

The Portrait of a Good Foreign Language Teacher: A Cross-Interview Analysis of Private Language Course Administrators' Opinions

İyi Bir Yabancı Dil Öğretmen Profili: Özel Dil Kursları Yönetici Fikirlerinin Çapraz Mülakat Analizi

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Abstract

The attempt to present the profile of a good language teacher is an early arrival, dating back to 1920s. The literature to date abounds with much scholarly attention to exploration of mainly students' and teachers' point of view regarding the issue. However, the paucity of research into other different perspectives in Turkey serves as the backcloth of the current study qualitative in nature, which employs in-depth interviews with the six administrators of six private courses in a province in the northeast part of Turkey with the aim of filling this hiatus. The data gathered via individual in-depth interviews were analysed via content analysis, in which the researchers went through the transcribed texts to find the recurring themes, enumerate them, create broad categories out of them, and pick excerpts that could support their interpretations. Although it was not intended to provide definitive good language teacher profile, issues such as a finely-tuned classroom authority, energy, tolerance, creativity, a sound knowledge of language, an ongoing professional development, enhancement of student autonomy, good communication skills, and teaching experience were found as the distinguishing effective teacher characteristics, analogous to the previous studies. However, the findings contradict with the seemingly omnipresent tendency towards describing native speaker as good language teacher in the existing literature in that local Turkish teachers were described as effective teachers with their in-class teaching roles, second language learning experience, strong empathy with students while their native counterparts were valued solely for their communicative ability and potential role to add to institution prestige. The current study with a glimpse of Turkey is believed to help capture the essence of the issue by providing a close scrutiny of a different perspective, in turn yield insight for prospective English language teachers and teacher education planners.

Keywords: *Teacher qualities; good language teacher; private course; cross-interview analysis*

Öz

İyi dil öğretmen profilini tanımlama çabaları 1920'lere kadar uzanan köklü bir gayrettir. Günümüze kadar uzanan bu alanyazın, meseleyi çoğunlukla öğrenci ve öğretmen açısından ele alan sayısız çalışmalarla doludur. Fakat Türkiye'de bu konuda farklı görüş açılarını araştırmak için yapılan çalışmalar yok denecek kadar azdır ve bu bariz açık, Türkiye'nin kuzeydoğusundaki bir ilde bulunan altı özel dil kursundaki toplam altı yönetici ile detaylı bireysel görüşmelerin yapıldığı özünde nitel olan bu çalışma ile doldurulmaya çalışılmıştır. İyi dil öğretmeni profilinin sabit tanımı hedeflenmese de

alanyazında var olan çalışma sonuçlarına benzer olarak hassas dengelenmiş sınıf otoritesi, enerji, tolerans, üretkenlik, iyi bir hedef dil bilgisi, sürekli kişisel gelişim, öğrenci özerkliğini geliştirme, iyi iletişim becerileri ve eğitim tecrübesi gibi özelliklerin iyi bir dil öğretmeni ile özdeşleştirildiği görülmüştür. Fakat sonuçlar art alanyazında yaygın olarak bulunan doğal konuşmacı ile iyi dil öğretmenini özdeşleştirme eğiliminin belirlendiği çalışmaların aksine çıkmış, ve yerel Türk dil öğretmenleri sınıf içi öğretim rolleri, ikinci dil edinim tecrübeleri, öğrencilerle kuvvetli empati kurabilme yeteneklerinden dolayı iyi dil öğretmeni olarak etiketlenirken doğal konuşmacılar sadece hedef dildeki iletişim becerileri ve kuruma prestij kazandırma potansiyellerinden dolayı övülmüşlerdir. Türkiye gerçeğine ışık tutan bu çalışma ile daha önceki çalışmalara ek olarak farklı bir bakış açısının detaylı incelenmesi ile meselenin özüne inerek öğretmen adayları ve eğitim planlayıcılarına gelecek için fikir verme amacı güdülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen nitelikleri; iyi dil öğretmeni; özel kurslar; çapraz görüşme analizi

Introduction

Teaching is one of the most difficult profession as teachers are supposed to be familiar with a great number of issues including content, general pedagogy, curriculum, pedagogical content, learners and their characteristics, educational context, and educational ends, purposes, and values as well as philosophical and historical grounds (Shulman, 1987). Specifically, Harmer (2007) argues that teaching a language is a demanding activity and could be categorised as both a science and art. The profession can be regarded as a science because reacting to different events, adopting various roles appropriately, performing certain tasks such as preparation, keeping record, having certain skills such as managing classroom, matching tasks and groups, using various activities and topics, planning appropriate destinations in the form of learning outcome, knowing about language system, materials and resources, classroom equipment, and keeping-up-do-date require teachers to know the procedure of how to do things, which could create the sense of a scientific endeavour. On the other hand, teaching a language could be regarded as an art since establishing good rapport with students, recognising their individuality, listening to them, respecting them, and being even-handed require teachers to create a healthy relationship with their students.

As the quality of education is associated with teacher qualifications, drawing the profile of an effective teacher is regarded vital in education, and this attempt is welcome since it may result in erasing problems stemming from teachers (Dincer, Goksu, Takkac, & Yazıcı, 2013). Writing that the word "effective" comes from the Latin word *effectivus* referring to creativity and production, Gao and Liu (2013, p. 84) describe effective teachers as the ones who can "engage students in the learning process and maximize student academic achievement and other school outcomes". Describing the qualities of an effective teacher is regarded as one of the two important issues that determine teacher education pedagogy, and it is seen as a difficult undertaking (Korthagen, 2004). However, as one of the key factors in successful education, it is argued that description of good teacher qualities needs to be given careful consideration (Onem, 2009).

Even though considerable attention has been paid to define the good teachers' traits, an absolute standard list to describe the hallmarks of best teaching does not exist. As highlighted by Gao and Liu (2013), examining good teacher characteristics has become a matter of consideration since the 1920s. Providing a list of good teacher qualities is a difficult attempt as teachers are different from each other, they can be successful in different ways, and students' views regarding these qualities change (Harmer, 2007). Although they have provided a list of traits, Celik, Arkan, and Caner (2013) claim that teacher effectiveness should be regarded as "as a fluid rather than a fixed phenomenon" (p. 295) since good teachers know that continuing professional growth is vital in teacher effectiveness, and

these characteristics may change in time. This makes the task of trait determination far from prescriptive.

The studies on the perception of good language teachers have mostly focused on the perspectives of either students/teachers or both of them (Onem, 2009). As students' and teachers' perspectives are believed to reflect the profile of a good language teacher, the existing literature is somehow limited to state-funded institutions. The recent study aims to expand our understanding of good language teacher profile and reflect a different perspective for the sake of providing a fuller picture from the private language courses' perspective in Turkey rather than find a conclusive answer at a substantive level guided the study. The researchers are of the opinion that this kind of research has practical value in specific Turkish language teaching context as practising or prospective teachers may need locally rather than globally described teacher characteristics that can suit their needs in their specific teaching contexts. This in turn may help Turkish teacher education institutions avoid "irrelevancy of teacher education to the realities of Turkish schools" (Cakiroglu & Cakiroglu, 2003, p. 254).

Literature Review

It is crystal-clear in the existing literature on language pedagogy that the profession of language teaching is both quite challenging and unique among other fields. For instance, in a detailed study with five groups of practising and prospective teachers, namely 20 postgraduate students, 29 language teacher conference delegates in UK, four subject specialists, 151 Hungarian pre-service English teachers, and 24 Slovene undergraduates in English, Borg's (2006) found out how unique and challenging the profession of language teaching is. He reached the following 11 themes as key characteristics: the nature of subject, the content of teaching, methodology, teacher-learner relationships, non-native issues, teacher characteristics, trainings, status, errors, student body, and commercialisation. First, language subject is seen more dynamic and relevant to real life. Second, the content includes not only four basic skills but also various issues such as culture, communication and learning skills. Third, language teaching is much richer in methodologies and techniques. Fourth, language teachers are more communicative with their pupils. Fifth, language teachers teach a language other than their mother tongue, and they are compared to native speakers. Sixth, creativity, flexibility, and enthusiasm are the three most basic teacher characteristics. Seventh, it requires serious trainings for each teacher qualification. Eighth, the status of language teachers is much lower than the teachers in other fields. Ninth, language teachers are more likely to tolerate incorrect student output. Tenth, language has more adult learners than the other subjects. And lastly, some commercial forces play key roles in language teaching.

The natural outcome of the challenging and unique nature of language teaching profession is the sheer emphasis put on its teacher qualities. Although Goodywn (1997) accepts that describing a good language teacher is "extraordinarily sophisticated and subtle" attempt, he outlines eight aspects of the qualification of a highly accomplished teacher as personal characteristics, professional identity, subject knowledge, planning and review, assessment and recording, documentation, relationships with pupils and colleagues, and contextual understanding. While personal characteristics refer to being self-reflective, tolerant and communicative, having eagerness to try out new things, and being good at guiding, professional identity includes characteristics such as having a strong ELT background, being interested in professional development, being receptive to change and acting as an agent in innovation, respecting other colleagues and being a role model for them. As the name speaks for itself, subject knowledge stands for the degree of teacher knowledge on topics they are responsible to teach, and incorporating it into practical teaching taking the context into consideration is of seminal value. In addition, while the aspect of planning and review requires teachers to create and follow both challenging and realistic plans, assessment and recording dimension is related to knowing about

various assessment techniques and using them appropriately. Documentation refers to preparing classroom materials and departmental guidelines. The aspect of relationship with pupils and colleagues is about promoting student thinking and autonomy and collaboration with peers. Lastly, contextual understanding is being aware of the local circumstances of students and communicating with parents. Goodywn (1997) notes further that it is naive to think that every single teacher can reach at an equal level in all the eight aspects above.

While taking all the above issues into account, in their detailed review of the related literature, Dincer et al. (2013) create fewer characteristics: socio-affective skills, pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge, and personality characteristics. Socio-affective skills include being motivating and enthusiastic, having interaction with students, showing positive attitudes towards students, responding to their needs, and creating a stress-free learning environment. As the name speaks for itself, pedagogical knowledge refers to the knowledge of process and strategies that help teachers deal with content. It includes knowing how to give feedback, organising and explaining the content, using various approaches and integrating technology into one's own pedagogy, and managing the classroom. While pedagogical knowledge is about knowing how to do things, subject-matter knowledge refers to the knowledge about one's specific field such as speaking English well, having the knowledge of English lexicon and pronunciation, to include just a few. Lastly, personality characteristics such as being motivating, creative, enthusiastic, patient, kind, tolerant, open-minded, flexible, optimistic and so forth are the ones that help teachers deal with their students successfully. Dincer et al. (2013) conclude that although the issue is too complicated to be summarised with a list of characteristics, a good language teacher should have "a balanced combination" (p. 6) of these four basic aspects.

Another issue of ongoing debate regarding the profile of good language teacher is the dichotomy of native speaker teacher and non-native speaker teacher. The related literature shows that as native teacher is regarded as both model speaker and ideal teacher, English Language Teaching (ELT, henceforth) has yielded to this "pervasive ideology" (Holliday, 2006, p. 385) although there has been strong resistance to it recently, non-native teachers are mostly marginalised in this profession. While native speaker language teachers are described with adjectives such as active, collaborative, learner-centred, their non-native contemporaries are labelled as dependent, collectivist, hierarchical, passive, lacking self-esteem, and as Holliday (2006) succinctly puts, these descriptions "represent an imagined, problematic *generalized Other* to the unproblematic Self of the 'native speaker'" (p. 386). To complicate the matter even further, this ideology has affected employment policy as one of the several aspects of professional life, and many non-native English teachers are not favoured by language institutions although they are highly qualified in their field (Shin, 2008). In a questionnaire study conducted with ninety private language courses, universities, and further education institutions to find out the recruitment criteria in language teaching, Clark and Paran (2007) found out that three quarters of all participants and more than half of the private language courses among the three institutions placed much importance on native English speaker criteria. Other than the criteria of nativeness, institutions attached importance to aspects such as teaching qualifications, performance in interview, teaching experience, educational background, recommendation, and visa status. Despite the omnipresence of this tendency towards native speaker language teacher, education shareholders from different contexts including administrators, teachers, and students may hold the opposite view. For instance, in a study conducted by Celik et al. (2013) with 998 Turkish undergraduates, being a native speaker teacher was found to be an unimportant quality of a good language teacher. In Ustunluoglu's (2007) study, it was found that native and non-native teachers are regarded valuable at different levels. While non-native teachers were found more advantageous in in-class teaching roles due to their experience as second language learner and in-class management roles, their non-native

counterparts are admired because of their in-class communication skills and their individualistic characteristics such as being relaxed, cheerful, energetic, easygoing, friendly, and humorous.

On a similar note, Andrews (2007) does not associate language teacher competence with the place of teacher on native speaker/non-native speaker (NS/NNS, henceforth) continuum or ethnicity. Rather, he writes that having knowledge *of language, about language, and of students* and using them harmoniously are of paramount importance for efficient language teachers. Furthermore, he writes that with the development of alternative pedagogies to hegemonic Anglo-American ELT such as English as a Lingua Franca, the traditional dichotomy of NS/NNS has started to be questioned.

Shin (2008) writes that although non-native language teachers are not preferred due to their language competence, lack of cultural understanding, and social language in professional relationship, they have certain advantages such as good grammar knowledge, language learning experience, and the ability to empathise with learners. Therefore, she recommends that they "need to continuously improve their own skills in written and oral English and become familiar with the culture and discourse of the schools and communities in which they work" (p. 62) if they want to struggle with the injustice in recruitment policies. Another argument in favour of non-native teachers comes from Holliday (2006), who states that the issue of native-speakerism should be treated at prejudice level, and "that dominant professional discourses must be put aside if the meanings and realities of students and colleagues from outside the English-speaking West are to be understood" (p. 386).

A frequently recurring theme discussed within the frame of this issue is the importance of establishing rapport with students. As Senior (2006) writes, what distinguishes language teaching from other subjects is that classroom interaction is of crucial importance for language teachers as it is both a means and a goal itself in the teaching process. Establishing rapport with students is as important as pedagogy, for "without the vital links or threads that bind them to their classes in unique, personal ways, the essentially human process of classroom language learning is a soulless endeavour" (p. 266).

Scholars have also voiced their concerns regarding teachers' desire to have an ongoing teacher development. Teacher development requires the teacher to understand themselves as a teacher and increase their teaching skills over time, and in Richards and Farrells' (2011, p. 167) own words, it "includes personal and individual reflection on yourself as a teacher but should go beyond this to include the exploration of new trends and theories in language teaching, familiarization with development in TESOL, and the development of a specialization in your teaching".

In addition to much theoretical commentaries on the profile of the good language teacher, the analysis of the existing literature has shown that various effectiveness patterns have emerged in studies from three basic perspective categories, namely, student, teacher – whether prospective or practising-, and comparative studies.

Understanding Students' Perspective

Sakurai (2012) conducted a survey with 492 tertiary level and language course students from five different Arab countries to examine the images of Arabian learners of Japanese of the "good" native and non-native Japanese language teachers. The results show that while the participants place a higher value on native Japanese teachers' knowledge and experience, practical teaching, support for students' learning, and attempt to create friendly atmosphere, they emphasized that Japanese teachers with an Arabian background should interact with students, have knowledge of Japanese language and culture, and be experienced and high-qualified.

Koc (2012) conducted a more comprehensive questionnaire study to investigate elementary, secondary, and high school students' perceptions of good language teacher. The findings which were divided into two as affective characteristics and teaching skills show that the participants attached great importance to affective characteristics in a good language teacher. While they mostly wanted their teachers to avoid discrimination and be patient, they appreciated characteristics such as organising game and song activities, assigning homework, and praising students less. They also wanted their teachers to keep order in the classroom, increase their motivation, pay attention to their needs and build good relationship between them. Surprisingly, the researcher found that the higher the grade level is, the less important the characteristics such as teachers' being experienced, assigning homework, praising students, communicating with parents, designing song and game activities, taking students' views into consideration are.

Another recent study with a Turkish background belongs to Celik et al. (2013). Based on their study with almost 1000 university students, they draw the profile of a highly achieving language teacher as the one who:

- exhibits fairness in decision-making;
- is successful in reducing students' anxiety;
- demonstrates enthusiasm;
- teaches pronunciation well;
- teaches speaking skills adequately;
- has a sound knowledge of vocabulary;
- teaches reading skills adequately;
- has a sound knowledge of grammar;
- is adept at providing explanations in Turkish (mother tongue);
- is good at classroom management;
- teaches writing skills adequately (p. 294)

Understanding Teachers' Perspective: Practising and Prospective

Studies exploring teacher' perspective are a complementary angle of the issue. Although there are several attempts to reach a consensus regarding good teacher qualities at global level, culture plays a key role in this description. In their cross-cultural investigation of desired teachers personality traits with 155 secondary school American and Chinese teacher candidates, Gao and Liu (2013) found several common effective teacher descriptors although their participants come from two quite different cultures. Both parties were of the opinion that an effective teacher should be adaptable, enthusiastic, fair, agreeable, caring, friendly, honest, respectable, patient, and responsible. Furthermore, they should have higher expectations of their students and a good sense of humour. Still, the American teacher candidates were found to attach more importance to adaptability, humour, and responsibility and less importance to patience, agreeableness, caring, and friendliness than their Chinese counterparts. They attribute this difference to cultural differences in that while America is an individualistic and low-context society, China is a collectivistic and high-context society. Therefore, American teachers are expected to meet individual needs, care for their development, and avoid personal contacts while their Chinese counterparts are expected to enable students to get high scores from exams and have intimate family contact with students.

In their survey study conducted with 215 secondary school English teachers in Iran Khojastehmer and Takrimi (2009) found that out of their four dimensions, instructional strategies that includes qualities such as monitoring group work, using various activities, taking individual differences into consideration, preparing effective exams, attending to students' needs and so forth were regarded as the most important teacher qualification category. Communication (social) strategies that include

qualifications such as being enthusiastic and encouraging, maintaining discipline, and creating a cheerful atmosphere followed instructional qualifications. Although personal characteristics dimension has received much attention in western world, personal traits including characteristics such as teacher flexibility, support, justice, and so on was not regarded as important as the two above. Lastly, knowledge that includes competence in language skills and the use of teaching methods attracted less attention among the four dimensions.

Comparative Studies

In a comparative study with 163 high school teachers and 339 high school students in Korea, Park and Lee (2006) found that while the teachers ranked English proficiency the highest, students were seen to value pedagogical knowledge most. However, both parties valued socio-affective factors the least. Similarly, Onem (2009) conducted a comparative study to see whether there was a difference between students' and instructors' view of good teacher with 300 university prep class students and 56 instructors in the eastern part of Turkey. She largely found symmetry between the views of both parties as they valued personal qualities such as being patient, open to new ideas, talkative and smiling most and teaching skills such as using various techniques, teaching learning strategies, and using authentic materials less. Yet, the groups differed in the importance they attached to socio-affective skills and academic qualifications. While socio-affective skills such as motivating students, helping them, being enthusiastic, and creating a stress-free learning atmosphere got the second high median score for the student participants, it was in the third rank for the instructors. In addition, academic qualities that include skills such as having good field knowledge, being familiar with the current developments in the field, speaking English clearly, and having good and clear pronunciation were seen to be less important for the students than the instructors.

In order to understand the possible contribution of the current study to the related literature, it is worth referring to teacher education and recruitment in Turkey from the outset. As Yıldız (2003) writes, the only education institutions that educate teacher in general and language teacher in specific are education faculties. Teacher education programs have been exposed to various modifications since 1940s including founding education institutions for secondary school teacher education in 1940s, designing two-year language teacher education in 1960, extending this time to three years in 1967, and finally four years in 1978, and founding education faculties in 1982. He goes on writing that due to Turkey's changing economical and social conditions in parallel with the ones in the world, the need to educate people well and have high quality working power, and the desire to be a member of the European Union, these education faculties have undergone several reforms since 1982, and with the new education law (Law no. 4360) in 1997, these faculties governed by the Higher Education Council started to educate teachers with an enriched balanced curriculum on subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and school experience activities. As Seferoglu (2004) writes, due to the gap between language teacher supply and demand, graduates of English-medium programs were once employed as language teachers with an English language certification. Although education programs have serious problems in Turkey such as not preparing students for the real Turkish schools, lacking teaching philosophy and sociological values, and having bad physical conditions (Gokmenoglu, 2013), they go on education with several modifications, and today, teachers graduating from education faculties and English literature departments (with the education formation certification) are employed as permanent and contracted if they manage to get the required grade from the Public Personnel Selection Examination and the Teaching Knowledge Test (Cermik, Kurt, Eser & Ay, 2013), and the others work as paid staff at mostly private language courses in Turkey although there is a general attitude towards a contracted structure (Tuncer, 2012). However, as Ustunluoglu (2007, p. 67) describes, Turkey "not quite European and certainly not Asian but somewhere in-between" is a country where non-native language teachers are welcome every year.

The stimulus for the current study was to explore the good language teacher profile that plays a vital role in private language institutions' recruitment criteria. The major research question guided the study was how the institutions described the good language teacher. As minor research areas, the researchers aimed at understanding personality traits, pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge, social-affective skills, the NS-NNS issue, and education background and experience. The present study is believed to be significant for mainly three reasons. First, it meets the originality criteria suggested by Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight (2006). They list fifteen different meanings of originality, citing Phillips and Pugh (2005, cited in Blaxter et al., p. 13), three of which could be directly applied to the present study. These are conducting an empirical study that has not been carried out yet, carrying a study that has not been done before in the researcher's country, and adding to the existing knowledge in a new way. They write that researchers should look for originality in their research topics and questions in that they need to contribute to the existing literature rather than repeat what has been elaborated on earlier. As the issue has not been analysed yet by anyone in Turkey and abroad on the grounds that the existing literature abounds with studies on only teacher and student point of view, to the knowledge of the researchers, the researchers were the first ones to try it out, and the study has provided new information written for the first time. Second, analysing various perspectives of the good language teacher is a promising attempt as it can throw light on possible areas that need supplementation in teacher education so that prospective teachers can be educated in harmony with the country's realities and stimulate other researchers. Last but not least, the findings are hoped to better inform policy development as well as improve teacher education practice in Turkey. They are also expected to be invaluable in informing prospective teachers about the expectations of the private sector in Turkey.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study was designed as a contextual qualitative study which is "concerned with identifying *what* exists in the social world and the way it manifests itself" (Ritchie, 2003, p. 27). The researchers aimed at presenting the detailed profile of good language teacher described by private language institutions in a north-eastern province of Turkey. These qualifications were believed to reflect the expectations of the private sector from prospective language teachers in Turkey. The desire to unpack the issue of good language teacher and how this concept is understood by private language institutions which are closely connected with the matter generated the necessary motivation in the study.

Setting and Participants

The data were collected from six private language institutions from a north-eastern province of Turkey via convenience sampling, which is the most frequent qualitative sampling approach. As the aim was to get a deeper understanding rather than to "estimate the incidence of phenomena in the wider population" (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003, p. 81), the researchers chose their province due to ease of access. The researchers gathered the data from all six private language institutions out of seven in the city. The remaining one rejected to participate in the study due to their hectic schedule. In each private course, one available administrator or vice director was conveniently chosen as participant for the sake of practical cooperation; thus, the overall number of the participants is six. All these six administrators or vice directors have ELT experience mostly in public schools: however, as their comments show, since they were not satisfied with the physical conditions, lack of opportunities for

professional development, and unsatisfying payment, they preferred to work at private sector, and in the course of events, they started to run their own business or work as administrators in them.

Data Collection and Analysis

As the data gathering technique, in-depth individual interview was employed due to its four key factors. First, as in-depth interview is a combination of structure and flexibility, it allowed the researchers to start with an interview schedule inspired by the existing literature but discussed relevant issues spontaneously. Second, the interactive nature of interview allowed both the researchers and the participants to work together and influence each other. Third, the interview probes started interaction at a surface level first, but later follow-up and bridge questions led to a fuller understanding of the issue. Lastly, the generative nature of interview allowed the creation of new thoughts (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003).

As generated data that "give insight into people's own perspectives on and interpretation of their beliefs and behaviours – and, most crucially, an understanding of the meaning that they attach to them" (Ritchie, 2003, p. 36) were intended to be gathered, in-depth individual interview was employed. The interview protocol of the present study included eight basic questions and several follow-up questions inspired by the following studies: *The Distinctive Characteristics of Foreign Language Teacher* by Borg (2006), *The Characteristics of Effective English Teachers As Perceived by High School Teachers and Students in Korea* by Park and Lee (2006), *Turkish University EFL Students' and Instructors' Views on The Concept of The Good (English) Foreign Language Teacher* by Onem (2009), and *Common Characteristics of an Effective English Language Teacher* by Dincer et al. (2013). The in-depth interview data were gathered with the following questions: Who is the good language teacher?, How should the personality of a good language teacher be?, What kind of methods should a good language teacher use?, How is it important for a good language teacher to have a good understanding and use of English?, How is it important that a good language teacher should give lectures at the target language?, Should a good language teacher be a native or non-native speaker? Why?, From which country do you prefer your language teacher come?, Is the school which a language teacher graduated from important? Why?, Should a good language teacher be experienced? If yes, how long? Where should a good language teacher get this experience?, and How should a good language teacher's relations with his/her students be? The questions aimed at exploring the following six areas: personality characteristics, pedagogical knowledge skills, subject-matter knowledge, the issue of NS-NNS, the importance of education background and experience, and socio-affective skills. An expert holding a PhD degree in applied linguistics was consulted on for the validity and clarity of the instrument.

The in-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face in order to capture "depth, nuance and the interviewee's own language as a way of understanding meaning" (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003, p. 142). In addition, the researchers were sensitive to four ethical issues explained by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007). First, the researchers engaged the administrators of the private language institutions in the study with an oral informed consent that includes explanation of the procedure, any possible risks or benefits, and the freedom to withdraw at any moment they wanted. Second, confidentiality was ensured in that the identities of the administrators were not allowed to be known publicly as the researchers assigned numbers to the institutions. Third, the ethical dilemma deception, not telling the truth, was avoided as the researcher clearly explained the aim and the procedure to the administrators. Lastly, the study took the non-maleficence issue into consideration as the researchers ensured that all the evaluation and comments would respect private language institutions by using an unbiased language in the research report.

The data were analysed with content analysis. First, all the audio recorded interview data were transcribed word by word. Later, the transcripts were read through two times, and in the second time marginal notes were taken. Then, these codes, i.e., themes, grouped as categories (Bryman, 2004). Overall, the analysis could be entitled as cross-interview like in cross-tabulations which compare and contrast the results of several variables together rather than group findings regarding similar codes in absolute tables (Krippendorff, 2003). Similarly, the data indeed of any type of interviewing, including individual, group, or focus-group, could be analysed in a comparative and contrastive way to avoid the repetition of any similar findings and unnecessary elaborations. While creating the categories, the researchers mainly made use of the interview prompts determined in advance, i.e., personality traits, pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge, social-affective skills, the NS-NNS issue, and education background and experience. The researchers looked through the whole transcribed text for coding the data, and later they categorised the long list of codes as the end product based on the prompts. They also checked for possible overlapping in coding and summarised the quantitative data.

Credibility Measures

Various strategies were used to ensure validity in the current study. As Cohen et al. (2007) remark, ensuring infallible human judgement among two or more coders is vital for consistency. Therefore, all the three researchers serving as coders reviewed the data several times, read between lines, and collaborated during the process to ensure a common interpretation of the findings. In order to ensure trustworthiness, an external auditor holding an MA degree in the field was requested to review both the research process and the analysis to check the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, as rich and in-depth descriptions are believed to increase trustworthiness, the researchers described the whole process clearly.

Results and Discussion

The gathered data were coded, enumerated, and the categorised codes were presented under the following six aspects: personality traits, pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge, social-affective skills, the NS-NNS issue, and education background and experience.

Personality Traits

The analysis shows that the participants provided a wide range of characteristics regarding the personality of the good language teacher. Almost all the course administrators attached great importance to a well-balanced personality which is a combination of both love and discipline ($n=5$). They stated that although language teachers should be loving, caring, smiling, and moderate, it is of utmost importance to know where to stop and maintain discipline in the classroom. They frequently emphasized that good language teachers should never be a doormat, yet they should avoid overplaying authority and hurt students' feelings. The administrator of the first institution explained this balance with a self-explanatory metaphor:

"I mean the classroom may lose its focus; therefore, you should not allow them to behave badly and be lax. You know think about a handful of sand. You should hold it neither tightly nor loosely as in both situations you would have no sand in your hand."

Similarly, the administrator of the second institution highlighted this point, when he said that caring teachers are loved by their students, but the ones with good discipline and authority are better:

"Let me express it like this: if you consider personality traits, the expectations of students here, if I see the situation from students' angle, students want their teacher to care for them. Of course a caring teacher becomes students' favourite one. The second important point is understanding. We expect a total understanding from most of our teachers, of course this does not mean that we expect this from all teachers. Based on my experiences, I can say that a caring teacher is effective to a point, but strict teachers, I mean the disciplined ones are more successful in some certain areas."

This emphasis on teacher authority may be attributed to culture in that in collectivist and high-context cultures such as Turkey, teachers have an unshakable authority in the classroom and respecting a teacher is in direct proportion to authority. In accordance with the study of Eristi (2012), who found that providing discipline is seen as one of the basic roles of teachers by students in Turkey, the present study showed that private language courses tended to describe the discipline aspect as an important role of language teachers. Eristi (2012) attributes this focus on discipline to the exam-driven education system of Turkey, in which several parties including school administrators, teachers, and parents have high expectations of students. Creating a classroom where students cannot disrupt the teacher is regarded as a way of making these expectations come true. Similar conclusions were reached by Ustunluoglu (2007), pinpointing this preference as the common belief that "achievement is maximized if the teacher organizes and manages the classroom as an efficient learning environment where academic activities run smoothly and transitions are brief and orderly" (p. 73). Similarly, the value attached to maintaining discipline in the present study upholds the findings of Khojastehmer and Takrimi (2009), who found this characteristics under the title of communication skills much more important than subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge. However, the importance attached to personality traits and the attempt to list a wide variety of these kind of characteristics are in opposition to their study from teachers' perspective which pictured personality characteristics less important than instructional and communication (affective) skills. Yet, in accordance with Onem's (2009) comparative study conducted on students and teachers, personality traits are believed to distinguish good language teacher from a poor one.

The other desired personality traits that a good language teacher should possess and that can play vital role in these private language institutions' recruitment criteria can be listed from the most frequent to the least one as follows: being energetic ($n=3$), just ($n=2$), understanding ($n=2$) tolerant ($n=2$), respectful ($n=2$), patient ($n=2$), caring and loving ($n=2$) creative ($n=2$), a role model for the students ($n=2$), motivating ($n=1$), friendly ($n=1$), a leader ($n=1$), social ($n=1$), positive ($n=1$), moderate ($n=1$), comforting ($n=1$), open to criticism ($n=1$), open to innovation ($n=1$), cheerful ($n=1$), and good at observation ($n=1$). The following excerpt taken from the interview data conducted with the administrator of the fifth institution can summarise how much importance they attach to the five attributes listed above, namely being positive, caring and loving, good at observation, moderate, and understanding:

"A good language teacher should be positive all the time, because you are teaching another language, and it has several different approaches, methods, methodological approaches. I mean you need to be a good observer all the time. First, you need to observe your students, what do they need most? May be listening. Student A may need more listening practice than Student B, and thus the most important trait is being a good observer. Of course teachers should be always very moderate. When students make mistake, they should be understanding. (...) I think you need to be milder and more understanding regarding their mistakes. Of course, they should have good communicating skills, what you are doing is completely about communication."

Pedagogical Knowledge

The second aspect about which the administrators provided a rich variety of characteristic is pedagogical knowledge skills. The administrators highlighted the importance of knowing the process of teaching. The analysis showed that all the six institutions laid weight on the use of English as the medium of instruction. They see spoken language regarded the use of target language as the most secure way of exposing students' to English. They stated that the use of Turkish in classes ends up with language inefficiency and lack of authenticity. Therefore, they advise teachers to use alternative strategies such as body language, gesture, visuals, and real objects. Yet, the participants welcome a little bit Turkish when the teacher is in grammar classes, explains complex language structures, teaches low levels, and is caught short in explaining something. However, the following quotation can best summarise the strict attitude of the private courses towards the employment of English as the medium of instruction:

"Yes, they should rarely use Turkish. Anyway, we commonly cite an example to adults and children. You did not use to understand all the sentences your mother said to you, but thanks to their gestures and repetition, you have learned your mother tongue. It means that learning occurs in this way. First, you will hear without understanding, and then you will get the message thanks to movements, gestures, etc. However, if we use Turkish as the medium of instruction, our attempt turns into explaining a mathematical formula."

This "English-only" emphasis among the administrators are in accordance with the arguments of scholars such as Polio and Duff (1994) who argue that teachers should be trained about how to provide comprehensible input in target language. The participants' circumstance can be exemplified as the weaker form of L1 discouragement, supporting minimising mother tongue usage in classroom rather than the strongest form totally banning L1 in language instruction (Cook, 2001). They were found not to take L1 use as "a naturally occurring phenomenon" (Moore, 2013, p. 251). One explanation for this mostly-English emphasis in good teacher description may be associated with what Cook (2001) writes: the attempts of most methods except for Grammar-translation Method to describe the ideal language classroom as an atmosphere where the interaction is held in the target language result in good language teacher profile with a little L1 use. As the participating administrators voted for communicative teaching that can help students express themselves in English, an ability they cannot gain in state schools despite long years of language instruction, they favoured the employment of L2 in classroom.

The content analysis also brought out some other required pedagogical skills in a good language teacher as follows: managing the classroom well ($n=6$), engaging in an ongoing professional development ($n=4$), integrating all skills rather than focusing on segregated skills ($n=3$), enhancing student autonomy ($n=2$), having the ability the transfer the input appropriately ($n=3$), using methods and techniques appropriately ($n=2$), focusing on communicative teaching ($n=2$), integrating technology into classes ($n=1$), supporting one's instruction with body language and visuals ($n=1$), creating a real-life classroom atmosphere ($n=1$), teaching learner strategies ($n=1$), keeping up with the curriculum ($n=1$), having the knowledge of pedagogical formation ($n=1$), and having the knowledge of diverse students such as young learners ($n=1$).

Apart from the use of L2 in classes, engaging in an ongoing professional development is an eye-catching theme of pedagogical skills that is worth elaborating on in the analysis. The administrator of the fifth course expressed this issue vehemently when he said, "I can say that language teachers must always improve themselves. I mean they must improve themselves by keeping up with the latest

developments regarding language in the world and following the books and journals about language acquisition all the time". Although the administrators tolerate inexperience, they were found not to allow for a static professional life. Language teachers are expected to conduct professional development activities that can take many forms including reading current sources in their field and particularly the ones in second language acquisition, listening to BBC radio, reading both classic and current books in English, communicating with not only their local colleagues but also foreign ones, opening up to exchange of views, and going abroad. However, their desire to have a critical stance, open up to criticism, collaborate with both local and foreign colleagues, share ideas and activities with other teachers, and observe the classes of experienced teachers could be understood as their tendency to see language teaching as a collective rather than a solitary activity (Zhao, 2013). To conclude, these findings uphold the argument of Richards and Farrell (2011) that a good language teacher should reflect on their actions by having a critical stance, closely follow current trends in ELT, and truly have language teaching down to fine art.

Subject-matter Knowledge

The analysis also shows that a good language teacher is expected to not only know the process well but also have a sound knowledge of theory and a good understanding and use of English. The most frequent themes were the knowledge of English grammar and lexicon ($n=3$) and the ability to communicate in English well ($n=3$). Especially, the latter was frequently highlighted by the administrators. The excerpt below taken from the administrator of the second language course can show the general attitude towards the lack of communicative skills in English:

"What is the most frightening is that recently a committee came from the United States so as to conduct a study. They were conducting a study to explore English language education at state school in Turkey. 85 % of the language teachers communicated with the committee members thanks to translators. These people, I mean our language teachers cannot communicate with an American person. This is a quite calamitous situation."

The other characteristics regarding subject-matter knowledge can be listed as follows: having the knowledge of meta-language and language families ($n=1$), knowing other cultures ($n=1$), having the knowledge of current methods and techniques ($n=1$), and explaining the importance of language and its usages ($n=1$).

The most frequent theme regarding subject-matter was found to be the fact that good language teachers were described as the ones with a sound knowledge of both vocabulary and grammar, a finding which mirrors the results of Celik et al. (2013). The explanation for this high proportion of preference for good language knowledge can be the highly exam-driven nature of Turkish education system, requiring especially grammar and vocabulary-based language knowledge rather than oral production and speaking.

Social-affective Skills

In addition to characteristics with an academic nature, there are some non-academic ones that appeal to emotions and attitudes. The analysis showed that the most socio-affective skill for a good language teacher is having good communicative skills so as to create a healthy relationship with students ($n=6$). This ability is seen even more important than having pedagogical and subject-matter knowledge. As the administrator of the second course put it:

"The second point that I want to highlight again is that teachers should be never afraid of communicating with students and they should know the ways how to form healthy relationship with students. As you know, the percent of the role of the teacher in learning English is 20, or may be 30 with a very" good teacher, but then the remaining responsibility belongs to students. Here the communicative aspect of the teacher is vital as a teacher can teach students well via good interaction although he lacks subject-matter knowledge."

The consensus on the importance of good communication skills for a good language teacher upholds the argument of Senior (2006), who argues that establishing good rapport with students is the soul of language teaching.

The second most important characteristics was found to be enthusiastic and reflect how one loves teaching ($n=4$). They believe that if the teacher can reflect this energy and love to students, there remains no single student to whose affections the teacher cannot play on. In this way, although students may not like the language itself, they do their best due to their love for the teacher, and this in turn naturally brings about success in time. In addition, responding to students' individual needs was found to be the third most frequent theme regarding socio-affective skills ($n=3$). The administrator of the third course explains the justification as follows:

"Because teachers are managers. They should respond to them individually and try to understand their psychological and other problems, advantages and disadvantages as well as discover their abilities, and language aptitude. They should be attentive to all students individually."

The other socio-affective skills are extending social activities with students outside the school borders ($n=2$), developing the skill to communicate successfully to a wide range of students from children to adults ($n=1$) and having eye contact ($n=1$).

The NS-NNS Issue

The issue of nativeness/non-nativeness is another issue that has not gone unnoticed in the related literature. Although there were various views regarding the nationality of the good language teacher, most of the courses voted for the recruitment of local Turkish teachers as language instructors ($n=3$). The administrators accepted their attraction in oral production and listening classes, yet most made a distinction between instructive nature and natural communicative aim of language education. They believe that since non-native language teachers know the local culture and empathize with students due to being learners once, they can adopt the role of education coach and prepare students for the future well. As the administrator of the fifth course explained her preference for non-native speaker teacher:

"No, I attach great importance to the how to teach part. If you do not know how to teach, for instance our native tongue is Turkish, I am not a Turkish teacher. If you assign me to teach Turkish as a native Turkish speaker, I could never teach Turkish, because I do not know how to teach and where to start. Therefore, a native speaker teacher should be always in your course for the sake of course brand. The first question of the students who visit our course for the first time is whether we have a native speaker teacher or not. Their existence for our institution can be generally regarded as a contribution; however, if that native speaker is not a teacher, it is at a much lower level than me. Non-

native teachers know their students better due to their experiences. We have really good non-native language teachers who have truly improved themselves."

The results also showed that only one course was in favour of solely native speaker teacher, and the remaining two courses voted for recruiting both native and non-native language teachers, yet the attached greater importance to non-native ones. While they preferred native teachers for teaching grammar, and instructing beginner levels, they preferred their native colleagues for speaking classes, higher-level students, and course prestige. While this finding is in opposition to the results of Clark and Paran (2007), who found that language institutions and universities tend to take antivenins into account in language teacher recruitment, it closely reflect the findings of Celik et al. (2013), whose student participants did not associate good language teaching with belonging to the Inner Circle countries that refer to the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, where English is used as the dominant language with extended exposure in the society in the commonly-cited concentric circle model devised by Kachru (1985, cited in Matsuda, 2012: 2). As Shin (2008) writes, in the current study non-natives were preferred especially for their good grammar knowledge, language learning experience, and their ability empathise with their learners with their learner experience and culture sharing. Especially, the experience of non-native teachers as second language learners have put them in a much more advantageous position regarding in-class teaching roles in which they teach learning strategies better and become more empathetic to students' needs (Ustunluoglu, 2007).

Education Background and Experience

Lastly, the researchers aimed at understanding whether graduating from a prestigious university and teaching experience play as an important role as an aspect in the description of the good language teacher and naturally recruitment criteria. Although four of the administrators stated that being a graduate of a well-known university was not a sign of being a good language teacher and did not count as a recruitment criterion for them, two of them confessed that the name of the university was seen as a good label for the candidates, and they put then name of these candidates at the very beginning of their interview list. However, still they expressed that they did not automatically choose them. For instance, the administrator of the fifth institution described the process as follows:

"If the teacher has these features, these traits, we ask them to teach a demo class. If the teacher shows the features I have already mentioned, manages to communicate with the students successfully, and reflects his/her energy and love of teaching to both us and the students, he/she is a suitable candidate for us. The teacher should have the ability to keep students receptive all the time in the class, and the students need to understand them. If we recognise this positive energy in the candidate, then we entitle them as a good language teacher and hire them."

Although there were different views about the role of a prestigious university in recruitment, all participants reached a consensus regarding the importance of experience in the description of a good language teacher. The following excerpt taken from the first participant can best summarise this consensus on the importance of teaching experience:

"A teacher can of course start over from scratch, but they cannot start as a good teacher. Rather they start as teachers having a good mind to do so. Because this can go for all of us. Unfortunately, a teacher cannot be a perfect teacher without having classroom and student experience. This is directly proportionate to it. I mean you live and learn how to behave, how to survive in a chaos atmosphere. Of course, experience is not an inborn

talent, but as I have said before, an inexperienced person can start only as a teacher who takes baby steps to be a teacher."

Surprisingly, the administrators confessed that prospective teachers having gained experience at private language courses rather than state schools were more charming for them as they have more professional development opportunities such as having peer-coaching activities, preparing presentations, undergoing intern training, having orientation training, to list just a few. Furthermore, three of the participating administrators advised teachers to have international experience if they want to be a good language teacher as it was believed to guide students regarding English accent. Despite the consensus on the importance of experience, the administrators could not reach an agreement on the length of experience time. The experience duration according to the participants changes from 6 months to 4 years. The results seem to contradict the results from Werbinska (2009), who did not find experience as an important variable in language teaching effectiveness. However, the results are parallel in that the importance of experience in terms of duration varied among the participants. To sum up, all the participating courses associated success in teaching language with experience and exposure to real classrooms. This emphasis is in parallel with the attempt of education faculties to build the bridge between theory and practice via five-hour school experience practice at both first and fourth grade during pre-service education in which pre-service teachers are expected to know school atmosphere, teaching profession, and school management (Yıldız, 2003). Similarly, the private language courses emphasise experience as an important characteristic of a good language teacher and aim at expanding student horizon with such orientation programs.

Conclusion

The results of the current study show that private language institutions in Turkey attach great importance to personality traits of a language teacher as a distinguishing factor such as teaching energy, tolerance, respect, and a well-balanced stance between love and discipline. Especially the emphasis on well-balanced authority in language classroom could be explained with culture in that exam-driven education systems from high-context cultures regard organised and smooth classrooms with a finely-tuned classroom atmosphere as the key to success (Gao & Liu, 2013). In addition to personality traits, pedagogical knowledge is regarded another important are that distinguishes good language teacher, and private language courses appear to have a strong consensus on the importance of classroom management skills, an ongoing professional development, skill integration, enhancement of learner autonomy, and transfer of input appropriately. However, they made the point of L2 usage forcibly, stating that mother tongue usage is not natural in language classrooms (Moore, 2013). When it comes to subject-knowledge aspect, it was found that especially having a sound knowledge of grammar and vocabulary is what distinguishes a good language teacher, and this tendency could be explained with the exam-driven Turkish education system in which exams basically test students' grammar knowledge and reading skills. Besides, the courses were found to have a consensus on the importance establishing of rapport with students with good communication skills, which reflects Senior's (2006) emphasis on maintaining classroom community with group dynamics. The courses were found to prefer non-native language teachers, yet admired both parties for their certain skills, reflecting the findings of Ustunluoglu (2007) on role separation. Although they do not see nationality as a distinctive characteristic of good language teacher, they vote for their recruitment of native speaker teachers for speaking and listening courses as well as course prestige. However, they attach great importance to the experience of second language learning, empathy, and in-class teaching role of non-native teachers. Lastly, although the courses do not associate graduation from a well-known university with good language teaching, they attach great importance to teaching experience via intern training, peer-coaching activities, and orientation programs.

The aim was not to provide a definitive answer to the question of who the good language teacher is, yet the findings show that there are some common qualities emphasised by the three parties, namely students, teachers, and institutions such as the importance of teaching energy, tolerance, establishment of rapport, good communication skills ensuring classroom community maintenance, creativity, enhancement of student autonomy, ongoing professional development, a sound knowledge of language and teaching process, empathy with students, response to individual needs, a finely-tuned discipline, to list just a few.

Although the description of effective language teacher has a long tradition, the current study is believed to add to the attempts of capturing the essence of good language teacher profile with the exploration of a different perspective, namely private language institutions in addition to the plethora of the literature exploring teachers' and students' point of view. It is believed to solve the problem of the paucity of research into language teacher qualities from various perspectives in Turkey. Furthermore, it is of utmost importance to conduct these kinds of studies aiming at drawing a local-specific picture rather than a global ideal one so as to help education authorities in certain education contexts who need this picture from several points of view to improve the existing conditions. Lastly, quoting the argument of Celik et al. (2013) again in support of the researchers' stance, the researchers believe that more parallel studies are needed as teacher effectiveness should be regarded as "a fluid rather than a fixed phenomenon" (p. 295).

A note of caution is necessary that as the current study was limited to qualitative methods and only one province, it cannot give an adequate description of Turkish context. Therefore, further studies with a mixture of research techniques in harness and larger samples from a large geographical coverage are needed.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZ

Öğretmenlik; tatmin edici içerik sunabilme, eğitimbilim ve alan bilgisine sahip olma, öğretim programı takibi, bireysel farklılıkları dikkate alarak öğrenci ihtiyaçlarına cevap verebilme, içinde bulunulan eğitim bağlamını tanıyıp tüm paydaşlarıyla ortak noktada buluşabilmek gibi pek çok yeterliliğin bir arada bulunmasını gerektirdiğinden en zor mesleklerden biri olarak addedilmektedir. 21. yüzyılda dünyanın sınırların kaybolarak küresel bir kasabaya dönüşmesi sonucu özellikle dil öğretimi büyük önem kazanmış ve bunun etkiliği de iyi öğretmen özellikleri ile bağdaştırılmıştır. İlgili artalan incelendiğinde iyi dil öğretmenini tanımlama gayretinin çok eskilere dayandığı görülmekte ve günümüzde de hızından bir şey kaybetmemektedir. İlgili çalışmalar genelde ya öğrenci, ya öğretmen veya karşılaştırmalı bakış açısıyla ele alınmakta ve iyi öğretmen profili çeşitli boyutlardan incelenmektedir.

Bu hedefle yola çalışan çeşitli araştırmalara bakıldığında öğretmen profilinin farklı boyutlarının ele alınmış olduğu görülmektedir. Ancak alanyazın detaylı bir biçimde incelendiğinde özellikle vurgulanan bazı temel boyutların genelde dört başlık altında toplandığı rahatça görülmektedir. Bunlar: sosyal-duyuşsal beceriler, pedagojik bilgi, alan bilgisi ve kişilik özellikleridir. Adından da anlaşılacağı üzere sosyal-duyuşsal beceriler motivasyon, öğretme coşkusu, sağlıklı iletişim becerileri, olumlu tutum geliştirme, öğrenci ihtiyaçlarına cevap verebilme gibi alt yetenekleri kapsamaktadır. Pedagojik bilgi eğitim sürecinin nasıl olması gerektiğini vurgularken alan bilgisi içeriğe hakim olmayı kapsamaktadır. Kişilik özellikleri ise öğrenme ortamını olumlu hale getirmeye ve öğrencilerle sağlıklı iletişim kurmayı kolaylaştıracak sabır, nezaket, üretkenlik, açık fikirlilik, esneklik gibi kişisel özelliklerini içermektedir. Öğretmenlik sürekli gelişen bir kavram ve kültür ilintili olduğu için bu çerçeveye iyi bir dil öğretmeni profili çıkarmada bağlayıcı olmamaktadır. Doğal konuşmacı-anadili başka öğretmen olma ikilemi, tecrübenin rolü, mezun olunan üniversitenin prestiji gibi farklı boyutlar da işin içine girmektedir.

İyi bir dil öğretmen profili çıkarma Türkiye’de de akademik mecraların odak noktası olmaktadır. Meseleyi gerek öğrenci gerekse de öğretmen açısından ele alan çeşitli çalışmalar bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmaların sonucu genelde yurtdışında yapılan çalışmalarla paralellik göstermektedir: en çok önem atfedilen özellikler öğretmenin kişisel özellikleri, alan bilgisi hakimiyeti ve iletişimsel becerilerle olarak resmedilmektedir. Ortaya çıkan bu paralellikler artık konuyu farklı paydaşlar açısından da ele almanın zamanı geldiğini düşündürmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, iyi bir dil öğretmenin özelliklerini Türkiye’deki özel dil eğitim kurumları açısından ele almak, sonuçları var olan alanyazında farklı bakış açılarıyla karşılaştırmak ve bu kurumların eğitim personeli alma ölçütlerinin temel dayanağını ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bu amaçla nitel bir çalışma planlanmış ve Türkiye’nin kuzeydoğusundaki bir ilde bulunan tüm özel dil kursları yöneticilerine ulaşmak hedeflenmiştir. İlerdeki yedi kur yöneticisine ulaşılmış ve görüşme yapmayı kabul eden 6 kurs yöneticisi ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bilgi toplama aracı olarak kullanılan bu yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmelerdeki sorular alanyazındaki çalışmalar bazı alınarak hazırlanmıştır. Bu sorulara ek olarak duruma göre sonda soruları da sorulmuş ve görüşmelerde ses kaydı yapılmıştır.

Toplanan bilgi alanyazından esinlenerek kişisel özellik, pedagojik bilgi, alan bilgisi, sosyal-duyuşsal beceriler, doğal konuşmacı-Türk öğretmen ikilemi, ve eğitim geçmişi ile tecrübenin önemi olmak üzere altı alt başlık altında nitel içerik analizine tabi tutulmuştur.

Kişilik özellikleri ile ilgili sonuçlar incelendiğinde en çok vurgulanan özelliğin sevgi ve disiplinin dengeli bir biçimde harmanlanması olduğu görülmektedir. Her ne kadar iyi bir dil öğretmeni gülec, sevecen, ılımlı olarak tarif edilse de dozajında ayarlanmış bir otoriter anlayışı iyi dil öğretmeni kavramıyla bağdaştırılmıştır. Bu durum Türkiye gibi yüksek bağlamı kültürlerde ve sınav-odaklı eğitim

ortamlarında başarının önemli oluşuyla açıklanabilir, çünkü bu tür bağlamlarda başarıyı getirecek olan şeyin istenmeyen davranışları ortadan kaldırarak dersin akışının kesilmesini engelleyen otorite olduğuna inanılır. Diğer kişilik özellikleri enerjik, adil, anlayışlı, toleranslı, saygılı, sabırlı, sevecen, üretici, rol model, güdüleyici, arkadaş canlısı, lider, sosyal, olumlu, rahatlatıcı, eleştiriye ve yeniliğe açık, neşeli ve iyi gözlem yeteneğine sahip olma olarak sıralanabilir.

Pedagojik yeterlilik boyutuna bakıldığında iyi bir dil öğretmeni tanımında en sık vurgulanan özelliğin dersin İngilizce anlatılması ve dili hakim bir şekilde kullanılabilmesi olduğu görülmüştür. Sınıfta anadil kullanımı doğal bir olgu olarak görülmemekte ve jest mimik, görseller gibi alternatif yollarla bu yoldan kaçınılması önerilmiştir. Bu durum, Dilbilgisi-Çeviri Metodu dışında diğer tüm metotların ideal dil öğretmeni hedef dili kullanarak özgün bir ortam oluşturmaya çalışan kişi olarak tanımlama gayretiyle açıklanabilir. İyi öğretilerde arzu edilen diğer pedagojik yeterlilikler şöyle sıralanabilir: iyi sınıf yönetimi becerisine sahip olmak, sürekli mesleki gelişim çabası içinde olmak, tüm dil becerilerini harmanlayarak öğretmek, öğrenci özerkliğini geliştirmek, içeriği kitleye uygun aktarabilmek, farklı yöntem ve teknikleri yerine göre kullanabilmek, iletişimsel eğitime odaklanmak, teknoloji entegrasyonu sağlamak, vücut dili ve görsellerle eğitimi destekleyebilmek, gerçek-yaşamda olduğu gibi bir sınıf ortamı oluşturmak, strateji öğretmek, öğretim programını takip edebilmek, pedagojik formasyon bilgisine sahip olmak, farklı öğrenci kitlelerine eğitim verebilme bilgisine sahip olmak.

Alan bilgisi boyutu ele alındığında iyi bir dil öğretmeninde bulunması gereken en önemli yeteneklerin İngilizce dilbilgisi, kelime becerilerine sahip olmak, hedef dilde kendini çok iyi ifade edebilmek, üstdil becerilerine sahip olmak, diğer kültürler ve dil aileleri konusunda bilgi sahibi olmak, yöntem ve teknik teorik bilgisine hakim olmak, dil eğitiminin önemi ve farklı dil kullanımları hakkında bilgi sahibi olmak olduğu görülmüştür. Ancak bunlar arasında en çok vurgulanan becerinin dilbilgisi ve kelime bilgisi oluşu sınav odaklı Türk eğitim sisteminde genelde konuşma ve dinleme becerilerinden ziyade dilbilgisi, okuma ve kelime bilgisinin ölçülmesinin hedeflenmesi olarak açıklanabilir.

Sosyal-duyuşsal becerilerle ilgili sonuçlara bakıldığında iyi iletişim becerilerine sahip olmanın en çok önemsenen sosyal beceri olduğu görülmektedir. Buna ek olarak coşkulu olmak ve mesleğini ne kadar sevdiğini öğrenciye aktarabilmek, öğrencinin bireysel özelliklerine hitap edebilme yeteneğine sahip olmak, göz teması kurabilmek ve sınıf dışında da öğrenciyle sıcak ilişki kurabilmek sık sık vurgulanan temalar olmuştur.

Doğal konuşmacı-Türk öğretmen ikilemi ile ilgili sonuçlar var olan alanyazının aksine Türk dil öğretmenlerinin çok daha tercih edildiğini ve dolayısıyla öğretmen milliyetinin iyi dil öğretmeni tanımında çok da bağlayıcı olmadığını göstermektedir. Katılımcılar bu iki tür öğretmenin yeteneklerini ayırt etme yoluna gitmiş ve doğal konuşmacıların konuşma, dinleme derslerinde ve kurumun prestijinde rol oynayabileceğinin altını çizmiştir.

Son olarak da eğitim geçmişi ve deneyim boyutuna bakıldığında iyi bir üniversiteden mezun olmanın iyi bir öğretmen olunacağı anlamına gelmediği vurgulanmış, önemli olanın sürekli mesleki gelişme çabası içinde olduğu belirtilmiştir. Ancak iyi bir dil öğretmeni deneyim ile bağdaştırılmış ve bu deneyimin alanında deneyimli meslektaşları gözlemlemek, staj yapmak, uyum eğitimi almak, yurtdışı deneyimi yaşamak gibi yollarla kazanılması gerektiğinin altı çizilmiştir.

Sonuç olarak çalışmanın amacı tanımlayıcı bir iyi dil öğretmeni profili çizmek olmasa bile sonuçlar Türkiye bağlamında iyi bir dil öğretmeni profilini çizme açısından değerlidir. İyi eğitimci tanımını küresel ve idealist çerçevede yapan çalışmalara ek olarak yerel alan çalışmaları yapmak öğretmen eğitimine ışık tutabilir, adayları farklı beklentilere karşı hazırlayabilir ve var olan alanyazına da katkı sağlayabilir.