



## AN INVESTIGATION INTO EFL TEACHERS' THINKING AND TEACHING STYLES THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE OF THEIR STUDENTS

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### **Abstract**

*This qualitative multiple case study is to investigate whether the thinking and teaching styles of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers are perceived by their students in action. This study, which was conducted at a state university in Turkey, included two EFL teachers and their students who had been trained in the English preparatory program for one academic year. Convenience sampling was used for the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and students to collect data. The research data were interpreted and analyzed with two strategies, direct interpretation and categorical aggregation, within the scope of the content analysis method. According to the results of the study, in both cases, the teachers' teaching styles reciprocated by their students, while the teachers' thinking styles partially reciprocated in the classroom. The thinking and teaching styles that the two EFL teachers wanted to bring into the classroom were largely similar. It was seen that some contextual factors were effective in the formation of the thinking and teaching styles.*

**Keywords:** Teaching English, EFL teachers, thinking styles, teaching styles.



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## YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN DÜŞÜNME VE ÖĞRETİM STİLLERİNİN ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN BAKIŞ AÇISINDAN İNCELENMESİ

### Öz

*Bu nitel çoklu vaka çalışması, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretmenlerinin düşünme ve öğretme stillerinin uygulamada öğrencileri tarafından algılanıp algılanmadığını araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinde yürütülen bu çalışmaya, iki İngilizce öğretmeni ve bir akademik yıl boyunca İngilizce hazırlık programında kendilerinden eğitim almış öğrencileri dahil edildi. Çalışmada elverişli örnekleme kullanıldı. Veri toplamak için öğretmenler ve öğrencilerle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapıldı. Araştırma verileri, içerik analizi yöntemi kapsamında doğrudan yorumlama ve kategorik toplama olmak üzere iki strateji ile yorumlandı ve analiz edildi. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, her iki vakada da öğretmenlerin öğretme stilleri öğrencileri tarafından karşılık bulurken, öğretmenlerin düşünme stilleri sınıfta kısmen karşılık buldu. İki İngilizce öğretmenin sınıfa getirmek istediği düşünme ve öğretme stilleri büyük ölçüde benzerdi. Düşünme ve öğretme stillerinin oluşumunda bazı bağlamsal faktörlerin etkili olduğu görüldü.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İngilizce öğretimi, dil öğretmenleri, düşünme stilleri, öğretme stilleri.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In most of the foreign language teaching theories put forward to date, the teacher is the guiding agent that largely determines what students should do to achieve the goals set for foreign language learning. In the learning process of the student, the thinking and teaching styles of the teachers are as effective as the teachers themselves. Various studies have proven that teachers' thinking and teaching styles are among the most important factors affecting students' learning success and motivation (Cotton, 1991; Dewi et al., 2020; Ahmed et al.,

2021; Jahan et al., 2021). Sternberg's theory of mental self-government (1988, 1990, 1994, 1997), which states that people need to somehow govern their day-to-day activities and there are many ways to do it, defines people's thinking style as the way they prefer to do something or use the abilities they have, rather than a talent. In other words, people can make different choices in different situations and tend to use styles they are comfortable with. People may differ in their thinking styles towards the people they interact with in their social environment. On the other hand, teaching style is defined as teachers' personal behaviours to convey information during teaching activities (Brown, 2001; Grasha, 2002). To put a finer point on it, while a teacher's thinking style expresses consistent individual differences in preferred ways of organizing and processing knowledge and experience (Messick, 1976), teaching style includes a teacher's attitude, behaviour, action and role while managing the teaching-learning process and classroom environment (Gafoor & Babu, 2012).

Teachers' various cognitions led to varied roles in language education, according to Zhang (2011), who claimed that teacher cognition had a significant impact on teaching processes. In the case of examining the teachers' unobservable cognitive dimension, which is the source of what teachers think, believe and know about learning and teaching, is seen as a component of quality education (Öztürk, 2021). According to Sugesti et al. (2020), teachers frequently do not even realize that they have beliefs that influence how they carry out their duties. These beliefs include how they perceive students and the materials, how they use teacher talk and code switching, how they create their supplemental materials, which approach they most frequently use, and how they interact with both students and colleagues. It is also important to understand students' perceptions of teachers' thinking and teaching styles as they relate to their own learning. These studies enable teachers to understand

the perspectives of their students and identify areas in which instruction has to be modified.

### 1.1. Thinking Styles

Thinking styles, which are defined as people's preferred methods of applying their skills, include cognitive functions such as perception, judgment, decision-making, and problem-solving and influence how people approach intellectual problems (Sternberg 2000). Teacher thinking styles are thought to be important in the realization of effective teaching because teachers' preferences regarding thinking styles can greatly affect their decision-making processes and therefore their teaching success. According to the theory of mental self-government, there are 13 different thinking styles included in the five dimensions of mental self-government (Sternberg and Zhang, 2005). These dimensions and the thinking styles they included are as follows.

**Functions.** In this dimension, there are three basic thinking styles of people's mental self-government: legislative, executive, and judicial. People with a legislative style prefer to engage in tasks where they can demonstrate creative strategies, generate new ideas and solutions, and express their opinions. Individuals with executive style prefer to take part in works that have a set of planned, guiding principles and instructions. Individuals with a judicial style prefer to evaluate and compare the process they are in and the activities and results of other people.

**Form.** In this dimension, there are four thinking styles in the mental self-government of humans. These are monarchic, hierarchical, oligarchic and anarchic. People with the monarchic style prefer to do tasks that require them

to focus on only one thing at a time, and they are perfectionists. Those with a hierarchical style prefer to focus their attention on a few tasks that they prioritize. Those with an oligarchic style prefer to work towards several goals at the same time, they do not prioritize any one task. Finally, individuals with anarchic style prefer to work on tasks that do not require anxiety, do not depend on anything, and therefore allow more flexibility.

**Level.** Two levels of thinking are defined in this dimension of people's mental self-government, where individuals may differ in their attention to details: local and global. Individuals with a local thinking style prefer tasks that require focusing on details, while individuals with a global style prefer to give their full attention to theoretical ideas and focus on an idea as a whole.

**Scope.** People have two types of thinking styles in this dimension of mental self-government: internal and external. Individuals with an internal thinking style prefer tasks that require independent work from other people. On the other hand, individuals with external thinking style prefer activities that offer opportunities to develop interpersonal relationships, that is, allow interaction with others.

**Leanings.** There are two types of thinking styles of people in this dimension, which is defined in mental self-management: liberal and conservative. Individuals with a liberal thinking style prefer tasks that do not adhere to existing rules and structures, and tasks that aim at significant changes. Individuals with conservative thinking style, on the other hand, prefer tasks that do not require any changes and consider the application of existing rules and structures appropriate.

## 1.2. Teaching Styles

A teacher's teaching style, according to Jarvis (2004), is the culmination of their philosophy, beliefs, values, and behaviors; it includes the full application of this philosophy together with the validation and support of their beliefs regarding values and attitudes toward aspects of the teacher-student learning exchange. Teaching styles also address the theoretical perspectives that educators adopt (Soleimani, 2020). Having stated that, teaching styles are individual inclinations and behaviors related to pedagogy and learning that may appear differently in various settings.

Thinking that each teacher has a unique teaching style means that there are as many styles as the number of teachers, Grasha (2002) concluded that categorizing teaching styles would help to establish much more qualified relationships about teaching and learning processes. Grasha, who stated that teachers can use different teaching styles in different conditions and that they do not have a single teaching style, categorized the teaching style models as follows:

**Expert teaching style.** Teachers with this type of teaching style have sufficient knowledge and expertise to provide their students with the information they need comprehensively, to encourage students to increase their competencies, and in this way, they try to maintain their expert status.

**Formal authority teaching style.** Teachers with this style maintain their status among students, make students adopt expectations, goals and rules due to their knowledge and role in the school, and give positive and negative feedback. These teachers mostly do not change their style in teaching process and expects

things to be done in the right, strict, acceptable and standard ways of doing things. This is more of a teacher-centred style.

**Personal teaching style.** The teacher who adopts this teaching style makes the students observe their own learning approach and encourages them to practice. The teacher controls, guides and encourages students to participate in the lesson. According to teachers with this type of teaching style, the approach to learning they experienced is the best, and they expect the same from their students.

**Facilitator teaching style.** Teachers with this style often try to ensure that students learn independently and take initiative and responsibility. For this purpose, they guide and direct their students to equip them with active teaching strategies by adopting asking questions, collaborative learning, exploring new options and producing alternatives. This teaching style is seen as a student-centred method.

**Empowering teaching style.** Teachers with this style assume the role of resource person in developing their students' capacity to act autonomously. In order for them to gain the ability to manage their own capacities, the teacher, who takes care of their development individually or as a group, prepares suitable environments where he/she can check them regularly, answer their questions and they can work independently on their projects.

### **1.3. Related Studies**

A number of research studies have examined the relationships between teachers' thinking styles and students' thinking styles, learning motivations (Doménech-Betoret & Gómez-Artiga, 2014), teachers' teaching styles (Apaydin & Cenberci, 2018), students' creativity (Sarmadi et. al., 2016) and learning

outcomes (Song, 2018). Looking at teachers' thinking and teaching styles from the students' perspective is illuminating as to whether the right thing is being done or not; because sometimes the characteristics we think we have can be perceived differently in the eyes of others. For example, in his study, Komo (2020) concluded that although teachers stated that they exhibit student-centred teaching practices in four areas, they were teacher-centred in terms of encouraging student-centred activities, personalizing teaching and meeting individual student needs, according to student views.

A study on students' preferred and perceived teachers' thinking and teaching styles was carried out by Reyes (2019). 149 students studying in the University of the East Caloocan's Philippine politics course participated. A self-report questionnaire was used in the study's descriptive research design to ascertain the participants' preferred thinking and teaching styles. The majority of the participants indicated that their teachers' methods and strategies in the course were the main reason they learned the subject. The students' preferred thinking styles in their teachers were External and Executive. The two most common teacher teaching styles perceived by students were Expert and Formal Authority. The majority of the participants preferred their teachers to be formal authorities and facilitators. It has been stated that the effective thinking and teaching styles are those that are adapted to the needs of the students.

An important issue to be addressed in the field of educational research is whether teachers' thinking styles act together with their teaching styles and, if so, how. According to Hasanuddin (2021), there is a considerable correlation between the dominant teacher's thinking style and their teaching style. Similarly, to analyse "the relationship between prospective mathematics teachers' thinking styles and teaching styles", Apaydın and Cenberci (2018) used



thinking styles put forward by Sternberg and Zhang (2005) and teaching style models defined by Grasha (2002). They state that there is a strong relationship between prospective mathematics teachers' thinking styles and teaching styles.

A questionnaire modified from Grasha's Teaching Style Inventory (1996) was given to 175 college students in a study by Norzila et al. (2007) to determine whether or not students' opinions and preferences of the teaching styles of English language instructors differed. The researchers discovered that students' preferred and perceived teaching styles did not differ based on gender. While teacher-centered teaching styles were most commonly employed by teachers, students favored student-centered styles. Similarly, Chen (2008) wanted to explore middle school students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching styles as part of his research. The study's conclusions demonstrated that students' academic performance and their perceptions of teaching styles differed significantly. On tests, students who thought their teachers were more authoritarian or democratic performed better than those who thought their teachers were more laissez-faire or indifferent.

Students' learning strategies can also be impacted by the interaction between teachers' thinking and teaching styles. When Vermunt and Verloop (1999) examined the literature on teaching and learning activities, they discovered that there are categories in the domain of teaching that are very similar to those in the domain of learning. In other words, it was concluded that the teacher's teaching activities directly affect the student's learning activities. They also stated that teaching strategies and learning strategies are not always compatible, and that congruence will occur only when students' learning strategies and teachers' teaching strategies are compatible, on the other hand, when this is not the case, friction will occur. Similarly, focusing on English teaching/learning, Öztürk (2017) concluded that there is no statistically

significant difference between the preferences of teachers and students, according to the findings of his study. He also states that those who teach and learn English as a foreign language reflect convergent orientations and meet on a common ground in their thinking styles preferences.

Another study supporting these findings conducted by Durmus and Güven (2020). In their study, they focused on the relationship between the teaching styles of English language teachers in university preparatory classes and the learning styles of their students. As a result, they found a significant relationship between some teaching and learning styles, for example between formal authority teaching style and avoidant learning style ( $p=.04$ ) and between personal model teaching style and competitive learning style ( $p=.03$ ). Considering this relationship, it is seen that the teaching styles that teachers want to apply are important for students.

Many studies have been conducted on the thinking and teaching styles of teachers (Zhang, 2008; Emir, 2013; Sarmadi et. al., 2016; Song, 2018; Apaydın & Cenberci, 2018), however, in the related literature there appears a lack of studies about the extent to which these thinking and teaching styles are perceived by their students. It is a question mark whether it is perceived in the same way from the students' perspectives. In other words, students' opinions about their teachers' thinking and teaching styles were not investigated. In his study, Zhang (2008) mentioned that studies were conducted on the subjects such as teaching behaviours of the intellectual styles of teachers and their relationships with the expectations of the students and their professional stress; the relationship of teachers' intellectual styles with student achievement and student socialization; and the relationship between teacher-student style match or mismatch and the attitudes of teachers and students towards each

other. Therefore, considering all these, the current study might be particularly noteworthy for examining these gaps in the literature.

The thinking and teaching/learning styles of teachers and students can be directly related to each other, and as stated in the literature (Öztürk, 2017; Durmus and Güven, 2020), this is seen as a factor affecting the students' learning success. In their study on teachers' learning activities and changes in behaviour and cognition, Hoekstra et al. (2009) state that taking student opinions seems promising to measure teacher behaviours and behavioural changes, but methods that include only teachers' own reports do not seem sufficient. Based on Zhang's (2008) study of whether teachers' teaching styles are consistent with their thinking styles, and the study by Apaydın and Cenberci (2018) on the relationship between prospective mathematics teachers' thinking styles and teaching styles, this current study investigates whether these thinking and teaching styles that EFL (English as a Foreign language) teachers themselves state are perceived by their students.

Research questions:

- 1) Are the thinking and teaching styles that EFL teachers believe they possess congruently perceived by their students? If so or if not, how?
- 2) Are there any similarities in the thinking and teaching styles that participating EFL teachers bring to the classroom? If so, how?
- 3) If EFL teachers' thinking and teaching styles are perceived differently by their students, what are the probable reasons?

## 2. METHOD

This current study has a qualitative case research design. The true purpose of a case study is not generalization but rather particularization (Stake, 1995). The following scenarios should be taken into account when using a case study design, according to Yin (2003): (a) when the study's focus needs to address the questions of "how" and "why"; (b) when you wish to address contextual conditions because you think they are pertinent to the phenomenon being studied; or (c) when it is unclear where the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are. This method has the benefit of allowing participants to share their own stories in addition to the researcher and participant working closely together. In this manner, the narrative of the teacher-student congruence of teaching and thinking styles of teachers in the classroom will be explored. Since the current research's context varies for each case, a multiple-case study was employed. Yin (2003) explains that multiple case studies can be used to predict similar outcomes or to predict opposite outcomes. When developing a case study's conceptual framework, Miles and Huberman (1994) stress that it's important to determine any connections that might exist based on logic, theory, and/or experience and it should also give the researcher the chance to group general constructs into intellectual "bins." All of these meet the goal of the current study, which is why this research method was selected.

### 2.1. Participants

The current study included two EFL teachers teaching preparatory classes at a public university and 40 students (20 students for each teacher). Each teacher's class consisted of 20 students and since all students in each class were

interviewed, the goal of reaching a consensus on teacher thinking and teaching styles was achieved. The interviews with both students and teachers varied between seven and 14 minutes. The interviews with students were spread over a two-week period, choosing the times that were convenient for the students to increase reliability. These teachers had taught participating students within the English preparatory class program for one academic year. This is supposed to be a sufficient period of time for students to become acquainted with the thinking and teaching styles of the teachers, as these students have been taking 12 or 13 hours a week with the same teachers. In order to get a deeper understanding of and contributing to the teaching learning processes in one of the researchers' institutions, it is found to be appropriate to continue working with the teachers and students in that institution. In this respect, the sample is a convenience sampling because a group of participants that the researcher has easy access to has been selected. Participating students were selected randomly on a voluntary basis.

## **2.2. Data Collection**

Three steps were followed during the data collection phase. Based on the Theory of Mental Self-government indicated by Zhang and Sternberg (2005) and teaching style models defined by Grasha (2002), semi-structured interviews were first applied to teachers and then to their students. The aim of the interviews conducted with the teachers was to discover the thinking and teaching styles that they thought they brought into the classroom. Subsequently, the interviews conducted with the students examined the thinking and teaching styles that they thought their teachers brought into the classroom. The thinking and teaching styles mentioned by Zhang and Sternberg (2005) and Grasha (2002) were explained to the teachers and students before the interviews. In addition, they were given papers containing information on

this subject so that they could remember some information during the interview and they were told that they could look at it whenever they wanted. While the semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers were conducted in English, in the interviews with the students, they were provided with support in Turkish in parts where they struggled to explain themselves more clearly. The teachers and students were given definitions and key characteristics of the teacher thinking and teaching styles mentioned in the current study, but the names of styles were not given. The reason for this was to understand the styles they adopted as content from their own thoughts, without being affected by the certain terms. In the third and final step of data collection, teachers were asked to reflect on the results in order to interpret the similarities and differences from the primary source.

### **2.3. Data Analysis**

Content analysis was used to interpret the information gathered from semi-structured interviews. In content analysis, data are the outcome of procedures chosen by the researcher to address particular questions about phenomena in the context of particular texts. The choice of content analysis for our data field was deemed appropriate because it allows us to select valid answers to questions about why existing texts emerged, what they mean and for whom, how they mediate between antecedent and consequent conditions, and ultimately, context (Krippendorff, 2018). In the content analysis, two strategies were used, direct interpretation and categorical aggregation, as suggested by Stake (1995). In the context of qualitative research, direct interpretation means that the researcher concentrates on the sample and tries to put it together in a more meaningful way. This strategy was used to analyze the data obtained from the teachers. On the other hand, since the data obtained from the students was

broader and denser, categorical aggregation, which reveals the meaning from the sample collection of relevant meanings, was used Here, categories will refer to the terms of thinking (Zhang and Sternberg, 2005) and teaching (Grasha, 2002) styles. In this way, the percentage values of the terms (according to their frequency) were taken from the answers given by each student according to the categories of thinking and teaching styles and were tabulated. While categorical aggregation was being done, each student's statements related to the teacher's thinking and teaching styles were examined and their categories were determined by content analysis. Since there were 20 students in each case, qualitative data were interpreted to quantitative data, considering that the percentage of each selected category affected the rate by 5%. Measures such as triangulation and participant verification were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected during the research process.

### **3. FINDINGS**

In this part, the two cases will be discussed under separate headings. In the first case, the teacher will be named Damla, and the students will be named as D1, D2, D3, ... D20, while in the second case, the teacher will be named Mert, and the students will be named as M1, M2, M3, ... M20. The teacher thinking styles, whose definitions were given to teachers and students before and while interviews are as follows: Legislative, Executive, Judicial, Hierarchical, Monarchic, Oligarchic, Anarchic, Global, Local, Internal, External, Liberal, and Conservative. Similarly, the teacher teaching styles, the definitions of which were also given to teachers and students before and while interviews are as follows: Expert teaching style, Formal authority teaching style, Personal teaching style, Facilitator teaching style and Empowering teaching style.

### 3.1. Case Damla: EFL Teacher's Thinking and Teaching Styles

In the first case, as a result of the semi-structured interview with the teacher, the data was interpreted with the direct interpretation strategy and inferences were obtained. The thinking styles adopted by the Case Damla and the reasons to adopt are shown in the summary statements below.

“... I can say that I mostly *value tasks that have clear instructions* and structures. This is mainly because my students should be aware of what they are doing. **[Function-Executive]** ... When I look at it this way, I usually ask my students for *tasks that will provide flexibility in how to work according to the situation*. Yes, I am sure that my thinking mostly chooses such tasks... because in the classroom, I sometimes have to take into account situations caused by external factors such as time constraints. **[Form-Anarchic]** ... I can clearly say that I *pay more attention to the general picture of a topic and abstract ideas* rather than getting bogged down in details. **[Level -Global]** ... When I consider real life, I think that *working on tasks that allow for collaborative initiatives with other people* is more important and I try to include it in the classroom. **[Scope-External]** ... I can say that I *use tasks that ensure compliance with existing rules and procedures*, ... especially considering classroom management... **[Learning-Conservative]**”

The thinking styles adopted by teacher Damla according to the mental self-government theory of Sternberg and Zhang (2005) and their partial reasons are as follows.



**Table 2. Damla Teacher's Thinking Styles and Reasons**

<i>Thinking styles</i>	<i>Reasons behind</i>
Function-Executive	making the process clear to students
Form-Anarchic	external factors such as time constraints
Level-Global	choice of teaching strategy, deductive reasoning
Scope-External	teaching according to real-life situations
Leaning-Conservative	classroom management

In the second part of the semi-structured interview, the teacher Damla was asked which of the teaching styles categorized and defined by Grasha (2002) she adopted and the reasons for it. The summary analysis of the answers received is as follows.

“Actually most of these recipes more or less fit my style but I mostly want my students to *gain independence and responsibility* in the learning process because learning requires continuity and after my preparatory education they need to continue learning English according to their own needs... for example it can be academic English or professional English... so I constantly direct them to explore *alternative learning methods*... **[Facilitator teaching style]** again, as I mentioned, I try to *provide the information that students need in the most efficient way possible*... while doing this, I do not hesitate to *share the knowledge I have* with my students... I know that *if they do not see me as an expert on the subject, their interest in the lecture will decrease*... **[Expert teaching style]**”

Damla teacher's teaching styles and justifications can be seen in her own statements along with the reasons.

**Table 3. Teaching Styles of Teacher Damla and Reasons**

<i>Teaching styles</i>	<i>Reasons behind</i>
Facilitator teaching style	student future needs
Expert teaching style	student needs and their interest to lecture

### 3.2. Case Damla: EFL Teacher's Thinking and Teaching Styles from Students' Perspective

As a result of semi-structured interviews conducted with all students in the same class where teacher Damla taught for an academic year, the students' perceptions of teacher thinking and teaching styles were compiled with the categorical aggregation strategy and percentages were taken.

**Table 4. Damla Teacher's Thinking Styles from Her Students' Perspective**

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Teacher's Thinking style (categorie</i>	<i>%</i>
Function	Legislative	25
	Executive	30
	<b>Judicial</b>	<b>45</b>
Form	Hierarchical	20
	Monarchic	15
	Oligarchic	15
Level	<b>Anarchic</b>	<b>50</b>
	Global	30
	<b>Local</b>	<b>70</b>
Scope	Internal	10
	<b>External</b>	<b>90</b>
Leaning	Liberal	20
	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>80</b>

According to the perceptions of Damla teacher's students, the prominent teacher's thinking styles are as in Table 4. According to her students, Damla teacher's most prominent thinking styles were *External* and *Conservative*. The

students, like the teacher herself, saw her as *Anarchic*, while on the other hand, unlike the teacher, they saw her as *Judical* and *Local*. We can examine the reason for these two contrasts from the students' views with the following expressions.

Opinion of D7 (student number 7 from Derya's class):

"Our teacher Damla mostly gives us tasks that *we can evaluate our performance* and then she *evaluates our performance and gives us feedback* [Judicial]... this attitude is obviously very beneficial for us and the evaluation of my performance in different ways makes my learning permanent..."

Opinion of D19 (student number 19 from Derya's class):

"... to be honest, even though I don't like it sometimes... *Damla* teacher's *detailed examination of some subjects*, especially grammar, confused me... but on the other hand, I understood that *those details* made a difference over time and were to my benefit... At first, *these details* were confusing for me... [Local]"

On the other hand, inferences with categorical aggregation were made from the students' comments and the teaching styles of teacher Damla from the students' perspective were given in Table 5 together with their percentages.

**Table 5. Teaching Styles of Teacher Damla from the Student Perspective**

<i>Teaching Styles (categories)</i>	<i>%</i>
Expert teaching style	50
Formal authority teaching style	25
Facilitator teaching style	10
Personal teaching style	10
Empowering teaching style	5

According to the findings obtained from the students' descriptions, 10 of the students perceived Damla teacher as having the *expert teaching style*, while 5 of them perceived her as having the *formal authority teaching style*. On the other hand, only two students perceived Damla teacher as having the *facilitator teaching style*.

### 3.3. Case Damla: Teacher's Reflection on the Findings

At this stage, the terminological names of the thinking and teaching styles, which were previously given only as definitions, are now given. The reflection of teacher Damla on the findings is as follows:

“I am very happy that my students accepted and correctly perceived my thinking and teaching styles to a large extent... on the other hand, it seemed very strange to me that they found me to be Local in terms of thinking, I mean, by definition, I always saw myself as Global and I thought that I developed my teaching styles in this way. I will definitely evaluate this (in a positive way). ... I am also shocked that they perceived me as having a formal authority teaching style. I don't think I have a very prescriptive or standard, unchangeable mental structure (she smiles). ... but you know what they say, "the student observes best". This information added a lot to me. ... I can say that the reason for these differences is 'classroom management anxiety' and 'there are too many subjects to teach, meaning we have very little flexibility'.”

As can be understood from these statements, classroom management anxiety and too many subjects to teach are seen as the reasons for Damla teacher's inability to transfer her thinking and teaching styles to the classroom.

### 3.4. Case Mert: EFL Teacher's Thinking and Teaching Styles

The thinking styles that emerged as a result of the semi-structured interview we conducted with teacher Mert are given in the analysis with direct interpretation below and in Table 6.

"I like to give tasks that my students *can evaluate their performance* and that I *can support them with feedback* because I believe that different feedback will be very useful **[Function-Judicial]**. ... Actually, I mostly care that my students *work flexibly*, of course within certain rules ... I want them to both explore and not disrupt the order ... **[Form-Anarchic]**. ... I believe that *a more general window is more useful than detail* in teaching ... details are boring to students and there isn't too much time for details ... **[Level-Global]**. ... Although I know the benefits of collaborative work, I think it is *more useful for them to work independently* at this level in order to take individual responsibility. They need to gain learner autonomy ... **[Scope-Internal]**. ... As I said before, I allow flexibility in their work, but they *need to comply with the existing rules and procedures* ... The main reason for this may be that I do not want the classroom order to be disrupted **[Learning-Conservative]** ..."

While the way teacher Mert determines his thinking styles is given in the transcription above, the table below shows why he adopted these thoughts together with his thinking styles.

**Table 6. Thinking Styles of Teacher Mert and Reasons**

<b><i>Thinking styles</i></b>	<b><i>Reasons behind</i></b>
Function-Judicial	to ensure the permanence of knowledge
Form-Anarchic	let them explore, time constraints
Level-Global	not to bore the students
Scope-Internal	level of students
Leaning-Conservative	classroom management

On the other hand, the following information about teaching styles was obtained in the interviews with teacher Mert.

“Throughout my teaching career I have always felt that I had *to maintain my status as a teacher* among students because if students get too comfortable they won't care about the lessons... I also like *to give constant feedback* and students feed off of that... I don't think I'm too strict but I always *have standards* ... **[Formal authority teaching style]** ... I want to show my students *how knowledgeable I am about a subject*, I think when students see teachers as uninformed, they don't approach the lesson with the same seriousness. ... it has always been one of my goals to increase their (students') competence with my knowledge and show *my expertise*... **[Expert teaching style]**”

Mert teacher's teaching styles and justifications can be seen in his own statements along with the reasons.

**Table 7. Teaching Styles of Teacher Mert and Reasons**

<i>Teaching styles</i>	<i>Reasons behind</i>
Formal authority teaching style	demonstrate competence, take control of teaching
Expert teaching style	taking student attention

### 3.5. Case Mert: EFL Teacher's Thinking and Teaching Styles from Students' Perspective

Following semi-structured interviews with every student in the same class that teacher Mert taught during an academic year, the category aggregation procedure was used to collect the students' opinions of the teacher's thinking styles, and percentages were calculated.

**Table 8. Mert teacher's thinking styles from his students' perspective**

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Teacher's Thinking style (categories)</i>	<i>%</i>
Function	<b>Legislative</b>	<b>40</b>
	Executive	30
	Judicial	30
Form	Hierarchical	10
	Monarchic	15
	<b>Oligarchic</b>	<b>50</b>
Level	Anarchic	25
	Global	40
	<b>Local</b>	<b>60</b>
Scope	Internal	25
	<b>External</b>	<b>75</b>
Leaning	Liberal	15
	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>85</b>

According to the perceptions of teacher Mert's students, the teacher's most prominent thinking styles are as shown in Table 8. According to his students, teacher Mert's most prominent thinking styles are *Conservative* and *External*.

The first difference here was that the teacher saw himself as *Internal*, not *External*. On the other hand, while the teacher saw himself as *Judicial*, *Anarchic* and *Global*, the students perceived him as *Legislative*, *Oligarchic* and *Local*. We can give an example of the reasons for these differences from the students' perceptions with their own expressions.

Opinion of M3 (student number 3 from Mert's class):

"In class work, our teacher (Mert) mostly makes us do *group activities*. I think these activities are very enjoyable." **[External]**

Opinion of M4:

"... I think we do tasks that require *more creative strategies* and sometimes our teacher (Mert) lets us *choose our own activities*." **[Legislative]**

Opinion of M8:

"... I can say that the activities we do *have more than one goal* ..." **[Oligarchic]**

Opinion of M20:

"He (Mert) makes us *pay attention to some details* during the tasks because we can make a lot of mistakes" **[Local]**

As for the other issue, inferences were made from the student comments with categorical aggregation and teacher Mert's teaching styles from the students' perspective are given in Table 9 together with their percentages.



**Table 9. Teaching Styles of Teacher Mert from the Student Perspective**

<i>Teaching styles (categories)</i>	<i>%</i>
Expert teaching style	45
Formal authority teaching style	30
Facilitator teaching style	15
Empowering teaching style	10
Personal teaching style	0

As can be seen in Table 9, the *expert teaching style* and the *formal authority teaching style* that Mert teacher stated that he adopted were also perceived by his students and found a response in the classroom.

### **3.6. Case Mert: Teacher's reflection on the findings**

After examining the study findings regarding his own thinking and teaching styles, teacher Mert's reflection was as follows:

"I would like to state that I have never been asked to reflect on the data of any study I have participated in before, and I really liked it because we can see and reflect on things we have not seen in this way... it is very good for me that my teaching styles are perceived by my students in the classroom. On the other hand, I was surprised that my thinking styles were not mostly perceived because I spent a full year (an academic year - 8 months) with the same class. I can say that the reason why my thinking styles were not perceived was the necessity to follow a certain syllabus. ... we exchange a lot of information with other teachers, and maybe I may have unconsciously reflected their thoughts into the classroom thinking they were my own because after all, we want to do the best. ... from now on, I will try harder to bring my own thinking styles into the classroom (laughing). ..."

As can be understood, the necessity to follow a certain syllabus and being influenced by his colleagues are seen as the reasons why Mert teacher cannot transfer his thinking styles to the classroom.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION**

This current study aimed to find out whether the thinking and teaching styles that EFL teachers believe they possess reciprocated by their students in the classroom and whether there are similarities between the thinking and teaching styles that EFL teachers bring to the classroom.

In the first case, the EFL teacher's thinking styles largely reciprocated by students, while in the second case, this did not seem possible. This result showed that different cases could produce different results, and most of the factors that shape EFL teachers' thinking styles are student- and teaching-centered. Furthermore, the contextual factors that most affected EFL teachers' thinking styles in these cases were teaching styles, student levels (student profile), real-life situations, time constraints, and classroom management. As Gökçe and Keçik (2021) point out, these and similar contextual factors shape teacher belief and influence classroom practices. Similarly, the results of the study by Philip et al. (2019) reported that there may be differences between what teachers report (thinking styles) and what they actually do in the classroom (teaching styles), and the researchers stated that this may be due to contextual factors such as lesson duration, students falling behind expectations, and institutional policy. On the other hand, in both cases, the teacher's teaching styles reported by the teachers were congruently perceived and reported by their students. Teacher cognition is recognized as having an impact on teachers' professional lives, thus contributing to the development of effective pedagogy

and increasing student learning success (Borg, 2015; Li, 2023). In this regard, it is critical that students accurately perceive the teacher's teaching style.

According to Li (2017), the mental live of a teacher is hard to observe and cognition is a psychological process as well as a mental state or process because it is supported by interpersonal interactions that are openly discussed and negotiated. In both cases, the fact that the thinking styles were not perceived by the students (partially in the first case) but the teaching styles were congruently perceived reveals that the teaching styles of these EFL teachers were more distinct, but their thinking styles were more difficult to perceive. This further demonstrates how instructors' intellectual beliefs do not translate into actual practice. This issue is described by Sugesti et al. (2020) as follows; teachers frequently do not even realize that their beliefs affect how they carry out their teaching responsibilities. In the reflections of the EFL teachers in this study, the reasons for this were stated as classroom management anxiety, too many subjects to teach - very little flexibility, having a specific syllabus they have to follow, and being influenced by other colleagues. In their study, Walsh and Wyatt (2014) emphasized that in Britain, Australasia and North America contexts they could not find a perfect fit between teachers' methodological principles and practices. They stated that the reason for this was that student needs came to the fore. Reyes (2019) stated that the effective thinking and teaching styles are those that are adapted to the needs of the students. Considering the discussion that teachers' thinking and teaching styles affect student motivation and achievement (Bernardo et al., 2002; Samson, 2019), the importance of these differences increases even more. These differences may lead to the conclusion that teachers cannot always reflect what they want to achieve/do in the classroom setting.

The fact that EFL teachers in both cases mostly bring similar thinking styles to the classroom also raises a different debate whether it is specific to EFL teaching. Because it is seen that mathematics teachers do not prefer or adopt these thinking styles (Apaydin & Cenberci, 2018), observed in the current study. On the other hand, it was concluded that the most frequently used teaching styles by EFL teachers in these cases were expert teaching style, facilitator teaching style and formal authority teaching style, and Apaydin and Cenberci's study (2018) similarly reveal that mathematics teachers mostly prefer facilitator teaching styles and expert teaching styles, equally.

## 5. IMPLICATIONS

The results obtained in this research, on the one hand, provide a reflection on the thinking and teaching styles that EFL teachers think they apply, and on the other hand, since these thinking styles are perceived differently by the students, the results can contribute to the field of EFL teaching by shedding a light on future research. The results also support student learning, because if EFL teachers realize that their thinking and teaching styles are not directly observed or perceived by their students, teachers may need a change to address their students' learning needs. These kind of studies give teachers the ability to comprehend their students' viewpoints and pinpoint places where instruction has to be modified, and also it is a chance for institution to minimize the contextual factors that negatively affect what EFL teachers want to reflect to their classroom.

## 6. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER STUDIES

This case study was conducted with only two EFL teachers in a higher education institution and the students they have taught. We recommend that similar studies be conducted with more EFL teachers (not only in a higher education institution) to better determine what the thinking and teaching styles of EFL teachers are, because this was not the purpose of this current study. The reason why teachers can carry their teaching styles into the classroom, but their thinking styles are not congruently perceived by their students may be another research question. The notion that teachers in various fields have similar teaching styles but distinct thinking styles is proposed as another research topic. In addition, it would be useful to apply the observation technique to teachers and students as a continuation of this study to learn why some teacher thinking styles are not well reflected in the classroom environment.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement:**

As the authors of this article, we declare that we have no potential conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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### **Ethics Committee Decision:**

An ethics committee decision is needed for this research and ethics committee approval has been obtained and documented from the relevant institution.

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## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

### Giriş

Öğrencilerin öğrenme sürecinde, öğretmenlerin düşünme ve öğretme stilleri, öğretmenlerin kendileri kadar etkilidir. İnsanların günlük aktivitelerini bir şekilde yönetmeleri gerektiğini ve bunu yapmanın birçok yolu olduğunu belirten Sternberg'in zihinsel özyönetim teorisi (1988, 1990, 1994, 1997), insanların düşünme stilini bir yetenekten ziyade bir şeyi yapmayı veya sahip oldukları

yetenekleri kullanmayı tercih ettikleri yol olarak tanımlar. Başka bir deyişle, insanlar farklı durumlarda farklı seçimler yapabilir ve kendilerini rahat hissettikleri stilleri kullanma eğilimindedirler. Diğer yandan, öğretme stili, öğretmenlerin öğretim etkinlikleri sırasında bilgiyi iletmek için kullandıkları kişisel davranışlar olarak tanımlanır (Brown, 2001; Grasha, 2002). Daha açık bir ifadeyle, bir öğretmenin düşünme stili, bilgi ve deneyimi düzenleme ve işleme konusunda tercih edilen yollardaki tutarlı bireysel farklılıkları ifade ederken (Messick, 1976), öğretim stili, bir öğretmenin öğretme-öğrenme sürecini ve sınıf ortamını yönetirken sergilediği tutum, davranış, eylem ve rolünü içerir (Gafoor & Babu, 2012).

Sugesti vd.'ye (2020) göre öğretmenler sıklıkla görevlerini nasıl yerine getirdiklerini etkileyen inançlara sahip olduklarının farkında bile değildirler. Bu inançlar öğrencileri ve materyalleri nasıl algıladıkları, öğretmen konuşmasını ve kod değiştirmeyi nasıl kullandıkları, ek materyallerini nasıl oluşturdukları, en sık hangi yaklaşımı kullandıkları ve hem öğrencilerle hem de meslektaşlarıyla nasıl etkileşim kurdukları gibi konuları içerir. Öğrencilerin tercih ettiği ve algıladığı öğretmen düşünme ve öğretme stilleri üzerine Reyes (2019) tarafından bir çalışma yürütülmüştür. Katılımcıların çoğunluğu, öğretmenlerinin dersteki yöntem ve stratejilerinin konuyu öğrenmelerinin ana nedeni olduğunu belirtmiştir. Öğrencilerin öğretmenlerinde tercih ettikleri düşünme stilleri *Dışsal* ve *Yönetici*'dir. Öğrenciler tarafından algılanan en yaygın iki öğretmen öğretme stili *Uzman* ve *Resmi Otorite*'dir. Katılımcıların çoğunluğu öğretmenlerinin *Resmi Otorite* ve *Kolaylaştırıcı* olmasını tercih etmiştir. Öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarına göre şekillendirilmiş düşünme ve öğretme stillerinin etkili olacağı belirtilmiştir.

İlgili literatürde, bu düşünme ve öğretme stillerinin öğrenciler tarafından ne ölçüde algılandığına dair çalışma eksikliği görülmektedir. Öğrencilerin bakış açısından da aynı şekilde algılanıp algılanmadığı ise bir soru işaretidir. Başka bir deyişle, öğrencilerin öğretmenlerinin düşünme ve öğretme stilleri hakkındaki görüşleri araştırılmamıştır. Bu güncel çalışma, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin düşünme ve öğretme stillerinin öğrencileri açısından eylemlerinde gözlemlenebilir olup olmadığını anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, İngilizce öğretmenlerin sınıftaki düşünme ve öğretme stillerinin varlığı öğrenci boyutundan incelenecektir.

## Yöntem

Bu güncel çalışma nitel bir vaka araştırması tasarımına sahiptir ve bir devlet üniversitesinde İngilizce hazırlık sınıflarında ders veren iki İngilizce öğretmeni ve 40 öğrenciyi (her öğretmen için 20 öğrenci) içermektedir. Bu öğretmenler, bir akademik yıl boyunca İngilizce hazırlık sınıfı programı kapsamında katılımcı öğrencilere ders vermişlerdir. Örneklem, araştırmacının kolayca erişebileceği bir

katılımcı grubu seçildiği için kolay ulaşılabilir bir örneklemedir. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler önce öğretmenlere, ardından öğrencilerine uygulanmıştır. Daha sonra öğretmenlerden, birincil kaynaktan benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları yorumlamak için sonuçlar üzerinde düşünmeleri istenmiştir. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerden toplanan bilgileri yorumlamak için içerik analizi kullanılmıştır. İçerik analizinde, Stake (1995) tarafından önerildiği gibi doğrudan yorumlama ve kategorik toplama olmak üzere iki strateji kullanılmıştır.

### Bulgular (Sonuçlar)

Damla öğretmen vakasında yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme sonucunda Sternberg ve Zhang'ın (2005) zihinsel özyönetim kuramına göre öğretmen Damla'nın benimsediği düşünme stilleri *İşlevsellik-Yönetici, Biçim-Anarşik, Düzey-Küresel, Kapsam-Dışsal* ve *Eğilim-Muhafazakar*'dır. Diğer yandan Grasha'nın (2002) kategorize edip tanımladığı öğretim stillerinden benimsenenler *Kolaylaştırıcı öğretim stili* ve *Uzman öğretim stili*'dir. Damla öğretmenin öğrencilerinin algılarına göre öğretmenin öne çıkan düşünme stilleri *Dışsal* ve *Muhafazakar*'dır. Öğrenciler öğretmenin kendisi gibi onu *Anarşik* olarak görürken, öğretmenden farklı olarak onu *Yargısal* ve *Yerel* olarak görmüşlerdir. Ayrıca öğrencileri onu çoğunlukla *Uzman öğretim stili* ve *Biçimsel otorite öğretim stili*'nde görmektedirler.

Öğretmen Mert ile gerçekleştirdiğimiz yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme sonucunda ortaya çıkan düşünme stilleri *İşlevsellik-Yargısal, Biçim-Anarşik, Düzey-Küresel, Kapsam-İçsel* ve *Eğilim-Muhafazakar*'dır. Mert öğretmenin öğretme stilleri çoğunlukla *Resmi otorite öğretme stili* ve *Uzman öğretme stili*'dir. Öte yandan öğrencilerine göre Öğretmen Mert'in en belirgin düşünme stilleri *Muhafazakar* ve *Dışsal*'dir. Buradaki ilk fark, öğretmenin kendini *Dışsal* değil *İçsel* olarak görmesidir. Diğer yandan öğretmen kendini *Yargısal, Anarşik* ve *Küresel* olarak görürken, öğrenciler onu *Yasamacı, Oligarşik* ve *Yerel* olarak algılamışlardır. Ayrıca Mert öğretmenin benimsediğini belirttiği *Uzman öğretme stili* ve *Resmi otorite öğretme stili* öğrencileri tarafından da algılanmıştır.

### Sonuç ve Tartışma

İlk vakada, İngilizce öğretmenin düşünme stilleri öğrenciler tarafından büyük ölçüde karşılık bulurken, ikinci vakada bu mümkün görünmemiştir. Bu sonuç, farklı vakaların farklı sonuçlar üretebileceğini ve İngilizce öğretmenlerinin düşünme stillerini şekillendiren faktörlerin çoğunun öğrenci ve öğretim merkezli olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, bu vakalarda İngilizce öğretmenlerinin düşünme

stillerini en çok etkileyen bağlamsal faktörlerin öğretim stilleri, öğrenci seviyeleri (öğrenci profili), gerçek yaşam durumları, zaman kısıtlamaları ve sınıf yönetimi olduğu bulunmuştur. Öte yandan, her iki vakada da, öğretmenler tarafından bildirilen öğretim stilleri, sınıftaki öğrenciler tarafından uyumlu bir şekilde algılanmış ve bildirilmiştir.

Her iki vakada da düşünme stillerinin öğrenciler tarafından algılanmaması (ilk vakada kısmen) ancak öğretim stillerinin uyumlu bir şekilde algılanması, bu İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğretim stillerinin daha belirgin, ancak düşünme stillerinin algılanmasının daha zor olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu durum, öğretmenlerin düşünsel inançlarının gerçek pratiğe tam manasıyla yansımadığını bir kez daha göstermektedir. Öte yandan, bu durumlarda İngilizce öğretmenleri tarafından en sık kullanılan öğretim stillerinin *uzman öğretim stili*, *kolaylaştırıcı öğretim stili* ve *resmi otorite öğretim stili* olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.