



## Continuing professional development process: English language teachers' views on the role of teacher research

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### Abstract

The changing needs of learners drive teachers to improve themselves in terms of professional development (PD). To achieve that, teachers apply to activities such as in-service training (INSET) programs. However, these programs may sometimes fail to respond to the needs of teachers; therefore, "teacher research" (TR) gains importance. A researcher teacher is expected to both engage IN (doing) TR as well as engage WITH (reading) it. Although TR contributes to teachers' PD, only few studies are available in the Turkish context. Therefore, the current study aimed to reveal English language teachers' views and practices on TR in the PD process. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to collect data from twenty-seven English language teachers (19 females, 8 males) working in state schools and data were analyzed via content analysis. From Richards and Farrell's (2009) list of eleven tools for PD, only workshop was mentioned to be applied for their PD, meaning that teachers adopted input transfer activities although they saw themselves responsible for their PD. Additionally, although the majority of teachers favored the benefits of TR, none of them was found to do research, justifying Borg's (2006) ten conditions for TR. Findings provide implications for English teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, and policy-makers.

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**Keywords:** Teacher Research; professional development; teachers' research engagement; INSET; in-service training

## 1. Introduction

A teacher has a vital role in enhancing quality of education (Seferoğlu, 2012), in training quality students (Seferoğlu, 2003), and in achieving the applied educational reforms (Mete, 2013). A teacher who is ready to change conditions constantly improves himself/herself professionally and individually, looks for necessary resources and opportunities for his/her development, and takes advantage of these resources and opportunities wisely (MoNE, 2006). In this vein, continuing professional development becomes significant in line with the principle of lifelong learning for quality teachers and quality education (MoNE, 2014).

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Teachers are required to have the necessary knowledge, skills and awareness related to their PD so that they can offer quality education and training to their students (Atay, 2007). PD is defined as “activities that improve the individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as teachers” (OECD, 2009, p. 49). In this age of information, teachers cannot be satisfied with the undergraduate education and they need to be open to constant improvement socially, culturally, technologically, and pedagogically. This lifelong development should be social, constructive and continuous (McAlpine and Saroyan, 2004). It is emphasized that teachers’ PD may increase the quality of education, as it affects student success (OECD, 2005) and allows teachers to meet the different needs of students (Young, 2010). Richards and Farrell (2009) lay emphasis on eleven tools that contribute to teachers’ PD, namely, workshops, self-monitoring, teacher support groups, keeping a journal, peer observation, teaching portfolios, analyzing critical incidents, case analysis, peer coaching, team teaching, and action research.

A workshop empowers people to learn through doing (Price, 2010, p. 35). In workshops which develop collegiality, and support innovations, teachers find input provided by experts, experience practical classroom activities, so their motivation raises (Richards and Farrell, 2009, p. 23). As a component of self-management, self-monitoring is a systematic observation by a person of his or her own actions (Ganz, 2008). It helps teachers monitor their own progress and behavior. A Teacher support group is a collaboration between two or among more teachers to accomplish their goals, assuming that “working with a group is usually more effective than working on one’s own.” (Richards and Farrell, 2009 p. 51). It provides a safe place for teacher collaboration. Keeping a Teaching Journal contributes to personal growth and allows teachers to record classroom events. Peer observation refers to an observer closely watching a language lesson in order to understand some aspect of teaching, learning or classroom interaction (Richards and Farrell, 2005, p. 85). A teaching portfolio is a collection of teachers’ works that aim to provide clues about the improvement of a teacher. Analyzing critical incidents are unplanned events occurring during a lesson, and they may reveal factors that shape classroom practices (Richards and Farrell, 2009 p. 113). Case Analysis is an analytical thinking technique which involves gathering information over time about a teaching situation (ibid. p. 126). Peer coaching is “a peer-networking interaction (working together) which draws upon collaboration and mutual trust.” (Rhodes, Stokes & Hampton, 2004, p. 25). It depicts how teachers conduct their practice and deal with the difficulties that they confront. In team teaching, teachers prorate the responsibility for teaching a class. Thus, they have a chance “to cooperate as equals, although when teachers with differing levels of experience share the same class, some elements of a coaching relationship may also occur.” (Richards and Farrell, 2009 p. 159). Finally, action research is “a common methodology employed for improving conditions and practice in classrooms” (Craig, 2009, p.2) that seeks to determine and solve the problems. It helps teachers change the teaching and learning process in their classroom.

### *1.1. Teachers’ professional development in Turkey*

The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) organizes INSETs so as to inform teachers about students’ needs, how to create a more effective and productive education environment, and providing teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills so that they can solve the problems they encounter (MoNE, 2006). Besides, in Turkey, the School Based Professional Development Model and the Educational Information Network are used by teachers to develop themselves professionally. The former aims to ensure that teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to create an efficient teaching and learning environment inside and outside the school (MoNE, 2008) so that teachers can take a more active role for their own development. The latter is a social platform designed by the General Directorate for Innovation and Education Technologies which allow all stakeholders,

especially teachers and students to have access to reliable and useful e-content whenever they want. Thanks to this platform, teachers and students not only can share the contents they produce but also they can access the desired materials everywhere (school, at home, etc.).

These courses, however, do not contribute to teachers' PD at the desired level (Atay, 2007). The reasons can be listed as: being few in number (Küçüksüleymanoğlu, 2006), being deficient in content and irrelevant to teachers' practice (Çelik & Dikilitaş, 2015), not taking into account the regional needs, assuming that the teachers of the central and rural schools have the same needs (Kaya, Çepni & Küçük, 2004), top-down approach in the selection of topics (Bayrakçı, 2009; Odabaşı-Çimer, Çakır and Çimer, 2010), lack of field specialists (Sandholtz, 2002), lack of practice (Atay, 2007; Bayrakçı, 2009); and lack of feedback (Uysal, 2012). These limitations show the importance of the TR.

### *1.2. Teacher research*

Teacher research engagement has attracted interest recently. The reason behind this drive has been that both doing and reading research is good for teachers' PD (Borg, 2008). It is a requirement that teachers construct knowledge by themselves instead of receiving it passively from outside. Farrell and Jacobs (2010) state that teachers have more say in terms of the practical aspect of teaching when compared with academicians since they are in forefront of this battle.

In addition to its contribution to teacher's continuous professional development, TR also provides teachers with the ability to produce classroom practices that are appropriate for the social, cultural, and physical context in which they work (Hiep, 2006). Literature reveals that TR contributes to teaching profession (Zeichner, 2003); provides useful first-hand information for teachers, policy makers, academicians, and teacher trainers (Francis, Hirsch & Rowland 1994); increases teachers' field and pedagogic knowledge and helping them to integrate theory into practice (Kirkwood & Christie, 2006; Rosiek & Atkinson, 2005); changes schools positively (Price and Valli, 2005); develops teachers' reflective and critical thinking skills (McBee, 2004; Ruthven, 2005); helps teachers gain meaningful PD experiences (Furlong & Salisbury, 2005); and finally, enhances their professional competence (Atay, 2007; Borg, 2006, 2009; Gu & Wang, 2006). As mentioned above, teachers' research engagement is not only significant for their own intellectual development, but also it has a vital role on effective classroom management. TR requires some conditions (Borg, 2006). The first one is awareness which requires teachers to extend beyond traditional. Next, they should have a reason for longing for engaging in it (motivation). However, these conditions are inefficient, if they do not have the required knowledge and skills. Besides, teachers should opt to engage in TR (choice), and need to be supported by a mentor (mentoring). Without time, other conditions do not guarantee that teachers will conduct research. Realizing the importance of TR (recognition) and feeling they are expected to do it (expectations) will more likely help teachers to do research. Finally, Teachers must have the opportunity to present their research findings to the benefit of others (dissemination potential).

### *1.3. Barriers to Teacher Research*

Although TR has numerous benefits, when the conditions explained above are not met, there may occur some barriers which may prevent teachers from doing research. Commonly mentioned obstacles are: lack of obligation (Worrall, 2004); lack of time (Borg, 2009, 2012); workload (Allison & Carey, 2007); associating research with academics (Borg, 2008, 2009); lack of research knowledge and skills (Borg, 2006, 2008, 2009; 2012); teachers' inaccessibility of materials for research (Borg, 2009, 2012); lack of interest and motivation (Allison & Carey, 2007); lack of practical application and unsupportive institutional conditions (Borg, 2009).

#### 1.4. Purpose and research questions

The current study aims to reveal the views and practices of English language teachers on PD and TR. Many studies have underlined the vital role of PD (Genç, 2010; McAlpine & Saroyan, 2004; OECD, 2009, s. 49) and the importance of TR (Atay, 2007; Borg, 2006, 2009; Francis, Hirsch & Rowland 1994; Gu & Wang, 2006; Hiep, 2006; Kirkwood & Christie, 2006; McBee, 2004; Price & Valli, 2005; Ruthven, 2005; Zeichner, 2003). However, in Turkish context, there is dearth of study on the views and practices of English language teachers on TR in PD process.

The research questions of the study were:

1. What are the views and practices of the English language teachers on their professional development?
2. What are the views and practices of the English language teachers on teacher research?

## 2. Method

In this section, detailed information will be given about research design, participants, data collection and procedure, and data analysis.

### 2.1. Design

A case study method among qualitative research approaches was applied in the study. The case study is a research method that describes a phenomenon in the natural real life framework and it examines the situation deeply and in a multifaceted and systematic way (Cohen & Manion, 2007). It is very important to present the data as detailed as possible, directly and with support of the participants' statements as much as possible in case study, (Punch, 2005). In this study, the collected data related to the views and practices of English language teachers on TR in PD process were analyzed in depth.

### 2.2. Participants

Participants were 27 English language teachers (19 females and 8 males) working in public schools in Ankara during 2015-2016 academic year. Participant were teachers who were working in either primary or secondary (lower or upper) schools, from seven different central districts of Ankara (Altındağ, Çankaya, Etimesgut, Keçiören, Mamak, Sincan, Yenimahalle). Two basic criteria were used while selecting the sample: 1) working in public schools, and 2) having no postgraduate education. In this respect, a purposeful sampling technique, which is frequently preferred in qualitative research, was used. This technique is known to be more economical and convenient than other types of sampling (Brink, 1996). Besides, it is not random, but is based on a specific purpose and is preferred to obtain a deeper, more comprehensive and more important information (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

### 2.3. Data collection procedures

The research developed a semi-structured interview form for data collection. The first part consisted of questions about the participants' demographic information (age, gender, professional experience, alma mater, weekly course load... etc.) whereas in the second part were interview questions. These questions were asked in the learner's L1, in order to remove "the concerns about the proficiency of the learner impacting the quality and quantity of the data provided" (Mackey and Gass, 2005, p. 174) since language is effective in telling the events (Richards, 2009).

Piloting as "dress rehearsal" (Nunan and Bailey, 2009, p. 145) is necessary for determining the applicability and usefulness of data collection methods, and it helps the researcher make required changes before the main study is carried out (Mackey and Gass, 2005, p. 43). Therefore, semi-structured interview questions and the interview process were piloted with three participants in order to prevent problems that might arise due to the lack of understanding of the questions or during the voice recording.

At least two state schools located in each district were visited. Twenty-seven volunteer English language teachers of those schools were interviewed. Before the interviews were conducted, the purpose of the study was clearly explained to each participant, and interviews were held at participants' convenience. To avoid any data loss and to be able to benefit from direct excerpts in the work, interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants.

#### *2.4. Data analysis*

In this study, content analysis was selected and Bryman's (2008) qualitative analysis steps were applied for analyzing the data. First, the whole transcripts were passed through several times and the necessary notes were taken. Secondly, the researchers once again read the transcripts to determine key words, expressions and cues. In the third stage, codes were identified and the similar codes were combined. At the last stage, researchers collected the codes under certain categories. At this stage, the emerging categories were interpreted.

Researcher triangulation was applied to increase the quality of the research (Patton, 2002). For credibility, the researchers tried to make interviewees be familiar with the research environment (Richards, 2003), creating a positive atmosphere as much as possible, so that participants could express themselves more easily and respond more sincerely. The procedure, participants, and research environment were explained in detail so that the current study's results could be replicated in various environments (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007, p.162). To increase dependability, the "expert supervision" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.) was carried out by two experts, one working in ELT department and the other in the field of qualitative research methods. Finally, member check was applied to achieve confirmability, which is a "confirmation of results by others" (Trochim and Donnelly, 2007, p 163). That is, the researchers are concerned with the objectivity of the research.

### **3. Results**

The findings of the semi-structured interview are below.

The tables visualize the views and practices of English language teachers in relation to PD and TR. They are also helpful in showing the frequencies of each theme. The categories, sub-categories and themes together with their frequencies and some representative excerpts are illustrated below.

**Table 1.** Views of teachers on improving PD

| Categories   | Sub-categories        | Codes  | f*        |
|--------------|-----------------------|--|-----------|
|              | Individual Effort     | Printed publications (books/articles/Journals) | 13        |
|              |                       | Internet                                       | 11        |
|              |                       | <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>24</b> |
| PD Resources | Supportive Activities | INSETs   | 23        |
|              |                       | One-shot seminars                              | 9         |
|              |                       | Projects (EU)                                  | 3         |
|              |                       | Conferences                                    | 1         |
|              |                       | Workshops                                      | 1         |
|              |                       | <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>37</b> |
|              |                       | <b>Grand Total</b>                             | <b>61</b> |

\* Since participants expressed more than one opinion for different codes, grand total increased more than the overall total number of teachers.

As seen in Table 1, a total of 61 views expressed by English language teachers were categorized as PD resources which had two sub-categories: Individual Effort and Supportive Activities. For the individual effort, printed publications and the Internet were expressed as the sources that English language teachers applied personally in order to improve themselves professionally. Yet, some teachers underlined the importance of supportive activities, such as INSET, for their PD. Some teachers indicated that attending one-shot seminars given by various publishing companies would contribute their PD.

In response to the question ‘What should an English teacher do to improve himself/herself in terms of professional development?’, the representative excerpts are as follows:

*“To keep my English knowledge up-to-date, I follow current English language news sites, current journals or social media sites in English. I do it via the Internet. I sometimes read books and articles related to language teaching.”* T12

*“Now, there are a lot of INSETs conducted by the MONE. Most of them are useful for teachers to develop themselves professionally. Since participating these seminars is a voluntary action, you can benefit from these programs whenever you feel yourself inadequate or whenever you need to develop yourself professionally.”* T1

**Table 2.** Practices of teachers for developing themselves professionally

| Categories                     | Codes                         | f            |           |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| PD Resources which are applied | Internet                      | 13           |           |
|                                | Western movies or TV channels | 8            |           |
|                                | Nothing                       | 6            |           |
|                                |                               | <b>Total</b> | <b>27</b> |

Table 2 presents what English language teachers do to develop their PD. The most commonly used resource was the Internet. A third of the participants considered western movies and English TV channels as resources for their PD. Some respondents believed that they did not need to do anything for their PD.

Concerning the question ‘What do you do for your professional development?’, the following commentaries are examples of the teachers’ views.

*“I am searching the activities shared by other English teachers on social networking sites”.* T27

*“I am watching western movies and following TV channels such as CNBC-E” T22*

*“I do not need to improve myself in terms of PD. Because I studied abroad, I feel myself competent in English.” T11*

**Table 3.** Views of teachers on who has primary responsibility for PD

| Categories               | Codes                     | f         |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Responsible stakeholders | Teacher                   | 15        |
|                          | MoNE                      | 7         |
|                          | Both teacher and the MoNE | 5         |
|                          | <b>Total</b>              | <b>27</b> |

Table 3 reveals the views of English language teachers about who is responsible in PD process. Over half of the teachers indicated that they themselves were liable for their PD. Although some claimed that the MoNE had the responsibility for teachers' PD, others reported that both teachers themselves and the MoNE were equally responsible in PD process.

In relation to the question “Who are responsible for their professional development?”, teachers have the views below.

*“I think the teacher is responsible for his/her PD. Because if you are not volunteer to do something, no one can force you to do it”. T8*

*“Both teachers and the MoNE have the authority in PD process. The MoNE should support teachers and decrease the workload of teachers. Likely, teachers should be enthusiastic about enhancing themselves.” T9*

**Table 4.** The role of teacher research in PD

| Categories                   | Codes                         | f         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| The role of TR in PD Process | Well-qualified teachers       | 18        |
|                              | Productive lessons            | 5         |
|                              | Satisfy the needs of students | 4         |
|                              | <b>Total</b>                  | <b>27</b> |

Table 4 displays the role of TR in PD process. Most of those who were interviewed emphasized that TR was sine que non for becoming a well-qualified teacher. Moreover, it is stated that, as a result of the teacher research, the lessons became more productive and the student needs were better satisfied.

Regarding the question ‘What is the role of TR in PD?’, the following extracts from the teachers' interviews captured some of the significant responses to this question.

*“It helps teachers enhance themselves and find various solutions to occurring problems... It increases self-esteem. Thus, the teacher feels competent.” T15*

*“Thanks to teacher research, once students witness a well-prepared teacher in their class, they get motivated and enjoy the course.” T17*

*“The teacher learns different techniques and methods... S/he recognizes that each student is unique and their needs are divergent. All students are given appropriate feedback according to their needs” T14*

**Table 5.** Views of teachers on teachers' responsibility of TR

| Categories                     | Codes                          | f         |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Teachers' responsibility of TR | Yes                            | 14        |
|                                | Reading but not doing research | 8         |
|                                | No                             | 5         |
| <b>Total</b>                   |                                | <b>27</b> |

Table 5 shows whether teachers see themselves responsible for TR. The majority agree that teacher research is their primary responsibility. Although some of those who were interviewed favored teacher engagement with research (not in research), there were interviewees who rejected the idea of teacher research engagement.

For the question 'Do you think teachers are responsible for engaging with and/or in research?', teachers had the following statements.

*"In fact, the teacher is also a researcher. It is the task of the teacher to conduct research and follow up innovations"* T2

*"Engaging with research is necessary but the difference between teachers and academicians needs to be distinguished. Whether teachers do research is not a vital issue in public schools. However, issues such as interaction, classroom management are more important. It is the academicians' responsibility to do research and share the findings to the teachers"* T22

*"It is not our duty because we have neither energy nor time for research"* T6

**Table 6.** Views of teachers on the contribution of and barriers to reading research

| Categories                      | Sub-categories      | Codes        | f                          |           |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| Engagement <b>with</b> Research | Yes (11)<br>No (16) | Contribution | Efficient course           | 5         |
|                                 |                     |              | Motivation                 | 3         |
|                                 |                     |              | Respectability of teachers | 2         |
|                                 |                     |              | Solution of problems       | 1         |
|                                 |                     |              | <b>Total</b>               | <b>11</b> |
| Engagement <b>in</b> Research   | Yes                 |              | 0                          |           |
| <b>Grand Total</b>              |                     |              | <b>11</b>                  |           |

Table 6 shows teachers' research engagement. If the answer was affirmative, they were asked to talk about the contributions. Findings show that none of the respondents engaged in research although some of them engaged with it. Those who gave affirmative answers asserted that TR helped teachers conduct efficient lessons; it increased motivation of teachers and learners; it heightened teachers' respectability; and it helped them find solutions to the problems they faced.

Concerning the question 'Do you do research? If yes, what are the contributions?', some extracts from the teachers' views are as follows.

*"Students get bored when a teacher conducts lesson traditionally. This situation pushes you for searching new methods. Thanks to new methods and techniques, learners enjoy lesson."* T1

*"When I prefer different materials and more effective methods, learners became motivated."* T9

*"I have noticed that I have been respected much more than before since I started to use different materials and methods"* T14



**Table 7.** Views of teachers on the barriers to doing research

| Categories           | Codes                     | f*        |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Barriers to research | Unsupported by the MoNE   | 15        |
|                      | Lack of time              | 11        |
|                      | Workload                  | 10        |
|                      | Unnecessary               | 9         |
|                      | Lack of writing skill     | 8         |
|                      | Lack of motivation        | 5         |
|                      | Familial factors          | 5         |
|                      | Lack of obligation        | 4         |
|                      | Unchallenging curriculum  | 4         |
|                      | School level              | 3         |
|                      | Underestimating its value | 2         |
|                      | Laziness                  | 2         |
|                      | Being theoretical         | 1         |
|                      | <b>Total</b>              | <b>79</b> |

\* Since participants expressed more than one opinion for different codes, grand total increased more than the overall total number of teachers.

Table 7 reveals what prevents teachers from doing or reading research. Although they explained various barriers to TR, the majority complained that the MoNE did not support them in order to do or read research. Some teachers reported the lack of time as a barrier due to heavy workload. A third of the participants considered TR unnecessary. Another obstacle was that teachers lacked knowledge of academic writing. Other disincentives were the lack of motivation, familial factors, lack of obligation, unchallenging curriculum, school level, underestimating the value of TR, laziness, experience, and being theoretical.

For the question ‘What prevents you from doing and reading research?’, the representative excerpts are as follows.

*“First, the MoNE does provide us any support or feedback. Second, in my spare time at school, I do work related to school such as reporting learners’ scores, preparing exam questions. We have heavy workload.” T4*

*“Workload, familial factors... We do not have enough time at home because we need to spare some time to our families. TR may be possible if the workload is reduced.” T22*

*“I do not have enough time. Also, the MoNE does not ask us to do it. Actually, I am not willing to do it.” T2*

*“Writing skill is important. Besides, it's not something the teacher will do alone. Teachers and academicians need to do it together.” T7*

*“I do not feel myself competent regarding TR...” T8*

*“... lack of time, lack of motivation, lack of feedback... why should I do it? What will happen if I do it? It will not contribute my salary. I do not want to increase my workload more.” T12*

#### 4. Discussion

The findings are discussed below with respect to research questions:

4.1. *Research Question 1: What are the views and practices of the English language teachers on their professional development?*

As Table 1 illustrates, individual effort became prominent for those who found INSET inadequate. They applied printed publications and the Internet so as to contribute their PD. This might be due to the inadequacy of these trainings (Atay, 2007); the insufficient number of INSET (Küçükşüleymanoğlu, 2006); the lack of the application dimension Bayrakci, 2009). However, some teachers looked forward to receiving support from the MoNE, confirming Uysal's (2012) study in which a large majority (93%) of the teachers stated to be willing to join a next in-service training course again. Kartal and Simşek (2011) found that even if lecturers working at college of Foreign Languages at a Turkish University valued PD tools, they did not apply these tool for their PD. Likely, in this study, none of PD tools listed by Richards and Farrell (2009) was uttered by teachers, except workshops. This might be due to Turkish education system. Although cooperation and collaboration have been appreciated in Turkey, training has mostly been done under the influence of the craft model. Thus, teachers find input transfer activities more attractive.

Table 2 shows that although INSET programs were thought to be one of the PD sources, due to the above-mentioned probable reasons, they did not prefer these courses for their PD. Because of the impractical dimension of INSET (Atay, 2007; Bayrakci, 2009), teachers used the Internet to reach out to the application-based sharing. This Table also revealed the misconception of PD among some teachers. That is, according to those who regarded watching western movies or TV channels to develop themselves, PD referred to being good at speaking and listening in English.

Table 3 reveals that most of the participants considered themselves responsible for PD, which shows that teachers were aware of the necessity of having the knowledge, skills and awareness for quality education (Atay, 2007).

#### 4.2. Research Question 2: What are the views and practices of the English language teachers on teacher research?

The findings of Table 4 demonstrate that teachers were aware of the benefits of TR. This result confirms Barker (2005), who asserted that the central logic behind doing research was the desire to improve the quality of education and training.

Table 5 screens that teachers saw themselves responsible for TR. Unlike the study of Doan and Nguyen (2006), in which participants thought that it was the job of research specialists and professional researchers, the majority of the participants believed that English language teachers were also responsible for TR in order to contribute to their PD. This finding confirms Borg (2008) who states that teachers regard research as a part of their profession.

Table 6 shows the contributions that TR provides to teacher, teaching, and classroom environment. Parallel to the findings of the current study, teachers who are familiar with TR increase the quality of education positively (Everton, 2002). Some teachers claimed that the more they engaged with research, the more they were respected, implying that TR increases the respectability of teachers (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001; Zeichner, 2003). Teachers improve their self-confidence by doing research (Hahs-Vaughn and Yanowitz, 2009; Kirkwood and Christie, 2006; Zeichner, 2003) as well as their professional competences (Atay, 2007, Borg, 2006, 2009; and Wang, 2006; You, 2007). In this way, teachers become more motivated.

As illustrated in Table 7, considering Borg's ten conditions for TR, the lack of *time* as a result of heavy workload and the lack of support from the MoNE (*mentoring*) were the biggest obstacles for teachers to conduct research, supporting Allison and Carey (2007) and Borg (2012). One important consequence was that teachers saw TR unnecessary. They did not feel themselves responsible for TR. The possible reason might be due to the misconception of TR, which was mostly associated with academics (*expectation*). Teachers' conceptions of their own role and of research need to extend

beyond traditional notions to be able to engage in TR in a productive manner (*awareness*). Furthermore, teachers indicated that the school level and the curriculum did not push them to do research, which was another misconception of TR; that is, teachers perceived TR as something to be applied when they encountered challenging situations, rather than seeing it as a lifelong process. For *knowledge and skills*, some teachers indicated that neither did they feel competent in TR nor they had writing skills. In parallel with Allison and Carey' (2007) study, some interviewees complained that they did not want to and opt to engage in TR (*motivation* and *choice*, respectively) since there was no financial feedback (i.e., being rewarded or being paid). The conditions such as *recognition*, *community*, and *dissemination* potential were not stated by the respondents. Actually, this is not surprising, as Borg (2006) points out, TR among English teachers may not be a very common activity, because teachers do not have a research culture.

## 5. Conclusions

With the purpose of revealing the views and practices of English language teachers TR in PD, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 27 English language teachers. They were observed to have a misconception of both TR and PD. They perceived PD as keeping themselves active in basic language skills (especially, speaking and listening). To achieve that, they watched English films and TV channels via the Internet. Teachers considered themselves primarily responsible for PD.

Respondents believed that TR was sine qua non for their PD. However, none of them engaged *in* research, and only some of them engaged *with* it. The main barriers to TR were workload, lack of time, family factors, perceiving TR unnecessary, lack of support from the MoNE, and lack of writing skills. Finally, teachers expressed that the macro environment (e.g. the MoNE) rather than the micro one (e.g. school administration) played a negative role in terms of TR. To sum up, the following suggestions may be listed with regard to these results;

- The MoNE should increase both quality and quantity of INSET.
- The MoNE should support and reward teachers' PD activities,
- Teachers must have a say in the planning and implementation stages of INSET in order to adopt them.
- INSET should encourage teachers to enhance themselves instead of having the traditional knowledge transfer approach.
- Teachers, school administrations, the MoNE, and universities should cooperate in TR.
- Teachers' workload should be decreased so that they could have enough time for TR.
- An information system for INSET need to be established. So, it is necessary to determine which trainings teachers have and which ones they need.
- Teachers should be supported with the necessary knowledge, skills, beliefs, desires and attitudes for TR.
- INSET activities need to be practice-based. Teachers should practice during the activities and the classroom application dimensions of these activities should be addressed.
- For teachers to do research, the authority should remove obstacles emerged in the current study.
- TR should be recognized as an essential component of teachers' continuing professional development.

The most important source of PD is the teachers themselves. That is, teachers are not passive consumers of the information provided in INSETs. They should be supported to actively generate knowledge through TR and to implement classroom practices according to the knowledge they produce. The quality of schools cannot be increased without quality teachers. Because the quality of an educational system does not exceed the quality of teachers (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). Therefore, for improving the quality of any education system, the importance should be given to the continuous PD of the teachers.

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## Sürekli mesleki gelişim süreci: İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğretmen araştırmalarının rolü hakkındaki görüşleri

### Öz

Öğrenci ihtiyaçlarının sürekli değişmesi, öğretmenleri mesleki gelişim açısından kendilerini geliştirmeye zorlamaktadır. Bunun için öğretmenler, hizmet içi eğitim programlarına başvururlar. Ancak, bu programlar bazen öğretmenlerin ihtiyaçlarına cevap vermekte yetersiz kalabilir. Bu durumda “öğretmen araştırması” önem kazanmaktadır. Araştırmacı bir öğretmenden hem araştırmaları takip etmesi hem de bizzat araştırma yapması beklenir. Öğretmen araştırmalarının öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimine bu denli katkı sağlanmasına rağmen, Türkiye’de yeterli çalışma bulunmamaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişim sürecinde öğretmen araştırması hakkındaki görüşlerini ve uygulamalarını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamıştır. Devlet okullarında çalışan yirmi yedi İngilizce öğretmeni (19 kadın, 8 erkek) ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme yapıp, toplanan veriler içerik analizi ile analiz edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre öğretmenler mesleki gelişim için Richards ve Farrell’in (2009) öne sürdüğü on bir araçtan sadece çalışmaya başvurduklarını göstermiştir. Bu durum, öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim için kendilerini sorumlu görmelerine rağmen, girdi transfer faaliyetlerini kabul ettiklerini göstermektedir. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin büyük çoğunluğu öğretmen araştırmalarının önemini desteklemesine rağmen, Borg’un (2006) öğretmen araştırması için gerekli on koşulun olmamasından dolayı öğretmenlerden hiçbirinin araştırma yapmadığı görülmüştür. Araştırmanın bulguları İngilizce öğretmenleri, öğretmen eğitimleri, müfredat geliştiricileri ve politika yapımcıları için anlamlıdır.

*Anahtar sözcükler:* Öğretmen araştırması; mesleki gelişim; hizmet içi eğitim

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