, 2001) and Turkey joined and contributed to the European Year of Languages (EYL) events by organizing and participating in conferences, seminars and local meetings.

the language learning process in Turkey in order to harmonize with European standards and also to support the language policy of the CoE by training plurilingual Turkish citizens as part of the integration process for a multicultural European society.

Turkey has also decided to develop the ELP to support individuals as part of their life-long language learning. Another consideration is that Education Ministers of all the member states of the Council of Europe agreed to implement the European Language Portfolio project in their educational systems in Crascow meeting in Poland in 2000 (Demirel, 2002).

Developing learners' capacity for self-assessment is fundamental to the ELP's pedagogical implementation. Self-assessment comes naturally to learners who are involved in planning and monitoring their own learning. A teacher-centered approach will hinder the application of self-assessment techniques in formal educational institutions. It will take time to change students' behaviors and attitudes towards the assessment system. On the other hand, self-assessment is the core of the ELP's pedagogical function. It is based on reflective learning. Teacher assessment is important as well as self-assessment, so teachers can develop their own assessment tools (Little, 1999).

It is obvious that portfolio-oriented foreign language education will alter the role of teachers and their professional understanding of English language teaching to a great extent.

A key factor for successful change is defining the components of change for those who are to implement them (Evans, 1996). Consequently, teachers need to develop definitions based on their personal knowledge (Conelly and Clandinin, 1985; Elbaz, 1991) and experiences, resulting in a wide range of definitions for the term learner-centeredness and its implementations.

This research study investigated Turkish primary school EFL teachers' BAK about learner-centeredness, their role in creating learner-centeredness and

how they see the relationship between learner-autonomy and learner-centeredness and what they know about ELP and how they think the implementation of ELP will affect their practices. Another purpose of the study was to investigate how EFL teachers implement their understanding of learner-centeredness within the context of primary education. Since the focus of this study was EFL teachers working in private and public primary schools, comparison between teachers working in these two educational contexts in terms of their beliefs, assumptions, knowledge and practices was also revealed.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this multiple case study was to identify English language teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge about learner-centeredness, learner autonomy, and ELP at the primary school level. In addition, the teachers' own classroom practices were examined, focusing on how they implement learner-centeredness in their classroom. There are numerous reasons why it was important to conduct this study. First of all, there has been very little research comparing the beliefs of teachers versus their practicing in primary schools to see if the beliefs and practices support each other in Turkey. Some studies have looked at the beliefs of practicing teachers but failed to consider teachers' practices (Akyel, 1997). Discovering current EFL teacher beliefs and practices in Turkey is the first step in moving towards change. This study will not only show what teachers currently believe about learner-centeredness and how their understanding of learner-centeredness is reflected in their classroom practices, but it will be the first in terms of its aim and focus in EFL context.

The introduction of a new program or approach will be in competition with well-established theories of language teaching and learning, which are the product of previous teaching and learning experiences, and prejudices, and beliefs (Freeman and Richards 1993). Teachers' educational attitudes and

theories have an effect on their classroom behavior. They influence what students actually learn, and are a potent determinant of teachers' teaching style. In any attempt to improve education, teachers are central to long-lasting changes. The investigation of teachers' beliefs and practices can help identify the difficulties teachers face when implementing curricular innovations in the classroom and will help in establishing the most appropriate kind of support that is needed in in-service teacher development (Breen 1991).

How teachers as the end users of an innovation perceive its feasibility is a crucial factor in the ultimate success or failure of that innovation. In this study, the research questions were identified by considering the role of the teachers in implementing innovations. This study is expected to contribute to earlier research on teacher beliefs for both theoretical and practical reasons. In theory, this study contributes to the discussion of the relationship between teacher beliefs and practices. An understanding of teachers' BAK regarding learner-centeredness and how learner-centered instruction is implemented contributes to understanding what degree of learner-centeredness exists in EFL teaching at the primary education level in Turkey. Therefore, studying the complexities of teachers' beliefs and their efforts to implement learner-centered practices may result in suggested guidelines for the successful implementation of learner-centered practices in the future. For this reason, the study findings are important to making English programs successful for students.

This study is also expected to raise awareness at the educational policy level. There are a number of recent reviews of largely unsuccessful attempts to implement learner-centered curricula among teachers whose background and experience tends towards more traditional teacher-centered methods. In some form of this incident this has been documented in Greece (Karavas-Doukas, 1995) and South Korea (Li,1998). When policy is made in the absence of a basic understanding of what happens in the classrooms, ill-formed policies that

are impractical and ineffective can result. Policy leaders can use findings to reflect on ways to shape educational reform so teachers are renewed rather than depleted by the process.

As MONE moves toward implementation of the national standards, foreign language teachers will increasingly be called upon to implement their understanding of learner-centeredness that may be incongruent with their BAK. By exploring the BAK of English language teachers about learner-centeredness, learner-autonomy and ELP the present study has the potential to identify and articulate variance with those beliefs set forth in MONE's guidelines, which will help the policy makers to anticipate conflict or resistance to elements of the innovations and to provide direction for professional development opportunities related to the implementation of learner-centeredness. The results of the study might be utilized by MONE in determining the content of the in-service training program they are planning before launching a new curriculum ([http://programlar.meb.gov.tr/program\\_giris/yaklasim\\_2.htm](http://programlar.meb.gov.tr/program_giris/yaklasim_2.htm)).

The study can also inform educational practice. Public and private school administrators at primary levels can use the findings of this study to support best practice as they restructure the roles of the teachers. Designers of beginning teacher programs can use findings to shape induction programs that effectively support the growth of learner-centeredness in novice teachers.

Brousseau, Book and Byers (1988) affirm that knowledge gained through investigation of teachers' beliefs can provide insights for teacher education programs and instructional leaders. They argue that the first step toward understanding how to affect the process of schooling would be to understand the values and beliefs of those who drive those processes. The designers of university teacher preparation programs can utilize findings to help shape curricula in ways that support the development of learner-centered teachers.



Furthermore, this study is also expected to make educational planners aware of the relationship of current teaching practice to learning outcomes so that they can set up aligned curricula from the elementary school to college that are coherent, balanced, broad, relevant, progressive, and contribute to learner autonomy.

If teachers are to implement new programs, there is a need to see to what extent their current beliefs and practices match with what the innovations require of the teachers. As changes in teaching English take place, many teachers will be required to implement these changes using new resources and new pedagogical practices and will need to receive the professional development necessary for implementation. In sum, the study offers potential benefits for research, policy, and practice. A better understanding of how teachers understand learner-centeredness, what they know about the ELP and how they practice learner-centeredness can contribute to an expanded research base and better-informed decisions to be taken by educational leaders who envision a highly effective teaching force for the next decades.

Another significance of this study is related to primary schools that are contemplating changes in their schools. Although a case study cannot be generalized to other institutions, what is learned in a single study can inform MONE. A successful case study can also serve as a starting point from which further research may begin. The findings of this study may form the ideas of a questionnaire, which could then be conducted with larger population. Researchers must have a through understanding of teachers' BAK about learner centeredness, learner autonomy, and the ELP and their practices regarding learner-centeredness if they are to pose relevant questions. It is hoped that this investigation will generate data that will lead to insights for future research studies.

Finally, this study is significant because it examines differences in private and public primary school EFL teachers in terms of their beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge and practices about learner-centeredness. Thus, it will add to the limited body of research available on public and private schools.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

Teacher beliefs and innovations research suggests that teachers whose beliefs and practices match with innovation assure the success of innovations. This inspires an exploration of teachers' beliefs about learner-centeredness, learner autonomy and teachers' knowledge about the ELP. In addition, this study investigates how EFL teachers implement their understanding of learner-centeredness in their classrooms. As the "key agents of improvement" (Cohen and Ball, 1990, p.233), it is important to understand how teachers interpret and implement learner-centeredness. The second focus of the study is to find out the similarities and differences between the teachers in public and private primary school in terms of their BAK regarding learner-centeredness, learner-autonomy and ELP and their implementation of learner-centeredness in their classrooms. In order to explore these issues, this study addressed the major research questions, which are given below:

1. How do teachers understand the concept of "learner-centeredness"?
  - 1.1. How do they see their role in creating learner-centeredness?
  - 1.2. How do they see the relationship between learner-centeredness and learner autonomy?
2. How do teachers implement their understanding of learner-centeredness in their classroom?
3. What do teachers know about ELP?
  - 3.1. How do they think its implementation will affect their practices in the classroom?

4. Are there any differences between the beliefs of public primary EFL teachers and private primary EFL teachers in terms of
  - 4.1. how they understand the concept learner-centeredness?
    - 4.1.1. how they see their role in creating learner-centeredness?
    - 4.1.2. how they see the relationship between learner-centeredness and learner autonomy?
  - 4.2. how they implement their understanding of learner-centeredness in their classroom?
  - 4.3. what they know about ELP?
    - 4.3.1. how they think its implementation will affect their practices in the classroom?

### 1.5 Definition of terms

Terminology can sometimes be confusing and in some cases may have multiple interpretations. The present study made use of several terms which were foundational to the study. They were used to articulate specific meanings. For purposes of clarity, it is necessary to define the following terms used throughout the study.

**BAK:** the distinction between knowledge and beliefs is totally reduced by Woods (1996) who coins a new inclusive term, BAK (beliefs, assumptions and knowledge) that refers not only to beliefs, assumptions and knowledge but also the relationship among them and to their interrelated structure.

**Learner-centeredness:** Lambert and McCombs (1998) viewed the construct “learner centeredness” as a focus on both individual learners and learning in all aspects of the education process. A focus on individual learners encompasses their needs, talents, backgrounds, interests and abilities and a focus on learning includes attention to both how learning occurs and to the educational practices that promote high levels of learning, achievement, and motivation. Learner-centered teachers strive to understand their students’ background, learning strengths and weaknesses, interests, learning styles, and social needs. They

design lessons that actively engage their students in learning and that allow students to link new knowledge with prior understandings. They utilize the social context of the classroom to facilitate student learning evidenced by strategies such as cooperative learning.

**Constructivism:** Constructivism is a theory of learning that states cognitive growth occurs through the transformation of mental structures (Brooks and Brooks, 1999). Constructivism is also a “theory of knowing” and the process of “coming to know”

(Von Glaserfeld, 1995, p.53), which is influenced by “reflection, mediation, and social interaction” (Walker and Lambert, 1995, p.2). The pedagogical implication of this theory is that the teacher’s role is to facilitate this construction of knowledge.

**Self-assessment:** Self-assessment is a form of assessment appropriate within a learner-centered educational philosophy (Hamp-Lyons, 1990). Henner-Stanchina and Holec (1985, p.98) describe the self assessment process as follows: learners simultaneously create and undergo the evaluation procedure, judging their achievement in relation to themselves against their own personal criteria, in accordance with their own objectives and learning expectations.

**Belief:** Belief is defined as a mental state, possessing as its content a proposition that may be consciously or unconsciously held. Accepted as true by the individual, it is imbued with emotive commitment and serves as a guide to thought and behavior (Borg, 2001b).

**Attitude:** According to Ajzen (1988, p. 23), an attitude is a person's "evaluative reaction" to some object of interest. Ajzen suggested that attitudes then "predispose" the person to creating a cognitive response (a belief) about the object, and a potential to act on the object (an intention).

**Knowledge:** Alexander et al. (1991, p.317) define the term “knowledge” to encompass “all that a person knows or believes to be true, whether or not it is verified as true in some sort of objective or external way”.

**Traditional approach:** Classrooms are usually driven by “teacher-talk” and depend heavily on textbooks for the structure of the course. There is the idea of a fixed world of knowledge that the students must come to know. Teachers serve as information-givers and seek to transfer their thoughts and meanings to the passive student. There is little room for student-initiated questions, independent thought or interaction between students. The goal of the learner is to regurgitate the accepted explanation or methodology expostulated by the teacher (Hanley, 1994).

### **1.6 Organization of the study**

This study focused on the beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge of English language teachers of the current primary education program in Turkey. The aim was to survey the practices and beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge of EFL teachers based on learner-centeredness and ELP.

The study falls into five parts. Chapter one presented background information generally on innovations regarding primary education in Turkey and specifically on the innovations pertaining to English language education at primary level, a brief theoretical framework upon which the study was focused, the significance and purpose of the study, and the specific research questions, which are addressed. In the study chapter two provides related literature reflecting studies based on teachers’ beliefs, innovation and learner-centeredness and it describes the background literature that inspired the study and supported the researcher’s assumptions. In addition, information is provided about learner autonomy and ELP. Chapter 3 describes the method by which the study was conducted. It identifies the methodology, population, instrumentation and data collection methods and data analysis procedures used to carry out the study. In chapter 4 the findings obtained as a result of data analysis procedures are presented. Each case is separately described to better capture the rich detail and dense descriptions necessary to answer the research questions. Chapter 5 provides a cross case analysis and discussion among the

focus groups and the four participants. It also contains conclusions and recommendations for policy, practice and research for education in general, and particularly primary education of English in Turkey based upon the interpretation of the findings. The Appendix provides the data collection protocols and data analysis checklists. Bibliographic information regarding literature cited in the study is found in the reference section.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 Presentation**

A review of literature was conducted to identify and synthesize key research related to the purpose of the study, to present the theoretical foundation for the study carried out, and to confirm the need for the study. The scarcity of relevant studies and lack of understanding EFL teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge about learner-centeredness in Turkey was the main motivation for the study.

The purpose of the chapter is to explore related literature and research in order to provide a framework for investigating primary EFL teachers' beliefs about learner-centeredness, learner-autonomy and the use of the European Language Portfolio in EFL classrooms. Therefore, in this study, the literature review includes research in teacher beliefs, research concerning the relationship between teacher beliefs and practices, research pertaining to beliefs about innovations, the origins of learner-centeredness; the definition and description of learner-centeredness, learner autonomy and the use of ELP in language teaching and learning and information about Turkish educational context.

#### **2.1 Belief Research**

In the mid-1970s a new body of research began to emerge that worked to describe teachers' thoughts, judgments and decisions as the cognitive processes that shaped their behaviors (Calderhead, 1996, Clark and Peterson, 1986; Dann, 1990). As a consequence of this, a surge of interest in the area of teacher belief systems has appeared (Pajares, 1992). This research "has helped to identify the nature and complexity of the teacher's work , and helped to provide ways of thinking about the processes of change and support" (Calderhead, 1996, p.721). Researchers found that teaching could not be characterized simply as behaviors

that were linked to thinking done before and during the activity but rather that the thought process of teaching included a much wider and richer mental context. As Shavelson and Stern (1981, p.479) explained, research on teacher cognition made “the basic assumption that teachers’ thoughts, judgments, and decisions guide their teaching behavior”.

Kagan (1990, p. 420) noted that teacher cognition is somewhat ambiguous, because researchers invoke the term to refer to different products, including “teachers’ interactive thoughts during instruction; thought during lesson planning, implicit beliefs about students, classrooms and learning; reflections about their own teaching performance; automatized routines and activities that form their instructional repertoire; and self-awareness of procedures they use to solve classrooms problems”.

Currently, there is increasing recognition that the beliefs individuals hold are the best indicators of the decisions they make during the course of everyday life (Bandura, 1986). Pajares (1992, p. 307) argues that the investigation of teachers' beliefs "should be a focus of educational research and can inform educational practice in ways that prevailing research agendas have not and cannot". Educational researchers trying to understand the nature of teaching and learning in classrooms have usefully exploited this focus on belief systems. The research of Jakubowski and Tobin (1991) suggests that teachers' metaphors and beliefs not only influence what teachers do in the classroom, but that changes in these same metaphors and beliefs can result in changes in their practices.

A belief can be defined as a representation of the information someone holds about an object, or a “person’s understanding of himself and his environment” (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, p.131). This object can “be a person, a group of people, an institution, a behavior, a policy, an event, etc., and the associated attribute may be any object, trait, property, quality, characteristic, outcome, or event” (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, p.12). While Rokeach (1972) defined a belief as “any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred



from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase ‘I believe that...’” (p.113), Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) defined a belief system as a hierarchy of beliefs according to the strength about a particular object.

Researchers exploring teachers’ beliefs at the primary and secondary levels have used a number of definitions: “the highly personal ways in which a teacher understands classrooms, students, the nature of learning, the teacher’s role in the classroom, and the goals of education” (Kagan, 1990, p. 423); “psychologically held understandings, premises or propositions about the world that are felt to be true” (Richardson, 1996, p.103); and “generally refer to suppositions, commitments and ideologies” (Calderhead, 1996, p.715).

Beliefs play an important role in many aspects of teaching as well as in life. They are involved in helping individuals make sense of the world, influencing how new information is perceived, and whether it is accepted or rejected. Teachers’ beliefs are a term usually used to refer to pedagogic beliefs or those beliefs of relevance to an individual’s teaching (Borg 2001b). Teacher beliefs have been identified by Kagan (1992a) as tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students, about classrooms, and the academic material to be taught.

The literature on teacher knowledge and beliefs from the primary and secondary levels has developed a number of terminological differences. Kagan (1990, p.456) highlighted this problem by noting: “Terms such as teacher cognition, self-reflection, knowledge and belief can be used to refer to different phenomena. Variation in the definition of a term can range from the superficial and idiosyncratic to the profound and theoretical”. The use of these varying terms makes it difficult to investigate in this area of teacher cognition. Pajares (1992) addressed this difficulty:

Defining beliefs is at best a game of player’s choice. They travel in disguise and often under alias-attitudes, values judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical

principals, perspectives, repertoires of understanding, and social strategy, to name but a few that can be found in the literature. (p.309)

Defining beliefs is not a very easy task. There is a “bewildering array of terms” as Clandinin and Connelly (1987, p. 487) put forward including teachers’ teaching criteria, principles of practice, personal construct/theories/epistemologies, beliefs, perspectives, teachers’ conceptions, personal knowledge, and practical knowledge.

### **2.1.1 Belief Research in English Language Teaching**

The concept of belief, which has been a common feature of research papers in education for the past decade, has recently come into favor in ELT. In the field, various terms have been used to refer to the term ‘belief’: *pedagogical thoughts* (Shavelson and Stern 1981), *perspective* (Zeichner, Tabachnick, & Densmore, 1987), *theoretical orientation* (Kinzer, 1988), *image* (Calderhead, 1996), *theoretical belief* (Kinzer, 1988; Johnson, 1992; Smith 1996).

Terms used in language teacher cognition research include theories for practice (Burns, 1996) which refer to the thinking and beliefs which are brought to bear on classroom processes; philosophical orientation and personal pedagogical system (Borg, 1998) which corresponds with stores of beliefs, knowledge, theories, assumptions and attitudes which shape teachers’ instructional decisions; maxims (Richards, 1996) to comprise personal working principles which reflect teachers’ individual philosophies of teaching; images (Johnson, 1994) which means general metaphors for thinking about teaching that represent beliefs about teaching and also act as models of action; conceptions of practice (Freeman, 1993) to cover ideas and actions teachers use to organize what they know and to map out what is possible; BAK (Woods, 1996) which includes the concepts beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge, In all those studies the core term on which there is focus is “belief”.

Despite the popularity of the term, there is no consensus on meaning yet. The definition set forth by Rokeach (1968) claims that a belief is any simple

proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does and knowledge is a component of belief. Rokeach uses the term 'attitude' to refer to the beliefs teachers have about constructs.

Richards and Lockhart (1996, p.30) state that "teachers' beliefs systems are founded on the goals and values that teachers hold in relation to the content and process of teaching, and their understanding of the systems in which they work and their roles within it". These beliefs and values serve as the background to much of teachers' decision making action and hence constitute what has been termed the "culture of teaching". Richards and Lockhart (1996) summarize those teachers' beliefs systems, which are derived from a number of different sources. They are,

- a) their own experience as language learners,
- b) their experience of what works best for their learners,
- c) established practice,
- d) personality factors,
- e) educational based or research-based principles,
- f) principles derived from an approach or method (pp.30-31).

Borg (2001b) discusses three aspects of the term belief:

1. The truth element-drawing on research in the philosophy of knowledge, a *belief* is a mental state which has as its content a proposition that is accepted as true by the individual holding it, although the individual may recognize that alternative beliefs may be held by others. This is one of the key differences between *belief* and *knowledge* must actually be true in some external sense.

2. The relationship between belief and behavior - most definitions of *belief* propose that beliefs dispose or guide people's thinking and action.

3. Conscious versus unconscious beliefs - on this point there is disagreement, with some maintaining that consciousness is inherent in the definition of *belief*, and others allowing for an individual to be conscious of some beliefs and unconscious of others.

The field of language teaching has been one of tradition and transition since its beginning hundreds, indeed, by some accounts, thousands of years ago (Kelly, 1969; Howatt, 1984; Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Even though a much newer pursuit than the teaching of languages such as Greek and Latin or Chinese, the teaching of the English language has already been through many transitions in methodology. What are now considered traditional methods were once the innovations of their time, characterized by the attitudes and values of their creators, who recommended that other educators abandon one method and choose another, with unquestioning optimism, as though this latter method were the solution to their classroom concerns (Clarke, 1982).

In the past 50 years alone, English language teaching has gone through a whirlwind of transitions in its methodology, from grammar translation to direct method, to audiolingualism, to cognitive code, and a host of variations in each. In recent years, the most substantive transition in English language teaching has taken place through a collection of practices, materials, and beliefs about teaching and learning that are known by many different names, e.g. communicative methodology, communicative language teaching, and the communicative approach (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Contemporarily, English teaching methodology is going through yet another transition. This transition, frequently referred to as the 'post method' condition (Kumaravadivelu, 2001),

Research in the area of teacher thinking has grown rapidly particularly since the 1980s, with the consequence that the literature is vast and is often focused on very specific aspects of teaching. Nevertheless, the research concerned with teachers' implicit theories of teaching and learning, particularly concerned with epistemological and pedagogical beliefs is of considerable relevance to research in language teaching (Kagan, 1992a; Pajares 1992). The reasons are: first, educational beliefs have shown to influence teaching practice (Kagan 1992a) and learning outcomes. Second, methods used to investigate

relationship between beliefs and/or conceptions and teaching practice and the ways of analyzing data, are of interest.

By the mid 1980s, a rising view of teaching began to highlight the complex ways in which teachers think about their work as being shaped by their prior experiences as students, their ‘personal practical knowledge’ (Golombek, 1998). More recently the notion of work context has been recognized as central in shaping teachers’ “conceptions of their practices” (Freeman, 1993).

Language teaching is defined as a dynamic process, which arises out of the meeting and interaction of different sets of principles: different rationalities. In this sense, a rationality is the inner logic which shapes the way in which participants perceive a situation and the goals which they will pursue in this situation (Tudor, 1998). Tudor proposes that to understand language teaching, a first step is to explore the different rationalities which are present in each situation in order to discover the reality the participants involved in. There are four different types of rationalities: those of the students and teachers, socio-cultural rationalities and then the rationality of methodology.

While describing teacher rationalities, Tudor (1998) argues that research into subjective needs has led us to appreciate the uniqueness of each learner’s interaction with their language study. More recently something similar about the teachers has been realized. They, too will perceive and interact with methodology they are implementing in the light of their personality, attitudes, and life experience and the set of perceptions and goals which these give rise to. For this reason there is a need to listen to the teachers’ voices in understanding classroom practice. There is a need to understand teachers’ perceptions and the way in which these perceptions influence teachers’ classroom behaviors.

The maxims (Richards, 1996) or the pedagogic principles (Breen et al.2001) teachers use are important in understanding their pedagogical actions. The reality of classroom teaching is how the teachers interpret official curricula or the recommended materials. Teachers are not skilled technicians who dutifully realize a given set of teaching procedures in accordance with the

directives of a more or less distant authority. They are active participants in the creation of classroom realities and they do this on the basis of their own attitudes and beliefs, and their personal perceptions of interaction with their teaching situation.

All teachers hold beliefs about their work, their students, their subject matter, and their roles and responsibilities. They are individuals with their personal perceptions and goals, which go to shape the rationality which will guide their actions in the classroom and their interaction with the context in which they are operating (Tudor, 1998, p. 324).

A major goal of research on teachers' thought processes is to increase our understanding of how teachers think and behave in the classroom. The drive for this area of research comes from the assumption that what teachers do is a reflection of what they know and believe, and that teacher knowledge and teacher thinking provide the underlying framework or schema which guides teacher's classroom practices (Sutcliffe and Whitfield 1976, Westerman 1991, Flowerdew, Brock & Hsia 1992, Kagan 1992a, Richards and Lockhart 1994, Bailey 1996, Woods 1998, Borg 1998, Richards 1998). Therefore, in order to understand teaching, we must understand how thoughts get carried into actions (Clark and Yinger 1977, Shavelson and Stern 1981, Clark and Peterson 1986, Johnson 1992, Nunan 1992).

Pajares (1992) reviewed research on teacher beliefs and argued that "teachers' beliefs can and should become an important focus of educational inquiry" (p. 307). He then sketched numerous facets of beliefs and acknowledged that a variety of conceptions of educational beliefs appear in the literature. Citing Nespor's (1987) influential work, he suggested that "beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and are stronger predictors of behavior" (p. 311). Studies on teacher beliefs have slowly gained prominence, especially with regard to teacher change issues.

Guskey (1986), for example, examined 52 teachers who participated in teacher development programs and concluded that change in teachers' beliefs "is likely to take place only after changes in student learning outcomes are evidenced" (p. 7). In contrast, Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, and Lloyd (1991) found that change in beliefs preceded change in practices. The current view is that relationships between beliefs and practices are interactive and ongoing (Fullan, 1991; Richardson, 1996). Richardson (1996) even states that "In most current conceptions, the perceived relationship between beliefs and actions is interactive. Beliefs are thought to drive actions; however, experiences and reflection on action may lead to changes in and/or additions to beliefs" (p. 104).

Pajares (1992) promoted 16 "fundamental assumptions that may reasonably be made when initiating a study of teacher's education beliefs" (1992, p. 324). These assumptions include among others, the notions that (a) beliefs are formed early and tend to self perpetuate, persevering even against contradictions caused by reason, time, schooling, or experience; (b) individuals develop a belief system that houses all the beliefs acquired through the process of cultural transmission; (c) beliefs are instrumental in defining tasks and selecting the cognitive tools with which to interpret, plan, and make decisions regarding such tasks; (d) individuals' beliefs strongly affect their behavior; and (e) knowledge and beliefs are inextricably intertwined (for complete discussion of all 16 assumptions, see Pajares, 1992, pp. 324–326).

## **2.2 Teacher Knowledge Research**

Meanwhile doubts arose also from the scientific community about a conception of professionalism that asked professionals (such as teachers) to just apply the theories and insights provided by others. Schön (1983, 1987) analyzed the work of various groups of professionals and concluded that they applied a certain amount of theoretical knowledge in their work, but that their behavior was not at all "rule governed" and that they had no straightforward

way to determine which behavior was adequate in specific circumstances. Schön contrasted this principle of “technical rationality” to the principle of “reflection-in-action”, which pertained to the thinking of the professional during professional activity and implied a continuing dialogue with the permanently changing situation. This situation does not present itself as a well-defined problem situation. On the contrary, defining the problem is itself one of the most difficult tasks of the professional.

This recognition of the centrality of the teacher and the teacher’s knowledge and beliefs regarding each educational process, including educational innovations, is relatively recent (Calderhead, 1996). Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet (2000), for example, searched for key features of effective professional development and, based on their research, reported that professional development should focus on deepening teacher knowledge in order to foster teacher learning and changes in practice. Similarly, Hawley and Valli (1999) considered the expansion and elaboration of teachers’ professional knowledge base as essential for their professional development.

In the literature about teacher knowledge, various labels have been used, each indicating a relevant aspect of teacher knowledge. The labels illustrate mainly which aspect is considered the most important by the respective authors. Together, these labels give an overview of the way in which teacher knowledge has been studied to date. The most commonly used labels are “personal knowledge” (Connelly and Clandinin, 1985; Elbaz, 1991), indicating that this knowledge is unique; “the wisdom of practice” (Schwab, 1971), and in more recent publications, “professional craft knowledge” (e.g., Brown and McIntyre, 1993; Shimahara, 1998), referring to a specific component of knowledge that is mainly the product of the teacher’s practical experience; “action oriented knowledge”, indicating that this knowledge is for immediate use in teaching practice (Carter, 1990); “content and context related knowledge” (Cochran, DeRuiter, & King, 1993; Van Driel, Verloop, & De Vos, 1998); knowledge that is to a great extent ‘tacit’ (Calderhead and Robson,



1991); and knowledge that is based on reflection on experiences (Grimmet and MacKinnon, 1992).

It is important to realize that in the label ‘teacher knowledge’, the concept ‘knowledge’ is used as an overarching, inclusive concept, summarizing a large variety of cognitions, from conscious and well-balanced opinions to unconscious and unreflected intuitions. This is related to the fact that, in the mind of the teacher, components of knowledge, beliefs, conceptions, and intuitions are inextricably intertwined. As Alexander, Schallert, and Hare (1991) noted, the term ‘knowledge’ is mostly used to encompass “all that a person knows or believes to be true, whether or not it is verified as true in some sort of objective or external way” (p. 317). This is particularly relevant with respect to research on teacher knowledge. In investigating teacher knowledge, the main focus of attention is on the complex totality of cognitions, the ways this develops, and the way this interacts with teacher behavior in the classroom.

Following Pajares (1992), knowledge and beliefs are seen as inseparable, although beliefs are seen roughly as referring to personal values, attitudes, and ideologies, and knowledge to a teacher’s more factual propositions (Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard, 2001).

### **2.2.1 Teachers’ Knowledge and Beliefs About Teaching**

In his extensive review of the literature, Calderhead (1996) found that many different kinds of knowledge have been described as underpinning effective teaching. The main forms are those related to the subject being taught, to teaching methods, and to the ways in which students develop and learn. The extent to which teachers have conscious access to this knowledge is, however, far from clear. Some researchers argue that much of this knowledge is implicit or tacit, derived from experience rather than from any conceptual framework.

The research concerned with teachers’ implicit theories of teaching and learning, particularly work concerned with epistemological and pedagogical

beliefs, which reflect their experiences, is of considerable relevance to research in language teaching (Kagan, 1992a; Pajares 1992). First, educational beliefs have shown to influence teaching practice (Kagan 1992a) and learning outcomes. Second, methods used to investigate relationship between beliefs and/or conceptions and teaching practice and the ways of analyzing data, are of interest.

Pajares (1992) attempts to clarify the confusion with the distinction between knowledge and belief. However, as many researchers have found, it is not so much that knowledge differs from beliefs, but that beliefs themselves constitute a form of knowledge. In his attempts to characterize beliefs, Nespor (1987) provides some distinctions between beliefs and knowledge. He singles out four features of the construct previously identified by Abelson (1979) and considers them in relation to teachers:

1. Existential presumptions or personal truths are generally unaffected by persuasion and are perceived by the teacher as being beyond his/her control or influence.
2. Alternativity is a feature of beliefs that would include situations such as when teachers attempt to establish an instructional format of which they have no direct experience but which they might consider ideal.
3. Belief systems can be said to rely much more heavily on affective and evaluative components than knowledge systems. Teachers' values and feelings often affect what and how they teach and may conflict with their knowledge.
4. Belief systems are composed mainly of episodically stored material which is derived from personal experience, episodes or events which continue to influence the comprehension of events at a later time. Whereas beliefs reside in episodic memory, knowledge is semantically stored.

A further distinction between beliefs and knowledge, notes Nespor (1987, p.313), is that, while knowledge often changes, beliefs are "static". As well, whereas knowledge can be evaluated or judged, such is not the case with beliefs as there is usually a lack of consensus about how they are to be evaluated. Furthermore, there do not appear to be any clear rules for determining the relevance of beliefs to real world events. While there is no doubt other distinctions can be made between the two constructs, a better understanding may be gained by exploring the relationship between the two and by considering beliefs as a form of knowledge. This form of knowledge could be referred to as personal knowledge.

Kagan (1992a) refers to beliefs as a "particularly provocative form of personal knowledge" and argues that most of a teacher's professional knowledge can be regarded more accurately as belief. According to Kagan, this knowledge grows richer and more coherent as a teacher's experience in classrooms grows and thus forms a highly personalized pedagogy or belief system that actually constrains the teacher's perception, judgment, and behavior. In terms of beliefs being personal knowledge, Kagan explains: "A teacher's knowledge of his or her profession is situated in three important ways: in context (it is related to specific groups of students), in content (it is related to particular academic material to be taught), and in person (it is embedded within the teacher's unique belief system)" (p.74). Like Clark (1988) who equates 'implicit theories' with beliefs, Nespor (1987) explains how beliefs become personal pedagogies or theories to guide teachers' practices:

Teachers' beliefs play a major role in defining teaching tasks and organizing the knowledge and information relevant to those tasks. But why should this be so? Why wouldn't research-based knowledge or academic theory serve this purpose just as well? The answer suggested here is that the contexts and environments within which teachers work, and many of the problems they encounter, are ill-defined and deeply entangled, and that beliefs are peculiarly suited for making sense of such contexts. (p.324)

Munby (1982) also equates implicit theories with teachers' beliefs. Clark and Peterson (1986) in their review of the literature on teachers' thought processes, argue that teachers' theories and beliefs represent a rich store of knowledge. Teachers make sense of their complex world and respond to it by forming a complex system of personal and professional knowledge and theories which, as Kagan (1992a) describes, are often tacit and unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms and the material to be taught.

### **2.2.1.1 Beliefs, Assumptions, Knowledge**

Throughout this study the term BAK is used as an inclusive term to refer to beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge. Therefore, the following section describes the rationale behind using this term. In the discussion so far, approaches which divide aspects of teacher cognition were examined in separate categories. A more recent strand of research, however, challenges the categorical distinctions outlined above.

Woods (1996) suggests that these dichotomies do not accurately reflect the relationship between Teachers' beliefs, assumptions and knowledge and their practices in the classroom. In order to take appropriate action, people need to understand; and to understand they need knowledge about the world and specifically about the situation they are in (Woods, 1996, p. 59). Woods (1996) develops a multidimensional cycle of planning and decision making within teaching. He describes three phases of assessment, planning and implementation which operate recursively to inform different hierarchical levels of the teaching process going from the most local level of discrete events in the lesson plan to the most global level of whole course planning (p. 139).

Woods's analysis of interview data suggests that knowledge structures and belief systems "are not composed of independent elements, but [are] rather structured, with certain aspects implying or presupposing others" (p. 200). Woods proposes a model to signify the evolving system of beliefs, assumptions and knowledge (BAK) that recursively informs or is informed by the context of

teaching: the BAK was part of the perceiving and organizing of the decisions. Woods has demonstrated that language teachers create and maintain background networks of beliefs, assumptions and knowledge which constitute a valid theory of teaching and learning. These background theoretical networks are grounded in every level of routine classroom practice in much the same way that educational theory is grounded in the systematic collection of empirical data. This construct (BAK) is supported by MacDonald, Badger and White (2001). They also suggest that while there is some support for a categorical distinction between theory and practice in language education, it is suggested that the beliefs, assumptions and knowledge of teachers are in fact inextricably bound up with what goes on in the classroom.

### **2.3 Research on the Relationship between Teachers' Beliefs, Instructional decisions, and Practices**

Beliefs are manifested in teaching practices because teachers' instruction tends to reflect their beliefs. Pajares (1992) and Richardson (1996) investigated the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices, concluding that teachers' beliefs were reflected in their actions, decisions and classroom practices. Kagan (1992a) also supported Pajares and Richardson's claim that teachers' beliefs served as a vital role in influencing the nature of the instruction.

In her study, Johnson (1992) examined the relationship between ESL teachers' defined, theoretical beliefs about second language learning as well as teaching and instructional practices during literacy instruction for non-native speakers of English. Three tasks, such as an ideal instructional protocol, a lesson plan analysis, and a beliefs inventory were used to determine how much ESL teachers' beliefs were reflected in skill-based, rule-based, and function-based orientations. The findings in Johnson's study showed that ESL teachers' defined beliefs were congruent with their theoretical orientations, and teachers with different theoretical orientations gave quite different instruction for ESL

students. Therefore, her study concluded that overall, teachers had different teaching approaches, selections of teaching materials, and images of teachers and students according to their beliefs about learning and teaching. For example, a teacher whose dominant theoretical orientation was function-based focused generally on comprehending the main idea, following a pattern of pre-reading as well as post-reading questions, and discussion as usual reading activities in her instruction.

In addition, Smith's (1996) study explored the relationship between nine experienced ESL teachers' beliefs and their decision-making in classroom practices. The result of her study showed that teachers' articulated theoretical beliefs were consistent with their instructional planning and decisions. For example, those teachers who believed in communication of meaning as a primary goal in learning a language designed and implemented tasks which promoted student-interaction and meaningful communication, such as small-group or pair activities.

Golombek (1998) examined how two in-service ESL teachers' personal practical knowledge informed their practice through a description of a tension each teacher faced in the classroom. The teachers' personal practical knowledge informed their practice by serving as a kind of interpretive framework through which they made sense of their classrooms as they recounted their experiences and made this knowledge explicit. The results of this study suggested that L2 teacher educators should recognize that L2 teachers' personal practical knowledge is embodied in individuals. For this reason, personal practical knowledge is important to acknowledge in L2 teacher education practice and research.

Similarly, in his article Borg (2001a) presents two cases which illustrate the extent to which teachers' perceptions of their knowledge about grammar emerged as one of the factors which influences teachers' instructional decisions in teaching grammar. The two case studies suggested clearly that teachers' self-perceptions of their knowledge about grammar had an impact on their work.

Two conclusions emerging from this study are the necessity of further research into perceptions of teachers about their knowledge about grammar and the effects of these perceptions on their work, and the need to develop strategies, which enable teachers to become aware of their knowledge about grammar.

Another study by Borg (1998) was conducted on a single teacher known for his reputation as a professionally committed L2 teacher in an English language institute in Malta. A major finding of this study is the implication that 'initial training of the particular teacher in the study had a powerful effect on his personal beliefs which in turn had an immediate and lasting impact on his practice'. The teacher's experience introduced him to communicative methodology and fostered his beliefs in student-centeredness.

Two studies carried out by Woods (1990, 1991) have similar results. In 1990, Woods conducted two case studies on teachers' beliefs and interactive decisions. The first finding of the study was that a complex process of decision-making was involved in the instructional practices observed. In other words, the decisions were based on a variety of factors depending on the dynamic interactions between individuals. Woods also examined the nature of these decisions and found that there were two different kinds of decisions, which were related to each other sequentially and hierarchically. The second finding of the study was about how teachers approached decision making. When their decisions were analyzed in context taking into consideration the beliefs underlying these decisions, it was seen that the two teachers differed dramatically in terms of their beliefs about learning and teaching the language. One of them had a very global perspective, always starting with the situational factors and moving on to language in broader terms. The other teacher on the other hand, had a much more linear perspective, isolating the language from its context in order to master its formal aspects. This meant that the two very different views teachers had about teaching and learning resulted in different instructional practices. Moreover, the teachers' instructional practices were consistent with their beliefs.

Another study by Woods (1991) focused on two teachers who were observed through an entire course. The aim of the study was to depict whether the teachers' decisions in carrying out their classroom instructions were consistent with their underlying assumptions and beliefs about language and teaching. It was seen that the difference between the two teachers in terms of their attitudes and beliefs towards the curriculum resulted in different instructional decisions. Hence, a major finding of the study was that for each teacher, the decisions made in carrying out the classroom instructions were consistent with their underlying assumptions and beliefs about language and teaching.

Like studies done by Woods (1990 and 1991), the findings of a study conducted by Johnson (1992) indicate that teachers' classroom instruction is consistent with their beliefs about teaching and learning. After an analysis of the sample of teachers she studied, she identified three methodological perspectives following the classification in Johnson's study (1992): a skill-based approach, which separates language into four language skills, a rule-based approach, which views language learning as a mastery of grammar-rules and a function based approach, which sees language as the means of communication in authentic contexts. The majority of the teachers held dominant beliefs that reflected one of the three approaches. In the second part of the study, Johnson observed three teachers who had different approaches to teaching and learning in order to identify the relationship between their beliefs and their classroom instruction. The results of the study showed that ESL teachers taught in accordance with their theoretical beliefs.

Similar results were reported by Burns (1996) who, in her study, focused on the nature of thinking and beliefs of six experienced teachers. The findings of the study indicated "the teachers' thinking cohered around interconnecting, and interacting "contextual' levels" (p.157). In other words teachers' beliefs emerged from factors that affected each other and shaped one



another and these beliefs were reflected in and influenced their instructional practices.

The findings of these studies indicate that teachers' classroom instructional practices are affected by their beliefs. It is crucial to examine teachers' beliefs and the relationship of these beliefs with their instructional decisions and practices in different contexts. Insights gained in this way can yield valuable suggestions for the establishment of pre-service and in-service EFL teacher education programs.

## **2.4 Professional Development**

According to the thesaurus of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database, *professional development* refers to "activities to enhance professional career growth." Such activities may include individual development, continuing education, and in-service education, as well as curriculum writing, peer collaboration, study groups, and peer coaching or mentoring.

Fullan (1991) expands the definition to include "the sum total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one's career from pre-service teacher education to retirement" (p. 326).

Teacher development is defined as "a process of continual intellectual, experiential, and attitude growth of teachers" (Lange, 1990, p.250). Pennington (1990) asserts that growth necessarily entails change. Changes in beliefs are more difficult than any other type of change because they challenge the core values held by individuals regarding the purposes of education. Therefore, significant educational changes can mainly occur if changes in beliefs, teaching styles and materials take place as a result of personal development in a social context.

Several studies have investigated differences between expert and novice teachers. In general, novice teachers define good teaching in terms of personal characteristics of teacher, children's involvement, and affective features of

classroom interaction. Expert teachers define good teaching more in terms of lesson structure and teaching strategies (Calderhead, 1996; Kagan and Tippins, 1992). The expert teachers are better able to take account of context and purpose. The expert teacher is able to make a deeper interpretation of events, interpreting significant contextual cues and generating hypotheses about the situation in question (Calderhead, 1996; Schempp, Tan, Manross, & Fincher, 1998). As a result of experience, some teachers seem to have developed rich, well organized knowledge bases that enable them to draw readily on their past experiences (Carter, Sabers, Cushing, Pinnegar, & Berliner, 1987). As in studies of human expertise in other fields, it has been found that teachers have a highly developed but domain-specific knowledge base (Ericsson and Lehmann, 1996).

The novice has a more discrete and disorganized knowledge base. In the expert teacher, facts and rules become integrated into more holistic patterns of thought and action, situations are perceived in context and can be related to other events, there is a high level of personal commitment, and actions appear comprehensive, fluid and evidently effortless (Berliner, 1987; Calderhead, 1996; Carter et al., 1987).

Common to all the major change initiatives reshaping the face of public education today is an emphasis on continued professional development. Today, one of the recent reforms focuses on professional development as a way of getting reforms into the classroom. MONE aims at improving in-service training programs. The Ministry is aware of the important role of staff development at the forefront of its reform efforts. One of the objectives is stated as “all teachers must regularly participate in professional development linked to the innovations” ([www.meb.gov.tr/Stats/apk2002ing/apage29-48.htm](http://www.meb.gov.tr/Stats/apk2002ing/apage29-48.htm)). Among the special objectives of MONE, it is clearly seen that MONE aims to improve qualitatively and quantitatively the in-service training given to teachers,

In order to meet the teacher requirements at all levels of education, teacher-training projects executed in collaboration with higher education

institutions are asserted to continue along side the existing teacher training system ( <http://www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm>).

Although improving instructional techniques remains important in teacher development, what makes the current discussion of the role of professional development distinct from the past is the emphasis being placed on models that move beyond the merely technical. Teachers are increasingly being asked to reconceptualize teaching, learning and their own education (Feiman-Nemser, 1990), to reflect on themselves as professionals, on their roles in the classrooms, and on their students (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). Quality professional development addresses teachers' needs as the teachers themselves see them (Little, 1993) and tries to influence teachers' actions by starting from and making conscious teachers' attitudes and beliefs (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). They must bring their 'mental models' to consciousness, those deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, and images they have about education (Senge, 1990). Little (1993) takes teacher involvement in their own professional development even further. In order to address the diversity within their own classrooms, teachers can no longer be viewed solely as "implementers" of school reform. Teachers and school officials must take into account the underlying assumptions of the reforms, as well as their social and historical contexts, and the degree to which they are congruent with teachers' beliefs, commitment, and practices (Little, 1993)

The literature on school reform, change and professional development are clear: teachers are fundamental stakeholders in the change process. Their needs and concerns must be taken into consideration in professional development programs and reform initiatives if these reforms are to achieve any lasting effect on student performance. The literature findings on learner-centeredness, learner autonomy and ELP are equally clear: the requirements of these approaches must be addressed in classroom practices, nation-wide reform initiatives, and teachers' professional development if the initiatives are to resonate with the student in our schools.

## 2.5 Innovations

During the last 20 years or so, language education has been characterized by a constant process of innovation in the form of, e.g., curriculum revision, materials design, teacher training and development, and testing. As a result, language teaching professionals have increasingly had to deal with innovations, either in the role of directly implementing them or in terms of being responsible for their initiation, and co-ordination. Unfortunately, however, it is clear that many language education innovation projects have failed to fulfill their promise, and managing them has often turned out to be a frustrating and unrewarding experience.

The incorporation of innovations in teachers' daily work is one of the main components of their professional development. Concerning curricular innovations, the professional development of teachers refers to two main domains of knowledge: the content (declarative knowledge, what to teach) and the process (procedural knowledge, how to do it). The combination of both types of knowledge, concerning any subject matter to be taught, has been labeled by Shulman (1986) 'pedagogical content knowledge'. Its development depends both on theoretical and conceptual knowledge and on personal experience. The introduction of an educational innovation (teaching new subjects or using a new teaching strategy) will therefore require the development of both the theoretical knowledge and the relevant experience of the teachers. An innovation may thus be regarded to have been successfully introduced once the teachers have adopted it, i.e., are able and willing to implement it in their classes and are confident in their ability to adapt the innovation to the needs and abilities of their own students (Hall, George, and Rutherford, 1977).

The main method for the introduction of educational innovations is usually in-service training. However, it has been shown that in many cases, in-service training does not actually achieve its main objectives, namely the

implementation of new teaching strategies and a significant change in students' achievements (Guskey, 1986; Fullan, 1991). In fact, even when provided with the necessary knowledge and well prepared learning materials, teachers often find the implementation of an innovation to be a very demanding task. In their attempt to implement such innovations, i.e., in their efforts to translate theory into practice, teachers encounter obstacles of various types and from different sources. Many different factors have been found to bear on the process of introduction of educational innovations (Guskey, 1986; Fullan, 1991). It is generally accepted that success or failure depends on the attitudes, knowledge, and skills of the teachers, on the support of the relevant administrations, and on the teachers' perception of such a support (Fullan, 1991).

From the point of view of the teachers, the adoption of an innovation implies changes in attitudes, beliefs and concepts, and the development of new personal pedagogical content knowledge (van Dreil, Verloop, and de Vos, 1998). Measures of teachers' self-efficacy concerning the implementation of an innovation have been found to be related to their perception of its "congruence, difficulty of use and importance" (Guskey, 1986; Guskey and Passaro, 1994). The innovating teachers must be deeply involved, highly motivated and strongly willing to struggle with their personal difficulties and with external constraints, while attempting to implement an innovation (Dreyfus et al., 1998). It is therefore a lengthy, awkward, and to some extent painful process (Tobin, Briscoe, & Holman, 1990).

Alexander et al. (1996) look more at teachers in an attempt to understand the efficacy of innovations in schools. They propose that teachers tend to implement in their classrooms what they know and understand, in spite of whatever innovation may be adopted by the school, or what evidence may be offered about their current methods or innovative methods. Alexander et al. (1996) suggest changes in teacher preparation to develop teachers' understanding of learning philosophies, theories and principles. The preparation should instruct teachers in how to apply those principles to increasing student

learning, and teaches teachers “more about less” by focusing less on a survey of what exists and more on developing deeper understanding of what is taught. Further, they believe that a deeper understanding of these theories will better prepare teachers to evaluate and understand innovations that they will confront in the future.

As Cuban (1984) has suggested, teaching practices have changed little and teachers tend to teach as they were taught. Specifically teacher–trainers, teachers, administrators, educational researchers, and developers all play a role in the swinging of the educational innovation pendulum, and as such there is a need to change the domain of each to have a lasting impact on the problem.

Teaching and learning traditionally take place in the classrooms. Those outside the classroom who make policy or try to shape it, such as designers of textbooks, state syllabi, and state tests attempt to pry openings into classrooms to influence what goes on in them. Hoping something new will improve results; these outsiders want to affect this world that they will rarely, if ever, see. And this world is also a world rarely shared among the practitioners inside the classrooms themselves, for they each live their own separate situations (Jackson, 1990; Lortie, 1975). One method that has been used very frequently to get a sense of the effects of a policy on classrooms is to listen to the voices of the teachers (Carter, 1993). Teachers are the only people who have inside experience of the same classroom year in and year out.

Teachers are a critical factor in the classroom. Change arouses emotions. It involves as disruption to teachers’ beliefs and existing patterns of expectations. New meanings, new behaviors, and new skills are required for learning to do something new (Fullan, 1991). One of the most consistent findings and understanding about the change process in education is that all successful schools experience an “implementation dip” as they move forward. The implementation dip is literally a dip in performance and confidence as professionals encounter an innovation that requires new skills and new understandings (Fullan, 1991). Thus when a new innovation in instruction is

implemented professional development efforts need to be monitored and supported to ensure teachers practices are consistent with the elements of the innovation.

According to a study carried out by Yıldırım (1997) research studies on teaching in Turkey indicate that classrooms are dominated by teacher-centered activity, mostly through lecturing and recitation. Teachers are often transmitters of knowledge and students are expected to produce more or less the same knowledge in the exams. Students rarely ask questions and student-to student interactions through small group activities or group projects are atypical.

The purpose of this case study is to provide an explanation of how teachers conceptualize the challenges as they implement the innovative program of elementary English. Some of the existing research on educational change (Fullan, 1991; Hall and Loucks, 1978; Huberman and Miles, 1984; Sarason, 1990) indicated that one of the factors which was identified as significant to successful implementation of any program includes a clearly demonstrated commitment to the innovation on the part of the teachers involved.

## **2.6 Teacher Change and Professional Development**

In order to bring about a change in educational practice in the classroom, innovators need to be cognizant of the dynamic interrelationship of the dimensions of implementation. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) define these dimensions as the following: a. use of new or revised materials, b. use of new teaching methodologies

and c. a change in beliefs about “best practice.” In order for change to occur in the classroom Fullan (2001) believes that teachers need to develop meaning at each of these three dimensions. He states that when innovators are asking for teachers to change they are striking at the identity of teachers, which threatens their sense of competence and self-concept.

In contexts in which educational innovations are being implemented, teachers' attitudes take on tremendous importance because teachers' attitudes

and beliefs are the single strongest guiding influence on teachers' instruction and practices (Thompson, 1984; Doyle, 1992; Cuban, 1984; Fang, 1996; Freeman, 1989, 1998).

There is a new era of effort to define effective teaching in our education system and to take some steps toward training more qualified teachers for schools. Today, views are often against memory-based education and examination-based instruction. The teachers' roles in the classrooms have been changing. Instead of being viewed as mere transmitters of knowledge, they are seen as decision-makers in the classrooms. Nonetheless, there is still lack of enough information about how they really perceive themselves and their teaching practices. Transforming teaching practices from one paradigm to another is not an easy task

There is a growing consensus in the literature regarding the elements of effective professional development for teachers. Effective professional development is embedded in the reality of teachers' work. It is designed with teacher input. It fosters critical reflection and meaningful collaboration. Promising professional development is aligned with effective teaching and learning.

Staff development and school-based training programs are often criticized as notoriously unsuccessful in bringing about attitudinal changes in teachers. It may be that these efforts approach the problem in a reverse fashion. There is some evidence that it is more profitable to expend effort in changing behavior before attempting to change beliefs or attitudes. Guskey (1986) found that when teachers were encouraged to engage in innovative practices and when they found them successful in boosting achievement, significant attitudinal change was noted. This same change is not seen, however, when teachers do not use the innovations in the first place, or if they use them but detect no improvement in their students.

Teachers' willingness to implement new instructional practices is a key factor influencing improvement efforts involving implementation of new



practices. These practices may require minor changes in certain classroom activities or may mandate an entirely new curriculum or a very different instructional approach. Furthermore, several variables have been identified in the literature as determinants of teachers' willingness to implement instructional innovations. These variables include the degree to which the innovations are aligned with teachers' present practices (congruence) and teachers' estimates of the needed extra time and effort to implement the innovations (cost) (Doyle and Ponder, 1977).

The identified variables also include teachers' perceptions of the importance and difficulty of implementing innovations (Sparks, 1983), and teachers' experience and sense of efficacy (Guskey, 1988). Thus, it is important to understand what factors influence teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of recommended practices. Research has shown that the aforementioned variables i.e., congruence, cost; difficulty, and importance did indeed influence teachers' degree of implementing a new program or instructional innovation. For example, based on an analysis of results from five studies, Mohlman, Coladarci, and Gage (1982) maintained that congruence and cost influenced teachers' degree of implementation. That is, teachers were willing to implement instructional practices that are similar to their current practices and less costly.

Likewise, Sparks (1983) reported that teachers' perceptions of the importance of the new practices were positively correlated with implementation; meanwhile, teachers' ratings of the difficulty of implementation were found to be highly individualistic and unrelated to willingness to implement new practices.

Along similar lines, Guskey (1988) explored the relationship among teachers' sense of efficacy and their attitudes toward the implementation of mastery learning as a form of instructional innovation. The concept of teacher efficacy has its roots in the construct of self-efficacy proposed by Bandura in 1977. Bandura hypothesized that peoples' belief about the action-outcome

relationship is not a sufficient determinant of behavior. Rather, behavior is likely to be determined by peoples' self-efficacy in order to produce certain outcomes. Furthermore, Bandura (1997) maintained that peoples' interpretations of past experience lead them to foresee how well they will be able to perform specific tasks. These anticipations then influence their willingness to engage in new tasks, make extra effort, and persist in the face of adversity (Ross, 1989).

An important obstacle to adopting innovations is that teachers are frequently given very little support and reward for changing what they do in classrooms (Datnow et al., 2002). When changes are instituted, teachers may be left on their own to figure out how to do the innovation, how to develop appropriate curriculum materials, how to mesh curriculum and processes to district or state goals, and how to solve problems specific to the context in which they are implementing. Yet when they accomplish successful implementation there is little recognition or reward for doing so. On the other hand, teachers are likely to risk rebuke when innovations fail or struggle. In this context, it is not any surprise that most teachers prefer to 'stand pat' with what is comfortable rather than to attempt an innovation, no matter how convincing. An innovation cannot become institutionalized when only a minority of the teachers embrace the reform and fully implement the innovation. It remains "experimental" or novel and without being widely accepted and used, the innovation is bound for eventual rejection (Datnow et al., 2002). Inertia favors a lack of large-scale change.

### **2.6.1 Teacher Beliefs and Educational Innovations**

There is another area where research on teacher beliefs can potentially be relevant, that is, the field of educational innovations. In many past educational innovations, the teacher was seen as the executor and implementer of innovations that were devised by others. Teachers were supposed to implement these innovations in accordance with the intentions of the developers

as much as possible, and, if there was additional time and money available, it was spent on training the teachers to acquire the skills needed in order to demonstrate the required behavior. The vast majority of the educational innovations did not materialize at all or failed after some time because the teachers, after a period of change, abandoned the new behavior and returned to the old routines with which they were comfortable.

There is a growing consensus that educational innovations are doomed to fail if the emphasis remains on developing specific skills, without taking into account the teachers' cognitions, including their beliefs, intentions, and attitudes (Trigwell, Prosser, & Taylor, 1994). Many innovations are considered impractical by the teachers concerned because, for instance, they are unrelated to familiar routines (leading to strong feelings of uncertainty and insecurity), do not fit in with their own perceptions of the domain, or conflict with the existing school culture (Brown and McIntyre, 1993; Carlgren and Lindblad, 1991). This does not mean that the knowledge and beliefs of teachers should be the standard, but it certainly means that they must be the starting point for any successful intervention or innovation. To identify their authentic beliefs with respect to the basic ideas behind the innovation, a thorough investigation into the knowledge of the teachers themselves is required.

The complex and multidimensional character of the current innovations has major implications for the functioning of teachers (Elmore, 1996). Research into the implementation of large-scale educational innovations shows the concerns of teachers to play an important role in the successful development of the innovations (Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1977).

Teachers' beliefs obviously affect their behavior in the classroom. Their beliefs tend to be derived from their own experiences as learners, their training, their teaching experience, their interaction with colleagues and the values and norms of the society in which they work. When teachers' beliefs are congruent with the innovation, they are likely to be positively disposed towards its implementation. However, teachers who are initially enthusiastic about an

innovation may easily become illusion if there is lack of support for the innovation such as inadequate resourcing or negative sentiments from the principal or the colleagues. If the innovation is incompatible with teachers' existing attitudes, resistance to change is likely to occur (Waugh and Punch, 1987). There are a number of recent reviews of largely unsuccessful attempts to implement learner-centered curricula amongst teachers whose background and experience tends towards more traditional teacher-centered methods. In some form of this occurrence has been documented in South Korea (Li, 1998) and Greece (Karavas-Doukas, 1995).

## **2.7 Ministry of National Education**

Turkey has been pursuing a project of modernization for almost 200 years and for the last 40 years the project systematically and exclusively leads the country toward West. It is a decision not only made by the Turkish elite but also by the member of the Western world that the country sees no other way but to be part of the West. It is this longing that drives the country in its desire to be an official member of the European Union. In order to get to be admitted to the European Union, Turkey has to meet the standards of the Union on economy, education and politics. For that purpose, Turkey took the decision to restructure the society through the reforms that will create the better and modern country to side with European Nations.

One way of doing this is to implement educational reforms. The first stage of the new eight-year uninterrupted compulsory elementary education program began to be implemented nationwide in the 1997-1998 school year. Turkey realized one of the most significant reforms in the field of education witnessed in many years. In addition, as a part of this reform program, Turkey started to improve programs taught at primary level. Through this process the Ministry carries out the requirements to meet the standards of the European Union and the global world.

### 2.7.1 National Provision of Primary Education

Educational administration is centralized under the Ministry of Education. The Ministry is responsible for drawing up curricula, coordinating the work of official, private and voluntary organizations, designing and building schools, and developing educational materials. The Supreme Council of National Education discusses and decides on curricula, regulations prepared by the Ministry. Educational affairs in the provinces are organized by the Directors of National Education appointed by the Minister. However, they work under the direction of the provincial governor ([www.ttkb.meb.gov.tr](http://www.ttkb.meb.gov.tr)).

Private primary and secondary schools are financially independent. The principles regulating private schools are defined in legislation that reflects the educational standards and regulations applicable to public-sector schools. Educational administration is firmly centralized under the Ministry of National Education. For example, the Ministry is responsible for drawing up curricula, coordinating the work of official, private and voluntary organizations, designing and building schools, and developing educational materials. The *Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı* (Board of Training and Education) discusses and determines curricula and regulations prepared by the Ministry. Educational activity in the Turkish provinces is organized by the Directors of Education appointed by the Minister. However, they work under the direction of the provincial governor. Thus administrative control over and management of public-sector schools at local level lies under the provincial directorates of the Ministry.

Supervision of educational institutions is carried out at both central and regional level. While the supervision of basic education institutions is performed at regional level by primary education inspectors, inspectors delegated by the Ministry of National Education supervise secondary education institutions. Public higher education institutions are autonomous for purposes of teaching and research. However, they have to submit annual reports to the Higher Education Council which is responsible for the planning and

coordination of higher education. Institutions are monitored at least once a year by the Higher Education Supervisory Board (*Yükseköğretim Denetleme Kurulu*) acting on behalf of the YÖK.<sup>1</sup>

The school year comprises 180 days and is divided into two semesters. It begins in the second week of September and ends in mid-June of the following year. At the end of the first semester, there is a two-week holiday called ‘mid-school-year’ holiday. The Ministry of National Education takes decisions on the exact timing of each semester. Schools are open five days a week from Monday to Friday. The number of school lessons a week in basic education is 30, so that the average number of lessons a day is 6. One lesson lasts 40 minutes and the break between lessons, which is determined by the school, at least 10 minutes. In general, the full school day runs from 9 a.m. to 3 or 4 p.m. However, 12,342 of the 56,321 public-sector schools (22 %) organize their provision in two separate shifts (morning and afternoon) to increase their capacity in areas of crowded settlement. In such cases, the number and duration of school lessons remain the same as in full-day provision.

The maximum number of pupils per class as officially specified is 30. However, there are no criteria for grouping pupils within a class – they are allocated to classes as each school wishes. This means that one can find classes with 70 students<sup>2</sup>. For grades 1 to 5, classroom teachers are individually responsible for their classes. However, in grades 6 to 8 and some subjects in grades 4 and 5, certain lessons are given by specialist teachers. The curriculum is determined at national level by the Supreme Council of National Education, which is a department of the Ministry of National Education.

It is intended that pupils in basic education should be provided with basic knowledge and skills. Through active learning and pupil-oriented teaching, children are meant to become more creative, learn to think critically

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<sup>1</sup> All the information about MONE was taken from the web-site <http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/>

<sup>2</sup> Before the actual focus group discussion, a pilot focus group study was carried out with EFL teachers working in a primary school. The number of students in each class in this school was more than 70.

and solve the kind of problems they will face in later life. In the first three grades, there are no examinations. Instead, pupils are continuously assessed on the basis of their marks and work during the year. In grades 4 to 8, at least two examinations per semester have to be organized for each course, although teachers determine the precise number at the beginning of each school year. When preparing written or oral examination questions, they have to take account of the learning objectives for each subject as laid down in the annual course plans, as well as basic rules for assessing the performance of pupils. In general, pupils are assessed by means of written or oral examinations, or on the basis of assignments, marks for specific projects or practical examinations (in the case of lessons on use of the computer, drama or local handicrafts). The mid-term mark for a course is the average of all marks obtained by the pupil during the semester. However, teachers may award a higher mark to pupils who have taken part in scientific, artistic, social, cultural or sports activities. In order for a pupil to move on to the next grade or complete compulsory education successfully, the average of the marks obtained in all courses should be no less than 2 in either semester of the school year. At the end of the year or the end of an extra training course, a teacher council discusses the situation of pupils who have been unsuccessful during the year. If the council decides that a pupil may nevertheless progress to the next grade, this is explicitly mentioned in the school record of the pupil concerned.

General secondary education is provided in general high schools, Anatolian high schools, multi-program high schools, science high schools, foreign language based high schools, Anatolian teacher high schools, Anatolian fine art high schools and a social science high school. The key characteristic of Anatolian high schools is that some subjects are taught in a foreign language (mainly English, German or French) and that they include a preparatory year to achieve proficiency in it.

In Turkey, admission requirements depend on the particular type of school concerned. No examination has to be taken for admission to general high

schools or multi-program high schools. However, in the case of Anatolian high schools, science schools, Anatolian teacher high schools and Anatolian vocational and technical high schools, pupils have to sit centrally administered entrance examinations Lycee *Entrance Exam* (LGS) is required. This exam puts tremendous pressure on adolescents attending the last year of primary school to prepare for the national lycee admission examination of LGS. These examinations are very competitive and are the sole criteria for acceptance into Anatolian high schools. So great is the pressure to perform well that students attend private courses to strengthen their knowledge in subjects such as Mathematics, Turkish, and Science. This results in taking these courses more seriously than English.

All teachers who work for the Ministry of National Education are appointed by the ministry and are civil servants whose salaries are paid by the State. Those employed in private schools are not civil servants and are paid by the owner of the school concerned.

### **2.7.2 Primary School Organization**

Primary education is compulsory and free at public schools. Primary education institutions consist of eight-year schools where continuous education is provided and primary education diplomas are awarded to the graduating students.

Teaching materials are asserted to be based on Atatürk's ideology in terms of quality and quantity, so as to provide contemporary, scientific knowledge and experience, away from memorizing and promoting active learning for the students ([www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm](http://www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm)). The Ministry of National Education approves and distributes all textbooks for grades one to eight. Private schools use commercially published books which are also approved by MONE. They are free to choose the English text books they use to teach through kindergarten, primary and secondary levels.



The fifty-ninth Turkish government has declared that it will engage in wide-ranging activities to improve educational programs. In the Eighth Five-Year Development Plan as well as in the Governmental Plan for Immediate Action, the restructuring of curricula is among the issues which have been emphasized (<http://www.byegm.gov.tr/REFERENCES/EDUCATION-system.htm>) Student-centered learning, and consideration of students' prior experiences and their intellectual, emotional, social, physical, aesthetic, moral and spiritual development are the cornerstones of Turkish transformed education system. The redesigned school curriculum is structured upon a constructivist view of knowledge, learning competencies in content areas, developing a reflective attitude, and promoting creative, analytical and critical thinking.

### **2.7.3 Reorganization of Teacher Training Programs in the Education Faculties**

Considering the teacher requirements in relation to the eight-year of primary education implemented by the Law no 4306, teacher-training programs have been reorganized with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education and the Higher Education Council in order to meet the short- and long-term teacher requirements of the primary and secondary education institutions. The new system has been implemented since 1998-1999 academic year ([www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm](http://www.meb.gov.tr/indexeng.htm)). Another important factor which required the restructuring of the teacher education programs was the recognition of the inadequacies of Faculties of Education in training qualified and sufficient number of teachers.

### **2.7.4 The Key Role of Professional Development in Educational Reform**

The new visions of learning and teaching that underlie current educational reform efforts in Turkey are making profound demands on schools, teachers, and students. Teachers are expected to help students develop rich

understandings of important content, think critically, construct and solve problems, synthesize information, express themselves proficiently, and demonstrate these understandings and skills on new types of assessments. Classrooms are to be places where teachers and students engage in rich discourse about important ideas and participate in problem solving activities grounded in meaningful contexts. These visions depart significantly from much of the educational practice that is found in today's typical Turkish schools.

If educational reform efforts are to succeed, it is imperative that teachers meet these challenges. Although policy makers certainly are crucial to reform, "teachers are the key agents when it comes to changing classroom practice. They are the final policy brokers" (Spillane, 1999, p. 144). As Little (1999) explained, long-term observers of educational innovation and school reform have argued that reform might more productively be seen as a problem of learning than as a problem of implementation. That is, the progress of reform appears to rest in crucial ways on the capacity of teachers, both individually and collectively. (p. 2). Little's view is echoed by Fullan and Hargreaves (1992), who concluded, based on the empirical investigations of educational change in Canada, England, and the US reported in their edited book, that teacher development is central to successful change.

The success of current reform efforts is dependent upon creating opportunities for teachers' continual learning and providing sufficient professional development resources to support these opportunities (Cohen and Ball, 1990; Darling-Hammond, 1990, 1996; Richardson, 1994). Because many new forms of assessment require that teachers play a key role in their design, administration, scoring, and use, these assessments will not work as intended unless adequate training is provided. The need for major new investments in professional development is even greater for those assessment policies that are expected to change curriculum and instructional policies.

At the same time, educational scholars have noted the inadequacy of existing support for teacher learning. Darling-Hammond (1990) suggested a

possible reason for this situation—that policy makers appear not to realize the central role that teachers play in compounding the problem, the resources that have been spent on professional development over the years often have not yielded positive results. Most in-service activities for teachers are one-time events rather than on-going learning experiences.

These activities tend to be “intellectually superficial, disconnected from deep issues of curriculum and learning, fragmented, and non-cumulative” (Cohen and Ball, 1999, p. 15). The programs are not designed to take into account what we know about how teachers learn (Putnam and Borko, 1997). Thus, it is not surprising that, as Fullan (1991) observed, “Nothing has promised so much and has been so frustratingly wasteful as the thousands of workshops and conferences that led to no significant change in practice when teachers returned to their classrooms” (p. 315).

At the beginning of 2002, Improvement in Primary Education programs were drawn up under the guidance of Ministry of National Education in Turkey. These aim to promote new developments in primary education, deepen teaching reform, improve teaching quality, and meet the needs of the country and society for qualified citizens. The distinctive difference between the new curriculum and the former one consists in the new curriculum being based on constructivism, and stressing the introduction of new teaching model which requires changing the existing teacher-centered pattern of language teaching to a learner-centered pattern. The new curriculum focuses on learner-centered teaching modes and the development of the individual as a whole person, the promotion of learner responsibility and capacity for learning how to learn and how to learn a language. These new requirements are leading to many changes, which are not merely restricted to the teaching practices or approaches, but, more importantly, to changes in teaching philosophy, which deals with teacher’s “knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and thinking that inform such practice” (Richards, 1998, xviii).

## **2.8 Constructivism**

In the past few decades, there have been increasing criticisms of the direct teaching method that expects teachers to teach as many skills as required by the curriculum and learners to learn exactly what teachers present in their classrooms. This teacher-centered approach results in a failure to develop students' abilities to apply or transfer what they learn in the classroom into real life. The criticisms of this teaching approach are that it ignores pedagogical considerations such as individualized learning tasks, and it does not focus on students' interests and needs. Instead of focusing on students' development in cognitive learning processes, most teaching objectives involved drill-and-practice or memory skills. In addition, a directed teaching method creates an environment of learning skills in isolation from real-life problems and does not help students apply this requisite information or skills when they are required (Robyler and Edwards, 2000). This failure of educational goals, such as a failure to support learners' meaningful learning, calls for a change from the traditional teaching and learning paradigm geared to the need for educational reform. Awareness of the importance of teaching in authentic and meaningful contexts and student-centered teaching approaches leads the educators and teachers to adopt a constructivist teaching approach.

Unlike a direct-instructional model, a constructivist learning approach tends to focus on learning through posing problems, exploring possible answers, and students' developing products and presentations individually or through peer interaction (Robyler and Edwards, 2000).

Since constructivists stress learners actively participating in the learning process more than seeking correct answers, their teaching practices involve the process of meaning-making, contextualizing, integrating, collaborating, facilitating, and problem-solving activities (Willis, Stephens, & Matthew, 1996). Thus constructivist learning models tend to entail more inclusive tasks, such as exploring open-ended questions and scenarios, doing research and

developing products rather than giving lectures or filling in practice worksheets or activities designed for specific responses (Roblyer and Edwards, 2000).

In this vein constructivism tends to be a students centered approach placing more emphasis on the role of learners than that of teachers in classrooms. Constructivism views the learner as the essential and active part of the instructional activities, which represent its support of student-centered learning pedagogy.

Breen and Littlejohn (2000) assert that the theoretical basis for learner-centered teaching is provided by constructivism, a view of learning that suggests that learners create their own knowledge based on their previous experience and their social interactions, which is based on three principles of constructivism. The first one is that the learners acquire knowledge by constructing new meanings through social interaction, not by receiving knowledge from outside source; the second one is that the learners transform new experiences through what they already know; the third one is that learning is self-regulated and self-preserving. The ultimate goal of constructivism is that learners become empowered to be autonomous and independent from their teachers while performing their activities.

Instead of emphasizing the role of teachers, constructivists value collaborative learning activities. The source of knowledge comes not from the teacher but from students' learning environments, including peer learners. Constructivists believe that learners need to collaborate with their peers to share their background knowledge and learning experience. Thus, constructivists stress teaching students how to work together to solve problems through group-based and cooperative learning activities. If a teacher follows a constructivist learning model, she tends to favor more group work than individualized work (Roblyer and Edwards, 2000).

The main point of constructivism is that knowledge is not delivered to learners, but constructed by the learners through the learning process. Compared to a directed teaching method which places more stress on getting

the correct answers, a constructivist learning approach sheds light on learners' learning process, that is, how the teacher can help learners to discover and explore content knowledge by knowing what questions to ask and how to ask them. Therefore, in a constructivist approach, learners are expected to participate in their learning process actively for meaningful learning to occur. Obviously, the constructivist view of how students obtain their knowledge is different from that of a traditional classroom where a teacher plays the role of either a resource or a deliverer of content knowledge (Duffy and Cunningham, 1996; Prawat, 1992).

Unlike a direct-instructional model, a constructivist learning approach tends to focus on learning through posing problems, exploring possible answers, and students' developing products and presentations individually or through peer cooperation (Roblyer and Edwards, 2000). Since constructivists stress learners actively participating in the learning process more than seeking correct answers, their teaching practices involve the process of meaning-making, contextualizing, integrating, collaborating, facilitating, and problem-solving activities (Willis, Stephens, & Matthew, 1996). Thus, constructivist learning models tend to entail more inclusive tasks, such as exploring open-ended questions and scenarios, doing research and developing products rather than giving lectures or fill-in in practice worksheets or activities designed for specific responses (Roblyer and Edwards, 2000).

In this vein, constructivism tends to be a student-centered approach, placing more emphasis on the role of the learners than on that of teachers in the classrooms. Constructivism views the learner as essential and active part of the instructional activities, which represent its support of student-centered learning pedagogy. The ultimate goal of constructivism is that learners become empowered to be autonomous and independent from their teachers while performing activities. By doing so, learners are able to construct their knowledge in a more meaningful and authentic way. Instead of emphasizing the role of teachers, constructivists value collaborative learning activities.

Recently, in the field of second/foreign language education there has been a shift in focus from the teacher to the learner, from exclusive focus on how to improve teaching to an inclusive concern for how individual learners go through their learning. Very briefly, there are two reasons of this shift: the goals of language learning as well as insights into language and into the process of language learning have changed (Gremmo and Riley, 1995). Learner-centeredness is not a theory about teaching, but rather a theory about learning. Each individual decides what is important and what is relevant to construct a meaningful concept.

Although learner-centered instruction has to be implemented for a long time in Turkey, the majority of parties concerned have understood only the theoretical concepts. When it comes to actual practice, importance is not attached to learners but to subject matter (Yıldırım, 2000). The teaching-learning process is still a routine, repetitious method of transferring knowledge. More time is devoted to rote learning than to practice, training how to think, and character building. Learners are still used to following direct instructions, being obedient, and sitting quietly in their seats. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has been far from satisfactory. With an urgent need of teaching-learning reform in Turkish school system, real implementation of a learner-centered approach becomes imperative.

To a certain degree, a communicative language learning approach overlaps with the idea of a constructivist learning approach since both learning approaches value learners' interaction in learning process and learning in authentic and meaningful situation. Teachers of these foreign language subjects have been encouraged to use an approach commonly referred to as communicative language teaching (CLT), and as the Communication and Language or Communication approach. CLT approaches have also been widely endorsed for use by teachers through the Anatolian High School guidelines prepared in 2002, The inclusion of CLT in the curriculum of this level is considered very significant because of the contribution it can make to the

realization of national priorities: extending opportunities for cultural and economic exchanges with other countries and enhancing relationships with other countries and cultural groups on both regional and international levels.

### **2.8.1 Learner-centeredness**

Student-centered education has been used historically to describe approaches and materials that focus on meeting individual student needs in a nurturing learning environment. According to Henson (1996), the teachings and work of John Dewey foreshadowed this development. Dewey's work published in early 1900s, changed the way educators looked at teaching. Researchers have pointed out that Dewey moved the focus from outside the learner to inside (Rallis, 1995). Although recent inquiry into learner-centered philosophy and practices has affected the constructivist view of teaching and learning, the importance of Dewey's influence on learner-centered education cannot be understated.

Educational approaches considered student centered throughout the past two decades have included the open classroom, programmed learning, individually guided instruction, and computer-based instruction. The emergence of the constructivist movement, however, led to a shift in the conceptualization of learner centeredness. Learner centeredness came to describe the application of constructivist principles in practice rather than a description of a particular set of practices.

The current construct of learner centeredness was defined by McCombs and Whisler (1997) as the perspective that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs) with a focus on learning (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners). McCombs and Whisler (1997) maintained that underlying everything learner-centered teachers do is the assumption that all



students want to learn. To understand the current use of the term learner-centeredness, one must understand the context of constructivism in education.

The constructivist movement in education, pioneered by Withall (1975), and Vygotsky (1986), underlies the current shift from a non learner-centered to a more learner-centered perspective in educational practice. This movement followed a number of years during which “teaching was seen as the implementation of set routines and formulas for behavior that were standardized and disconnected from the diverse needs and responses of students” (Darling-Hammond and Sclan, 1996, p.68). According to constructivism, (a) new understandings are actively constructed by learners, (b) new learning depends on a learner’s current background of understanding, (c) authentic learning tasks are essential to meaningful learning, and (d) social interaction facilitates learning (Good and Brophy, 1986; Wittrock, 1998).

One important implication of constructivism for instruction is that teachers, rather than delivering already organized and interpreted subject material to students, need to guide students to create their own understandings. They accomplish this by utilizing students’ backgrounds of understanding, cooperative learning, authentic learning problems, and active student engagement in the learning process. Withall (1975) conceptualized the role of teacher as one of facilitator: “The primary role and purpose of any teacher in any classroom is to help learners learn, inquire, problem-solve, and cope with their own emotional needs and tensions, as well as with the needs of those around them” (p.261). The constructivist focus is not on what the teacher wants to teach, but on what and how students need to learn (Bruning, Schraw, & Ronning, 1995; Kauchak and Eggen, 1998).

The current constructivist movement in education supports a shift toward teacher beliefs and research-based classroom practices that facilitate effective learning. The central concept in constructivism is suggested by its name: Learners use their existing knowledge and backgrounds of experience to construct meanings from new information and experiences. Students who take

active roles in learning activities learn better than passive students. Finally learners construct meaning within the context of social relationships (Kauchak and Eggen, 1998).

Constructivism offers at least three implications for the role of teaching. First it stresses the importance of teachers' relationships to their students and to the process of learning. Second, it suggests that the beliefs and assumptions that drive teachers' decisions should place students at the center of the learning process as active meaning-makers of classroom experiences. Third, constructivism suggests that teachers' classroom practices should allow students an active and social role in learning activities.

Learner-centered teaching has also been called meaning-making, progressive, constructivist, students-centered, andragogy, holistic, and focused on process as opposed to content (Grubb et al., 1999; Karabell, 1998). It has also been referred to as active learning since students must participate in creating knowledge rather than being passive recipients of content. In addition, the teacher serves as a guide to students rather than the source of all authority and knowledge. In the learner-centered teaching environment, learning becomes primary with the actual content of the course becoming secondary (Cranton, 1998). The teacher is more concerned with the development of higher order intellectual and cognitive skill among students. They focus more on empowering learners and making them more autonomous and self-directed learners (Cranton, 1998).

The term "learner centered" can be further clarified by noting that it is sometimes used synonymously with "student centered." Those who would distinguish between the two terms describe "learner" as a broader term than "student," implying that the principles associated with how people learn apply to all learners, not just elementary and secondary students in formal educational settings (McCombs and Whisler, 1997). Since the researcher aimed at mentioning the learning dimensions of people the term "learner" is used instead

of “student” throughout this study. The term “student” was used only when the teachers mentioned the learners as students.

### **2.8.1.1 Teacher Roles in Classroom Contexts**

Goodlad (1984) painted a rather dark picture of school settings emerging from observations of over 1000 classrooms. The dominant teaching procedure which he revealed was lecturing, with an emphasis on recall and a lack of student–student interactions, group work or any other alternative approaches: a teacher-centered form of instruction. Freire (1970) maintains that such “banking education” equates with teachers filling empty vessels with knowledge, and that it should be replaced by more equalized roles between teachers and learners. A teacher-centered approach in which the teacher imposes her/his ideas rather than allowing learners to develop their own is believed to curtail the development of critical thinking skills and cognitive development. In contrast to a learner-centered classroom in which learners have a say in their learning, and often work with others in group activities, a teacher-centered classroom is defined as one in which many activities are primarily organized as whole-class activities directed by the teacher.

In the foreign/second language classroom, the teacher has traditionally been seen as the director of classroom exchanges, the authority and transmitter of knowledge doing most of the talking, with learners’ speech being limited both in terms of quantity and quality (Long and Porter, 1985). The traditional teacher-centered classroom environment found in many foreign/second language classrooms allows only limited opportunities for students to use the target language and to engage in meaningful communication.

Teacher-centered forms of instruction have been found too authoritarian by various educational theorists who claim that more power should be given to students in their learning process (Freire, 1970; 1983). They call for teachers to relinquish some of their authority as sole dispenser of information, and move towards more cooperative, equalized roles between teacher and learner.

Within the context of learner-centered instruction, humanistic education takes a prominent role. The goal of humanistic education is to increase learner participation in the learning process, establishing a “participatory mode of decision-making in classroom process to promote life-long learning” (Rogers, 1969, p. 3). Carl Rogers (1969) proposed a shift in education, from teaching to learning, from the teacher directing and controlling the teaching to facilitating students’ learning. The learner is to take charge of her/his own learning and to become more independent from the teacher.

Going one step further, Freire (1970) argues in favor of a form of education, where the learner is the focus and teachers and learners are partners. In such a learner-centered context, learners are not passive or “disengaged brains”, “depositories of teacher knowledge” (Freire, 1970, p. 72), but active participants in the negotiation of meaning, not simply repeating or memorizing material but expressing ideas of their own, thus using the language in a more qualitative way. In such a context, meaning is inherent in the communication between teacher and learner through a dialectical process. The prescriptive aspect of the educational process which Freire denounces is also denounced by a number of critical theorists such as Giroux (1987), and Greene (1988) who argue in favor of more balanced control over educational processes between teachers and learners.

These learner-centered approaches to teaching/learning seem to allow teachers to go beyond the teacher/learner dichotomy in which the teacher controls the classroom instructional process, and student are passive recipients (Lee and VanPatten, 1995), towards a two-way, reciprocal relationship in which both teachers and learners learn from one another. This two-way communication process is exactly what proponents of L2 communicative language teaching advocate, the teacher becoming a facilitator, intervening without taking control, encouraging learners to communicate, acting as a co-participant in the teaching learning-process. Stevick (1980) stresses that the language teacher needs to be able to provide students with room for “initiative”

while maintaining control: structuring classroom activities and providing constructive feedback on student performance. The teacher in such a communication model has two main roles. Breen and Candlin (1980, p. 99) assert that “the first role is to facilitate the communicative process between all participants in the classroom [...]. The second role is to act as an interdependent participant with the learning-teaching group”.

Responsibility for social relations which stresses the responsibility of the teacher in shaping social relations and managing pupil-teacher relationships. There is a shift towards more student-centered teaching. A new vision on learning implies redefining the roles of teachers and students (Candy, 1990; Hargreaves, 1994). A more central role is assigned to the students. They are considered active constructors of their own understanding.

### **2.8.2 Research on Teachers’ Beliefs and Communicative Language Teaching**

The communicative approach has been widely adapted and used by language teachers, program developers, school curricula, teaching materials and second and foreign language teaching during the last decades (Berns, 1984; Savignon, 1991; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Li, 1998). Through this widespread use, it became an approach to meet language learners’ communicative needs not only in Europe and the United States but all over the world. A great deal has been written and discussed about its theoretical foundations and practical concerns since its introduction into language teaching in the early 1970s (Savignon 1991).

CLT is not a rigidly circumscribed method of foreign language teaching but rather an approach, based on an amalgam of affiliated strategies, that seeks to develop communicative competence in students and requires a commitment to using the foreign language as a medium for classroom communication as much as possible. CLT classrooms are also usually characterized by a number of features that are commonly listed in the literature on CLT (Mangubhai,

Howard, and Dashwood, 1999; Williams, 1995). These features include: an emphasis on language use rather than language knowledge; greater emphasis on fluency and appropriateness in the use of the target language than structural correctness; minimal focus on form with corresponding low emphasis on error correction and explicit instruction on language rules or grammar; classroom tasks and exercises that depend on spontaneity and student trial-and-error and that encourage negotiation of meaning between students and students and teachers; use of authentic materials; an environment that is interactive, not excessively formal, encourages risk-taking and promotes student autonomy; teachers serving more as facilitators and participants than in the traditional didactic role; and students being actively involved in interpretation, expression and negotiation of meaning. In short, the approach puts the focus on the learner (Savignon, 1991, p. 4).

A number of reports in literature deal with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) innovations in EFL contexts. Although there are studies which highlight many of the principal problems in instituting curricular innovations promoted by CLT, many of the studies take the researcher perspective. Teachers' perceptions of innovations related to CLT remain largely unexplored (Li, 1998).

Some studies aim at investigating teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching within the ESL and EFL contexts. In an EFL context. Burnaby and Sun (1989) conducted a study with 24 Chinese university English teachers to investigate teachers' views on the appropriateness and effectiveness of Western language teaching methods (i.e. the communicative approaches). Although Chinese teachers revealed favorable attitudes towards CLT in general, they mentioned some difficulties in its implementation caused by their inefficient sociolinguistic and strategic competence in English. They also cited lower status of teachers teaching communicative skills than those teaching analytical skills or literature, large classes, lack of authentic materials and teaching aids, traditional teaching

methods, Chinese educational system and schedules as the crucial factors that constrain the implementation of CLT successfully in China.

Similarly, Karavas-Doukas, in her study (1996), focused on the degree of implementation of communicative approaches in Greek public secondary schools. In order to investigate Greek EFL teachers' attitudes towards CLT, she developed a 24-item attitude scale. The scores obtained by the participant teachers revealed that a considerable majority of them had mildly favorable attitudes towards CLT. Yet, when their classroom practices were observed, their attitudes were found to be different from their actual language teaching behaviors. Unlike the results of the scale, the observed classes were found to be teacher-dominated. The focus was on language forms and no group work activities were used. Teachers were found to follow an eclectic approach rather than communicative or traditional methods. The researcher concluded that this discrepancy may be the result of teachers' misinterpretation of the new approaches.

Another study carried out in an EFL context is a case study with 18 South Korean secondary school EFL teachers. Li (1998) investigated how Korean teachers perceive the use of CLT in South Korea where it was introduced into language education in 1992 by the Ministry of Education. Li elicited that all of the teachers who participated in the study were using grammar-translation, audio-lingual method or a combination of both. In relation to the first source of difficulty, the teachers reported their abilities in English speaking and listening were not adequate to conduct the communicative classes necessarily involved in CLT. Their low strategic and sociolinguistic competence in English was another factor, which made it difficult for the teachers to conduct communicative classes. They also reported that their students had low proficiency in English and lacked motivation to participate in class activities. The difficulties stemming from the educational system were large classes, insufficient equipment, and grammar-based examinations in which the students were evaluated through grammar, reading comprehension,

and translation questions. Teachers mentioned lack of administrative support and CLT experts who could offer professional help in managing communicative classes. Teachers also believed that CLT gave no account to the purpose of English learning and learning settings in South Korean EFL context and that it could not provide an effective instrument to evaluate the students. The researcher concluded that these difficulties the Korean teachers encountered in the use of CLT arose from differences between educational theories in South Korea and the Western countries. For a successful implementation of Western methods in EFL contexts like South Korea, fundamental changes are required in the underlying educational theories of that context and teachers' perceptions on the implementation of an innovation should be investigated before it is introduced.

Similar results were obtained in the studies described above although they were conducted in different settings i.e. China, Greece, and China. All of them make the same announcement in the end. If an innovation is going to be implemented, teachers' beliefs about this innovation should be gathered first. In addition, if necessary, they should be trained in such a way to adopt themselves to this particular innovation and they should be informed about its effectiveness.

Another study that shows the relationship between teachers' beliefs and communicative language teaching was described in Gorsuch's (2000) article which focused on teachers as they were asked to implement educational innovations suggested in a nationally instituted educational policy. With teachers and their world view as the starting point of the study, the study applied empirical methods to a model of Japanese EFL teachers' perceptions of various national, school, and classroom-level influences and related those perceptions to teachers' approval of classroom activities associated with communicative language teaching. The findings of the study suggested ways educational change might be encouraged, should this be will of the government, local school boards, the students, their families, the teachers, business and



industry, and others with a stake in education outcomes. Another finding of the study was that university entrance exam preparation had an influence on Japanese high school EFL education and that teachers felt influenced by the exam at both the institutional and the classroom levels. Finally, although teachers were somewhat sensitive to potential shifts in attitude toward the exams at the institutional level, they were less so when it came to those shifts as expressed in the classroom. The above studies reveal a lot of constraints of applying CLT in EFL context. Problems come from teachers' lack of confidence of applying CLT, inappropriateness of CLT in EFL contexts, large size of class, student factors, and teachers' fear of innovations.

Innovations in various EFL contexts developed in consonance with the underpinnings of CLT have faced major challenges (Anderson, 1993; Cheng, 2002, Dam and Gabrielsen, 1988; Li, 1998; LoCastro, 1996; Savignon, 1991). The origins of these challenges are multiple and include the teacher, the students, the educational system, and communicative language itself (Li, 1998). Dam and Gabrielsen (1988) found that the need to redefine teachers' roles contributed more to difficulty in the implementation of task-based approaches than did resistance from learners. The studies point to the inconsistency between teachers' perceptions of communicative language teaching and their actual in-class behavior. Anderson (1993) also reports that in addition to both teacher and learner resistance, the difficulties of implementing a meaning-based program include teachers' lack of communicative competence in English, the lack of teacher preparation generally, and the multiple and excessive demands placed upon teachers.

## **2.9 Learner Autonomy**

One of the most important outcomes of the shift towards more communicative language teaching has been the enhancement of the role of the learner in the language learning process (Wenden, 1991). Foreign language education is no longer one in which teachers teach and learners learn. Instead,

teachers have to learn to let go and learners have to learn to take hold of their learning (Wenden, 1991). Learners need to be willing and able to think independently and act responsibly for their own learning. For students to maximize their chances for success in this rapidly changing world, learner autonomy has become a desirable goal in language learning and teaching (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). As very few studies have been done to investigate teachers' beliefs on these issues, the findings of this research are important to English teachers and students who emphasize self-direction for lifelong learning as the goal of learner-centered instruction.

Holec (1980) was the first to discuss the concept of learner empowerment and autonomy in a foreign language learning context. He defines learner autonomy as the ability to take control of one's own learning. Seen from this perspective, teachers are no longer transmitters of knowledge, but help learners choose learning strategies and evaluate their own learning. Over the last two decades or so, the nature and the implications of the concept of learner autonomy have evolved and become clearer in time (Tudor, 1996). Little (1991) has described autonomy as a "buzz-word" (p.2) of the 1990s and "learner autonomy" has been discussed in numerous books (Benson and Voller, 1997; Dam, 1995; Dickinson and Wenden, 1995; van Lier, 1995). In language education, however, the concept of autonomy is not clearly defined, so its application for language teaching is still open to discussion, despite the fact that "few teachers will disagree with the importance of helping language learners become more autonomous as learners (Wenden, 1991, p.11). Various definitions of autonomy in language learning will be reviewed as to generate the working definition of the concept learner autonomy.

As put forward by Little (1991, p.4) "autonomy is a *capacity* - for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning. The capacity

for autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts".

Kumaravadivelu (2003) points out that the misconception about the meaning of autonomy is created by the diversity of the terms. This diversity includes widely used terms such as self-instruction, self-direction, self-access learning, and individualized instruction. For Holec (1980), autonomy describes an attitude and self-direction, a mode of learning. Holec (1981) later defines learner autonomy as 'the ability to take charge of one's learning' (p. 3). He further explains that taking charge actually means to have and to hold the responsibility for determining learning objectives, defining content and progress, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring the procedure of acquisition, and finally, evaluating what has been acquired.

Although Holec (1981) stressed that the term autonomy should be used to describe a capacity of the learner, other researchers, such as Riley and Zoppis (1985) and Dickinson (1992), began to use it to refer to situations in which learners worked under their own direction outside the traditional classroom. In Riley and Zoppis's view (1985), access to a rich collection of second language materials would offer learners the best opportunity for experimentation with self-directed learning. Thus, they greatly support self-access language learning centers for self-directed or autonomous learning because, they presume, self-access work will lead to autonomy.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) remarks that these descriptions and definitions of terms indicate varying degrees of learner involvement and teacher engagement, ranging from total learner control over the aims and activities of learning, to partial learner control, to indirect teacher control in terms of methods and materials, and place and pace of study. In spite of the conceptual and terminological variations found in the L2 literature, he suggests that one can discern two complementary views on learner autonomy, particularly with regard to its aims and objectives: learning to learn and learning to liberate. The first view, learning to learn, is a narrow view that summarizes the chief goal of

learner autonomy—enabling learners to learn how to learn. To develop learners' academic autonomy in language learning, teachers need to equip learners with the tools necessary to learn on their own and train them to use appropriate strategies for realizing their learning objectives.

The second view, learning to liberate, is a broad view that urges learners to become critical thinkers in order to realize their human potential. Within this view, learning a language is not an end but a means to an end for liberational autonomy (Benson and Voller, 1997). This view coincides with Pennycook's (1997) version of autonomy that relates to the social, cultural, and political contexts of education. To address this purpose, teachers need to take into account the sociopolitical factors that shape the culture of the L2 classroom (Tudor, 1996).

Drawing on insights from the research on this approach during the 1980s and 1990s, Kumaravadivelu (2003) states that promoting learner autonomy is a matter of helping learners: (1) develop a capacity for independent learning; (2) take responsibility and use appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives; (3) discover their learning potential; (4) learn to face and solve their weaknesses and failures in the learning process; (5) develop self-control and self-discipline for self-esteem and self-confidence; (6) move beyond a mere response to instruction from the teachers and the educational system; and (7) understand the complex process when interacting with one's self, the teachers, the task, and the educational environment.

The procedures and techniques for accomplishing learner autonomy have become known as learner training. A crucial task for the teacher, for example, is to help learners take responsibility for their learning, and to bring about necessary attitudinal changes in them (Tudor, 1996). Learners' ability to take charge of their own learning can be made possible only if they are trained to identify and use appropriate strategies.

Regarding the role of the teacher and the learner, autonomy can be effected in the presence of a supportive institutional environment. Since

autonomy is a complicated construct, teachers and learners need to achieve it through effort. Teachers need to learn to let go and learners to take hold (Little, 1991).

Learner autonomy does not leave out the role of the teacher in the classroom; rather it emphasizes the role of the teacher to foster autonomy in the learner. The teacher needs to be an instructor, supervisor, and coach, who guides his or her students to take responsibility for their own learning process. This can be done by helping learners organize and plan their learning and develop new and better modes of acquiring language.

According to Little (1999), the basis of learner autonomy in formal educational contexts is acceptance of responsibility for one's own learning, and the development of learner autonomy relies on the exercise of that responsibility for learners to understand what they are learning, why they are learning, how they are learning, and with what degree of success. Teachers should create environments in which responsibility is shared with the learners. That is, teachers select and structure an environment that can allow learners to exercise increasing responsibility through decision making that is either done independently of others or in a situation where they choose to be part of a group and work interdependently for their learning.

Fernandes, Ellis, and Sinclair (1990) observe, "language learners in the classroom often tend to revert to the traditional role of pupil, who expects to be told what to do.... As a result, some learners have become teacher-dependent and often feel that it is the teacher alone who is responsible for any learning and progress that takes place" (p.101). However, the responsibility for such a definition should not be assigned to learner only. The teacher has an important role in helping learners realize that both the learner and teacher must take responsibility for effective language learning.

An important factor for developing autonomy is the support provided by the teacher. Brookfield (1994) sees the role of the teacher as facilitator in contrast to the role of teacher as authority. While the former is a process

analyst, the latter is a content expert. The teacher plays an important role in facilitating the process of re-orientation and personal discovery, which is a natural outcome of self-directed learning (Kelly, 1996). It is crucial for the teacher to establish a good relationship with students, supporting and guiding them in their learning, e.g., by helping them formulate their goals more clearly, and providing feedback, encouragement, and reinforcement.

Opting to promote learner autonomy represents a challenge to a new role of the teacher. In the view of Little (1991), since learning arises from interaction and interaction is characterized by interdependence, the development of autonomy in learners presupposes the development of autonomy in teachers.

### **2.9.1 Self-Assessment**

In the last decade, with the increased attention to learner-centered curricula, needs analysis, and learner autonomy, the topic of self-assessment has become of particular interest in testing and evaluation (Blanche 1988; Oscarsson, 1998). According to Blue (1994), interest in self-assessment developed out of a more general interest in the area of autonomous learning or learner independence. Self-assessment is an essential component of learner-centered approach to teaching.

It is now being recognized that learners have the ability to provide meaningful input into the assessment of their performance, and that this assessment can be valid. In fact, with regard to second and foreign language, research reveals an emerging pattern of consistent, overall high correlations between self-assessment results and ratings based on a variety of external criteria (Blanche 1988; Oscarsson 1984, 1997, 1998; Coombe 1992).

According to Oscarsson (1998) there are six different reasons why self-assessment can be beneficial to language learning. First, he stresses that self-assessment promotes learning, plain and simple. It gives learners training in evaluation which results in benefits to the learning process. Secondly, it gives

both students and teachers a raised level of awareness of perceived levels of abilities. Training in self-assessment, even in its simplest form, like asking "What have I been learning?" encourages learners to look at course content in a more discerning way. Thirdly, it is highly motivating in terms of goal-orientation. Fourth, through the use of self-assessment methodologies, the range of assessment techniques is expanded in the classroom. As a result of using self-assessment, the learner broadens' his/her range of experience within the realm of assessment. Fifth, by practicing self-assessment, the students participate in their own evaluation (Dickinson, 1992). The students share the assessment burden with the teacher. The sixth and the last reason is that by successfully involving students in their own assessment, beneficial post-course effects will ensue.

## **2.10 The European Language Portfolio**

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) has been developed under the authority of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe's Framework is a natural development from earlier work of the Council. It is based on a number of projects which were highly influential world-wide and gained general acceptance in the language professions. These included the Threshold Level (van Ek, 1975), a manifestation of the communicative approach which has had a widespread and lasting effect on classroom practice and test design.

The Preface to the 1980 edition of *Threshold Level English* recommends a functional approach to language teaching; the main focus of this approach is on language in practical use, as it serves the daily personal needs of an adult living in a foreign country. It is designed to encourage the lifelong learning of languages, to any level of proficiency; to make the learning process more transparent and to develop the learner's ability to assess his/her own competence; to facilitate mobility within Europe by providing a clear profile of the owner's language skills; to contribute to mutual understanding within

Europe by promoting plurilingualism (the ability to communicate in two or more languages) and intercultural learning (Little, 2002).

The ELP consists of three components (Little and Perclová 2001):

1. The *Language Passport*: designed to provide an overview of the individual's proficiency in different languages at a given point in time
2. The *Language Biography*: facilitating the learner's involvement in planning, reflecting upon and assessing his or her learning process and progress
3. The *Dossier*: to document and illustrate achievements or experiences recorded in the *Language Biography* or *Passport*

According to Little and Perclová (2001, introduction to Appendix 2), the 'Self-assessment checklists' for the *Language Passport* 'can be used to plan a course of learning' and are thus the part of the ELP which is able to serve as a syllabus for teaching foreign languages.

The skills referred to in the *language passport* are UNDERSTANDING (LISTENING and READING), SPEAKING (SPOKEN INTERACTION and SPOKEN PRODUCTION), and WRITING; while the levels, derived from the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework*, are BASIC USER (A1: BREAKTHROUGH and A2: WAYSTAGE), INDEPENDENT USER (B1: THRESHOLD and B2: VANTAGE), and PROFICIENT USER (C1: EFFECTIVE OPERATIONAL PROFICIENCY and C2: MASTERY). The individual skills mentioned are (LISTENING, READING, SPOKEN INTERACTION, SPOKEN PRODUCTION and WRITING) at different levels.

The ELP has two functions:

**a. Reporting.** The ELP displays the owner's capabilities, but in relation to foreign languages. Its purpose is not to replace the certificates and diplomas that are awarded on the basis of formal examinations, but to supplement them by presenting additional information about the owner's experience and concrete evidence of his or her foreign language achievements.

**b. Pedagogical.** The ELP is also intended to be used as a means of making the language learning process more transparent to learners, helping



them to develop their capacity for reflection and self-assessment, and thus enabling them gradually to assume more and more responsibility for their own learning (Little, 2002).

In its reporting and pedagogical functions, the ELP is designed to support four of the Council of Europe's key political aims: the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity, the promotion of linguistic and cultural tolerance, the promotion of plurilingualism, and education for democratic citizenship.

The Council also explains that the authorities and education institutions using an ELP should help learners to develop autonomy, a critical awareness of their learning and to assess their language and intercultural competence.

The ELP makes it possible for children to be able to assess their own language competence in different languages (including the languages which have not been learnt at school or other formal courses). On their own or with the help of the teacher, children can do this periodically by referring to the self-assessment grids or checklists, provided in the Language Passport and Language Biography sections of the ELP. Through asking children to assess themselves, children will be encouraged to develop a capacity for self-assessment and will be able to reflect on their own personal objectives. As a result, the child will be able to gain an overall picture of his/her language learning, define future goals and suitable learning strategies; this will also enhance the child's motivation and assist in laying the basis for autonomous language learning (Little, 2002).

### **2.10.1 ELP Implementation Studies**

The ELP was trialed by over 30,000 students and 1,800 teachers in 15 member states of the Council of Europe: Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom; also in private language schools under the auspices of EAQUALS (European Association for

Quality Language Services) and in universities in various countries. These experiences are described in a Council of Europe report (<http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio//documents/ELP%20in%20use.pdf>).

Pilot projects have been undertaken at all educational levels – primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, vocational, university, adult – on the basis of a variety of pedagogical assumptions.

Feedback from individual teachers confirms that the ELP can exert a strong positive influence on language learning (Czech Republic). Others noted that it helped not only learners, but also teachers, to reflect on language and language learning and made learners more aware of what they knew (Moscow). Taken together, reports from teachers suggest that the ELP can serve as an instrument of renewal, not just in individual foreign language classrooms but within national systems. It can improve learners' motivation, develop their reflective capacities, and encourage them to take their own learning initiatives; but in doing this, it can also help them to carry their foreign language learning (and foreign language use) beyond the confines of the classroom.

Study of the reports on the teachers' comments about ELP shows the value of four elements: program integration, committed support of teachers and administrators, teacher and student training and clarity of status and purpose of the ELP.

It seems that the European Language Portfolio can help developing various aspects of the paradigm shift in ELT as described by Jacobs and Farrell (2001), including the following:

1. Learner autonomy is supported by the fact that learners can set their own objectives with the aid of self-assessment checklists
2. Curricular integration can be fostered through production of the Dossier
3. A focus on meaning is adopted throughout checklists

Jacobs and Farrell mention 'portfolio assessment' under the title of 'Alternative Assessment' (2001, p. 11), and their actual description is similar to

the ELP's Dossier. The Council for Cultural Co-operation Education Committee, in the *Principles and Guidelines*, points out that the ELP reflects the CoE's concern with "the development of the language learner [and] the development of the capacity for independent language learning (p. 2)."

### **2.10.2 The ELP in Turkish Educational System**

Turkey, as a member state of the Council of Europe, has decided to develop and implement the ELP model in piloting schools at the secondary education level. As a first step the Ministry of Turkish National Education, Board of Education, accepted to pilot the ELP project in selected schools in Turkey, and an action plan was put into practice. For this purpose, 24 piloting schools at secondary education level in Ankara and Antalya provinces were identified. Secondly, the ELP project documents supplied by the Council of Europe, Foreign Language Division were examined and evaluated. As a result an in-service teaching program for piloting teachers was designed. In addition, long term and short term objectives were determined to attain the aims of the ELP project in Turkey.

Finally, in a seminar held in 2001 seminar, the ELP project was introduced in detail, existing sample ELP models of other European countries were examined, language descriptors in the portfolio were analyzed and the implementation process of the ELP in Turkey was discussed. As a result a sample ELP model was developed for upper secondary high school students by the ELP steering committee in the Board of National Education. A non-validated ELP model has been published by the Ministry of National Education with the name "Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası – European Language Portfolio" and distributed to piloting schools (Demirel, 2004).

The findings of the pilot implementation of ELP indicated that teachers all agreed that the ELP implementation made a positive contribution to the language teaching-learning process and motivated students more than expected. Most of the students achieved some learner autonomy, self-assessment and

responsibility in the learning process. However, the teachers reflected a need for in-service training seminars on the following topics

- a. Learner autonomy.
- b. Self-directed learning.
- c. Project-based learning.
- d. Web-based learning.
- e. Cooperative learning.
- f. Experiential learning.
- g. Portfolio assessment.
- h. Learning Styles.
- i. Theory of Multiple Intelligences.
- j. Brain-based learning.
- k. Constructivism.

A study carried by Egel (2004) deals with the benefits of integrating the ELP in Turkish public primary schools. She asserts that contrary to the classical teaching methods observed in the Turkish primary schools, the piloting phase of the ELP has shown in some settings that “an ELP functioned as a catalyst in so far as it accelerated impending changes in the fields of teaching practice, curriculum design and assessment” (Schneider and Lenz, 2001, p. 6). She asserts that implementing the ELP in Turkish primary schools can open significant avenues for enhancing learner-centred teaching. An ELP oriented teaching practice focuses on supporting the children in setting their own language goals and periodically self-assessing their language achievements. As the responsibility of language learning shifts from the teacher to the learner, the child will become more independent from the teacher and this will enhance the child’s level of autonomy, which is the key to successful life-long learning.

Even though the results of the pilot project both in the European countries and in Turkey yielded positive results, Erözden (2004) focuses on an important point regarding the use of the Common European Framework. In his study he invites all the implementers of CEF to reconsider the points, which are

mentioned in the framework (given in the Appendix A). Erözden (2004) asserts that introducing English Language Portfolio without considering the points mentioned in the CEF (Bailly et al., 2002) might turn into a disaster rather than a benefit.

## **2.11 Summary**

In an effort to lay the foundation for the present research endeavor, this chapter reviewed the related literature as a theoretical framework for this study. The review first surveyed the literature relating to the terminology and meaning of beliefs, assumptions and knowledge. The strands of research summarized at the beginning of the chapter converged to highlight the critical role that teachers' BAK played in determining teachers' classroom practices. A second focus of the chapter was to describe and discuss the foundations of constructivism and learner-centeredness. Understanding constructivism and learner-centeredness completely allows for a better start with which to explore the education reforms in Turkey.

The review of relevant literature about teachers' BAK and practices, and constructivism and learner-centeredness was accompanied with the description of English Language Portfolio. Additional information was provided about the education system in Turkey and the current educational reform movement which has focused upon new ideas about learning and instructional improvement, with a primary emphasis upon learner-centeredness and a call for students who can use critical thinking skills and know how to learn, rather than memorize unrelated bits of knowledge.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **3.0 Presentation**

This chapter will provide an explanation of the methods used to complete the study. The following sections are included within this chapter: a restatement of the research questions b. qualitative research, overall design, and rationale c. selection of the sites and the participants d. data gathering sources and techniques e. validity and reliability of the instrument and h. analysis of the data. The research questions asked in the study were;

1. How do teachers understand the concept of “learner-centeredness”?
  - 1.1. How do they see their role in creating learner-centeredness?
  - 1.2. How do they see the relationship between learner-centeredness and learner autonomy?
2. How do teachers implement their understanding of learner-centeredness in their classroom?
3. What do teachers know about ELP?
  - 3.1. How do they think its implementation will affect their practices in the classroom?
4. Are there any differences between the beliefs of state elementary teachers and private elementary teachers in terms of
  - 4.1. how they understand the concept learner-centeredness?
    - 4.1.1. how they see their role in creating learner-centeredness?
    - 4.1.2. how they see the relationship between learner-centeredness and learner autonomy?
  - 4.2. how teachers implement their understanding of learner-centeredness in their classroom?
  - 4.3. what they know about ELP?

#### **4.3.1. how they think its implementation will affect their practices in the classroom?**

The investigation of teachers' cognitions has led to the development of a range of innovative methods for collecting evidence about teaching (Calderhead, 1996). For this particular study, the combination of focus group interactions of teachers of English working in the same place, participant teachers' responses to interviews, classroom observations, and before- and after-class reflections, field notes and document analysis were used to document English language teachers' BAK and classroom practices.

The study was conducted at one public and one private primary school in Istanbul. Focus groups were held in each school with the teachers of English and then individual interviews and observations were carried out with four volunteer teachers during the spring semester, 2004-2005. The four participant teachers were observed in their classrooms ten times along with before- and after-class reflections facilitated by the researcher. A follow up interview was conducted with each teacher at the end of the observations. These observations were accompanied with document analysis.

Multiple methods of data collection were used so that the researcher could determine initial stated beliefs and gain a more in depth understanding of what beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge they held. In addition, through in depth individual interviews, observations and document analysis, the researcher could obtain clarification and use them in understanding how the EFL teachers implemented their understanding of learner-centeredness in their classrooms.

The focus group served as a vehicle for holding guided discussions among the teachers working in the English Department of the selected schools. Focus groups both in state and private primary school met once at the beginning of the data collection procedure for approximately one and a half hour at the beginning of the spring semester. This was followed by individual interviews with volunteer teachers. In addition, during the spring semester the four participant teachers were observed individually in their classrooms ten times

along with before- and after-class reflections facilitated by the researcher. Pre- and post-observation reflections were used after the observations. All the interviews were semi-structured in nature.

Data from transcriptions of focus group interactions, teachers' responses to the interviews, before- and after-class reflections, and field notes from classroom observations and the documents were inductively analyzed.

### **3.1 Qualitative Research, Overall Design, and Rationale**

Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible. Other terms used interchangeably are naturalistic inquiry, interpretive research, field study, participant observation, inductive research, case study, and ethnography (Merriam, 1994). Spradley (1979, p. 3) defines ethnography as "the work of describing a culture". The goal of ethnographic research is "to understand another way of life from the native point of view" (Spradley, 1979, p.3).

Although this approach is commonly used by anthropologists to study exotic cultures and primitive societies, Spradley (1979, p.iv) suggests that it is a useful tool for "understanding how other people see their experience". He emphasizes, however, that "rather than *studying people*, ethnography means *learning from people*" (Spradley 1979, p. 3).

Qualitative research genres have become increasingly important modes of inquiry for field such as education. Although the acceptance of qualitative inquiry is currently widespread, it is necessary to provide a rationale for the particular type of qualitative research in which the study is situated. Many traditions of qualitative research can be categorized into those focusing on individual lived experiences, those focusing on society and culture, and those with an interest in language and communication (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The overall strategy used in this research is a case study design.



According to Merriam (1994), the key philosophical assumption upon which all types of qualitative research are based is the view that individuals interacting with their social worlds construct reality. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed; how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. Qualitative research “implies a direct concern with experience as it is “lived” or “felt” or “undergone” (Sherman and Webb, 1988, p.7).

A second characteristic of all forms of qualitative research is that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument, the researcher, rather than through some inanimate inventory or computer. The researcher is responsive to the context; he or she adapt techniques to the circumstances; what is known about the situation can be expanded through sensitivity to nonverbal aspects; the researcher can process data immediately, can clarify and summarize as the study evolves, and can explore anomalous responses (Guba and Lincoln, 1981).

A third characteristic of qualitative research is that it usually involves fieldwork. The researcher must physically go to the people, setting, site, and institution in order to observe behavior in its natural setting.

Finally, since qualitative research focused on process, meaning, and understanding, the product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive. Words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon. There are likely to be researcher descriptions of the context, the players involved, and the activities of interest. In addition, data in the form of participants’ own works, direct citations from documents, excerpts of videotapes, and so on, are likely to be included to support the findings of the study (Merriam, 1994).

Researchers who conduct qualitative studies simply seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved in the investigation. Data are collected through interviews, observations, or document analysis. Findings are a mix of description and

analysis-an analysis that uses concepts from the theoretical frame work of the study. The analysis result in the identification of recurring patterns (in the form of categories, factors, variables, themes) that cut through the data or in the delineation of a process. In these studies the analysis does not extend to building a substantive theory as it does in grounded theory studies.

This dissertation is approached from an ethnographic perspective, aiming to discover an emic perspective<sup>1</sup> (Agar, 1996; Hornberger, 1995; Spradley, 1979; Watson-Gegeo, 1988); in other words the goal was to understand beliefs, assumptions and knowledge from the perspective of the teacher-participants.

As such, the researcher preferred not to apply questionnaires or preconceived categories of interview questions on teachers' beliefs. Since the purpose was to gain an in-depth understanding of beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge from each participant teacher's perspective, and not just to gather their answers to predetermined questions, the researcher started the research with fresh mind, a "beginner's mind" (Gebhard and Oprandy, 1999) or "a conscious attitude of almost complete ignorance" (Spradley, 1979, p.4) whose benefit was to gain "new, unexpected, and unpredictable understandings" (Hornberger, 1994, p.689). Various methods within the field of qualitative research are designed to gather specific types of qualitative data. For the purpose of this study, the case study approach to qualitative research was selected.

### **3.2 Case Study Approach**

Case studies are preferred strategies when "how" and "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context. In the qualitative form of case studies, it is descriptive research that is used.

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<sup>1</sup> The emic perspective "refers to culturally based perspectives, interpretations, and categories used by members of the group under study" (Watson-Gegeo, 1988, p.580).

Descriptive research is viewed as non-experimental and is preferred when description and explanation are sought, when it is not possible or feasible to manipulate the potential causes of behavior, and when variables are not easily identified or are too embedded in the phenomenon to be extracted for the study (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). The case study involves the techniques of direct observation and systemic interviewing. The unique strength of this study is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence such as focus groups, interviews, observations and documents.

Gage (1978), Shulman (1987), and others have argued convincingly for the value of case studies as existence proofs, providing images of what can be accomplished rather than documenting what is typically the case. Specifically, one major virtue of a case study is expressed as its ability to evoke images of the possible. It is often the goal of policy to pursue the possible, not only to support the probable or frequent (Shulman 1987). A well designed case instantiates the possible, not only documenting that it can be done, but also laying out at least one detailed example of how it was organized, developed, and pursued. For the practitioner concerned with process, the operational detail of case studies can be more helpful than the more confidently generalizable virtue of a quantitative analysis of many provided (Merriam, 1994).

Thirteen participants engaged as focus groups once and four participants engaged in interviews and observations for one semester. Their written documents such as worksheets and exam papers were also collected. These documents were analyzed and compared with the interview data, observation results and field notes.

Yin (1994) described the following protocol as a major component in asserting the reliability of case study research. There must be an overview of the case study project, which should communicate to the reader the general topic of inquiry and the purpose of the case study. Field procedures must describe how the site of study was chosen and how it will be accessed, what sources of information will be used, such as, informant interviews, focus

groups, documents, archival records, participant observation, direct observation, or physical artifacts. Case study questions must be designed for the investigator in order to assure some degree of focus as the investigator collects data. Finally a guide for the case study report should be developed (Yin, 1994). The guideline suggested by Yin (1994) was adapted in this study.

### **3.2.1 Parameters of the Study**

Although case study methodology has been identified as one of the most effective methods of investigating “contemporary phenomenon within its real life context” (Yin, 1994, p.13) the researcher needs to determine the “truth value” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) of the study. The truth value refers to the qualities of applicability, consistency, and neutrality in a study. In addressing these qualities, Lincoln and Guba delineated three constructs for qualitative, case study inquiry. The first construct is credibility, where the purpose is to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in a manner to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

The second construct is transferability, in which the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context rests more with the investigator who would make that transfer than with the original investigator. It is this second investigator that desires to apply the findings about the population of interest to a second population believed to be similar enough to the first to warrant that application. This comparison relies on the judgment about the relevancy of the first study to a second setting. This construct is significantly different than the generalizability of the study. The generalizability of a study speaks to the original researcher’s ability to generalize the findings about a particular sample to the population from which the sample was drawn (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

A third construct is dependability, where the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for study as well as changes in the design created by increasingly refined understanding of the

setting. This construct is different from the concept of reliability where it is assumed that a setting does not change and in turn an inquiry could be replicated. The qualitative inquiry assumes that the social world is always being constructed and the concept of replication is itself problematic (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Credibility is further defined as a way to find similarities between what the researcher attributes to the subject's reality and the realities the subject constructs (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Techniques exist to make it more likely that credible findings and interpretations will be produced. The major techniques that will be manipulated in this qualitative study are prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation.

Prolonged engagement is the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes. It is not possible to understand any phenomenon without reference to the context in which it is embedded; therefore the researcher must spend enough time in becoming oriented to the situation. Prolonged engagement was prevalent throughout this study. Once the study began, the researcher interacted with the participants on a regular basis in order to collect data via individual interviews, focus groups, observations, and before- and after-class reflections. So, she was in the field for one semester and this prolonged engagement secured strong rapport and trust from the participants which enabled the researcher to listen to their unique voices on their beliefs and to observe their practices (Creswell, 1998).

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.304) assert that "the purpose of persistent observation is to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail". Observations occurred throughout the study; however, it was vital that the researcher determined those things that really counted with respect to the participants' beliefs about learner-centeredness and their classroom practices.

Triangulation is the third technique for improving the probability that the findings and interpretations will be found credible. Triangulation, the use of

multiple data sources and research methods allows the researcher to view the focus of inquiry from several vantage points (Merriam, 1994). Several reviewers in the area of teacher beliefs have noted the importance of using multiple methods to investigate teacher beliefs (Richardson, 1996; Wideen et al., 1998). Pajares also (1992) asserts that “additional measures must be included if richer and more accurate inferences are to be made” (p.327). In understanding the notion of triangulation, an important component needs mentioning. It is argued that no report is credited unless it can be verified by another person or checked in available documents implying that “multiple sources” maybe multiple copies of one type of source or different sources of the same information (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The data collected throughout the study were distributed to the participants for their modification. Four different ways of data gathering from the participants were employed. This allowed the participants to confirm the data collected from them and to make any adjustments or clarifications needed for the data to be trustworthy. Triangulating the data contributed to building credibility and trustworthiness of the study findings (Creswell 1998, Weir and Roberts 1994).

Finally, the study was conducted in natural environments, namely in regular EFL classrooms. Practical insights can be derived only from the empirical study in the natural setting.

### **3.2.2 Learner-centered Model**

In 1997, the American Psychological Association’s Board of Educational Affairs published a list of 14 principles extracted from over a century of rigorous psychological research on human memory, motivation, development, and learning for the purpose of providing “a framework for developing and incorporating the components of new designs for schooling”<sup>2</sup> (APA, 1997).

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<sup>2</sup> American Psychological Association. Available on <http://www.apa.org/ed/lcp.html>.

Even though the principles seemed very comprehensive at the beginning, a thorough examination of these principles revealed that the learner-centered principles devised by APA did not specify the manner in which they could be applied to explain the realities of the classrooms and the actual behaviors of the teachers during their teaching activities. It was observed that for this specific study they could only serve the purpose of a framework within which an actionable conception of learner-centered practices could be developed. Thus, the researcher developed her own set of learner-centered practices that were compatible with the events observed in the classrooms.

Since APA's learner-centered principles were the only framework that described the psychological principles underlying learner-centered education. APA's learner-centered principles guided the construction of this model. In addition to the premises offered by these principles, the researcher relied on basic tenets of constructivism, learner-centered education and communicative language teaching.

The researcher believed that the learner-centered model will provide a detailed framework that can contribute to current educational reform and curriculum redesign efforts. It can be incorporated in new designs for curriculum and instruction, for evaluating educational attainment as well as for the systemic redesign of professional development programs and educational structure. The practices identified here are not only expected to address teachers but also instructors and others involved in designing or implementing instruction.

The idea of constructing a new learner-centered model stemmed from noticing the inability of the current learner-centered or constructivist frameworks in explaining the classroom realities observed during the study. Besides, the teachers' voiced concerns about learner-centered education gave the impetus for the design of this model. It is now evident that educational practice will be most likely to improve when educational system is redesigned with the focus on the learner. However, the teachers need to have a framework

which will either guide them in implementing learner-centeredness or engage them in self-reflection so that they will have a chance to reflect on their own teaching practices. The items emphasize the active and reflective nature of learning and learners and thus aim at providing the teachers with concrete items that explicitly describe what the teacher has to do in order to be learner-centered.

Through dialogue with concerned educators and researchers, this model can evolve further to contribute to the betterment of learner-centered practices in schools from pre-primary level to graduate levels.

The items in the model indicate that “learner-centeredness” is a complex interaction of teacher qualities and practices. The model is composed of two parts. The first five parts up to number 27 comprises items regarding learner-centered practices whereas the last section is devoted to teacher qualities which the teachers should not assume and practices which the teachers should avoid implementing.

### LEARNER CENTEREDNESS : AN EVALUATIVE AND DIAGNOSTIC MODEL FOR TEACHERS AND EDUCATIONAL ASSESSORS

**Table 1:** Learner-centered model

<b>COGNITIVE AND METACOGNITIVE FACTORS</b>	
<b><i>1. Teacher takes into account learner differences while teaching and planning her lesson.</i></b>	
1. Learners' interests	
2. Careful attention to socioeconomic status in the instructional setting	
3. Accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities	
4. Learners' perspectives (beliefs)	
5. Learners have different strategies, approaches, and capabilities for learning that are a function of prior experience and heredity	
6. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying body size	
7. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying posture	
8. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying mobility	
9. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying sensory needs	
10. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying communication needs	
11. Learning styles	
12. Instruction designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural differences	



Table 1 (continued)

13. Instruction anticipates variation in individual learning pace
14. Developmental and social factors
15. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying talents
16. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying capacities
17. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying intelligences
<b>2. Teacher encourages learners to construct new meanings by establishing relationships with their prior knowledge.</b>
1. Learners use their existing knowledge and backgrounds of experience to construct meanings from new information and experiences
2. Recognition of importance of prior knowledge
3. Teacher creates meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge
4. Teacher creates and uses a repertoire of thinking and reasoning strategies to achieve complex learning goals.
5. Teacher provides opportunities and resources for the learners to discover concepts for themselves.
6. New learning depends on a learner's current background of understanding
7. Learners use strategic thinking in their approach to learning
8. Teacher recognizes Importance of Relation to Other Courses
<b>3. Teacher encourages learner autonomy by giving the learners responsibility.</b>
1. Teacher encourages and accepts learner autonomy and initiative
2. Teacher develops self-control and self-discipline for self-esteem and self-confidence
3. Teacher holds the responsibility for determining learning objectives
4. Teacher encourages learners to take ownership of their choices - if things go 'wrong' encourages learners to consider what they will do next time.
5. Learners assume personal responsibility for contributing to their own learning
5.1. Learners take responsibility and use appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives
5.2. Learners take responsibility and use appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives
6. Learners monitor their progress toward these goals
7. Learners become more independent from the teacher
8. Learners are self-regulating
9. Teacher supports autonomy in learners, who become intrinsically motivated to do high-quality work
10. Teacher focuses more on empowering learners
11. Teacher focuses more on making learners more autonomous and self-directed learners
<b>4. Teacher encourages learners to select their learning goals and tasks by providing help.</b>
1. Learners participate in selection of academic goals and learning tasks
2. Teacher plays a major interactive role with the learner
3. Teacher plays a major interactive role with the learning environment
4. Teacher allows learners options in use of instructional materials
5. Teacher allows learners options in use of testing
6. Teacher allows learners options in use of assignments
7. Teacher allows learners options in-class activities
8. Assignments ought be determined either individually or collectively by the learners themselves in consultation with the instructor
9. Teacher creates contexts that help learners create a learning community
10. Teacher negotiates activities, tasks, assessment and class behaviour with learners so as to encourage ownership
<b>5. Teacher focuses on learners.</b>
1. Learners achieve through active engagement in a learning process
1.1. Learners use reasoning
1.2. Learners are active

Table 1 (continued)

1.3. Hands-on
1.4. Learners generate alternative methods to reach their goal
1.5. Learners select potentially appropriate learning strategies or methods
1.6. Learners have a say in their learning
2. Active learning since learners must participate in creating knowledge rather than being passive recipients of content
3. Learner commitment to learning
4. Learning modalities
5. Teacher focuses on learning vs. teaching
6. Teacher places learners at the center of the learning process as active meaning- makers of classroom experiences.
7. Teacher's classroom practices allow learners an active and social role in learning activities
<b>6. Teacher tries to increase learners' cognitive capacities.</b>
1. Teacher addresses to learners' intellectual domains
2. Learners not seeking correct answers
3. Teacher explores possible answers
4. Teacher uses problem-structuring strategies and behaviors
5. Teacher encourages thinking among learners
5.1. Teacher uses Socratic questioning
5.2. Teacher encourages learner inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and to ask questions of each other
6. Teacher helps learners to discover and explore content knowledge by knowing what questions to ask and how to ask them
7. Teacher ensures learners can: devise questions, plan and present a study of their own choice as a demonstration of 'learning how to learn' ability
8. Facilitate creative and critical thinking
8.1. Teacher inquires about learners' understanding of concepts before sharing their own understanding of those concepts
8.2. Teacher encourages reflective thinking
8.3. Teacher guides learners to create their own understandings
<b>7. Teacher encourages the highest level of learning-output standards.</b>
1. Teacher holds high expectations for learner performance
2. Teacher encourages learners always to put forth their best effort
3. The teacher is more concerned with the development of higher order intellectual and cognitive skill among learners
4. Teacher sets appropriately high and challenging standards
5. Teacher promotes the highest levels of achievement for all learners
6. Teacher promotes the highest levels of learning
7. Learners feel challenged to work towards appropriately high goals
8. Learner commitment to achieving high standards of comprehension and understanding
<b>8. Teacher encourages learners to identify their own objectives and classroom activities which are realistic.</b>
1. Teacher encourages learners to select methods to be used
2. Teacher encourages learners to select techniques to be used
3. Teacher provides study guides and clear learning objectives
4. Teacher encourages learners to suggest classroom activities
5. Clear Expectations & Objectives are determined either individually or collectively by the learners themselves in consultation with the instructor
6. Learners set reasonable performance goals

Table 1 (continued)

<b><i>9. Teacher gives clear instructions.</i></b>
1. Teacher communicates necessary information effectively to the learners, regardless of ambient conditions or the learners' sensory abilities
2. Instruction is straightforward & eliminates unnecessary complexity
3. Teacher explains concepts simply without assuming learner has prior knowledge
4. Necessary information is communicated clearly
5. Teacher ensures learners know what is expected in any task
6. Teacher scaffolds any help necessary to ensure learners gain success - to break tasks down to understandable steps until learning is in place
7. Teacher is clear about why learners do what they do
8. Instruction is designed to be useful and accessible to all learners
9. Teacher alternates delivery of material taking into account the need for information to facilitate capacity of the brain to process information
<b><i>10. Teacher provides the learners with enough time to concentrate on the solution of the problems posed.</i></b>
1. Teacher allows wait time after posing questions
2. Teacher provides time for learner to construct relationships and metaphors
<b>MOTIVATIONAL AND AFFECTIVE FACTORS</b>
<b><i>11. Teacher creates a positive and secure atmosphere.</i></b>
1. Teacher creates personal relationships that provide trust
2. Teacher creates a classroom environment that allows for and respects "learner voice"
3. Teacher treats learners as human, equal, cultural beings
4. Teacher establishes personal relationships that increase learners' sense of belonging
5. Teacher establishes personal relationships that increase learners' sense of self-acceptance
6. Teacher establishes personal relationships that provide caring
7. Teacher establishes personal relationships that provide stability
8. Teacher establishes contexts that help learners feel safe to share ideas
9. Teacher encourages learners to express their personal feelings and opinions
10. Teacher creates caring relationships with the learners
11. Teacher sees things from the point of learners and provides them with opportunities to share their perspectives
12. Teacher addresses Ss' physical needs
13. Teacher addresses Ss' emotional needs
14. Teacher addresses Ss' social needs
15. Teacher recognizes positive behaviour of any learners
16. Teacher appraises the learner's cognitive strengths
17. Teacher understands the learner's cognitive weaknesses
<b><i>12. Teacher promotes the highest levels of learner motivation by appropriate tasks.</i></b>
1. Tasks the learner perceives to be of optimal novelty
2. Tasks the learner perceives to be of optimal difficulty
3. Tasks the learner perceives to be relevant to personal interests
4. Tasks that provide for personal choice
5. Tasks that provide for personal control
6. Tasks that are comparable to real-world situations
7. Tasks that learners perceive as meaningful
8. Tasks that learners perceive as they can succeed
9. Tasks that provide for learner's creativity
10. Tasks that provide for learner's higher order thinking
11. Tasks that provide for learner's natural curiosity
<b><i>13. Teacher selects and uses suitable materials.</i></b>
1. Material is appropriate to their developmental level

Table 1 (continued)

2. Material is presented in an enjoyable way
3. Material is presented in an interesting way
4. Teacher focuses on core tasks rather than non-essential ones
5. Manipulative materials
6. Interactive materials
7. Physical materials
8. Authentic materials
<b><i>14. Physical environment is important for learning to occur.</i></b>
1. Access to a rich collection of second language materials
2. Teacher Assures that suitable physical conditions are provided, like classroom size, desks/tables, acoustics, and lighting accessible to all learners
3. Teacher Makes use of the instructional A/V aids to ensure all learners know what is expected of them so they can be encouraged to work independently either as individuals or in groups
<b><i>15. Teacher pays attention to the language she uses.</i></b>
1. Careful attention to appropriate register in language in the instructional setting
<b><i>16. Teacher pays constant attention to what the learners are saying.</i></b>
1. Teacher listens well
2. Teacher encourages learner-generated questions and discussions
<b>DEVELOPMENTAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS</b>
<b><i>17. Teacher encourages relationships among learners.</i></b>
1. The process of collaborating
2. Collaborative learning activities (Group learning, peer teaching, group projects, problem-based learning tied to core course goals and objectives)
3. Collaboration with peers
4. Learners construct meaning within the context of social relationships
5. Social interaction facilitates learning
6. Teacher promotes purposeful interaction and communication between and among learners
7. Teacher promotes purposeful interaction and communication between learners and faculty
8. Presentations with peers
9. Personal relationships that increase learners' sense of self-respect
10. They becomes we
11. Learners' backgrounds of cooperative learning
12. Learning settings that allow for social interactions
13. A school and classroom environment that allows for the development of positive personal relationships and a caring school and classroom environment
<b>INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES</b>
<b><i>18. Teacher uses alternative assessment techniques including self-assessment.</i></b>
1. Alternative assessment (diagnostic, Performance, process, Self-, ...)
2. Inclusive tasks (exploring open-ended questions, scenarios, doing research, ...)
3. Teacher develops the learner's ability to assess his/her own competence
4. Teacher encourages learners to reflect on what they have done ( successful or otherwise)
5. Teacher encourages learners to consider what they might do next time
6. Teacher negotiates with the class so that they can assess their own work and set their own improvement goals

Table 1 (continued)

<b><i>19. Teacher considers learners' needs during the process of the design of the lesson and teaching.</i></b>
1. Learners' needs
2. Educational decisions will be responsive to the learner
3. Focus is not on what the teacher wants to teach, but on what and how learners need to learn
4. Teacher focuses on meeting individual learner needs in a nurturing learning environment
5. Teacher matches learning and performance opportunities to the needs of individual children
<b><i>20. Teacher knows her learners' background well.</i></b>
1. Learners' cultural heredity and background
2. Learners' experiences
3. Learners' backgrounds of authentic learning problems
4. Learners' backgrounds of understanding
5. Careful attention to ethnicity in the instructional setting
<b><i>21. Teacher sees mistakes as the evidence of learning and displays tolerance.</i></b>
1. Teacher knows that errors provide the opportunity for insight into learners' previous knowledge constructions
2. Teacher encourages learners to take risks, to have a go, and to see mistakes as learning opportunities
3. Tolerance for Error: Teacher Minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions
<b><i>22. Teacher takes the learners' beliefs about themselves and their learning into account before designing her lessons and while teaching.</i></b>
1. Careful attention to beliefs in the instructional setting
2. Internal world of beliefs for failure
3. Internal world of beliefs for success
<b><i>23. Teacher helps learners to discover their own learning styles.</i></b>
1. Teacher helps learners examine their learning preferences
2. Teacher helps learners expand or modify their learning preferences if necessary
3. Teacher helps learners discover their learning potential
<b>TEACHER QUALITIES</b>
<b><i>24. Teacher shares her status equally with the learners the classroom.</i></b>
1. Equalized roles between teacher and learner(s)
2. Cooperative roles between teacher and learner(s)
<b><i>25. Teacher assumes different roles in the classroom.</i></b>
1. Learning counselor
2. Facilitator
3. Teacher gets to know learners well enough be able to understand both their intentions and their resources
4. Teacher has an understanding of how learners develop and learn
5. Teacher recognizes individual differences in their learners and adjust their practice accordingly.
6. Teacher helps learners clarify their intentions and develop their resources and awareness
7. Teacher treats learners equitably
8. Encouraging
9. Motivating
10. Teacher's mission extends beyond developing the cognitive capacity of their learners
11. Teacher channels learner participation in a pedagogically useful direction
12. Teacher provides feedback on learners' performance
13. Diagnostic coach always with the aim on extending learners skill and confidence

Table 1 (continued)

14. A joint learner with learners
15. Teacher helps learners cope with their own emotional needs and tensions, as well as with the needs of those around them
16. Teacher helps learners inquire
17. Teacher helps learners problem-solve
18. Teacher helps learners learn
<b>26. Teacher should be tolerant towards changes in the course of instruction.</b>
1. Flexibility
<b>27. Effective teacher has certain qualities.</b>
1. Organized
2. Understanding
3. Enthusiastic
4. Fair
5. Friendly
6. Humorous
7. Teacher makes things clear
8. Teacher enjoys what she/he teaches
9. Teacher develops a system to monitor the effectiveness of teaching
<b>NON-LEARNER-CENTERED PRACTICES</b>
<b>28. Teacher should try to avoid being driven by the following practices.</b>
1. Having a classroom as one in which many activities are primarily organized as whole-class activities directed by the teacher
2. Having a lack of learner -learner interactions
3. Having a mismatch between the teaching preferences of the teacher and the learning preferences of learners
4. Having the routine as superior to flexibility
5. Having a teacher role of either a resource or a deliverer of content knowledge
6. Conducting activities designed for specific responses
7. Demanding learners to be obedient
8. Having beliefs to be excessively competent in a particular subject
9. Being curriculum-driven
10. Being directed by a teaching method which places more stress on getting the correct answers
11. Devoting a whole class time to practice worksheets
12. Persistence in following instructions in tasks and lesson plans
13. Giving lectures
14. Causing or creating insecurity through
14.1. Anxiety
14.2. Test anxiety
14.3. Fear for punishment
14.4. Panic
14.5. Rage
14.6. Ridicule
14.7. Ruminating about failure
14.8. Stigmatizing labels
14.9. Worrying about competence
15. Limiting learners' speech both in terms of quantity and quality
16. Having negative gender role expectations

Table 1 (continued)

17. Having repetitious method of transferring knowledge.
18. Dictating rote learning
19. Being strict about learners sitting quietly in their seats.
20. Depending solely on standardized tests
21. Imposing own ideas rather than allowing learners to develop their own
22. Being text-book centered
23. Assuming a role of an infallible authority and transmitter of knowledge
24. Being time driven.
25. Exerting undue pressure to perform well
26. Acting as decision makers
27. Creating an insecure climate and relationships with learners

### 3.3 Selection of the Sites and Participants

Selection of an appropriate site for a study is a key issue for all case studies (Merriam, 1994). In selecting a site the researcher must be concerned with the validity of the data collected. The data must express the authentic views of the informants with minimal interference or distortion by the research process (ibid.). In case study research, it is the ability to access authentic views of the informants that determines validity, not the representativeness of the site. Wainwright (1997) gives three criteria for site selection that should be followed: the ease of access to informants, the ability to illuminate any characteristics of the site that might adversely influence the testimony of the informant. The process of identifying a site through the use of criteria is known as reflexive management and is a key element in the credibility of the study (Wainwright, 1997).

The criteria upon which the selected sites were determined consisted of the following.

- a. The school had to be willing to participate in the study; both schools were willing to devote the time needed.
- b. The school had to be within a reasonable amount of travel time for the researcher<sup>3</sup>. Both schools were within driving range for the researcher

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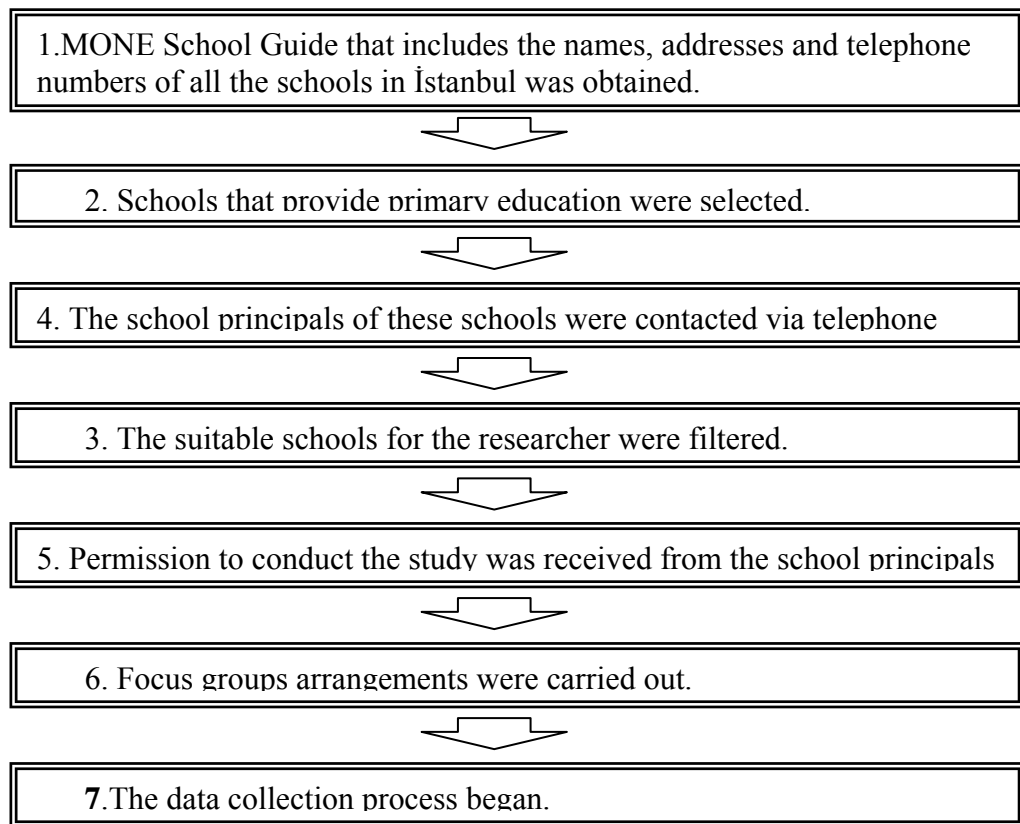
<sup>3</sup> The city in which these schools are located encompasses a land area of 5712 km<sup>2</sup>. It has a population over 10 million. This ends up with a great mess of traffic jam especially at the rush hours.

The researcher considered four private and six public schools for the study. The school principals of two private schools and five public schools simply refused the researcher's request for conducting her study in their schools asserting that they were too busy to arrange this. Two private schools<sup>4</sup> and one public school accepted her request. The principals of the participant schools willingly allowed the researcher to conduct the study without the official permission of superintendent of the school district which rescued the researcher from certain bureaucratic catastrophe. Only the school principal of private school asked for the advisor's description of the study. The document with the advisor's signature was sent to the principal via fax machine and the data collection process began. In anticipation of these schools being the sites for the case study, the researcher contacted the principals via telephone. A meeting was scheduled for February at which time the researcher explained the criteria for the selection of these schools and the purposes of the research to the teachers and carried out focus group interviews. Selection of the sites is shown as follows.

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<sup>4</sup> When two private schools accepted the researcher's request and allowed her to carry out the research in their schools, she preferred the private school which was more available for her in terms of its location. However, the focus group discussion did not prove fertile. Even though there were seven participant teachers in the focus group, three teachers did not involve in the discussion in spite of the researcher's efforts. Besides, only one teacher displayed her enthusiasm for participation in the interviews and observations. The other teachers implied their reluctance for being involved in such a study. So the researcher selected the participant private school for the study.





**Figure 2:** *Site selection process.*

This study took place at one state primary school and one private primary school that provide education to students between the ages 6 and 14. The study examined English language teachers teaching the grades from 4 to 8.

### **3.3.1 The Public School**

The public school is located in a middle socioeconomic neighborhood. It is a medium sized school serving first through eight grade students from a narrow region. It originally began its life in 1957, but turned into two shift in 1973-1974 school year. English classes are taught by five teachers. The principal has been working there for 18 years. It is a well-funded school in an area of middle-class society. It is one of the 81 elementary schools in the district which is

similar in size and student population in many other schools in Istanbul. The school serves approximately 1200 students in grades 1 to 8. There is a classroom which the teachers are trying to change into a language laboratory. There are two teachers' rooms one of which is allocated to smokers. The departments do not have their own rooms. The number of students in each class does not exceed 35. The classrooms are large, well lit and well furnished. It has an English staff of five. They have a very detailed official web-site.

### **3.3.2 The Private School**

The private school is located in one of the richest areas of Istanbul. It was founded in 1994. The school provides all students with quality textbooks and instructional materials ordered directly from abroad. Tuition fees and charges are more expensive than other private schools. As a result, students here have more advantages when exploring modern materials as well as advanced technology. The school days begin at 9.00 and end at 4.00. There are totally 39 classrooms in the school. The number of EFL teachers is 18 six of whom are native speakers of English. There is a rather big room which is allocated for EFL teachers. There are eight computers, two printers and a scanner in the room. Besides, lots of books can be noticed on the shelves. The head of the department has her own room. There are a lot of facilities in the school to encourage students to learn. There are computer, physics, and chemistry and biology labs in addition to a smart class. The smart class is a technology class which is specifically designed for English courses. Students can have a chance to improve their English in a multimedia environment. The mission of and the philosophy of the school is stated in its web-site as "by engaging students in activities and experiences that ensure meaningful application of their learning in authentic settings, students will understand the interconnectedness of knowledge as they grow to be lifelong learners". It is added that in order to do that they adopt "Whole learning model". In order to provide students' active involvement "Interactive Education Model" is

implemented. In their web page it is also asserted that contemporary education models such as “Project Production”, “Whole learning” are implemented in their school. To achieve this end, the school has created an academic program designed to enable talented, highly motivated students to pursue academic excellence and acquire fluency and literacy in English and Turkish. Students’ work is displayed in the hallways and stairwells. The classes are light and the bulletin boards in the classes are attractive and colorful. Students’ projects and posters are displayed on the bulletin boards.

### **3.4 Selection of Participant Teachers**

The population for this study included totally thirteen teachers attending focus groups, four teachers’ in-depth analysis through two semi-structured interviews along with observations, pre-and post-observation reflections and document analysis.

Participant teachers for in-depth study were convinced that individual contributions to the components of the research at every stage should be voluntary. In determining the criteria to be used for participating in the study for individual analysis, each participant had to

1. be teaching English to the grades from 4 to 8.<sup>5</sup>
2. be willing to allow the researcher to observe his/her classroom interactions.
3. be willing to participate in interviews before and after the observations.
4. be willing to participate in semi-structured interviews prior to the observations and after the observations.
5. be available in terms of the time commitment.
6. have degrees in ELT.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In Turkey, except for a few schools, generally public primary schools introduce a foreign language into their curriculum in the fourth grades whereas in private schools education of a foreign language starts as early as the pre-school stage.

7. have considerable experience as an EFL teacher.<sup>7</sup>

8. have involved in-service activities related to teaching English.<sup>8</sup>

At the focus group meetings, information was provided on the ethical standards that would apply, including assurances of preservation of anonymity and respect for the teacher's right to withdraw at any time; the extent of the participant's commitment of time to the project; and the need to select four to eight grades as the focus classes for the research. The choice of year levels was made to increase the likelihood of comparability of private and public schools.

The four participant teachers earned their bachelors degrees from ELT departments of three different universities. None of them had post graduate degrees. Their teaching experiences varied from five years to seven years. They stated their commitment to the research.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedure**

The data for this study were gathered using multiple tools; focus groups, interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Focus-group interviews were scheduled with the school principal. In the public school, the school principal and in the private school the head of the department communicated the focus group meetings to the English staff. The researcher encountered the focus groups first time during the focus group discussion. Each focus group represented a specific homogeneous grouping. All of them were Turkish teachers of English<sup>9</sup> teaching in primary schools. Individual interviews were carried out with four teachers being two from the public and two from the

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<sup>6</sup> Graduates of English literature Departments can also be appointed as teachers of English provided that they have a certificate in teaching. The inclusion of teachers with literature background into the sample was avoided because this might act as a variable in the study.

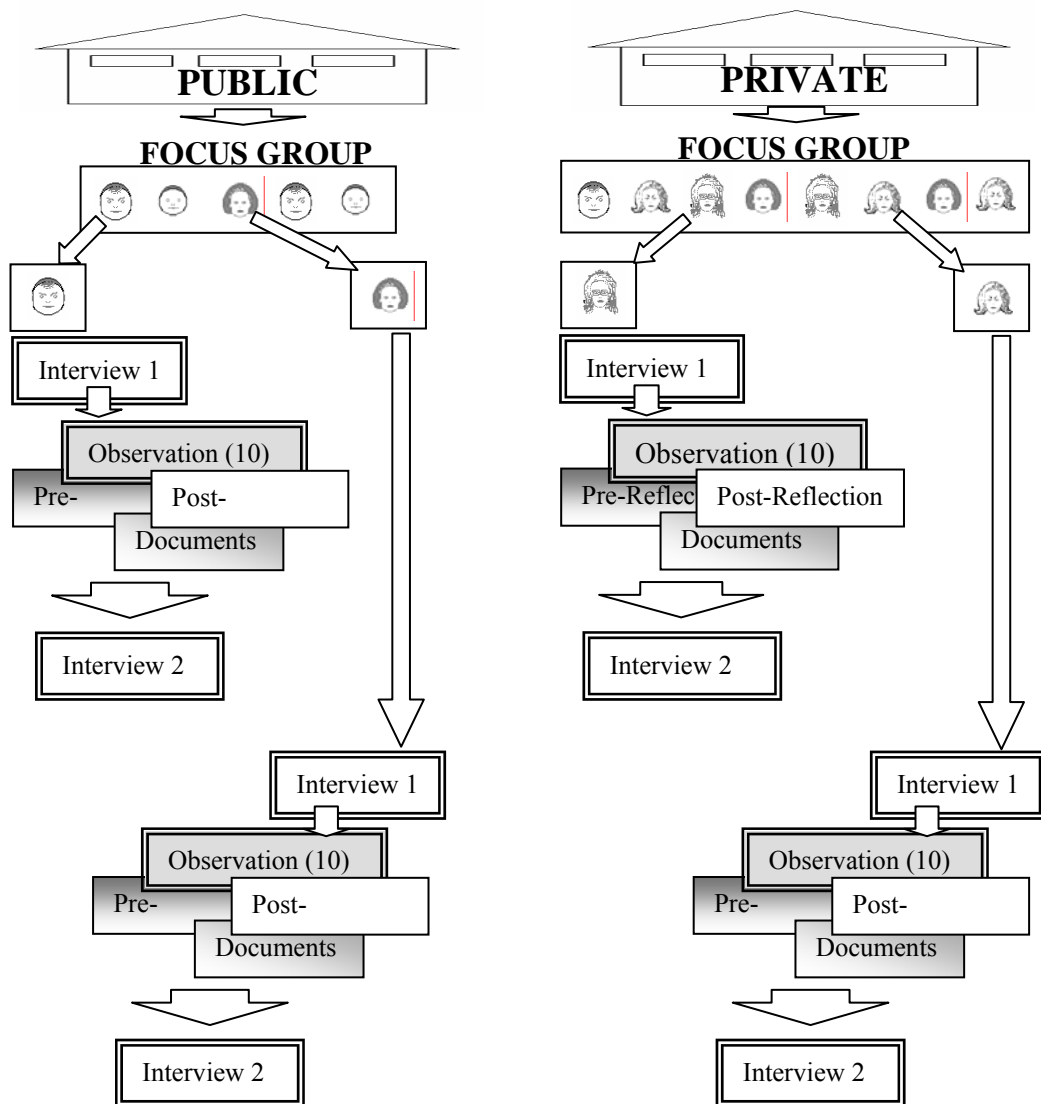
<sup>7</sup> A large body of research suggests that school quality is enhanced when teachers have high academic skills, teach in the field in which they are trained, and have more than a few years of experience (Meyer et al., 2000).

<sup>8</sup> It was anticipated that the teachers who had attended in-service training seminars would be introduced to the current trends in the field of foreign language teaching methodology and thus provided more information.

<sup>9</sup> This is particularly important, because although in public primary schools it is not common to hire native speakers of English, private schools hire native speakers in an attempt to raise their standards in language education and better advertise their institutions.

private school. These individual interviews were complemented with observations, pre- post- observation reflections and document analysis. Document analysis was conducted on the samples of examinations and worksheets, and the textbooks. The process of multiple methods of data collection allowed for the triangulation of the data. The data except for the focus group interviews were gathered by the author as the single investigator.

The following figure shows the process of data collection.



**Figure 3:** Data collection process

### **3. 5.1 Focus Groups**

Qualitative measures include the use of focus groups. For an accurate understanding of this specific community, a wide variety of perspectives was needed. Focus groups were selected as the means of gathering data from teachers of the selected schools. The decision to conduct focus-group interviews stemmed from two reasons. First, using the group format would allow the researcher to meet all the EFL teachers in the schools fairly rapidly and identify the volunteer participant teachers for in-depth study. Secondly, there is a great rationale in the literature for using group interviews (Lewis, 1992, quoted in Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989; Persico and Heany, 1986) because group interviews allow for “interaction and discussion among, they will produce meanings that are social products and that probably will be quite different from the prior, socially untested perceptions of any single individual.”

In focus groups there is a sense of security in being among others who share many of the same feelings and experiences. Focus groups also allow for group interaction in response to a researcher’s questions. Focus groups give the researcher an opportunity to hear discussions that may arise during focus group sessions (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Focus groups were conducted with teachers working in the English Department. Teachers in the public school formed the first focus group. The focus group at public school spent one and a half hour and the focus group at the private school spent one hour and fifteen minutes in an interview with the researcher. Semi-structured interview questions were used to initiate focus group discussions (focus group interview questions are given in Appendix B). These focus group meetings were audio-taped to allow the researcher the opportunity to accurately record the data gathered at the meeting.

The active phase of data collection began in February and lasted until June, when the spring semester came to an end. The data from focus group interviews were analyzed prior to the start of individual interviews, classroom

observations, and before-and after-class reflections so that the researcher could use this information as starting point for dialogue among the participants.

Although data collection and data analysis occurred simultaneously during spring semester 2005, the synthesis across cases of four participant teachers' BAK and practices took place when all data collection processes were complete. The executive summary of the study's findings was shared with the participants for their final input and modification.

### **3. 5.1.1 Conducting Focus Group Interviews**

According to Krueger (1994) there are two important aspects of group methodology: 1. asking questions that yield powerful information and 2. analyzing focus group data.

In order to receive responses that yielded forceful information, the following was adhered to by the researcher.<sup>10</sup>

1. Open-ended questions were utilized.
  - a. What do you think..
  - b. How do you feel about .....
  - c. What do you know...
2. Dichotomous questions were avoided.
3. Why? And To what extent? Were rarely asked.  
Instead of asking for reasons, attributes and/or influences were solicited.
4. Questions were focused from general to specific.
5. Probing questions were used.

### **3.5.1.2 Focus Group Participants**

#### **3. 5.1.2.1 Participants in the Public School**

The focus group subjects in the public school consisted of five primary EFL teachers. Participants were full-time EFL teachers, each teaching a minimum of 22 hours/week. Except for one female teachers, all the participant

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<sup>10</sup> The researcher used Litosseliti (2003) as a guide while conducting focus group interviews.

teachers were male. They were diverse in years of teaching experience. All participants had a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in ELT except for one teacher whose major was in History. The following table details the background information of the participant teachers a the focus group participants at the public school (Appendix C).

**Table 2:** Focus group participants at the public school

Name	Sex	Age	Years of teaching experience	Study Degree	Major	Levels	Hours of teaching a week	Professional activities attended recently
Teacher A	Male	28	5	B.A	ELT	6-7-8	28	Almost all the in-service training activities held by MONE
Teacher B	Female	27	5	B.A	ELT	5-6-7-8	24	Learner centeredness
Teacher C	Male	45	20	B.A	ELT	6-7-8	24	Methodology Course (Denmark) MONE
Teacher D	Male	43	13	B.A	ELT	4-6-7-8	24	-
Teacher E	Male	25	3	B.A	History	4-5-6	24	-

### 3. 5.1.2.1 Participants in the Private School

The focus group subjects in the private school consisted of eight primary EFL teachers. Participants were full-time EFL teachers, each teaching a minimum of 18 hours/week except for one teacher who worked as a substitute teacher. The teachers had varying years of teaching experience. All participants had Bachelor's Degree in ELT. There was only one male teacher. The rest of the participant teachers were females.

The following table details the background information of the participant teachers a the focus group participants at the private school .



**Table 3:** Focus group participants at the private school

Name	Sex	Age	Years of teaching experience	Study Degree	Major	Levels	Hours of teaching a week	Professional activities attended recently
Teacher 1	Female	31	7	B.A	ELT	4-5	20-22	Multiple intelligence, Active learning,
Teacher 2	Female	31	8	B.A	ELT	5-6	23	Active Learning Many
Teacher 3	Male	31	8	B.A	ELT	4-5-6-7-8	20	Many
Teacher 4	Female	48	21	B.A	ELT	5	10+Sub. Teacher	Many
Teacher 5	Female	25	3	B.A	ELT	2-3	20	ELT Sem. Role-plays NLPin ELT
Teacher 6	Female	29	7	B.A	ELT	1-2	18	Conferences
Teacher 7	Female	29	7	B.A	ELT	3-4	18	Young Learners Seminars
Teacher 8	Female	53	29	B.A	ELT	3-4	20	Many

### 3. 5.1.3 Focus Group Structure

Curricular seating was used to facilitate spontaneous responses and interchange in both focus group discussions. People were not rushed and had time to collect their thoughts before speaking, so the responses were more considered. Pauses and probes were used when the researcher believed a participant to be censoring the response. Questions as “Would you explain further...?” , “Could you say more about that....?” or “would you give an example to that?” were asked to probe further clarification.

An assistant from the ELT department where the researcher works was asked for help during the focus group discussions so that the researcher could concentrate on guiding the group and on gathering the information being discussed. The assistant's responsibilities included.

1. taking responsibility for the recorders<sup>11</sup>
2. taking notes throughout the discussion with emphasis on notable quotes, key points for each question, and non-verbal clues of participants that would indicate level of agreement, interest or disinterest.
3. not participating in the discussion either verbally or non-verbally, unless invited to by the researcher.

The focus groups lasted approximately one and a half hours. Participants were aware of the recording and were assured that their names would not be associated with the research findings.

### **3. 5.2 Ethnographic Interviews**

Interviews seek the words, ideas, and thoughts of the people being studied. As Ely et al. (1991, p.58) indicate, "the major purpose of an in-depth ethnographic interview is to learn to see the world from the eyes of the people being interviewed". Through ethnographic interview, researchers can well understand their participants, their experiences, and their situations. The ethnographic interviewer learns from the participants as informants and, meanwhile, strives to discover the true meanings and significance underlying the participants' words.

For this research, semi-structured interviews were used to elicit participant teachers' responses. As Spradley (1979, p.58) states, skilled ethnographers "...often interview people without their awareness, merely carrying on a friendly conversation while introducing a few ethnographic questions...to assist informants to respond as informants. "a good interview is

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<sup>11</sup> One digital and one manual recorders were used in the study in order not to lose data due to a problem in the machines.

one in which the interviewee is at ease and talks freely about his or her experiences, feelings, and points of view.

The decision to use this interview approach was shaped by a number of considerations. First, this method has a long and successful tradition in teacher thinking research dating back two decades (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988; Elbaz, 1983). It gives teachers the opportunities and time to detail fully and freely the bases for their approaches to teaching, without the constraints of a set schedule of invariant questions. Moreover, this approach allows prominence to be given to the voice of teachers rather than that of researchers, an important consideration for ensuring fidelity of accounts of practice and their rationales (Elbaz, 1991). Second, practical theories are considered to be largely implicit (Clark and Peterson, 1986; Gage, 1978) because they tend to build up in teachers' minds in the absence of a formal process of theory construction and because teachers are rarely invited to make them explicit.

For these reasons, articulation of implicit theories by teachers can pose difficulties. These difficulties can be assured to an extent within the context of an in-depth interview by creating a climate conducive to teacher reflection and disclosure of details of their practical theories. Teacher engagement in these introspective processes can be encouraged by interviewers being empathic, supportive and non evaluative, asking open-ended questions, seeking clarification and extension of the teachers' remarks and using the language of the teachers where possible. In this study, the role of interviewer was defined to include these features. Finally, a semi-structured approach was used because it was felt that it would provide flexibility to allow unique features of a teachers' BAK into surface and would assist a teacher, in articulating the bases for his/her teaching.

Case study entails a focused approach to interviewing (Wainwright, 1997). Patton (1990) characterized the research interview as a strategy to find out things from people we cannot directly observe. Three types of interview

procedures have been recognized as valid: structures, partially structured, and unstructured (Patton, 1990).

The partially structured interview is similar to the structured interview in that the interviewer starts out with a pre-designed set of questions to ask each respondent. It differs from the structured interview in that the interviewer has the opportunity to ask spontaneous questions to “follow-up” on a particular response (Merriam, 1994).

In this case study, the partially structured interview was used. This was thought to be the most trustworthy technique for this study since it allowed the researcher the flexibility to ask predetermined questions as well as spontaneous questions as the interaction dictated. The interview questions served as the primary structure for the interviews and focus groups; however, the interviewer had the opportunity to ask spontaneous questions of the various respondents to clarify their responses or to follow their responses to the fullest conclusion.

The final phase of the data collection involved “exit interviews” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.275) with each of the participating teachers. All of them were conducted after the researcher finished the observations. The purpose of the last interview was threefold: to clarify some points which arose during the observations but were not asked prior to observations and to ask for clarification about themes that were identified during the preliminary analysis of the first interviews. The questions therefore emerged from the observations or the analysis of the first interviews (Appendix D). The third reason was to ask some questions that were not asked in the first interview due to face preservation concerns. These questions were reserved for the later interview because first interview was the second time the researcher met the participant teachers and she had never seen them before. She especially hesitated to ask questions about the administration. The researcher assumed that asking questions about the administrative influences on their teaching activities might cause anxiety and hinder the teachers’ being honest.

In this study, a semi-structured interview with open-ended framing questions was conducted to glean information from each EFL teacher regarding her BAK about learner-centeredness, learner-autonomy and ELP. Language, both verbal and nonverbal, is an avenue through which humans share experiences, bring others to an understanding of their lives, allow insight into their feelings, concerns, and beliefs and establish the order, sense and meaning attached to the events of which they speak (Siedman, 1991).

It is a common belief that people are more likely to open up and reveal their true feelings and thoughts when using the language they are comfortable with. Therefore, all the interviews in this research were audio taped and conducted in Turkish, the national language of Turkey. All the audio-taped data were transcribed and translated into English soon after each interview<sup>12</sup>. To ensure confidentiality, for each transcription each of the participant teachers was asked to check the information displayed. They were free to omit any information. Besides, anything that would reveal the participant's identity was discarded as well.

The interview questions and format were developed after review of the literature. The list of the interview questions was designed to be descriptive, structural and contrastive in order to elicit information that would construct a clear picture of each participant's reasoning, thinking and experiences. The interview questions were based upon the conceptual foundation of the study that focused on learner-centeredness, the relationship between learner-centeredness and learner-autonomy and ELP.

Beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge on the meaning of the situation being examined were condensed into a series of questions that attempted to elicit the information sought during a time frame acceptable to the teachers.

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<sup>12</sup> Since both the interviewer and the interviewee are native speakers of Turkish, the medium of communication during the interviews and all the interaction was Turkish. Therefore, the tapes were first transcribed in Turkish. Then after the analysis is completed, the segments of the transcripts that were to be quoted in the thesis were translated into English by the researcher herself. The translation was checked by proof-readers who were experienced instructors in ELT Department

The interview questions were developed over several months and piloted with two teachers who were not included in the final sample. Before the piloting process the researcher requested an expert to give feedback to her about the interview questions. After the piloting, interview questions were revised to clarify questions, to decrease ambiguity, and to avoid leading questions. The questions asked during the interviews are listed in Appendices D and E.

Interviews lasted from about one hour to two hours and were conducted at the school sites. Throughout the interview process there was a focus on maintaining good rapport. In the meantime, since a good relationship was established with the participant teachers there was always a casual conversation which also proved very fruitful in terms of probing into the way the teacher thinks. From the interviewing process, it was possible to capture the meanings of the participant teachers' words and thoughts. The use of ethnographic interviews generated a multifaceted view of the four participant teachers' education, understanding of these concepts and the application of them in their classes.

Interviews and focus groups were audio-taped with the written permission of each participant. All participants were given a letter describing the intent and the process of the study, assured of confidentiality as it relates to reporting the findings of qualitative research, and notified of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. All participants were asked to sign a letter of consent (Appendix F) to participate prior to the asking of any interview or focus group questions.

### **3. 5.3 Observational Methods**

“Participant”, “naturalistic”, and “ethnographic” observation have been used to identify a variety of data collection methods in which researchers observe behaviors or events in natural settings and records them (Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1991). In all of these observational methods the researcher is an active participant in the interpersonal environment of the unit that is being observed.

The main objective of the researcher is to document the behaviors and interaction patterns as they occur in the natural setting (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Therefore, the researcher adopted the role of an active participant as the most appropriate role for understanding teachers' practices about learner-centeredness. The purpose of the observation was to examine the way teachers' implemented their understanding of learner-centeredness.

Richards (1998) explains the significant aspect of studying teacher beliefs. He states that teachers' practices differ according to their beliefs and theory of teaching and learning. He further remarks that teacher educators have to understand the kind of assumptions, theories and beliefs teachers have when they observe teachers' lessons in order to gain insights into teachers' thinking. This sort of observation, he adds, serves as a means that "can be used to develop a deeper understanding of how and why teachers teach the way they do and the different ways teachers approach their lessons" (Richards, 1998, p. 142).

Observation is a check that enables the researcher to verify that the teachers are doing what they believe they are doing (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). The role of the observer was non-participant observer. Non-participant observation involves merely watching what happens and recording events on the spot, minimizing interaction with the participants and classroom events (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984).

Through participant observation, the researcher can learn first hand how the actions of the participants correspond to their words, see patterns of behavior, experience the unexpected, as well as expected, and develop a quality of trust with participants that motivates them to tell the researcher what otherwise they might not (Glesne, 1999). On the continuum of participant-observation, the researcher remained primarily an observer but had some interaction with the participant in the form of eye-contact and facial gestures. Although interaction occurred between the researcher and participants during the interviews, focus groups, and before- and after class reflections, the

researcher was strictly an observer during classroom interaction. During the classroom interactions, the researcher studied the setting, participants, events that occurred in the classroom.

The assumption was that certain behaviors displayed by teachers were indicators of whether the classroom was teacher-centered or learner-centered. As the behaviors were observed, a pattern emerged indicating whether the participant teachers were teacher-centered or learner-centered. The survey and interview provided the researcher with each participant's stated belief about learner-centeredness and teaching. This information was compared with behaviors in the classroom to determine the relationship between stated beliefs and classroom practices.

It was the intent of the observations to obtain information pertaining to the following areas.

1. Classroom environment.
2. Student's role in the classroom
3. Teacher's role in the classroom

The researcher observed each participant 400 minutes in ten lessons. Since the participant teachers in the public school expressed their reluctance about recording in their classrooms reflecting their feeling that they would not be comfortable with being audiotaped, so in order to provide unity in terms of data collection techniques, extensive field notes were taken during the observations both in public and private schools. The main purpose of the classroom observation was to compare and contrast the participants' verbal responses and their behaviors in the classroom. On a humanistic standpoint, the teachers could have articulated some statements while they projected a whole different set of behaviors about their BAK about implementing learner-centeredness. By observing the participants as they were teaching and interacting with the students in EFL classes, the researcher was able to reconcile their learner-centered practices. Writing extensive observational notes helped



the researcher in analyzing the data on the basis of the model she developed herself.

### **3. 5. 4 Before- and After–Observation Reflections**

In recent years there has been considerable interest in using reflection as part of teacher training and facilitating this to improve the quality of teachers' learning so that teachers learn to reflect on classroom events. This reflection according to Calderhead (1996, p.715), may have a prospective dimension. "Teachers may be considering what can be learned from recent experience, the significance of the day's events, and what the implications are for future teaching".

Calderhead (1996, p.715) notes that "this reflection will occur at what is defined as the critical level which refers to a much more deliberate form of reflection that questions not only teachers' actions and their efforts but the ideological and material contexts in which those actions take place".

Before and after each lesson, the participant teacher and researcher tried to reflect on the classroom experience that had taken place. The interactions between the researcher and the participant teacher were either audio taped or taken in the form of field notes. In each case the researcher asked the participant teacher how he/she taught the class went and how she/he implemented learner-centeredness. The researcher also inquired them about any significant occurrences she had noticed (Appendix G and Appendix H).

### **3.5.5 Document Analysis**

Tuckman (1988) suggests that the first step in conducting a case study should be the gathering of all documents relevant to the study. Documents of teaching materials, examination papers, curricula, department goals were found to be useful (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992; Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Tuckman (1988) described documents as a source of information that can be used to

better understand an event or phenomenon. Documents are defined here as written sources of data.

All written accounts have the purpose of describing events of phenomenon under question. However, there is no guarantee that an account is accurate; therefore it may never be used the sole evidence in making conclusions (Tuckman , 1988). Accounts simply supply another source of data to be considered in the process of triangulation of data.

The investigator requested the examples of examinations administered to students, worksheets, the copies of the pages of the books dealt with during the classes bearing in mind that the materials used would reflect the teachers' philosophy of teaching. Besides, their interpretation of these documents would provide insights into their beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge regarding their understanding of learner-centeredness.

### **3.5.6 Field Notes**

Field notes for observations are used to assist in the description of the phenomenon or event under study in particular case study and serves as another source for data triangulation. Field notes were collected for the observational data. Field notes consist of descriptive notes, which describe what is observed and heard and reflective notes or a journal, which consist of the experiences, reflections and learning of the researcher (Creswell, 1998).

Field notes were taken during the classroom observations and before- , after-class reflections and after focus group discussions and individual interviews. These notes were expanded upon immediately following the reflection so that the researcher could recall as much information as possible. The notes were descriptive in nature. The researcher strived accuracy but avoided being judgmental. Making judgments did not occur until the analysis phase of the research study. Field notes taken during all observations provided descriptions of instructional activities and additional information. These descriptions included work from the board or on the overhead projector, the

nature of working groups, student and teacher movement, and descriptions or copies of instructional materials such as handouts and worksheets.

Different binders are kept for each school. A six-ringed binder for each group was maintained for the purpose of organizing the individual interviews, focus group interviews, and observations specific to participants. Documents were attached to the observations. These items were organized by type and date of publication.

### **3. 5.6.1 Transcription of Audio-tapes and Field Notes**

All the audio tapes were transcribed verbatim resulting in approximately 150 single spaced pages of transcription. Ineligible portions are marked as ?. This especially happened in focus group interviews where there were many overlaps. Field notes were transcribed directly from the researcher's notes. These included summaries of informal conversation and interviews that had not been audio taped and description of settings, people and activities. Oral accounts in and outside school recorded in the form of field-notes .These accounts were invaluable data because sometimes people feel more at ease to talk outside the group than with it.

### **3. 5.7 Role of the Researcher**

According to Patton (1990), "The challenge to the researcher is to make sense of the massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal" (pp. 371-372). Merriam (1994) also contends that the researcher must possess certain personality characteristics to successfully conduct a qualitative research study. To begin with, the qualitative researcher must have an enormous tolerance for ambiguity. Throughout the research process—from designing the study, to data collection, to data analysis—there are not set procedures or protocols that can be followed step by step.

Sensitivity, or being intuitive, is a second trait needed in this type of research. The researcher must be sensitive to the context and all the variables within it, including the physical setting, the people, the overt and covert agendas, and the nonverbal behavior. The researcher must be sensitive to the information being gathered. What does it reveal? How well does it reflect what is happening? Finally, the researcher must be aware of any personal biases and how they may influence the investigation.

In producing a qualitative study, the researcher must also be sensitive to the biases inherent in this type of research. As LeCompte and Preissle (1993) observe, qualitative research “is distinguished partly by its admission of the subjective perception and biases of both the participants and researcher into the research frame” (p. 92). Because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human, all observations and analyses are filtered through that human being’s worldview, values, and perspective. It might be recalled that one of the philosophical assumptions underlying this type of research is that reality is not an objective entity; rather there are multiple interpretations of reality. The researcher thus brings a construction of reality to the research situation which interacts with other people’s construction or interpretations of the phenomenon being studied. Sensitivity thus extends to understanding how biases or subjectivity shape the investigation and its findings (Merriam, 1994, pp. 22-23).

Apart from being able to tolerate ambiguity and being a sensitive observer and analyst, the qualitative research investigator must also be a good communicator. A good communicator empathizes with respondents, establishes rapport, asks good questions, and listens intently.

Guba and Lincoln (1981, p.21) make the point that qualitative evaluators do not measure. Rather, “they do what anthropologists, social scientists, connoisseurs, critics, oral historians, novelists, essayists, and poets throughout the years have done. They emphasize, describe, judge, compare, portray, evoke images, and create, for the reader or listener, the sense of having been there” (p. 149).

The role of the researcher in this study was to examine, interpret and describe the data from the focus group interactions, personal interviews, field notes of observations and documents collected during this investigation.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis is a recursive process of questioning, repositioning, and revising the data. It is one that utilizes the hunches of the researcher to direct further inquiry. Data analysis is the researcher's process of systematically searching and arranging interview transcripts, field notes, and other data to augment one's understanding of the data (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). Data collection in itself implies data analysis (Ely, at , 1991).

After the focus group discussions, the process of data analysis began. Within three weeks each taped focus group discussion was transcribed and entered into field log in chronological order as the interviews occurred. These transcriptions which were page and line numbered and characterized by a five cms left margin to allow for handwritten notes and codes, were read at least two times through before any coding took place.

The purpose of doing an immediate analysis after each focus group was to make the themes and categories from preceding interviews available for comment and clarification in subsequent interviews with the teachers.

Focus-group interactions, interviews, field notes and observations were used in analyzing the data. Because each data-gathering procedure has its own mechanisms and bias, the researcher decided that there was merit in using multiple methods, supplementing one with others to counteract bias and generate more adequate data.

#### **3. 6.1 Data Analysis Procedures**

##### **3. 6.1.1 Focus Group Data Analysis**

Data from the focus group were generated from the transcriptions of audio tapes at the focus group session. A written report was prepared based on

the verbatim transcript of the recording and field notes of the focus group. Data were analyzed using constant comparison method originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and adapted to qualitative research methodology developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The process consisted of four stages: transcription, utilizing statements, categorization and category integration (see Appendix I for Analysis Worksheet for focus Groups).

After the transcription of the focus group discussion, incidents, or units of meaning were identified. An incident, or a unit of meaning, was defined by the main idea of the statement within the context of the discussion. The next step consisted of categorizing statements using the constant comparison method. Specifically, the second statement was compared to the first and a decision was made to whether it belonged in the same category. If it did it was placed in that grouping; if not, it formed the beginning of a new group. The third statement was then read and placed in either the first or the second group; or if it did not fit either of these categories, a third pile was started. This procedure continued until all statements were placed into a group. These categories were then named and defined by the researcher.

Finally during the category integration stage, each statement in a category was reviewed to determine if it fit the definition. If it did not, it was placed in a more suitable category or a miscellaneous pile. After each statement in each category was reviewed, the miscellaneous statements were either placed or discarded. Throughout the category integration process, the focus was on asking if that meaning was reflected in the category definition. This yielded a lot of items for each major research question.

### **3.6.1.2 Interview Analysis**

All interviews were tape recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. These transcriptions were first reviewed using Glaser and Strauss's (1967) and Strauss's (1987) constant comparative method to create categories in the domains that were tapped by the interviews: primarily learner-centeredness,

learner autonomy, and ELP. The interviews were first analyzed individually for each teacher.

The transcripts were read many times and coded in order to discover emerging themes pertinent to the research questions discussed above. The steps taken were;

1. read the transcripts and then file notes numerous times, mark passages of interest, label those passages
2. copy marked pages onto text cards using a coding system, and then sort them out into categories.
3. Search for recurring patterns and for thematic connections between the various categories, within and across the participants.

In analyzing data rather than using a pre-existing analytic framework , the research questions formed the starting point. The themes emerged during the analysis of the data. In the first analysis, the transcripts were read carefully many times to conduct initial coding, and the passages or chunks that were of particular interest were marked. The initial coding included such categories as the definitions of learner-centeredness, learner autonomy, and their role in creating these, and so on. In the following analysis, the relationship among the initial categories was identified paying attention to similarities and contrasts among them. By doing so, it was observed that these categories fell into larger categories or domains such as “the obstacles that hinder the practice of learner-centeredness” or “the teachers’ reactions towards innovation”. In the subsequent steps, the relationship of these domains to each other thematically and to the research question was analyzed, and finally the major themes emerged.

During the final analysis, the researcher conducted a cross case analysis between the four participating teachers to find “thematic connections within and among the participants and their settings.” (Siedman, 1991, p.102). The cross-case analysis allowed the researcher to draw conclusions and find answers to research questions.

When conducting case studies, researchers often examine a single case study, but they may also choose to investigate several cases simultaneously. This study involved four teachers teaching at two different sites, and comparisons across the cases were made. As Huberman and Miles (1994) state, “looking at multiple actors in multiple settings enhances “generalizability”. (p.193). At the same time, however, “there is a danger that multiple case studies will be analyzed at high levels of inference, aggregating out the local webs of causality and ending with a smoothed set of generalizations that may not apply to any single case” (p.194). This caution was taken into consideration throughout the course of this study.

### **3. 6.1.3 Observation and Document Analysis**

The observation notes and field notes were reviewed and coded according to “key events” (Patton, 1990 p.377). Key events for this study consisted of the teachers’ actions in the classroom.

Before coding could begin, data needed to be transformed into typed text. After every observation session, field notes were typed and placed into files; documents are numbered and also filed. A table of documents was developed for each participant, indicating the document number, title and brief summary of the relevance of the document.

Data displays were created throughout the process. First, a table of events that displayed classroom events chronologically was created (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This allowed for a general overview of the core events during the inquiry.

Checklists, which were devised by the researcher on the basis of the learner-centered model, was used in observation (Appendix J) and document analyses (Appendix K). The learner-centered model formed the frames of these two checklists. The learner-centered model was designed by the researcher to identify the key elements of learner-centeredness and to discern whether or not the practices and procedures employed by the four case studies were consistent



with the key elements advocated in the research literature on learner-centeredness. Since documents were indispensable parts of the lessons, they were also analyzed on the basis of the model a part of which was allocated for the materials and tasks. The information used to design the model was adapted mainly from the learner-centered principles (McCombs and Lambert 1997) and basic tenets of constructivism and Communicative Language Teaching.

In order to analyze observation data and documents efficiently, spreadsheet facilities were used. Excel program was chosen for that reason. First, the learner-centered checklists were entered into Excel. Then two columns were allocated for each statement. If the teacher displayed that behavior it was tallied as 1. Otherwise it was recorded as zero. The frequency of the teachers' practices was ignored. So, it did not matter how many times the teacher implemented the learner-centered practice in question or not. Once the practice was observed, it was tallied as "strong". In order to avoid using the words "positive" (in the case of a learner-centered practice) and "negative" (in the case of a lack of a learner-centered practice), the researcher decided to use the terms "strong" and "not strong". The same process was followed for the document analysis.

### **3. 7 Cross-Case Analysis**

During the final analysis, a cross case analysis between the four participating teachers was carried out to find "thematic connections within and among participants and their settings". The cross case analysis allowed the researcher to draw conclusions and find answers to research questions. A fundamental reason for cross-case analysis is to deepen understanding and explanation. Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue that when researchers studied more than one setting at a time, they framed the issue well.

In doing cross-case analysis for this study, the researcher grouped together answers from different participants to the same questions and then analyzed different perspectives on central issues. This study used a semi-

structured interview approach where all four teachers were asked the same set of questions. The focus issues here were how the BAK and practices of each teacher differed in the different types of schools they attended. The data from each teacher's case record were compared and contrasted to find the common themes and different factors that affect the teachers' implementation of learner-centeredness. Therefore, the synthesis of data from each case allowed the researcher to draw conclusions and answers to the research questions.

### **3. 8 Limitations**

Although the naturalistic approach was deemed to be the most appropriate for this research inquiry, there can be certain limitations that might impact the findings. Methodological approaches might influence the type and amount of data to be acquired by the research. In this study, the choice of informants, questions and questioning format, and observations may have influenced the data collected. Especially during the observations, as stated by Evertson and Green (1986), the researcher's presence might have influenced the participants and the setting, including the students, leading the participants into expectations or reactions that could distort the findings.

The administration of qualitative inquiry requires that the researcher be the prime instrument for data collection. Based on the humanistic stand points of the researcher, biases can be generated during both periods of data collection and analysis. Cautionary measures were taken to minimize the researcher's subjectivity. In order to ensure highest degree of objectivity a model was devised in order to analyze the data collected through observations using this model.

In this case study, the findings are specific to two schools. For this reason, the results cannot be generalized to all primary schools, yet the findings can be helpful to those engaging in a change process. The transferability of the findings could possibly guide schools in determining their priorities,

formulating a plan to address these priorities, and engaging all stakeholders in the overall change process.

While these limitations affected the generalizability of the study's findings, the presented hindrances are thought to strengthen the data collection procedures for future study. The researcher stresses the fact that qualitative inquiry is a process. The limitations foster an invitation for other researchers to expand the current study while the four participating teachers' rich voices echo the true essence of conducting a qualitative inquiry.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter presented the research methodology that was employed, such as the use of focus group discussions, ethnographic interviews, observations, and document analysis. The parameters in selection of the settings and the participants were also explained. As a result of the features of qualitative research, the research questions and the processes of data collection and analysis can be described as evolving and emergent.

This chapter also included the methods of analysis. The data was coded by topic, and then categorized in order to identify themes and patterns. Also discussed was how the findings were interpreted. The methods used to ensure validity and reliability were also discussed in this chapter. The chapter concluded with limitations and assumptions of the study.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**

#### **4.0 Presentation**

Data analysis is the point in qualitative research at which the researcher must take a critical look at the evidence that has been gathered to interpret its meaning. Analysis is the most important step of ordering or making sense of the data. Focus in analyzing qualitative data comes from the research questions generated at the beginning of the inquiry process and during the conceptual, question-focusing phase of the study (Merriam,1994).

In this chapter, data are framed in a manner that facilitates the analysis of how four primary EFL teachers define learner-centeredness and ELP and how they implemented learner-centeredness.

This chapter begins with a descriptive analysis of focus group discussions held at both schools and presents the case studies of the four participating teachers. The case studies include transcribed data from interviews and analysis of data gathered from classroom observations and document analysis on the basis of a model designed by the researcher. Pre-and post-observation reflections will also be provided along with observation analysis for each case. Topics in the case studies include teacher's academic background, the teachers' BAK about learner-centeredness, teacher's role in creating learner-centeredness, implementation of learner-centeredness, benefits of learner-centeredness, the barriers that hinder the implementation of learner-centeredness, learner autonomy, and English Language Portfolio.

The purpose of the following section is to present analysis of the data gathered through focus group discussions held both in public school and private school. Several major themes emerged from the data concerning teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge about learner-centeredness, learner autonomy and English Language Portfolio in public school and in the private

school. The themes were further divided into subcategories to improve the understanding and flow of data analysis. Each of these subcategories stands alone, yet they are intertwined with each other. Evidence supporting each theme is presented mainly in the form of direct quotations from the participants. The use of direct quotations are intended to permit the readers of this study to hear the participant express herself in her own voice and thus allow the readers to better perceive the intended meaning and the tone of his BAK. Since the data collection started with the public school and then continued with the private school. This order will be followed in presenting the results of the data analysis. The research questions guided the presentation of data.

#### **4.1. Teachers' Understanding of "learner-centeredness"**

##### **4.1.1 Public School Teachers' Understanding of "learner-centeredness"**

###### **4.1.1.1 Analysis of Focus Group Interview**

The first question directed to the teachers was about their understanding of learner-centeredness. Teacher C defined learner-centeredness as an education system in which the students were more open in the lessons. He continued his definition by stating that they explained the main points in the lessons and the students were active in the rest of the lessons. What the students were supposed to do in the rest of the lessons were described as

*"The rest of the lesson belongs to the student; the students construct sentences, do the exercises and do the dialogues"*

Teacher A's belief was similar to Teacher C's. He asserted that they just gave the topic. Teacher A saw the students' being active as something equal to carrying out the exercises given by the teacher. His example made this point clear.

*"For example if we are going to teach a tense, for example we are teaching the present perfect tense now, we give the differences between the simple past tense. We give the details. Afterwards, the student does the rest. That is, the student does all the exercises and the examples."*

The participant teachers did not provide definitions of learner-centered instruction other than these. The rest of the talk focused mostly on the obstacles that hindered their implementation of learner-centeredness and on the criticisms of the education system.

### ***Implementation of learner-centeredness***

Although at the very beginning of the focus group discussion Teacher C said that learner-centeredness was an education system which they implemented as much as they could, when asked specifically about their learner-centered practices Teacher D admitted that they could not implement it. However, he at least considered himself and the other EFL teachers lucky because the students had an opportunity to take a turn at least once in their lessons. He further added that when compared with other courses like Maths or Science, EFL teachers tended to move more towards learner-centeredness. Teacher A agreed with the idea that learner-centered education could not be implemented very much in their school. So, the question of how they implemented learner-centeredness had no answer.

Only the female teacher who was also the participant teacher for the in-depth analysis made a comment by stating that she had the students made projects. However, this resulted in frustration. She expressed her disappointment as

*“The students made projects and this was something learner-centeredness for me but of course it wasn’t understood.”*

Later, the source of her disappointment was understood. She received negative reactions from the parents.

Teacher C further clarified how they implemented learner-centeredness. Again, it was in the form of giving the rules, *“the grammar part”* he said. *“If there is a new structure, a new tense, we explain it. This is what all of us do.”* However, he acknowledged they as teachers occupied most of the lesson being active and thus the students got far away from being at the center.

### ***Obstacles in implementing learner-centeredness***

The obstacles in implementing learner-centered instruction can be classified as follows;

#### **a. Nature of the students**

Teacher A expressed his concern regarding the students. The students were highly exam oriented and because of this they tended to memorize everything. The teachers' efforts to make students think proved unfruitful. The students asked for rules and they wanted to memorize them. So the students had difficulties when they were asked to find the results from a given topic. According to the teachers' account the students wanted to get out of the center rather than being in the center. When they were asked to establish their own understanding, they simply couldn't. That was the main reason put forward as a reason why the teachers could not implement it. For Teacher A it was the whole system to put the blame on.

*"The system works that way. So however hard you try to change it individually, it is impossible to put an end to it in four hours a week."*

Teacher D agreed with Teacher A and repeated that education mostly depended on rote learning.

*"This is something we encounter in education in general. Since education depends on memorization, it is the same in Turkish, in Mathematics, you can not divert students to thinking. So it is not only a matter of English. It requires logic. You can not find this in the students."*

He commented that their lessons had to be grammar-based although they did not want to. Because this was the only way they considered as being the most appropriate for the students. Teacher A added that preventing students from memorization was very difficult. So they had to adapt a grammar-based approach due to students' persistence in memorization.

#### **b. Lycee Entrance Exam (LGS)**

The most commonly criticized matter was the LGS exam. The participant teachers presented this exam as a real stroke to teaching English in

primary education. Besides, it was viewed as an important reason in the students' tendency towards memorizing everything. Teacher A was the first to voice it.

*"After this LGS, the students are always memorizing."*

This view was supported by Teacher B as

*"Especially in the eighth grade English finishes."*

Teacher A focused on the process of English teaching in the grades up to eight.

*"You do the best English lesson in the sixth grade. Since I do not teach fourth and fifth grades but with the sixth grades you do the best lesson, it is good in the seventh grade but in the eighth..."*

Teacher C interrupted Teacher A and completed his sentence

*"...a collapse begins."*

Teacher D considered the fact that students were not responsible for English in the LGS exam as a disadvantage, which was a different opinion. He thought the main reason why students did not take English lessons seriously stemmed from the content of this exam.

The main aim of the students in this school was to pass this exam and enter an Anatolian or vocational high school. The students thought that they would have a prep year in those schools and would have a chance to learn English. So they saw no urgent need to improve their English school. Teacher B further summarized this

*"Of course owing to this, the education is examination –centered now."*

### **c. Time constraints**

Class hours devoted to English lessons were told to be insufficient in order to develop four skills in students. Teacher B as expressed this

*"You need to spend time in order to improve the students' four separate skills. We don't have much time. So we can only focus on grammar during our lessons."*



Teacher A was of the same belief with Teacher B. He mentioned that *“if you spare your own time, it can suffice”*. He meant that he had to spend extra time in school other than his classes. For Teacher B’s lesson, the students prepared projects. Teacher A expressed his admiration for Teacher B’s efforts but he articulated his concern regarding these projects.

*“If you evaluate each project one by one so that all the students can see and share, your class time will fly away. The class hour is insufficient in that sense.”*

His solution to this problem was sacrifice expected from everybody. However, he was aware that this was also impossible. So he concluded that

*“Everything depends on the falsity of the education. That is, you always end up at the same point”*.

His words were a sign of criticism against the whole system which was also an indication of his disbelief in the innovations.

Teacher D repeated the same thing about class hours as two hours a week was too few. Teacher A articulated the realities of the content of the English program. He reported that the curriculum was not suitable for implementing learner-centeredness because there were a lot of subjects to be covered.

*“I have to finish three units in two weeks. What can I make the students do in such a limited time. I try to do the maximum. That is I give the main outline of the subject and stand aside and say OK! You do it yourself.”*

Here the students were supposed to do the exercises relevant to the topic.

#### **d. Students’ efficacy**

Student efficacy was put forward as an obstacle only by one of the teachers. Teacher B asserted that learner-centered education should start from the very beginning because it was not possible to establish it later. She expressed her belief as

*“These students are too old for that. That is they are young but too old as well”*

She did not believe that the students could learn a foreign language at that age. She asserted that the capacity of brain stopped at these ages. Besides an important factor put forward by Teacher B was the inefficacy of students. There were some students in her classes who were unable to write even their names. Of course, there were also bright ones but the poor students constituted the majority.

*“He can’t even make up a Turkish sentence. I don’t have a chance to give him English.”* was what she said about one of her students. She supported the current learning campaign which announced that 7 is too late. She thought that students’ intelligence had an important role in their learning. The students did not even know Turkish or what an adjective was. There were even students who could not perceive the most structural patterns.

*“We told them that you would put an adjective here by heart. But they don’t know”.*

She considered the education given by the parents had the most priority. The parents should improve their children’s intelligence starting from the very beginning, even from the first months. She reflected her beliefs about such low-achieving students as

*“Student comes, he is really an idiot. There is nothing wrong with his brain. What can a teacher do with him?”*

#### **e. Teachers’ efficacy**

One of the concerns expressed during focus group discussion about innovations and learner-centeredness was regarding teacher’s efficacy. Teacher A voiced his apprehension as

*“The teacher must be the person who teaches. This is the way it should be. But we cannot apply it because we don’t even know what is teaching to learn.”*

Teacher B expressed the same thing as

*“Yes, this sentence is always articulated but there is nothing we see.”*

Although they were able to hear the same statement in the seminars and read it in the internet sites. They complaint about the lack of educators who could teach them how to teach “how to learn”.

*“How am I going to teach the students how to learn. For five years, all I have been doing is teaching the given topic but I do not have a good command of the ways of teaching the students how to learn.”*

#### **f. Classroom size**

One of the obstacles that hindered the implementation of learner-centered education was asserted to do with classroom size. Although the suitable number for implementing learner-centered instruction was given as 30, Teacher C found this number too high. For English lessons 30 students meant a crowded population. He stated that the number of students should not exceed 15-20. He defended his suggestion as

*“Sometimes we try it. We say ask this question that question to your friends. And some techniques are mentioned here. Let’s do groups and make them ask questions to each other. There is a lot of noise in the classroom.”*

The problem was

*“When we ask them to come to the board and act out the dialogues in the form of pair work. Two students do, 30 students watch them. These 30 students get bored. But if there are 20 students in the class, we can finish it in 10 times.”*

Number of students was reflected as an important barrier in the implementation of learner-centeredness.

#### **e. Heterogeneous group of students**

There was another important point Teacher C underlined. This was about the learner diversity in terms of the students’ level in English. Students came to this school from other schools in the district. Some students knew English well whereas some of them knew absolutely nothing about English.

When there was such a disorder it was impossible to put the learners in the center.

*“So what do we do? We explain the topic from the very beginning.”*

**f. Lack of suitable materials**

Teacher C mentioned the conditions in Turkey and expressed his doubts about to what extent learner-centeredness could be implemented. He put forth the materials as the first obstacle in implementing learner-centeredness. While he was talking about the textbooks, Teacher D who had a lot to say about the textbooks mandated by the ministry interrupted him. It seemed obvious that textbook was a real problem for all the participants of the focus group discussion. The main problems with the textbooks expressed by the participant teachers was as followed

Teacher B *“They are a real nightmare. They are very bad”*

Teacher D *“The subjects are so irrelevant with each other that I can not decide what I am going to teach. There isn’t an appropriate plan program”*

Teacher C *“ Every year, there is another book. Especially the ministry’s distributing free books is too bad. At least in the previous years we could choose the textbook. There is no continuity. You teach something one year. The following year it may not appear in another book. Since we have different books every year, we cannot inform the students about their level at the end of the scale. I mean we can’t say you will be able to speak English at this level or understand it or you will have that much vocabulary. ”*

Teacher D *“There is one more thing. Among the books the ministry prepared, there isn’t a book, which gives visual education. This is a real handicap.”*

Teacher C *“The classroom’s being crowded prevents a lot of things. For example, the books, the books do not divert students into practice. They are full of boring reading passages. If you start to explain these passages, you lose half of your class hour. They are already very boring. You can’t even present them to high school students. So what happens, the students can not understand*

*and the teacher becomes active. As a result the students get away from the lesson and the teacher becomes more prominent.”*

Teacher B thought that the book did not have a function. She wished they didn't have such a book. There were two sentences she found good in the book, so she always got the students read these two sentences. She commented on the textbooks as

*“There are so many rubbish things in the book that even I can not understand. You see the pictures of tapes but there are no tapes. I still don't understand who is writing these books. An EFL teacher cannot have prepared this book.”*

Teacher A agreed with her by confirming the lack of tapes that were supposed to accompany the books.

#### **g. Ministry of National Education**

As mentioned before, participants' main problem was with the ministry. They said that the ministry was doing things that were far away from the realities. The system ministry was trying to establish was an ideal one but the authorities could not see the realities. They had doubts about the activities of ministry. Teacher A said

*“Maybe it [the ministry] is either seeing the realities or bringing a system as a result of the obligations coming from outside. Look at the systems you are talking about and look at what we are telling you.”*

#### **h. Lack of teacher motivation**

Lack of teacher motivation was another important factor that acted as an obstacle in the implementation of innovations, namely learner-centeredness. They claimed that teachers did not take their jobs seriously. This was stated as

*“The motivation of the teacher is very important. The teacher cannot take care of his job. I am her today but will be gone tomorrow.”*

Teacher A had another perspective regarding teacher's motivation. He stressed the importance of the teachers being relaxed. Teacher D clarified

Teacher A's opinion by articulating the common problem of people working as teachers.

*"It's the teacher's money relaxing him. Everybody pays more attention to materialistic things. With 700 million it's hard to live in Istanbul. This is another aspect."*

#### **i. Parents' influence**

Teacher B viewed parents as important as other factors. Her belief stemmed from her experience with the students' parents. Once she had the students made projects. The students worked together in groups. The project aimed at presenting their neighborhood and their families. Although *"it was a good study"*, there were many reactions against it. She expressed her attitude towards families as

*"In fact the family should also be educated. The families are not used to such things. They want their children to get high marks. This is introduced as something unimportant and this is what they all think about"*

Teacher D agreed with her. He asserted that regarding the things which were connected to learner-centeredness, firstly parents and individuals were important.

*"For the learner-centered situation, first of all, the cultural level and the perspective of the family is important."*

Teacher A suffered from the same problem. He thought that *"whenever you try something unusual you get reaction from the families or you get reaction in one way or other."*

Parents and the ministry were given as the main reasons for the teachers' avoidance of making the students carry out learner-centered activities. They declared that whenever the students were told to buy extra material, it turned out to be a meaningless complaint such as

*"Where did you buy this card, why did you buy this card?" They dealt more with where you bought the necessary project material?*

### ***Benefits of learner-centeredness***

Only one benefit appeared throughout the discussion. Teacher C stated that

*“It [learner-centeredness] increases student involvement... makes him enjoy the lesson and shows him what he can do.”*

### ***Voiced prerequisites for implementing learner-centeredness***

According to Teacher D, the first thing to implement learner-centered instruction was that the student population shouldn't exceed 30.

The teachers altogether highlighted the suitable conditions that would promote learner-centered instruction. These were as follows

The way English was perceived was important. For example, since English was not among the courses students were asked in the LGS exam, this put English in a secondary position. So the students did not take English courses very seriously.

Each class should have a constant EFL teacher although their education. Since the teachers were always changing there is not a set procedure every year.

Finally they voiced the importance of materials again and said materials should not change very often because it took time to adapt to different materials.

### ***Importance of convincing teachers of the benefits of learner-centered education***

Teacher C voiced an important aspect of this research. He focused on the importance of beliefs in the implementation of learner-centeredness.

*“That is we have to believe when they say this is learner-centered education. Can this education system really be? They have to convince us first. We have to believe it and in order to make us believe this they have to provide the suitable conditions.”*

He insisted on the necessity of a suitable environment so that they would be convinced that this really worked. This required the training of teachers. Not

only the teachers, but also the parents would have to attend an in-service training seminar. For him, a new education system required these.

Teacher D criticized the way the policy makers were implementing innovations. Although the ministry was planning to make some changes, a representative of the ministry did not come and explain these to them. As a result of these practices

*“Things that the teachers do not adapt happen. So the teacher neither accepts or nor wants to accept it. As a result the teacher does not take the ownership of this.”*

#### **4.1.1.2 Interview Analysis of Teacher A**

Teacher A asserted that even though he tried to remember what learner-centeredness meant, he did not remember much about learner-centeredness. He tried to think of his university days, but it did not work very much. According to him, everything belonged to the student in a learner-centered environment.

*“In fact by learner-centeredness..I understand himm...the learners learn by doing. This is exactly what I understand. I perceive it as the learners learning something by doing.”*

This was all he could say. Although he thought it was a very good method, it was hard to implement. It was his beliefs that the students should do everything. He believed that the teacher should show the subjects and the clues and the students should do the rest. He expressed his feeling about their inability to implement learner-centered education as

*“Unfortunately we can’t do it.”*

In the follow up interview when this question was raised, he had the same definition of learner-centeredness again. Learner-centeredness was an education system where the teacher provided the students with the general details of the subject and where the students did the rest. By “*the rest*” he meant the examples and the exercises, which he called the “*development and conclusion parts*.”



Teacher A was aware that the way he conducted his lessons was not a desirable one. While talking about his current classroom activities, he described the process as follows

*“What am I doing now, I come and distribute worksheet. Do something.. We can teach people how people mustn’t teach English. If you want to learn how you mustn’t teach English, it is like this. If you do it this way, let alone teaching English to the child you only put him off English.”*

### ***Learner-centered tasks***

Teacher A was not able to give learner-centered tasks to his students for the simple reason that he did not have time to check the tasks and give feedback. During the interview it was understood that learner-centered tasks meant projects for him. Here is what he said

*“When you give homework you should evaluate it. But I can’t. That is, I can’t deal with it. This... there are some mistakes arising from me. Normally, yes, you can give very nice learner-centered tasks, very nice assignments, projects, for the students to deal with. The child should be willing for that, when you force the students you don’t get much. You can’t impose such an atmosphere; you don’t want to deal with it, that’s why it happens”*

His disbelief partly originated from his experiences regarding tasks. He commented on the administrator’s and the parents’ reaction. He expressed his feeling as *“Everyone creates a problem”*.

Teacher A stated that he could conduct dialogues with the students, and the students could work in groups. There were some classes where the students were able to perform dialogues. He found these dialogues as a part of learner-centered education. He articulated that dialogues formed to part of EFL curriculum as

*“After this learner-centered education you can apply these.”*

### ***Communicative approach***

Teacher A said he used communicative approach if it existed in their plans. Along with the communicative approach they had a couple of additional

methods as alternatives. There was a kind of mockery in the tone of his voice. He said

*“We have a multiple method of teaching in our system on the paper, the method which [the teacher] uses is marked. OK! Which method does the teacher apply?, this changes according to the teacher...theoretically we apply communicative method, in practice we can't”*

He concluded that the only communication that took place was the one between the teacher and the students. Another important thing with Teacher A was he did not like artificial dialogues. He found it funny when two students stood up and acted out a dialogue none of which they understood. Because of this he did not implement such things in his lessons.

#### ***Students' decision making***

Teacher A explained what he understood from students' decision making as *“taking decisions together with the students in general and also in terms of the content of the exams”*

He explained the way he let students make decisions by stating

*“I give them the topics but when they have difficulty in understanding them I may change or delete them or sometimes they find the level of topics too easy. If all the class have the same opinion and if four hours are allocated for this topic, I may spend just one hour which gives me an extra time for other topics.”*

#### ***Learning***

Teacher A thought English language learning was a long lasting process and learning started from birth.

#### ***Evaluation***

*“Exams are the most important tools for evaluation. We can only understand what students have learn in the best way in exams. Becasue they are alone during the exam. You don't direct them in any way. You ask both easy and difficult questions. Sometimes students say they get excited and can't do well. But this is just an excuse.”*

He further commented that

*“Ministry of National Education has also taken exams as the basic criteria. There are also the evaluation behaviors in the reports. However, everybody is interested in the notes given. Nobody deals with the behavioral dimension. We evaluate the participation and interest in the lessons, whether they make research or not and whether they ask questions. This is the way we evaluate students.”*

He concluded by raising two questions to the researcher

*“How can the student evaluate himself? The students cannot do this because he does not know what and how much he should learn.”*

His comment was a clear sign of his distrust in terms of students’ ability to assess themselves.

### **Learner-needs**

When Teacher A was asked whether students’ needs and interest were taken into consideration during the process of material design or choice he said he did not think about this at the beginning. He said

*“First of all, I think about the way I will do the lesson and how to spend forty minutes being boring the child because when he is bored I am also bored. In fact, I should ask myself whether I am trying to help the child learn better or how I can spend the lesson. Perhaps both.”*

### **Teaching English**

Teacher A thought the teacher could not teach English but he could give some ideas to the students. He stated

*“It is not easy to teach English. It is not easy to learn it either. But teaching English is more difficult.”*

He explained his ideas about when to start teaching English as follows

*“Everybody can learn English and there are two ways of doing this. You can teach it at an early age, for example at six. In pre-school years this can be done very well, for example pronunciation but later it gets more difficult. For*

*this reason you should start teaching English either at an early age or after the child becomes competent in his mother tongue.”*

### **Motivation**

Teacher A thought first of all the teachers should be motivated to teach. Thus he reflected his belief as

*“Even if the teacher is not well prepared he should come to the lesson willingly. If he does so the children will also be motivated. Motivation plays an important role in language teaching.”*

### **Teacher-centered-education**

Teacher A said he did not he didn’t understand much about teacher-centered education but he thought most of the things he did were teacher-centered to a certain extent. He explained his understanding of teacher-centeredness as follows

*“When I think of the things I do, I do some parts of them myself and the students do some parts themselves. It is a bit student centered and a bit teacher centered”*

After this explanation, Teacher A apologized for not being able to make ‘technical’ explanations.”

### ***Obstacles in implementing learner-centeredness***

#### **a. Laziness**

There were some obstacles hindering the implementation of learner-centeredness. He stated very honestly that the first and the most important factor that hindered their learner-centered practices is “*laziness*”. He confessed that many people did the same. They did not take their jobs very seriously. They were not concerned about the education of students.

*“For example I don’t want to spend so much time on projects. You have to collect them, evaluate them, give feedback.”*

### **b. Disbelief**

The second reason for the difficulties for implementing innovations was shown to be frustration. Being impeded by barriers, he simply gave up being very “*idealist*”.

### **c. Classroom size**

Thirdly, they did not have the necessary conditions. The classroom size was not suitable.

*“With this number of students you can neither do group work nor pair work. That is you don’t have suitable classroom settings.”*

### **d. Time constraints**

Teacher A reported that they didn’t have enough time. They had 160 minutes a week. Although they had more time compared to the other subjects, it was still not enough for them to do something “extra”.

### **e. Lack of materials**

Lack of resources was another factor, which prevented teachers from implementing learner-centered education. For learner-centered education there was a great need for audiovisual materials, classroom setting, student population, teacher quality. At the time of this study Teacher A was responsible for modernizing the current foreign language lab. In fact it was just a typical classroom that the administrator let them use as a language lab. Teacher A took the responsibility of improve the laboratory conditions it because he liked to deal with computers. He was trying to provide materials for the lab. Even though the administrator bought a computer and a projection they still lacked materials. Teacher A expressed his apprehension about the materials by stating

*“What am I going to use in the computer. What am I going to reflect?...What am I going to ask the students to listen- to watch? We have only the equipment, not the material we can use.”*

Teacher A didn’t find the textbook useful and saw himself as the textbook which meant he was the provider of information that was needed for teaching. He also added

*“The ministry was dealing with foreign language education at a theoretical level. There is not a solution for practice dimension.”*

He further added that the books did not address the children's interests. He preferred not to use this book in his classes for the fear that students could develop a negative attitude towards English.

The textbooks neither had a plan nor a program. They lacked sequencing in terms of difficulty. There were no exercises in them. He said

*“There is a workbook, a thick workbook, there are no activities in it. So what happens? We prepare worksheets and do our lessons with them.”*

He mentioned the lack of supplementary materials which were supposed to be used with the main textbook. He said that the ministry had very nice books for the eighth grades. There were nice songs in them. But he had to “*sing the song*”. There are no cassettes, so he asked “*how can I sing the song. I don't know. I don't know how to sing this song*”. He gave the same example for the dialogues. There was a listening part for which it was possible to find the cassettes. So the teacher read the dialogue. Lack of resources was a big problem for Teacher A and meant an extra burden.

They had suffered a lot from the bureaucratic rules of the ministry. Upon a parent's complaint they gave up using a book, which they liked. Even though there were nice books in the market, they were not allowed to get the students to buy them. There was always a risk of investigation. As a result of such investigation even the administration of the school could be replaced.

#### **f. Colleagues' influence**

The school posed no difficulties for the teachers in their practices. The implementation of learner-centeredness depended on the teachers. Teacher A said that most of the teachers deserved their retirement. So they were fed up. Especially with the abolition of the previous system regarding grading, the relationship between the teachers and the students was spoiled. According to the new law the students did not fail. All of them passed their classes.

Moreover, there was a conflict between the experienced and the novice teachers. When the novice teachers tried to do something challenging the experienced ones considered these motivated teachers as “*stupid*”. Teacher A, apologetically, expressed this as follows

*“Excuse me... but they call you stupid. They say ‘you create extra work on your own’.”*

#### **g. Examination system**

With the existing examination system it was impossible to get rid of memorization. All the students were concerned with LGS exam. The students did not study English but they concentrated on studying for his exam. This exam identified their fate.

#### **h. Bureaucratic practices**

Teacher A was fed up with the bureaucratic practices of the school. In fact the problem was not the school alone but the whole system. He gave an account of how he lost his excitement. All of his attempts to better the education failed. So what he only thought was to do his lessons and not to interfere with other things.

He had most of the problems with the materials. The teachers did not have a right to discuss about the textbooks. Once they were mandated, the teachers were obliged to use them. Nonetheless, they gave worksheets to compensate the shortages of the textbooks. Now that they were going to have a computer lab, they had a projection and a computer, Teacher A was searching for pictures, video images and music to supply materials for the students. However he had doubts about this activity. He was sure that one day inspectors would come and would inspect them.

*“They will criticize us..I will give my hours ...here in the evening, in the summer –they will come with nonsense things. [the inspector]will come, look at it for an hour..he will say aah ‘you it is OK.. the computer’.. then he will say ‘there is no need to use it’... ‘we would use a more upgraded one’...or he will*

*say 'this is very expensive, how do you find the money for computers' etc.... they collect the students one by one and ask...you risk your job"*

### ***Technology***

Teacher A was going to improve the conditions in the computer lab. He thought that with the help of audio visual aids he was aiming at better implementing better learner-centered education. He carried hopes regarding the function of the new lab. His plans included showing the students colorful images.

*"They are children at the age of 12-13, they will find the images, pictures interesting."*

He seemed to be aware of his learners' interests. Moreover, he did not avoid declaring openly that he would be motivated to teach in such an environment. He would save time as well. He would not be writing on the blackboard, and erasing it.

He thought that this lab had an important place in the learner-centered education. Through the computers the students would be provided with additional audio-visual input and then the teacher would have a right to ask the students to create something.

### ***Disbelief regarding innovations***

Teacher A said that the teacher didn't believe that innovations worked. Maybe the teachers could also do something.

*"If we try a bit, if we sacrifice, nice things happen. But when you sacrifice you get reactions. When you do a successful work the success does not belong to you. You try once, twice and in the third time is it me who is always struggling?"*

He was complaining about bureaucracy, whenever he tried to do something new he always encountered bureaucratic barriers in the system.

*"You overcome one barrier, overcome the second and in the third I am always trying to do something. I spend my own time and money...eee you*



*always put barriers in front of me. Suppose that you pass over all the barriers, the students do not react, if the students react, the parents don't react."*

For him that meant he would continue with the "formula" he knew well. A very significant thing about Teacher A was his disbelief about everything in the system. He believed that whatever was aimed at would be "*on the paper*" without application. So he said that they would probably continue with the same methods which he called "*the same structural methods*". He mentioned that "new things" always came but they were never put into practice.

When Teacher A was asked whether he was following the innovations his reply was positive. He preferred to get information about the innovations from the Internet. He had a sensible reason in the choice of Internet. He had difficulty in understanding the texts that were sent to schools. Things were explained through "*this article*" and "*that article*". When it came to the Ministry's own web-page, it was all about the same things. He especially found the foreign sites very useful. These sites presented very original ideas.

Teacher A thought there were so many obstacles stemming from the National Education System. The teachers were trying to do things despite all these difficulties but it was difficult to get positive results.

"The situation is terrible in secondary schools. In high school entrance exams the situation is worse. And it is the same in the primary. We are trying to teach English starting from the 4th grade but the child does not take English seriously because there are other lessons as well such as Turkish, maths and science. We will give these students A1, A2 reports. If an expert comes from outside and looks at the reports, he will say everything is excellent but he will see that there is nothing in practice."

#### **4.1.1.3 Interview Analysis of Teacher B**

In defining learner-centeredness, initially Teacher B could not decide whether there should be a center somewhere or not. She found this approach

formalistic. According to her there wasn't a necessity for "*this center*" or "*that center*" and added that

*"If there is a need for one, then, it should be the student because he is the target. Others such as the teacher or the book are just means for teaching. Since the students form the target population, I try to use it...I try to activate them as much as possible."*

For her, learner-centered activities included all the activities carried out by the students in the classroom. She described them as

*"Learner-centered activities are those formed by the students themselves. Then, all activities are learner-centered. You need to keep yourself away as much as possible."*

She also added that

*"It is better if we keep ourselves away. Students should come with the topics they want to learn. I always tell them to find things themselves. It is good for the students to try to learn themselves because when they do it alone, they learn better."*

However, she considered the implementation of learner-centeredness a waste of time. Especially with weak students the teacher had to spend a considerable amount of time. She seemed to believe that learner-centeredness was a kind of instruction that could be implemented with only a particular group of students. She reflected this as

*"Unfortunately, it already works well with good students. For the intelligent and motivated ones, it increases their motivation as well. But for bad students, it works even worse. They constantly ask your support because they are used to it. This is not good for them. You need to be more structural with them. So you have to ask them to memorize."*

Teacher B believed that weak students did not have a chance to get such kind of instruction because they did not have the capacity to learn something through learner-centered education.

*“It can be used with good students to make them better. However, if the students are bad, there is not much to do.”*

### **Learner-centered tasks**

When asked about the type of tasks she asked the student to carry out she said she did not have a definite description of tasks. Mostly the activities she applied came to her mind during the course of teaching.

*“They are not the ones I plan at home. I try to improve their creativity because I believe that my mission should not only be limited to teaching English. I should contribute students’ education in general.”*

### **Techniques used while teaching grammar**

She accepted that there were always structural explanations in teaching English but she tried to change this structural form into a communicative one. However, the students were used to rote learning so a conflict usually occurred. She accused the students of waiting for everything without trying to find anything. This caused a burnout in the teacher and because of the students’ attitude the teacher ended up having a feeling like

*“Is it always me who is dealing with all these?”.*

Teacher B did not involve the students into the decision-making process because the students *“do not have a vision so they just ask you to continue as you do.”*

### **Learning**

She believed that learning changed from one person to another. She further clarified her statement as

*“It depends on how the students’ brain work. Some learn better when writing while others learn better when reading. Some only need to listen to for once. I mean it is related with both intelligence and the process.”*

Teacher B also believed that everybody could learn a language but up to a certain level. If people wanted to learn English, they certainly would. However, she also added that

*“Learning a language is absolutely a talent. But I don’t know what kind of talent but it is.”*

### **Learner-differences**

When asked about how she dealt with learner-differences, she answered that she could not adjust her teaching according to the students. Even though she admitted that students were very different she said

*“To do this the classes should be differentiated. This not a solution either. A student who is good at English may not be good at mathematics.”*

As a result she treated all the students the same and she claimed that it was not possible to consider individual difference while teaching because the students should be placed into classroom according to their learning abilities or the teacher had to present everything to the student. She also supported the idea that students should be grouped according to their learning styles.

### **Noise**

Teacher B stressed the importance of silence in her classrooms. Noise was very important for me; she simply couldn’t stand it.

*“It is important for me. In some classes it is so noisy that you lose control of the class. When it is too much, it disturbs even the students themselves. It is so annoying that it sometimes creates problems. For instance, ‘you warn a student but he does not stop, then you end the activity because of your anger towards that student’.”*

### **Examination**

The researcher wanted to learn the effect of examinations on the teacher’s instruction. She learnt the examination had an important effect on the teacher’s instruction. The teacher planned her instruction according to the exams. She gave an example to show the impact the exams made on her teaching

*“For instance, yesterday in one of the classes we were supposed to continue to a topic which we could not finish last week. But then I thought that I*

*am not going to ask about it. Thus, I decided to skip that one and moved to another one, to a topic which I was planning to ask in the exam.”*

She reflected that the exams influenced students as well because the students “ask whether a topic will appear in the exam or not. The students perceive it that way. They constantly ask ‘teacher are you going to ask this in the exam’”

She was of the idea that without exams her instruction would be much more different. She asserted that maybe the students would learn grammar better. They would speak more or read something. She felt that she wasn’t fair while teaching something to students that she wouldn’t ask in the exam.

*“When you say that you will ask it in the exam, then you should teach it. Spending too much time on topics that are not included in the exam appears not to be fair to me. I feel as if I am stealing students’ time”*

For her exam was clearly an “important factor”..

### **Communicative approach**

She didn’t remember what it was, the first thing she mentioned about the communicative approach was “we write this method in the yearly plan”. She reported that language naturally brought communication. She thought that the students would be provided with more opportunities to communicate in the classroom. She also reported that

*“The more you communicate in the classroom, the more you succeed.”*

However she found it difficult to apply it in her classrooms. She tried it but in the end she gave up. She tried to communicate in English with the students but it did not work. The teacher explained the reason why she and the students talked in Turkish as “the students don’t understand and they want the teachers to explain everything in Turkish”.

### **Teacher-centered education**

Another question raised to Teacher B was about her understanding of teacher-centered education. She started her definition with an example as

*“For instance, if we put it in its simplest way, rather than making the students do the exercises if you do them yourself then you are teacher-centered.”*

Then she expressed her belief about this as

*“ I don’t like doing the examples myself. I want the students to figure out how they should do them themselves.”*

She was strongly against teacher-centered instruction. She thought that the students should find the rules rather than the teacher presenting it. Besides, teacher dominated instruction would not be very strong and long lasting.

### **Benefits of learner-centeredness**

When asked about the benefits of learner-centered instruction Teacher B responded as

*“The first advantage is that it prevents the students from being bored. Dealing with something different at home prevents them from being bored and at the same time they like doing things themselves. Their enthusiasm and motivation towards the course increases and consequently they are willing learn better.”*

She established a relationship between the teacher and the motivation factor in a different way.

*“When you are alone, you may not motivate them. You can only motivate them through despotism, but this is not my style.”*

She asserted that the only way to motivate children in the classroom was being very strict.

### **Obstacles in implementing learner-centered instruction**

#### **a. The students’ capacity**

Teacher B thought that intrinsic motivation was very important. The students should have a capacity to learn in a learner-centered environment. She stressed the importance of genes. The most prevailing aspect in all the interviews with Teacher B including focus group discussion was the importance of intelligence she underlined. She classified the students as the “good” ones

and the “*bad*” ones. According to her, nobody could do anything with the “*bad*” ones.

She stated her beliefs as follows

*“Intrinsic motivation is important. Certain background and capacity to learn are required. Genetic factors are important. There is also the intelligence factor and the multiple intelligence factor about which I don’t know much. That is, some students can’t get school education. So whatever is the center here, the teacher, the book or I am, it does not matter. Maybe the school education should turn into a different form for them”.*

She believed that the students were the most important factors in the success of education and repeated the importance of intelligence again as follows.

*“The decisive factor is the student. No matter what you do or who you are (you can be the best teacher, the best parent or a professor). The inborn genetic factors are important.”*

She believed that the way the students were brought up affected the way their brain functioned. As a natural result, they were not used to doing things themselves. They always waited for the teacher’s help or support. Therefore, the teachers had to give up putting effort in it. She mentioned the importance of intelligence again and expressed this as

*“I mean you can achieve it with some students. I try my best, as I said, with projects and small activities”.*

#### **b. Classroom size**

Teacher B asserted that since the classrooms were crowded they could not apply learner-centered instruction very much. Even though she mentioned that the classrooms in the school where she taught were not as crowded as most of the schools in the district, she thought that the students should be educated in small classrooms with not more than ten students.

### **c. Textbook**

Textbook was an important obstacle that hindered learner-centered. She did not want the Ministry to distribute books because she thought the books were full of nonsense issues. She described the textbooks as

*“Each textbook is different. For instance, the one we used last year included “someone-anyone” but this year we don’t have that topic in the new textbook. It was one of the difficult topics for the students. There is no unity, continuity in the books. There should be unity in terms of content at least so that you will know what and how to teach. Sometimes I say that it is better not to have a textbook rather than having a bad one.”*

She wanted freedom in selecting her own materials. She preferred to use her resources rather than the ones prepared by the Ministry. Besides she believed that she would write better books if she were given a chance.

*“I believe that I can write better textbooks. The ones who write them don’t know about the issue.”*

### **d. Learner diversity in terms of intelligence**

The main obstacle that hindered learner-centered instruction was expressed as the nature of students again. They had mixed classes. Although it was a primary school some students came from different schools after the fifth grade. She thought that students should be not only on the basis of their notes but both in terms of their intelligence and interests. She explained the reason for this as

*“Students come from different primary schools with certain habits and they are not open to new things. We have mixed classes but I believe that students should be divided into groups not only based on their but also based on the types of intelligences and interests they have. For instance, when you have both ‘super’ students and weak students in class, you can handle with neither of them. You give incomplete instruction to the good one and for the weak one you don’t have enough time and energy to work with.”*



### **In-service training**

The basic problem with the in-service training programs was articulated as the quality of the trainer. Teacher B believed that in-service programs could not provide the teachers with the necessary support the teachers needed in terms of implementing innovations. She pointed at the importance of the quality of educators as followed

*“They should be careful when employing the teachers. I don’t want unqualified ones, I mean the ones having similar qualifications with me, to come and teach me.”*

She thought the government did not take it seriously. Thus her belief was voiced as

*“They do it for the sake of doing it.”*

### **4.1.2 Private School Teachers’ Understanding of “learner-centeredness”**

#### **4.1.2.1 Analysis of Focus Group Interview**

The teachers participating in the focus group defined the concept learner-centeredness in similar ways. The first teacher who took the turn was the volunteer teacher for in-depth interviews and observation. Teacher 2 defined learner centeredness as *“learning by living”*. According to her, the teacher did not have an important function in this learning environment. She metaphorically described the process as

*“[the student] learns by living, that is he is learning by himself. You throw the ball to them [the learners]”*

A rather experienced teacher, Teacher 6 expressed learner-centeredness as the learners being active rather than the teacher. The other participant teachers agreed with this definition and focused on the teacher’s role as

*“the teacher tries to make the learner active as much as possible”*

Another dimension related to the definition of learner-centeredness was the students’ collaboration. The teacher was not the one who explained the lesson but the children learn *“in an interactive way”* as expressed by Teacher 3.

### **Implementation of learner-centeredness**

Mainly implementation of learner-centeredness was realized in the form of group works and pair work. Projects were also used. Besides, while they were teaching vocabulary in the reading lessons they tended to implement learner-centeredness.

### **Obstacles regarding the implementation of learner-centeredness**

#### **a. Nature of the students**

Even though the teachers tried hard, the students tended to be shy which created a barrier for the implementation of learner-centeredness. The students were not considered as very creative so the teachers asserted that the students diverted to keeping silent.

Another important factor was the students' disposition towards memorization. They got so much used to memorize everything that whenever the teachers tried to make the students work in groups or pairs, the students could not succeed. They were not used to work in groups.

#### **b. Noise factor**

The teachers complaint about the noise whenever they tried to implement learner-centeredness. Teacher 2 stated that

*"I need a whistle. ... there is too much noise. I can't stop them."*

The students sometimes took English lessons as activity lessons in which they played games and did not take very seriously. The teachers voiced the importance of classroom teachers' collaboration in that sense because classroom teachers spent more time with the students than EFL teachers.

#### **c. Language switching**

One of the dangers of creating group work was stated as language switch. The students could revert back to Turkish immediately. So the teacher should pay great attention to students as Teacher 4 asserted.

*"Your eyes should be on the other group where your ears are on a different group".*

In fact implementing learner-centeredness was thought to be a tiring task for the teachers.

#### **d. Classroom management**

In some classrooms it was impossible to conduct group work because there might be some students with misbehaviors or very low-achieving student. So the teacher should plan it very well before conducting group works.

#### **e. Effect of classroom teachers' instruction**

Teacher 8 emphasized the impossibility of implementing learner-centered instruction in the lower grades. So it was quite natural to have problems when the students reached fourth or five grades. The teachers were unable to fully succeed in conducting group work activities.

The classroom teachers had most of the responsibility here. The students first encountered classroom teachers. Teacher 8 stressed the importance of classroom teachers as follows:

*“Classroom teacher teaches them everything; teaches the rules, teaches the discipline, teaches the lessons. What are the lessons except for the classroom teacher? Physical education, music, arts, English lessons. The students perceive English lessons just like an art lesson or a physical education lesson or a game lesson. So the classroom teachers should establish this system well. I mean if we want to implement learner-centeredness or project-based education, we should start with classroom teachers.”*

In an environment where the classic system prevailed, having learner-centered education was impossible. They articulated a need for behavior unity.

#### **f. Time constraints**

Doing group work activities took a lot of time. The teachers wasted more time than planned. However, they did not mention it as a very important obstacle affecting their practices. This was the only articulated belief about time limitations.

### **g. Administrative factors**

Whenever there was noise coming from the classrooms this was considered as lack of classroom management stemming from the teacher. So the way discipline was perceived by the administration was different from the teachers'. The administration assumed that the students did not learn when there was noise. So the teachers were stressful owing to this fact. It was reflected as

Teacher 8 *"The teacher cannot provide discipline, the teacher has a discipline problem and a bad image of teacher appears."*

The administrators could even enter the classrooms when the teachers were in and could say

*"Is there a problem? Are you upsetting your teacher? Let us help you, if you worry your teacher again we change your teacher"*

### **h. Lycee Entrance Exam**

It was only Teacher 5 who stressed the LGS exam as an obstacle. He asserted they had LGS and ÖSS waiting a head.

*"None of the students entered these places by making portfolios."*

### **i. Parents' influence**

The parents put a lot of pressure on the teachers. Especially regarding the textbooks, they were unable to use the textbooks as an instrument. They became the main objective partly due to parents' strain as put forward by Teacher 8.

*"Public schools have a specific profile of parents. That is there is a pressure stemming from the parents."*

However hard the teachers tried learner-centered education, and try to make student discover, when the children went home the families did everything for the children. They articulated how the students got everything ready.

Teacher 8 pointed out the importance of parents and the education given by parents

*“This is not a one-legged system. There is family in it, school administration in it, the teacher in it, and the student. That is, it is a four-legged system.”*

Her expression was rather a summary of the whole discussion. The support teachers were expecting from parents was clarified as the acceptance of parents. The parents should accept the logic of learner-centeredness. Since most of the parents learnt in a classical way, they tended to come and in a way question the teachers. They expressed their opposition and skepticism very openly. The parents thought that their children could not learn anything in this system.

The parents’ perspectives are very different. Some of them found learner-centeredness very suitable but some of them asked for an account of it. The parents’ main threatening issue is money. Thus the parents said *“I give this much of money to this school. I don’t accept that my child is learning something in this system.”*

The teachers reported that parents immediately came and accused the parents when they saw a low mark in their children’s reports. They complaint about the teachers to the administration. So the main support was expected from the administration. The administration should support the teachers by making the parents conscious of the benefits of learner-centeredness.

#### **Use of technology in learner-centered instruction**

It was only Teacher 5 who articulated the use of technology as a part learner-centered education. When the researcher started her observations with the participant teachers, it was understood that he was in charge of the smart class, which was specially designed for English lessons. The students had a chance to work in groups in this multi media environment. The use of computers and special programs the teacher could easily control all the students and thus the students could work in their own pace. Besides, the students felt more motivated owing to the existence of computers.

### **Role of the textbook**

Textbooks were indispensable part of the teachers in their teaching activities in this private school. However their only concern was that it should not be the main objective. The textbooks were “*great*” in that they provided extreme “*help*”. The textbooks were viewed as guides. Teacher 6 reflected this as

*“ The textbooks guide us. Especially finding the vocabulary, for example you don’t think about which words you have to teach in the sixth grades, the book helps you. You enter the target vocabulary group but if there is more we identify these words in our meetings and give these words, too.”*

However, the teachers didn’t seem willing to finish the book only to cover the curriculum. Teacher 4 justified herself stating that since she was the one who knew the students she must have the right to choose activities, which she thought, suited her students. But they had a content to finish so they rushed towards this end. They didn’t have time for such extra curricular activities. So the textbooks turned into an obligation for some of them.

### **Benefits of learner-centeredness**

Most of the participants stressed the importance of learner- centered education. They all agreed that learner-centered-education was beneficial for the students. First of all, since they learnt through “*discovery*”, it was the student’s own effort. Due to this fact, it was more valuable. Teacher 3 added that

*“It is valuable. The student learns it as a result of experience and he does not forget.”*

The main benefit was related to the nature of knowledge. Secondly, multiple intelligences were raised as an issue. Teacher 2 established the relationship between multiple intelligence and learner-centeredness. She assumed that when learner-centeredness was applied, the students naturally used every aspect of multiple intelligences. This resulted in automatically carrying out the learning activity according to the students’ talents.

The other benefits put forward by the teachers were as followed

Teacher 4 *“Thinking develops, yes..thinking ability develops”*

Teacher 5 *“The student learns to learn at the same time.*

An additional dimension was the use of group work and pair work. It seemed like the students benefited from learner-centered practices. When the students worked together with a partner, they learnt to act collectively. The teachers reported that although there was a certain amount of noise, they had fun as well.

#### **4.1.2.2 Interview Analysis of Teacher 1**

Teacher 1 thought learner-centered classes were the ones where the student and the teacher had different roles. According to her, most of the lesson should be conducted by the students; the teacher should act as *“helper”* and *“guide”*. She believed that learner-centered instruction depended on the distribution of amount of talk between the students and the teacher

*“The less the teachers talk, the more beneficial it will be for learner-centeredness. The important thing is how much chance is given to the students to express themselves.”*

However, she was also aware that teachers liked talking so much that they did the same in the lessons, too.

She thought learner-centered education was an ideal system

*“Learner-centeredness is an ideal education system. If the teacher talks all the time and does not let the students to express themselves, there won’t be any meaning in learning a language. This is very important for language learning.”*

#### **Implementation of learner-centeredness**

Teacher 1 reported that if the teachers used the first 5-10 minutes of the lesson and the students used the rest, the lesson would be considered as learner-centered.

### **Benefits of learner-centeredness**

When asked about the benefits of learner-centered education. Teacher 1 commented that if the students could express themselves, this was considered as an indication of the teacher's success. It was not only the grammar but practice was also important. She reported that because of this speaking was very important for her.

### **Obstacles in implementing learner-centeredness**

The main obstacle Teacher 1 encountered in implementing learner-centeredness was mixed ability classes.

*"It is not always possible to receive the expected answer or the feedback from the students. When you ask a question if the student is just looking at you not having comprehended the question, then you need to ask the same question over and over again. You need to rephrase it. Therefore, we know that learner-centered teaching, as we all know, is the right thing actually".*

She also mentioned that some students would avoid speaking because

*"they may afraid to speak thinking that their level is low or some students will be shy"*

However, she believed that the teacher could help such students in getting over these barriers by motivating them. The teacher could also assure the students that nobody would make fun of them.

### **Learning**

She believed that learners' personal characteristics were important in learning . She mentioned an in-service program she attended. There she observed eight different learner types. Since they had mixed classes and had students from all these eight types, she thought that they had to organize their activities accordingly. She gave an example to show how she adressed learner differences.

*"When I am teaching vocabulary I prefer using pictures".*

Another example she gave was



*“Some students love working together with soft music. They consider it like a gift and they don’t understand what they do. I mean if we organize activities which can involve all these different types of learners, they can learn best.”*

She stressed that she was trying to accommodate her teaching to address all the students as much as she could.

Teacher 1 asserted that learning was a difficult process. Particularly learning English was a difficult process for her.

*“The process is difficult but when the students understand the things to be done or how the system works, then he can continue very successfully. Of course, not all students are good at languages. Some students are talented to learn a language while some others study hard and put great effort to ease the process. For the first 4 grades the system is nearly the same. In the first and the second year English is taught focusing only on vocabulary and certain structures. In third and especially in fourth year they start speaking English. Then, we expect them to use the things they have learned in their first three years. It is a difficult period for the students.”*

However, she added that *“although learning English is difficult, if the student understands the system, what she has to do, she can succeed”*.

### **Decision making**

She said the teacher could involve the students into the decision process on the design of the activities. They could design the activities together in the classroom. However she didn’t believe that students would be helpful in choosing the teaching materials. Thus she expressed this as follows

*“Even our decisions are not suitable at times. I mean sometimes we choose a book thinking that it is the best and throughout the semester we experience that it is not suitable to our students’ proficiency level or to the age or it does not work well in class. Then, we decide to change it.”*

### **Motivation**

She believed that motivation of students was very important. She did not think that learning could occur without motivation.

*“If a student is not motivated towards the course, no matter how intelligent she is, she is lost.”*

The way she tried to motivate students was reflected as

*“ We need to keep personal one-to-one relationship with them. Especially to young learners, for instance, you cannot behave as if you were a foreigner when you enter the class. I try to find out the things they are interested in or the things they like”.*

### **Role of intelligence**

Teacher 1 thought that intelligence was required in learning a language to some extent. However, she believed that the students who were not highly intelligent managed to learn a language by studying hard. Opportunities provided for them were very important.

### **Teacher –centered education**

Teacher 1 explained teacher centered classroom as places where the teacher was more like a “dictator” rather than a guide. She reported that in a teacher-centered classroom, almost everything was carried out by the teacher. It was something students didn’t like.

### **Noise**

Teacher 1 could tolerate when a student talked to her friend sitting next to her, this did not disturb her. But a student who always walked around would disturb her.

### **The communicative approach**

Teacher 1 regarded the communicative approach as one of the most important methods in her branch. She reported that she tried to use this method in her classrooms as much as she could. According to her, it was her objective to teach students to communicate so

*“I try to communicate with children as much as I can by using the language. I never speak Turkish. Consequently, the students start to perceive you as a foreigner and even in the breaks they try to speak English to you.”*

When the researcher asked about the communication among the students, she commented that

*“It isn’t easy to make the students talk English. But I try to give the expressions most commonly used and I warn them when they speak Turkish.”*

### **Teaching grammar**

She preferred to introduce the topic by giving examples. Or sometimes she started with the textbook. Generally she gave the examples and wanted students to find out.

### **In-service training**

She thought in-service training seminars were useful especially in the dissemination of innovations because the teachers had to be informed about all the innovations taking place and however before trying the innovations the teachers should not give any decisions on their applicability.

She added that in-service training was necessary because they needed to renew themselves. She also added that their job required continuity. She stressed the importance of being aware of the innovations as

*“You do the same thing everyday, you are dealing with children everyday. Whether it is used or not, that is we need to know about the innovations. And I think we can get something positive from whatever appears as new.”*

Teacher 1 described an in-service training program she would like to attend as follows

*“ If a person comes and reads what is written on OHP, it irritates me. I can read it myself or if he distributes them as handouts, it may not be a problem. I need to be sure that that person knows about the topic and made some research, put some effort on it. I need to trust him. If I trust the speaker, I*

*can learn from him. When a speaker says things like “you can use ...in practice”, it attracts my attention”.*

#### **4.1.2.3 Interview Analysis of Teacher 2**

Teacher 2 asserted that she did not care much about the definition of learner-centeredness. The only thing she wanted was creating a learner-centered classroom.

She explained her ideas as follows:

*“It’s not that the teacher doesn’t have many functions in learner-centeredness but you guide the students implicitly; you stimulate them to think, you reflect the responsibility onto them. You, as the teacher, draw the limits but the students learn according to their own abilities. It’s such a wonderful thing.”*

The main learner-centered tasks she employed were the project works.

#### **Implementation of learner-centeredness**

Teacher 2 mentioned the importance of classroom teachers in implementing learner-centered practices in the classroom. She thought classroom teachers had the most responsibility in the successful establishment of such an instruction. She said

*“You need to start with minor things together with classroom teachers. Classroom teachers should be putting a lot of efforts in this work, then we should take it over.”*

Teacher 2 asserted that she tried to apply cooperative learning as much as she could. She also mentioned effective teaching and active learning as techniques she employed in order to implement learner-centeredness.

She further commented that *“in my classes my aim is to make my students think, to make them ask the question Why?”* She wanted to support the student’s learning like this.

## **Obstacles in implementing learner-centeredness**

### **a. Classroom size**

While talking about the obstacles Teacher 2 again articulated her enthusiasm about learner-centered education. She wished she could do it all the time. However, she considered classroom size an important factor. With few students it was easy but with large classes she was unable to implement learner-centered practices. She clarified this through an example

*“For example, there are 22 students in my class, so it’s appropriate but it’s a very active class, I mean they are children but I think every class should be student-centered, I wish it was...”*

### **b. Nature of the students**

Nature of the students was expressed as an obstacle by Teacher 2. She asserted that with some students learner-centered instruction did not work.

*“It’s project-based, but not every student is able to do it. I mean some students just copy from their textbooks without creating anything, for example a research project is handed in as an internet print out. Learner-centeredness should support creativity: yet it is not appropriate for every student.”*

Through this statement she articulated the role of creativity in learner-centered instruction as well.

### **c. Administration**

The administration was an important factor that hindered her learner-centered activities. Besides she did not like worksheet and homework check part of their teaching activities.

*“There is the administration, the textbook we follow. There’s for example, homework check. Well, for example, for me this part is awful.”*

She thought that worksheet check and workbook check were a waste of time. The students did not get much from this process

*“Both the worksheet check and workbook check are wasting our time, the students don’t benefit from them, but they are done just for the sake of doing them. Yet, I’m doubtful about its benefits on the part of the students.”*

### **Benefits of learner-centered instruction**

Teacher 2 listed the benefits of learner-centered instruction as follows

*“Children do learn to think. Usually they are used to spoonfeeding. They don’t know how to search for information. They don’t know how to do research project but they just copy and paste. That is, they do not produce anything. Within learner-centeredness, students will learn to think to produce and to learn.”*

### **Teacher-centeredness**

Teacher 2 defined teacher-centered education as

*“The teacher chooses, the teacher lectures, you take notes and if there is something wrong, you cannot ask anything. It’s only what she gives you!”*

### **Flexibility**

Teacher 2 was tolerant for students’ mobility in the classroom. She did not mind what the students were doing as long as they were learning something. Nonetheless she could not do whatever she wanted in her teaching environment.

*“We all have good and bad times. Where there is some fun and entertainment we should not try to passivize the children. It’s better to accept it as it is. I don’t mind students standing up in front of me or eating hamburgers or drinking coke in classes but I just let them be happy. Can you achieve this? Perhaps, I could do it if I were in a public school.”*

When it came to planning she reflected her opposition to making lesson plans because this killed creativity. For her a plan which was not followed was useless.

*“A lot of things depend on spontaneous factors. For example, I am strongly against daily lesson planning. I mean it’s nonsense. If I am to write up, I just take little notes on post-it-like papers. Yet, if something else comes up in the class from the student or if something else comes to my mind, I do it. What’s the point in making plans if you are not going to follow it? It’s mental planning you know.”*

### **Student's decision making**

Teacher 2 explained that they were unable to involve the students in the decision-making process due to the nature of students. The students did not decide to do anything; they never said they wanted to learn this or that. So it was always the teacher deciding about the instruction or the activities. Teacher 2 reported that

*“The students don't participate in decision making. They want to have it ready for them. The students are not concerned with it, anyway. They wouldn't even think about it even if you asked them”.*

She commented that the only thing they would say would be what they preferred to do like singing a song, playing games. She called these *“such artificial things”*

In fact Teacher 2 also underlined the fact that students could not be allowed to make decision about their learning. She commented that maybe the students could participate in the decisions like what they wanted to learn, but not more.

### **Learning**

Teacher 2 believed the existence of multiple intelligence theory and she explained the learning process as follows

*“You learn what interests you. You never learn what doesn't interest you.” Concentration and your mood is very important but I know you cannot learn by just listening. You learn by note taking, through games and songs, and metaphors. It reflects multiple intelligence in essence, but however good my maths intelligence is, it does not help me if I don't like the topic. So, it's the teacher's job...”*

Teacher 2 thought that everybody could not learn a foreign language because language learning required talent such as a *“good memory”*.

She focused on the impact of memorization in language teaching and underlined the impossibility of acquiring English without memorizing certain linguistic items such as conjugation of verbs.

She reported that there was not a relationship between intelligence and learning a foreign language.

### **Exams**

Teacher 2 reported that the examinations affected their instruction because the students studied only for the exams. She admitted that the exams were important for the teacher as well. However, she emphasized the importance of revision before the exams. She expressed this as

*“If you focus on the same questions, the success will be high in the exam.”*

Teacher 2 also by referring to the EFL department in her school commented that they contradicted with themselves. She expressed this as

*“Our exams do not concur with our objectives and with our implementation. You would be terrified if you examined our exams.”*

She conveyed the head of the department’s attitude towards the exam as

*“The more difficult the exam is, the better it is, according to her.”*

Teacher 2 further criticized the worksheets they distributed to the students in terms of their content. She hated them and stated that *“Our worksheets are all grammar-based. I mean, the workbook has grammar exercises, anyway.”*

### **Motivation**

Teacher 2 articulated the importance of student motivation. She expressed her belief as follows

*“Of course, motivation is what triggers interest, like a footballer. He wouldn’t run after the ball if not motivated”.*

As a teacher she needed to be motivated as well. She claimed that

*“When I’m not motivated, I cover the workbook. Sometimes it’s the other way round, when I follow the workbook I lose motivation. I’m not happy when I teach grammar I hate homework check. I hate having to teach grammar. I like flashcards, colors, paper work, art work.”*



Teacher 2 also said that she was motivated when the students were motivated.

### **The communicative approach**

Teacher 2 found this question “nonsense”. According to her this question was useless because without communication, nothing would happen. She reflected this as

*“You can not apply this. It already exists.”*

### **In-service training**

While talking about in-service training workshops she complaint about the content of these programs. She said that

*“In in-service training workshops, what you already know is presented. I participate just because I have to. For example we would like to listen to Üstün Dökmen but they cannot organize it or the teachers are reluctant to listen to him. A few people volunteer to join these workshops”.*

Teacher 2 asserted that she would like to listen to professionals. She didn’t want to see slide shows or OHP transparencies. She would like to be treated like a typical student so that she could see how theories were applied in classroom situations.

She would like to attend an in-service training seminar about learner-autonomy. She thought there could be seminars on NLP but she added that she didn’t find NLP related to education. She further said they learnt about active learning in one of these seminars.

## **4.2 Teachers BAK about their Roles in Creating Learner-centeredness**

### **4.2.1 Public School Teachers’ BAK about their Roles in Creating Learner-centeredness**

#### **4.2.1. 1 Analysis of Public School Focus Group Interview**

Teacher A considered his role as “*corrector*”. First he corrected the students like “*you have a mistake here, this is true*” and then his role changed into a “*guide*”.

The other participant teachers did not make comment on the role of the teachers and just nodded which was an indication of their agreement.

#### **4.2.1.2 Interview Analysis of Teacher A**

Teacher A thought that the teacher had all the roles one could technically think of.

*“counselor, guide, teller...whatever you can think of about the teachers. The learner is **passive**.”*

Nonetheless, according to him in EFL lessons students were more active when compared to the other lessons. In the first 15 minutes of the lesson Teacher A explained the lesson and in the rest of the lesson the students did something, but he said

“Unfortunately it is always memorization that we can not do away with. I know it is false but..”

##### ***Teacher’s skills***

Teacher A explained the necessary teacher skills as

*“He should be good and know the children’s psychology. He should know about the learners’ needs according to their ages. In fact he should even know the cultural differences, where she came from. People expect a lot of things from the teacher. The teacher should be learner-centered.”*

He accepted that he could not be learner-centered at the moment but he was trying to address the learners’ needs as much as he could.

According to Teacher A *“a good teacher prepares his lessons dedicatingly; tries to teach something to the children when he can’t he gets nervous. Someone who really tries to teach something is the teacher.”*

He said *“I tried to teach something but I have some limitations. That is, I am trying to give something to my students and teach. But when the students can’t learn, people blame me. I am trying to do my best but if he can’t get it what can I do?”*

Teacher A further added that another important point *“is the teacher’s relationship with his students. He should take his students’ level into consideration and classroom management is another quality of a good teacher.”*

#### **4.2.1.3 Interview Analysis of Teacher B**

Teacher B explained the teacher role as the one who presented the topic and she taught this was quite sensible. Especially if the teacher were using grammar she should present it. . She also mentioned that students could be involved at certain points by giving certain tasks like

*“Go and search these rules..”*

The use of word *“rules”* in the task was a sign of how Teacher B thought an English lesson should be.

However, she still found giving tasks to students difficult. She further described the role of teacher as *“guide”*. This was the most important *“position”* of the teacher. In addition the teacher should be in the *“correcting position”*. She asserted that these were the most important *“positions”* of the teacher.

The reason why she stressed one of most important functions of a teacher as correcting students depended on the students’ need to know the right and the wrong.

She believed that

*“If you don’t confirm them, they always have a question in their minds”.*

According to Teacher B, everything depended on the students. She asserted that she wanted to show everything to the students but if the students were not able to get it, there was nothing a teacher could do.

*“As I said before the decision maker in this process is the student. No matter how hard you try to lead him with questions. If he does not want to learn, there is not much you can do.”*

### **Qualities of a good teacher**

She described teacher qualities as

*“Firstly, she should be creative. She should like her job so that she can think about her job. She should respect students so that she can consider her students as individuals. She should think that their knowledge might be less than hers but considering their age, her students might be more intelligent than her. She should love her country and the world. She should be a bit patriotic so that she won’t only work with the purpose of earning money.”*

The relationship she established between learner-centeredness and being patriotic was as followed

*“If she is a person who teaches in order to get a salary, the education will be either teacher-centered or textbook-centered.”*

### **4.2.2 Private School Teachers’ BAK about their Roles in Creating Learner-centeredness**

#### **4.2.2.1 Analysis of Private School Focus Group Interview**

The role of the teacher was expressed by Teacher 3 as

*“She is the one who makes the learners active.”*

The other teachers confirmed her statement. Teacher 3 further elaborated her answer as

*“She is not the one who teaches.”*

Teacher 2 had a different opinion about the role of the teacher.

*I call her a secret leader. A leader got lost in the shuffle.*

#### **Skills the teacher has to have in order to implement LC**

The first skill mentioned was experience in terms of classroom management. Both Teacher 6 and Teacher 5 focused on the importance of experience. Teacher 4’s belief was a different.

*“She must have a good sense of hearing.”*

Teacher 2 pointed out the vitality of planning. For her, the last thing to do was group work without a plan.

*“I think without thinking about the problems that might arise, entering the classroom will turn into a nightmare, and it won’t reach its aim. On the contrary, it becomes very confusing.”*

Teacher 6 mentioned the quality of instruction. Both Teacher 6 and Teacher 2 articulated that the instruction should be very clear. Teacher 5 added that knowing the students well was also very crucial. Teacher 1 and Teacher 4 articulated the same belief. The teachers had to be aware of learner differences in terms of their age.

According to Teacher 4, patience was an essential quality of a teacher. Teacher 2 stated that the teacher must have practical intelligence. Teacher 3 had a similar idea with having slightly different aspect. She expressed that being a teacher was a matter of talent. She didn’t believe that everyone could be a teacher. Besides, tenderness was another feature that was voiced as desirable for a teacher. The last quality mentioned by Teacher 5 was honesty, which was quite different from the other qualities mentioned. He stated that

*“Not every environment is the same...very different...[the teacher] should change according to each classroom, should be active, should be really honest.”*

#### **4.2.2.2 Interview Analysis of Teacher 1**

Teacher 1 expressed the main role of the teacher as a guide and she reported that the teacher’s main function was to help students about what to do.

Nonetheless, according to her the role of the teacher might change in the classroom depending on the activity.

*“The activity might require the teacher to bear the role of a leader. Then your teaching becomes teacher-centered. As I mentioned before our classes are mixed but of course you can lead the children, which is also important.”* She further added that the teacher should have a leader role, she should explain what they were supposed to do and she was the person who assigned roles.

### **Qualities of teachers**

Teacher 1 defined the qualities of teachers as

*“Teachers should be qualified. To begin with she should set up a good relationship with students. Good teachers should be sure about what is going to be done in class and how it is going to be handled. She should like her job. She should willingly go to the classroom. Otherwise, nothing can be expected from that lesson. Other than these, as a teacher, you should feel that you are liked by the students. These spiritual points are important. A teacher should know how the same topic will be taught to students with various interests and talents.”*

#### **4.2.2.3 Interview Analysis of Teacher 2**

Teacher 2 thought that teacher autonomy was very important

*“Unless the teacher doesn’t have autonomy, whatever you do.....”*

She reflected her beliefs about the skills a teacher had to have in implementing learner-centered instruction as

*“The teacher should be creative and practical, She should have the ability to solve many problems at a time, she should be a quick-minded. Otherwise, because kids are more active, the teacher lags behinds.”*

She further expressed her belief about the teacher’s role as

*“You have to be funnier, more intelligent than the students but you need to be at their level, though.”*

The way Teacher 2 defined the teacher’s role was consistent with a desirable atmosphere for the implementation of learner-centered instruction. Besides her answer also reflected how she approached innovations.

*“The classroom atmosphere is also very important. You approach every single kid differently. I mean it’s rather complex. It’s necessary to think positive, to be innovative. There’s no way.”* She further added that

*“This is a matter of belief and style. Not everyone can do everything. It requires creativity, effort and patience. It’s not a job of one who cannot understand children.”*

#### **4.3 Teachers’ Beliefs, Assumptions, and Knowledge about the Relationship between Learner-autonomy and Learner-centeredness**

##### **4.3.1 Public School Teachers’ BAK about the Relationship between Learner-autonomy and Learner-centeredness**

###### **4.3.1.1 Analysis of Public School Focus Group Interview**

Learner autonomy was a term the teachers had never heard before. Teacher B’s first reaction was,

*“They are always establishing terms.”*

Teacher A’s belief was similar to Teacher B’s

*“There is no continuity, always new concepts are coming.”*

They considered this term as something the ministry was imposing again. However, whatever the effect was on the teachers, it was not regarded very important as reflected by Teacher D

*“It is not important. They will change it next year.”*

Their reaction to learner autonomy was an indication of distrust to the practices of the Ministry.

#### **Teacher Autonomy**

The discussion evolving around learner-autonomy brought the participants to the issue of teacher autonomy. Teacher A expressed his desire for teacher autonomy.

*“There should be teacher autonomy as well. What are we doing now? The state told us ‘this is your book’. That is I mustn’t go outside the textbook.”*

They coped with this situation by using photocopies. But they needed to use journals, books, CDs and other resources, too. In spite of their efforts to find CDs they could not succeed in finding visual materials. All of the participants were aware of the importance of using audio-visual aids in their

teaching. Their main problem was their inability to find such materials. In fact, there were such materials but the teachers found their prices very high. That was why there was an extensive amount of copying. However, as a result of these restrictions in terms of materials, the teachers were limited. They could not use other materials; they could not use “other words”.

While talking about the material problem, they remembered the CDs the Ministry of National Education sent to them the previous year. They made fun of these CDs. The visions in the CDs belonged to 1980s, the ones especially designed for the English course of Distance Education University to be broadcast on TV. It was no more than a source of laughter for the students.

*“The students laughed at them and ...they are not watching.”*

Through this example the teachers articulated the ministry’s lack of upgrading the materials. Having these CDs meant nothing for the teachers.

#### **4.3.1.2 Interview Analysis of Teacher A**

Teacher A did not understand learner-autonomy very much and he asked

*“How are we going to do this?”*

When the researcher gave a definition of learner-autonomy, he stated that he did not think it was applicable. In fact, he did not have enough knowledge to decide how it should be implemented. According to him it was something applicable in the European Union or in different places in Istanbul. It could be carried out at local level but it could not be applied as a general practice. The main reason for his being negative was the teachers’ education.

*“You see you gave the title, but we don’t know what it is about. The teachers should be educated.”*

He was not able to give a detailed answer to the question of learner-autonomy. However, he admitted this openly.

*“I have to be educated first, I have to be informed.”*

In the second interview the researcher asked the same question again this time he had something to say. He did not agree that the students had



autonomy. A concept like autonomy existed neither in the teachers' mind nor in the student's mind. It was the first time he had heard this term from in his life. The learners were not autonomous because they were not that conscious. They were unable to take the responsibility of their learning. Teacher A thought that if the teacher took his job seriously and acted responsible, the students appreciated the teacher. If the teacher was "loose", the students continued without having responsibility.

*"Teacher is an important power, in fact the teacher is a very important power in everything."*

The main reason for the students being irresponsible was the teachers themselves and the education system. There should be punishments and sanctions. He thought that Turkish people were "loose" people and they had to be directed strictly. The teachers had to direct the students with rigid rules.

### **In-service-training programs**

Teacher A thought not only teachers but also the administrators and the personnel working at all levels of education should be trained.

*" "In service training given to teachers now is of no use. I have been attending these seminars for five years but I haven't got any benefit from them. It is just lost of time. National Education Director of District, Branch Manager come there. They say so many good things but the next day you come across with strange official documents. In service training programs are just like fairy tales but a good teller is not found."*

According to him there was a need to restructure in-service training programs as well.

*"We need academicians. A teacher who doesn't know anything is sent to give us seminars by Nation Education of District and they say 'there is nobody else we can send to you. That is we can't send anybody from Mars.'"*

Teacher A summarized his ideas saying that *"in-service training should be made more professionally. The philosophy behind the program and the applicability of it should be explained. A school with negative conditions should*

*be established and the new model should be presented to the teachers and the teachers should see how to apply the model there”*

Teacher A said in in-service seminars, the representatives of the Ministry just told them about the applicability of the best systems in schools with good conditions.

#### **4.3.1.3 Interview Analysis of Teacher B**

Teacher B did not know what learner-autonomy was and said

*“It didn’t sound meaningful to me. What is it? I really don’t know about it. It sounds too technical for me. I did not understand it during the focus group interview as well”*

When the researcher provided her with a definition again she asserted that autonomous learning wasn’t possible with these learners because the students were incapable of taking responsibility of their learning. Moreover, she found the parents responsible for developing autonomy in the learners.

*“It is too much to expect it from the students. They cannot do it themselves and they need guidance. There are different types of students and we have to consider all of them with their various intelligence levels. Students cannot direct themselves. It might be because they are too much connected to their families and the students cannot see themselves as individuals. Parents don’t want them to be individuals either.”*

She did not believe that the teachers could make the students take their own responsibility of learning. Everything seemed to depend on the families again.

*“The student should take his own responsibility. If the sense of responsibility is not given by the parents, you cannot give it as well. Parents don’t give responsibilities to their children. They help them with their homework for instance.*

She defined the relationship between learner autonomy and learner-centeredness as *“There is a direct relationship. Autonomous learning is not*

*possible without it. They are interrelated. You cannot enhance learner-centeredness unless you give responsibility to the students”.*

#### **a. Parents as obstacles in promoting learner-autonomy**

Parents created an important obstacle in Teacher B’s efforts to promote learner autonomy. Teachers and parents had a conflict which harmed the teachers’ roles as authority in the classrooms. When the parents reacted to the teachers’ practices, the students lost their respect. She asserted that she tried to promote learner autonomy by giving project work but

*“I try to involve learner autonomy. It works well with some of them but fails with some others. The reason for this failure is the parents to a great extent. The parents do not understand such things. These are mainly due to cultural deficiencies. When a parent says “what is this? what is your teacher trying to do?” to the children it destroys your authority as a teacher. OK! you are an authority but the mother and father are also authorities. Parents and teachers should not be in conflict. Parents’ contribution is essential.”*

She also added that for her it was impossible to add learner autonomy into her teaching.

*“If it were an easy thing to do, I would have already done it.”*

### **4.3.2 Private School Teachers’ BAK about the Relationship between Learner-autonomy and Learner-centeredness**

#### **4.3.2.1 Analysis of Private School Focus Group Interview**

In order to establish a context the researcher asked the meaning of learner-autonomy first. The answer for the definition of learner autonomy came from Teacher 1 as

*“That is, being able to control his learning, establishing control on this, isn’t it?”*

Teacher 4 was rather pessimistic. She asserted that

*“But in our Turkish society, number of such students is so few.”*

All of them expressed their dissatisfaction about the scarcity of autonomous learners. There were only a few, if any, to give the examples of. Their main concern was the system. In “*this classical system*” the students were accustomed to rote learning. They did not create anything on their own. Teacher 1 believed that

*“This is completely related to reasoning and to the ones who have established this.”*

#### **Relationship of learner-autonomy with learner-centeredness**

In fact, the question aimed at eliciting the relationship between learner-centeredness and learner autonomy did not prove very fertile. The teachers again mentioned the importance of parents in creating autonomy in the learners. They all agreed that autonomy started in the family. Some of them stated that it was highly related to genetics. So people were inborn as autonomous learners. Teacher 1 insisted on the importance of parents and reflected as

*“It is the education of parents. It starts with the education at home. Father and mother should be educated first. They have to learn to be a mother and a father”*

They accused the family of being unable to teach their children how to inquire. The parents did not encourage their children to take responsibility. On the contrary they did everything for their children, they even prepared their children’s school bags. It was the parents who should teach the students to think critically.

#### **4.3.2.2 Interview Analysis of Teacher 1**

Teacher 1 mentioned that they were struggling with autonomy. She expressed the importance of classroom teachers in promoting autonomy in learners as follows

*“ The students are used to spoon-feeding. There was always a person doing everything for them. I mean the primary school class-teacher set some behaviors that are not easy to change”*

Teacher 1 reported that she tried to promote autonomy especially at the beginning of school year in her lessons.

*““Before everything I try to talk to them, why are you learning this. Their understanding is very important for me. I don’t want them to view English as a lesson. I want them to see it as something they will use.”*

She further added that she needed classroom teachers’ support in promoting autonomy.

Teacher 1 articulated the importance of a relation between learner autonomy and learner-centeredness.

*“It is important to have a connection between them. How can I put it? When a student takes a responsibility, his attitudes towards the course, his behaviors in class are changing. When a student understands how he has to do things, we can observe his progress through his attitudes and behaviors. Of course, not all students show progress. But they know their level in English.”*

#### **4.3.2.3 Interview Analysis of Teacher 2**

While explaining the implementation of learner-centered instruction, Teacher 2 mentioned the importance of students in this process.

*“I try to implement it but they need to think. For example a class of mine, 5-D, is one in which you greet them “Good afternoon” early in the morning and you get the response “Good morning”. The students do not think at all.”*

Teacher 2’s understanding of learner autonomy was reflected in her classroom activity which was explained as

*“I try to guide them to find my mistakes. I always say ‘find my mistake’ and I want to guide them, only to guide them. So this is what I can do. I give examples from my life.”*

Then she highlighted the importance of being a model to the students and she described the way she achieved this as

*"I give them specific examples of my own to share my experiences. Teacher should be a model. I used to be a misbehaving, timid student. I don't want them to experience what I have had. I try to remember my own studenthood, what I used to get bored with and so on."*

She also added that she tried to think her years at primary school while teaching; what she liked, what bored her. So she wanted to alter her instruction accordingly to make students interested.

Teacher 2 defined the relationship between learner-autonomy and learner-centeredness as

*"Actually these two are not mutually exclusive. They complement each other. I guess autonomy is primary but I cannot split them apart."*

In an attempt to define the relationship between learner-autonomy and learner-centeredness she tried to clarify her ideas and asserted that

*"There is not an answer for the question 'which one is dependent on which'. I don't know, I really have no idea about which one is more important."*

She admitted that she was not sure about the relationship between learner autonomy and learner-centeredness.

Teacher 2 came up with a solution about the relationship between learner-autonomy and learner-centeredness.

*"There should be autonomy first. It's also related to personality, perhaps. The child should have the capacity. Otherwise, it may not work out. You might get different results."*

She further gave an example of one of her students Ömer. Especially significant is the way she described autonomy through this student.

*"Like my Ömer in 5-B. He is a super child, fully autonomous...whatever you give to him...it works."*

She suggested that autonomy was the prerequisite for learner-centered instruction. However, Teacher 2 mentioned the importance of parents in developing autonomy in children. She asserted that

*“Many things start within the family. The family background is very important. You need to know the reasons and state-of-art techniques. You shouldn’t be over-tolerant.”*

#### **4.4 Teachers’ Beliefs, Assumptions, and Knowledge about European Language Portfolio**

##### **4.4.1 Public School Teachers’ BAK about European Language Portfolio**

##### **4.4.1.1 Analysis of Private School Focus Group Interview**

ELP was one of the innovations the ministry wanted to introduce. In fact, it was among the ministry’s plan for the 2005-2006 school year to start its implementation. The focus group reaction towards this instrument was an indication of the appropriateness of the ministry’s decision to delay its implementation. None of the participants had an idea of what it was.

##### **Self-assessment**

None of the participants had an idea about self-assessment. Teacher A’s first reaction was a question to the researcher’s question

*“Assessing yourself?”*

His question was followed by Teacher C’s question.

*“Do you mean self assessment is the student’s use of his current capacity?”*

The following ideas were mainly related to the problems that might occur owing to the implementation of self-assessment. The teachers’ starting point was the students’ inability to evaluate themselves. For the teachers, in order for self-assessment to occur the student had to know all the topics and the criteria for each subject. Teacher D reflected his belief through a metaphor as

*“Which part of the iceberg does the student see and which part do we see? Since he cannot see everything, self-assessment system is difficult.”*

Teacher C mentioned the importance of conditions again. He suggested that if the students were forced, they could do this. He exemplified his statement by mentioning the projects the students carried out in Teacher B’s

lessons. Although these were very nice tasks, he admitted that they could not do the same.

The teachers again mentioned the importance attached to LGS exam. So the only way for the students to assess themselves was LGS. The students were more concerned about the number of correct answers in the test and how well they did in comparison to their friends.

#### **4.4.1.2 Interview Analysis of Teacher A**

Teacher A equalized students' self-assessment with examinations. However, he confessed that he did not know the other ways in which the students could evaluate themselves. Currently, grades were important in the assessment of students' achievement. He asserted that the students could also evaluate themselves by the reactions they received from the teachers or his friends' feedback.

Teacher A thought students should know about their level and about the role and importance of English.

*‘‘When students do something well, they think they are doing well but they ask themselves how much they have learnt. And also they question themselves about how much they are going to learn. When I tell the students something, sometimes a student asks a question about a subject which is not in the curriculum. But I can't teach the relevant points because then they should be responsible for it in the exam. Just a few students know about their level and evaluate themselves.’’*

*He asked a question then ‘‘While the students do not know English well, how are we going to teach them how to evaluate themselves?’’*

#### **4.4.1.3 Interview Analysis of Teacher B**

Teacher B was not sure about the function of ELP. She thought it was something students would use abroad in finding a job.



After the researcher presented a document with information about ELP she said

*“That might be possible. If a student knows what she does and what she doesn’t, as a teacher you can easily show what she knows and what she doesn’t. It is something good but if there weren’t the reality of exams to be taken, there would be students who want to improve themselves in that [ELP] direction.*

#### **4.4.2 Private School Teachers’ BAK about European Language Portfolio**

##### **4.4.2.1 Analysis of Private School Focus Group Interview**

Only Teacher 4 knew something about ELP. She has seen an example of it in her previous school. She told about the levels the passport offered and mentioned about the textbooks the teachers had to choose to implement ELP. Teacher 5 accepted that they didn’t know much about ELP.

##### **Self-Assessment**

Examinations were carried out as a form of assessing students. However, sometimes they could have the students create portfolios. When it came to self-assessment they asserted that the textbooks they were using had a self-assessment part. The problems that might arise owing to the implementation of self-assessment were largely related to the students. The teachers did not think that the students were honest enough to evaluate themselves. In an attempt to satisfy their parents and teachers the students might distort the facts. Besides, they were not competent enough to assess their weaknesses and strengths. Teacher 2 stated this as

*“It is nice book. There is self assessment in it. But I don’t think they act very honestly. Maybe if they do it alone, that is fine ..but I don’t think they are honest in the classroom. Not to be embarrassed in front of her friends...”*

Teacher 4 had an experience regarding self-assessment. There was an activity in the workbook. The students changed their workbooks with each other. The teacher asked the students to evaluate their friends instead of

themselves. However, it turned out to be a disappointing experience for Teacher 4.

*“There were so many complaints from the students. Teacher, my friend wants me to get a low mark, she does not do it carefully, she corrects the true answer as false...I had this kind of complaints..”*

All of the participants agreed that although it was a very beneficial practice its application was very difficult. The most commonly articulated benefits were expressed as *“it is good for the students to see their mistakes on their own and to accept their weaknesses”*.

#### **4.4.2.2 Interview Analysis of Teacher 1**

Teacher 1 said ELP was new for her. In most of the chapters of their coursebooks, there were such sections. By saying such sections she meant the self-assessment parts. However, she admitted that they were not given any training about it. They just heard about ELP from the book representatives. She believed that ELP would facilitate their job and in the application of ELP, they would have a chance to see the child's development better. She concluded by saying

*“Every child has developmental features and ELP plays an important role for the teacher to understand this process.”*

She further commented that

*“It is important for the students to be able to evaluate themselves. Their textbook, the ones published this year, includes parts like that. With parts I mean the ones that require students to keep learning portfolios and evaluate their own performances as “I feel good at ... and bad at ....”. So far we are not informed about the topic by a seminar or an expert. We are at the moment trying to figure it out through the textbooks. That is something new for us. I personally have heard about it last semester. I believe that many schools will be interested in applying it. Our upper grades are keeping portfolios and I know that it is applied at university level too. However, as I already stated since I*

*don't have adequate knowledge about the topic, the things I state reflects a small amount of knowledge I gained from the books I read."*

According to her the portfolio would be a good document which would also show the parents' their children's progress.

Teacher 1 said that her students assessed themselves orally. She thought students assessed themselves well. For example her students could say *"I am bad at reading but better at listening"*. They could express themselves well especially when they became more conscious learners in grades 4 and 5. But she had doubts about whether it was correct for the students to evaluate their performances or not. This could be questioned for each individual student. She exemplified this as follows

*"For instance, after an exam a student says that the exam was fine and that she will take 4 or 5 out of 5. But when you read her paper she gets 30."*

Teacher 1 also highlighted the importance of students' honesty by saying that the students usually felt responsible for their families, so they refrained from presenting the right information to show themselves different.

#### **4.4.2.3 Interview Analysis of Teacher 2**

Teacher 2 mentioned the self-assessment part in their books. However she also admitted that it did not work with all the learners.

*"There is such a section in our course books but there are some students who pretend to have understood because of peer pressure. It will not work with one third of the students."*

She really liked the idea of students assessing themselves. She thought it would be *"superb"*. She also added that

*"It's important to know your weaknesses or your strengths. It doesn't have any disadvantages."*

Teacher 2 examined self assessment procedures in a few books and she liked the self-assessment parts. She gave an example of self-evaluation she saw in one of the books she examined.

*“There’s a book called Engy of Longman. There are very good questions about the evaluation. There are some question in 3 boxes in “Project”, too; such as “How well do you think you did in this unit?”*

She highlighted the importance of getting students to evaluate themselves with self-assessment questions at home by saying

*“Those questions should be answered at home so they can be honest. I think it’s wiser to keep their self-assessment reports in a portfolio at home.”*

While talking about self-assessment Teacher 2 highlighted the role of the parents in this process. She stated that

*“The parents should not see their self assessment reports or the teacher should hide them or the student will lock them in a closet. They shouldn’t read the students’ self-assessment reports, either”*

She justified her belief by saying

*“Because the students lie, I mean the little kids, they don’t want to accept it. They are not honest about themselves in the presence of peers.”*

In order to provide honesty *“self-assessment should be kept confidential.”*

She thought that self-assessment practice was important in that the students would see what he knew well and what he didn’t and thus will try harder.

#### **4.5 Teachers’ BAK about the Implementation of ELP**

##### **4.5.1 Public School Teachers’ BAK about the Implementation of European Language Portfolio**

##### **4.5.1.1 Analysis of Public School Focus Group Interview**

After the researcher distributed the handout, which included information about ELP, they had a chance to express their beliefs regarding its implementation. Teacher A stated his belief, in fact disbelief, as

*“This system- what it is, how it can be implemented, what needs to be done- should be explained to the teachers. I don’t think the teachers know something about it.”* and added that *“it can be implemented in the European*

*Union, and in Turkey, yes, it can be implemented, on the paper, we implement it the best way possible”.*

Teacher B expressed her doubts about the portfolio. She was also the one questioned the use of the instrument.

*“What will the passport give to us?”*

Teacher A’s and Teacher B’s reaction and the other participants’ silence towards ELP was a sign, which required further consideration before announcing the implementation of this instrument.

### **Suggested solutions for the obstacles**

The teachers suggested that learner-centered education should be explained to the parents very clearly. There should be seminars for parents as well. In fact, the system should be explained to the teachers, the administrators. In short everybody should be informed about the system. Parents should be convinced that the time students spent on the projects was not a waste of time.

Another solution articulated by the teachers attending focus group discussion was participation into curriculum design. Teacher D repeated his claim that the policy makers did not take into account the teachers and the realities of the teachers. Teacher B had a similar beliefs to Teacher D, but her emphasis was on the solution to this problem. She believed that she was the “king of the classroom”. Nobody could know what she was doing in the classroom. She likened it to “perform the ritual prayers” and said *“who will know what I do. You can simply say ‘yes I do but only you know about it’”*.

All of the participants raised their concerns about not having a word in the practices. They reported that since they were the implementers of teaching activities, they were the ones who could provide the best information for the policy makers. In-service training

When the teachers expressed their reservations about their pedagogical knowledge, new questions emerged relating to in-service training program. Again it was Teacher A who thought they needed to attend in-service training programs. However, he desired completely different in-service programs from

those he used to attend. He was conscious of the necessity for such professional development.

Teacher A voiced his expectations from an in-service training seminar. He needed to be trained by educators specialized in their branches. The in-service training he attended recently was a very bad experience for him. It was a seminar about computers, but the person in charge of training the teachers was not an expert one. So they could not learn anything during their participation in the seminar. Besides, the lack of quality in these in-service training occasions created a disbelief in Teacher A regarding the nature of the seminars. He stated that *“these education courses are for show only, it is just ‘we gave and finished’. That is, things are on the paper.”*

The in-service training seminars were usually in the form of lecturing, the trainer reading from the pages. Hence, the participants usually ended up saying that *“teacher, give us the papers, then we can go home and read them.”*

Teacher A had a lot to say about these in-service seminars because it was usually him who was asked to attend such programs. He described a seminar he participated once. The topic was **learning to learn**. He expressed his thoughts about his experience through an anecdote.

*“They gathered us in the X district. People came from the career center. Yes, what they are telling is nice but most of the terms and the sentences are philosophic. First of all, majority of the listeners do not understand, and they continuously look at their watches, they want to leave or they say let’s escape during the break. Many people don’t take it seriously, and the number of people should be reduced. You can’t have a seminar with 500 people. People are talking to each other. Questions related to the topic cannot be asked. People scratch their heads or look at other sides to avoid the microphone. The same thing happened last year. They gave a seminar about the new system last year-leave grammar aside and apply the new system. The person giving the seminar does not know these. He took the papers and started to read. When the EFL*

*teachers asked questions, he said 'let me go now. I don't know the answers. Let's come together next week. I will learn these and come.'*

Teacher A reported that unfortunately the following week it was the same. There wasn't a solution. Although the ministry imposed new things, mandated new books, the innovations could not be explained to the teachers. He gave an account of a very similar thing that happened with the grading system which was again an innovation brought by the ministry. He claimed that the selected authority could not explain the content of the new grading system. This practice created disbelief among the teachers regarding novelties in education.

The participants emphasized the need to convince the teachers about the content and benefits of the innovations. The teachers were accustomed to system and they kept on what they had been doing. All of the discussion about the in-service training programs led to the necessity of an expert trainer and to the betterment of the in-service training programs.

#### **4.5.1.2 Interview Analysis of Teacher A**

Teacher A stated ELP should be applied first of all in language schools or piloting should be made in schools where intensive foreign language education was given. He thought applicability of ELP was difficult. It was not realistic because there were other problems to be solved before trying to reach EU standards.

While explaining the difficulties in reaching the standards of EU he talked about the changes to be made in the Anatolian High School programs and about computer assisted language learning to be introduced.

He thought in most of these schools this would be difficult due to the lack of enough number of language teachers. He said

*"First of all we need 2000 more EFL teachers . Basically it is a good idea to start English language teaching from the fourth grades because we will be trying to provide continuity; however, first you need to increase language hours. You can't achieve this with two-three hours of English lessons a week."*

He articulated a conflict by asserting

*“Unless enough language teachers are found, teachers of Maths or Science who don’t know English will be giving the lessons.”*

Teacher A expressed his pessimism regarding ELP by commenting as *“under these conditions you can’t aim to get students to reach A-B levels or to get passport needed for A and B.”*

Teacher A further reflected his disbelief about ELP stating that these innovations would be at a theoretical level and they could never be implemented. He established a relationship with the textbook by stating that the textbooks distributed to the students had lots of deficiencies.

#### **4.5.1.3 Interview Analysis of Teacher B**

In terms of its application She asserted that

*“This will attract the attention of the students who are already interested in the topic. But, there are many students who won’t be able to understand even the proficiency criteria there and we don’t have the opportunity to change this fact.”*

Again focusing on the importance of intelligence regarding students’ inability to carry out self-assessment process she added that

*“The students are too old to do that. I always say we get stupid as we grow older. It is a scientific fact. The younger you are, the more intelligence you are.”*

#### **Self-Assessment**

Teacher B did not believe the applicability of self-assessment in Turkey because she found it *“nonsense”* She stated that it could be applied in theory, people could pretend that they were implementing it, but in reality this was impossible.

The way they evaluated students were through formal exams. She equalized self-assessment with the assessment of exams prepared by teacher.



*“As I said before, self-assessment is done through the exams”.*

She focused on the intelligence factor again but this time the adjective she used to qualify “good” student was not “intelligent” but “conscious”. Actually Teacher B’s BAK showed consistency in that since learner-centered education was a kind of special education only for the gifted ones, self-assessment was the same. She had the same idea that conscious students would achieve better in assessing themselves whereas the rest would not.

*“Conscious learners can do it better than the others. The unconscious ones are not even aware of what is being done in the classroom. How can they self-assess their performance?”*

She again mentioned the importance of the way students were raised.

*“Moreover, students are not used to self-assessment. There was always someone giving decisions on behalf of these students. That’s why we, their parents, teachers and people around them, assess them.”*

She was against the idea of implementing self-assessment. She overtly stated that she would reject it because she thought it was useless.

*“Don’t give students a test and let them evaluate themselves. This is impossible. We are not a race who does not cheat. That is, it is nonsense, perhaps I could not perceive it, what they are thinking”*

They here referred to the policy makers.

She thought that it would be a temporary practice and said

*“They can apply it in theory but then in two years time it will be cancelled. I think it is not possible”*

She found parents as a main obstacle in implementing self-assessment. Parents had an indirect effect here. The implementation of self-assessment depended on the students and the families had a crucial role in preparing their children for such activities.

*“I find it a bit difficult. I always say this. It is not only the English lessons but it has its roots during pregnancy, education. Education given by*

*parents is important. You give birth but the child does not only belong to you. A lot of people are affected by your child."*

Teacher B's beliefs reflected the importance she attached to students' capacity. What he said implied the responsibility of parents in raising their children. The relationship with parents and self-assessment was established as

*"Students should be conscious so that they can assess themselves. Otherwise when you say "assessment" the only thing that will come to his mind will be an exam".*

So, according to her the students' capacity to assess themselves depended on the how their families raised them.

### **Innovation**

While talking about innovations Teacher B expressed her pessimism regarding innovations. She commented as followed

*"The people are hopeless now. Whenever they try to do something good you are hurt. But if you say I just care about the money I will get, and keep silent nobody says anything. So the applicability of innovations depends on the teacher's good intentions."*

She did not believe that things could change. Maybe if there was too much emphasis on the innovation and constant and harsh controls on the implementation of the innovation, it would slowly work otherwise it did not have a chance. She stated that the teachers had developed a distrust towards the innovation. She expressed this as

*"If the system is changed in every 3 year then you lose your trust."*

## **4.5.2 Private School Teachers' BAK about the Implementation of ELP**

### **4.5.2.1 Analysis of Private School Focus Group Interview**

When the researcher gave them some information about ELP and asked for their beliefs about its implementation, the teachers displayed their enthusiasm towards implementing it. Teacher 6 expressed her willingness as

*"I am already ready".*

However, they articulated the need for in-service training. It was a complete process. Everyone should act together. They also mentioned the importance of beliefs regarding innovations. They stated that the teachers should believe in the virtue of the innovation especially the ones who would participate in in-service training. Attending these seminars was nothing if the person implemented what he believed to be true.

Besides they suggested some improvements about the in-service programs. They stated that ELT seminars were just a repetition of each other.

*"It is something like doing what you know. That is they tell you what you already know."*

#### **4.5.2.2 Interview Analysis of Teacher 1**

She believed that all the teachers working in her school were open to innovations. She expressed this as follows

*"Particularly English language teachers are different. Perhaps they are educated and know about a foreign culture, they are mature people. Thus, I don't think that it will cause any problems among teachers. It might be problematic for the students and the school managers. Some school managers do not like innovations. They might be right in that too. There is no rule saying that all innovations are good."*

She didn't think that whatever appeared as new could be accepted as good. Only after trials one could say that it was "true" or "false". She appreciated the school's attitude in that sense.

*"This school takes safe steps. It first waits for the others to see whether the system works or not."*

She did not also think that "everything new will be suitable for our education and teaching policy in Turkey's conditions"

### 4.5.2.3 Interview Analysis of Teacher 2

#### European Language Portfolio

When it came to the effects of ELP on her practices, Teacher 2 didn't think “ *it'll have tremendous effects. Of course, there'll be mistakes at the beginning.* ”

She further pointed out the importance of administration in this transition process.

*“I'm not sure if there'll be problems in rectifying those mistakes. At that point the administration as I always say administration's attitude is very important. The scope of the administration, support from them is very important.”*

According to her the success of ELP practice depended on the way the administrators perceived it. If they bothered too much about discipline, ELP certainly wouldn't work.

#### Innovation

She commented that she would never implement anything that she didn't agree with. Her reaction was

*“What ever the administration dictates, I never do it if I don't approve of it. That's why the teacher is very important.”*

### 4.6 Teachers' Implementation of their Understanding of Learner-centeredness

In order to understand how participant teachers implement their understanding of learner –centeredness, they were observed in their classrooms. During the observations extensive field notes were taken. In the following section the analysis of data gathered through observations will be presented. Each teacher's observation analysis is accompanied with the analysis of after- and before- observation reflections and the analysis of tasks they exploited while teaching.

## 4.6.1 Public Teachers' Observation Analyses

### 4.6.1.1 Observation Analysis of Teacher A

The following table shows Teacher A's observation results. It reports whether the teachers exhibited the practice in question or not.

**Table 4:** Teacher A's observation report

Strong	Not strong	<b><i>1. Teacher takes into account learner differences while teaching and planning her lesson.</i></b>
	√	1. Learners' interests
	√	2. Careful attention to socioeconomic status in the instructional setting
	√	3. Accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities
	√	4. Learners' perspectives (beliefs)
	√	5. Learners have different strategies, approaches, and capabilities for learning that are a function of prior experience and heredity
	√	6. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying body size
	√	7. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying posture
	√	8. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying mobility
	√	9. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying sensory needs
	√	10. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying communication needs
	√	11. Learning styles
	√	12. Instruction designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural differences
	√	13. Instruction anticipates variation in individual learning pace
	√	14. Developmental and social factors
	√	15. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying talents
	√	16. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying capacities
	√	17. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying intelligences
Strong	Not strong	<b><i>2. Teacher encourages relationships among learners.</i></b>
	√	1. The process of collaborating
√		2. Collaborative learning activities (Group learning, peer teaching, group projects, problem-based learning tied to core course goals and objectives)
	√	3. Collaboration with peers
	√	4. Learners construct meaning within the context of social relationships
√		5. Social interaction facilitates learning

Table 4 (continued)

	√	6. Teacher promotes purposeful interaction and communication between and among learners
	√	7. Teacher promotes purposeful interaction and communication between Ss and faculty
√		8. Presentations with peers
	√	9. Personal relationships that increase learners' sense of self-respect
	√	10. They becomes we
	√	11. Learners' backgrounds of cooperative learning
	√	12. Learning settings that allow for social interactions
	√	13. A school and classroom environment that allows for the development of positive personal relationships and a caring school and classroom environment
Strong	Not strong	<b>3. Teacher uses alternative assessment techniques including self-assessment.</b>
	√	1. Alternative assessment (diagnostic, Performance, process, Self-, ...)
	√	2. Inclusive tasks (exploring open-ended questions, scenarios, doing research, ...)
	√	3. Teacher develops the learner's ability to assess his/her own competence
	√	4. Teacher encourages learners to reflect on what they have done ( successful or otherwise)
	√	5. Teacher encourages learners to consider what they might do next time
√		6. Teacher negotiates with the class so that they can assess their own work and set their own improvement goals
Strong	Not strong	<b>4. Teacher encourages learners to construct new meanings by establishing relationships with their prior knowledge.</b>
	√	1. Learners use their existing knowledge and backgrounds of experience to construct meanings from new information and experiences
	√	2. Recognition of importance of prior knowledge
	√	3. Teacher creates meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge
	√	4. Teacher creates and uses a repertoire of thinking and reasoning strategies to achieve complex learning goals.
	√	5. Teacher provides opportunities and resources for the learners to discover concepts for themselves.
	√	6. New learning depends on a learner's current background of understanding
	√	7. Learners use strategic thinking in their approach to learning
	√	8. Teacher recognizes Importance of Relation to Other Courses
Strong	Not strong	<b>5. Teacher encourages learner autonomy by giving the learners responsibility.</b>
	√	1. Teacher encourages and accepts learner autonomy and initiative
	√	2. Teacher develops self-control and self-discipline for self-esteem and self-confidence
	√	3. Teacher holds the responsibility for determining learning objectives

Table 4 (continued)

	√	4. Teacher encourages learners to take ownership of their choices - if things go 'wrong' encourage learners to consider what they will do next time.
	√	5. Learners assume personal responsibility for contributing to their own learning
	√	5.1. Learners take responsibility and use appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives
	√	5.2. Learners take responsibility and use appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives
	√	6. Learners monitor their progress toward these goals
	√	7. Learners become more independent from the teacher
	√	8. Learners are self-regulating
	√	9. Teacher supports autonomy in learners, who become intrinsically motivated to do high-quality work
	√	10. Teacher focuses more on empowering learners
	√	11. Teacher focuses more on making learners more autonomous and self-directed learners
Strong	Not strong	<b>6. Teacher encourages learners to select their learning goals and tasks by providing help.</b>
	√	1. Learners participate in selection of academic goals and learning tasks
	√	2. Teacher plays a major interactive role with the learner
	√	3. Teacher plays a major interactive role with the learning environment
	√	4. Teacher allows learners options in use of instructional materials
	√	5. Teacher allows learners options in use of testing
	√	6. Teacher allows learners options in use of assignments
√		7. Teacher allows learners options in-class activities
	√	8. Assignments ought be determined either individually or collectively by the learners themselves in consultation with the instructor
	√	9. Teacher creates contexts that help learners create a learning community
	√	10. Teacher negotiates activities, tasks, assessment and class behaviour with learners so as to encourage ownership
Strong	Not strong	<b>7. Teacher creates a positive and secure atmosphere.</b>
√		1. Teacher creates personal relationships that provide trust
	√	2. Teacher creates a classroom environment that allows for and respects "learner voice"
	√	3. Teacher treats learners as human, equal, cultural beings
	√	4. Teacher establishes personal relationships that increase learners' sense of belonging
	√	5. Teacher establishes personal relationships that increase learners' sense of self-acceptance
	√	6. Teacher establishes personal relationships that provide caring
	√	7. Teacher establishes personal relationships that provide stability
	√	8. Teacher establishes contexts that help learners feel safe to share ideas

Table 4 (continued)

	√	9. Teacher encourages learners to express their personal feelings and opinions
	√	10. Teacher creates caring relationships with the learners
	√	11. Teacher sees things from the point of learners and provides them with opportunities to share their perspectives
√		12. Teacher addresses Ss' physical needs
	√	13. Teacher addresses Ss' emotional needs
	√	14. Teacher addresses Ss' social needs
√		15. Teacher recognizes positive behaviour of any learners
√		16. Teacher appraises the learner's cognitive strengths
	√	17. Teacher understands the learner's cognitive weaknesses
Strong	Not strong	<b>8. Teacher considers learners' needs during the process of the design of the lesson and teaching.</b>
	√	1. Learners' needs
	√	2. Educational decisions will be responsive to the learner
	√	3. Focus is not on what the teacher wants to teach, but on what and how learners need to learn
	√	4. Teacher focuses on meeting individual learner needs in a nurturing learning environment
	√	5. Teacher matches learning and performance opportunities to the needs of individual children
Strong	Not strong	<b>9. Teacher focuses on learners.</b>
	√	1. Learners achieve through active engagement in a learning process
	√	1.1. Learners use reasoning
√		1.2. Learners are active
	√	1.3. Hands-on
	√	1.4. Learners generate alternative methods to reach their goal
	√	1.5. Learners select potentially appropriate learning strategies or methods
	√	1.6. Learners have a say in their learning
	√	2. Active learning since learners must participate in creating knowledge rather than being passive recipients of content
	√	3. Learner commitment to learning
	√	4. Learning modalities
	√	5. Teacher focuses on learning vs. teaching
	√	6. Teacher places learners at the center of the learning process as active meaning- makers of classroom experiences.
√		7. Teacher's classroom practices allow learners an active and social role in learning activities



Table 4 (continued)

Strong	Not strong	<b>10. Teacher knows her learners' background well.</b>
	√	1. Learners' cultural heredity and background
	√	2. Learners' experiences
	√	3. Learners' backgrounds of authentic learning problems
	√	4. Learners' backgrounds of understanding
	√	5. Careful attention to ethnicity in the instructional setting
Strong	Not strong	<b>11. Teacher tries to increase learners' cognitive capacities.</b>
	√	1. Teacher addresses to learners' intellectual domains
	√	2. Learners not seeking correct answers
√		3. Teacher explores possible answers
	√	4. Teacher uses problem-structuring strategies and behaviors
	√	5. Teacher encourages thinking among learners
	√	5.1. Teacher uses Socratic questioning
	√	5.2. Teacher encourages learner inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and to ask questions of each other
	√	6. Teacher helps learners to discover and explore content knowledge by knowing what questions to ask and how to ask them
	√	7. Teacher ensures learners can: devise questions, plan and present a study of their own choice as a demonstration of 'learning how to learn' ability
	√	8. Facilitate creative and critical thinking
√		8.1. Teacher inquires about learners' understanding of concepts before sharing their own understanding of those concepts
	√	8.2. Teacher encourages reflective thinking
	√	8.3. Teacher guides learners to create their own understandings
Strong	Not strong	<b>12. Teacher sees mistakes as the evidence of learning and displays tolerance.</b>
	√	1. Teacher knows that errors provide the opportunity for insight into learners' previous knowledge constructions
	√	2. Teacher encourages learners to take risks, to have a go, and to see mistakes as learning opportunities
	√	3. Tolerance for Error: Teacher Minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions
Strong	Not strong	<b>13. Teacher encourages the highest level of learning-output standards.</b>
	√	1. Teacher holds high expectations for learner performance
	√	2. Teacher encourages learners always to put forth their best effort

Table 4 (continued)

	√	3. The teacher is more concerned with the development of higher order intellectual and cognitive skill among learners
	√	4. Teacher sets appropriately high and challenging standards
	√	5. Teacher promotes the highest levels of achievement for all learners
	√	6. Teacher promotes the highest levels of learning
	√	7. Learners feel challenged to work towards appropriately high goals
	√	8. Learner commitment to achieving high standards of comprehension and understanding
Strong	Not strong	<b>14. Teacher shares her status equally with the learners the classroom.</b>
	√	1. Equalized roles between teacher and learner(s)
	√	2. Cooperative roles between teacher and learner(s)
Strong	Not strong	<b>15. Teacher assumes different roles in the classroom.</b>
	√	1. Learning counselor
	√	2. Facilitator
	√	3. Teacher gets to know learners well enough be able to understand both their intentions and their resources
	√	4. Teacher has an understanding of how learners develop and learn
	√	5. Teacher recognizes individual differences in their learners and adjust their practice accordingly.
	√	6. Teacher helps learners clarify their intentions and develop their resources and awareness
√		7. Teacher treats learners equitably
	√	8. Encouraging
	√	9. Motivating
	√	10. Teacher's mission extends beyond developing the cognitive capacity of their learners
√		12. Teacher channels learner participation in a pedagogically useful direction
√		13. Teacher provides feedback on learners' performance
√		14. Diagnostic coach always with the aim on extending learners skill and confidence
	√	15. A joint learner with learners
	√	16. Teacher helps learners cope with their own emotional needs and tensions, as well as with the needs of those around them
	√	17. Teacher helps learners inquire
	√	18. Teacher helps learners problem-solve
	√	19. Teacher helps learners learn

Table 4 (continued)

Strong	Not strong	<b>16. Teacher takes the learners' beliefs about themselves and their learning into account before designing her lessons and while teaching.</b>
	√	1. Careful attention to beliefs in the instructional setting
	√	2. Internal world of beliefs for failure
	√	3. Internal world of beliefs for success
Strong	Not strong	<b>17. Teacher encourages learners to identify their own objectives and classroom activities that are realistic.</b>
	√	1. Teacher encourages learners to select methods to be used
	√	2. Teacher encourages learners to select techniques to be used
	√	3. Teacher provides study guides and clear learning objectives
√		4. Teacher encourages learners to suggest classroom activities
	√	5. Clear Expectations & Objectives are determined either individually or collectively by the learners themselves in consultation with the instructor
	√	6. Learners set reasonable performance goals
Strong	Not strong	<b>18. Physical environment is important for learning to occur.</b>
	√	1. Access to a rich collection of second language materials
	√	2. Teacher Assures that suitable physical conditions are provided, like classroom size, desks/tables, acoustics, and lighting accessible to all learners
√		3. Teacher Makes use of the instructional A/V aids to ensure all learners know what is expected of them so they can be encouraged to work independently either as individuals or in groups
Strong	Not strong	<b>19. Teacher helps learners to discover their own learning styles.</b>
	√	1. Teacher helps learners examine their learning preferences
	√	2. Teacher helps learners expand or modify their learning preferences if necessary
	√	3. Teacher helps learners discover their learning potential
Strong	Not strong	<b>20. Teacher gives clear instructions.</b>
√		1. Teacher communicates necessary information effectively to the learners, regardless of ambient conditions or the learners' sensory abilities
	√	2. Instruction is straightforward & eliminates unnecessary complexity
√		3. Teacher explains concepts simply without assuming learner has prior knowledge
√		4. Necessary information is communicated clearly
√		5. Teacher ensures learners know what is expected in any task
	√	6. Teacher scaffolds any help necessary to ensure learners gain success - to break tasks down to understandable steps until learning is in place

Table 4 (continued)

	√	7. Teacher is clear about why learners do what they do
	√	8. Instruction is designed to be useful and accessible to all learners
	√	9. Teacher alternates delivery of material taking into account the need for information to facilitate capacity of the brain to process information
Strong	Not strong	<b>21. Teacher pays attention to the language she uses.</b>
√		1. Careful attention to appropriate register in language in the instructional setting
Strong	Not strong	<b>22. Teacher pays constant attention to what the learners are saying.</b>
	√	1. Teacher listens well
	√	2. Teacher encourages learner-generated questions and discussions
Strong	Not strong	<b>23. Teacher provides the learners with enough time to concentrate on the solution of the problems posed.</b>
√		1. Teacher allows wait time after posing questions
√		2. Teacher provides time for learner to construct relationships and metaphors
Strong	Not strong	<b>24. Teacher should be tolerant towards changes in the course of instruction.</b>
	√	1. Flexibility
Strong	Not strong	<b>25. Effective teacher has certain qualities.</b>
	√	1. Organized
	√	2. Understanding
	√	3. Enthusiastic
√		4. Fair
	√	5. Friendly
	√	6. Humorous
	√	7. Teacher makes things clear
	√	8. Teacher enjoys what she/he teaches
	√	9. Teacher develops a system to monitor the effectiveness of teaching
Strong	Not strong	<b>26. Teacher should try to avoid being driven by the following practices.</b>
√		1. Having a classroom as one in which many activities are primarily organized as whole-class activities directed by the teacher
√		2. Having a lack of learner -learner interactions
√		3. Having a mismatch between the teaching preferences of the teacher and the learning preferences of learners

Table 4 (continued)

√		4. Having the routine as superior to flexibility
√		5. Having a teacher role of either a resource or a deliverer of content knowledge
√		6. Conducting activities designed for specific responses
	√	7. Demanding learners to be obedient
√		8. Having beliefs to be excessively competent in a particular subject
√		9. Being curriculum-driven
√		10. Being directed by a teaching method which places more stress on getting the correct answers
√		11. Devoting a whole class time to practice worksheets
	√	12. Persistence in following instructions in tasks and lesson plans
√		13. Giving lectures
	√	14. Causing or creating insecurity through
	√	14.1. Anxiety
	√	14.2. Test anxiety
	√	14.3. Fear for punishment
	√	14.4. Panic
	√	14.5. Rage
	√	14.6. Ridicule
	√	14.7. Ruminating about failure
	√	14.8. Stigmatizing labels
	√	14.9. Worrying about competence
	√	15. Limiting learners' speech both in terms of quantity and quality
	√	16. Having negative gender role expectations
√		17. Having repetitious method of transferring knowledge.
√		18. Dictating rote learning
	√	19. Being strict about learners sitting quietly in their seats.
	√	20. Depending solely on standardized tests
	√	21. Imposing own ideas rather than allowing learners to develop their own
√		22. Being text-book centered
√		23. Assuming a role of an infallible authority and transmitter of knowledge
√		24. Being time driven.
	√	25. Exerting undue pressure to perform well
	√	26. Acting as decision makers

In most of the pre-, post-observation reflections, Teacher A reflected the same beliefs about his lessons. Before the lessons he mostly asserted that he was going to implement learner-centeredness in the form of presenting the topic for fifteen minutes and then getting the students to answer the questions in the handouts. Since the teachers were not happy with the textbook they were obliged to follow, they prepared their own materials. These materials appeared as handouts that consisted of grammar exercise. So the students were active answering the questions written in the handouts. After the lessons, when the researcher asked how the lesson went, he was generally happy with the lesson. He mostly asserted that the lesson went as he planned. The researcher observed a typical pattern in almost every lesson. After the teacher gave the rules of a certain topic, the students were required to go to the board and to write the answer on the board. However, before they sat they had to translate the sentence into Turkish. When asked about the reason of this, teacher A explained this as

*“I am trying to make the students answer the questions consciously”.*

He was trying to prevent “*rote learning*” through this activity. Besides, he used this translation process as a means to understand whether the students did the exercise himself or not. Once the student could translate the sentence he was assured that he learnt it. In all of the lessons observed neither the teacher nor the students spoke English. Use of English was limited to only the exercises.

#### **4.6.1.1 Document Analysis**

The following table displays the analysis of documents exploited by Teacher A. The documents include handout prepared by the teacher.

**Table 5:** Analysis of documents exploited by Teacher A

Strong	Not strong	<b>1. Teacher promotes the highest levels of learner motivation by appropriate tasks.</b>
	√	1. Tasks the learner perceives to be of optimal novelty
√		2. Tasks the learner perceives to be of optimal difficulty
	√	3. Tasks the learner perceives to be relevant to personal interests
	√	4. Tasks that provide for personal choice
	√	5. Tasks that provide for personal control
	√	6. Tasks that are comparable to real-world situations
√		7. Tasks that learners perceive as meaningful
√		8. Tasks that learners perceive as they can succeed
	√	9. Tasks that provide for learner's creativity
	√	10. Tasks that provide for learner's higher order thinking
	√	11. Tasks that provide for learner's natural curiosity
Strong	Not strong	<b>2. Teacher selects and uses suitable materials.</b>
	√	1. Material is appropriate to their developmental level
	√	2. Material is presented in an enjoyable way
	√	3. Material is presented in an interesting way
√		4. Teacher focuses on core tasks rather than non-essential ones
	√	5. Manipulative materials
	√	6. Interactive materials
	√	7. Physical materials
	√	8. Authentic materials

The materials used by the teacher A were mostly in the form of fill-in the blanks. A review of exercises examined by the researcher revealed that the exercises consisted of sentence-level items that do not share a context with the other questions in the exercises.

Due to predominance of sentence-based grammar exercises, which cover a number of random topics the exercises, can be described as lacking a contextualized component. Even though the tasks are suitable for the students'

linguistic level, they do not address their interests. They have no relevance to real life contexts. Examples can be given as

**A-Rewrite the following sentences using “passive”<sup>1</sup>**

1. The postman brings the letters
2. The milkman brings the milk.

**B-Build up “passive” sentences**

1. newspapers /sell/ newsagent's
3. Chinese/speak/China

**C-Fill in the blanks with ‘Past Simple’ or ‘Present Perfect’**

1. My friend is a writer. He ..... (write) many books.
2. We ..... (not/have) a holiday last year.

All in all, none of the exercises the students are supposed to do in the classroom promote learners' creativity. In none of the lessons observed, the students engaged into reading, listening or speaking practices. Only once, the students were asked to read a dialogue in which the characters seemed very artificial.

#### 4.6.1.2. Observation analysis of Teacher B

B's observation results can be demonstrated as follows. Each table reports whether the teachers exhibited the practice in question or not.

**Table 6:** Teacher B's observation report

Strong	Not strong	<b><i>1. Teacher takes into account learner differences while teaching and planning her lesson.</i></b>
	√	1. Learners' interests
	√	2. Careful attention to socioeconomic status in the instructional setting
	√	3. Accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities
	√	4. Learners' perspectives (beliefs)
	√	5. Learners have different strategies, approaches, and capabilities for learning that are a function of prior experience and heredity

<sup>1</sup> This instruction was written in Turkish except for the word “passive”.



Table 6 (continued)

	√	6. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying body size
	√	7. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying posture
	√	8. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying mobility
	√	9. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying sensory needs
	√	10. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying communication needs
	√	11. Learning styles
	√	12. Instruction designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural differences
	√	13. Instruction anticipates variation in individual learning pace
	√	14. Developmental and social factors
	√	15. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying talents
	√	16. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying capacities
	√	17. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying intelligences
Strong	Not strong	<b>2. Teacher encourages relationships among learners.</b>
	√	1. The process of collaborating
√		2. Collaborative learning activities (Group learning, peer teaching, group projects, problem-based learning tied to core course goals and objectives)
√		3. Collaboration with peers
	√	4. Learners construct meaning within the context of social relationships
	√	5. Social interaction facilitates learning
	√	6. Teacher promotes purposeful interaction and communication between and among learners
	√	7. Teacher promotes purposeful interaction and communication between learners and faculty
	√	8. Presentations with peers
	√	9. Personal relationships that increase learners' sense of self-respect
	√	10. They becomes we
	√	11. Learners' backgrounds of cooperative learning
	√	12. Learning settings that allow for social interactions
	√	13. A school and classroom environment that allows for the development of positive personal relationships and a caring school and classroom environment
Strong	Not strong	<b>3. Teacher uses alternative assessment techniques including self-assessment.</b>
√		1. Alternative assessment (diagnostic, Performance, process, Self-, ...)
	√	2. Inclusive tasks (exploring open-ended questions, scenarios, doing research, ...)
	√	3. Teacher develops the learner's ability to assess his/her own competence
	√	4. Teacher encourages learners to reflect on what they have done ( successful or otherwise)

Table 6 (continued)

	√	5. Teacher encourages learners to consider what they might do next time
	√	6. Teacher negotiates with the class so that they can assess their own work and set their own improvement goals
Strong	Not strong	<b>4. Teacher encourages learners to construct new meanings by establishing relationships with their prior knowledge.</b>
√		1. Learners use their existing knowledge and backgrounds of experience to construct meanings from new information and experiences
√		2. Recognition of importance of prior knowledge
√		3. Teacher creates meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge
	√	4. Teacher creates and uses a repertoire of thinking and reasoning strategies to achieve complex learning goals.
	√	5. Teacher provides opportunities and resources for the learners to discover concepts for themselves.
	√	6. New learning depends on a learner's current background of understanding
	√	7. Learners use strategic thinking in their approach to learning
	√	8. Teacher recognizes Importance of Relation to Other Courses
Strong	Not strong	<b>5. Teacher encourages learner autonomy by giving the learners responsibility.</b>
	√	1. Teacher encourages and accepts learner autonomy and initiative
	√	2. Teacher develops self-control and self-discipline for self-esteem and self-confidence
	√	3. Teacher holds the responsibility for determining learning objectives
	√	4. Teacher encourages learners to take ownership of their choices - if things go 'wrong' encourage learners to consider what they will do next time.
	√	5. Learners assume personal responsibility for contributing to their own learning
	√	5.1. Learners take responsibility and use appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives
	√	5.2. Learners take responsibility and use appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives
	√	6. Learners monitor their progress toward these goals
	√	7. Learners become more independent from the teacher
	√	8. Learners are self-regulating
	√	9. Teacher supports autonomy in learners, who become intrinsically motivated to do high-quality work
	√	10. Teacher focuses more on empowering learners
	√	11. Teacher focuses more on making learners more autonomous and self-directed learners
Strong	Not strong	<b>6. Teacher encourages learners to select their learning goals and tasks by providing help.</b>
	√	1. Learners participate in selection of academic goals and learning tasks
	√	2. Teacher plays a major interactive role with the learner

Table 6 (continued)

	√	3. Teacher plays a major interactive role with the learning environment
	√	4. Teacher allows learners options in use of instructional materials
	√	5. Teacher allows learners options in use of testing
	√	6. Teacher allows learners options in use of assignments
	√	7. Teacher allows learners options in-class activities
	√	8. Assignments ought be determined either individually or collectively by the learners themselves in consultation with the instructor
	√	9. Teacher creates contexts that help learners create a learning community
	√	10. Teacher negotiates activities, tasks, assessment and class behaviour with learners so as to encourage ownership
Strong	Not strong	<b>7. Teacher creates a positive and secure atmosphere.</b>
	√	1. Teacher creates personal relationships that provide trust
	√	2. Teacher creates a classroom environment that allows for and respects "learner voice"
	√	3. Teacher treats learners as human, equal, cultural beings
	√	4. Teacher establishes personal relationships that increase learners' sense of belonging
	√	5. Teacher establishes personal relationships that increase learners' sense of self-acceptance
	√	6. Teacher establishes personal relationships that provide caring
	√	7. Teacher establishes personal relationships that provide stability
	√	8. Teacher establishes contexts that help learners feel safe to share ideas
	√	9. Teacher encourages learners to express their personal feelings and opinions
	√	10. Teacher creates caring relationships with the learners
	√	11. Teacher sees things from the point of learners and provides them with opportunities to share their perspectives
	√	12. Teacher addresses Ss' physical needs
	√	13. Teacher addresses Ss' emotional needs
	√	14. Teacher addresses Ss' social needs
	√	15. Teacher recognizes positive behaviour of any learners
	√	16. Teacher appraises the learner's cognitive strengths
	√	17. Teacher understands the learner's cognitive weaknesses
Strong	Not strong	<b>8. Teacher considers learners' needs during the process of the design of the lesson and teaching.</b>
	√	1. Learners' needs
	√	2. Educational decisions will be responsive to the learner
	√	3. Focus is not on what the teacher wants to teach, but on what and how learners need to learn

Table 6 (continued)

	√	4. Teacher focuses on meeting individual learner needs in a nurturing learning environment
	√	5. Teacher matches learning and performance opportunities to the needs of individual children
Strong	Not strong	<b>9. Teacher focuses on learners.</b>
	√	1. Learners achieve through active engagement in a learning process
	√	1.1. Learners use reasoning
√		1.2. Learners are active
	√	1.3. Hands-on
	√	1.4. Learners generate alternative methods to reach their goal
	√	1.5. Learners select potentially appropriate learning strategies or methods
	√	1.6. Learners have a say in their learning
	√	3. Active learning since learners must participate in creating knowledge rather than being passive recipients of content
	√	4. Learner commitment to learning
	√	5. Learning modalities
	√	6. Teacher focuses on learning vs. teaching
	√	7. Teacher places learners at the center of the learning process as active meaning- makers of classroom experiences.
	√	8. Teacher's classroom practices allow learners an active and social role in learning activities
Strong	Not strong	<b>10. Teacher knows her learners' background well.</b>
	√	1. Learners' cultural heredity and background
	√	2. Learners' experiences
	√	3. Learners' backgrounds of authentic learning problems
	√	4. Learners' backgrounds of understanding
	√	5. Careful attention to ethnicity in the instructional setting
Strong	Not strong	<b>11. Teacher tries to increase learners' cognitive capacities.</b>
	√	1. Teacher addresses to learners' intellectual domains
	√	2. Learners not seeking correct answers
	√	3. Teacher explores possible answers
	√	4. Teacher uses problem-structuring strategies and behaviors
	√	5. Teacher encourages thinking among learners
	√	5.1. Teacher uses Socratic questioning

Table 6 (continued)

	√	5.2. Teacher encourages learner inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and to ask questions of each other
	√	6. Teacher helps learners to discover and explore content knowledge by knowing what questions to ask and how to ask them
	√	7. Teacher ensures learners can: devise questions, plan and present a study of their own choice as a demonstration of 'learning how to learn' ability
√		8. Facilitate creative and critical thinking
	√	8.1. Teacher inquires about learners' understanding of concepts before sharing their own understanding of those concepts
	√	8.2. Teacher encourages reflective thinking
	√	8.3. Teacher guides learners to create their own understandings
Strong	Not strong	<b>12. Teacher sees mistakes as the evidence of learning and displays tolerance.</b>
	√	1. Teacher knows that errors provide the opportunity for insight into learners' previous knowledge constructions
	√	2. Teacher encourages learners to take risks, to have a go, and to see mistakes as learning opportunities
	√	3. Tolerance for Error: Teacher Minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions
Strong	Not strong	<b>13. Teacher encourages the highest level of learning -output standards.</b>
	√	1. Teacher holds high expectations for learner performance
	√	2. Teacher encourages learners always to put forth their best effort
	√	3. The teacher is more concerned with the development of higher order intellectual and cognitive skill among learners
	√	4. Teacher sets appropriately high and challenging standards
	√	5. Teacher promotes the highest levels of achievement for all learners
	√	6. Teacher promotes the highest levels of learning
	√	7. Learners feel challenged to work towards appropriately high goals
	√	8. Learner commitment to achieving high standards of comprehension and understanding
Strong	Not strong	<b>14. Teacher shares her status equally with the learners the classroom.</b>
	√	1. Equalized roles between teacher and learner(s)
	√	2. Cooperative roles between teacher and learner(s)
Strong	Not strong	<b>15. Teacher assumes different roles in the classroom.</b>
	√	1. Learning counselor

Table 6 (continued)

√		2. Facilitator
	√	3. Teacher gets to know learners well enough be able to understand both their intentions and their resources
	√	4. Teacher has an understanding of how learners develop and learn
	√	5. Teacher recognizes individual differences in their learners and adjust their practice accordingly.
	√	6. Teacher helps learners clarify their intentions and develop their resources and awareness
	√	7. Teacher treats learners equitably
√		8. Encouraging
	√	9. Motivating
	√	10. Teacher's mission extends beyond developing the cognitive capacity of their learners
	√	12. Teacher channels learner participation in a pedagogically useful direction
	√	13. Teacher provides feedback on learners' performance
	√	14. Diagnostic coach always with the aim on extending learners skill and confidence
	√	15. A joint learner with learners
	√	16. Teacher helps learners cope with their own emotional needs and tensions, as well as with the needs of those around them
	√	17. Teacher helps learners inquire
	√	18. Teacher helps learners problem-solve
	√	19. Teacher helps learners learn
Strong	Not strong	<b><i>16. Teacher takes the learners' beliefs about themselves and their learning into account before designing her lessons and while teaching.</i></b>
	√	1. Careful attention to beliefs in the instructional setting
	√	2. Internal world of beliefs for failure
	√	3. Internal world of beliefs for success
Strong	Not strong	<b><i>17. Teacher encourages learners to identify their own objectives and classroom activities which are realistic.</i></b>
	√	1. Teacher encourages learners to select methods to be used
	√	2. Teacher encourages learners to select techniques to be used
	√	3. Teacher provides study guides and clear learning objectives
√		4. Teacher encourages learners to suggest classroom activities
	√	5. Clear Expectations & Objectives are determined either individually or collectively by the learners themselves in consultation with the instructor
	√	6. Learners set reasonable performance goals

Table 6 (continued)

Strong	Not strong	<b>18. Physical environment is important for learning to occur.</b>
	√	1. Access to a rich collection of second language materials
	√	2. Teacher assures that suitable physical conditions are provided, like classroom size, desks/tables, acoustics, and lighting accessible to all learners
	√	3. Teacher makes use of the instructional A/V aids to ensure all learners know what is expected of them so they can be encouraged to work independently either as individuals or in groups
Strong	Not strong	<b>19. Teacher helps learners to discover their own learning styles.</b>
	√	1. Teacher helps learners examine their learning preferences
	√	2. Teacher helps learners expand or modify their learning preferences if necessary
	√	3. Teacher helps learners discover their learning potential
Strong	Not strong	<b>20. Teacher gives clear instructions.</b>
√		1. Teacher communicates necessary information effectively to the learners, regardless of ambient conditions or the learners' sensory abilities
√		2. Instruction is straightforward & eliminates unnecessary complexity
√		3. Teacher explains concepts simply without assuming learner has prior knowledge
	√	4. Necessary information is communicated clearly
	√	5. Teacher ensures learners know what is expected in any task
	√	6. Teacher scaffolds any help necessary to ensure learners gain success - to break tasks down to understandable steps until learning is in place
	√	7. Teacher is clear about why learners do what they do
	√	8. Instruction is designed to be useful and accessible to all learners
	√	9. Teacher alternates delivery of material taking into account the need for information to facilitate capacity of the brain to process information
Strong	Not strong	<b>21. Teacher pays attention to the language she uses.</b>
	√	1. Careful attention to appropriate register in language in the instructional setting
Strong	Not strong	<b>22. Teacher pays constant attention to what the learners are saying.</b>
	√	1. Teacher listens well
	√	2. Teacher encourages learner-generated questions and discussions

Table 6 (continued)

Strong	Not strong	<b>23. Teacher provides the learners with enough time to concentrate on the solution of the problems posed.</b>
	√	1. Teacher allows wait time after posing questions
	√	2. Teacher provides time for learner to construct relationships and metaphors
Strong	Not strong	<b>24. Teacher should be tolerant towards changes in the course of instruction.</b>
	√	1. Flexibility
Strong	Not strong	<b>25. Effective teacher has certain qualities.</b>
	√	1. Organized
	√	2. Understanding
	√	3. Enthusiastic
	√	4. Fair
	√	5. Friendly
	√	6. Humorous
	√	7. Teacher makes things clear
	√	8. Teacher enjoys what she/he teaches
	√	9. Teacher develops a system to monitor the effectiveness of teaching
Presence	Absence	<b>26. Teacher should try to avoid being driven by the following practices.</b>
√		1. Having a classroom as one in which many activities are primarily organized as whole-class activities directed by the teacher
√		2. Having a lack of learner -learner interactions
√		3. Having a mismatch between the teaching preferences of the teacher and the learning preferences of learners
√		4. Having the routine as superior to flexibility
√		5. Having a teacher role of either a resource or a deliverer of content knowledge
√		6. Conducting activities designed for specific responses
√		7. Demanding learners to be obedient
√		8. Having beliefs to be excessively competent in a particular subject
√		9. Being curriculum-driven
√		10. Being directed by a teaching method which places more stress on getting the correct answers
√		11. Devoting a whole class time to practice worksheets
√		12. Persistence in following instructions in tasks and lesson plans



Table 6 (continued)

√		13. Giving lectures
	√	14. Causing or creating insecurity through
√		14.1. Anxiety
√		14.2. Test anxiety
	√	14.3. Fear for punishment
	√	14.4. Panic
	√	14.5. Rage
√		14.6. Ridicule
√		14.7. Ruminating about failure
√		14.8. Stigmatizing labels
√		14.9. Worrying about competence
√		15. Limiting learners' speech both in terms of quantity and quality
	√	16. Having negative gender role expectations
√		17. Having repetitious method of transferring knowledge.
√		18. Dictating rote learning
√		19. Being strict about learners sitting quietly in their seats.
	√	20. Depending solely on standardized tests
√		21. Imposing own ideas rather than allowing learners to develop their own
	√	22. Being text-book centered
√		23. Assuming a role of an infallible authority and transmitter of knowledge
√		24. Being time driven.
	√	25. Exerting undue pressure to perform well
√		26. Acting as decision makers
√		27. Creating an insecure climate and relationships with learners

There was a recurring pattern in the almost all of the lessons observed. Usually each lesson started with the teacher's explanation of the topic. This explanation usually occurred in the form of giving the rules. After this stage, the students were called to the board to write down the correct answer written in their handouts. They read the sentence in English and translated it into Turkish. When the researcher asked why the students were reading the sentence and then translating it into Turkish, the teacher's answer was

*“I make them read the sentences so that I can hear their pronunciation mistakes and correct them. And they translate the sentences so I understand whether he is doing the exercises mechanically or not. The aim of the lesson is to make the students construct meaningful sentences. I believe that this should be done if the time is not limited”*

After almost all the lessons observed the teacher reflected that she reached her aim in the lessons. *“I was able to finish the handouts.”* After a lesson with the eight graders she reflected the importance of students’ notebooks. In this lesson she focused on “a little” , “a few”, “ a lot of”. The students had learnt this in the seventh grade. So the lesson aimed at *“reminding them”*. When asked about her beliefs about the lesson. She complaint about the students saying that *“they mustn’t throw their old notebooks. If the student has good intentions, she doesn’t throw her books”*. The believed that if the students had kept their notebooks they would have looked at the examples they did the year before and things would be much easier for them. Her strategy to involve the students to the lesson was conversing with them. *“when one student is writing on the board, I talk about a different topic and I try to make them fresh. I provide their involvement. Otherwise, they sleep and do not participate. But with the sixth graders we don’t have much dialogue. They are not suitable for my concersation”*. It was observed that the teacher mostly talked about things that were not related to English in her lessons. According to her when the students did the exercises, the lesson was learner-centered.

#### **4.6.1.2.1 Document Analysis**

The following table displays the analysis of documents exploited by Teacher B. The documents include handout prepared by the teacher.

**Table 7:** Analysis of documents exploited by Teacher B

Strong	Not strong	<b>1. Teacher promotes the highest levels of learner motivation by appropriate tasks.</b>
	√	1. Tasks the learner perceives to be of optimal novelty
√		2. Tasks the learner perceives to be of optimal difficulty
√		3. Tasks the learner perceives to be relevant to personal interests
	√	4. Tasks that provide for personal choice
	√	5. Tasks that provide for personal control
√		6. Tasks that are comparable to real-world situations
√		7. Tasks that learners perceive as meaningful
√		8. Tasks that learners perceive as they can succeed
	√	9. Tasks that provide for learner's creativity
	√	10. Tasks that provide for learner's higher order thinking
	√	11. Tasks that provide for learner's natural curiosity
Strong	Not strong	<b>2. Teacher selects and uses suitable materials.</b>
	√	1. Material is appropriate to their developmental level
	√	2. Material is presented in an enjoyable way
	√	3. Material is presented in an interesting way
√		4. Teacher focuses on core tasks rather than non-essential ones
	√	5. Manipulative materials
	√	6. Interactive materials
√		7. Physical materials
√		8. Authentic materials

The handout prepared by the teachers B reflected a highly structural approach to language teaching. The exercises were usually in the form of fill-in the blanks or construction of sentences out of words.

Examples of “fill in the blanks type” can be shown as

**A. Complete the sentences in The Present Continuous Tense**

1. The plane ..... (fly) to Rome
2. Sally .....(have) a bath at the moment.

**B. Answer the questions with *a little* or *a few***

1. 'Have you got any money?' 'Yes, .....
2. 'Are there any factories in this town?' 'Yes, .....

Examples of "build-up sentences type" can be shown as

**C. Build-up sentences from the given words<sup>2</sup>**

1. doesn't/my sister/ everyday/ English/ speak
2. at weekends/my car/wash

**D. Make sentences in the Present Continuous Tense**

1. Terry's father/not/clean/the windows
2. You /help / my mother/ now?

No comprehension questions were employed throughout the lessons. The questions and activities did not provide the students with opportunities to become actively involved in the language study. The teacher brought a clock to the classroom once while she was teaching the fifth graders how to tell the time, thus in this lesson she provided the students to engage into a meaningful activity. Apart from this material, the other materials lacked contextualized or situationalized exercises which revealed that there was a low level of authenticity inherent in the materials the teacher exploited.

**4.6.2 Private School Teachers' Observation Analyses****4.6.2.1 Observation Analysis of Teacher 1**

The following table shows Teacher 1's observation analysis results on the basis of the learner-centered model devised by the researcher.

**Table 8:** Teacher 1's observation report

Strong	Not strong	<b>1. <i>Teacher takes into account learner differences while teaching and planning her lesson.</i></b>
√		1. Learners' interests
	√	2. Careful attention to socioeconomic status in the instructional setting

<sup>2</sup> This instruction was written in Turkish.

Table 8 (continued)

	√	3. Accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities
	√	4. Learners' perspectives (beliefs)
√		5. Learners have different strategies, approaches, and capabilities for learning that are a function of prior experience and heredity
	√	6. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying body size
	√	7. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying posture
√		8. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying mobility
√		9. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying sensory needs
√		10. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying communication needs
√		11. Learning styles
	√	12. Instruction designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural differences
√		13. Instruction anticipates variation in individual learning pace
	√	14. Developmental and social factors
	√	15. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying talents
	√	16. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying capacities
	√	17. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying intelligences
Strong	Not strong	<b>2. Teacher encourages relationships among learners.</b>
	√	1. The process of collaborating
√		2. Collaborative learning activities (Group learning, peer teaching, group projects, problem-based learning tied to core course goals and objectives)
√		3. Collaboration with peers
	√	4. Learners construct meaning within the context of social relationships
√		5. Social interaction facilitates learning
√		6. Teacher promotes purposeful interaction and communication between and among learners
	√	7. Teacher promotes purposeful interaction and communication between learners and faculty
√		8. Presentations with peers
	√	9. Personal relationships that increase learners' sense of self-respect
√		10. They becomes we
	√	11. Learners' backgrounds of cooperative learning
√		12. Learning settings that allow for social interactions
√		13. A school and classroom environment that allows for the development of positive personal relationships and a caring school and classroom environment.
Strong	Not strong	<b>2. Teacher uses alternative assessment techniques including self-assessment.</b>
√		1. Alternative assessment (diagnostic, Performance, process, Self-, ...)
√		2. Inclusive tasks (exploring open-ended questions, scenarios, doing research, ...)
	√	3. Teacher develops the learner's ability to assess his/her own competence
√		4. Teacher encourages learners to reflect on what they have done ( successful or otherwise)

Table 8 (continued)

	√	5. Teacher encourages learners to consider what they might do next time
	√	6. Teacher negotiates with the class so that they can assess their own work and set their own improvement goals
Strong	Not strong	<b>3. Teacher encourages learners to construct new meanings by establishing relationships with their prior knowledge.</b>
√		1. Learners use their existing knowledge and backgrounds of experience to construct meanings from new information and experiences.
√		2. Recognition of importance of prior knowledge
√		3. Teacher creates meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge
	√	4. Teacher creates and uses a repertoire of thinking and reasoning strategies to achieve complex learning goals.
√		5. Teacher provides opportunities and resources for the learners to discover concepts for themselves.
√		6. New learning depends on a learner's current background of understanding
	√	7. Learners use strategic thinking in their approach to learning
	√	8. Teacher recognizes Importance of Relation to Other Courses
Strong	Not strong	<b>4. Teacher encourages learner autonomy by giving the learners responsibility.</b>
	√	1. Teacher encourages and accepts learner autonomy and initiative
	√	2. Teacher develops self-control and self-discipline for self-esteem and self-confidence
	√	3. Teacher holds the responsibility for determining learning objectives
	√	4. Teacher encourages learners to take ownership of their choices - if things go 'wrong' encourage learners to consider what they will do next time.
	√	5. Learners assume personal responsibility for contributing to their own learning
	√	5.1. Learners take responsibility and use appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives
	√	5.2. Learners take responsibility and use appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives
	√	6. Learners monitor their progress toward these goals
	√	7. Learners become more independent from the teacher
	√	8. Learners are self-regulating
	√	9. Teacher supports autonomy in learners, who become intrinsically motivated to do high-quality work
	√	10. Teacher focuses more on empowering learners
	√	11. Teacher focuses more on making learners more autonomous and self-directed learners
Strong	Not strong	<b>5. Teacher encourages learners to select their learning goals and tasks by providing help.</b>
	√	1. Learners participate in selection of academic goals and learning tasks

Table 8 (continued)

	√	2. Teacher plays a major interactive role with the learner
	√	3. Teacher plays a major interactive role with the learning environment
	√	4. Teacher allows learners options in use of instructional materials
	√	5. Teacher allows learners options in use of testing
	√	6. Teacher allows learners options in use of assignments
	√	7. Teacher allows learners options in-class activities
	√	8. Assignments ought be determined either individually or collectively by the learners themselves in consultation with the instructor
	√	9. Teacher creates contexts that help learners create a learning community
	√	10. Teacher negotiates activities, tasks, assessment and class behaviour with learners so as to encourage ownership
Strong	Not strong	<b>7. Teacher creates a positive and secure atmosphere.</b>
√		1. Teacher creates personal relationships that provide trust
√		2. Teacher creates a classroom environment that allows for and respects "learner voice"
√		3. Teacher treats learners as human, equal, cultural beings
	√	4. Teacher establishes personal relationships that increase learners' sense of belonging
	√	5. Teacher establishes personal relationships that increase learners' sense of self-acceptance
√		6. Teacher establishes personal relationships that provide caring
	√	7. Teacher establishes personal relationships that provide stability
√		8. Teacher establishes contexts that help learners feel safe to share ideas
√		9. Teacher encourages learners to express their personal feelings and opinions
√		10. Teacher creates caring relationships with the learners
	√	11. Teacher sees things from the point of learners and provides them with opportunities to share their perspectives
√		12. Teacher addresses Ss' physical needs
√		13. Teacher addresses Ss' emotional needs
√		14. Teacher addresses Ss' social needs
√		15. Teacher recognizes positive behaviour of any learners
√		16. Teacher appraises the learner's cognitive strengths
	√	17. Teacher understands the learner's cognitive weaknesses
Strong	Not strong	<b>8. Teacher considers learners' needs during the process of the design of the lesson and teaching.</b>
	√	1. Learners' needs
	√	2. Educational decisions will be responsive to the learner

Table 8 (continued)

	√	3. Focus is not on what the teacher wants to teach, but on what and how learners need to learn
	√	4. Teacher focuses on meeting individual learner needs in a nurturing learning environment
	√	5. Teacher matches learning and performance opportunities to the needs of individual children
Strong	Not strong	<b>9. Teacher focuses on learners.</b>
√		1. Learners achieve through active engagement in a learning process
	√	1.1. Learners use reasoning
√		1.2. Learners are active
	√	1.3. Hands-on
	√	1.4. Learners generate alternative methods to reach their goal
	√	1.5. Learners select potentially appropriate learning strategies or methods
√		1.6. Learners have a say in their learning
	√	2. Active learning since learners must participate in creating knowledge rather than being passive recipients of content
	√	3. Learner commitment to learning
√		4. Learning modalities
	√	5. Teacher focuses on learning vs. teaching
	√	6. Teacher places learners at the center of the learning process as active meaning- makers of classroom experiences.
√		7. Teacher's classroom practices allow learners an active and social role in learning activities
Strong	Not strong	<b>10. Teacher knows her learners' background well.</b>
√		1. Learners' cultural heredity and background
√		2. Learners' experiences
	√	3. Learners' backgrounds of authentic learning problems
	√	4. Learners' backgrounds of understanding
	√	5. Careful attention to ethnicity in the instructional setting
Strong	Not strong	<b>11. Teacher tries to increase learners' cognitive capacities.</b>
	√	1. Teacher addresses to learners' intellectual domains
	√	2. Learners not seeking correct answers
√		3. Teacher explores possible answers
	√	4. Teacher uses problem-structuring strategies and behaviors
√		5. Teacher encourages thinking among learners



Table 8 (continued)

√		5.1. Teacher uses Socratic questioning
√		5.2. Teacher encourages learner inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and to ask questions of each other
	√	6. Teacher helps learners to discover and explore content knowledge by knowing what questions to ask and how to ask them
	√	7. Teacher ensures learners can: devise questions, plan and present a study of their own choice as a demonstration of 'learning how to learn' ability
	√	8. Facilitate creative and critical thinking
√		8.1. Teacher inquires about learners' understanding of concepts before sharing their own understanding of those concepts
	√	8.2. Teacher encourages reflective thinking
	√	8.3. Teacher guides learners to create their own understandings
Strong	Not strong	<b>12. Teacher sees mistakes as the evidence of learning and displays tolerance.</b>
√		1. Teacher knows that errors provide the opportunity for insight into learners' previous knowledge constructions
	√	2. Teacher encourages learners to take risks, to have a go, and to see mistakes as learning opportunities
	√	3. Tolerance for Error: Teacher Minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions
Strong	Not strong	<b>13. Teacher encourages the highest level of learning -output standards.</b>
√		1. Teacher holds high expectations for learner performance
√		2. Teacher encourages learners always to put forth their best effort
	√	3. The teacher is more concerned with the development of higher order intellectual and cognitive skill among learners
	√	4. Teacher sets appropriately high and challenging standards
	√	5. Teacher promotes the highest levels of achievement for all learners
	√	6. Teacher promotes the highest levels of learning
	√	7. Learners feel challenged to work towards appropriately high goals
	√	8. Learner commitment to achieving high standards of comprehension and understanding
Strong	Not strong	<b>14. Teacher shares her status equally with the learners the classroom.</b>
√		1. Equalized roles between teacher and learner(s)
	√	2. Cooperative roles between teacher and learner(s)
Strong	Not strong	<b>15. Teacher assumes different roles in the classroom.</b>
	√	1. Learning counselor

Table 8 (continued)

√		2. Facilitator
	√	3. Teacher gets to know learners well enough be able to understand both their intentions and their resources
	√	4. Teacher has an understanding of how learners develop and learn
	√	5. Teacher recognizes individual differences in their learners and adjust their practice accordingly.
	√	6. Teacher helps learners clarify their intentions and develop their resources and awareness
√		7. Teacher treats learners equitably
√		8. Encouraging
√		9. Motivating
	√	10. Teacher's mission extends beyond developing the cognitive capacity of their learners
√		11. Teacher channels learner participation in a pedagogically useful direction
√		12. Teacher provides feedback on learners' performance
	√	13. Diagnostic coach always with the aim on extending learners skill and confidence
	√	14. A joint learner with learners
	√	15. Teacher helps learners cope with their own emotional needs and tensions, as well as with the needs of those around them
	√	16. Teacher helps learners inquire
	√	17. Teacher helps learners problem-solve
	√	18. Teacher helps learners learn
Strong	Not strong	<b>16. Teacher takes the learners' beliefs about themselves and their learning into account before designing her lessons and while teaching.</b>
	√	1. Careful attention to beliefs in the instructional setting
	√	2. Internal world of beliefs for failure
	√	3. Internal world of beliefs for success
Strong	Not strong	<b>17. Teacher encourages learners to identify their own objectives and classroom activities which are realistic.</b>
	√	1. Teacher encourages learners to select methods to be used
	√	2. Teacher encourages learners to select techniques to be used
	√	3. Teacher provides study guides and clear learning objectives
√		4. Teacher encourages learners to suggest classroom activities
	√	5. Clear Expectations & Objectives are determined either individually or collectively by the learners themselves in consultation with the instructor
	√	6. Learners set reasonable performance goals

Table 8 (continued)

Strong	Not strong	<b>18. Physical environment is important for learning to occur.</b>
√		1. Access to a rich collection of second language materials
	√	2. Teacher Assures that suitable physical conditions are provided, like classroom size, desks/tables, acoustics, and lighting accessible to all learners
√		3. Teacher Makes use of the instructional A/V aids to ensure all learners know what is expected of them so they can be encouraged to work independently either as individuals or in groups
Strong	Not strong	<b>19. Teacher helps learners to discover their own learning styles.</b>
	√	1. Teacher helps learners examine their learning preferences
	√	2. Teacher helps learners expand or modify their learning preferences if necessary
	√	3. Teacher helps learners discover their learning potential
Strong	Not strong	<b>20. Teacher gives clear instructions.</b>
√		1. Teacher communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities
√		2. Instruction is straightforward & eliminates unnecessary complexity
√		3. Teacher explains concepts simply without assuming learner has prior knowledge
√		4. Necessary information is communicated clearly
√		5. Teacher ensures learners know what is expected in any task
	√	6. Teacher scaffolds any help necessary to ensure learners gain success - to break tasks down to understandable steps until learning is in place
	√	7. Teacher is clear about why learners do what they do
	√	8. Instruction is designed to be useful and accessible to all learners
√		9. Teacher alternates delivery of material taking into account the need for information to facilitate capacity of the brain to process information
Strong	Not strong	<b>21. Teacher pays attention to the language she uses.</b>
	√	1. Careful attention to appropriate register in language in the instructional setting
Strong	Not strong	<b>22. Teachers pays constant attention to what the learners are saying.</b>
	√	1. Teacher listens well
√		2. Teacher encourages learner-generated questions and discussions
Strong	Not strong	<b>23. Teacher provides the learners with enough time to concentrate on the solution of the problems posed.</b>
	√	1. Teacher allows wait time after posing questions.

Table 8 (continued)

	√	2. Teacher provides time for learner to construct relationships and metaphors
Strong	Not strong	<b>24. Teachers should be tolerant towards changes in the course of instruction.</b>
	√	1. Flexibility
Strong	Not strong	<b>25. Effective teachers have certain qualities.</b>
√		1. Organized
	√	2. Understanding
	√	3. Enthusiastic
√		4. Fair
	√	5. Friendly
	√	6. Humorous
√		7. Teacher makes things clear
	√	8. Teacher enjoys what she/he teaches
	√	9. Teacher develops a system to monitor the effectiveness of teaching
Presence	Absence	<b>26. Teacher should try to avoid being driven by the following practices.</b>
√		1. Having a classroom as one in which many activities are primarily organized as whole-class activities directed by the teacher
√		2. Having a lack of learner -learner interactions
√		3. Having a mismatch between the teaching preferences of the teacher and the learning preferences of learners
√		4. Having the routine as superior to flexibility
√		5. Having a teacher role of either a resource or a deliverer of content knowledge
√		6. Conducting activities designed for specific responses
√		7. Demanding learners to be obedient
	√	8. Having beliefs to be excessively competent in a particular subject
	√	9. Being curriculum-driven
√		10. Being directed by a teaching method which places more stress on getting the correct answers
√		11. Devoting a whole class time to practice worksheets
√		12. Persistence in following instructions in tasks and lesson plans
	√	13. Giving lectures
√		14. Causing or creating insecurity through
	√	14.1. Anxiety

Table 8 (continued)

	√	14.2. Test anxiety
√		14.3. Fear for punishment
	√	14.4. Panic
√		14.5. Rage
√		14.6. Ridicule
	√	14.7. Ruminating about failure
	√	14.8. Stigmatizing labels
√		14.9. Worrying about competence
√		15. Limiting learners' speech both in terms of quantity and quality
	√	16. Having negative gender role expectations
√		17. Having repetitious method of transferring knowledge.
√		18. Dictating rote learning
	√	19. Being strict about learners sitting quietly in their seats.
	√	20. Depending solely on standardized tests
√		21. Imposing own ideas rather than allowing learners to develop their own
√		22. Being text-book centered
√		23. Assuming a role of an infallible authority and transmitter of knowledge
	√	24. Being time driven.
√		25. Exerting undue pressure to perform well
√		26. Acting as decision makers
√		27. Creating an insecure climate and relationships with learners

After one of the lessons in which she wrote the meanings of the words on the blackboard the teacher was aware that the lesson was not learner-centered. However, the reason was articulated as time constraint. She had to finish this vocabulary part before the end of the week. So she chose the quickest way of achieving this. When the researcher asked her what kind of changes she would do if she repeated the same lesson again. She said that

*“I would erase the words so that the students would see only the meanings. Then I would ask the students to guess the words.”*

One in another lesson when she asked the students to do “*information gap*” activities, she thought this activity was more like a self-assessment activity. She reflected this as “*because the students assessed themselves*”.

Generally, she reflected her satisfaction about her activities in the classroom. She believed that she could generally implement learner-centeredness because she provided the students with opportunities to talk either in the form of asking questions, or answering them.

Her reflection on her activities with the fourth graders after a lesson in which she tried to use posters and make the students comment on the poster included the students. She articulated this as

*“I would like to change the students. I know that with another group of students everything would be different.”* This was a classroom where she had difficulties in classroom management due to some students with behavior disorders.

In her speaking lessons she saw her as an assistant who would direct the students into speaking again when they lost their concentration. She thought that the teacher should not interfere while the students were speaking. After each lesson when she conducted speaking activities, she reflected that the lessons were classroom centered.

#### **4.6.2.1.1 Document Analysis**

The following table displays the analysis of documents exploited by Teacher 1. The documents include handouts prepared by the teacher and the textbook.

**Table 9:** Analysis of documents exploited by Teacher 1

Strong	Not strong	<b><i>1. Teacher promotes the highest levels of learner motivation by appropriate tasks.</i></b>
√		1. Tasks the learner perceives to be of optimal novelty

Table 9 (continued)

√		2. Tasks the learner perceives to be of optimal difficulty
√		3. Tasks the learner perceives to be relevant to personal interests
	√	4. Tasks that provide for personal choice
	√	5. Tasks that provide for personal control
√		6. Tasks that are comparable to real-world situations
√		7. Tasks that learners perceive as meaningful
√		8. Tasks that learners perceive as they can succeed
√		9. Tasks that provide for learner's creativity
√		10. Tasks that provide for learner's higher order thinking
√		11. Tasks that provide for learner's natural curiosity
Strong	Not strong	<b>2. Teacher selects and uses suitable materials.</b>
√		1. Material is appropriate to their developmental level
√		2. Material is presented in an enjoyable way
√		3. Material is presented in an interesting way
√		4. Teacher focuses on core tasks rather than non-essential ones
	√	5. Manipulative materials
√		6. Interactive materials
√		7. Physical materials
√		8. Authentic materials

The textbook which the teacher was using contained topics that would interest students. There were tasks and puzzles that gave students a real reason to answer and to feel involved. Besides, the text book provided opportunities for individual, pair, group, and whole class work. In the book there was a “How did you do?” part which required the students to identify the points they knew well from the unit. The students were asked to fill one sheet for each unit. The textbook was colorful with illustrations, photographs, and pictures on each page.

The teacher brought posters to the classroom three times during the observation process. The posters were visible and colorful. By looking at the poster the students generated stories.

The handouts which were prepared by the collaboration of the teachers in department had a similar pattern with the textbooks. Each activity was accompanied with pictures. The sentences were given in a context. The questions written in the handouts emphasized comprehension with questions and activities that reflected thinking skills.

The questions and activities employed in the handouts provided students with opportunities to become actively involved in the language study. Each week the handouts were printed on a different color paper. In addition, the students could get a colorful copy of the same handout from the school's website. Examples of the tasks in the handout included

### **CLOZE TEST**

Butterflies \_\_\_\_\_ a kind of insects. They have got 6 legs \_\_\_\_\_. can be in many beautiful colors. Three \_\_\_\_\_ thousands of kinds of butterflies. They live \_\_\_\_\_ most places \_\_\_\_\_ world. Butterflies usually \_\_\_\_\_ plants. Some \_\_\_\_\_ them are big but some are very \_\_\_\_\_. Butterflies prefer the day and \_\_\_\_\_ often play at night. If you hold a butterfly in \_\_\_\_\_ hands, you \_\_\_\_\_ be careful \_\_\_\_\_ it's very easy to hurt it. I love \_\_\_\_\_ butterflies in my garden.

### **Sentence Completion**

1. Everyday I have to \_\_\_\_\_ before I come to school but on Sunday I \_\_\_\_\_
2. In the past people couldn't \_\_\_\_\_ but today \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I have a sore throat. I should/shouldn't \_\_\_\_\_ but today \_\_\_\_\_.
4. My mum usually \_\_\_\_\_ in the evenings \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_



### 4.6.2.2 Observation Analysis of Teacher 2

The following table shows Teacher 2's observation analysis results on the basis of the learner-centered model devised by the researcher.

**Table 10:** Teacher 2's observation report

Strong	Not strong	<b><i>1. Teacher takes into account learner differences while teaching and planning her lesson.</i></b>
√		1. Learners' interests
	√	2. Careful attention to socioeconomic status in the instructional setting
	√	3. Accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities
	√	4. Learners' perspectives (beliefs)
√		5. Learners have different strategies, approaches, and capabilities for learning that are a function of prior experience and heredity
	√	6. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying body size
	√	7. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying posture
	√	8. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying mobility
	√	9. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying sensory needs
	√	10. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying communication needs
√		11. Learning styles
	√	12. Instruction designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural differences
	√	13. Instruction anticipates variation in individual learning pace
√		14. Developmental and social factors
√		15. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying talents
	√	16. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying capacities
√		17. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying intelligences
Strong	Not strong	<b><i>2. Teacher encourages relationships among learners.</i></b>
√		1. The process of collaborating
√		2. Collaborative learning activities (Group learning, peer teaching, group projects, problem-based learning tied to core course goals and objectives)
√		3. Collaboration with peers
√		4. Learners construct meaning within the context of social relationships
	√	5. Social interaction facilitates learning

Table 10 (continued)

√		6. Teacher promotes purposeful interaction and communication between and among learners
	√	7. Teacher promotes purposeful interaction and communication between learners and faculty
	√	8. Presentations with peers
	√	9. Personal relationships that increase learners' sense of self-respect
√		10. They becomes we
	√	11. Learners' backgrounds of cooperative learning
√		12. Learning settings that allow for social interactions
	√	13. A school and classroom environment that allows for the development of positive personal relationships and a caring school and classroom environment
Strong	Not strong	<b>3. Teacher uses alternative assessment techniques including self-assessment.</b>
√		1. Alternative assessment (diagnostic, Performance, process, Self-, ...)
√		2. Inclusive tasks (exploring open-ended questions, scenarios, doing research, ...)
	√	3. Teacher develops the learner's ability to assess his/her own competence
√		4. Teacher encourages learners to reflect on what they have done ( successful or otherwise)
	√	5. Teacher encourages learners to consider what they might do next time
	√	6. Teacher negotiates with the class so that they can assess their own work and set their own improvement goals
Strong	Not strong	<b>4. Teacher encourages learners to construct new meanings by establishing relationships with their prior knowledge.</b>
√		1. Learners use their existing knowledge and backgrounds of experience to construct meanings from new information and experiences
√		2. Recognition of importance of prior knowledge
√		3. Teacher creates meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge
	√	4. Teacher creates and uses a repertoire of thinking and reasoning strategies to achieve complex learning goals.
√		5. Teacher provides opportunities and resources for the learners to discover concepts for themselves.
√		6. New learning depends on a learner's current background of understanding
	√	7. Learners use strategic thinking in their approach to learning
	√	8. Teacher recognizes Importance of Relation to Other Courses
Strong	Not strong	<b>5. Teacher encourages learner autonomy by giving the learners responsibility.</b>
	√	1. Teacher encourages and accepts learner autonomy and initiative

Table 10 (continued)

	√	2. Teacher develops self-control and self-discipline for self-esteem and self-confidence
	√	3. Teacher holds the responsibility for determining learning objectives
	√	4. Teacher encourages learners to take ownership of their choices - if things go 'wrong' encourage learners to consider what they will do next time.
	√	5. Learners assume personal responsibility for contributing to their own learning
	√	5.1. Learners take responsibility and use appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives
	√	5.2. Learners take responsibility and use appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives
	√	6. Learners monitor their progress toward these goals
	√	7. Learners become more independent from the teacher
	√	8. Learners are self-regulating
	√	9. Teacher supports autonomy in learners, who become intrinsically motivated to do high-quality work
	√	10. Teacher focuses more on empowering learners
	√	11. Teacher focuses more on making learners more autonomous and self-directed learners
Strong	Not strong	<b>6. Teacher encourages learners to select their learning goals and tasks by providing help.</b>
	√	1. Learners participate in selection of academic goals and learning tasks
√		2. Teacher plays a major interactive role with the learner
	√	3. Teacher plays a major interactive role with the learning environment
	√	4. Teacher allows learners options in use of instructional materials
	√	5. Teacher allows learners options in use of testing
	√	6. Teacher allows learners options in use of assignments
√		7. Teacher allows learners options in-class activities
	√	8. Assignments ought be determined either individually or collectively by the learners themselves in consultation with the instructor
√		9. Teacher creates contexts that help learners create a learning community
	√	10. Teacher negotiates activities, tasks, assessment and class behaviour with learners so as to encourage ownership
Strong	Not strong	<b>7. Teacher creates a positive and secure atmosphere.</b>
√		1. Teacher creates personal relationships that provide trust
√		2. Teacher creates a classroom environment that allows for and respects "learner voice"
√		3. Teacher treats learners as human, equal, cultural beings
√		4. Teacher establishes personal relationships that increase learners' sense of belonging
	√	5. Teacher establishes personal relationships that increase learners' sense of self-acceptance

Table 10 (continued)

√		6. Teacher establishes personal relationships that provide caring
	√	7. Teacher establishes personal relationships that provide stability
√		8. Teacher establishes contexts that help learners feel safe to share ideas
	√	9. Teacher encourages learners to express their personal feelings and opinions
√		10. Teacher creates caring relationships with the learners
√		11. Teacher sees things from the point of learners and provides them with opportunities to share their perspectives
	√	12. Teacher addresses Ss' physical needs
√		13. Teacher addresses Ss' emotional needs
	√	14. Teacher addresses Ss' social needs
√		15. Teacher recognizes positive behaviour of any learners
√		16. Teacher appraises the learner's cognitive strengths
	√	17. Teacher understands the learner's cognitive weaknesses
Strong	Not strong	<b>8. Teacher considers learners' needs during the process of the design of the lesson and teaching.</b>
	√	1. Learners' needs
	√	2. Educational decisions will be responsive to the learner
	√	3. Focus is not on what the teacher wants to teach, but on what and how learners need to learn
	√	4. Teacher focuses on meeting individual learner needs in a nurturing learning environment
	√	5. Teacher matches learning and performance opportunities to the needs of individual children
Strong	Not strong	<b>9. Teacher focuses on learners.</b>
√		1. Learners achieve through active engagement in a learning process
	√	1.1. Learners use reasoning
√		1.2. Learners are active
√		1.3. Hands-on
	√	1.4. Learners generate alternative methods to reach their goal
	√	1.5. Learners select potentially appropriate learning strategies or methods
√		1.6. Learners have a say in their learning
√		2. Active learning since learners must participate in creating knowledge rather than being passive recipients of content
	√	3. Learner commitment to learning
	√	4. Learning modalities
√		5. Teacher focuses on learning vs. teaching

Table 10 (continued)

√		6. Teacher places learners at the center of the learning process as active meaning- makers of classroom experiences.
√		7. Teacher's classroom practices allow learners an active and social role in learning activities
Strong	Not strong	<b>10. Teacher knows her learners' background well.</b>
√		1. Learners' cultural heredity and background
√		2. Learners' experiences
√		3. Learners' backgrounds of authentic learning problems
	√	4. Learners' backgrounds of understanding
	√	5. Careful attention to ethnicity in the instructional setting
Strong	Not strong	<b>11. Teacher tries to increase learners' cognitive capacities.</b>
√		1. Teacher addresses to learners' intellectual domains
√		2. Learners not seeking correct answers
√		3. Teacher explores possible answers
	√	4. Teacher uses problem-structuring strategies and behaviors
√		5. Teacher encourages thinking among learners
√		5.1. Teacher uses Socratic questioning
√		5.2. Teacher encourages learner inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and to ask questions of each other
√		6. Teacher helps learners to discover and explore content knowledge by knowing what questions to ask and how to ask them
	√	7. Teacher ensures learners can: devise questions, plan and present a study of their own choice as a demonstration of 'learning how to learn' ability
√		8. Facilitate creative and critical thinking
√		8.1. Teacher inquires about learners' understanding of concepts before sharing their own understanding of those concepts
√		8.2. Teacher encourages reflective thinking
√		8.3. Teacher guides learners to create their own understandings
Strong	Not strong	<b>12. Teacher sees mistakes as the evidence of learning and displays tolerance.</b>
√		1. Teacher knows that errors provide the opportunity for insight into learners' previous knowledge constructions
	√	2. Teacher encourages learners to take risks, to have a go, and to see mistakes as learning opportunities
√		3. Tolerance for Error: Teacher Minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions

Table 10 (continued)

Strong	Not strong	<b>13. Teacher encourages the highest level of learning -output standards.</b>	
√		1. Teacher holds high expectations for learner performance	
√		2. Teacher encourages learners always to put forth their best effort	
	√	3. The teacher is more concerned with the development of higher order intellectual and cognitive skill among learners	
	√	4. Teacher sets appropriately high and challenging standards	
	√	5. Teacher promotes the highest levels of achievement for all learners	
√		6. Teacher promotes the highest levels of learning	
	√	7. Learners feel challenged to work towards appropriately high goals	
	√	8. Learner commitment to achieving high standards of comprehension and understanding	
Strong	Not strong	<b>14. Teacher shares her status equally with the learners the classroom.</b>	
	√	1. Equalized roles between teacher and learner(s)	
	√	2. Cooperative roles between teacher and learner(s)	
Strong	Not strong	<b>15. Teacher assumes different roles in the classroom.</b>	
	√	1. Learning counselor	
√		2. Facilitator	
	√	3. Teacher gets to know learners well enough be able to understand both their intentions and their resources	
	√	4. Teacher has an understanding of how learners develop and learn	
√		5. Teacher recognizes individual differences in their learners and adjust their practice accordingly.	
	√	6. Teacher helps learners clarify their intentions and develop their resources and awareness	
√		7. Teacher treats learners equitably	
√		8. Encouraging	
√		9. Motivating	
√		10. Teacher's mission extends beyond developing the cognitive capacity of their learners	
√		11. Teacher channels learner participation in a pedagogically useful direction	
√		12. Teacher provides feedback on learners' performance	
√		13. Diagnostic coach always with the aim on extending learners skill and confidence	
√		14. A joint learner with learners	

Table 10 (continued)

√		15. Teacher helps learners cope with their own emotional needs and tensions, as well as with the needs of those around them
√		16. Teacher helps learners inquire
√		17. Teacher helps learners problem-solve
√		18. Teacher helps learners learn
Strong	Not strong	<b>16. Teacher takes the learners' beliefs about themselves and their learning into account before designing her lessons and while teaching.</b>
	√	1. Careful attention to beliefs in the instructional setting
	√	2. Internal world of beliefs for failure
	√	3. Internal world of beliefs for success
Strong	Not strong	<b>17. Teacher encourages learners to identify their own objectives and classroom activities which are realistic.</b>
	√	1. Teacher encourages learners to select methods to be used
	√	2. Teacher encourages learners to select techniques to be used
	√	3. Teacher provides study guides and clear learning objectives
√		4. Teacher encourages learners to suggest classroom activities
	√	5. Clear Expectations & Objectives are determined either individually or collectively by the learners themselves in consultation with the instructor
	√	6. Learners set reasonable performance goals
Strong	Not strong	<b>18. Physical environment is important for learning to occur.</b>
	√	1. Access to a rich collection of second language materials
√		2. Teacher Assures that suitable physical conditions are provided, like classroom size, desks/tables, acoustics, and lighting accessible to all learners
√		3. Teacher Makes use of the instructional A/V aids to ensure all learners know what is expected of them so they can be encouraged to work independently either as individuals or in groups
Strong	Not strong	<b>19. Teacher helps learners to discover their own learning styles.</b>
	√	1. Teacher helps learners examine their learning preferences
	√	2. Teacher helps learners expand or modify their learning preferences if necessary
	√	3. Teacher helps learners discover their learning potential

Table 10 (continued)

Strong	Not strong	<b>20. Teacher gives clear instructions.</b>
√		1. Teacher communicates necessary information effectively to the learners, regardless of ambient conditions or the learners' sensory abilities
√		2. Instruction is straightforward & eliminates unnecessary complexity
√		3. Teacher explains concepts simply without assuming learner has prior knowledge
√		4. Necessary information is communicated clearly
√		5. Teacher ensures learners know what is expected in any task
√		6. Teacher scaffolds any help necessary to ensure learners gain success - to break tasks down to understandable steps until learning is in place
	√	7. Teacher is clear about why learners do what they do
√		8. Instruction is designed to be useful and accessible to all learners
√		9. Teacher alternates delivery of material taking into account the need for information to facilitate capacity of the brain to process information
Strong	Not strong	<b>21. Teacher pays attention to the language she uses.</b>
√		1. Careful attention to appropriate register in language in the instructional setting
Strong	Not strong	<b>22. Teacher pays constant attention to what the learners are saying.</b>
√		1. Teacher listens well
√		2. Teacher encourages learner-generated questions and discussions
Strong	Not strong	<b>23. Teacher provides the learners with enough time to concentrate on the solution of the problems posed.</b>
√		1. Teacher allows wait time after posing questions
√		2. Teacher provides time for learner to construct relationships and metaphors
Strong	Not strong	<b>24. Teacher should be tolerant towards changes in the course of instruction.</b>
√		1. Flexibility
Strong	Not strong	<b>25. Effective teacher has certain qualities.</b>
√		1. Organized
√		2. Understanding
√		3. Enthusiastic
√		4. Fair
√		5. Friendly



Table 10 (continued)

√		6. Humorous
√		7. Teacher makes things clear
√		8. Teacher enjoys what she/he teaches
	√	9. Teacher develops a system to monitor the effectiveness of teaching
Presence	Absence	<b>26. Teacher should try to avoid being driven by the following practices.</b>
√		1. Having a classroom as one in which many activities are primarily organized as whole-class activities directed by the teacher
√		2. Having a lack of learner -learner interactions
	√	3. Having a mismatch between the teaching preferences of the teacher and the learning preferences of learners
	√	4. Having the routine as superior to flexibility
	√	5. Having a teacher role of either a resource or a deliverer of content knowledge
√		6. Conducting activities designed for specific responses
	√	7. Demanding learners to be obedient
	√	8. Having beliefs to be excessively competent in a particular subject
	√	9. Being curriculum-driven
	√	10. Being directed by a teaching method which places more stress on getting the correct answers
	√	11. Devoting a whole class time to practice worksheets
	√	12. Persistence in following instructions in tasks and lesson plans
	√	13. Giving lectures
	√	14. Causing or creating insecurity through
	√	14.1. Anxiety
	√	14.2. Test anxiety
√		14.3. Fear for punishment
	√	14.4. Panic
√		14.5. Rage
	√	14.6. Ridicule
	√	14.7. Ruminating about failure
	√	14.8. Stigmatizing labels
	√	14.9. Worrying about competence
	√	15. Limiting learners' speech both in terms of quantity and quality
	√	16. Having negative gender role expectations
	√	17. Having repetitious method of transferring knowledge.

Table 10 (continued)

	√	18. Dictating rote learning
√		19. Being strict about learners sitting quietly in their seats.
	√	20. Depending solely on standardized tests
	√	21. Imposing own ideas rather than allowing learners to develop their own
	√	22. Being text-book centered
	√	23. Assuming a role of an infallible authority and transmitter of knowledge
	√	24. Being time driven.
	√	25. Exerting undue pressure to perform well
	√	26. Acting as decision makers
	√	27. Creating an insecure climate and relationships with learners

After a lesson with her 5<sup>th</sup> graders, Teacher 2 asserted that even though the lesson seemed learner-centered on the surface it was not so. It was Teacher 2 who always guided the students. Her reflection was significant in the sense that immediately after the lesson she had asserted that it was a learner-centered lesson. However when she thought about the classroom events for a while she decided that it was not. Through her consciousness she realized this.

Before entering her lesson with the sixth graders, she admitted that she could implement learner-centeredness with this group. In this classroom it was impossible. The researcher also observed that there were some students in this classroom who posed discipline problems and thus irritated the teacher and the other students. Classroom teacher of this class also suffered from this situation. However, the administration seemed to ignore the existence of such students in the classroom. As Teacher 2 reported the principal did not give support to the teachers in the solution of problems with some students.

Once, the teacher tried to conduct group work in the lesson with the fifth graders. After the lesson she reflected her disappointment with the lesson. Nothing went as she planned. She reported that even though she tried to prevent the students from talking Turkish, she could not do so. She further

remarked that the participation was low. She repeated her complaint about the administration's attitude regarding students' misbehaviors. She reflected this as

*"You can't explain. We were found guilty again. Whenever you tell about these things to the administration they accuse you of being unable to handle the situation."*

Most of Teacher 2's attempts to implement failed owing to the students' misbehaviors.

#### 4.6.2.2.1 Document Analysis

The following table displays the analysis of documents exploited by Teacher 1. The documents include handouts prepared by the teacher and the textbook.

**Table 11.** Analysis of documents exploited by Teacher 2

Strong	Not strong	<b>1. Teacher promotes the highest levels of learner motivation by appropriate tasks.</b>
√		1. Tasks the learner perceives to be of optimal novelty
√		2. Tasks the learner perceives to be of optimal difficulty
√		3. Tasks the learner perceives to be relevant to personal interests
√		4. Tasks that provide for personal choice
	√	5. Tasks that provide for personal control
√		6. Tasks that are comparable to real-world situations
√		7. Tasks that learners perceive as meaningful
√		8. Tasks that learners perceive as they can succeed
	√	9. Tasks that provide for learner's creativity
	√	10. Tasks that provide for learner's higher order thinking
	√	11. Tasks that provide for learner's natural curiosity
Strong	Not strong	<b>2. Teacher selects and uses suitable materials.</b>
√		1. Material is appropriate to their developmental level
√		2. Material is presented in an enjoyable way
√		3. Material is presented in an interesting way

Table 11 (continued)

	√	4. Teacher focuses on core tasks rather than non-essential ones
	√	5. Manipulative materials
	√	6. Interactive materials
√		7. Physical materials
√		8. Authentic materials

The textbooks employed by Teacher 2 were the same as teacher 1's. They followed the same series of textbooks. The material was interesting enough to hold the attention of the students. The content was very realistic. The books presented interesting real world information that introduced the topic and vocabulary. There were contemporary topics, meaningful communications and colorful pictures and photographs in the book. The activities in the books allowed for small group collaboration.

The textbooks were printed on quality paper. Format, layout and print were appropriate for the students' level. The teacher also brought posters to the classroom through which the students engaged in communication. The posters were visible and colorful enough to attract the students' attention.

The features of handouts were again the same as Teacher 1's. Each week the students were given a handout printed on a different color. They could also find the fully colorful handouts in the school's web site. Since these handouts were prepared by the teachers in the department, they reflected the same types of tasks. The exercises were always given in a context so that the students could establish meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge.

#### **4.7 Differences between the BAK of Public and Private Schools' EFL teachers**

##### **4.7.1 Teachers' Understanding of "learner-centeredness"**

The data from the focus group discussions revealed that the way the EFL teachers working in the public school defined learner-centeredness was

different from private teachers' interpretation of the same concept. Even though public school teachers at the beginning expressed a classroom environment where the students were "more open" and "active", their further description of learner-centeredness indicated that they implemented learner-centered instruction through asking the students to carry out grammar exercises after they presented the topics. Rather than providing information about the way they perceive learner-centeredness, they focused on the impossibility of such philosophy of teaching in the current conditions. Only one teacher among the group expressed the benefit of learner-centeredness which indicated the importance of student involvement into the lesson and the effect of such involvement on the student. He was aware that learner-centered instruction would "*make him enjoy the lesson and show the student what he could do.*"

However, the teachers in the private school defined learner-centeredness as "*learning by doing*" and making the learner as active as possible. The way they achieved this was reflected as making the students collaborate with each other in the form of group work or pair work. Interaction was one of the dimensions articulated by the teachers. Besides, they asserted that they ask to the students to carry out projects and it was a "*method*" they frequently used while teaching vocabulary. Although they expressed their concerns about the obstacles that hindered their practices, these obstacles did not prevent them from at least trying to do their best because they believed that it was a "*valuable*" method which encouraged the development of students' ability to think and thus promoted "*discovery*".

When the two teachers working in the public school were interviewed individually, the teachers' definitions of learner-centeredness were similar to the definitions expressed during the focus group interviews. Teacher A defined it as "*learning by doing*". In a learner-centered environment the students had the ownership of the events. However, he also articulated the fact that he could not implement it. His teaching activities comprised distributing worksheets to the students and asking them to do exercises. He was aware that what he was

doing was not good. He could not give learner-centered tasks to the students either. Communicative approach was the name of a method which only appeared in their plans because of bureaucratic sanctions. He certainly believed that exams are the most important tools for evaluation because the students could not evaluate themselves. According to him there were several factors which impeded his practices.

Teacher B working in the public school had a different definition of learner-centeredness. In fact she did not even believe that there should be a center while teaching. Therefore, she did not provide a definition of learner-centeredness. What she could say was learner-centered activities were the ones formed by the students. She believed that if the students did something whatever it was this activity should be considered as learner-centered. The way she implemented learner-centeredness was the same as Teacher A. The main difference between these two teachers was that Teacher A was aware that his activities could not be considered as learner-centered whereas Teacher B was strongly convinced that she was implementing learner-centeredness while asking the students to do the exercises in the worksheets. Besides, she reported project work was something she liked.

The individual interviews carried out with private EFL teachers revealed that they had different beliefs about learner-centeredness from the teachers in the public schools. While Teacher 1 focused on the importance of amount of talk in creating a learner-centered environment, Teacher 2 did not mind about the definition of learner-centeredness. Her only desire was to create an environment where the students were stimulated to think and to take responsibility of their learning. Both teachers reported that they used projects and group work activities as forms of learner-centered tasks. Both teachers believed in the benefits of learner-centered instruction. Even though all of the teachers both in public and private schools expressed their concerns about the obstacles preventing them from applying learner-centered practices, Teacher 1

was the only teacher who did not focus on these obstacles. The only factor that acted as a barrier was mixed classes.

#### **4.7.1.1 Teachers' BAK about the Role of Teacher**

The main role of the teacher was reflected as “corrector” and “guide” during the focus group discussion in the public school. In the individual interviews, Teacher A had a general view of teacher roles including “*counselor*”, “*guide*”, and “*teller*” and “*whatever you can think of about the teachers*” whereas Teacher B explained the role as “*presenter of the topic*” and “*guide*”. However she viewed the main role of the teacher as “*corrector*”.

The roles assigned to teacher in creating learner-centeredness were different from the ones articulated by public school teachers. The teachers in the private school highlighted the importance of teacher as “*the one who makes the learners active*”. Teacher 2 called her a “secret leader” whereas teacher 1 called the teacher “a leader”. Both teachers also focused on the teacher role as “*guide*” which was the same as public school teachers’ understanding of teacher’ role in creating a learner-centered environment.

#### **4.7.1.2 Teachers BAK about the Relationship between Learner-autonomy and Learner-centeredness**

The term learner-autonomy did not mean anything for the teachers in the public school during focus group discussion. Both Teacher A and Teacher B perceived learner autonomy as a new concept established by the Ministry which would most probably change the following year. During in-depth interviews both teachers reflected that autonomous learning was something which could never be implemented. For the relationship between learner-autonomy and learner-centeredness, Teacher B said that there was a direct relationship between these two. She stated that without giving responsibility to students, learner-centeredness could not be enhanced.

As for the teachers working in the private schools, provide an answer for the relationship between learner-centeredness and learner-autonomy, either. During individual interviews Teacher 1 stated that there should be a relationship but she did not explain it. Among all the teachers both in public and private schools, only Teacher 2 provided an explanation about the relationship between these two. She strongly believed that there should be learner autonomy first. She viewed learner-autonomy as a prerequisite for learner-centeredness. Without learner-autonomy there would not be learner-centeredness at all.

#### **4.7.2 Teachers' BAK about ELP**

None of the teachers in the public school knew anything about ELP whereas only one teacher was familiar with it in the private school. All of the teachers expressed their lack of knowledge about this instrument. The teacher who knew something about ELP saw an example of it she was working in another school. She only knew about the levels mentioned in the portfolio.

In the individual interviews it again appeared that the teachers in public schools did not know anything about the portfolio. However, the teachers in the private school are familiar with self-assessment which is one of the components of the portfolio. The basic difference between the teachers working in the public school and private school in that sense is private school teachers were already implementing self-assessment procedures whereas the public school teachers did not.

##### **4.7.2.1 Teachers' BAK about the Implementation of ELP**

Whereas the private teachers were very enthusiastic about the introduction of ELP into their teaching, the public teachers approached the implementation of ELP negatively. They did not believe that it was something applicable in the current conditions. All of them simply expressed that ELP was another innovation which could never be implemented. The private school



teachers were positive about it. The only thing that bothered Teacher 2 was the administration attitude towards this innovation. She believed that the success of ELP depended highly on the way perceived by the administrators.

#### **4.8 Differences between the Teachers' Implementation of their Understanding of learner-centeredness**

There was a significant difference between the learner-centered practices of teachers in the public school and in the private school. The teachers in public school tended to follow a presentation and practice routine which reflected the principles of grammar- translation method in language teaching. The students were required to do the grammar exercises given in the text after the teachers presented the topic. There was no interaction between the students in the form of group work in pair work. They were not given opportunities to create their own understanding of knowledge. The teachers mostly led their classrooms as authorities. There was a routinized and inflexible schedule, which was very well known by the students. The material these teachers used reflected their teaching approach. The worksheets consisted of isolated activities of grammar, which lacked a meaningful and interesting context.

However, it was observed that in the private school students were given more chances to participate in the lesson. Teachers encouraged relationship among learners through collaborative activities. There was a variety of activities carried by students. The teachers' teaching activities revealed the importance they attached to developing students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. There were some lessons when the whole class time was devoted to worksheet check but this was a requirement of the administration that the teachers were not very happy with. The materials employed were interesting and suitable for the students' developmental levels.

#### **4.9 Summary of the Results**

The data analysis including the data from focus group interviews, individual interview, classroom observation and documents revealed that public school teachers had a different definition of learner-centeredness from the teachers in the private school. Even though the private school teachers focus on making students active in their lessons through collaborative and productive tasks, public school teachers' concern is getting students to do grammar exercises. This difference is again reflected in their BAK about the teacher's role in creating learner-centeredness. Since the focus is on form in public school, the teacher's role is mainly seen as a corrector whereas in private school, the teacher is mostly the guide.

The teachers working in both public and private school expressed their lack of knowledge about learner-autonomy. Two teachers had similar BAK about the relationship between learner-autonomy and learner-centeredness. Teacher B from public school and Teacher 2 from the private school established a similar relationship between these two.

All of the teachers except for one teacher in the private school reflected her knowledge about ELP. However, the private school teachers were already implementing self-assessment which gave them a chance to express their BAK about its implementation. Public school teachers, on the other hand, expressed their concerns about its implementation and mentioned the obstacles they were facing in their teaching again. So this innovation meant just another unsuccessful attempt of Ministry of National Education to improve English language education for them.

The analysis of observations and documents suggested same results; the differences in BAK of public and private school teachers reflected in their teaching activities as well. The pattern of teaching observed in two public teachers' classes was very typical of the grammar translation method in which the students were called by name and asked to answer the questions in the text. The students were active only during the process of answering the question and

translating their answer into Turkish. The materials exploited my teachers reflected the same structural approach. The exercises in them were mostly fill-in the blank form which prevented students from being creative. In the private school, the teachers employed a variety of techniques to make students active. The students were encouraged to participate in the lesson by creating their own understanding of knowledge. The interaction among the students was noticed. The materials used by the teachers were congruent with their teaching activities. The students were exposed to real language within a context through these materials.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Presentation**

This chapter will entail a brief description of the entire study including a synopsis of the research problem, the collected data and the findings. Following the conclusion section, the researcher will provide some recommendations for further investigation and practical implications for practitioners, professional development, policy making, and teacher education programs. The last section for this present study will provide implications and recommendations for this present study to be further investigated.

Turkey is trying to be a member of the EU. However recently, parallel to the requirement of EU, Turkey has undertaken restructuring efforts. In order to reach the standards in education, there is a restructuring of curriculum. The programs have been renewed including English. This current research aimed at exploring teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge about learner-centeredness and ELP and their implementation of ELP. Without a thorough understanding of how teachers define LC and their implementation in practice, there can be no basis on which to challenge current educational practice or suggest change.

The discussion of the research study reflects the research questions that asked

1. How do teachers understand the concept of “learner-centeredness”?
  - 1.1. How do they see their role in creating learner-centeredness?
  - 1.2. How do they see the relationship between learner-centeredness and learner autonomy?
2. How do teachers implement their understanding of learner-centeredness in their classroom?

3. What do teachers know about ELP?
  - 3.1. How do they think its implementation will affect their practices in the classroom?
4. Are there any differences between the beliefs of public primary EFL teachers and private primary EFL teachers in terms of
  - 4.1. how they understand the concept learner-centeredness?
    - 4.1.1. how they see their role in creating learner-centeredness?
    - 4.1.2. how they see the relationship between learner-centeredness and learner autonomy?
  - 4.2. how they implement their understanding of learner-centeredness in their classroom?
  - 4.3. what they know about ELP?
    - 4.3.1. how they think its implementation will affect their practices in the classroom?

The literature review covered all aspects of the research questions and related indicators. An extensive literature review was done to inquire about the significant indicators of learner-centered practices. Besides, in order to use the term BAK confidently, the researcher carried out a thorough investigation of the literature on teacher cognition. On what she read about learner-centered education, she devised a model, which also served as a tool to analyze classroom observation data and documents. The model was created on the basis of the researcher's belief, assumption, and knowledge that there was a lack of comprehensive construct which would include all the realities of the classrooms observed.

In the following section each research question will be looked at to reveal what generalizations can be made about each case based on the data collected.

## **5.1 Conclusions for each Research Question**

### **5.1.1 Teachers' Understanding of "Learner-centeredness"**

The salient themes that emerged from the focus group discussions and individual interviews mainly illustrated that public school teachers and private school teachers approached the concept of learner-centeredness differently. Even though they first expressed it as learning by doing, their interpretation of learner-centeredness was simply a description of presentation practice production methodology which lacked its production component. They mainly understood learner-centeredness as making the students active by engaging them in grammar focused exercises. Their definition did not include the main principles of learner-centered education explained in the literature. The way they understood learner-centeredness resembled teacher centeredness more. Both Teacher A and Teacher B expressed the same belief that in a learner-centered classroom, teacher presents the topic and the student do the rest.

In private school teachers focused on the importance of learners in defining their understanding of learner-centeredness. They defined it as learning by doing. The activities they implemented in the classrooms indicated what they understood by learning by doing. They basically understood a learning environment in which the students were active by producing projects, working in groups and by being given chances to speak in the lessons. Teacher 1's understanding of learner-centeredness depended mostly on speaking. The more students talked, the more the lesson was learner-centered.

#### **5.1.1.1 Teachers' BAK about their Role in Creating Learner-centeredness**

Teachers in the public school viewed themselves as correctors and guides in creating learner-centeredness. Besides, they believed that they had a role of "presenter" who presents the topics. The roles they assigned themselves are in harmony with their understanding of learner-centeredness. Since they believed that students were active during worksheet practice, their role as a

presenter can be considered as a natural outcome of this process. Teacher B especially focused on the teacher's role as a corrector. According to her, students need to be confirmed all the time.

The teachers in the private schools viewed themselves as guides, facilitators, and leaders. They believed that they had to help students in their learning process. According to them learning was a difficult process and their task was to facilitate this difficult process. Teacher 1 mentioned her role as a leader because she believed that she was responsible for explaining the students what they they were supposed to do. Teacher 2's BAK differed from all of the participant teachers' BAK in terms of teacher role. She articulated the importance of the teacher's ability in solving problems. She assumed that the teacher had a role of problem solver. The way Teacher 2 defined teacher's role in creating learner-centeredness was consistent with a desirable atmosphere for the implementation of learner-centered instruction. The teacher was responsible for creating a positive atmosphere for students.

#### **5.1.1.2 Teachers' BAK about the Relationship between Learner-autonomy and Learner-centeredness**

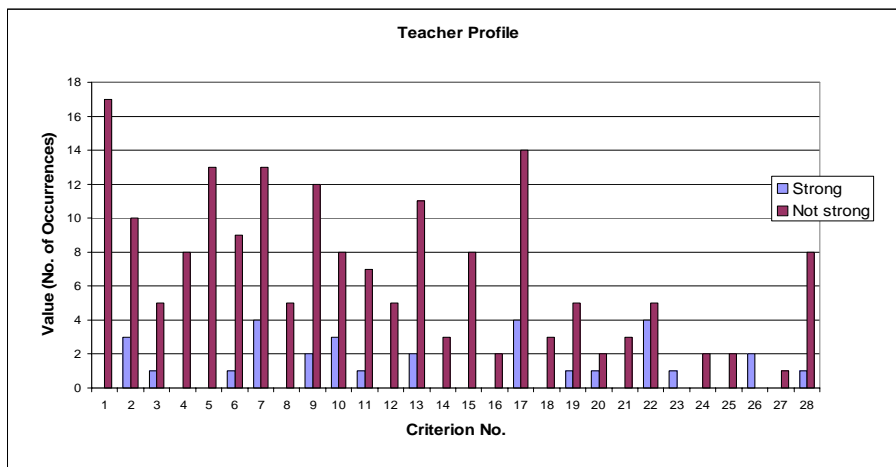
The teachers expressed their lack of knowledge about learner-autonomy. For the teachers in the public school it was just another term which would probably change the following year. The teachers simply preferred not to talk about learner-autonomy. As the study progressed Teacher A and Teacher B commented on learner autonomy. These teachers did not believe that autonomous learning could be applicable due to the current conditions in the education system in Turkey. Teacher A mentioned the importance of teacher autonomy. According to him priority should be given to teacher autonomy first. Teacher B's reaction to the impossibility of autonomous learning stemmed from her belief that the students were incapable of taking the responsibility of their learning. However, she believed that learner-autonomy and learner-centeredness is connected to each other.

The teachers in the private school also expressed their dissatisfaction about the scarcity of autonomous learners. Rather than expressing how the teachers viewed the relationship between learner-autonomy and learner-centeredness, they focused on the effect of parents in raising autonomous learners. Their BAK was clear; learner autonomy could not be realized in schools. Parents were responsible for raising autonomous learners. This was common with what teacher B said about learner-autonomy. Teacher 1 thought that there was a clear connection between learner autonomy and learner-centeredness because when students took responsibility of their own learning; this had a positive effect in their learning. Teacher 2 BAK about the relationship was more concrete, she strongly believed that they were dependent each other. She claimed that without autonomy, it was impossible to realize learner-centered instruction.

### **5.1.2 Teachers' Implementation of their Understanding of Learner-centeredness**

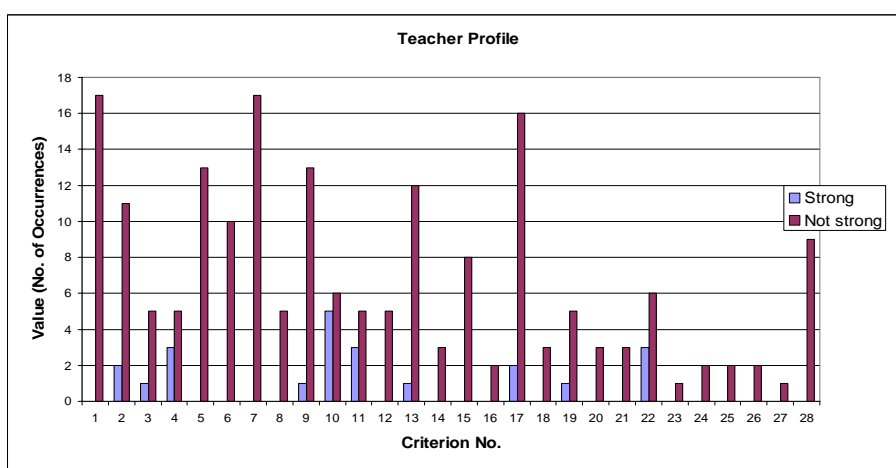
Observation data analysis revealed that the teachers in the public school implemented learner-centeredness the way they defined it. They presented the lesson and the students did the rest in the form of answering questions given in the handouts. They acted mainly as correctors throughout the observations observed. The activities in the classrooms were organized as whole class activities directed by the teachers. As they mentioned in the interviews they were the providers of knowledge. English was only used during the greetings and while the students were answering the question. The students did not have a chance either to talk English or listen to their teachers talk English. However, Teacher A consistently provided a positive and secure atmosphere in the lessons by recognizing positive behaviors of students and appraising them. He treated his learners equally and he communicated the necessary information to his students clearly. The profile below represents Teacher A's overall analysis of classroom observations.





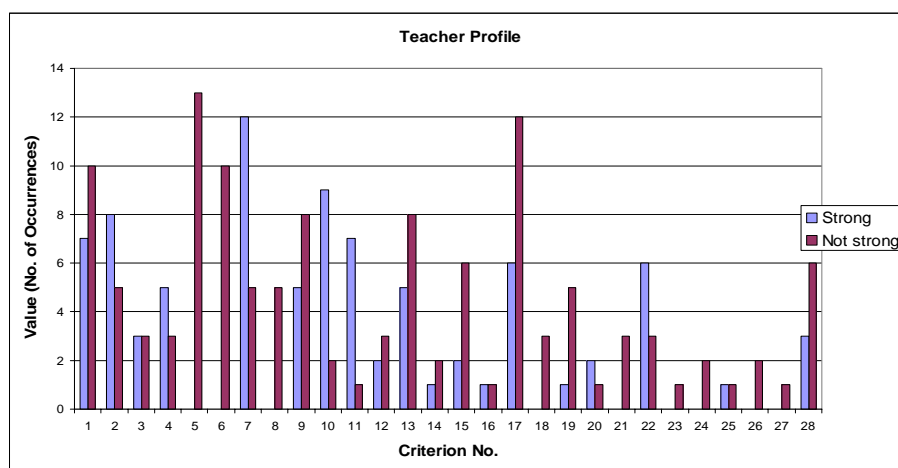
**Figure 4:** *Teacher A's profile*

The same classroom pattern was observed in Teacher B's lessons. Her beliefs about the importance of intelligence were reflected through her behaviors and words. There was consistency in her instructional practices and BAK. The atmosphere created by her did not reflect the ideal learning environment depicted in the model. However, she was strong at giving clear instructions. The following figure shows Teacher B's profile.



**Figure 5 :** *Teacher B's profile*

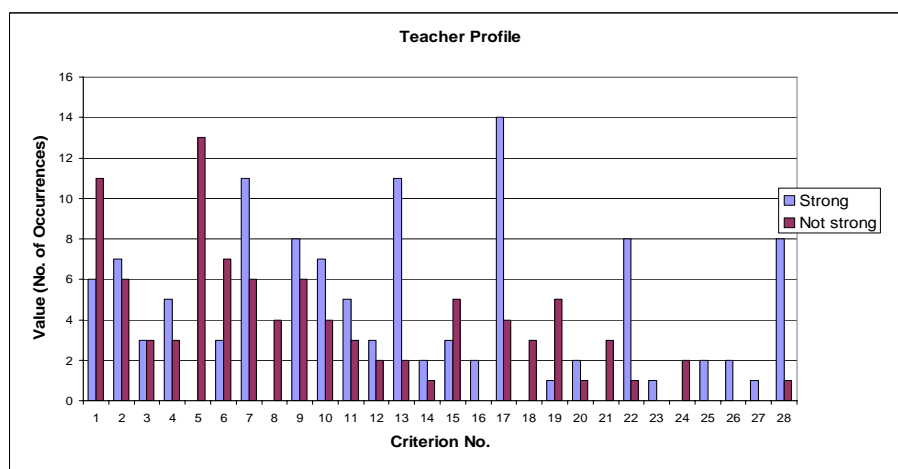
The data gathered from classroom observations of two teachers in the private school revealed that teachers employed a variety of activities in the classroom to promote students participation into the lesson. Only in the lessons when the teachers had to check students' homework there was a lack of learner-learner relationship. In these lessons teachers acted as a resource of knowledge. By bringing different language materials to the classrooms, teachers tried to make the lessons enjoyable as much as they could and thus they encouraged the students to discover concepts themselves. The materials the teachers used certainly affected the teachers' implementation of learner-centeredness. Teacher 1 who focused on the importance of making the students speak encouraged her students to speak in the lessons. Nonetheless, the time allowed her students to speak as much as she expressed during the interviews.



**Figure 6 :** *Teacher 1's profile*

Teacher 2 in the private school illustrated her understanding of learner-centeredness through her practices. Her BAK showed consistency with her BAK to a great extent. She was always supportive and positive during her lessons. She always encouraged her students to participate in the lessons. She

created an ideal atmosphere where the students feel relaxed and shared their ideas. Her attempts to increase learners' cognitive capacity was especially significant. Even though she was one of the teachers who mentioned the obstacles that hindered her practices, she tried to implement her understanding of learner-centeredness by facilitating the learning process for the students. The following table demonstrates her profile.



**Figure 7:** *Teacher 2's profile*

### 5.1.3 Teachers' BAK about ELP

All of the participant teachers except for one teacher expressed their lack of knowledge about European Language Portfolio. However, in the private school the teachers were familiar with the idea of self-assessment through the textbooks they used and Teacher 1 once heard its name from one of the representatives of books. However, they had doubts about the reliability of self-assessment process. They thought that the students could distort the results.

The teachers in the public school did not know anything about it. After being presented information about ELP, Teacher A and Teacher B expressed their concerns about ELP. For them its application was not possible. Their

main reaction was for the self-assessment process. They did not believe that the students could evaluate themselves.

Both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 knew about self-assessment and they were already using it in their classrooms. There was a section in their books which encouraged the students to evaluate themselves.

#### **5.1.3.1 Teachers' BAK about the Implementation of ELP**

Even though public school teachers did not know anything about ELP, they viewed it as an innovation and thus they reflected their disbelief. They articulated their need for in-service training first. Teacher A expressed that implementation of such an instrument was unrealistic. Teacher B did not believe that it would last for a long time. The main message they conveyed was whatever the innovation was they would continue with their routine practices. So it was clear that the implementation of ELP would not affect their practices because they would not be using it.

Teachers in the private school viewed the introduction of ELP into their teaching as something positive. They did not think it would affect their practices very much because they were already doing very similar things. However Teacher 2 highlighted the importance of administration's attitude towards the possible problems that might appear at the beginning. If the necessary support was given teachers would successfully accomplish it. Teacher 1 believed that ELP would facilitate their job and through the application of ELP, they would have a chance to see the child's development better.

### **5.2 Discussion of Conclusion in Relation to Review of Literature**

#### **5.2.1 Teachers' Understanding of "Learner-centeredness"**

Teacher A and Teacher B's definition of learner-centeredness was similar to the definition of teacher-centeredness in the literature. In the literature, teacher-centered instruction is defined as the activity in which the

information is moved or transmitted to and into the learner (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). In the foreign language classroom, the teacher has traditionally been seen as the director of classroom exchanges, the authority and transmitter of knowledge doing most of the talking, with learner' speech being limited both in terms of quantity and quality (Long & Porter, 1985). It was obvious that there was a misunderstanding of the concept by the teachers. The positive thing about this was at least Teacher A was aware of this. He was brave enough to assert that he needed to be informed about learner-centeredness.

The main focus in the private school teachers' definition of learner-centeredness was learners. Their definition of learner-centeredness was along similar lines with Freire (1970) who supports a libertarian form of education, where the learner is the focus and the teachers and learners are partners. The teachers in the private school engaged collaboration among students having the belief that this would facilitate students' learning (Kauchak & Eggen, 1998). They tended to favor more group work than individualized work (Robyler & Edwards, 2000). The students were considered to be active in a learner-centered environment by the teachers as put forward by (Tudor, 1996).

#### **5.2.1.1 Teachers' BAK about their Role in Creating Learner-centeredness**

The teachers in the public school generally viewed themselves as guides and facilitators but they believed that their most important role was being a "teller" and "presenter" and "corrector" which simply signaled their role as deliverer of content knowledge (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996; Prawat, 1992, 2000).

The teachers in the private school defined their roles as "facilitator", "guide" and "leader" and "problem solver". This role was supported by (Cohen, 1995). Additionally, new roles for teachers include helpers, facilitators, advisors and guides (Oxford, 1990; Wenden and Rubin, 1987).

### **5.2.1.2 Teachers' BAK about the Relationship between Learner-autonomy and Learner-centeredness**

Both Teacher B and Teacher 2 established the same relationship between learner autonomy and learner-centeredness. Learner autonomy was considered as one of the perquisites of learner-centeredness. When the definitions of learner-centeredness are examined it is clear that in a learner-centered environment, students become autonomous learners, which accelerates the language learning process. Learner autonomy is viewed as a prominent manifestation of a paradigm shift towards learner-centeredness in foreign language education (Tudor, 1996).

### **5.2.2 Teachers' BAK about ELP**

The teachers did not know anything about ELP but however they expressed their concerns about self-assessment procedures. The teachers had doubts about the reliability of students' judgment because they thought that some factors such as parental expectations or personality of the students might affect the students' evaluation of themselves. This is in line with what Saito (2005) mentions in his article. He emphasizes teachers' skepticism about the students' ability to assess themselves.

#### **5.2.2.1 Teachers' BAK about the Implementation of ELP**

While the teachers in the public school mentioned the inapplicability of ELP, the teachers articulated their need to be informed about it. Demirel (2004) arrived at similar results after piloting the ELP model with EFL teachers. The teachers reflected a need for in-service training seminars.

### **5.2.3 Teachers Implementation of their Understanding of Learner-centeredness**

The way four teachers defined learner-centeredness and the way they implemented learner-centeredness was consistent, which indicated that

teachers' beliefs were reflected in their actions, decisions, and classroom practices (Pajares, 1992; Richardson 1996).

### **5.3 Overall Conclusion**

The data results showed that the teachers working in the public school had limited knowledge of learner-centeredness. Since the way they understood learner-centeredness was different from the way it is explained in the literature, naturally their implementation of learner-centeredness did not reflect most of learner-centered practices given in the model. In a similar fashion, they expressed their lack of knowledge in their answers to the relationship between learner-autonomy and learner-centeredness. It seemed that the implementation would not affect their practices because they did not think ELP would be implemented at all. It would be a practice appearing on the papers again as it always did. Evans (1996) suggests that an individual's response to change that has been imposed upon him will depend on how well the individual can make sense of it and how motivated the individual is to understand the benefits of the change. When teachers are not convinced that a new practice should replace an old one, they have no motivation to change.

For the teachers in the private school, they had a definition of learner-centeredness which was compatible with the research in learner-centeredness. So accordingly this understanding was reflected in their teaching especially in the Teacher 2's practices. The way they approached ELP was quite different from the teachers in the public school. They were more enthusiastic about it thinking that ELP would not change their practices very much.

#### **5.3.1 Discussion of the Learner-centered Model**

The model developed by the researcher served as a tool in analyzing classroom events and documents used by the teacher. The items in the model indicate that learner-centeredness is a complex interaction of teacher qualities and practices. The rationale behind preparing such a model was to use it as an

observation checklist of classroom events and the qualities of teacher form the perspective of teacher. Each item was guided by the question “What should a teacher do to implement learner-centeredness?”. However, as the study progressed, the practices of teachers especially the teachers in the public school made it necessary to add another section to the model. This was what the teachers should avoid in order not to be non-learner-centered. This time the guiding question was “What should not the teachers do in order not to be non-learner-centered?”. The practices described in the model were a product of a thorough examination of literature in learner-centered education and constructivism. APA’s 14 learner-centered principles formed the basis of the model and it was widened to cover all the aspects of learner-centeredness.

The model was named as ‘learner centeredness: an evaluative and diagnostic model for teachers and educational assessors’, but throughout the study referred to as learner-centered model to facilitate reading. The name given to the model suggests that it can be used both for personal reflection and for assessment. The teachers can use the model as they investigate their individual instructional practices. In addition, educational assessors can use it in the assessment of one’s practices. The term ‘learner’ was used in the model and no specification was made about English language teaching. The purpose of using the term learner and not mentioning English language teaching was to suggest that the model aims at describing every teacher’s practices while teaching something to any learner. This means that it can be used from the most elementary stages to the most advanced levels with varying status and ages without discriminating the subject.

### **5.3.2 Discussion of the Results that Emerged during the Study**

This section is devoted to the themes that were outside the scope of this study but that deserved some attention. Even though the purpose of the study was to collect data to understand teachers’ beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge about learner-centeredness and ELP, the themes that emerged after the data



analysis indicated that rather than talking about what learner-centeredness meant for the participant teachers, they preferred to talk about the obstacles that hindered their practices. So in this section the factors that impede the teachers' implementation of learner-centeredness will be focused on.

Even though there were slight differences in the obstacles expressed by the public school, they more or less complaint about the same things. The common factors that seemed to negatively influence the teachers' implementation of learner-centered instruction were:

#### **A. Nature of students**

The participant teachers expressed their concerns regarding students' attitudes towards learner-centered instruction. The students were accustomed to the teacher-centered approach. They were more familiar with seat work and direct instruction. The findings were in line with what Lee, Chew and Tey (1999) suggest. They suggest that student resistance to cooperative learning might be due to a lack of training of students, lack of understanding basic cooperative learning principles, and a lack of cooperative techniques on the part of the teachers.

#### **B. Textbook's limitation**

Teacher A's and Teacher B's instructional activities evolved around the worksheets they prepared owing to their dissatisfaction with the textbook mandated by the Ministry. The use of instructional materials, which focus on structures, hindered their attempts at learner-centered implementation. Previous studies have found the same obstacle regarding the use of traditional textbooks (Marlowe and Page, 1998). Classroom observation data suggested that in public school classrooms (at least those of Teacher A's and Teacher B's) learning was a linear process with timelines for instruction dictated by MONE guidelines.

#### **C. Time Constraints and Content Coverage**

Closely related to the textbook's limitation factor, another two factors were found to prohibit the implementation of learner-centered instruction: time constraints and content coverage. There were too many materials to cover in

each class period and implementing student-centered activities took time. It appeared that it was more important for the teachers to cover a lot of material rather than teach students how to think. This was also found out in the studies which explored the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (Gorsuch, 2000, Li, 1998).

#### **D. Lycee Entrance Exam (LGS)**

Testing, especially LGS entrance examinations, was found to negatively influence the teachers' implementation of learner-centered instruction. Especially in the public school, the importance of getting students to pass the LGS exam and enter a high school put pressure on administrators and teachers. When compared to public school, the private school seemed to be operated in a more casual manner. This school did not put a lot of importance on preparing the students for lycee entrance exam.

#### **E. Class-size**

Teachers mostly complaint about the number of students in their classrooms. They demonstrated classroom size as an important factor that hindered their teaching. Class size and number of students have been found to become obstacles in implementing learner-centered teaching (Karavas-Doukas, 1995).

#### **F.Support**

The teachers in the public school suffered from lack of support from the Ministry, parents and colleague teachers . The teachers in the private school complaint about not having support from the administration of the school, about the parents' pressure on them and about the effect of classroom teachers' on their practices as well. The role of the school principal plays an important role as well as in terms of managing resources. Marlowe and Page (1998) suggested that in achieving constructivist implementation, principals can help teachers overcome barriers in terms of money, time, ideas, materials, assistance and training. Besides, department heads and teacher colleagues played important roles in facilitating teachers' classroom implementation. Research findings

show that an important aspect of changing to a more learner-centered approach is the use of peer support (Marlowe and Page, 1998).

The teachers working in private school needed classroom teachers' support and collaboration to a great extent in order to realize learner-centered instruction and autonomous learning. Additionally, Marlowe and Page (1998) pointed out that in achieving learner-centeredness, teachers need support and understanding from parents as well. The findings of the study showed that the students' parents created an obstacle for the implementation of learner-centered practices in the schools both in public and private schools.

### **G. Teacher efficacy**

The teachers in the public school especially Teacher A reported they have not acquired sufficient knowledge of teaching methods during their training as student teachers, nor do they know how to implement these innovations. Besides, laziness was another obstacle that hindered the implementation of learner-centeredness. According to Ross (1994), the degree and type of teacher efficacy can facilitate the implementation of new teaching methods because it motivates teachers to acquire and develop new skills. Teachers with low levels of efficacy are generally not very motivated, think of their work as having little use, exert only limited effort, and generally experience greater stress. They have also been found to display various avoidance behaviors and react defensively (e.g., to innovation proposals).

## **5.4 Implications**

From the findings of the study, four major implications can be drawn. The first implication is that schools must provide more support to teachers in shifting their classrooms to learner-centered instruction. The second implication for practice is that in-service training programs should be designed on the basis of a needs assessment of teachers. It is important for the ministry to provide opportunities for teachers to participate in formal training and workshops where they would be presented with a framework of instruction based on a learner-

centered approach to instruction. Teachers may not have the background to initiate and maintain to choose activities consistent with learner-centered practices. Therefore, there is also a need to articulate clear learner-centered principles for pre- and in-service programs for teacher education.

Fullan (2001) suggests that teachers need more time, training, and on-going support to shift their classroom for an innovation to succeed. The in-service programs and training should provide on-going practices accompanied by support, feedback, and reflection while allowing teachers to make a smooth transition from transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator of learner's construction. If the goal of learning reform is to change teachers from teacher-centered to learner-centered teachers, they should have enough chances to be trained and to observe an actual learner-centered class at elementary level in real life situations.

Finally, another major implication of this study is focused on the issue of educational reform. It is clear that there is a gap between the belief systems of many of the teachers in this study and many recent instructional and assessment initiatives such as those found in English Language Portfolio. Clearly, many of these new initiatives involve more than a shift in practices; they also involve the adoption of a fundamentally different paradigmatic belief system. Successful implementation of these new initiatives must give clearer attention to teachers' existing belief systems and understandings.

## **5.5 Suggestions and Recommendations**

The findings of this study will be presented as suggestions and recommendations for improving the implementation of learner-centeredness in all the education institutions.

### **5.5.1 Suggestions**

Mandating implementing learner-centeredness will backfire if MONE does not take into account the requirements of learner-centered education.

These findings provide a substantive illustration of teachers' BAK about these innovations. The findings give good indications of the consequences of innovations that they do not adopt. The model for implementing these innovations may not be realized as the events might actually take place differently. What the planners or decision makers want to happen cannot occur without planning, consensus building and careful piloting.

Almost every approach to school reform requires teachers to refocus their role, responsibilities, and opportunities-and, as a result, to acquire new knowledge and skills. The old norms of individualism, isolationism, and privatism (Lortie, 1975) no longer suffice. Well-defined descriptions of teacher's roles and responsibilities in the learner-centered classrooms, adequate support from the administration, willingness to participate in learner-centeredness and comfort with learner-centered practices will facilitate the change from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach.

The change incorporates the need for acceptance, adaptation, and the institutionalization of change by all of the stakeholders associated with school. Change is not easy. Tradition and familiar routines and practices of schooling are easy to maintain and follow. There is a need to bear in mind that successful designs for learning require time, resources, and supporting structures. Change doesn't occur overnight, and recognition of the time required to institutionalize change is critical.

Curriculum is the most important vehicle a school has for transmitting its core values to students. Teachers have a right to have their voices heard in creating the curriculum, especially that intended for the students they work with. A teacher's primary motivation for curriculum change is enhancing student learning. Given this motivation, teachers must be afforded an opportunity to participate in curricular discussions and decision-making. This involvement will bring autonomy to teachers as they connect their instructional expertise with meaningful curriculum change (Elmore & Fuhrman, 1994).

Effective implementation of the ELP, like many major pedagogical innovations, will take time and require commitment. Teachers need to take time to understand what the Common European Framework and the ELP philosophy is about and how it can be practiced in language classes. For this reason, teachers' professional development is very important. Language teachers have a crucial role in how their students experience their foreign language learning. Teacher trainers should convince the teachers of the value of ELP implementation and the positive results that can be achieved. Convincing teachers of the benefits of using ELP and supporting them in implementing this instrument are crucial elements in motivating teachers and in ensuring a positive reaction to the ELP.

One of the main factors that hinder the implementation of learner-centeredness is the lack of suitable material. The teachers working in the public school are not satisfied with the content of the textbooks. A suggestion can be made for the improvement of the textbooks used in the public schools. Consequently; MONE should pay special attention to the textbooks they mandate in the public schools. If the aim is to create individual with higher order thinking skills, there is an urgent need to improve the current textbooks.

The Ministry of Education provides training programs for in-service teachers. However, the personnel development programs cannot cater to all the teachers. Teacher education institutions should take a major step in helping in-service teachers who are currently in the education system. These institutes can provide training programs or more flexible courses for in-service teachers to improve their teaching.

As the implementation of learner-centeredness and ELP will be mandated nationwide, the practitioners will find themselves obliged to use it in their classrooms. Implementing learner-centeredness in the Turkish context with limited conditions is not very easy. Nonetheless, practitioners are encouraged to strive to promote student achievement. As evident in the study there are a multitude of factors that influence the implementation of learner-centeredness.

The implication for practitioners is that they need to be hopeful if there is going to be a strong teaching paradigm in the future. Naturally, it is a process and will not happen overnight.

### **5.5.2 Recommendations for Future Research**

This research was limited to one public and one private primary school in Istanbul. Even though it is an in-depth study; it is difficult to generalize the findings to all schools in Turkey. However, this study provided some meaningful data for teachers, administrators, and policy makers to consider before or during implementing learner-centered education and introducing English Language Portfolio. The researcher would like to recommend further study on this topic in a larger scale so as to be more generalizable. Because education is so important for Turkey country and its people, this topic should be studied by a large number of people and in every part of Turkey to make sure the results will work for the benefit of everyone in Turkey. In the future is hoped that investigators will replicate the study by expanding the sample of primary schools and conducting similar studies in secondary schools. A larger sample of teachers' BAK and practices about the state mandated change will facilitate further understanding of the change process in primary schools and lend credibility to the findings.

This study attempted to explore teachers' BAK and practices about learner-centeredness in EFL classes in two primary schools in Turkey. Future studies should expand upon several factors found in this study that appeared to influence teachers' implementation of learner-centered instruction.

This study did not address teacher efficacy for understanding the implications for improvement to educational practice. Therefore, it might be illuminating to contrast teachers' level of self-efficacy with their observed practices of learner-centeredness.

Another aspect that needs to be addressed are the beliefs of people other than teachers of English, such as school administrators and teachers of other

subjects in regard to recent educational reforms in Turkey. Given that curriculum change in Turkey is initiated in a top-down manner, school administrators are charged with implementing these changes. However, the reality seems to be different. Therefore, examining the beliefs of those who are most influential would be helpful in order to explore how the new curriculum guidelines are interpreted at each level of hierarchy. Also, examining the beliefs of teachers of other subjects might shed light on the impact of the institutional culture as a whole on the new instructional approach.

The examination of the content of pre-service and in-service training offered in Turkey and the beliefs of trainers of such programs might be informative. The teaching practices of many of the university instructors who are in charge of pre-service education must be congruent with the practices of learner-centered instruction if the aimed objective of education is to establish learner-centered instruction. In order to find out where their teaching practices originate, an exploration of university instructor's beliefs will be another area for further research.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This study had several notable strengths, including: the inclusion of multiple methods for investigating teachers' beliefs, assumptions and knowledge and practices regarding learner-centeredness and the creation of a model. This study was unique in its multi-faceted exploration of teachers' mental complexities and their behaviors in classroom context. The reports on teacher BAK and practices provided a rich view of classroom realities functioning in a broader context of a community which involves administrators, policy makers, and parents. Furthermore, this study on the innovations regarding English language teaching has illuminated the need for ongoing, continuous professional development of teachers in bringing about changes when implementing an innovation.



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## APPENDIX A

### THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK AND LANGUAGE POLICY

1. On what principles are the number and choice of languages in the curriculum made?
2. Is there a national language policy?
3. What are the reasons for the decision?
4. Do all children have the opportunity to become literate in their mother tongues  
(home language)? Are majority children enabled to learn minority languages?
5. Are modern languages
  - compulsory
  - optional throughout education:
    - pre-school
    - primary
    - lower secondary and upper secondary
    - higher
    - further
    - adult

What steps are taken to ensure coherence and continuity of development?
6. On what principles are decisions based concerning the curricular time available for language learning?
7. On what principles are policies based as to which decisions should be made at
  - a) national, b) regional, c) local, or d) school level?
8. What steps are taken to achieve coherence among a) curricular objectives, b) teaching methods, c) textbooks and other teaching materials, and d) examinations and qualifications?
9. On what principles are national language provision based?
  - a) economic need (for example, international trade, tourism)

- b) diplomatic relations
  - c) parental pressures
  - d) cultural values
  - e) traditional practice
10. Are different ministries and ministerial departments responsible for different sectors of educational provision? If so, what steps are taken to ensure coherence among their policies?
11. What steps are taken to implement:
- a) the European Charter for Minority or Regional Languages
  - b) the Council of Europe Framework Convention of National Minorities
  - c) the Hague Recommendation Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities
  - d) the (unofficial but UNESCO-sponsored) Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights?
12. Are minority languages used as the medium of instruction for mother-tongue speakers
- a) as a transitional measure
  - b) in later stages of the educational process?
13. Is support given to the extra-curricular learning of minority languages?
14. What support is given to language learning in adult education?
15. Are there ministerial curricular guidelines concerning:
- a) the languages to be taught
  - b) the objectives to be pursued
  - c) the approach to be followed
  - d) the methods to be used
  - e) the materials to be used
  - f) the qualification to be awarded
  - g) the content and procedures in tests and examinations?

Are guidelines mandatory or advisory? On what principles are guidelines based?

16. Is educational research in the language field ministerially promoted and funded? What steps are taken to bring the results of research to the attention of administrators and other professionals?
17. Are the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers on Modern Languages (69)2, (81)19, (97)6 accepted and taken into account in formulating national (or ministerial) policies? What steps are taken to bring the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to the attention of the language teaching profession?
18. Are the language learning objectives specified by the Council of Europe for twenty-three European languages (Waystage, Threshold, Vantage) used in textbook and course construction and in qualifying examinations?
19. Are nationally recognised language qualifications calibrated in terms of Common Reference Levels of the Council of Europe?



## **APPENDIX B**

### **FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

1. Have you heard the term “learner-centeredness”?
2. What does learner-centeredness mean to you?
3. What are the benefits of a learner-centered approach to teaching?
4. What is the role of the teacher in the classroom?
5. How do you see the role of the teacher in implementing learner-centeredness?
6. Which skills do you think the teacher needs to implement learner-centeredness?
7. How do you implement learner-centeredness in your classrooms?
8. What are the difficulties that arise with respect to the realization of learner-centered approach?
9. What is the function of the textbook for you?
10. Which techniques do you often use while teaching grammar?
11. How do you define learner-autonomy?
12. How do you integrate learner autonomy into your teaching?
13. What is the relationship between learner-autonomy and learner-centeredness?
14. Do you believe “self-assessment” is valuable and necessary?
15. What self-assessment techniques do you use while teaching?
16. How do you include self-assessment activities into your teaching activities?

17. Have you ever heard of the concept “European Language Portfolio”?
18. What do you know about ELP?
19. How do you think its implementation will affect your practices?

## APPENDIX C

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Male ( )      Female ( )

Date of birth:

2. Type of school you are teaching in

- ☐ state
- ☐ private

3. Level(s) at which you are teaching English. (Mark all the applicable ones)

- |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| 7. | 8. |    |    |    |    |

4. Highest academic qualifications

- ☐ A teacher's certificate in \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ A diploma in \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ A bachelor's degree in \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ A master's degree in \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ A doctorate in \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

5. Number of years of teaching experience:

6. Are you a member of any professional foreign language associations?

7. Which professional activities have you attended recently? When?

8. How many hours a week do you teach?

## **APPENDIX D**

### **INTERVIEW PROTOCOL I**

1. How do you define learner-centeredness?
2. What are the benefits of a learner-centered approach to teaching?
3. How do you implement learner-centeredness in your classrooms?
4. What learner-centered tasks do you assign to your students?
5. How do you think learning occurs?
6. What kind of environment is necessary for learning to occur?
7. How do you support your students in the process of learning?
8. How do you cater for individual differences?
9. Do you take learners' needs while designing the course?
10. What is the role of the teacher in the classroom?
11. How do you perceive your role in implementing learner-centeredness?
12. What skills do you think a teacher needs to implement learner-centeredness?
13. What are the difficulties that arise with respect to the realization of learner-centered approach?
14. What is the function of the textbook for you?
15. Which techniques do you often use while teaching grammar?
16. How do exams affect your teaching?
17. How do you define learner-autonomy?
18. How do you integrate learner autonomy into your teaching?
19. What is the relationship between learner-autonomy and learner-centeredness?
20. How do you assess your students?
21. Do you believe "self-assessment" is valuable and necessary?
22. What self-assessment techniques do you use while teaching?
23. How do you include self-assessment activities into your teaching activities?

24. Have you ever heard of the concept “European Language Portfolio”?
25. What do you know about ELP?
26. How do you think its implementation will affect your practices?
27. What is your reaction to innovations?

## **APPENDIX E**

### **INTERVIEW PROTOCOL II**

1. How do you view error correction?
2. Do you think everybody can learn a foreign language?
3. What does teacher-centered education mean to you?
4. What do you think about the Communicative Approach?
5. How do you implement the principles of the Communicative Approach?
6. How can students communicate with each other?
7. How do you define a good teacher?
8. What is the role of motivation in language learning?
9. How do you provide motivation in the classroom?
10. What do you think about the in-service training programs?
11. What kind of in-service training would you like to attend?
12. What is your personal reaction to noise in the classroom?
13. What kind of activities is more suitable for the students?
14. What kind of support do you get from the administration?
15. Are there any topics left that you wanted to share but I have not asked?
16. Having been a participant in this study, what impact did it have on you as a teacher?

## **APPENDIX F**

### **EFL TEACHERS INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Dear EFL teachers,

My name is Suzan Hatipoğlu KAVANOZ and I am a doctoral student at Middle East Technical University in English Language Teaching Department. I am seeking your participation in a research study that will basically describe, in depth, how teachers interpret and implement learner-centeredness. The study will discover how teachers understand the key elements of learner-centered education and European Language Portfolio and how teachers implement their understanding of learner-centeredness in their classrooms. The following methods will be used to conduct the study: semi structured interviews with EFL teachers teaching the grades from 4 to 8, observations with pre- and post-observation reflections and document analysis of texts.

The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision of whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at the phone number or e-mail indicated at the bottom of this letter. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so by contacting me at the phone number, e-mail, or address indicated below. In order to maintain confidentiality, I separate any identifying materials from the survey, and the tapes from all interviews will be retained only until the research paper has been approved and published. Afterwards, all data collected related to your participation will be destroyed by the researcher.

Each teacher participant will be involved in two semi-structured interviews. An audio tape will be used to record each interview. The first interview will be contacted prior to the observations classrooms and the questions will focus on the definition and implementation of learner-centeredness as well as teachers'

knowledge about European Language Portfolio. The second interview will be conducted after the final observation of the classrooms and the questions will focus on the clarification of the points which occurred during the observations. The interviews will take place at your convenience..

The information obtained in this study may be published in academic journals or presented at conferences, pseudonyms will be used and all identities will be kept strictly confidential. A summary of the findings from this study will be made available to you upon request. If you have any question or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at work (0 212 449 16 11) or via e-mail at [shatip@yildiz.edu.tr](mailto:shatip@yildiz.edu.tr) . Your time and cooperation are highly valued and deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Suzan Hatipoğlu KAVANOZ  
Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi  
Eğitim Fakültesi  
Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümü  
Davutpaşa Yerleşim Birimi  
34010 Esenler/İSTANBUL



## **APPENDIX G**

### **PRE-OBSERVATION QUESTIONS**

1. How are you going to implement learner-centeredness?
2. How are you going to provide learner autonomy?
3. What are you planning to do?
4. Have you chosen an activity that is interesting/that will generate meaningful language use?
5. At what point in your lesson will pupils use language for a real purpose?
6. Is your activity at an appropriate intellectual level to stretch and challenge your students?
7. Is it interesting? Is it motivating?
8. What do you expect to happen?
9. How can you describe your overall objectives?
10. How are you going to introduce the subject today?
11. How are you planning to accomplish these objectives?
12. Which activities are you planning to use?
13. How are you going to cover the unit?

## **APPENDIX H**

### **POST-OBSERVATION QUESTIONS**

1. What would you like to improve/have done better in the lesson?
2. How would you like to develop/improve/change your teaching in the future?
3. What evidence was there that your activity was successful?
4. What evidence was there that the students were interested?
5. Did they have a fair share of time to talk?
6. Did you try to involve all the students or chosen only a few?
7. How did the lesson go?
8. Could you accomplish your objectives?
9. Why did you choose this specific objective?
10. Is there anything you would change?
11. Were there any successes?
12. Were there any problems?

**APPENDIX I****ANALYSIS WORKSHEET FOR FOCUS GROUP**

**Date** : **Time** :  
**Number of participants** :  
**Location** :

**Response to Question**

<b>Brief Summary Key points</b>	<b>Notable Quotes</b>

## APPENDIX J

### OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Strong	Not strong	<b><i>1. Teacher takes into account learner differences while teaching and planning her lesson.</i></b>
		1. Learners' interests
		2. Careful attention to socioeconomic status in the instructional setting
		3. Accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities
		4. Learners' perspectives (beliefs)
		5. Learners have different strategies, approaches, and capabilities for learning that are a function of prior experience and heredity
		6. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying body size
		7. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying posture
		8. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying mobility
		9. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying sensory needs
		10. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying communication needs
		11. Learning styles
		12. Instruction designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural differences
		13. Instruction anticipates variation in individual learning pace
		14. Developmental and social factors
		15. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying talents
		16. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying capacities
		17. Instruction designed with consideration for learners with varying intelligences
		<b><i>2. Teacher encourages relationships among learners.</i></b>
		1. The process of collaborating
		2. Collaborative learning activities (Group learning, peer teaching, group projects, problem-based learning tied to core course goals and objectives)
		3. Collaboration with peers
		4. Learners construct meaning within the context of social relationships
		5. Social interaction facilitates learning
		6. Teacher promotes purposeful interaction and communication between and among learners
		7. Teacher promotes purposeful interaction and communication between learners and faculty
		8. Presentations with peers
		9. Personal relationships that increase learners' sense of self-respect
		10. They becomes we
		11. Learners' backgrounds of cooperative learning
		12. Learning settings that allow for social interactions
		13. A school and classroom environment that allows for the development of positive personal relationships and a caring school and classroom environment
		<b><i>3. Teacher uses alternative assessment techniques including self-assessment.</i></b>
		1. Alternative assessment (diagnostic, Performance, process, Self-, ...)
		2. Inclusive tasks (exploring open-ended questions, scenarios, doing research, ...)
		3. Teacher develops the learner's ability to assess his/her own competence
		4. Teacher encourages learners to reflect on what they have done ( successful or otherwise)
		5. Teacher encourages learners to consider what they might do next time
		6. Teacher negotiates with the class so that they can assess their own work and set their own improvement goals
		<b><i>4. Teacher encourages learners to construct new meanings by establishing relationships with their prior knowledge.</i></b>
		1. Learners use their existing knowledge and backgrounds of experience to construct meanings from new information and experiences
		2. Recognition of importance of prior knowledge
		3. Teacher creates meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge

		4. Teacher creates and uses a repertoire of thinking and reasoning strategies to achieve complex learning goals.
		5. Teacher provides opportunities and resources for the learners to discover concepts for themselves.
		6. New learning depends on a learner's current background of understanding
		7. Learners use strategic thinking in their approach to learning
		8. Teacher recognizes Importance of Relation to Other Courses
		<b>5. Teacher encourages learner autonomy by giving the learners responsibility.</b>
		1. Teacher encourages and accepts learner autonomy and initiative
		2. Teacher develops self-control and self-discipline for self-esteem and self-confidence
		3. Teacher holds the responsibility for determining learning objectives
		4. Teacher encourages learners to take ownership of their choices - if things go 'wrong' encourage learners to consider what they will do next time.
		5. Learners assume personal responsibility for contributing to their own learning
		5.1. Learners take responsibility and use appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives
		5.2. Learners take responsibility and use appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives
		6. Learners monitor their progress toward these goals
		7. Learners become more independent from the teacher
		8. Learners are self-regulating
		9. Teacher supports autonomy in learners, who become intrinsically motivated to do high-quality work
		10. Teacher focuses more on empowering learners
		11. Teacher focuses more on making learners more autonomous and self-directed learners
		<b>6. Teacher encourages learners to select their learning goals and tasks by providing help.</b>
		1. Learners participate in selection of academic goals and learning tasks
		2. Teacher plays a major interactive role with the learner
		3. Teacher plays a major interactive role with the learning environment
		4. Teacher allows learners options in use of instructional materials
		5. Teacher allows learners options in use of testing
		6. Teacher allows learners options in use of assignments
		7. Teacher allows learners options in-class activities
		8. Assignments ought be determined either individually or collectively by the learners themselves in consultation with the instructor
		9. Teacher creates contexts that help learners create a learning community
		10. Teacher negotiates activities, tasks, assessment and class behaviour with learners so as to encourage ownership
		<b>7. Teacher creates a positive and secure atmosphere.</b>
		1. Teacher creates personal relationships that provide trust
		2. Teacher creates a classroom environment that allows for and respects "learner voice"
		3. Teacher treats learners as human, equal, cultural beings
		4. Teacher establishes personal relationships that increase learners' sense of belonging
		5. Teacher establishes personal relationships that increase learners' sense of self-acceptance
		6. Teacher establishes personal relationships that provide caring
		7. Teacher establishes personal relationships that provide stability
		8. Teacher establishes contexts that help learners feel safe to share ideas
		9. Teacher encourages learners to express their personal feelings and opinions
		10. Teacher creates caring relationships with the learners
		11. Teacher sees things from the point of learners and provides them with opportunities to share their perspectives
		12. Teacher addresses Ss' physical needs
		13. Teacher addresses Ss' emotional needs
		14. Teacher addresses Ss' social needs
		15. Teacher recognizes positive behaviour of any learners
		16. Teacher appraises the learner's cognitive strengths
		17. Teacher understands the learner's cognitive weaknesses

		<b>8. Teacher considers learners' needs during the process of the design of the lesson and teaching.</b>
		1. Learners' needs
		2. Educational decisions will be responsive to the learner
		3. Focus is not on what the teacher wants to teach, but on what and how learners need to learn
		4. Teacher focuses on meeting individual learner needs in a nurturing learning environment
		5. Teacher matches learning and performance opportunities to the needs of individual children
		<b>9. Teacher focuses on learners.</b>
		1. Learners achieve through active engagement in a learning process
		1.1. Learners use reasoning
		1.2. Learners are active
		1.3. Hands-on
		1.4. Learners generate alternative methods to reach their goal
		1.5. Learners select potentially appropriate learning strategies or methods
		1.6. Learners have a say in their learning
		2. Active learning since learners must participate in creating knowledge rather than being passive recipients of content
		3. Learner commitment to learning
		4. Learning modalities
		5. Teacher focuses on learning vs. teaching
		6. Teacher places learners at the center of the learning process as active meaning- makers of classroom experiences.
		7. Teacher's classroom practices allow learners an active and social role in learning activities
		<b>10. Teacher knows her learners' background well.</b>
		1. Learners' cultural heredity and background
		2. Learners' experiences
		3. Learners' backgrounds of authentic learning problems
		4. Learners' backgrounds of understanding
		5. Careful attention to ethnicity in the instructional setting
		<b>11. Teacher tries to increase learners' cognitive capacities.</b>
		1. Teacher addresses to learners' intellectual domains
		2. Learners not seeking correct answers
		3. Teacher explores possible answers
		4. Teacher uses problem-structuring strategies and behaviors
		5. Teacher encourages thinking among learners
		5.1. Teacher uses Socratic questioning
		5.2. Teacher encourages learner inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and to ask questions of each other
		6. Teacher helps learners to discover and explore content knowledge by knowing what questions to ask and how to ask them
		7. Teacher ensures learners can: devise questions, plan and present a study of their own choice as a demonstration of 'learning how to learn' ability
		8. Facilitate creative and critical thinking
		8.1. Teacher inquires about learners' understanding of concepts before sharing their own understanding of those concepts
		8.2. Teacher encourages reflective thinking
		8.3. Teacher guides learners to create their own understandings
		<b>12. Teacher sees mistakes as the evidence of learning and displays tolerance.</b>
		1. Teacher knows that errors provide the opportunity for insight into learners' previous knowledge constructions
		2. Teacher encourages learners to take risks, to have a go, and to see mistakes as learning opportunities
		3. Tolerance for Error: Teacher Minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions
		<b>13. Teacher encourages the highest level of learning-output standards.</b>
		1. Teacher holds high expectations for learner performance

		2. Teacher encourages learners always to put forth their best effort
		3. The teacher is more concerned with the development of higher order intellectual and cognitive skill among learners
		4. Teacher sets appropriately high and challenging standards
		5. Teacher promotes the highest levels of achievement for all learners
		6. Teacher promotes the highest levels of learning
		7. Learners feel challenged to work towards appropriately high goals
		8. Learner commitment to achieving high standards of comprehension and understanding
		<b>14. Teacher shares her status equally with the learners the classroom.</b>
		1. Equalized roles between teacher and learner(s)
		2. Cooperative roles between teacher and learner(s)
		<b>15. Teacher assumes different roles in the classroom.</b>
		1. Learning counselor
		2. Facilitator
		3. Teacher gets to know learners well enough be able to understand both their intentions and their resources
		4. Teacher has an understanding of how learners develop and learn
		5. Teacher recognizes individual differences in their learners and adjust their practice accordingly.
		6. Teacher helps learners clarify their intentions and develop their resources and awareness
		7. Teacher treats learners equitably
		8. Encouraging
		9. Motivating
		10. Teacher's mission extends beyond developing the cognitive capacity of their learners
		11. Teacher channels learner participation in a pedagogically useful direction
		12. Teacher provides feedback on learners' performance
		13. Diagnostic coach always with the aim on extending learners skill and confidence
		14. A joint learner with learners
		15. Teacher helps learners cope with their own emotional needs and tensions, as well as with the needs of those around them
		16. Teacher helps learners inquire
		17. Teacher helps learners problem-solve
		18. Teacher helps learners learn
		<b>16. Teacher takes the learners' beliefs about themselves and their learning into account before designing her lessons and while teaching.</b>
		1. Careful attention to beliefs in the instructional setting
		2. Internal world of beliefs for failure
		3. Internal world of beliefs for success
		<b>17. Teacher encourages learners to identify their own objectives and classroom activities which are realistic.</b>
		1. Teacher encourages learners to select methods to be used
		2. Teacher encourages learners to select techniques to be used
		3. Teacher provides study guides and clear learning objectives
		4. Teacher encourages learners to suggest classroom activities
		5. Clear Expectations & Objectives are determined either individually or collectively by the learners themselves in consultation with the instructor
		6. Learners set reasonable performance goals
		<b>18. Physical environment is important for learning to occur.</b>
		1. Access to a rich collection of second language materials
		2. Teacher Assures that suitable physical conditions are provided, like classroom size, desks/tables, acoustics, and lighting accessible to all learners
		3. Teacher Makes use of the instructional A/V aids to ensure all learners know what is expected of them so they can be encouraged to work independently either as individuals or in groups
		<b>19. Teacher helps learners to discover their own learning styles.</b>
		1. Teacher helps learners examine their learning preferences
		2. Teacher helps learners expand or modify their learning preferences if necessary
		3. Teacher helps learners discover their learning potential

		<b>20. Teacher gives clear instructions.</b>
		1. Teacher communicates necessary information effectively to the learners, regardless of ambient conditions or the learners' sensory abilities
		2. Instruction is straightforward & eliminates unnecessary complexity
		3. Teacher explains concepts simply without assuming learner has prior knowledge
		4. Necessary information is communicated clearly
		5. Teacher ensures learners know what is expected in any task
		6. Teacher scaffolds any help necessary to ensure learners gain success - to break tasks down to understandable steps until learning is in place
		7. Teacher is clear about why learners do what they do
		8. Instruction is designed to be useful and accessible to all learners
		9. Teacher alternates delivery of material taking into account the need for information to facilitate capacity of the brain to process information
		<b>21. Teacher pays attention to the language she uses.</b>
		1. Careful attention to appropriate register in language in the instructional setting
		<b>22. Teacher pays constant attention to what the learners are saying.</b>
		1. Teacher listens well
		2. Teacher encourages learner-generated questions and discussions
		<b>23. Teacher provides the learners with enough time to concentrate on the solution of the problems posed.</b>
		1. Teacher allows wait time after posing questions
		2. Teacher provides time for learner to construct relationships and metaphors
		<b>24. Teacher should be tolerant towards changes in the course of instruction.</b>
		1. Flexibility
		<b>25. Effective teacher has certain qualities.</b>
		1. Organized
		2. Understanding
		3. Enthusiastic
		4. Fair
		5. Friendly
		6. Humorous
		7. Teacher makes things clear
		8. Teacher enjoys what she/he teaches
		9. Teacher develops a system to monitor the effectiveness of teaching
Presence	Absence	<b>26. Teacher should try to avoid being driven by the following practices.</b>
		1. Having a classroom as one in which many activities are primarily organized as whole-class activities directed by the teacher
		2. Having a lack of learner -learner interactions
		3. Having a mismatch between the teaching preferences of the teacher and the learning preferences of learners
		4. Having the routine as superior to flexibility
		5. Having a teacher role of either a resource or a deliverer of content knowledge
		6. Conducting activities designed for specific responses
		7. Demanding learners to be obedient
		8. Having beliefs to be excessively competent in a particular subject
		9. Being curriculum-driven
		10. Being directed by a teaching method which places more stress on getting the correct answers
		11. Devoting a whole class time to practice worksheets
		12. Persistence in following instructions in tasks and lesson plans
		13. Giving lectures
		14. Causing or creating insecurity through
		14.1. Anxiety
		14.2. Test anxiety
		14.3. Fear for punishment



	14.4. Panic
	14.5. Rage
	14.6. Ridicule
	14.7. Ruminating about failure
	14.8. Stigmatizing labels
	14.9. Worrying about competence
	15. Limiting learners' speech both in terms of quantity and quality
	16. Having negative gender role expectations
	17. Having repetitious method of transferring knowledge.
	18. Dictating rote learning
	19. Being strict about learners sitting quietly in their seats.
	20. Depending solely on standardized tests
	21. Imposing own ideas rather than allowing learners to develop their own
	22. Being text-book centered
	23. Assuming a role of an infallible authority and transmitter of knowledge
	24. Being time driven.
	25. Exerting undue pressure to perform well
	26. Acting as decision makers
	27. Creating an insecure climate and relationships with learners

## APPENDIX K

### TASK ANALYSIS CHECKLIST

Strong	Not strong	<b><i>1. Teacher promotes the highest levels of learner motivation by appropriate tasks.</i></b>
		1. Tasks the learner perceives to be of optimal novelty
		2. Tasks the learner perceives to be of optimal difficulty
		3. Tasks the learner perceives to be relevant to personal interests
		4. Tasks that provide for personal choice
		5. Tasks that provide for personal control
		6. Tasks that are comparable to real-world situations
		7. Tasks that learners perceive as meaningful
		8. Tasks that learners perceive as they can succeed
		9. Tasks that provide for learner's creativity
		10. Tasks that provide for learner's higher order thinking
		11. Tasks that provide for learner's natural curiosity
		<b><i>2. Teacher selects and uses suitable materials.</i></b>
		1. Material is appropriate to their developmental level
		2. Material is presented in an enjoyable way
		3. Material is presented in an interesting way
		4. Teacher focuses on core tasks rather than non-essential ones
		5. Manipulative materials
		6. Interactive materials
		7. Physical materials
		8. Authentic materials

## APPENDIX L

### TURKISH SUMMARY

#### GİRİŞ

Eğitim bireylerin ve toplumların geleceğini biçimlendiren en önemli etkenlerden biridir. Bugün gelişmekte olan pek çok ülkede eğitimde yeniden yapılanmaya gidilmektedir. Gelişmekte olan bir ülke olarak Türkiye’de de eğitimin her kademesinde reformların gerçekleştirilmesi kaçınılmazdır. Özellikle de Türkiye’nin Avrupa Birliği üyeliği adaylığına bağlı olarak son on yılda ülkede önemli eğitim reformları yapılmıştır. 1997 yılında kesintisiz sekiz yıllık ilköğretime geçilmesi en önemli eğitim reformlarından biridir.

Hükümetin 7. ve 8. Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planları’nda; 21. yüzyılda Türk toplumunun profili, düşünme, algılama ve problem çözme yeteneği gelişmiş, bilgiyi yaratıcı bir şekilde kullanabilen, bilgi çağı kimliğine uygun, bilim ve teknoloji üretimine yatkın, kendini tanımaktan ve açıklamaktan korkmayan bireyler şeklinde belirtilmiştir. Öğretim programlarının çağdaş ihtiyaçlara göre düzenlenmesi, diğer şartlara zemin oluşturması bakımından önceliklidir. Ders programlarının yeniden düzenlenmesinde en önemli ilke öğrencilerin kendi öğrenmelerine etkin biçimde katılmalarıdır. Özellikle temel eğitimin iyileştirilmesi Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı’nın en önemli amaçlarından biridir. Bu nedenle yapılandırmacı ve öğrenen-odaklılık ilkelerine bağlı olarak bazı ilköğretim derslerinin programları yenilenmiştir. İlköğretim Matematik (1, 2, 3, 4 ve 5. Sınıf), İlköğretim Türkçe (1, 2, 3, 4 ve 5. Sınıf), İlköğretim Hayat Bilgisi (1, 2 ve 3. Sınıf), İlköğretim Sosyal Bilgiler ( 4 ve 5. Sınıf), İlköğretim Fen ve Teknoloji (4 ve 5. Sınıf) dersi öğretim programları 2005-2006 Öğretim Yılından itibaren uygulanmak üzere kabul edilmiştir. Söz konusu derslerin ilköğretim 6-8. sınıflar düzeyindeki öğretim programlarının geliştirilme çalışmaları ise devam etmektedir.

İlköğretim düzeyinde İngilizce öğretiminde de değişiklikler yapılacaktır. İngilizce programında yapılacak yenilikler İngilizce öğretiminde

öğrenen-odaklı yaklaşımın kullanılması, öğrenen özerkliğinin ön plana çıkarılması ve Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası'nın kullanılmasıdır.

Öğrenen-odaklı eğitim yaklaşımının temel hedefi öğrenciyi merkeze alarak; birey olarak kendisinin ve sistemin ihtiyaç duyduğu değişim sürecini başlatmaktır. Yenilenen öğretim programları ile Türk eğitim sisteminde büyük bir dönüşümün gerçekleşmesi arzulanmaktadır. Yeni öğretim programları, “*yapılandırmacı eğitim yaklaşımı*” ile hazırlandığından; programların uygulanmasında başarı, öğretmenlerin bu eğitim yaklaşımı hakkında bilgi sahibi olmalarına bağlı olacaktır.

Türk eğitim sistemi genel olarak davranışçı psikoloji ve davranışçı öğrenme kuramı üzerine kurulu bir sistemdir. Geleneksel eğitim anlayış ve yaklaşımı, davranışçı yaklaşımların özelliklerini taşımaktadır. Davranışçı yaklaşımda; dersler öğretmenlerin anlatımları ile yürütülür, dersler kitaplara dayanır, öğretmenler bilgi kaynağıdır ve öğrencilere bu bilgilerini aktarmakla görevlidir. Öğrenci, öğretmenin aktardığını aynen almak ve tekrar etmekle görevlidir. Eğitimde yeniden yapılanma sürecine bağlı olarak bu geleneksel öğretmen-odaklı öğretimden öğrenen-odaklı öğretime geçiş özellikle de öğretmenler açısından büyük önem taşımaktadır.

Öğrenen-odaklı yaklaşım öğrenen özerkliği kavramını da beraberinde getirmektedir. Buna bağlı olarak öğretmen öğreneni kendi öğreniminin sorumluluğunu almaya teşvik etmelidir.

Ayrıca, hızla gelişen bilim ve teknolojinin transferine duyulan gereksinimler, uluslararası iletişim aracı olan yabancı dillerin öğretime son derece önem kazandırmıştır. Birleşip bütünleşmeye yönelen dünyada, oluşturulan uluslararası kuruluşlar da yabancı dil öğrenmenin kaçınılmazlığını göstermektedir: 1949 yılında 10 Avrupa ülkesinin katılımıyla resmi dilleri İngilizce ve Fransızca olan Avrupa Konseyi kurulmuştur. Halen 47 üyesi bulunan bu konseye Türkiye de 1950 yılından beri üyedir. Konsey, kültürler arası farklılıkların karşılıklı anlayış ve hoşgörüyle karşılanabilmesi için birden çok yabancı dilin öğrenilmesini teşvik etmektedir; 2001 yılında başlatılan Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası Projesi ile de AB'ye üye ülke vatandaşlarının,

gidecekleri ülkenin dilini belli bir seviyede bildiklerini belgeleyen bir dil pasaportu istemeyi planlamaktadır. Türkiye de kendi Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyasını hazırlamaya başlayarak dil eğitiminin niteliğini arttırmayı hedeflemektedir. Dosya-odaklı yabancı dil öğretiminin, öğretmenlerin rollerini ve İngilizce öğretimi anlayışlarını büyük oranda değiştireceği açıktır.

Bu karşılaştırmalı olgu çözümlemesi çalışması İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ilköğretim düzeyinde İngilizce öğretimine ilişkin yeniliklerle ilgili inanç, görüş ve bilgilerini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra öğretmenlerin öğrenen-odaklı eğitimi sınıflarda ne biçimde uyguladıklarına da bakılmıştır. Öğretmen inançları ve yeniliklerle ilgili yapılan araştırmalar öğretmenlerin inançları ve sınıf içi uygulamalarının yeniliklerle uyumlu olduğu takdirde, yeniliklerin başarıyla gerçekleştirileceğini göstermiştir. Bu da öğretmenlerin öğrenen-odaklı eğitim, öğrenen özerkliği ve Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası ile ilgili inanç, görüş ve bilgilerinin araştırılması gereğini öne çıkarmaktadır. “İyileşmenin temel araçları” (Cohen ve Ball, 1990, s.233) olarak, öğretmenleri öğrenen-odaklılığını ne biçimde anladıklarını ve uyguladıklarını anlamak bu çalışmanın temel amacıdır. Ayrıca, özel okul ve devlet okulu öğretmenleri arasında inanç, görüş ve bilgi açısından ne tür farklılıklar olduğunu belirlemek de bu çalışmanın amaçlarından biridir. Bu amaçlar doğrultusunda aşağıdaki sorulara yanıt aranmıştır.

1. Öğretmenler öğrenen-odaklılığından neyi anlamaktadırlar?
  - 1.1. Öğretmenler öğrenen-odaklılığını yaratmada rollerini nasıl görmektedirler?
  - 1.2. Öğretmenler öğrenen-odaklılığı ve öğrenen özerkliği arasındaki ilişkiyi nasıl görmektedirler?
2. Öğretmenler kendi öğrenen-odaklılığı anlayışlarını nasıl uygulamaktadırlar?
3. Öğretmenler Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası hakkında ne bilmektedirler?
  - 3.1. Öğretmenler Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası uygulamasının kendi sınıf içi uygulamalarını nasıl etkileyeceğini düşünmektedirler?
4. Devlet ilköğretim ve özel ilköğretim öğretmenleri arasında

- 4.1. öğrenen-odaklılığından neyi anladıkları
    - 4.1.1. öğrenen-odaklılığını yaratmada rollerini nasıl gördükleri
    - 4.1.2. öğrenen-odaklılığı ve öğrenen özerkliği arasındaki ilişkiyi nasıl gördükleri
  - 4.2. kendi öğrenen-odaklılığı anlayışlarını nasıl uyguladıkları
  - 4.3. Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası hakkında ne bildikleri
    - 4.3.1. Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası uygulamasının kendi sınıf-içi uygulamaların nasıl etkileyeceğini düşündükleri
- açısından ne tür farklılıklar vardır?

## YAZIN TARAMASI ÖZETİ

1970’li yılların ortalarından itibaren öğretmenlerin inanç sistemleri oldukça önem kazanmaya başlamıştır. Öğretmen bilişini inceleyen yeni bir alan ortaya çıkmıştır. Öğretmenlerin düşüncelerinin, yargılarının ve kararlarının öğretme davranışını yönlendirdiği ileri sürülmüştür (Shavelson ve Stern 1981).Tüm öğretmenler kendi işleri, öğrencileri, konu alanları, rolleri ve sorumlulukları hakkında inançlara sahiptirler. Bu inançları doğrultusunda sınıf içi etkinliklerini ve etkileşimlerini düzenlerler (Tudor, 1998).

Öğretmenlerin düşünce süreçlerini araştırmadaki temel amaç öğretmenlerin ne düşündüklerini ve sınıf içinde nasıl davrandıklarını anlamaktır. Buradaki temel varsayım öğretmenlerin etkinliklerinin, düşüncelerinin bir yansıması olduğudur. Öğretmenlerin inançları öğretimin pek çok alanında önemli rol oynamaktadır. Ancak son derece yaygın biçimde kullanılmasına karşın inanç kavramının tanımlanması oldukça zordur. Yapılan inanç tanımları ve bilgi tanımları birbirleriyle büyük oranda örtüşmektedir. Pajares de (1992) bilgi ve inancın birbirinden ayıramayacağını belirtmiştir. Aynı biçimde görüş tanımları da inanç ve bilgi tanımlarıyla paralellik göstermektedir. Woods (1996) bu kavramları birleştirerek inanç, görüş ve bilgi (İGB) kavramını ortaya koymuştur. İGB kavramı sadece inanç, görüş ve bilgiyi değil aynı zamanda bu kavramların aralarındaki ilişkiyi de yansıtmaktadır.

Yabancı dil öğretimi alanında öğretmen inançlarının araştırıldığı çalışmalarda, öğretmen inançlarıyla davranışlar arasında bir tutarlılık olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Bu çalışmalara göre öğretmenlerin inançları sınıf içi uygulamalarını etkilemektedir.(Golombek, 1998; Borg, 1998; Woods, 1990, 1991; Johnson, 1992; Burns, 1996).

Öğretmen inançlarının özellikle bağıntılı olduğu bir alan eğitimde yenilikler alanıdır. Şu anda giderek yaygınlık kazanan görüş, öğretmen inançlarının yeniliklerin başarıya ulaşmasındaki rolüdür. Özellikle de büyük ölçekli yeniliklerin başarıya ulaşmasında öğretmen inançlarının rolü büyüktür. Öğretmen inançları ya da tutumları dikkate alınmadan uygulamaya konan yeniliklerin başarıya ulaşması pek olası değildir (Trigwell, Prosser ve Taylor, 1994).Öğretmen inançları yeniliklerle tutarlılık gösterdiği ölçüde bu yenilikler başarıyla gerçekleştirilecektir. Eğer bir yenilik öğretmenlerin varolan inanç sistemleriyle çelişiyorsa, öğretmenlerin değişime direnç göstermesi mümkündür (Vaugh ve Punch, 1987).

Bugün Türkiye’de Avrupa Birliği standartlarına ulaşmak için eğitim alanında önemli reformlar gerçekleştirilmektedir. Temel eğitim programları yapılandırmacı yaklaşım temel alınarak yeniden düzenlenmektedir. İngilizce ders programında yapılacak olan değişiklikler öğrenen-odaklılığını, öğrenen özerkliğini ve Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyasını uygulamasını kapsamaktadır.

Öğrenen-odaklı eğitim öğrenenlerin bireysel gereksinimlerine yanıt veren yaklaşım ve ders malzemelerini tanımlamak için kullanılmaktadır. Bugün her ne kadar yapılandırmacı öğrenme ve öğretim yaklaşımının öğrenen-odaklı felsefeyi oluşturduğu söylene de öğrenen-odaklı eğitim yaklaşımının temelleri ilk kez John Dewey tarafından atılmıştır. McCombs ve Whisler (1997) öğrenen-odaklılığı öğrenenlerin deneyimlerinin, bakış açılarının, yeteneklerinin, ilgilerinin, kapasitelerinin ve gereksinimlerinin temel alındığı bir yapı olarak tanımlamaktadır. Burada öğrenenlerin en üst seviyede güdülenmesi, öğrenmesi ve başarılı olması önemlidir. McCombs ve Whisler (1997) öğrenen-odaklılığı anlayabilmek için eğitimde yapılandırmacılık bağlamının iyi bilinmesinin gerekli olduğunu ileri sürerler. Yapılandırmacılıkta a.yeni anlamlar öğrenen

tarafından oluşturulur b.yeni öğrenme öğrenenin mevcut anlama geçmişine bağlıdır c. gerçek hayata uygun öğrenme etkinlikleri anlamlı öğrenme için gereklidir d. toplumsal etkileşim öğrenmeyi kolaylaştırır (Good ve Brophy, 1986).

Yapılandırmacılığın öğretmenler açısından en önemli sezdirimi konu malzemesini doğrudan öğrencilere vermek yerine öğrenenlerin kendi anlamlarını oluşturmalarını sağlamaktır. Bunu da öğrenenlerin geçmiş öğrenme deneyimlerini, işbirlikçi öğrenmeyi, gerçek hayata uygun öğrenme sorunlarını kullanarak ve öğrenenin öğrenme sürecine etkin biçimde katılımını sağlayarak gerçekleştirirler. Öğrenen odaklı yaklaşımda, öğrenenler edilgen olmaksızın öğrenme sürecini belirleyen ve ona yön veren etkin katılımcılar olarak görülmektedir. Bu da öğretmenin artık sınıf içinde bilginin tek sahibi olarak bunu öğrenenlere aktaran kişi olmaktan çok öğrenenlere rehberlik eden kişi konumuna geçmesine neden olmuştur. Öğrenen-odaklı eğitim yaklaşımında öğretmen rolü öğrenenlerin öğrenme sürecini “kolaylaştırıcı” biçiminde tanımlanmıştır (Withall, 1975).

Öğrenen-odaklı yaklaşımda öğrenenin ön plana çıkmasıyla öğrenen özerkliği kavramı önem kazanmıştır. Holec (1980) yabancı dil eğitiminde öğrenen özerkliği kavramını tartışan kişidir. Öğrenen özerkliğini bireyin kendi öğrenmesinin kontrolünü kendisinin alması biçiminde tanımlamıştır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında öğretmen öğrenenlere bilgi aktaran değil öğrenenlerine kendi öğrenmeleri için öğrenme stratejileri belirlemelerine ve bunu değerlendirmelerine yardımcı olandır. Öğrenen özerkliği kavramının net olarak tanımlanamaması yabancı dil öğretiminde uygulanması konusunda bir takım tartışmalara yol açmaktadır. Kumaravadivelu (2003), bu yaklaşımla ilgili 1980’ler ve 1990’larda yapılan araştırmalara bağlı olarak öğrenen özerkliğini teşvik etmeyi öğrenenlerin a. bağımsız öğrenme için kapasite oluşturmalarına, b. hedeflerini gerçekleştirmeleri için sorumluluk almalarına ve uygun stratejiler belirlemelerine, c. kendi öğrenme potansiyellerini ortaya çıkarmalarına, d. öğrenme sürecinde kendi zayıflıklarıyla yüzleşmelerine ve bunları çözmelerine, e. öz-denetim ve öz-disiplin oluşturmalarına, f. kendileriyle, öğretmenlerle,



etkinliklerle ve eğitim ortamıyla etkileşirken karmaşık süreci anlamalarına yardımcı olma biçiminde ortaya koymuştur. Öğretmen bir danışman, koç ya da rehber konumundadır ve öğrenenleri kendi öğrenmelerinin sorumluluğunu almaları yönünde onları teşvik eder.

Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın İngilizce programlarına getirmek istediği bir diğer yenilik de Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyasının İngilizce öğretiminde kullanılmasıdır. Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyasının ortaöğretimde kullanılması için 2001 yılında üç ilde pilot çalışmaları yapılmış ve öğretmenlere bu araç tanıtılmıştır. Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyasının pilot çalışmaları sonucunda öğretmenler Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyasının yabancı dil öğretimi-öğrenimi sürecine olumlu katkıda bulunduğunu ve öğrencilerin beklenenin üstünde güdülendiğini belirtmişlerdir.

Avrupa Dilleri Öğretimi Çerçeve Programı, Avrupa'da tüm dillerin aynı çerçeve program dahilinde, ortak standartlarla öğrenildiği, ve ortak kriterlerle ölçülüp belgelendirildiği bir çerçeve programıdır. Temel olarak bu programda dil öğrenme süreci, öğreneni merkeze alarak dil öğrenme farkındalığı geliştirmekte ve dil öğrenimini teşvik etmektedir. Kişinin yaşamı boyunca, okulda, mesleki eğitiminde, işyerinde, resmi olmayan etkileşimler ve kültürler arası deneyimler yoluyla edindiği dil deneyimlerinin kayıt ve rapor edildiği araçtır. Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası, İş yaşamında kullanılmak üzere dil öğrenme nitelik ve deneyimlerinin Avrupa standartlarında açıkça yazıldığı bir kayıttır. Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası 3 kısımdan oluşur;

Dil Pasaportu; bireyin tamamen kendi beyanına göre yapılan değişik dillerdeki yeterliliğine ilişkin genel bilgiler içeren bir belgedir. Avrupa'da denklik ve serbest dolaşım süreçlerini kolaylaştırır.

Dil öğrenim geçmişi; kişinin geçmişte öğrenilen dilde neler yapabileceğini dilsel ve kültürel deneyimleri hakkında bilgiler içerir.

Dil Dosyası; dil öğrenim geçmişi ve dil pasaportunun bölümlerinde kayıtlı olan sertifika ve diplomaları kapsar.

## ARAŞTIRMA DESENİ

Bu araştırma nitel veri toplama yöntemlerini ve çözümlemelerini içermektedir. Araştırma 2004-2005 öğretim yılının bahar döneminde İstanbul ilinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın örneklemini bir devlet ilköğretim okulu ve bir özel ilköğretim okulunda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenleri oluşturmuştur.

Çalışmanın ilk aşamasında araştırmacı veri toplayacağı okulları belirlemiştir. Okul müdürlerinin izinleri alındıktan sonra devlet ilköğretim okulunda çalışan 5, özel ilköğretim okulunda çalışan 8 öğretmenle odak kümeleri oluşturulmuş, kendileriyle ortalama bir buçuk saat süren görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bu görüşmeler ses kayıt cihazına kaydedilmiş ve daha sonra çeviri yazıları araştırmacı tarafından yapılmıştır. Bu odak kümelerini 4 gönüllü öğretmenle yapılan kapsamlı görüşmeler ve sınıf içi gözlemleri izlemiştir. Bu gözlemler belge çözümlemesiyle işlenmiş, görüşmeler ve ders-öncesi ve ders-sonrası görüş alımlarından elde edilen veriler tümevarımsal olarak çözümlenmiştir.

Bireysel olarak öğretmenlerle görüşme yapılması ve ders içi etkinliklerinin gözlemlenmesi için öğretmenlere araştırmanın her aşamalarındaki katılımlarının gönüllülük esasına dayandığı belirtilmiştir. Çalışmaya katılmak için her bir öğretmenin

1. 4., 5., 6., 7., ve 8. sınıflara İngilizce dersi veriyor olması
2. araştırmacının kendi ders verdiği sınıflarda gözlem yapmasına izin vermesi
3. sınıf içi gözlemleri öncesinde ve sonrasında araştırmacıyla dersle ilgili izlenimlerini paylaşması
4. sınıf-içi gözlemleri başlamadan önce ve gözlemlerin tamamı bittiğinde araştırmacıyla görüşmeler yapması
5. araştırmacıya zaman ayırması
6. İngilizce öğretmeni olarak deneyimli olması
7. İngiliz Dili Eğitimi lisans diplomasına sahip olması

## 8. İngilizce öğretimiyle ilgili hizmet-içi eğitim programlarına katılmış olması

ön koşulları aranmıştır.

Çalışmaya katılan dört öğretmen, üniversitelerin İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bölümünden mezundur. Hiç biri yüksek lisans yapmamıştır ve öğretmenlik deneyimleri 5 ile 7 yıl arasında değişiklik göstermektedir.

Öğretmenlerle gözlem süreci öncesi ve sonrasında yapılan öğretmenlerle görüşmelerde açık uçlu sorular sorulmuştur. İlk görüşmedeki sorular yazın taraması sonucunda belirlenmiş, gözlem sonrasındaki görüşmelerdeki sorularsa öğretmenlerin ilk görüşmelerde ortaya koydukları inançları netleştirmek ve gözlemler sırasında ortaya çıkan öğretmen davranışlarıyla ilgili daha detaylı bilgi almak amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Her görüşme ortalama bir buçuk sürmüştür. Bu görüşmeler ses kayıt cihazına kaydedilmiş ve daha sonra yazılı metin biçimine dönüştürülmüştür.

Öğretmenlerin 2004-2005 öğretim yılı bahar döneminde sınıf içi etkinlikleri araştırmacı tarafından gözlemlenmiş ve dersteki tüm konuşmalar ve sınıf olayları detaylı biçimde not edilmiştir. Ders içi gözlemleri sırasında ses kaydı yapılmamıştır. Öğretmenlerle derse girmeden önce ve dersten sonra kısa görüşmeler yapılmış dersle ilgili izlenimleri alınmıştır. Öğretmenlere her ders sonrasında öğrenen-odaklılığını ne şekilde uyguladıkları sorulmuştur. Gözlemler sırasında öğretmenler tarafından kullanılan çalışma yapıtları ve dersle ilgili belgeler de öğretmenlerden istenmiş, veri çözümlemesi sırasında bu belgeler kullanılmıştır.

Görüşmeler sırasında toplanan nitel veriler içerik analizi kullanılarak çözümlenmiştir. Görüşmelerin çözümlenmesinde araştırma soruları başlangıç noktasını oluşturmuştur. Verinin çözümlenmesi sırasında temalar oluşmuş ve bu temalar araştırma sorularına göre kategorilere ayrılmıştır. Bu kategoriler öğrenen-odaklılığı tanımı, öğrenen özerkliği ve öğrenen-odaklılığı arasındaki ilişki, öğretmenlerin öğrenen odaklılığını yaratmadaki rollerini, öğretmenlerin Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası hakkında ne kadar bilgi sahibi olduklarını içermektedir.

Ders içi gözlemlerinin ve belgelerin çözümlenmesi amacıyla araştırmacı tarafından öğrenen-odaklılığı modeli hazırlanmıştır. Bu modelin hazırlanmasında 1997 yılında Amerikan Ruhbilim Derneği'nin hazırlamış olduğu 14 öğrenen-odaklılığı ilkesi ve öğrenen-odaklılığı ve yapılandırmacı yaklaşımla ilgili kapsamlı yazın taramasından yararlanılmıştır. Model, öğrenen-odaklı yaklaşımın tüm boyutlarını içermektedir. Öğrenen-odaklılığı ve yapılandırmacı yaklaşımla ilgili yazın taraması süzülerek tek tek maddeler belirlenmiş ve birbirleriye ortak maddeler gruplanmıştır. Model toplam 29 gruptan oluşmaktadır. 28 grup öğrenen-odaklılığın ilkelerini yansıtmaktadır. Bir grup öğrenen-odaklılığı içermeyen öğretmen davranışlarını belirtmektedir. Bu grup öğrenen-odaklılığını sağlamak için öğretmenleri kaçınılmalar gereken davranışları yansıtmaktadır.

Bu öğrenen-odaklı modele bağlı olarak gözlem ve belge şemaları oluşturulmuş ve ders içi gözlemlerden elde edilen sınıf olayları bu şemalara göre çözümlenmiştir. Gözlemlerin ve belgelerin çözümlenmesinde Excel programı kullanılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin sergilemiş oldukları öğrenen-odaklı olan ve olmayan davranışlar davranışın varlığı ya da yokluğuna bağlı olarak işaretlenmiş ve bilgisayara yüklenmiştir. Sonuç olarak öğretmenlerin öğrenen-odaklılığını ne ölçüde uyguladığını gösteren nicel veriler elde edilmiş, öğretmen profilleri ortaya çıkmıştır.

Araştırmanın karşılaştırmalı bir olgu çözümlemesi çalışması olması belli sınırlılıkları beraberinde getirmiştir. Sınıf içi gözlemlerin araştırmacı tarafından yapılması katılımcıların davranışlarını ve ortamı etkilemiş olabilir. Ayrıca çalışma iki okulda yürütülmüştür. Buna bağlı olarak araştırma sonuçları genellenemez, ancak yine de herhangi bir değişim sürecine katılanlar için sonuçlar oldukça yararlı olabilir. Bu sınırlılıklar çalışmanın çıktılarının genellenebilirliğini etkilese de, gelecekteki çalışmalara yön verebilir.

## **SONUÇLAR VE TARTIŞMA**

Odak kümeleri görüşmeleri ve bireysel görüşmelerden elde edilen bulgular devlet ilköğretim okulunda çalışan öğretmenlerle, özel ilköğretim

okulunda çalışan öğretmenlerin öğrenen-odaklılığına farklı biçimde yaklaştıklarını göstermiştir. Her ne kadar hem devlet ve özel okul öğretmenleri öğrenen-odaklılığını yaparak öğrenme olarak tanımlamış olsalar da çalışma ilerledikçe, devlet okulu öğretmenlerinin yaparak öğrenmeden anladıklarının öğrencilerin tümce düzeyinde dilbilgisi-odaklı alıştırmaları yapmaları olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Öğrencilerin ders içi etkinlikleri öğretmenler tarafından hazırlanan çalışma yapraklarındaki alıştırmalara doğru yanıtlar vermelerini içermektedir. Devlet okulundaki öğretmenlerin öğrenen-odaklı eğitim tanımları öğretmen-odaklı yaklaşım tanımına uymaktadır. Devlet okulunda çalışan her iki öğretmen de öğrenen odaklılığını öğretmenin dersi sunması ve öğrencilerin alıştırmaları yapması biçiminde anlamakta ve uygulamaktadır.

Özel okul öğretmenleri ise öğrenen-odaklı eğitimin tanımında öğrenen üzerinde durmuşlardır. Öğrenen-odaklılığını yaparak, yaşayarak öğrenme olarak tanımlamışlar ve sınıf içi etkinlikleri olarak da proje çalışmaları ve grup çalışmaları gösterilmiştir. Özellikle bir öğretmen öğrencilerin daha çok söz aldıkları ve kendilerini sözlü olarak ifade ettikleri bir sınıf ortamının öğrenen-odaklı olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Bu öğretmene göre öğrenciler sınıf içinde ne kadar çok söz alırsa ders o kadar öğrenen-odaklı olacaktır.

Devlet ilköğretim okulunda çalışan öğretmenler öğrenen-odaklılığını yaratmadaki rollerini düzeltici ve rehber olarak tanımlamışlardır. Aynı zamanda konuyu sunan kişidirler. Kendileri için biçtikleri roller yine kendi öğrenen-odaklı eğitim anlayışlarıyla uyumludur. Devlet okulu öğretmenlerinden biri kendini öğrencilerin hatalarını düzelten kişi olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bu öğretmene göre öğrencilerin sürekli olarak hatalarının düzeltilmesi gerekmektedir.

Özel okul öğretmenleri kendilerini rehber, kolaylaştırıcı ve lider olarak görmektedirler. Öğrencilere öğrenme süreci sırasında yardımcı olmaları gerektiğinin üzerinde durmuşlardır. Öğrenme zaten yeterince zor bir süreçtir ve öğretmenin rolü bu süreci öğrenciler açısından mümkün olduğunca kolaylaştırmaktır. Bir özel okul öğretmeni, öğretmenin öğrencilere ne yapmaları gerektiğini açıklayan lider konumunda olduğunu belirtmiştir. Diğer özel okul

öğretmeni ise öğretmenin sorunları çözen kişi olarak öneminden söz etmiştir. Her iki özel okul öğretmeni öğrencilerin öğrenme için olumlu bir sınıf ortamına gereksinim duyduklarının altını çizmiştir.

Gerek devlet okulu, gerekse özel okul öğretmenleri öğrenen özerkliği tanımı konusunda yeterli bilgiye sahip olmadıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Çalışma ilerlediğinde öğretmenlere öğrenen özerkliği tanımı verilerek ne düşündükleri sorulmuş ve öğretmenler öğrenen özerkliğinin mevcut öğrencilerle ve şu anki eğitim sistemiyle söz konusu olamayacağını belirtmişlerdir. Her iki devlet okulu öğretmeni öğretmen özerkliğinin gereğini vurgulamışlardır.

Özel okul öğretmenleri de öğrenen özerkliği kavramına uyan öğrencilerin yokluğundan söz etmiş ve bu konuda ailelerin etkisini belirtmişlerdir. Bu öğretmenlerin inancına göre öğrenen özerkliğinin okul ortamında gerçekleştirilmesi mümkün değildir. Bir özel okul öğretmeni öğrenen-odaklı eğitim için öğrenenlerin özerk olması gerektiğini söylemiştir. Öğrencilerin kendi öğrenmelerinin sorumluluğunu almadıkları bir öğrenme ortamında öğrenen-odaklı yaklaşımı uygulamak olası değildir.

Öğretmenlerin ders-içi gözlemlerinin çözümlenmesi sonucunda öğrenen-odaklı eğitimi kendi inançları, görüşleri ve bilgileri doğrultusunda uyguladıkları görülmüştür. Devlet okulu öğretmenleri öğrenen-odaklı eğitimi tanımladıkları biçimde uygulamaktadırlar. Öğretmen dersi sunan kişidir. Ardından öğrenciler öğretmen tarafından hazırlanıp kendilerine verilen çalışma yapraklarındaki alıştırmaları sözlü olarak yanıtladıktan sonra, doğru yanıt tahtaya yazmakta ve sonrasında Türkçe'ye çevirmektedirler. Öğretmen bu sırada gerçekleşebilecek olan hataları düzelten kişidir.

Özel okul öğretmenlerinin ders içi gözlemlenmesi sonucunda öğretmenlerin ders sırasında farklı etkinlikler yer verdikleri ve öğrencilerin mümkün olduğunca derse katılımını sağlamaya çalıştıkları görülmüştür. Öğretmenler derse farklı malzemeler getirerek öğrencilerin motivasyonunu arttırmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Özel okul öğretmenlerinden bir tanesi her derste ideal bir öğrenme ortamı yaratmaya çalışmış ve öğrencilerin kendi fikirlerini rahatlıkla ifade edebilmelerini sağlamıştır.

Bir öğretmen dışında diğer tüm öğretmenler Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyasıyla ilgili hiçbir şey bilmediklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Ancak, özel okul öğretmenleri öz-değerlendirme kavramını iyi bilmekte ve bunu hale hazırda uygulamaktadırlar. Devlet okulu öğretmenleri öz-değerlendirme kavramını ilk kez araştırmacıdan duymuşlardır ve öğrencilerin kendilerini değerlendirmelerinin mümkün olmadığını düşünmektedirler.

Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyasının uygulanmasıyla ilgili devlet okulu öğretmenleri ve özel okul öğretmenleri farklı inanç, görüş ve bilgi belirtmişlerdir. Devlet okulu öğretmenleri bu aracın uygulanabileceğine inanmamaktadır. Her ne kadar uygulanıyor gibi gözükse de bu gerçekçi olmayacaktır. Özel okul öğretmenleri ise Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası kullanımının kendi etkinliklerini çok fazla etkilemeyeceğinin düşünmektedirler ve gerekli desteği aldıkları takdirde bunu rahatlıkla uygulayabileceklerdir.

Araştırmanın sonuçları özellikle devlet ilköğretim okulunda çalışan öğretmenlerin gerek öğrenen-odaklı eğitim yaklaşımı gerekse Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası hakkında sınırlı bilgiye sahip olduklarını göstermiştir. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı bu yenilikleri başlatmadan önce öğretmenlere bu yeniliklerin içeriği hakkında hizmet-içi eğitim seminerleri düzenlemelidir. Bu hizmet-içi seminerler söz konusu alanın uzmanları tarafından verilmelidir. Burada öğretmen yetiştiren kurumlara da iş düşmektedir. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı bu kurumlarla işbirliği yaparak öğretmenlere hizmet-içi eğitim olanakları sağlayabilir. Değişim kolay bir süreç değildir. Özellikle de yeniliklerin başarıya ulaşması için zamana, kaynağa ve desteğe gereksinim vardır. Değişimler kısa bir zamanda gerçekleşmez ve değişimi kurumsallaştırmak için zamanın gerekliliği göz ardı edilmemelidir.

Ayrıca ders programlarının esas uygulayıcıları olarak öğretmenlerin de ders programları hazırlanırken görüşlerinin alınmasında yarar vardır. Öğretmenlerin ders programları hazırlanmasına katılımları öğretmenlere özerklik kazandıracaktır (Elmore ve Fuhrman, 1994).

Bu çalışma İstanbul ilindeki bir devlet ve bir özel ilköğretim okuluyla sınırlıdır. Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarını tüm Türkiye'deki öğretmenlere genellemek

mümkün değildir. Ancak, bu çalışma öğretmenler, okul yöneticileri ve politika belirleyicileri için öğrenen-odaklı eğitimi uygulamasının öncesinde ve uygulama sırasında oluşabilecek sorunlar için anlamlı veriler sunmaktadır. Araştırmacı bu tür bir çalışmanın daha büyük sayıda katılımcılarla yapılmasını önermektedir.

Bu çalışmada öğretmenlerin öğrenen-odaklı yaklaşım ve Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyasıyla ilgili inanç, görüş ve bilgileri araştırılmıştır. Bundan sonraki çalışmalarda öğretmenlerin öğrenen-odaklı eğitimi uygulamalarını engelleyen etkenlere bakılabilir.

İngilizce öğretmenleri dışında inanç, görüş ve bilgileri araştırılacak diğer bir grup da okul yöneticileridir. Bir yenilik söz konusu olduğunda okul müdürleri bu yeniliklerin uygulanmasından sorumludurlar. Okul yöneticilerinin de öğrenen-odaklı eğitim yaklaşımı ve Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası uygulaması hakkında inanç, görüş ve bilgilerini incelemek yeni ders programlarının hiyerarşinin her düzeyinde nasıl algılandığını göstermek açısından yararlı olacaktır.



## **VITA**

Suzan Hatipoğlu Kavanoz was born in Bulgaria, on January 26, 1972. She received her B.A. and M.A. degrees in ELT from İstanbul University in 1994 and 1999 respectively. She worked as an instructor at İstanbul University in ELT Department for five years. She has been a research assistant at Yıldız Technical University since 2000. Her main areas of interest are teacher cognition, program development, methodology, and phonetics and phonology.