ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN PORTFOLIO FOR STUDENT TEACHERS OF LANGUAGES (EPOSTL) IN TURKISH SETTING

TÜRKİYE BAĞLAMINDA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN DİL ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARINA YÖNELİK AVRUPA PORTFOLYOSU (DÖAYAP) ALGILARI

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- All cited studies have been fully referenced
- I did not do any distortion in the data set
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Ahmet ÖNAL

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN PORTFOLIO FOR STUDENT TEACHERS OF LANGUAGES (EPOSTL) IN TURKISH SETTING

Ahmet ÖNAL

ABSTRACT

The financial, technological, political, educational and scientific circumstances around the world continue to evolve rapidly and advances in communication systems accelerate the pace of this process of transformation. In order to keep up with this rate of change and seize the opportunities, the necessity of being able to communicate with people speaking foreign languages has been recognized not only by individuals but by governments as well. Having appreciated this need, the governments try to provide their citizens with proper foreign language education. To achieve this, the process of language teacher education is reconstructed and improved as language teachers are, arguably, the main actors in the process of language education and the quality of foreign language education is directly correlated with the quality of foreign language teachers. Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe and the European Centre for Modern Languages have already recognized this priority; and thus, encourage and fund related projects and publish documents such as the European Profile for Language Teacher Education, the European Profiling Grid, the European Language Portfolio and the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages that aim to upgrade and harmonize language and language teacher education across the continent.

In this respect, setting high standards for pre-service language teachers would yield its benefits in long-term whereas providing in-service language teachers with in-service training sessions that focus on such documents and familiarize them with the concepts embodied in these documents would possibly prove more effective in a shorter-term. Put in other words, the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL), encouraging its users to reflect on and evaluate their didactic awareness and skills, has initially been designed with pre-service language teachers in mind; however, it may also be employed throughout the process of in-service language teachers' professional development (Burkert &

Schwienhorst, 2008; Çakır & Balçıkanlı, 2012; Heyworth, 2013; Ingvarsdóttir, 2011; Jimbo, *et al.*, 2010; Mirici & Hergüner, 2015; Newby, 2011; 2012b; Velikova, 2013). Moving from this line of reasoning, the aim of this dissertation is to arrive at an understanding of in-service language teachers' perceptions of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors in relation to Turkish Foreign Language Education context. More specifically, the researcher aims to reveal the categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors that have been regarded more important by in-service English language teachers who work for different levels of institutions (primary, secondary, and tertiary), have varying levels of experience (1 – 5 years, 6 – 10 years, 11 – 15 years, 16 – 20 years, and +20 years) and education (BA, MA, and PhD).

The self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL are grouped under 7 main sections, 31 sub-sections, and 195 descriptors. The descriptors focus on didactic skills of the student teachers of languages as well as concepts such as autonomy, reflection, interculturality, life-long learning, self-assessment, and plurilingualism. In order to collect the relevant data, the 195 self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL have been employed as the items of the questionnaire in the form of a '5 point Likert type scale' and an open-ended question has been added as the 196th questionnaire item with the aim of collecting qualitative data. The participants of the study are 75 in-service English language teachers who work for primary, secondary, and tertiary level institutions with varying levels of experience and education. The data has been analyzed via SPSS statistical package 23. To be more specific, the means of the in-service English language teachers' answers have been computed for the whole document and for the categories of the self-assessment descriptors via descriptive statistics involving mean and frequency analyses. As a second step, the distribution of the data has been analyzed via 'Kolmogorov-Smirnov Goodness-of-Fit Test'. As the distribution of the data is not normal, a non-parametric test, rather than a parametric test, has been employed in order to find out the level of differences between and among the groups of in-service English language teachers. Moreover, as in-service English language teachers have been classified into more than two groups, 'Kruskal-Wallis H Test' has been conducted and 'pairwise comparisons' have been performed as a last

step in order to reveal the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL that have been attached meaningfully different importance by in-service English language teachers working for different levels of institutions, with different levels of experience and education.

The results of the analyses indicate that in-service English language teachers' overall perception of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors has been positive in that their overall perception of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors is 4,13 out of 5. Put differently, in-service English language teachers' overall rating of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors is nearly 83% and, in line with the wording of the questionnaire, in-service English language teachers have regarded the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors 'very important'. Nevertheless, significant differences have been observed as to in-service English language teachers' perceptions of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors in terms of the level institution they work for and their level of experience and education. Furthermore, in-service English language teachers have not offered any additional descriptors for the context they operate in, which implies that the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors are comprehensive and satisfactory for their context. To sum up, the findings of this study clearly indicate that the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL have largely been welcomed by in-service language teachers in Turkish context despite the fact that some categories of the EPOSTL such as 'conducting a lesson' have been considered comparatively more important than such sub-sections as 'independent learning' and 'context'. Therefore, acquainting in-service English language teachers with such principles of the EPOSTL as plurilingualism, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), self-assessment, learner and teacher autonomy through in-service training sessions will possibly contribute to both their professional development and the overall success in foreign language teaching across the country.

Keywords: EPOSTL, Foreign Language Teacher Education, Foreign Language Teacher Evaluation, Foreign Language Teacher Competencies, In-service English Language Teachers

Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nuray ALAGÖZLÜ, Hacettepe University, Department of Foreign Language Education, Division of English Language Teaching

TÜRKİYE BAĞLAMINDA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN DİL ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARINA YÖNELİK AVRUPA PORTFOLYOSU (DÖAYAP) ALGILARI

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ÖZ

Dünyadaki finansal, teknolojik, politik, eğitimsel ve bilimsel koşullar hızla gelişmeye devam etmektedir ve iletişim sistemindeki gelişmeler bu dönüşüm sürecinin hızını daha da arttırmaktadır. Bu hızlı değişime ayak uydurabilmek ve fırsatları yakalamak için yabancı diller konuşan insanlarla iletişim kurma zorunluluğu yalnızca bireyler tarafından değil hükümetler tarafından da kabul görmüştür. Bu ihtiyacın farkında olan hükümetler, vatandaşlarına uygun ve etkili yabancı dil eğitimi vermeye çalışmaktadırlar. Bunu başarmak için dil öğretmenlerinin dil eğitimi sürecinde ana aktörler olduğu ve yabancı dil eğitiminin kalitesi yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin kalitesi ile doğrudan ilişkili olduğu için yabancı dil öğretmeni eğitim süreci yeniden yapılandırılmakta ve iyileştirilmektedir. Avrupa Konseyi'nin Dil Politikaları Bölümü ve Avrupa Modern Diller Merkezi bu konunun önceliğini çoktan kabul etmiştir; bu nedenle, ilgili projeleri teşvik ve finanse etmektedir. Buna ek olarak, kıta çapında yabancı dil ve yabancı dil öğretmen eğitimini iyileştirmeyi ve standart hale getirmeyi amaçlayan Dil Öğretmen Eğitimi için Avrupa Profili (DÖEAP), Avrupa Profil Belirleme Gridi (APG), Avrupa Dil Portfolyosu (ADP), ve Dil Öğretmen Adaylarına Yönelik Avrupa Portfolyosu (DÖAYAP) gibi belgeleri yayınlamıştır.

Bu bağlamda, hizmet öncesi yabancı dil öğretmen adaylarının eğitimlerine yüksek standartlar getirmek daha uzun vadede yarar sağlayacakken, görev yapmakta olan yabancı dil öğretmenlerine bu tür belgeler üzerinde yoğunlaşan ve bu belgelerde yer alan kavramları tanıtan hizmet içi eğitim sunmak muhtemelen çok daha kısa vadede etkisini gösterecektir. Diğer bir deyişle, kullanıcılarını öğretici yeteneklerini ve farkındalıklarını derinlemesine düşünmeye ve değerlendirmeye teşvik eden Dil Öğretmen Adaylarına Yönelik Avrupa Portfolyosu (DÖAYAP) esasen hizmet öncesi dil öğretmenleri düşünülerek tasarlanmış olmasına rağmen görev yapmakta olan yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişim süreci boyunca da kullanılabileceği düşünülmektedir (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008; Çakır &

Balçıkanlı, 2012; Heyworth, 2013; Ingvarsdóttir, 2011; Jimbo, *et al*., 2010; Mirici & Hergüner, 2015; Newby, 2011; 2012b; Velikova, 2013). Bu düşünceden hareketle, bu tezin amacı görev yapmakta olan yabancı dil öğretmenlerin DÖAYAP öz-değerlendirme tanımlayıcılarını Türkiye'deki Yabancı Dil Eğitimi bağlamında nasıl algıladıklarını ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bu amaçla, farklı seviyede eğitim kurumlarında (ilk, orta, ve yüksek) görev yapmakta olan, çeşitli tecrübe seviyelerine (1 – 5 yıl, 6 – 10 yıl, 11 – 15 yıl, 16 – 20 yıl, ve +20 yıl) ve eğitim altyapısına (lisans, yüksek lisans, ve doktora) sahip olan katılımcıların DÖAYAP öz-değerlendirme tanımlayıcılarının hangi alt bölümlerini daha önemli gördükleri belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır.

DÖAYAP öz-değerlendirme tanımlayıcıları, 7 bölüm, 31 alt bölüm ve 195 tanımlayıcı biçiminde gruplandırılmıştır. Sözkonusu 195 tanımlayıcı, öğrenci özerkliği, derinlemesine düşünme, kültürler-arasılık, yaşam boyu öğrenme, öz-değerlendirme ve çok dillilik gibi kavramların yanı sıra, aday yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin öğreticilik yeteneklerine odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışma için gerekli verileri toplamak amacıyla, DÖAYAP içerisinde bulunan 195 öz-değerlendirme tanımlayıcısı '5 puanlık Likert tipi ölçeği' biçiminde anket maddeleri olarak kullanılmış ve nitel veri toplamak amacıyla 196'ncı madde olarak da açık uçlu bir soru eklenmiştir. Bu araştırmanın katılımcıları, çeşitli düzeylerde tecrübe ve eğitim geçmişine sahip ilk, orta ve yüksek öğretim düzeyde kurumlarda görev yapmakta olan 75 İngiliz Dili öğretmenidir. Elde edilen veriler SPSS istatistik paketi 23 ile analiz edilmiştir. Öncelikle, belgenin hem tümü için hem de öz-değerlendirme tanımlayıcılarının alt bölümleri için katılımcıların yanıtlarının ortalamaları, ortalama ve frekans analizleriyle birlikte betimleyici istatistik araçlarıyla hesaplanmıştır. İkinci adım olarak, verilerin dağılımı 'Kolmogorov-Smirnov Uygunluk Testi' ile analiz edilmiştir. Verilerin dağılımı normal olmadığı için, katılımcı gruplar arasındaki farkların seviyesini bulmak için parametrik bir test yerine parametrik olmayan bir test uygulanmıştır. Ayrıca, katılımcılar ikiden fazla gruba ayrıldığından, "Kruskal-Wallis H Testi" ve son aşamada da "çiftli karşılaştırmalar" gerçekleştirilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, farklı seviyedeki eğitim kurumlarında çalışan ve çeşitli tecrübe süresi ve eğitim altyapısına sahip katılımcıların anlamlı seviyede farklı algıladıkları öz-değerlendirme tanımlayıcıları ortaya çıkarılmıştır.

Yapılan analiz sonuçları, görev yapmakta olan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin DÖAYAP öz-değerlendirme tanımlayıcılarını genel olarak olumlu biçimde algıladıklarına işaret etmektedir çünkü genel olarak tanımlayıcıları önemli bulma oranları 5 üzerinden 4,13 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Farklı bir ifadeyle, katılımcıların genel olarak DÖAYAP öz-değerlendirme tanımlayıcılarını yaklaşık olarak %83 oranında önemli gördükleri ve hatta ankette kullanılan kelime seçimine göre 'çok önemli' kabul ettikleri sonucu ortaya çıkmıştır. Bununla birlikte, görev yaptıkları eğitim kurumunun düzeyi, tecrübeleri ve eğitim altyapıları dikkate alındığı zaman, katılımcıların DÖAYAP öz-değerlendirme tanımlayıcılarını algılamaları arasında anlamlı farklar da gözlemlenmiştir. Ayrıca, katılımcıların hiçbirisi görev yaptıkları ortam için ilave edilmesi gerektiğini düşündüğü herhangi bir tanımlayıcı önerisinde bulunmamıştır. Bu husus da DÖAYAP öz-değerlendirme tanımlayıcılarının yeterince kapsamlı ve tatmin edici olduklarına işaret etmektedir. Özetlemek gerekirse, gerçekleştirilmiş olan bu çalışmanın bulguları, DÖAYAP öz-değerlendirme tanımlayıcılarının, her ne kadar 'dersin işlenişi' gibi bazı alt bölümler, 'bağımsız öğrenme' ve 'bağlam' gibi bazı diğer alt bölümlere göre daha önemli algılanmış olsa da, Türkiye bağlamında görev yapmakta olan İngiliz Dili öğretmenleri tarafından büyük oranda memnuniyetle karşılandığını göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, görev yapmakta olan İngiliz Dili öğretmenlerini hizmet-içi eğitimler aracılığıyla çok dillilik, kültürler-arası iletişimsel yetkinlik (KİY), öz-değerlendirme, öğrenci ve öğretmen özerkliği gibi DÖAYAP içerisinde de vurgulanan ilkelerle aşina hale getirmek muhtemelen hem öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimlerine hem de ülke genelinde yabancı dil öğretimindeki başarıya katkı sağlayacaktır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: DÖAYAP, Yabancı Dil Öğretmeni Eğitimi, Yabancı Dil Öğretmeni Değerlendirmesi, Yabancı Dil Öğretmeni Yeterlilikleri, Hizmet-içi İngiliz Dili Öğretmenleri

Danışman: Doç. Dr. Nuray ALAGÖZLÜ, Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümü, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BA: Bachelor of Arts

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CELTA: Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults

CLL: Community Language Learning

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

CoE: Council of Europe

DELTA: Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

ECML: European Centre for Modern Languages

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELP: European Language Portfolio

ELT: English Language Teaching

ELTE: English Language Teacher Education

EPG: European Profiling Grid

EPLTE: European Profile for Language Teacher Education

EPOSTL: European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages

ESL: English as a Second Language

EU: European Union

FLE: Foreign Language Education

HEC: Higher Education Council

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies

INSET: In-Service Training

L2: Second/Foreign Language

MA: Master of Arts

MoNE: Ministry of National Education

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SLTE: Second Language Teacher Education

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

1. INTRODUCTION

In this part of the study, the significance and purpose of the study will be explained. The statement of the problem as well as the research questions and assumptions will be presented in this chapter. Finally, limitations of the study will be given at the end of this section.

1.1. Introduction

In the second decade of the 21st century, the importance of teaching and learning foreign languages has become firmly established due to factors such as globalization, international and inter-continental mobility, technology, trade and economy as well as scientific research and tourism (Sarıçoban, 2001). Our planet has become smaller, and accordingly, it has become more multicultural and multilingual. Until about two decades ago, people used to talk of nation states which could be associated with single languages but this has changed and a need for multilingual individuals has eventually emerged. European countries do not form an exception to this trend and the language map in Europe is also changing day by day. “More and more Europeans are using other languages instead of or in addition to their official ‘national’ language. The European continent is rapidly becoming a multilingual one” (Broeder & Wijk, 2012, p. 16). The linguistic landscape has changed in Europe and this triggers changes in foreign language education systems across Europe. It is not possible for Turkey to remain indifferent to these changes owing to the fact that Turkey wishes to integrate into the European Union (EU) and has taken important steps to realize her long-held ambition.

Having established the importance of learning foreign languages, the issue of well-educated foreign language teachers arises. It is an undeniable fact that success in Foreign Language Education (FLE) is, to a great extent, related to the qualifications of the Foreign Language teachers. It is the job of the teacher to plan, perform and assess educational activities as well as reconstructing the activities in line with the feedback obtained from the students (Coşkun, 2009). The way of

ending up with successful foreign language teachers is, first of all, providing them with proper education at teacher training faculties at universities, and secondly, organizing effective and productive in-service training (INSET) seminars to facilitate professional development.

As to the issue of training foreign language teachers, a project was launched by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) titled as 'A Framework for Teacher Education' in 2004. The primary aim of the project was to play a crucial role throughout the process of harmonization of language teacher education across the continent. The goals of the project were:

-to address the content of teacher education with a view to identifying 'core competences',

-to formulate corresponding didactic competence descriptors relating to language teaching, and

-to embed these in a portfolio to help student teachers reflect on their knowledge, skills and values (Slivensky, 2008, p. 441).

As a direct result of this project, the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) has been designed and printed in French and English in 2007. The EPOSTL aims to encourage students undergoing their initial teacher education to reflect on the didactic knowledge and skills necessary to teach languages, to help them to assess their own didactic competences and to enable them to monitor their progress and to record their experiences of teaching during the course of their teacher education (Newby, *et al.*, 2007). It builds on previously published documents such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP) - as well as the European Commission-financed project European Profile for Language Teacher Education – A Frame of Reference (EPLTE) (Newby, *et al.*, 2007).

Although the primary aim of the EPOSTL is to provide a tool for reflection and self-assessment for student teachers during their initial teacher education, as suggested by Burkert & Schwienhorst:

> *…it should further assist curriculum development and course planning and should also be used as an awareness-raising instrument for in-service teacher education. The EPOSTL as such ought to be integrated into existing course structures and, if possible, be used throughout the teacher education programme (2008, p. 242).*

Therefore, its use in in-service teaching practice would make it a valuable tool for professional development (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008; Çakır & Balçıkanlı, 2012; Heyworth, 2013; Ingvarsdóttir, 2011; Jimbo, *et al.*, 2010; Mirici & Hergüner, 2015; Newby, 2011; 2012b; Velikova, 2013). Even though the EPOSTL is firstly and mainly designed for prospective foreign language teachers in the European setting and the Turkish context bears both structural and cultural discrepancies, it is still worth considering this instrument carefully with the aim of specifying which aspects can be successfully emulated and implemented in Turkish context.

1.2. Significance of the Study

It is not possible to refute that good education cannot be achieved without qualified teachers; therefore, proper training and education of teachers is of utmost importance for this purpose. However, the issues of what proper training and education of teachers involves, what competences a teacher should have, and what the criteria are to be employed in the process of evaluation of teachers are hard to specify. In this respect, the EPOSTL, a document that was developed for the ECML of the Council of Europe (CoE), offers a viable solution in that it aims to harmonize language teacher education across Europe by building on existing documents published by the Language Policy Division of the CoE such as the CEFR, the ELP, and the EPLTE (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008; Newby, 2011; 2012b). When its overall impact is evaluated considering factors such as its dissemination, current use, flexibility and global effectiveness, it can be argued that the EPOSTL has generally been appreciated by all its users (Newby, *et al.*, 2011). Its sphere of influence has even transcended Europe and the Japanese have produced two Japanese versions of the EPOSTL (JAPOSTL, JAPOTL) to be employed in pre-service and in-service teacher education, respectively (Newby, 2012b).

As to the reception of the EPOSTL in Turkish context, there have been several recently published studies (such as Bergil & Sarıçoban, 2016; Çakır & Balçıkanlı,

2012; Hişmanoğlu, 2012; Hişmanoğlu, 2013; Mirici & Hergüner, 2015; Okumuş & Akalın, 2015; Su Bergil, 2015) on the use of the EPOSTL in pre-service foreign language teacher education in Turkish context. However, there are no studies on the use of EPOSTL for in-service foreign language teachers in Turkey. This is one of the reasons why this study has been conducted. Accordingly, this dissertation aims to arrive at an understanding of in-service language teachers' perceptions of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors in relation to Turkish FLE context. The main reason for this necessity is to specify which descriptors in the self-assessment section of the EPOSTL will be perceived as important for Turkish context and the reasons underlying this situation.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The successful completion of this dissertation will make it possible to arrive at an understanding of the perception of in-service English language teachers working for different levels of institutions and with different levels of experience and educational background of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors in Turkish context. The total number of self-assessment descriptors is 195 and this may seem overwhelming for the users of the EPOSTL. In line with this, the team of researchers in Japan has reduced the number of self-assessment descriptors to 100, arguing that some of the descriptors would be irrelevant to their particular context and foreign language education system. In a similar vein, this dissertation aims to specify if there are any irrelevant self-assessment descriptors for Turkish context. To do this, in-service English language teachers' perception of the seven categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors are obtained and discussed. The influence of in-service English language teachers' level of education, level of experience and the context in which they operate on their perception have also been identified and dealt with. It has also been considered that there may be some more descriptors necessary for Turkish context, which will be tried to be obtained via this study. As a result of this study, the relative significance of the categories in the EPOSTL self-assessment section has been evaluated for Turkish context and suggestions as to the utilization of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors for Turkish context have been provided.

1.4. Statement of the Problem

Teachers play a crucial and pivotal role in the overall quality of education; and therefore, excellence in education can only be attained via competent teachers (Coşkun, 2009; Rossner, 2013b). However, defining the characteristics of a competent teacher has been a challenging and controversial issue and the EPOSTL offers a viable solution for this problem. In addition, it is not currently possible to speak of perfect harmonization in the process of training foreign language teachers in Turkish context. Therefore, as a document that has been welcomed across and adopted by the countries in Europe and that has even been adapted to the Japanese context, the EPOSTL, along with other CoE publications such as the CEFR and the ELP, has also been taken into consideration by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) since 2006 (Coşgun-Ogeyik, 2009; Hişmanoğlu, 2012). However, if we consider the other side of the coin, it can be argued that majority of in-service English Language teachers/instructors currently working for the MoNE and Higher Education Council (HEC) in Turkey have completed their BA (a) decade(s) ago, long before the EPOSTL was published, and accordingly, their professional competencies and educational concerns vary greatly. As a result of this study, it will be possible to reveal and analyze in-service English language teachers' perception of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors.

1.4.1. Research Questions

In-service English Language Teachers working for primary, secondary, and tertiary level institutions have been included into the study as participants and their perceptions of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors have been identified by using a quantitative and a quasi-qualitative research design. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the following research questions:

1.4.1.1. What is In-Service English Language Teachers' Overall Perception of the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Descriptors in Turkish Context?

1.4.1.2. Which Categories of the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Descriptors will be Perceived as More/Less Important by In-Service English Language Teachers in Turkish Context?

1.4.1.3. Which Categories of the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Descriptors will be Perceived as More/Less Important by In-Service English Language Teachers

Working for Primary, Secondary, and/or Tertiary Level Institutions in Turkish Context?

1.4.1.3.1. Are there any Significant Differences in the Perceptions of the Self-Assessment Descriptors of the EPOSTL by In-Service English Language Teachers Working for Primary, Secondary, and/or Tertiary Level Institutions in Turkish Context?

1.4.1.4. Which Categories of the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Descriptors will be Perceived as More/Less Important by In-Service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Experience in Turkish Context?

1.4.1.4.1. Are there any Significant Differences in the Perceptions of the Self-Assessment Descriptors of the EPOSTL by In-Service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Experience in Turkish Context?

1.4.1.5. Which Categories of the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Descriptors will be Perceived as More/Less Important by In-Service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Education in Turkish Context?

1.4.1.5.1. Are there any Significant Differences in the Perceptions of the Self-Assessment Descriptors of the EPOSTL by In-Service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Education in Turkish Context?

1.4.1.6. What Descriptors are Missing in the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Section according to In-Service English Language Teachers in Turkish Context?

1.5. Assumptions

Accordingly, the hypotheses of this study are:

1.5.1. In-service English language teachers' overall perception of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors in Turkish context may be positive.

1.5.2. In-service English language teachers' perception of the categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors will not be equal and some of the categories will be perceived as more/less important.

1.5.3. In-service English language teachers' perception of the categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors will not be the same when the level of the institution they work for is considered and some of the categories will be perceived as more/less important by in-service English language teachers working for primary, secondary, and/or tertiary level institutions.

1.5.3.1. Significant differences in the perceptions of some of the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers working for primary, secondary, and/or tertiary level institutions will be revealed.

1.5.4. In-service English language teachers' perception of the categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors will not be the same when their level of experience is considered and some of the categories will be perceived as more/less important by in-service English language teachers with different levels of experience.

1.5.4.1. Significant differences in the perceptions of some of the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with different levels of experience will be revealed.

1.5.5. In-service English language teachers' perception of the categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors will not be the same when their level of education is considered and some of the categories will be perceived as more/less important by in-service English language teachers with different levels of education.

1.5.5.1. Significant differences in the perceptions of some of the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with different levels of education will be revealed.

1.5.6. In-service English language teachers in Turkish context will suggest many context-specific descriptors to be included into the EPOSTL self-assessment section.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

The factors that impose limitations on this study are:

1. This study is limited to 75 in-service English language teachers.
2. The participants of the study include in-service English language teachers working for primary, secondary, and tertiary level institutions in Isparta, Turkey.
3. 'Personal Statement' and 'Dossier' sections of the EPOSTL have been excluded and only the 'self-assessment' section of the EPOSTL that includes 195 descriptors has been employed within the study.
4. 'Glossary' section of the EPOSTL has not been included within the questionnaire. Although the researcher has explained important terms and

concepts to the participants before they have filled in the questionnaire, the answers provided by the participants may have been contaminated as a consequence of their lack of information and awareness as to the terms and concepts that have been employed by the EPOSTL.

5. The questionnaire, designed to collect quantitative data, has been scaled in 5 point Likert-type format, which implies that in-service English language teachers may tend to answer questions in such a way that they believe expected of them; thus, contaminating the data as a result of "social desirability bias" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 54).

6. The 195 self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL have been employed as the data collection instrument and the wording of the descriptors within the EPOSTL follows the pattern of 'I can …'; however, as the aim of this study is to arrive at an understanding of in-service English language teachers' perceptions of the document rather than encouraging in-service English language teachers to assess themselves, the wording of the questionnaire has been slightly modified. More precisely, instead of 'I can …' pattern, gerund phrases (Ving) have been employed in the wording of the descriptors. As a result, the reliability of the data collection instrument has been re-evaluated although its reliability level has already been evaluated for European context.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the first half of this chapter, key issues related to language teacher education have been included. More specifically, such topics as professional development, language teacher education, second language teacher education curriculum, language teacher evaluation and related problems, language teacher supervision, language teacher competencies and English language teacher education process in Turkey have been dealt with in line with the review of the relevant and available literature.

In a similar way, the second half of this chapter focuses on relevant information regarding the rationale, content and use of some Foreign Language and Foreign Language Teacher Education-related publications of the Council of Europe (CoE) such as European Profile for Language Teacher Education (EPLTE), European Profiling Grid (EPG), English Language Portfolio (ELP) and Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL), forming the mainstay of this study, has been dwelled upon with specific reference to its background, aims and contents, implementation, advantages as well as criticisms. The potential use of the EPOSTL in in-service teacher development, the connection between the EPOSTL and other documents, the concepts of plurilingualism and alternative assessment with reference to the EPOSTL and the implementation of the EPOSTL in Turkish context have also been considered within this chapter.

2.1. Introduction

It has been firmly established that English has become the common language of international communication (Senior, 2006) and it has grown to be the language of communication in areas such as science, education, technology, trade and politics. Learning English as a Second or Foreign Language is espoused by many countries around the world due to the fact that it will enable these countries to integrate into the global economy and it will bring countless other benefits such as providing easier access to the information and knowledge that are indispensable for economic and social development (Burns & Richards, 2009). Accordingly,

increasing numbers of people try hard to improve their and their children's English language skills by preferring schools or colleges that offer high quality English language instruction, attending intensive language courses or even travelling to inner circle countries. Consequently, the demand for competent English language teachers and for more well-organized approaches to their training and professional development has become clear (Burns & Richards, 2009). To meet this urgent demand, some countries hire native speakers of English who have completed an English Language Teaching (ELT) course such as CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults). However, more often than not, training their citizens as English language teachers is considered as a more viable option by these countries.

As stated by Stern more than three decades ago, "…languages are difficult to learn and no less difficult to teach" (1983, p. 1). The vital role to be played by foreign language teachers in overcoming these difficulties has been emphasized by Rossner (2013b), Richards & Renandya (2002) and Cochran-Smith (2010). High quality in education can only be achieved by employing well-qualified and competent teachers; accordingly, "…teachers have been identified as one of the major determinants, if not the key factor, in the quality of education" (Cochran-Smith, 2010, p. 5). The aim of language teacher education in Turkey is, thus, to educate effective teachers who are capable of meeting the needs of today's world (Senemoğlu, 2011). Therefore, training pre-service teachers is not enough in itself to ensure high quality in education. Professional development opportunities should also be provided for in-service teachers to help them meet the challenges of a globalised society and to guarantee consistently high quality in foreign language education.

2.2. Professional Development for Language Teachers

According to Burns & Richards (2009), the current level of professionalism in ELT is much higher than it was the past in that "ELT is seen as a career in a field of educational specialization; it requires a specialized knowledge base obtained through both academic study and practical experience; and it is a field of work where membership is based on entry requirements and standards" (Burns &

Richards, 2009, p. 2). In addition, principles for language teaching and language teachers have been established of late and the number of professional journals, conferences and organizations has multiplied. In addition, our understanding of language learning/teaching and acquisition processes has become more advanced.

In this respect, Ur distinguishes a professional from an amateur and defines professionalism as "…preparing oneself to do a competent job through learning" (2002, p. 389). The term 'learning' in this definition involves attending pre-service/in-service courses, reflecting on experience, reading, writing, observing, discussing with colleagues, and researching. The main difference between an amateur and a professional is that a professional should not have a go at teaching and do it badly. For Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), a professional foreign language teacher is "...to keep current with new instructional techniques, research results, advances in the ESL field, and education policy issues and use such information to reflect on and improve their instructional and assessment practices" (TESOL, 2010, p. 19). What and how much learners get to know in the classroom is directly correlated with what teachers perform in the classroom; hence, professional development is to be regarded as the top priority for language teachers.

Pettis (2002) emphasizes three main areas in a teacher's process of professional development. First of all, a foreign language teacher should continuously improve his/her knowledge and understanding of language and language learning and make use of this new knowledge throughout his/her instruction. Secondly, there should be a change in the teacher's needs and interests throughout his/her career. A young teacher may be more interested in the content of his/her instruction whereas a more experienced teacher tends to deal with issues such as the delivery of that specific content. Thirdly, a personal and ongoing commitment is essential to professional development and professional development activities should become a top priority on a teacher's agenda.

In contrast to Pettis (2002), who asserts that professional development is a personal concern, Richards & Farrell (2005) consider professional development as

an institutional issue and suggest various guidelines that highlight the institution's role in providing its teachers with a proper professional development program. The needs of the institution itself as well as the practicing teachers should be specified as a first step. Following the needs analysis, long-term and immediate goals should be set for professional development and the participants must be selected. During this whole process, institutional and peer support should be provided and evaluation of what has been learned is to be carried out. As a final step, the results of the professional development program should be shared in the form of a brief written report, a presentation at a conference or a workshop that outline the process (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Even when the institution does not plan and conduct such professional development programs, foreign language teachers may still compensate for it in informal ways such as chatting with colleagues during lesson breaks about the problems they have experienced in their classes. While having a cup of tea or coffee, a teacher brings up a problem and the whole group listens and some teachers in the group typically make suggestions and try to help out.

2.3. Language Teacher Development versus Training

Although they may sound identical to the layman, the terms 'development' and 'training' are often distinguished as "…two complementary components of a fully rounded teacher education" (Head & Taylor, 1997, p. 9). The differences between the two have been highlighted by many researchers such as Bailey (2006), Freeman (1989), Lange (1990), Richards & Farrell (2005) and Rossner (2013b). Experimental data provided by secondary school trainee teachers in Germany suggest that for trainee teachers, pre-service training has offered a limited contribution to them in their in-service teaching experiences (Sigel, 2009). Delanoy (2002) even claims that trainee teachers are at times advised to disregard the lesson content provided throughout their pre-service training at university. These two cases confirm that pre-service training is definitely necessary but not enough unless supported with in-service development activities for a language teacher to function effectively. The following table summarizes the differences between the processes of training and development:

Table 2. 1. Comparison of Training and Development (Freeman, 1989, p. 42).

	Teacher Training: Process of direct intervention	**Teacher Development: Process of influence**
Characteristics of aspects of teaching focused on	Generally accessible; can be mastered through specific courses of action	Idiosyncratic and individual; maturation through constant attention, critique, and involvement of the teacher in his or her teaching
Constituent base	Knowledge and skills	Attitude and awareness
Focus	Initiated by the collaborator; work carried out by the teacher	Raised by the collaborator, but work initiated by the teacher
Criteria for assessing change	External; accessible to the collaborator	Internal; personal to the teacher
Closure	Can be within a fixed time period, once criteria are satisfied	Is open-ended; work continues until teacher decides to stop

Training focuses on a teacher's present responsibilities and usually consists of short-range and immediate goals. It functions as preparation stage for induction into an initial teaching position and it is usually conducted under supervision. The content of training process is specified by experts and the format of training is more or less standard (Richards & Farrell, 2005). On the other hand, teacher development is pointed towards improvement in teacher's appreciation of the profession of teaching and of himself/herself as a language teacher. It has longer-term goals and is considered to be a bottom-up process.

Ohata (2007) refers to Wallace's (1991) three models of teacher learning (the applied science, craft, and reflective models) in explaining the differences between teacher training and development. In the craft model, teachers model and imitate an expert teacher and stick to his/her directions without questioning just like apprentices learning crafts. In the applied science model, teachers make use of research-based theories and employ them throughout their instruction. In the

reflective model, teachers improve by reflecting on their experience. The points they have realized and learned through reflection are transferred to their future practices. Consequently, it can be argued that teacher training corresponds to the first and second models whereas teacher development is located within the third model.

To summarize, teacher training is more concerned with pre-service language teachers whereas teacher development is related to in-service language teachers and as the main concern of this dissertation is in-service foreign language teachers, teacher development is one of the principal items on the agenda throughout this dissertation. Accordingly, certain key features of teacher development are ascertained by Mann in his state-of-the-art article:

- It is in principle a bottom-up process, and so can be contrasted with staff development that is organized by the institution 'top-down'.
- It values the view of the teacher as an insider rather than the view of outsiders such as inspectors.
- It is independent of the organization but often functions more successfully with the institution's support and recognition.
- It is a continuing process and can never be finished, i.e. teachers however experienced can always develop further.
- It is a process of articulating and reflecting on inner conscious choices in response to the outer world of the teaching context.
- It is wider than 'professional development' as it includes personal, moral and value dimensions (Mann, 2005, p. 105).

2.4. Language Teacher Education

As has been noted previously, high quality in education is directly correlated with the qualities of teachers and teachers play the crucial role in sustaining and improving quality standards in education (Coşkun, 2009; Rossner, 2013b). In an ideal instructional process, teachers should be the ones who plan, implement, and evaluate the in-class instructional activities and who reconstruct these activities as a result of the feedback they obtain. Jourdenais asks "…if teachers need to be formally educated in order to teach language" (2009, p. 647). In some cases being

a native speaker is sufficient for a teaching position. Simply being a competent speaker of the target language is considered satisfactory and acceptable for a successful professional career by some stakeholders (such as school directors and parents) of the process of education; however, these 'native speakers' tend to seek workshops or enroll in INSET courses some time later. This observation by Jourdenais (2009) clearly suggests that foreign language teachers should be formally educated before they start their careers.

2.4.1. The Craft & Applied-Science & Reflective Models

Having established the fact that it is essential for teachers of foreign languages to be formally educated; there exist many other questions as to the model of this formal education, the content of this formal education, and the role of mentor teachers throughout this process among many others. Wallace (1991) was one of the most influential authors who tried to provide the answers to such questions by suggesting three models for language teacher education. According to the craft model (see Figure 2.1.), professional competence can only be attained by the inexperienced trainee if s/he tries to imitate the master's techniques and follow the master's instruction and advice. The practice of teaching is considered as a craft and a current example of the craft model in teacher training is placing practicum students with experienced cooperating teachers (Bailey, 2006). The craft model might work well in a highly static society; nevertheless, today's modern society puts special emphasis on change and innovation in every field of life, which comes to mean that the craft model would not yield effective results in a dynamic society.

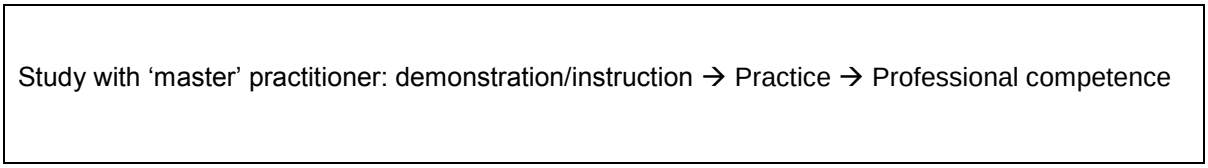


Figure 2. 1. The Craft Model of Professional Education (Wallace, 1991, p. 6).

The profession of language teaching involves more than a fixed collection of techniques and is inspired and shaped by scientific theories and research findings. Accordingly, great revolutions in the field of linguistics and formation of new fields of study such as psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics in recent decades lead us

to see the practice of language teaching as an applied science. In the applied science model, experts carry out research and create theory, which are then conveyed to the trainee. The trainee is to draw his/her own conclusions from these scientific findings and apply them in the classroom (see Figure 2.2.). Failure may stem from two possibilities; the trainee either has not grasped the findings properly or has not applied them appropriately in the class. One implication of the applied science model is that in-service teachers need to be frequently updated through in-service workshops owing to the fact that the body of knowledge they need to apply in their classrooms is constantly changing and growing (Bailey, 2006).

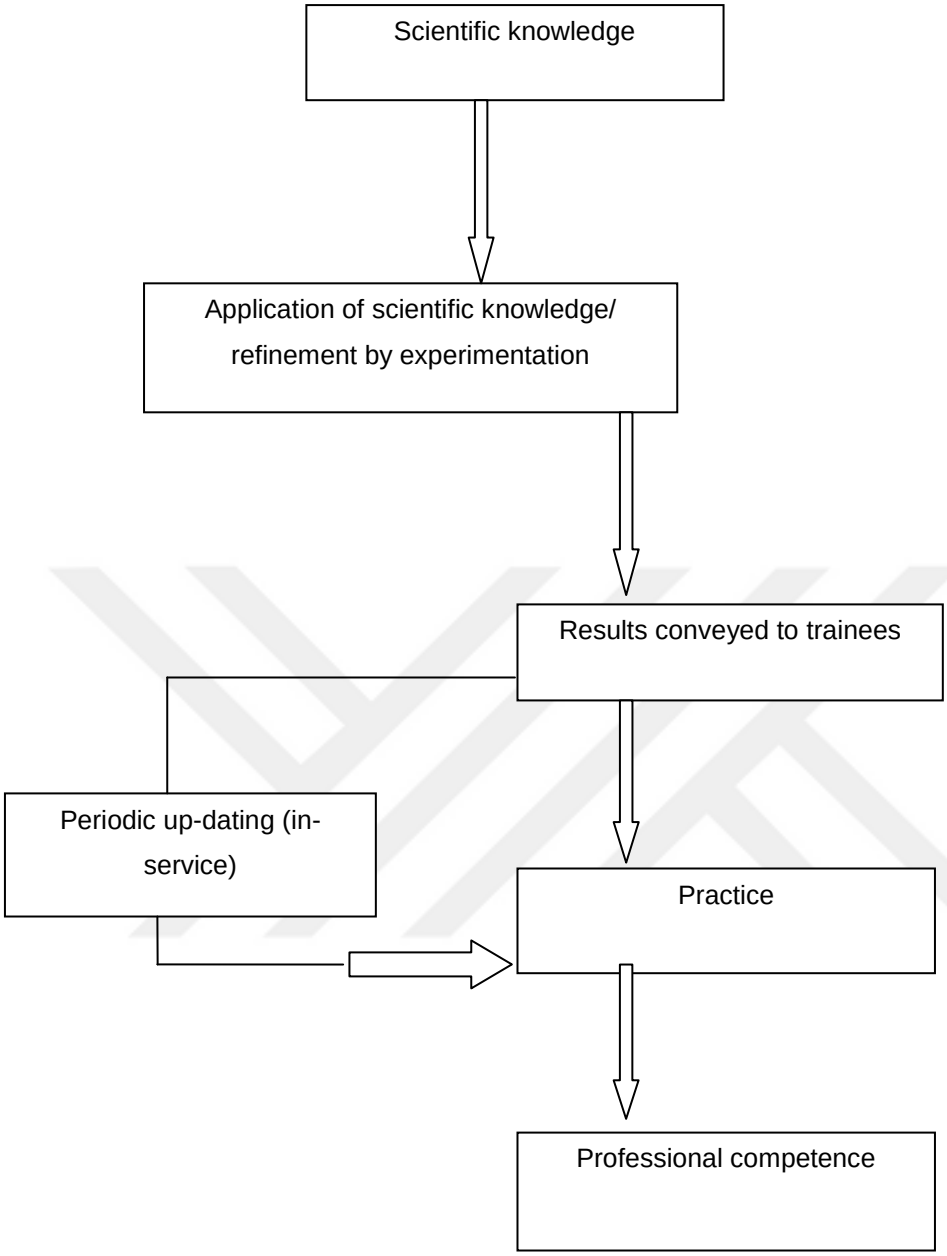


Figure 2. 2. The Applied Science Model of Professional Education (Wallace, 1991, p. 9).

The experiential aspect of the profession of teaching is focused on in the craft model whereas the applied science model stresses the key role to be played by the relevant scientific knowledge. The craft model dismisses the importance of 'received knowledge' referring to research and theory and the applied science model undervalues the teacher's experiential knowledge. Moreover, the craft model has been regarded as dully static and imitative. For Wallace (1991), the

reflective model functions as a mediating solution which gives equal emphasis to both the experiential knowledge and the received knowledge. In the reflective model (see Figure 2.3.), the process consists of three parts:

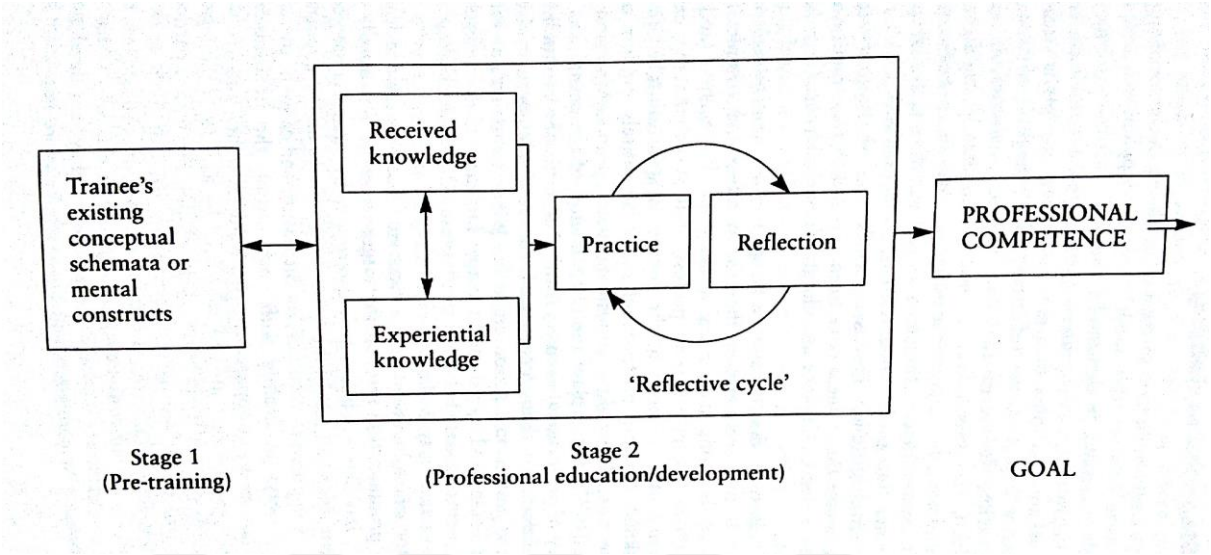


Figure 2. 3. Reflective Practice Model of Professional Education/Development (Wallace, 1991, p. 49).

-Stage 1 (pre-training stage): the trainee decides to embark on professional education or development process.
-Stage 2 (professional education/development): there is interaction between the received and experiential knowledge, which later relate to the trainee's own reflection and practice.
-Stage 3 (goal): as a result of the reflective cycle, trainee's professional competence is improved.

The trainee in stage 1 may be pre-service or in-service and the process in stage 2 may happen, for example, when a teacher attends a training program on listening comprehension. The technique of asking pre-listening questions is introduced to the teacher prior to listening the text. This technique may sound compatible with the teacher's mental constructs about listening and the teacher decides to try it in his/her own classroom. If the teacher thinks that the technique was of use, s/he may decide to add up this technique to his/her repertoire of practices for teaching listening comprehension and the teacher's professional competence on teaching listening comprehension gets upgraded (Wallace, 1991).

The model of reflective practice is not without disadvantages, though. For instance, as the experience is individual and private, it is not possible to make generalizations about the techniques. The same technique may work in some contexts with some students and may fail in some other contexts with other students. In spite of this and similar drawbacks, the reflective model enables teachers to develop their own personal theories of teaching, deal with their decision-making mechanisms and classroom practices, and develop their own ways of critical reflection by participating in the processes of "…planning, decision making, hypothesis testing, experimentation and reflection" (Richards, 1998, p. 3). In sum, the reflective model necessitates a completely different methodology in language teacher education because the trainee should be able to "…reflect on the received knowledge in the light of classroom experience" (Wallace, 1991, p. 55) and, in return, the experience gained in the classroom should contribute to the received knowledge base of the trainee.

2.4.2. Theories of Teaching in Language Teacher Education

Language teacher education programs normally consist of a knowledge base that features linguistics and learning theories and a practical section that highlights language teaching methodology and practicum studies. The body of this knowledge base has expanded greatly in recent decades, but there is hardly any direct relation between the work performed by the researchers who develop this knowledge base and the process of education and preparation of language teachers. This tension between practice and theory has also been voiced by Clarke (1994) and Hedgcock (2002). Furthermore, Johnson maintains that, "those who construct theory are … generally held in higher esteem than and hold positions of power over those who construct practice" (1997, p. 779). As stated by Richards (1987, p. 210): "To prepare effective language teachers, we need to have a theory of effective language teaching… Such a theory is arrived at through the study of the teaching process itself. This theory should form the basis for the principles and content of TESOL teacher education". This theory should also:

- describe effective language teaching processes;
- develop a theory of the nature of effective language teaching; and

- develop principles for the preparation of language teachers (Richards, 1987, p. 210).

Richards (1987) puts forward two approaches with the aim of developing theories of teaching and principles for teacher education programs. The first is the micro-approach, which delineates teaching in terms of its directly observable features and is focused on what the teachers does in the classroom. The second is the macro-approach, which moves beyond the observable features in order to arrive at generalizations and inferences and is essentially holistic. In spite of the fact that the aim of both approaches is developing theories of teaching and principles for teacher education programs, they lead in conflicting directions, which has been noted as “the dilemma of language teacher education” by Richards (1987, p. 211). Accordingly, using theory to direct and clarify the value of practical experience is suggested as the key of effective language teacher education programs.

The profession of language teaching has been considered as a science, a technology, a craft, and an art. Consequently, each of these views argues for different approaches to language teacher education. According to Zahorik (1986), three basic conceptions of teaching are: science-research conceptions, theory-philosophy conceptions, and art-craft conceptions. Needless to say, the basic skills of language teaching are conceptualized differently by each of these conceptions. Research and empirical investigation (Richards, 2002) are at the heart of science-research conceptions and ‘following a previously tested model’ and ‘doing what effective teachers do’ are suggested by Zahorik (1986) as examples for science-research conceptions. However, ‘a previously tested model’ may be successful in some contexts but may fail in some others. In a similar fashion, imitating ‘effective teachers’ is another tricky issue as identifying so-called effective teachers is not as easy as it sounds. An all-agreed list of criteria by which language teachers can be evaluated has not been decided upon yet and it does not seem possible at least in the near future. Such a list may consist of about two hundred entries (e.g. the self-assessment section of the EPOSTL) or may be squeezed into twelve characteristics as summarized by Blum:

1. Instruction is guided by a preplanned curriculum.
2. There are high expectations for student learning.
3. Students are carefully oriented to lessons.

4. Instruction is clear and focused.
5. Learning progress is monitored closely.
6. When students do not understand, they are retaught.
7. Class time is used for learning.
8. There are smooth and efficient classroom routines.
9. Instructional groups formed in the classroom fit instructional needs.
10. Standards for classroom behavior are high.
11. Personal interactions between teachers and students are positive.
12. Incentives and rewards for students are used to promote excellence (1984, pp. 3-6).

Instead of empirical investigation, rational thought and reason form the base of theory-philosophy conceptions. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Silent Way are given as examples to this view by Richards (2002) as they are based on a set of carefully elaborated assumptions. Humanistic approaches in language teaching such as Community Language Learning (CLL), team-teaching, learner-centered curriculum, and reflective teaching are also categorized as values-based approaches under the umbrella term of theory-philosophy conceptions (Richards, 2002). Art-craft conceptions, on the other hand, view teaching as an art or craft and the teacher's personal skills and character play the crucial role in teaching. Instead of general methods of teaching, teachers should be able to adapt their instruction in line with the requirements of the specific contexts in which they teach and their skills of decision-making are at the heart of this view. Therefore, a good teacher analyses the context s/he teaches in, is aware of the several options in this specific context, and chooses the best alternative that leads to the most effective results. The essential skills of each of these conceptions can be summarized as:

Science-research conceptions

- Understand the learning principles.
- Develop tasks and activities based on the learning principles.
- Monitor students' performance on tasks to see that desired performance is being achieved.

Theory-philosophy conceptions

- Understand the theory and the principles.

- Select syllabuses, materials and tasks based on the theory.
- Monitor your teaching to see that it conforms to the theory.

In the case of values-based approaches, the essential skills in teaching are:

- Understand the values behind the approach.
- Select only those educational means that conform to these values.
- Monitor the implementation process to ensure that the value system is being maintained.

Art-craft conceptions

- Treat each teaching situation as unique.
- Identify the particular characteristics of each situation.
- Try out different teaching strategies.
- Develop personal approaches to teaching (Richards, 1998, p. 46).

These three conceptions can be regarded as forming a continuum; for instance, inexperienced teachers may focus on the essential skills suggested by science-research conceptions and as they become more experienced, they can modify their initial understanding of teaching and try to unravel the implicit skills offered by theory-philosophy conceptions. Finally, considering the specific context in which they work, they may develop their personal theories of teaching and focus more on the skills of art-craft conceptions (Richards, 2002). In sum, various conceptions of teaching are blended throughout the process of teacher education and ongoing development.

2.4.3. Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE) Curriculum

Curriculum in any educational system is defined as "…the totality of content to be taught and aims to be realized" (White, 1988, p. 4) and the field of SLTE lacks a general compromise on what the fundamental knowledge base of the field is or what theoretical basis of the field includes. The reason for this, according to Richards (1998), is that the field of SLTE relies on a variety of disciplinary sources such as linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, neurolinguistics, and education. All the same, two main components of the content of SLTE have been proposed by Burns & Richards (2009, p. 3): "knowledge about" and "knowledge how". 'Knowledge about' refers to the content knowledge of SLTE programs and such courses as curriculum development, methodology, language analysis,

discourse analysis, and phonology are typically offered. ‘Knowledge how’, on the other hand, focuses on classroom teaching skills and pedagogic issues; therefore, methodology courses usually feature this aspect. For Johnson, three broad areas make up the content of SLTE, and these are:

1) the content of L2 teacher education programs, or what L2 teachers need to know;

2) the pedagogies that are taught in L2 teacher education program, or how L2 teachers should teach; and

3) the institutional forms of delivery through which both the content and pedagogies are learned, or how L2 teachers learn to teach (Johnson, 2009, p. 21).

Yet another set of areas that make up the content of SLTE is given by Richards (1998, p. 1):

-theories of teaching,
-teaching skills,
-communication skills,
-subject matter knowledge,
-pedagogical reasoning and decision making, and
-contextual knowledge.

As can be understood, the issue of content in SLTE has not been established and it will be dealt with in more detail in ‘Language Teacher Competencies’ section (Section 2.7.) of this dissertation. Nevertheless, content provides the answer for the question of what will be taught and there are many other questions such as ‘who will be taught’, ‘how it will be taught’, and ‘how what is learned will be evaluated’ in the process of planning a curriculum (see Figure 2.4.) (Graves, 2009).

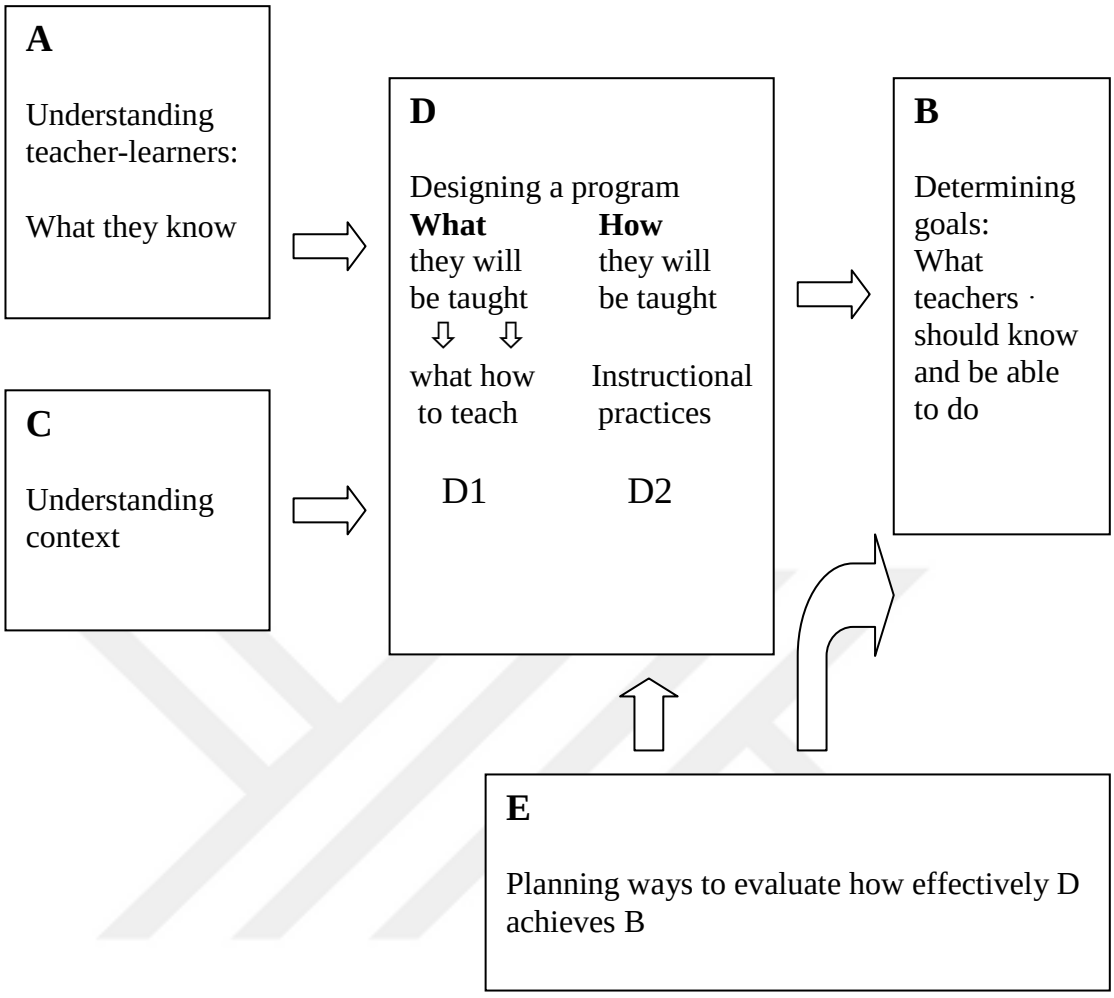


Figure 2. 4. A Framework for Planning a Curriculum (Graves, 2009, p. 116).

Two sets of needs analysis information are called for in this curriculum planning model. In stage A, information such as who the learners are, what they already know, and what their expectations are is collected. In stage B, information about what the teacher-learners should know and be able to do at the end of the process in the form of goals is gathered. Stage D functions as a bridge between what the learners know when they start the program and what they should know when the program finishes. The aim of stage E is to determine to what extent the learners were able to achieve the goals. The whole process takes place within a specific context, and therefore, stage C analyzes the accessible resources and potential restrictions throughout the process. As a final remark, it should never be forgotten that learning to teach is an ongoing and developmental process and there is no 'terminal competence' for foreign language teachers (Graves, 2009). The

knowledge base of teaching will change for most teachers over time as they change institutions, roles, and responsibilities throughout their teaching careers. Therefore, this model may be helpful in both pre-service language teacher education and in-service language teacher training processes.

2.4.4. Practicum and Microteaching

Most of the institutions that train language teachers expect their students to take part in practicum studies and carry out microteaching sessions with the main aim of transmission of theoretical competence into actual performance, which will also enable the student-teachers to improve their instructional skills and experience. In other words, as Sarıçoban summarizes, the aim of microteaching is "… to provide the student teachers with the opportunity to practice the teaching skills and evaluate themselves concerning these skills before their future roles as teachers" (2016, p. 166). A number of terms such as practice teaching, field experience, and internship are used to refer to the practicum and the practicum usually entails "…supervised teaching, experience with systematic observation, and gaining familiarity with a particular teaching context" (Gebhard, 2009, p. 250). As a result of this variation in practicum model, the student-teacher's role may also vary to a great extent in terms of intensity and level of responsibility. The student-teacher might just observe the actual teacher in one model whereas s/he may carry a full teaching load in another model. Despite this variation in role, responsibility, and context, the aims of practicum, as summarized by Gebhard, are similar and shared;

-to gain practical classroom teaching experience;
-to apply theory and teaching ideas from previous course work;
-to discover from observing experienced teachers;
-to enhance lesson-planning skills;
-to gain skills in selecting, adapting and developing original course materials;
-to expand awareness of how to set their own goals related to improving their teaching;
-to question, articulate and reflect on their own teaching and learning philosophies;

-to see their own teaching differently by learning how to make their own informed teaching decisions through systematic observation and exploration of their own and others' teaching (Gebhard, 2009, p. 251).

In a similar fashion, the main aim of microteaching is to enable student-teachers "…to explore and reflect on their own and others' teaching styles and to acquire new teaching techniques and strategies" (Ogeyik, 2009, p. 205). Two main components of microteaching are audio-/videotaping micro lessons (Gebhard, 1990) and offering feedback in the evaluation stage of teaching performance (Ogeyik, 2009). In a typical microteaching lesson, student-teachers teach a lesson and they are observed by their peers and teacher. Subsequently, the performance is analyzed and evaluated by their teacher and peers in a cooperative manner. The student-teacher is provided with some sort of constructive feedback. Finally, the student-teacher may be asked to "re-teach the lesson with regard to the proposed points in the discussion and evaluation stage" (Ogeyik, 2009, p. 206). Therefore, a microteaching cycle involves teach, review and reflect, re-teach stages (Ogeyik, 2009). As to the effectiveness of practicum in Turkish context, Sarıçoban conducted a study into foreign language teaching practicum beliefs of pre-service teachers and concluded that "…the micro teaching practice is useful for student teachers to reduce their deficiency in teaching skills and help these teacher candidates to develop much more positive attitudes towards their future professions" (2016, p. 166). To sum up, besides their countless other benefits, both practicum and microteaching assist students in their journey from theory to practice.

2.4.5. Innovation in Language Teacher Education

Innovation and change have turned out to be the fundamental features of the 21st century in nearly every area of life including foreign language teaching. Not surprisingly, schools and classrooms today are quite unlike what they used to be a few decades ago. The benefits offered by technology include easier and faster access to information, real-time communication, and greater learner control over the process of learning. These and other potential benefits of technology come with serious challenges, though. "Education … is somewhat different from … other areas as it involves both a pedagogic as well as a practical component in the

sense that teachers need to have the technical skills to use the technology before they can discover how to implement it" (Reinders, 2009, p. 230). Successful integration of technology into education calls for sustained effort and support of teachers (Branden, 2009); however, as noted by Karavas-Doukas (1998), change and innovation are words that policy makers love and teachers dread. In order for an innovation to be successfully implemented, teachers' concerns and beliefs, as well as the characteristics and constraints of the local contexts in which they operate, should be taken into account (Branden, 2009). Moreover, the following aspects need to be kept in mind prior to the initiation of an innovation (Heyworth, 2003, p. 15):

-utility
-feasibility
-economy
-acceptability
-measurability
-opportunity cost
-sustainability
-manageability
-impact

Regarding Language Teacher Education, the EPOSTL is an innovative document by the ECML of the CoE that aims to make a positive difference to the language education profession by promoting innovative approaches (Newby, *et al.*, 2011). Any innovation aims to be disseminated and implemented by its target group; accordingly, the ECML publicizes its innovations through mass media, the internet, books, CD-ROMs, e-mails, face-to-face communication, workshops, and seminars. When an individual learns about an innovation and decides to adopt it, s/he may change it or the way s/he uses it in relation to the version that has been disseminated (Kettemann, 2009). In this respect, the self-assessment descriptors, which form the core of the EPOSTL, need to be examined with a particular view to Turkish educational context and Turkish English Language Teachers' beliefs. Even though the beliefs of some teachers are hard to change, not all teachers are against any kind of innovation; hence, teachers should certainly be included in the decision making process and the implementation of an innovation.

2.4.6. Language Teacher Education and Autonomy

The concept of autonomy was first introduced to the language learning literature in the late 1960s (Yıldırım, 2013) and has been discussed extensively in the last three decades (Kettemann, 2009). In the words of Thornbury, "…autonomy is your capacity to take responsibility for, and control of, your own learning" (2006, p. 22). This definition focuses on the concept of 'learner autonomy'; however, it should not be forgotten that a teacher also needs to be acquainted with and exposed to the concept of autonomy if s/he is to support learners on their journey to learner autonomy. Accordingly, 'teacher autonomy' has been defined as "…teachers' willingness, capacity and freedom to take control of their own teaching and learning" (Huang, 2005, p. 206). Moreover, Little argues that "…genuinely successful teachers have always been autonomous in the sense of having a strong sense of personal responsibility for their teaching" (1995, p. 179). The concept of autonomy emphasizes certain key words such as 'willingness', 'capacity', 'freedom', 'control', 'responsibility', and 'independence' (Çakır & Balçıkanlı, 2012); in addition, for Kettemann (2009), it is closely related to a learner-centered approach, communicative language teaching, a constructivist approach to language learning/teaching, critical thinking and reflection skills, learning to learn, and alternative assessment.

The importance of the interrelationship between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy needs to be highlighted because "we can only expect teachers to implement the ideas of learner autonomy if they themselves have gone through training where the focus on reflection, on taking responsibility, on an exploratory and evaluative approach to learning and teaching have been a prominent element" (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008, p. 240). Furthermore, it is highly likely that language teachers who have not had any autonomy-oriented education or training will encounter problems in promoting autonomy in their learners. Language teacher education, therefore, "…has a crucial role to play in preparing student teachers to implement pedagogical strategies for autonomy in their own future classroom environments" (Balçıkanlı, 2009, p. 48). Teachers and student teachers of languages need to be able to find out what works best in a given context, reflect on their and their students' performance, and take on responsibility for their teaching and learning.

An effective way of promoting learner autonomy in language classrooms is the use of portfolios in that instruction is correlated to assessment and learners take greater responsibility for their learning and discover their strengths and weaknesses more specifically as well as fostering students' reflective skills (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008). The contributions of portfolio to promoting student teachers' autonomy and personal professional development in our local context have recently been reported by Yıldırım (2013). It goes without saying that autonomy as well as reflection is one of the theoretical aspects underlying the EPOSTL (Newby, *et al.*, 2007) and the notion of autonomy is spread throughout the document. To give some concrete examples, the self-assessment section of the EPOSTL is divided into seven general categories, one of which is 'independent learning' and this has further been sub-divided to feature 'learner autonomy' as a distinct category with seven descriptors. In addition, the concept of learner autonomy can be spotted in other categories;

-I can involve learners in lesson planning (Lesson Planning – Lesson Content, Descriptor 12) (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 36).

-I can negotiate with learners how their work and progress should best be assessed (Assessment – Designing Assessment Tools, Descriptor 2) (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 52).

As can be seen in a clear way, the concept of autonomy is an inherent feature of the EPOSTL. All in all, the EPOSTL embodies a learner-centered view of pedagogy and contributes to the development of autonomous learning; therefore, it would be a good idea to make use of it throughout the education of language teachers.

2.4.7. Language Teacher Education and Reflection

The principle of reflection is an integral component of the EPOSTL in that the EPOSTL claims to encourage the students to reflect on the didactic knowledge and skills necessary to teach languages. As reflection has become something of a slogan term, definitions of it abound in the relevant literature; however, in general terms, it is "…a way of systematically thinking about experiences, frequently coupled to action in educational practice, and arising from a problem experienced"

(Mansvelder-Longayrou, *et al.*, 2007, p. 49). Therefore, it is important for both pre-service and in-service teachers to acquire the skill of reflection because it contributes to teachers' lifelong professional development, enables them to assess their own instructional practices and to make better-informed instructional decisions. Reflection is closely related to the concept of criticism and being a reflective teacher implies moving beyond asking 'how to' questions (Richards & Nunan, 1990). According to Burton (2009), being reflective involves constantly mulling over such questions as 'What do I do?', 'How do I do it?', and 'What does this mean for me and those I work with and for?'. In this way, any teacher gets the opportunity of discovering strengths as well as the weaknesses of any lesson and ascertaining the potential space for further improvement. For Pollard, reflective practice in language teacher education features the following characteristics:

1. Reflective teaching implies an active concern with aims and consequences, as well as means and technical efficiency.
2. Reflective teaching is applied in a cyclical or spiraling process in which teachers monitor, evaluate and revise their own practice continuously.
3. Reflective teaching requires competence in methods of evidence based classroom enquiry, to support the progressive development of higher standards of teaching.
4. Reflective teaching requires attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and whole heartedness.
5. Reflective teaching is based on teacher judgment, informed by evidence-based enquiry and insights from other research.
6. Reflective teaching, professional learning and professional fulfillment are enhanced through collaboration and dialogue with colleagues.
7. Reflective teaching enables teachers to creatively mediate externally developed frameworks for teaching and learning (Pollard, 2005, p. 14).

A teacher may need to make spontaneous instructional decisions in the course of a lesson; or alternatively, s/he may need to reflect more systematically on particular issues before or after a lesson, which are termed as 'reflection-in-action' and 'reflection-on-action' by Schon (1983), respectively. A truly reflective teaching calls for interaction between both kinds of reflection. With this aim in mind, Mansvelder-Longayrou, *et al.* (2007) suggest employing 'teaching portfolios'

among others such as ‘peer discussion’, ‘writing up logbooks’, ‘carrying out action research’, ‘evaluating their teaching with the help of checklists or questionnaires’, and ‘case studies’ to encourage student teachers to reflect. In this way, student teachers will be able to set learning objectives for the future, see what they have learned over a specific period and reflect on their professional development as teachers. It should be admitted that becoming a reflective teacher is a demanding undertaking because it requires a major shift in teachers’ thinking and acting, and forces them to assume a critical viewpoint towards themselves (Barlett, 1990). Its potential benefits, however, are certainly worth the effort exerted.

2.4.8. The Relationship between SLTE and SLA

The main aim of the discipline of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is to describe and explain how learners acquire a second (or third, forth, etc.) language, which naturally renders it closely linked to studies in language pedagogy. In its due course, SLA has gained its autonomy as an independent but interrelated field of study with linguistics, psychology, sociology, and education. The range of topics covered by SLA has expanded to a great extent of late; however, some of these topics are of no relevance to language teacher education. Some of these topics are listed by Ellis (2009, p. 137):

- Learner errors
- Order and sequence of acquisition and “interlanguage”
- Variability
- Input and interaction
- Language transfer
- Cognitive aspects of L2 learning
- Linguistic aspects of L2 1earning
- Individual differences
- Learning strategies
- Instructed SLA

As an example, linguistic accounts of second language learning would not contribute much to a language teacher’s knowledge base as they rely on highly technical theories of linguistic competence. According to Ellis (2009), ‘instructed

SLA', which investigates the relationship between instruction and second language acquisition, is the "…area of study that is of most immediate relevance to teacher education" (2009, p. 135) because language teachers should focus on how they can manipulate the learning atmosphere in the best fashion with the aim of furthering their students' learning. In this case, should language teachers ignore all these SLA topics other than instructed SLA? The answer is definitely 'no' and Ellis (2009) offers two approaches. Firstly, in post-graduate programs, a range of different SLA theories should be presented to the teachers and teachers should decide for themselves which theories are valid for their contexts. In undergraduate programs, however, SLA topics that most directly attend to the needs of the teachers should be specified by teacher educators and only these topics should be presented to pre-service teachers. Even though the second approach seems to contain some sort of subjectivity, the main concern of teacher educators involved in this decision-making process should be on the role of instruction, the role of input and interaction, and the role of learning strategies in L2 acquisition.

2.5. Language Teacher Evaluation

Foreign languages have been taught and learned since ancient Roman times; nevertheless, language teacher education started to be seen as a key language policy issue in the 1970s. Widely adopted language teaching methods did not require language teachers to have so many qualifications until the introduction of the Communicative Approach. In the Grammar Translation Method, for instance, being able to translate the texts into the students' first language was enough to qualify as a teacher. In a similar vein, Audiolingualism in essence expects teachers to follow the materials that are provided. Likewise, obtaining near native-speaker competence and basic conversational skills was sufficient to become a teacher in the Natural Approach (Komorowska, 2011).

Combining the best aspects of audiolingualism and cognitivism, the Communicative Approach called for professionalism on the part of the teacher. The language teacher had to be able to plan courses, design syllabi, assess students, make the best use of technical aids, provide meaningful input, deal with students' errors in a proper way, and promote learner autonomy. It is possible to

broaden this list of teacher competences infinitely. As a result of this expansion in the list of language teacher competences, the evaluation of language teachers has become a complex and controversial undertaking, which is considered as “a theater of the absurd” by Brazer (1991, p. 82). The following questions need to be answered satisfactorily to get a better picture of the issue of language teacher evaluation:

- what are the aims of the evaluation process?
- who should be involved in the evaluation process?
- what criteria should be used in language teacher evaluation?
- in what way(s) should the evaluation be conducted?
- what kind of decisions should be taken at the end of the evaluation process?

2.5.1. The Aims of the Evaluation Process

Bailey (2009) refers to formative evaluation and summative evaluation and points out that formative evaluation in the context of language teacher evaluation promotes teachers’ professional development. Summative evaluation, on the other hand, is employed to decide if the contract of a teacher will be extended or terminated. In some institutions, the sole purpose of language teacher evaluation is hiring-and-firing instead of contributing to the teachers’ professional development and learning (Ur, 1996). Such an approach is certain to be stressful and demoralizing for teachers.

According to Murdoch, an effective language teacher evaluation system must:

- *encourage reflective practice*: language teachers should be able to collect data about their own teaching, reflect on the data and apply the necessary changes for the following situations.
- *empower and motivate teachers*: language teachers should be allowed to set their own goals and assess their performance in accordance with their pre-determined goals.
- *assess all aspects of a teacher’s professional activity*: as a result of time constraints, unrepresentative samples of teachers’ performances are evaluated; therefore, judgments should be made on all aspects of teachers’ activities.

- *take account of students' views*: in accordance with learner-centered instruction principles, students' should also contribute to the evaluation of language teachers.
- *promote collaboration*: the experience of evaluation is highly stressful for a teacher; therefore, a positive dialogue should be built between the evaluator and the teacher (Murdoch, 2000, pp. 55-56).

Successful implementation of these principles will lead to a democratic and friendly atmosphere with open, reciprocal communication (Bailey, 2006). In addition, the teachers who are the subjects of the evaluation process will feel more secure in such a context.

2.5.2. The Participants of the Evaluation Process

Language teachers may evaluate themselves by reflecting on their daily performance in the classroom. As an alternative, teachers may invite a colleague to observe a lesson and talk about the experience afterwards. Student evaluation may also be a reliable source of information for the teacher. However, most of the time, language teacher evaluation is carried out in a more formal fashion by those who hold positions of authority such as school principals, program administrators, supervisors, and senior teachers. What is more, in some countries, including Turkey, inspectors appointed by the MoNE are responsible for evaluating teachers. Bailey (2009) ranks the agents that may be involved in this process along a continuum of two extremes: external and internal participants of this process (see Figure 2.5.).

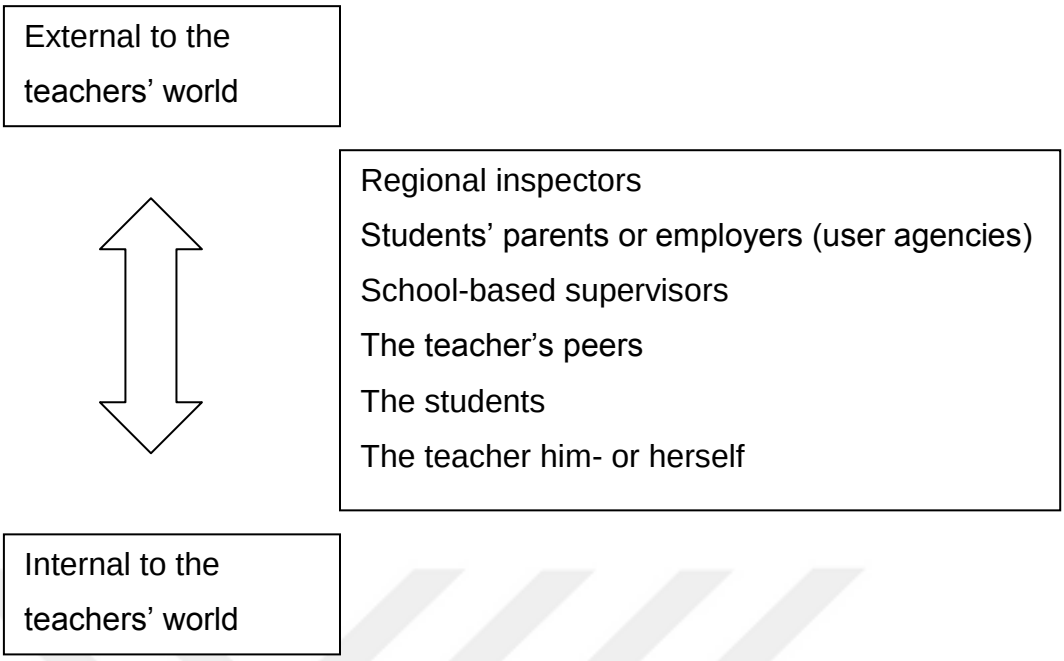


Figure 2. 5. People Involved in the Teacher Evaluation Process (Bailey, 2009, p. 720).

Starting with the 'internal' edge of this dichotomy, every professional constantly assesses how s/he has performed on a given occasion. In doing this, a teacher is likely to ask the following questions to him/herself:

- Am I doing a good job?
- Was that a successful lesson?
- Are my students progressing?
- Are they motivated?
- What works best for them as a group and as individuals?
- Do I need to change what I'm doing?
- What adjustments do I need to make to plans for upcoming lessons?
- Do I need to try something new with these learners or that individual learner?
- Are there areas where I need to grow in competence and/or confidence?
- Do I need help with this? What kind of help? (Rossner, 2013b, p. 117)

This kind of spontaneous reflection is essentially undisciplined, disorganized, and isolated, yet it forms the basis for professional development. In order to make this process more disciplined and organized, Ur (1996) suggests taking notes in the

form of a brief note on a piece of paper or, more systematically and professionally, in the form of journal-writing. Sharing problems or successes with a colleague will also contribute to this process because your colleagues may have encountered similar problems in their classes and they may help to find a solution to the problem. Hopefully, this will not be a uni-directional process and it will instill encouragement and progress for all the participants.

As an alternative to teacher's self assessment, students may also have a say in this process because "…students are an excellent source of feedback on your teaching: arguably the best" (Ur, 1996, p. 323). Instead of just a one-off sample of the teacher's instruction, students usually base their evaluation on a whole series of lessons they have experienced; and therefore, their evaluation will probably yield much more reliable source of data.

Alternatively, in institutions that feature a cooperative climate among the teaching staff rather than a competitive climate, the teachers' peers or colleagues, may play a vital role in this evaluation process. Working in the same institution and probably teaching similar students, colleagues will be cognizant of the specific context, limitations, and opportunities, which comes to mean that the data from their evaluation will be reliable as well. Being observed and evaluated by a colleague may be a little unpleasant and stressful for some teachers; nevertheless, a friendly and mutually respectful approach between the two teachers will remove these reservations and both teachers will gain from this experience.

On the other hand, the evaluation of a language teacher may be conducted by an external participant in a highly formal manner. The evaluator may be a supervisor, the principal, or an inspector. This experience will possibly be highly stressful for both the teachers and the students because at the end of the evaluation, high-stakes decisions such as renewing or terminating a teacher's contract may be taken. Hopefully, the evaluator will have the essential qualifications and experience for assessing a language teacher and the criteria s/he employs in this process will be agreeable and suitable for the context. However, the main weakness in this process is that the evaluator may have observed an

unrepresentative sample of the teacher's performance and this will produce an unreliable picture of the teacher.

2.5.3. The Criteria in Language Teacher Evaluation

In most cases, language teachers are evaluated by outsiders such as a supervisor, the principal, or an inspector from the MoNE. Therefore, specification of criteria in language teacher evaluation turns out to be a fundamental question to be answered because an effective evaluation system is to be based on a clear, visible, and appropriate set of evaluative criteria (McGreal, 1988). In addition, the teachers should be informed about the criteria by which they are to be evaluated beforehand and they should plan and perform their instruction accordingly.

The most traditional yet the most common criterion for evaluating language teachers has been the evaluator's personal judgment or opinion, which is mainly based on individual attitudes and beliefs. Rather than explicitly stated competencies, evaluator's implicit ideas, values, and experience are involved in this kind of evaluation. Similarly, the evaluation may be conducted by a group of people including inspectors, supervisors, peers, and principals who work in collaboration and act by consensus. One possible problem to arise in this procedure is that the evaluator(s) may observe and evaluate an unrepresentative sample of performance by the teacher due to contextual factors or anxiety.

The teaching method may also be taken into consideration as a criterion in this type of evaluation and this will cause further problems in that the evaluator(s) may have been trained in a particular method whereas the teacher may have been trained in another method. For instance, the role of a language teacher for an evaluator who has been trained in the Audio-Lingual Method is like an orchestra leader, directing and controlling the students and providing a good model for imitation; on the other hand, the role of a language teacher for a teacher who has been trained in Task-Based Language Teaching is choosing appropriate tasks for the students and creating pre-task and task follow-up phases in line with the abilities and needs of the students (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). In sum, using teaching method as a criterion in evaluating language teachers is hardly

justified because there is no conclusive confirmation as to the superiority of one method over another.

Student achievement may also be used as an additional criterion for judging a teacher's performance, but such an approach involves many other problems. It is necessary to assess what the student knew or could do at the beginning of the instruction and again at the end, and then find out the difference with the aim of identifying what or how much s/he has learned throughout the course. This can be performed with the help of pre- and post-tests that are valid, reliable, appropriate and of equal length and difficulty; nevertheless, it is easier said than done to prepare such tests and students "…even in homogeneous classes, may differ on several variables: aptitude, motivation, learning styles, study habits, test-taking skills, and so on" (Bailey, 2006, p. 215). Furthermore, it would not be sensible to attribute any amount of learning on the part of a student throughout the instruction process to the teacher's efforts because students may also learn from their peers or by self-study and there are many other factors such as conditions of the learning environment, the mix of students in the classroom, instructional materials, administrative policies, and involvement of parents (Zahorik, 1992). Therefore, language teacher evaluation should never be solely based on student achievement even though the fundamental aim of any effective teaching is students' progress.

As opposed to the evaluator's personal judgment or opinion, performance reviews have been put forward by Bailey (2006; 2009) with the aim of evaluating language teachers. In this approach, a teacher's performance is evaluated against standards in the form of performance goals, which have been specified cooperatively by the evaluators and the teachers in objective terms. These are explicitly stated goals; therefore, provide a common frame of reference for teachers and evaluators involved. In other words, the teacher knows clearly what his/her job involves and what standards are expected. Finally, it is argued by Rossner (2013b) that the EPOSTL with its 195 self-assessment descriptors reflects a similar approach and can serve a similar function.

2.5.4. In What Way(s) should the Evaluation be Conducted?

The manner in which the evaluation will be conducted depends on the aim of the evaluation and who it is to be carried out by. In general terms, if the teacher him-/herself or a colleague of the teacher is performing the assessment, pre-specified problematic areas may be focused on. Alternatively, a colleague of the teacher may observe the lesson and fill in an observation sheet or rubric, a sample of which is provided by Ur (1996). In a similar fashion, the evaluation may be carried out by the students, and in this case, structured questionnaires (Ur, 1996), open-ended questions that inquire their suggestions and constructive criticisms may be utilized; however, their anonymity should be kept confidential to make them feel free to give their real opinions.

The evaluation of the language teacher may also be executed by outsiders in a more formal manner and in-class observations are the most commonly used technique in this process. The frequency and duration of the observations may vary in accordance with the aim and context of the evaluation. The observer generally has an observation rubric and evaluates the teacher's performance in line with the descriptors in the rubric. The performance of the teacher may also be recorded and evaluated afterwards. It would be a good idea to integrate the teacher into the evaluation process as, for example, if there happens to be something that seems inconceivable for the evaluator, the teacher may be asked to explain and give a principled reason for it. Moreover, in order to enhance the reliability and validity of the assessment, conversations may be organized with the teacher, or the teacher may be asked to fill in questionnaires.

In recent times, however, teaching portfolios compiled by the teachers have increasingly been utilized in the evaluation of language teachers (Bailey, 2006; Richards & Renandya, 2002). A teaching portfolio is "a purposeful collection of any aspect of a teacher's work that tells the story of a teacher's efforts, skills, abilities, achievements, and contributions to his/her colleagues, institution, academic discipline or community" (Brown & Wolfe-Quintero, 1997, p. 28). One of the aims of compiling a teaching portfolio is to support evaluators in assessing teacher's qualifications and long-term performance. In this respect, the EPOSTL, which was

developed under the auspices of the ECML of the CoE, may contribute greatly to the process of language teacher evaluation.

2.5.5. The Decisions to be Taken at the End of the Evaluation Process

As has been aforementioned, language teacher evaluation may be conducted with various aims in mind, by various stakeholders, employing a variety of criteria, and in numerous ways. In line with all these variables, the decisions to be taken as a result of the evaluation process may vary as well. If the evaluation is conducted by an outsider such as an inspector or supervisor, the decision is most likely to be as to the contract of the teacher; if the teacher's performance is satisfactory, then his/her contract may be extended; if his/her performance is far from satisfactory, s/he may be asked to attend INSET courses to make up for his/her weaknesses or his/her contract may not be renewed.

On the other hand, if the evaluation is done by the teacher him-/herself, a colleague, or his/her students, the teacher will probably learn about what s/he can do and how well s/he does it. This will provide the teacher with the feedback and the teacher may decide to do some extra training or reading to minimize his/her limitations. Richards (1990) claims that when compared to the length of their teaching careers, the amount of time the teachers spend in professional training is relatively short; therefore, the feedback at the end of the evaluation process will prove very useful for the teachers in improving their performance over time.

2.5.6. Problems in Language Teacher Evaluation

The vital role played by evaluation cannot be overstated in any educational process; however, language teaching is influenced by many complex social factors that vary from one context to another (e.g. class size, student motivation, availability of well-prepared teachers, and easy access to appropriate materials), all of which lead to problems in language teacher evaluation (Bailey, 2006). As a result, it is hardly possible to specify universally agreed criteria for language teacher evaluation. Social and contextual factors need to be taken into account in the process of designing such criteria and fair and effective principles should be utilized. In addition, owing to lack of time, personnel, resources, and attention,

teacher evaluation is ignored in many language teaching contexts, which seriously undermines the quality of education. In order to forestall such problems, due attention should be paid to language teacher evaluation so that some of the problems and anxiety inherent in language teacher evaluation can be alleviated.

2.6. Language Teacher Supervision

It is an unquestionable fact that language teacher supervision is an integral component of language teacher evaluation and it is of interest to not only pre-service teachers but also in-service teachers. According to Wallace (1991), the aim of supervision is to monitor and improve the quality of teaching done by other colleagues in an educational context. More specifically, the supervisor may direct the teacher's instruction, offer suggestions on the best way to teach, provide a model for teaching, give practical advice to teachers or evaluate the teacher's performance (Gebhard, 1990). In some contexts, however, the supervisor also has to provide negative feedback, ensure that teachers adhere to program policy, and even fire employees if the need arises (Bailey, 2006). Although a directive model of supervision has conventionally been adopted by teacher educators, Gebhard offers five other models as alternatives for describing the role of the supervisor and supervision:

-alternative model of supervision
-collaborative model of supervision
-nondirective model of supervision
-creative model of supervision
-self-help-explorative model of supervision (Gebhard, 1990, p. 156).

These alternative models suggest that the role of the supervisor should be developmental rather than judgmental in its essence. It should not be forgotten that there are no undergraduate programs that train language teacher supervisors, and thus; experienced teachers are usually assigned the role of supervisors. Even so, they do not receive any training for their roles and responsibilities. Accordingly, the main role of the supervisor should be to contribute to the professional development of the teacher.

2.7. Language Teacher Competencies

The importance of teachers in the process of teaching cannot be overstated as they "…play a pivotal role in constructing and shaping educational practices at all levels" (Büyükyavuz, 2014, p. 1) and only by qualified teachers can high-quality education be ensured. Accordingly, teachers need to have certain competencies if they are to teach effectively. Most simply, language teacher competencies are "…statements about what novice teachers are supposed to know and be able to do" (Bailey, 2006, p. 210); however, language teaching competencies are hard to define and describe thoroughly and they have also been labeled as attainment targets, band-scales, standards, benchmarks, essential skills and knowledge, profiles, and saviours and etres (Katz & Snow, 2009).

The main advantage of identifying competencies is that they provide a common language for talking about the whole process of teaching and learning by setting out clear expectations for all those involved in the process. Other major uses of competencies have been summarized by Katz & Snow (2009, p. 67):

> *For teachers and administrators, they provide guidelines for designing instruction, curricula, and assessment. They also set criteria for program excellence and, perhaps, for promotion and career advancement. For teacher educators, they set out the competencies needed by prospective teachers as they prepare for teaching careers. For students, they set clear performance expectations, assisting them to understand what they should know and be able to do to meet standards.*

As can be seen, language teaching competencies play an essential role throughout the whole process of instruction from the planning stage to the evaluation stage. However, it is not possible to analyze and assess competence directly and it can be observed in the form of technical skills exhibited by a professional while performing his/her profession (Rossner, 2013b). Therefore, the practical and observable skills of a teacher in the classroom such as his/her classroom management procedures, his/her attitude towards students' errors, his/her way of presenting new language items, and the activities and tasks utilized by him/her may be dealt with in this process. Nevertheless, the teacher's individual knowledge and understanding obtained through education and training as well as experience lies behind these observable practices. Similarly, any teacher's knowledge and skills are manipulated by his/her set of values and attitudes to

society, education, language, culture, students, and teaching that have built on throughout the teacher's personal and professional development (Rossner, 2013b). As can be seen in Figure 2.6., each one of these components adds to the teacher's competence and decision-making mechanisms.

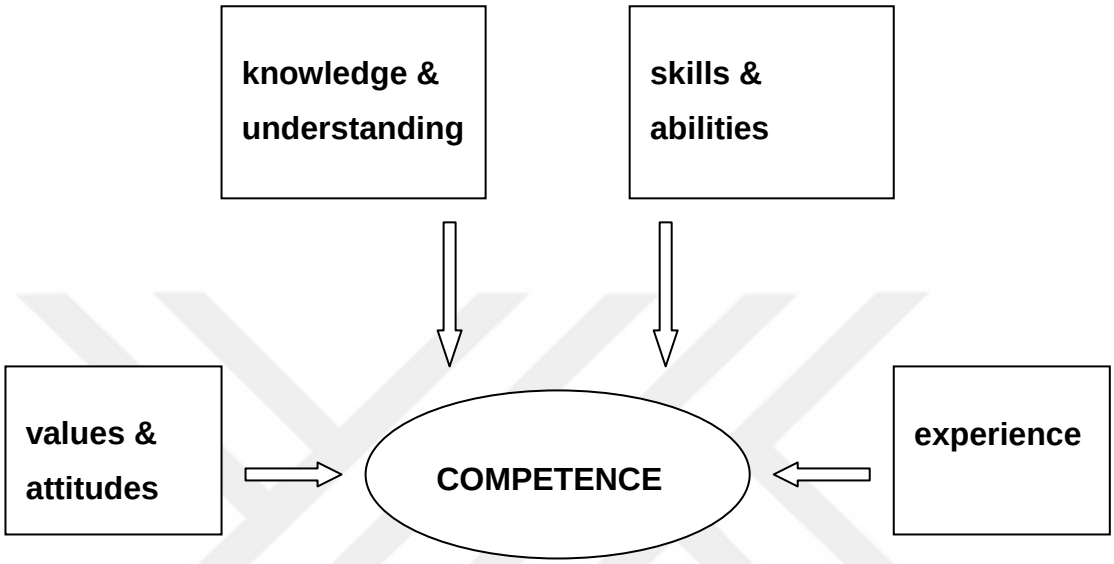


Figure 2. 6. Components of Professional Competence (Rossner, 2013b, p. 116).

This distinction between underlying competence and observable performance has also been highlighted by Katz & Snow (2009), who claim that content standards refer to the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions and performance standards denote the degree or quality of proficiency expected in line with the content standards. In other words, while content standards itemize what a teacher should know and be able to do, performance standards establish levels of achievement to assess the degree of learning.

Even though there is a general consensus as to the importance of language teaching competencies, the particular components that underlie these competencies are not the same for every researcher and in some cases the same concepts have been termed differently by different authors. For instance, the terms 'teacher language awareness', 'pedagogical content knowledge', and 'subject-matter knowledge' bear close connections and they essentially refer to the same

concept. When it comes to the underlying components of language teacher competencies, Cross (1995) argues that an ideal language teacher should have general level of education, subject competence, professional competence, and positive attitudes and beliefs. Selvi (2010) adds cultural competence to this list. Furthermore, Shulman (1987) maintains that knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends are to be developed within a language teacher's competence.

One of the most wide-ranging inventories that involve domains of competencies is proposed by Richards (1998). The six content domains with examples of goals are as follows (Richards, 1998, p. 15):

1. Theories of teaching
-to develop a critical understanding of major theories of second language teaching and their implications for language teaching practice
-to develop a personal theory of teaching and a reflective approach to one's own teaching
-to recognize the assumptions, beliefs, and values underlying one's own teaching practices
-to acquire skills needed for classroom-based inquiry
-to know how to initiate change in one's own classroom and monitor the effects of change

2. Teaching skills
-to master basic teaching skills (e.g., questioning skills, classroom management, lesson planning)
-to develop competence in using one or more language teaching methods (e.g., communicative language teaching)
-to be able to adapt teaching skills and approaches to new situations

3. Communication skills and language proficiency
-to develop effective communication skills as a basis for teaching
-to acquire an advanced level of proficiency in the language to be taught
-to be able to use the target language effectively as a medium of instruction

4. Subject matter knowledge

-to understand the nature of language and language use, particularly pedagogically based descriptions of the systems of phonology, syntax, and discourse

-to understand the nature of second language learning

-to be familiar with principal approaches to language teaching, curriculum development, testing and evaluation, and materials development

5. Pedagogical reasoning skills and decision making

-to be able to analyze pedagogical problems and develop alternative strategies for teaching

-to be able to relate theories of language, teaching, and learning to language teaching in actual situations

-to recognize the kinds of decision making employed in teaching and to utilize decision making effectively in one's own teaching

6. Contextual knowledge

-to understand the role of context in language teaching

-to be able to adapt one's teaching style according to contextual factors

First of all, a language teacher should have sufficient knowledge about theories of teaching since the theoretical underpinnings of the instruction will specify the particular approach to teaching and instructional procedures. Theories of teaching also shape the understanding of the teacher in terms of the nature and importance of classroom practices. Secondly, skill in teaching a language is definitely the core competency of a language teacher and it refers to such skills as selecting learning activities, presenting learning activities, asking questions, checking students' understanding, and reviewing and reteaching when necessary which are essential to any teacher. Thirdly, considering the fact that most of the instruction is performed face to face in classrooms, speech is the primary medium for the teaching of any subject matter, let alone languages. Therefore, an effective language teacher needs to have exceptional communication skills both verbally and non-verbally. Another aspect within the communication skills is the language

proficiency because, especially if the teacher is a nonnative speaker of the language s/he is teaching, s/he should also have a certain level of proficiency in the target language. Fourthly, areas such as phonetics and phonology, syntax, curriculum and syllabus design, testing and evaluation make up the subject matter knowledge for foreign language teaching and form the theoretical basis of the field; therefore, they should be mastered by a language teacher. Fifthly, teachers should develop their pedagogical reasoning skills and decision making because teaching is a dynamic process and sometimes unexpected opportunities may crop up during a lesson. A teacher needs to assess his/her and his/her students' performance constantly during a lesson by asking questions like 'Do the students understand this? Are my instructions clear?', 'Is this too difficult for the students?', 'Is this activity going as planned?', and 'Do my students have the vocabulary they need to complete this task?'. An effective teacher also has the ability to smell the atmosphere in the classroom and decide not to keep to the plan and do something else when necessary. Last but not least, a teacher should be aware of the role of context in which any teaching takes place since the context involves language and language teaching policies, community and sociocultural factors as well as administrative practices and school culture and program.

The importance of language teachers and language teacher competencies has also been accentuated throughout Europe in the last two decades and with the aim of promoting plurilingualism across Europe, the ECML, in cooperation with the CoE's Language Policy Division, has published several documents such as the EPLTE, the EPG, the EPOSTL, and the ELP. Each one of these documents will be expounded in the following sections of this dissertation; however, in connection with language teacher competencies, it can be argued that the EPLTE "…deals with the initial and in-service education of foreign language teachers in primary, secondary and adult learning contexts and it offers a frame of reference for language education policy makers and language teacher educators in Europe" (Kelly, *et al.*, 2004, p. 4). The EPLTE outlines the key 40 components of language teacher education under the subtitles of structure, knowledge and understanding, strategies and skills, and values, and serves as a checklist for existing teacher education programmes and a guideline for those still being developed (Kelly, *et al.*, 2004). The intended users of the EPLTE are, therefore, language education policy

makers and language teacher educators in general and teacher training curriculum developers in particular (Newby, 2012a). On the other hand, the EPG, which is designed to be used by language teachers themselves, trainers and mentors working with language teachers, and co-ordinators or heads of language departments, aims to support professional development and facilitate quality management. The EPG consists of the following four key areas in the form of can-do statements (Rossner, 2013b, p. 118):

-qualifications and experience proficiency in the target language, educational qualification, teaching qualifications and teaching experience

-key teaching competencies methodology – knowledge and skills, planning, interaction management and monitoring and assessment

-enabling competences intercultural competence, language awareness and use of digital media

-professionalism, professional conduct, including participation in professional development, contributions to the institution, collegiality, etc., and dealing with administrative tasks.

The main components covered by the EPG in terms of language teacher competencies, as summarized by North (2009) are: language (proficiency awareness), qualifications (qualifications/teaching practice/experience), core competencies (methodology knowledge and skills/planning/interaction management/assessment) and complementary skills (teacher development/digital literacy). In a similar way, the self-assessment section of the EPOSTL consists of 195 can-do descriptors and the EPOSTL encourages student teachers/teachers to reflect on their didactic knowledge and skills necessary to teach languages, helps them to assess their own didactic competences and enables them to monitor their progress and to record their experiences of teaching (Newby, *et al.*, 2007). These descriptors are grouped under seven general categories and they represent areas in which teachers require a variety of competences and need to make decisions related to teaching (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 85):

- Context
- Methodology
- Resources
- Lesson Planning

- Conducting a Lesson
- Independent Learning
- Assessment of Learning

While the EPOSTL is related to the didactic competencies, the ELP focuses on linguistic competencies and it has a reporting and a pedagogical function (Little, 2002). The ELP has a three-part format (Cummins & Davesne, 2009, p. 852):
-a record of language learning inside and outside the language classroom, including both any official test results as well as international and intercultural experiences (language passport);
-a diagnostic self-assessment of L2 skills and cultural competence linked to plans for improvement (language biography); and
-evidence of the L2 learner's progress in the development of language skills and intercultural competence over time (language dossier).

As regards the foreign language teaching policies of Turkey, as reported by Mirici (2008), the MoNE has adapted the ELP to its national foreign language education system and the English language curriculum for the primary and secondary level schools are based on the ELP and the CEFR. Similarly, the current language teacher education program is also argued to be based on the CEFR and the EPOSTL (Cosgun-Ogeyik, 2009).

2.7.1. The importance of Experience in Language Teaching – Expert vs. Novice Teachers

Experience has been considered as an important component in the profession of language teaching (Bailey, 2006; Jimbo, *et al.*, 2010; Straková, 2010; Tsui, 2009) as in many other professions. According to Beerens (2000), there are experienced teachers with three or more years of teaching experience; beginning teachers with up to two years of teaching experience; and thirdly, marginal teachers who need to improve their competencies regardless of the duration of their teaching experience. Similarly, the literature on teaching expertise, by and large, focuses on the comparison between expert and novice teachers in terms of their decision-making processes, lesson planning skills, classroom management, improvisational

skills, instructional strategies, and assessment procedures among many others. On the whole, expert teachers are supposed be more successful in a majority of these aspects.

Novice teachers, for example, stick to procedures, rules, and curriculum guidelines and ignore the particular context in which they function whereas experienced teachers are more independent in the process of decision making. Likewise, lesson plans of expert teachers are usually concise and rich while those of novice teachers are overly detailed, which means that they devote too much time to preparing lesson plans. In addition, expert teachers usually make use of proactive strategies to avert management problems while novice teachers tend to wait till a problem crops up and then employ reactive strategies (Jimbo, *et al.*, 2010). As far as content knowledge is concerned, expert teachers have a comprehensive overview of the curriculum and they are good at structuring the content of the curriculum whereas novice teachers do not have a coherent overview of the curriculum and their lessons are usually fragmented with ambiguous instructional goals (Tsui, 2009). On the other hand, novice teachers have their own strengths in that they have knowledge of the latest trends and they know the principles but they lack opportunities to apply them (Straková, 2010). It can be argued that novice teachers are stronger in theoretical understanding of the profession while expert teachers are more familiar with the classroom reality in a specific context; thus, in order to enable them to learn from each other and contribute to their professional development, pairing expert and novice teachers would be a good idea in INSET courses.

2.8. English Language Teacher Education in Turkey

Teacher Education in Turkey dates back to 1848 when ‘Darülmuallimin’ (Teacher Training School) was founded in İstanbul (Demirel, 1991; Eken, 2009); however, as the literacy rate among the general public was extremely low and majority of people could not even read and write in their native tongue, the issue of FLE did not get due attention. Following the declaration of Republic, the importance of education was recognized by the government and a ‘Literacy Campaign’ was launched in the 1920s. In line with this, ‘Gazi Orta Muallim Mektebi’ (Gazi

Secondary School Teacher Training School), which was established in Konya in 1926 and relocated in Ankara in 1927, aimed to meet the demand for secondary school teachers (Demirel, 1991). Likewise, 'Köy Enstitüleri' (Village Institutes) in the 1940s and 'İlköğretmen Okulu' (Primary School Teacher Training School) in the 1950s continued to train and graduate teachers till the establishment of Higher Education Council (HEC) in the 1980s (Eken, 2009). At present, HEC is responsible for the organization, planning, recognition and supervision of all higher education institutions (Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010).

Turkey is an officially monolingual country and English has been the most commonly taught foreign language since the 1950s due to several factors such as socio-political and socioeconomic developments, scientific/technological developments, the media, education, and international travel (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004). English language education is offered by state and private schools, colleges and universities across Turkey. At present, there are two major language teacher education programs in Turkey. The first one is ELT Departments, which operate under the Education Faculties of State or Private Universities across the country. These programs are at the undergraduate level and they grant a BA degree to their graduates. The second one is 'ELT Certificate Programs' offered by the Education Faculties of many universities. In order to apply for this certificate, one must be a graduate or a student of English Linguistics, British Language and Literature, or American Culture and Literature departments (Sert, 2010). According to Yağız, *et al.* (2016), the total number of ELT and related departments is over 50.

The most common minimum period of teacher training in Europe is four years, with the minimum duration of three years in Austria, Belgium, Poland and Romania, and maximum duration of six years in Italy and Luxembourg (Eurydice, 2008). In a similar fashion, the duration of English Language Teacher education in Turkey is four years; however, some faculties require their students to study at one-year intensive English Preparatory classes if they cannot pass the exemption exam administered at the beginning of the term, which means that the duration of education in these faculties becomes five years, one plus four years. Successful completion of the program does not guarantee a teaching position, though. As there are a lot more graduates than the government can employ in state schools,

the student teachers have to take a central exam that consists of general knowledge, educational sciences, and field knowledge questions. Some student teachers choose to work at private schools or private English Language courses; however, these institutions often demand international certificates such as DELTA or CELTA from the applicants.

In an attempt to minimize problems and meet shifting social, educational, and political changes and demands, HEC implemented two major program reforms by revising the content of courses in English Language Teacher education in 1997 and in 2006, respectively. The current program is argued to depend on upshots of the ECML projects such as the CEFR and the EPOSTL (Coşgun-Ogeyik, 2009; Hişmanoğlu, 2012). Majority of the courses within the current program are compulsory; however, faculties are entitled to alter up to 25% of the program in accordance with their own contextual requirements and limitations (Hişmanoğlu, 2012). The courses offered throughout the English Language Teacher training Bachelor's degree programme are (Karakaş, 2012, p. 14):

1st Year

-Contextual Grammar I – II
-Advanced Reading and Writing I - II
-Listening and Pronunciation I – II
-Oral Communication Skills I - II
-Turkish I: Written Expression
-Turkish II: Verbal Expression
-Computing I – II
-Effective Communication
-Introduction to Educational Sciences
-Vocabulary
-Educational Psychology

2nd Year

-English Literature I – II
-Linguistics I –II
-Approaches in ELT I – II
-English-Turkish Translation

-Expression skills
-History of Turkish Education
-Teaching Principles and Methods
-Instructional Technologies and Material Design
-Special Teaching Methods I
-Scientific Research Skills
-Language Acquisition

3rd Year
-Teaching Foreign Language to Young Learners I – II
-Special Teaching Methods II
-Teaching Language Skills I - II
-Literature and Language Teaching I – II
-Second Foreign Language I – II
-Drama
-Classroom Management
-Turkish-English Translation
-Community Service
-Measurement and Evaluation

4th Year
-Material Analysis and Development in ELT
-Second Foreign Language III
-Elective I – II – III
-Atatürk's principles and History of Revolution I - II
-School Experience
-Guidance
-Special Education
-Test Construction and Evaluation in ELT
-Comparative Education
-Turkish Educational System and School Management
-Teaching Practice

The main components of the program are, as can be seen, field knowledge (linguistic competence), teacher education (pedagogic competence), general knowledge, and teaching practice. The program aims to improve students' linguistic competence in the first year, focuses more on pedagogical and general knowledge during the second and third years and teaching practice is offered in the fourth year. The students have to take the university entrance exam to be accepted by the program; however, the exam consists of 80 multiple choice questions and tests students' grammar, vocabulary, translation, reading comprehension, and test taking skills. As a result of the negative washback effect of the university entrance exam, students tend to have serious problems in their oral and productive skills (Sert, 2010). As a remedy to this problem, the program concentrates on oral and written productive skills of the students, and in some cases, the students are even required to take one year intensive Preparatory Classes.

In contrast to the previous program, the current program incorporates a compulsory second foreign language, which can be considered as a change for the better from the perspective of plurilingualism promoted by the ECML projects such as the CEFR and the EPOSTL. Furthermore, the contents and names of many courses have been revised in the current program and a pedagogical dimension has been added to them. The previous program paid no attention to the students' pronunciation skills and separated integrated skills; nevertheless, the current program takes the importance of pronunciation into account and has combined integrated courses such as 'Listening and Pronunciation' and 'Advanced Reading and Writing'. Last but not least, students are to take 'Computing' courses during the first year and this will enable them to make use of technology for the rest of their educational and professional lives.

Despite these and many other assets, the current program is not without its own shortcomings. First of all, the current program has been in continuous use for more than a decade, which implies that it has already become obsolete since much has changed in terms of the role of English and the teaching of English; anyway, any program should be regularly updated to keep up with developments occurring within the related discipline (Coşkun, 2009). When it comes to the

theoretical rationale of the current program, it can be argued that the program disproportionately combines Wallace's (1991) two models in that majority of the courses feature the 'applied science model' of teacher education while 'school experience' and 'teaching practice' courses point toward the 'craft model' of teacher education. The 'reflective practice model', offered by Wallace (1991) and contributing to teachers' lifelong professional development and enabling them to critique teaching and make better-informed teaching decisions (Burton, 2009), is misplaced in the current program. The fact that the current language teacher education program lacks a sound philosophy has also been pointed out by Coşkun & Daloğlu (2010).

In a similar fashion, the importance of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which equips students with an awareness of cross-cultural differences, enables them to communicate effectively with those from other cultures and provides strategies for tackling these differences (Alptekin, 2002), has been underscored by Byram (1997); nonetheless, the current program for English Language Teacher Education (ELTE) is scant in terms of culture-based courses (Coşgun-Ogeyik, 2009). Another criticism to the current program is centered on the unequal amount of theoretical and practical components of the program. The concentration of theoretical and practical components in a given program should be well balanced (Ur, 1992). The current program, on the contrary, does not offer any practical courses till the fourth year and the students do not get the opportunity to transform their received knowledge into experiential knowledge. The need for more practice in the form of microteaching activities and observations of different teachers at a variety of school levels has also been expressed by Erozan (2005) and Seferoğlu (2006) in Turkish Language Teacher education context.

2.9. The Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML)

The linguistic landscape in Europe has been changing rapidly in the last two decades and multilingualism has become a pervasive phenomenon across Europe. According to McPake, *et al.* (2007), no less than 440 languages are spoken across the continent although there exist only 23 officially recognized

languages. In addition, more than half of all Europeans claim to speak at least one other language in addition to their mother tongue and the majority of Europeans (54%) are able to hold a conversation in at least one additional language, a quarter (25%) are able to speak at least two additional languages and one in ten (10%) are conversant in at least three (European Commission, 2012). As a response to these linguistic changes, language education policy in Europe has shifted from a monolingual, solitary approach towards a multilingual, unitary approach (Broeder & Wijk, 2012). It has been acknowledged that people may not share the same first language within a particular country and any language (not only English, French, German, *etc*.) should be regarded as a foreign language to be taught. The widespread recognition of this multilingual reality has made it indispensable to reorganize and restructure the whole process of foreign language education.

The European Year of Languages in 2001 highlighted the need to promote language learning at European level. Consequently, it was proposed in the Barcelona meeting of the European Council in 2001 that European citizens should be taught at least two foreign languages from an early age besides their first language and the education of foreign language teachers gained further importance (Kelly & Grenfell, 2004). In this context, several projects and publications have appeared as a result of the efforts of the Council of Europe.

The Council of Europe (CoE), founded in 1949, is the oldest and geographically the largest of the European organizations. It has 47 member states (including Turkey) and its main domains of competence are human rights, legal affairs, social cohesion and education, culture and heritage, youth and sport. Within this context, the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), set up in 1994, is an 'Enlarged Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe'. The ECML currently has 34 member states and main aim of the ECML is to provide respect for the cultural and linguistic diversity in Europe, offer support in the implementation of European language policies, and encourage reinforcement of cooperation in the field of language education (Martyniuk & Slivensky, 2012) as well as promoting dialogue and exchange among its stakeholders. Therefore, its activities are complementary to those of Language Policy Division, and the CoE is a unit responsible for the

development of policy and planning tools in the field of language education (Su Bergil, 2015).

The ECML attaches considerable importance to linguistic and cultural diversity across Europe, highlighting the key role of quality language education in achieving economic progress, intercultural dialogue, democratic citizenship and social cohesion (see http://www.ecml.at). The ECML of the CoE focuses its work on promoting innovative and effective approaches in language education since 1995, and plays a significant role in exploring for good practices and assisting their implementations in member states (Council of Europe, 2007). The ECML operates in collaboration with other units of the CoE and the roles played by the ECML and the Language Policy Unit of the Council are complementary; the Language Policy Unit sets the standards and formulates policies whereas the ECML is in charge of educational practice (Martyniuk & Slivensky, 2012). The ECML, thus, conducts projects as a result of which reports or other forms of publications are issued such as the English Language Portfolio (ELP) and the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL). As clarified by Kettemann, "…different projects approach the issues from different points of view: the teachers, the students, the individual, society, the methodological or didactic aspect" (2009, p. 127). The key strength of the ECML lies in the fact that the project teams offer various solutions or ideas to various issues. The following sections in this chapter focus on some of these projects and their outcomes that are related to language teaching and language teacher education.

2.10. European Profile for Language Teacher Education (EPLTE)

It is not possible to speak of standardization in language teacher education programmes across Europe and the European Commission-financed project European Profile for Language Teacher Education (EPLTE) has been offered as a frame of reference that policy makers and language teacher educators may be able to adapt to their existing programmes and needs (Kelly & Grenfell, 2004). The EPLTE is a result of several meetings of a wide range of European experts on language teacher education and the experience of eleven European teacher education institutions. It suggests guidelines for quality assurance and

enhancement (Kelly, *et al.*, 2004) as well as functioning as a content checklist for existing teacher education programmes and providing a guideline for the programmes to be developed (Enever, 2014). It can be used in both pre-service and in-service education of foreign language teachers who will work in primary, secondary, and adult learning contexts.

The main objective of the EPLTE is to deliver a Common Profile for language teachers including (Kelly, *et al.*, 2004, p. 12):

- The core linguistic, pedagogical and methodological skills required for language teachers to be effective in a European context;
- Other aspects of professional competence, for example, European citizenship, the psychology of learning, the philosophy of education, the teacher as manager, and ICT;
- The characteristics of a good foreign language teacher and effective classroom teaching strategies to promote learner motivation and take account of differences between learners and different learning contexts;
- Teachers' career development from newly qualified to advanced and expert status.

Taking advantage of the expertise of policy makers and educators in language teacher education from a wide range of European countries, the EPLTE covers 40 key components of language teacher education courses. The EPLTE has been organized under four sections and these sections should be seen as the composite parts of language teacher education, which is a multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary undertaking (Kelly & Grenfell, 2004, p. 4):

-*Structure* contains items 1-13 describing the different constituent parts of language teacher education and indicates how they could be organized.

-*Knowledge and Understanding* contains items 14-21 relating to what trainee language teachers should know and understand about teaching and learning languages as a result of their initial and in-service teacher education.

-*Strategies and Skills* contains items 22-34 relating to what trainee language teachers should know how to do in teaching and learning situations as teaching professionals as a result of their initial and in-service teacher education.

-*Values* contains items 35-40 relating to the values that trainee language teachers should be taught to promote in and through their language teaching.

In addition, each of these 40 items has been clarified in detail and supported by advice, guidelines and proposals from European experts. Strictly speaking, each item in the Profile has been divided into subsections such as heading, explanation, elaboration, exemplifications from case studies, and implementation. The aim of such a design is to minimize confusions or misunderstandings on the part of the users.

To sum up, although the EPLTE has been claimed to have great strategic importance for Europe in its efforts to achieve unity across Europe's diverse nations, cultures, communities, and languages (Kelly, *et al.*, 2004), the EPLTE is not the only publication to support and guide language teacher education across Europe as it has been followed by several other publications such as the EPG or the EPOSTL. These later projects deal with the complex process of language teacher education in more detail and from different perspectives.

2.11. The European Profiling Grid (EPG)

The EPLTE (Kelly & Grenfell, 2004) in the form of a profile and the EPOSTL (Newby, *et al.*, 2007) in the form of a portfolio have sought to describe the key language teaching competences; however, both of them were initially created with trainees, not experienced teachers, in mind. The EPG, on the other hand, aims to support the assessment of language teaching competences among in-service language teachers with varying degrees of experience (Rossner, 2013a). The EPG is a project co-funded by the European Commission, conducted between 2011 and 2013, and it comprised of partners from nine countries featuring principal national and international authorities on language education. The EPG is in the form a grid or table, attempting to describe the competences of language teachers in a tabular form covering six phases of development, and it is available in nine languages including Turkish. The main function of the EPG is to assist language teachers in their professional development; furthermore, it can be used by

managers or coordinators with the aim of assuring the quality of language education. More explicitly, the aims of the EPG as stated by North, *et al.*, are to:

- assist self-assessment and mapping of a range of current language teaching skills and competences;
- outline individual and group profiles of language teachers in an institution, stating the levels of competence attained according to a set of categories and descriptors;
- help to identify development needs and training programmes;
- serve as an additional tool for staff selection and appraisal;
- assist in understanding of and communication between different pedagogical systems and educational traditions in Europe;
- foster transparency of teaching standards, facilitating teacher mobility (2013, p. 12).

The descriptors in the EPG are in the form of 'can do' statements like the EPOSTL and they have been arranged in the form of an increasing pattern; starting with teachers-in-training, through novice teachers, and ultimately to experienced modern language professionals. The four key areas and 13 sub-categories covered by the EPG (North, *et al.*, 2013) are:

-Training and Qualifications
    -Language Proficiency
    -Education & Training
    -Assessed Teaching
    -Teaching Experience
-Key Teaching Competences
    -Methodology: Knowledge and Skills
    -Assessment
    -Lesson and Course Planning
    -Interaction Management and Monitoring
-Enabling Competences
    -Intercultural Competence
    -Language Awareness
    -Digital Media
-Professionalism
    -Professional Conduct

-Administration

The descriptors in these categories are organized over six phases of professional development, featuring 78 descriptor cells. Furthermore, with regard to the category and phase of development, there are one to five descriptors in each of these cells. Descriptors at different phases in a certain category are organized in a cumulative fashion in that any teacher at phase 2.2 is supposed to have mastered the competences stated at 1.1, 1.2, and 2.1 (Rossner, 2013a). Apart from this incremental nature of descriptors, assessment and self-assessment are aimed to be facilitated by the Grid. By reflecting on the results of the self-assessment, users will neither overestimate nor underestimate their performance and actual competences. At the same time, the EPG aims to meet the need for common standards related to qualifications, language proficiency and awareness, key teaching competences and the professional conduct of language teachers across Europe. And finally, the EPG claims to be open to further developments, implying that new categories and descriptors may be added and the EPG may be updated should the need arises.

The intended users of the EPG are: language teachers in the private sector as well as in the state sector, inexperienced / novice teachers, experienced teachers, in-service teacher trainers and mentors, pre-service teacher trainers and mentors, academic coordinators and directors of study, and managers of language institutions (North, *et al.*, 2013). The EPG, in addition, is meant to be multilingual as it can be used by and with teachers of any foreign language. To sum up, rather than being employed as an instrument to direct, impose, restrict, harmonize, reward or penalize foreign language teachers, the EPG is intended to inform, make suggestions, offer advice, share insights, assist in identifying individual strengths and gaps, and offer guidance (North, *et al.*, 2013). Although the EPG does not cover all the areas encompassed by the EPLTE and the EPOSTL, it outlines a gradual progression from a less experienced to a very proficient language teacher.

2.12. The European Language Portfolio (ELP) & Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) has been designed as "…a document allowing learners to record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences" (Kelly, *et al.*, 2004, p. 118). The story of the ELP can be traced back to the Rüschlikon Symposium in 1991 together with the CEFR. The development of a Common European Framework of Reference for language learning and exploration of possible forms and functions of an ELP has been recommended in the wake of this symposium. Consequently, after about a decade of intensive preliminary studies, drafts and projects, the ELP was introduced at the first European ELP Seminar, held in Coimbra, Portugal in 2001 (Little, *et al.*, 2011).

The lack of harmonization in foreign language teaching activities within Europe and the urgent necessity to enable European people who speak different languages and come from diverse cultural backgrounds to communicate with each other effectively paved the way for the ELP (Mirici, 2008). In line with this, the main aims of the ELP as recounted by Scharer are:

-The deepening of mutual understanding and respect among citizens in Europe;
-The protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity;
-The development of learner responsibility and learner autonomy;
-The promotion of life-long language and intercultural learning aiming for competent plurilingual and self-confident European citizens;
-The clear and transparent description of competences and qualifications to facilitate mobility and personal growth (2000, p. 4).

All types of language competence gained both formally and informally are valued by the ELP and the ELP is the property of the learner. The ELP consists of three parts: *a language passport*, which summarizes the owner's linguistic identity by briefly recording second/foreign languages (L2s) learnt, formal language qualifications achieved, significant experiences of L2 use, and the owner's assessment of his/her current proficiency in the L2s he/she knows; *a language biography*, which is used to set language learning targets, monitor progress, and record and reflect on specially important language learning and intercultural experiences; and *a dossier*, which can serve both a process and a display

function, being used to store work in progress but also to present a selection of work that in the owner's judgment best represents his/her L2 proficiency (Little, *et al.*, 2011, p. 7). More specifically, the language passport section, which covers the owner's language-related competencies and formal qualifications as well as intercultural gains, can also be used for either the teacher's or an external institution's assessment. Details such as when, why, and by whom the assessment has been conducted are also registered in the language passport. The language biography section, on the other hand, functions as a record of the learner's personal language learning history, and aims to involve the owner in planning future learning, and encourages plurilingualism (Cummins & Davesne, 2009; Egel, 2009). Finally, the owner of the ELP concretizes what s/he has learned so far in the dossier by documenting and illustrating his/her gains such as his/her written works and CDs that include his/her oral experiences or language certificates.

With its three-part structure, the ELP performs two functions: a reporting function and a pedagogical function. Its reporting function stems from the fact that it accompanies the certificates and diplomas obtained by the learner from formal examinations and it provides concrete evidence of the learner's proficiency and achievements. The ELP carries out its pedagogical function by encouraging plurilingualism, cultural awareness, and learner autonomy (Little, *et al.*, 2011). In other words, it reports the linguistic and cultural skills the learner has gained and it motivates learners to improve their skills linguistically and culturally.

Another function of the ELP is to consolidate and accentuate the rationale behind the CEFR for learners, teachers and schools, and other stakeholders because "…from the beginning the ELP was conceived as an implementation tool for the CEFR" (Little & Hodel, *et al.*, 2007, p. 11). The CEFR

> *…provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1).*

The cultural context has also been taken into account by the CEFR and levels of proficiency that make it possible to assess the user's progress at any stage of learning on a life-long basis have been encompassed within the CEFR. The CEFR, thus, urges the educational administrators, course designers, teachers, teacher trainers, and examining bodies to cogitate over what they actually do. Anyway, what they should do is to satisfy the needs of their learners throughout the thorny process of foreign language learning.

The CEFR provides a descriptive outline for analyzing what is involved in language use and language learning, and it classifies communicative proficiency at six levels arranged in three bands — A1 and A2 (Basic User), B1 and B2 (Independent User), C1 and C2 (Proficient User). General competences (knowledge, skills and know-how, existential competence, and ability to learn) plus communicative language competences (linguistic, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural) are encompassed by the CEFR's descriptive scheme. The CEFR identifies language activity in four categories (reception, production, interaction, and mediation) and language use in four domains (personal, public, occupational, and educational) (Little, 2007). Furthermore, the use of the CEFR is not restricted to only English as it can be employed to describe the communicative functions that a learner of any language needs to be able to achieve at different levels of proficiency.

The approach adopted by the CEFR in describing language use is an 'action-oriented' approach in that it "…views users and learners of a language primarily as 'social agents', in other words members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 9). The contextual, cognitive, emotional, and volitional variables as well as the full variety of abilities that are unique to and applied by the individual as a social agent have also been allowed for by the action-oriented approach of the CEFR. The action-oriented approach promoted by the CEFR argues that language is continuously used to perform communicative acts, which may be external and social (*e.g.* chatting with family and friends, holding formal meetings, writing personal or official letters) or internal and private (*e.g.* any kind of reading,

planning an apology for a mistake committed). In addition, any communicative act involves any of the four language activities (reception, production, interaction, and mediation); however, the user of the language will have to resort to his/her communicative language competence when s/he is to take part in language activity. The context in which any communicative act is carried out will impose certain conditions and constraints and four main domains of language use envisaged by the CEFR are: public, personal, educational, and occupational. Sociolinguistic and pragmatic components of communicative language competence are also covered by the context. Therefore, as argued by Little, *et al.*, "Although the CEFR is careful not to say how languages should be taught, its approach to the description of language use nevertheless reminds us at every turn that communicative language use plays a central role in communicative language learning" (2007, p. 14).

Over and above its action-oriented nature, the CEFR claims to be a comprehensive, transparent, coherent, multi-purpose, flexible, open, dynamic, user-friendly, and non-dogmatic framework for language learning and teaching. Rather than imposing a single uniform system, the CEFR aims to allow the users to apply it to diverse and unique contexts by making the necessary adaptations.

Principles commonly promoted by the CoE such as reflective learning, self-assessment, learner autonomy, plurilingualism, life-long learning and intercultural learning have also been highlighted throughout the ELP and CEFR. These principles have been and will be dealt with in the previous and following sections of this dissertation; however, it should be noted that these principles are all intertwined to each other. For instance, as clearly stated by Little, *et al.*, "…learner autonomy depends crucially on reflection and self-assessment" (2011, p. 18). Self-assessment by the learner reflects the features of formative assessment in the language biography and those of summative assessment in the language passport; moreover, it is the key factor that renders the ELP a helpful and functional document. There is no need to say that self-assessment is performed through the CEFR scales, which is, at the same time, an indication of the interdependence between the ELP and the CEFR (Little, 2007). In sum, successful and effective implementation of these principles requires additional willingness and

determination on the part of the users since these principles clearly go against conventional beliefs and practices.

Not surprisingly, the ELP and the CEFR have become influential factors in the process of foreign language learning and teaching, language teacher education, curriculum and textbook design as well as implementation and interpretation of assessment. For example, most of the textbooks today feature learner's self-assessment checklists to enable them to reflect on their learning. As another example, intercultural competence of learners is aimed to be developed through the activities offered by modern textbooks. Workshops and seminars on the implementation and underlying principles of the ELP and the CEFR have also been conducted, which is a clear evidence of the influence of the ELP on in-service language teacher professional development.

The CEFR, despite its aforementioned merits, is not without its critics, though. To start with, the influence of the CEFR on the implementation and interpretation of the process of assessment may bring about washback in testing in that the CEFR shapes the content and the manner of the instruction to a great extent. Fulcher (2004) warns about teachers' tendency to regard the CEFR as a document that epitomizes a universal acquisitional hierarchy in language teaching. More precisely, teachers "…begin to believe the language of the descriptors actually relates to the sequence of how and what learners learn" (Fulcher, 2004, p. 260). In a similar fashion, Shohamy & Menken (2015) maintain that seeing the linguistic progression of learners along a continuum starting from A1 level (Breakthrough) and ending at C2 level (Mastery) lacks any kind of empirical basis. As argued by Shohamy & Menken, "…there is little convincing evidence for the claim that language learning actually works in their prescribed clean, linear, and homogeneous fashion for all learners" (2015, p. 258). Therefore, the peculiarities of the context such as the age and interests of the learners and the specific circumstances of the learning context also need to be taken into account.

In addition, although the CEFR claims to be a non-dogmatic framework for language learning and teaching, "…principles of the Communicative Approach are at the core of many aspects of its 'action-oriented' view of language" (Newby,

2011, p. 76). The CEFR aims to promote mobility of students and citizens, deepen mutual understanding among citizens, and contribute to the establishment of a democratic society. However, it has been employed in immigrant education programs in such ways that it contradicts its underlying philosophy. The problem here, according to Nishiyama (2011), is that the CEFR functions as a screening instrument in selecting immigrants into European countries such as France and Germany. As a result, in contrast to its stated purpose, the CEFR may become a 'binding tool'. It has also been assumed that self-assessment and learner autonomy, emphasized by the CEFR and the ELP, may become a cause of concern and controversy for some users. In particular, some teachers may believe that their students will not be able to assess themselves accurately and they may be inclined to overstate their achievements. In order to eliminate this shortcoming and improve the validity and the reliability of the assessment, the teacher may ask his/her students to prove that they can do what they claim (Little, 2007). Similarly, Kırkgöz (2007) offers a twofold and complementary system of formal assessment and self-assessment rather than evaluating language learners based on solely their self-assessment. Considering the fact that self-assessment is fundamental to the effective use of the ELP, Little, *et al.* (2011) concludes that the more the ELP user undertakes formative assessment in the language biography section, the better s/he is to become at summative self-assessment in the language passport section.

To sum up, the CEFR and the ELP have originated in Europe; however, both documents have been highly influential in several aspects of foreign language learning and teaching around the world. They have been utilized in many different contexts and in many different ways, which renders an all-inclusive assessment of their impact impossible. Accordingly, as has been speculated by Little, *et al.* (2011), an indication of the actual value of the CEFR and the ELP might be that they have produced a variety of models and a great diversity of use.

As for the reception and implementation of the ELP and the CEFR in Turkish context, it is possible to say that both documents have largely been welcomed by the authorities and potential users in Turkey. Turkey has been a member state of

the CoE since 1949 and has been involved in the piloting phase of the ELP since 2001 (Egel, 2009). Additionally, in the words of Mirici, Turkey

> *…has just completed the process of piloting the use of ELP and has adapted the ELP implementation to the national educational system. The Ministry of National Education has just introduced a new English language curriculum based on the CEFR and ELP and aims to introduce a nationwide ELP use through electronic format of the validated models for 10-14 and 15-18 years of age groups (2008, pp. 28-29).*

Both of these validated models can be accessed on the website of the Ministry of National Education (see http://adp.meb.gov.tr/). The HEC implemented a curriculum reform in faculties of education in Turkey and it has been reported by Ogeyik (2009) and Hişmanoğlu (2012) that this curriculum is based on the ELP and the CEFR as well as the EPOSTL. As can be seen, the two national bodies responsible for primary and secondary education and tertiary education (Ministry of National Education and Higher Education Council, respectively) have welcomed the ELP and the CEFR; however, the recognition of change and innovation in education takes some time when it is introduced in a top-down fashion and it remains to be seen to what extent these documents have been adopted and utilized in Turkish foreign language education context.

2.13. The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL)

As the main interest of this dissertation, the EPOSTL has been dealt with in detail in the following part of this study in terms of its background, its main aims and contents, its implementation, criticisms directed to it, its relationship with the CEFR, the EPG, plurilingualism, and alternative assessment. In addition, the reception of the EPOSTL in Turkish context has been summarized with a specific view to its potential use and benefits.

2.13.1. Background to the EPOSTL

The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) is a document that was developed for the ECML of the CoE by a team of teacher educators from five different countries (Kristine Soghikyan - Armenia, David Newby - Austria, Anne-Brit Fenner - Norway, Hanna Komorowska - Poland,

Rebecca Allan - UK). The initial project by the ECML, 'A Framework for Teacher Education', aimed to harmonize language teacher education across Europe by building on existing documents published by the Language Policy Division of the CoE such as the CEFR, the ELP, and the EPLTE (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008; Newby, 2011; 2012a). The project team set itself three general tasks (Newby, 2007, p. 23):

-to address the content of teacher education with a view to identifying 'core competences';

-to formulate corresponding didactic competence descriptors relating to language teaching;

-to embed these in a portfolio to help student teachers reflect on their knowledge, skills and values.

In the course of implementation of these items, two central workshops, attended by student teachers and teacher educators from member states, were also organized by the ECML. The contributions made by the participants of the workshops were also taken into account and the final version of the EPOSTL was achieved in December 2006 (Newby, 2007). Since its publication in English, French, and German, many other member states have translated it into their local languages; therefore, the EPOSTL, currently available in .pdf format at the website of the ECML (see http://www.ecml.at/Resources /ECMLPublications/tabid/277 /language/en-GB/Default.aspx), can be downloaded in English, French, German, Hungarian, Spanish, Polish, Italian, Lithuanian, Greek, Croatian, Russian, Arabic, Romanian, Japanese, and Persian (Newby, 2011).

2.13.2. Aims and Contents of the EPOSTL

The EPOSTL, as defined by Newby, *et al.*,

> *…is a document for students undergoing their initial teacher education. It will encourage you to reflect on your didactic knowledge and skills necessary to teach languages, helps you to assess your own didactic competences and enables you to monitor your progress and to record your experiences of teaching during the course of your teacher education (2007, p. 5).*

As can be understood, it solely focuses on didactic skills rather than linguistic or pedagogical skills due to the fact that the structures and rationales of teacher

education programmes are arranged differently in different countries and different institutions may be responsible for providing didactic, linguistic or pedagogical skills of the students (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008; Newby, 2012a). Furthermore; although the main target of the EPOSTL seems to be the student teachers of languages, it has been reported by many researchers that it can also contribute to a great extent to in-service teachers' professional development (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008; Çakır & Balçıkanlı, 2012; Heyworth, 2013; Ingvarsdóttir, 2011; Jimbo, *et al.*, 2010; Mirici & Hergüner, 2015; Newby, 2012b; Newby, *et al.*, 2011; Velikova, 2013), which renders the focus of this dissertation more significant.

As a document that has been created to complement the principles of the CEFR and contribute to the harmonization of language teacher education across Europe (Newby, 2011), the main aims of the EPOSTL are:

- to encourage its users to reflect on the competences a teacher strives to attain and on the underlying knowledge which feeds these competences;
- to help prepare its users for their future profession in a variety of teaching contexts;
- to promote discussion between its users and their peers and their teacher educators and mentors;
- to facilitate self-assessment of the users' developing competence;
- to help students develop awareness of their strengths and weaknesses related to teaching;
- to provide an instrument which helps chart progress;
- to serve as the springboard for discussions, topics for term papers, research projects, etc.;
- to provide support during teaching practice and assist in discussions with mentors; this will help mentors to provide systematic feedback (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, pp. 83-84).

In general, learning portfolios are either product-oriented or process-oriented; however, the aims of the EPOSTL indicate a two-fold dimension of the document. The EPOSTL is a product-oriented portfolio as it functions as a self-assessment tool and it makes it easier to describe competences that are mastered and

provides evidence as to their achievement. On the other hand, the EPOSTL is a process-oriented portfolio as it encourages the users to reflect on their teaching and learning experiences and it enables to monitor the users' progress (Bagarić, 2011).

As to the rationale of the EPOSTL, rather than being reduced to only one of the specific models of language teacher education, it clearly reflects a 'competence-based' approach as it comprises of didactic skills to be mastered by the student teachers of languages. Simultaneously, an effective implementation of the EPOSTL calls for a 'reflective mode' if the descriptors are to be employed successfully. Finally, as highlighted by Newby, "…a 'craft model' and intuitive feelings for what works in a classroom will be an additional, though not exclusive, controlling element for student teachers in their teaching practice and indeed throughout their career" (2012b, p. 209). As a result, it is important to note that the 'competence-based' and 'action-oriented' approach of the CEFR and the ELP have been maintained throughout the EPOSTL (Newby, 2012b) and key words such as reflection and self-assessment that characterize the CEFR, the ELP, and the EPLTE are also emphasized within the main aims of the EPOSTL. In addition, the principles of interculturality, life-long learning, learner and teacher autonomy, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and plurilingualism are accentuated throughout the EPOSTL (Çakır & Balçıkanlı, 2012; Newby, 2011). This fact clearly corroborates the assertion that the EPOSTL is based on other CoE publications.

The first section of the EPOSTL following the 'Introduction' is the 'Personal Statement' section, consisting of several questions that encourage the users to reflect on such as their own language learning experiences, their opinions about and expectations of language teaching and their perception of the essential features of a language teacher. In brief, the function of the personal statement section is to assist users in developing a critical awareness of the teaching procedures employed by their previous language teachers by reflecting on their typical practices (Newby, 2011). The 'Self-assessment' section, containing 195 self-assessment descriptors related to language teaching, follows the personal statement section. The descriptors within this section are at the heart of the

EPOSTL and they can be seen as "…a set of core competences which language teachers should strive to attain" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 5). These descriptors have been arranged in seven general categories, which have again been divided into headings (see Figure 2.7.).

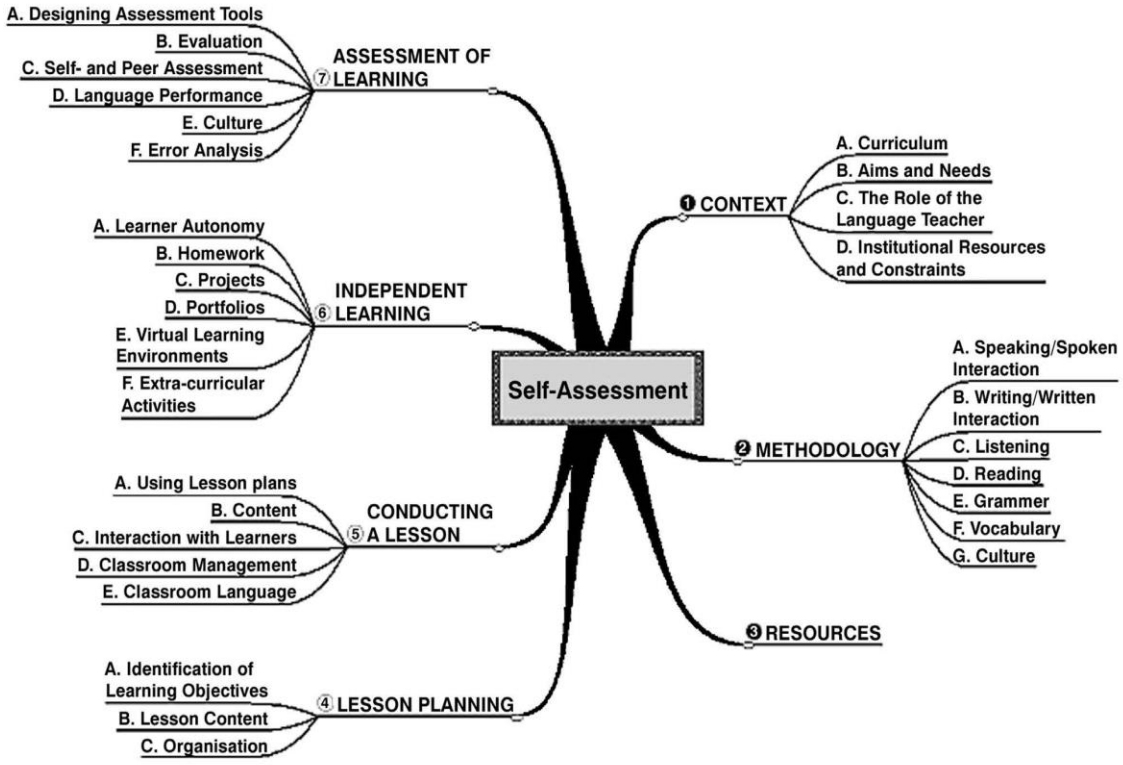


Figure 2. 7. Categorisation of Self-assessment Descriptors (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 6).

The descriptors in the self-assessment section have been formulated by the members of the project team and student teachers and teacher educators from 33 European countries have also been consulted with throughout this process (Newby, *et al.*, 2007). Rather than functioning as a sort of checklist to be ticked off by the users (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008), the self-assessment descriptors enable the users to reflect on and discuss particular competences and ponder on what it means to be competent in a given area. Additionally, the descriptors provide the users with the opportunity to self-assess their developing competences and keep a record of their progress. Needless to say, the self-assessment descriptors may also function as an agreed-upon basis for discussions with mentors and teacher educators (Newby, 2011). The users are required to perform their self-assessment by coloring in the open-bars at the end of each descriptor

and this may take place at different stages of their language teacher education. Accordingly, the users are expected to leave some parts of the bars blank, which underlines the fact that professional development is an ongoing and open-ended process and there is not an exit level or an ultimate point in a teacher's professional development (Mirici & Demirbaş, 2013). Therefore, the process of competence development is emphasized over the product of the language teacher education procedure. In a similar fashion, the bars do not contain any numerical scales as it is hardly possible to quantify didactic competences; therefore, the coloring of the bars "…only give a provisional and approximate representation of a student's competence" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 86). Consequently, the EPOSTL, and particularly the self-assessment section of the EPOSTL, may be used by in-service language teachers as well as student teachers of languages. Anyway, Newby, *et al.* clearly state that the self-assessment descriptors "…should be seen as competences that both student teachers and practicing teachers will attempt to develop continuously throughout their education and teaching career" (2007, p. 85).

The seven general categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment section; namely, *Context*, *Methodology*, *Resources*, *Lesson Planning*, *Conducting a Lesson*, *Independent Learning*, and *Assessment of Learning*, embody a variety of decisions any language teacher is to make and a set of didactic competences any teacher needs to attain. The project team aimed to organize the order of the general categories and sub-headings that follow them in accordance with the sequence of a teacher's activities and decision making processes. For instance, a teacher, first of all, needs to be aware of the constraints and opportunities of the particular context in which s/he will teach and decide on the best methodology to employ under the given circumstances by taking into account the available and unavailable resources. The teacher may continue with the stage of lesson planning after s/he has settled on the methodology and resources to be employed. Conducting the lesson follows the planning phase and as learning is only partly classroom-based and teacher-directed, independent learning activities such as portfolios, projects and extra-curricular activities should also be included. As a final note, assessment should be conducted at various points throughout the whole process (Newby, 2012a). It should be noted that the users of the EPOSTL do not

have to stick to this order throughout their language teacher education process; nevertheless, this will possibly enable them to get a coherent overview of language teacher's didactic competences.

At the beginning of each of these general categories, there appears a concise opening text as to the following content; however, the aim of this introductory text is to draw attention to certain aspects of the topic rather than elaborating on it. A total of 195 descriptors have been listed under the headings and they function as a guideline whereby discussions on issues such as learning and teaching theories, teachers' attitudes and values, and teachers' management of their classes may be launched. Such an approach is, as underlined by Burkert & Schwienhorst (2008), in line with the recent trends in language teacher education because there is a movement from the transmission of methods and techniques towards a focus on teachers' understanding and cognitive skills. As a result, users of the EPOSTL are encouraged to reflect on the self-assessment descriptors, which form the core of the EPOSTL.

The third section of the EPOSTL is the 'Dossier', in which the users can make the outcome of their self-assessment transparent as well as providing concrete evidence of their progress and recording samples of their works related to teaching. The dossier, thus, encourages the users to reflect on their progress and development and it may become a compilation of evidence to inform other stakeholders such as mentors, trainers, and employers. As the user of the EPOSTL masters the self-assessment descriptors, s/he may illustrate what s/he has achieved in a more concrete manner and relate the dossier to the self-assessment descriptors. Therefore, the dossier acts as a bridge between the skills identified in the self-assessment descriptors and the core knowledge needed to master these skills as well as relating the content of the teacher education programme to the self-assessment descriptors.

As to the content of the dossier, it is up to the user what to include in the dossier as the user is considered to be the best person to assess his/her progress. Although some of them can only be obtained when the users are in-service

teachers, some useful suggestions as to the content of the dossier may be listed as follows:

- Evidence from lessons you have given such as lesson plans, videos of lessons, samples of learner tasks, teaching and learning materials, classroom aids, etc.
- Evidence in the form of lesson observations and evaluations such as lesson observation notes written by teachers or mentors, post-lesson evaluations written by the users or others, etc.
- Evidence such as detailed reports, comments, checklists, performance checklists etc. compiled by different people involved in your teacher education
- Evidence from your analysis of what you have done as a teacher – your 'teacher actions' - and from learners' tasks and related performance such as logs or diaries kept by the users, learners' work, audio/video recordings of learners working together, learner tasks produced by the users and/ or by others, etc.
- Evidence in the form of case studies and action research such as case studies of learners, small-scale action research projects either for the user him/herself or to share with others for discussion, reflection, analysis, etc.
- Evidence from reflection such as reflections on particular philosophies of modern language teaching, reflections on personal theories of teaching and learning a foreign language, articles written by the user either solo or with others for student and/or professional journals, etc. (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, pp. 60-71).

In addition to these three main sections, the EPOSTL also consists of a 'Glossary', which elucidates the most important terms relating to language learning and teaching used in the EPOSTL; an 'Index' of the terms used in the descriptors; and a 'User's Guide', which gives detailed information about the EPOSTL. Some very important terms related to language learning and teaching that appear in the EPOSTL are defined with a specific view to the particular meaning attached to them throughout the EPOSTL. The index, on the other hand, has been designed with the main aim of helping users to pinpoint the terms and key words used in the descriptors. As the index has been constructed in the form of chart that aids cross-referencing, the users can easily find out in which section the term(s) they are seeking are located. Finally, the user's guide section informs the users as to the EPOSTL, its main aims, its content and the use of the self-assessment descriptors.

2.13.3. Implementation of the EPOSTL

The EPOSTL has been designed with student teachers of languages in mind and the primary context of the EPOSTL use was initial teacher education programmes of universities. The EPOSTL has existed for more than a decade, and when its overall impact is considered, it is possible to argue that the EPOSTL has often been utilized in in-service language teacher development for qualified teachers as well as pre-service language teacher education (Newby, *et al.*, 2011). In a similar way, the most common utilization of the EPOSTL in pre-service language teacher education has been in the practicum or teaching practice stages (Çakır & Balçıkanlı, 2012) as the university teachers and mentors frequently expect their trainees to fulfill the descriptors offered by the EPOSTL.

Institutionalization of the EPOSTL has been specified as one of the most significant requirements for the effective utilization of it since everyone involved in the process from university-based lecturers to school-based mentors and, of course, the users should adopt and implement it in their professional practices. In order to achieve this, it needs to be ensured that all the stakeholders use the EPOSTL whole-heartedly and the content and the rationale of the EPOSTL are to be understood properly by all the stakeholders (Newby, *et al.*, 2011). An all-agreed and sound action plan for using the EPOSTL including its aims, content and timescale needs to be created by the stakeholders and other possibilities for using the EPOSTL such as methodology courses, teaching practice, mobility programmes, course assignments, and term-papers should be sought. It is highly likely that several problems will arise while using the EPOSTL; therefore, support measures such as workshops, seminars and conferences aiming at the stakeholders are to be organized at regular intervals (Newby, 2011). As the EPOSTL is to be used flexibly in a variety of contexts rather than to be seen as a prescriptive document to be followed strictly, it should be integrated into the language teacher and development programmes in a systematic and coherent way to get the best result.

As a consequence of its flexible and context-free nature, the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL can be combined with micro-teaching activities as micro-teaching activities enable the users to reflect on didactic skills and

experiment their teaching skills and techniques in a safe manner. In this respect, Figure 2.8. illustrates how to integrate the EPOSTL into methodology courses and micro-teaching activities in six stages:

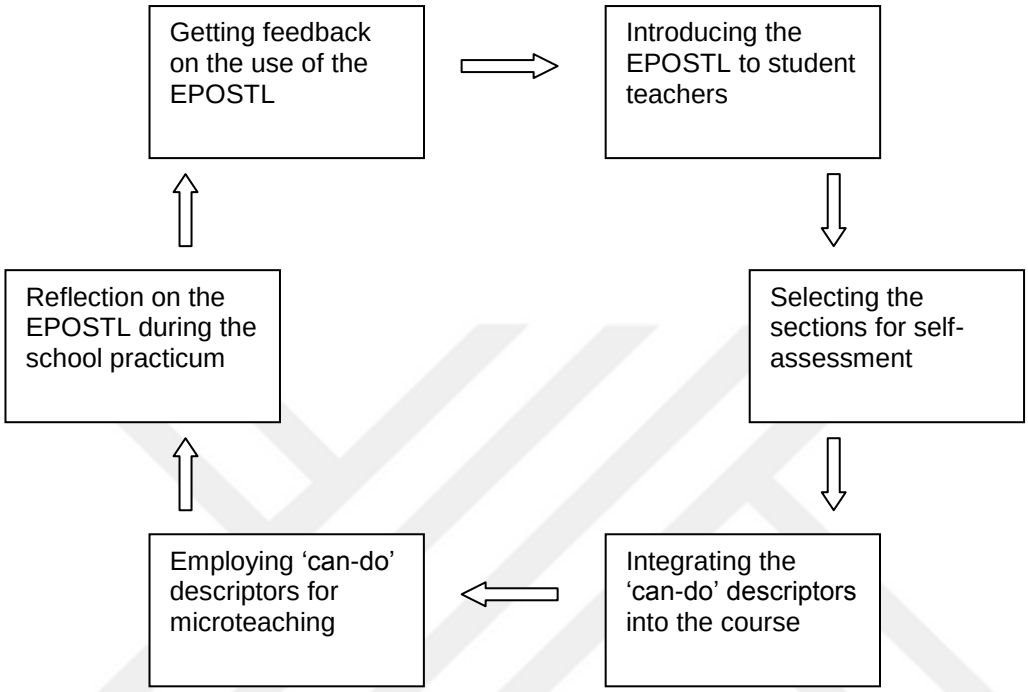


Figure 2. 8. Integrating the EPOSTL into English Language Teaching Methodology Courses (Orlova, 2011, p. 28).

As can be seen in the figure above, rather than all of the 195 descriptors, a representative and relevant section of the descriptors are to be chosen and these need to be integrated into the particular course. Following this, the users try to demonstrate that they have mastered the chosen self-assessment descriptors in their microteaching sessions, which are followed by reflection-on-action. Finally, the users have the chance to express their opinions on their experience.

Yet another use of the EPOSTL is for teacher trainers involved in curriculum design in spite of having been originally designed for student teachers of languages. The EPOSTL may assist teacher trainers in clarifying the aims of the courses and specifying the content of the courses as well as evaluating the teacher education programmes (Mirici & Demirbaş, 2013). Thus, it is possible to

argue that the EPOSTL may be used throughout the whole process of language teacher education from the planning to the evaluation stage.

2.13.4. Criticism of the EPOSTL

Not surprisingly, the EPOSTL, with its far-reaching scope, content and aims, has drawn serious criticism in many respects. The self-assessment descriptors make up the core of the EPOSTL and majority of criticisms of the EPOSTL are leveled at them. To start with, the number of self-assessment descriptors may seem overwhelming for the users when they first have a look at the EPOSTL (Newby, 2011). In addition, the questions of 'where to start' and 'whether to cover all the descriptors' might confuse the users during their first contact with the document. As a solution for these problems, Newby, *et al.* (2011) recommends using the tree diagram (see Figure 2.7.) of categories along with the descriptors since this will enable the students to see both the overall categorisation and the content of the individual descriptors. Or alternatively, the descriptors related to the topic of the particular class may be written on cards and these cards may be presented to the students. In this way, the students will deal with a manageable number of items rather than the whole document. The students should also be informed that not all of the self-assessment descriptors will be covered throughout their teacher education programme as the EPOSTL has been designed as a lifelong document which will enable the users to develop their didactic skills all through their careers. As to the question of 'where to start', though the sequencing of self-assessment descriptors reflects a teacher's activities and decision-making processes, the users are free to use the EPOSTL flexibly in line with their particular requirements and priorities. Additionally, another criticism reported by Newby (2012a) is that some methodologists who specialize in a specific area complain that their field of study has been underrepresented within the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors; however, this problem can easily be solved by complementing the EPOSTL with additional descriptors chosen by the users.

In contrast to the ELP and the CEFR, in which self-assessment descriptors are scaled in six levels, the self-assessment descriptors in the EPOSTL are not quantified numerically. This is another point that raises criticism (Burkert &

Schwienhorst, 2008); however, the authors of the EPOSTL (Newby, *et al.*, 2007) argue that the quantification of didactic skills, unlike linguistic skills, is a challenging task and coloring a bar in the process of self-assessment is less threatening for students as the inexorable association with being evaluated may be averted in this way (Newby, *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, some students may feel reluctant to make self-assessments (Newby, 2011) and the very notion of self-assessment is not readily welcomed in certain teaching and learning cultures because traditional assessment is administered solely by the instructors and assessing one's own competence is regarded as an unreliable practice. However, the EPOSTL may be used as a complementary approach for reviewing and monitoring students' progress (Orlova, 2011) and the results of the formal assessment may be supported and complemented with the self-assessment of the students in such contexts (Kırkgöz, 2007). As the self-assessment skills of the students develop, the reliability of their self-assessment will also increase and this needs to be continuously promoted by the teachers as well. As a matter of fact, the EPOSTL is "…the property of the student teacher" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 84) and "…is not supposed to be used for external assessment" (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008, p. 242); therefore, whether the teacher educator has the right to supervise the self-assessment by the student teacher is questionable.

The CEFR claims to be a non-dogmatic framework as it is "…not irrevocably and exclusively attached to any one of a number of competing linguistic or educational theories or practices" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 8). However, it can be noticed that modern trends in linguistic, cultural and didactic theory are adopted by the CEFR when its content is scrutinized. According to Newby (2012a), the EPOSTL noticeably features this rationale and the same terminology in its self-assessment descriptors and four theoretical approaches lie at the heart of both the CEFR and the EPOSTL: namely, 'a communicative view of language', 'a cognitive, constructivist view of language use and learning', 'cultural competence', and 'learner autonomy'.

With respect to its communicative view of language, the CEFR describes any form of language use and learning as "…the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of competences, both general

and in particular communicative language competences" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 9) and the influence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is seen in many of the self-assessment descriptors throughout the EPOSTL such as "I can evaluate and select a range of meaningful speaking and interactional activities to develop fluency (discussion, role play, problem solving etc.)" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 21) and "I can evaluate and select activities which help learners to participate in ongoing spoken exchanges (conversations, transactions etc.) and to initiate or respond to utterances appropriately" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 21). In a similar fashion, both the CEFR and the EPOSTL embody the notions purported by the cognitive and constructivist views of language use and learning in that cognitive terms such as schemata, frames, and hypothesis testing are frequently covered by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) and effects of these approaches can be witnessed within the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL such as "I can take into account the cognitive needs of learners (problem solving, drive for communication, acquiring knowledge etc.)" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 16) and "I can vary and balance activities in order to respond to individuals learners' learning styles" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 36). As regards cultural competence, Newby (2012a) argues that the value of culture with its various aspects such as intercultural awareness and socio-cultural competence as a fundamental component of language teaching and learning is clearly presented within the EPOSTL via self-assessment descriptors such as "I can appreciate and make use of the value added to the classroom environment by learners with diverse cultural backgrounds" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 17) and "I can plan activities to emphasize the interdependence of language and culture" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 35). Finally, the concept of learner autonomy is included as a category titled as 'independent learning' within the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL and the development of autonomous learning and a learner-centered view of pedagogy are also seen in other sections such as "I can involve learners in lesson planning" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 36) and "I can negotiate with learners how their work and progress should best be assessed" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 52).

As a final note, the EPOSTL has been regarded by some teacher educators as a comprehensive catalog of didactic competences to be accomplished by a 'good' language teacher; thus reducing the demanding profession of language teaching

to a finite list of skill-based competences (Newby, 2012a); nevertheless, various considerations such as the institutional context and individual preferences and values may entail diverse skills on the part of the teacher (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008). After all, one of the main aims of the EPOSTL is to function as a reflective tool and it is possible to formulate additional 'I can' descriptors in response to the specific necessities of a particular context as a result of the reflection process.

2.13.5. Advantages of the EPOSTL

The field of language teacher education has recently experienced a shift from the mere transmission of methods and techniques towards more reliance on the thinking and cognitive abilities of the teacher; thus, the EPOSTL has the potential to help its users raise their awareness and reflect on their didactic skills. As it focuses on student teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and values, it certainly facilitates student teachers' autonomy (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008). Likewise, the EPOSTL has been designed as a reflection tool for teachers of languages and its use is not limited to only English because it can also be used by teachers of other foreign languages. Rather than a structural and top-down framework such as a common language teacher education curriculum, the EPOSTL considers the diversity of different national contexts since the structures and the rationales of language teacher education programmes exhibit substantial variation across different countries (Newby, 2012a). In line with this, by employing the EPOSTL, it becomes possible to make inter-institutional and international comparisons.

The main strength of the EPOSTL lies in the fact that the EPOSTL is not only based on consistent theories of learning and teaching such as learner autonomy and reflection, social constructivist approaches (Velikova, 2013) and inter-cultural awareness but it is also rooted in practical methodological issues such as introducing topics, instituting a positive atmosphere, handling a reading text, and developing an appropriate test (Heyworth, 2013). An additional benefit of the EPOSTL, as documented by Mirici & Hergüner (2015), is that the users get the chance to familiarize themselves with the rationale behind the other European documents such as the CEFR and the ELP; thus becoming competent users of the

Europass documentation system. Yet another benefit of the EPOSTL stems from the fact that it assists language teacher educators in designing the curricula.

As will be explained in more detail below, alternative assessment techniques including portfolio assessment are claimed to be consistent with contemporary trends in foreign language teaching (Brown, 2004). Therefore, regardless of whether the portfolio use is a novelty or an institutionalized practice in an educational context, all stakeholders should grasp the rationale and implementation of the portfolio as it helps to document professional development and functions as a way of promoting ongoing development (Velikova, 2013). Additionally, as a portfolio accompanying language teachers in the course of their training and their first on the job years, the EPOSTL continually encourages them to face, observe, and evaluate their instructional practices (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008). As a concrete example, Bagarić (2011) conducted a study that examined the role of the EPOSTL in the evaluation and development of teacher education programmes in Croatia and focused on the issue of the practicality and usefulness of the EPOSTL. Using both qualitative and quantitative analyses, the author concludes that the EPOSTL begets positive results in that it makes it possible for the users to log their growth, to reflect on what they have learnt and to recognize the interrelationship between different courses within the programme.

In addition to its benefits in in-service teacher development, the EPOSTL also leads to several good practices in pre-service teacher education. Newby (2012b) classifies these benefits of the EPOSTL in three main categories:

-*Rationale of Teacher Education*: by supporting reflective modes of education and fostering a greater degree of autonomy as well as highlighting the principles of the Communicative Approach.

-*Content of Teacher Education*: by explicitly describing the aims and the outcomes, harmonizing bottom-up, needs-based objectives and top-down curriculum planning and making the comparison of language teacher education programmes less challenging.

-*Organization of Teacher Education*: by encouraging dialogue, cooperation, and communication among students, lecturers and mentors (Newby, 2012b, p. 216).

More specifically, the EPOSTL, first of all, fosters the development of autonomous modes of thinking and action among its users in that, rather than functioning as the consumers of researchers' theories and methodologists' instructional techniques, the users of the EPOSTL gain not only a repertoire of instructional activities and techniques but also the skill to evaluate these techniques and activities in a principled manner in line with the peculiarities of a specific context. As an example, one of the descriptors that clearly underscores this viewpoint within the EPOSTL is "I can draw on appropriate theories of language, learning, culture, etc. and relevant research findings to guide my teaching" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 17). In a similar vein, the EPOSTL espouses reflection throughout all its three main sections and it is based on a communicative view of language and language teaching, a cognitive, constructivist view of learning, the principles of autonomous learning, and various aspects of intercultural understanding (Newby, 2012b). Additionally, the EPOSTL renders the scope and aims of the teacher education and didactic skills transparent in a comprehensive and coherent way and provides a tool for self-assessment just as the CEFR does the same with the linguistic competences. Finally, as argued by Newby (2012b), the EPOSTL supports teaching practice by dealing with the problems of poor communication between university-based teacher educators and school-based mentors, inadequate preparation for teaching practice, and vague nature of criticisms from mentors. In this respect, the EPOSTL acts as a bridge between teacher education institutions and schools.

2.13.6. The EPOSTL in In-Service Teacher Development

It has been underlined that the EPOSTL may also be used effectively in in-service teacher development (Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008; Heyworth, 2013; Newby, 2012a; Newby *et al.*, 2011; Schallenberg, 2011) and it is often employed as a way of planning and determining the content of INSET sessions. As has been stated above, the EPOSTL is intended as a lifelong document which will enable the users to develop their didactic skills all through their career; therefore, by using the EPOSTL, "… teachers may identify gaps in their didactic competences which may form the basis for in-service seminars" (Newby, *et al.*, 2011, p. 16). It has even

been offered to rename the EPOSTL as the European Portfolio for Teachers of Languages by omitting the 'S' in the acronym.

2.13.7. The EPOSTL and Plurilingualism

The notion of plurilingualism has gained increasing importance as a direct result of the CoE's approach to language learning and it "…lies at the heart of the Council's language policies and has been supported through various measures…" (Kettemann, 2009, p. 78). The CEFR states that plurilingualism is attained

> *…as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples (whether learnt at school or college, or by direct experience), he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4).*

As a result, making use of one's linguistic and cultural competences as a whole while communicating with other speakers and developing these competences as the user learns new languages and gains inter-cultural understanding have been underlined by such a plurilingual view (Kettemann, 2009). In other words, rather than mastery of languages in an isolated fashion, the learners are expected to acquire plurilingual and pluricultural competences within which all languages interact. According to the CoE, plurilingual education promotes:

- an awareness of why and how one learns the languages one has chosen
- an awareness of and the ability to use transferable skills in language learning
- a respect for the plurilingualism of others and the value of languages and varieties irrespective of their perceived status in society
- a respect for the cultures embodied in languages and the cultural identities of others
- an ability to perceive and mediate the relationships which exist among languages and cultures
- a global integrated approach to language education in the curriculum (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Division_EN.asp)

Accordingly, teachers of languages will have to modify their professional identity and educational values, beliefs, and assumptions to keep up with this paradigm

shift as it obviously entails that language teachers should enable their learners to see themselves as social actors and agents of their own learning and to improve their intercultural communicative competence and their potential for intercultural communication and cooperation on a lifelong basis (Little, *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, as most of the language teachers are qualified to teach only one particular language, carrying out plurilingual and inter-cultural education is often a demanding task for teachers of languages. However, as long as this task is undertaken by all the stakeholders within an institution, the prospect of success is certain to increase.

2.13.8. The EPOSTL and Alternative Assessment

In response to traditional paper-and-pencil multiple choice testing and its inherent shortcomings, and as a natural requirement of learner-centered approaches, the concept of alternative assessment emerged in the 1990s. In order to make up for the drawbacks of traditional assessment techniques, alternative assessment was offered to provide additional measures of learners and to come up with more reliable and triangulated data about the learners (Brown, 2004). Alternative assessment requires students to show what they can do, integrate and produce rather than recall and reproduce (Huerta-Macias, 1995; 2002). The main differences between traditional and alternative assessment are summarized in the following table:

Table 2. 2. Traditional and Alternative Assessment (Brown, 2004, p. 13).

Traditional Assessment	Alternative Assessment
One-shot, standardized exams	Continuous long-term assessment
Timed, multiple-choice format	Untimed, free-response format
Decontextualized test items	Contextualized communicative tasks
Scores suffice for feedback	Individualized feedback and washback
Norm-referenced scores	Criterion-referenced scores
Focus on the ‘right’ answer	Open-ended, creative answers
Summative	Formative
Oriented to product	Oriented to process
Non-interactive performance	Interactive performance
Fosters extrinsic motivation	Fosters intrinsic motivation

In addition to these, alternative assessment requires students to perform, create, produce, or do something using real-world contexts (Brown, 2004), it does not

interrupt regular classroom activities, and it provides multiple indices to measure students' progress (Coombe, *et al.*, 2007). Accordingly, main types of alternative assessment employed in today's classrooms are (Coombe, *et al.*, 2007; MoNE, 2006; Richards & Renandya, 2002):

- portfolio assessment
- writing assessment
- classroom assessment
- self assessment
- peer assessment
- teacher observation
- anecdotal records
- checklists
- rating scales
- scoring rubrics
- benchmark standards
- student-designed tests
- projects
- presentations
- interviews
- journals

As reported by Bailey (2006), language teacher education programs have begun to use teaching portfolios in teacher evaluation in recent times. A teaching portfolio can be defined as "…a collection of documents and other items that provides information about different aspects of a teacher's work" (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 98). In a similar way, a portfolio is "…a purposeful collection of any aspect of a teacher's work that tells the story of a teacher's efforts, skills, abilities, achievements, and contributions to his / her colleagues, institution, academic discipline or community" in the words of Brown & Wolfe-Quintero (1997, p. 28). A portfolio facilitates review and reflection on the part of its user and lets its user know who s/he is, what s/he does, why s/he does it, where s/he has been, where s/he is, where s/he wants to go, and how s/he plans on getting there (Evans, 1995). In short, a teacher can document a comprehensive sample of his/her strengths, skills, and achievements by compiling a portfolio.

With regard to their purpose and audience, portfolios can be grouped as ‘working portfolios’ and ‘showcase portfolios’; the former displaying how much a teacher has moved on to attain a previously set goal, and the latter aiming to show the teacher’s best performance. Richards & Farrell (2005) offer two metaphors to highlight main advantages of compiling a teaching portfolio:

-A teaching portfolio may function as a mirror in that it enables the teacher to observe and reflect on his/her performance over time.

-A teaching portfolio may also serve as a map in the sense that the teacher can set immediate and longer-term goals, and review and assess his/her development periodically.

Considering this metaphor, it can be argued that the EPOSTL has the potential to function both as a mirror and a map in that it lets its users reflect on their performance as well as encouraging its users to set short and long term goals in terms of their professional skills. Another advantage of employing portfolio assessment is that it helps its users to become autonomous in terms of their professional development (Yıldırım, 2013). It has also been reported by Friedl (2009) that portfolio assessment increases the efficiency of instruction. Moreover, the study conducted by Louma & Tarnanen (2003) concludes that there is a high correlation between students’ self-assessment results and the results of formal testing, offering that learners do not tend to rate themselves higher than their actual levels. Based on these and many other benefits of portfolio assessment, Bailey (2006) reckons that supervisors will also consider teaching portfolios in their language teacher evaluation process since the portfolios present a coherent picture of teachers’ overall performance.

2.14. The Connection between the EPOSTL and the CEFR & the EPG & the EPLTE

The CoE is either directly or indirectly behind these documents that influence the practice of foreign language teaching and the EPOSTL is based on the CEFR, the ELP, and the EPG and these documents helped to a great extent to the construction of the EPOSTL. As a result, ‘can do’ descriptors as well as several

terms and insights from the CEFR have been integrated into the EPOSTL. In addition, the three-part structure of the ELP and the concept of 'can do' descriptors are repeated in the EPOSTL and they both center around the practice of reflection (Mirici & Demirbaş, 2013). However, the difference between the two is that the ELP describes linguistic competences while the EPOSTL focuses on didactic competences. In spite of this, the two documents may be used in such a way that they complement each other. An example provided by Newby clearly shows that a learner-based descriptor in the ELP such as "I can understand short simple texts written in common everyday language" (2011, p. 85) is to be complemented by a teacher-based descriptor in the EPOSTL such as "I can select texts appropriate to the needs and language level of the learners" (Newby, *et al*., 2007, p. 26). Therefore, the CEFR is concerned with what learners need to know and be able to do to use the language for communication as well as quantifying competences whereas the EPOSTL describes what teachers need to know and be able to do to ensure that the learners to use it for communication without any quantification of their competences. In a similar way, the relationship between the ELP and the EPOSTL is seen as a continuum by Little, *et al.* (2007) in that the learners are to develop an essential reflective orientation to learning by focusing on their experiences, beliefs, and expectations and teachers, in return, are to reflect on their instructional beliefs, characteristics, and expectations.

On the other hand, the EPLTE aims at policy makers and language teacher educators and the EPOSTL is originally designed for student teachers of languages; therefore, whereas the EPLTE adopts a top-down view of language teacher education and involves structural features of teacher education programmes as well as particular competences, the EPOSTL concentrates on specific didactic competences to be developed by students teachers of languages and adopts a bottom-up approach (Newby, 2007). At any rate, Grenfell (2012) suggests that both documents should be used in a complementary way throughout the process of curriculum design of language teacher education programmes.

2.15. The EPOSTL in Turkish Context

As a candidate country to the EU since 1997, Turkey strives to keep up with the recent developments and innovations in European countries as well as in the rest of the world. The field of education is not an exception and Turkey aims to understand and implement the latest educational tendencies and reforms adopted by the member countries (Büyükgöze, 2015). In line with this, Turkish MoNE signed the treaty at the 20th Session of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education of the CoE, Krakow, Poland, 15-17 October 2000 and adopted the CEFR for foreign language education curricula across the country (Mirici & Hergüner, 2015). Turkey, as a member of the European Council and in the process of membership to the EU, has adopted the policy of implementing European standards in every field; therefore, it is a must to implement the foreign language teacher education policies, developed by the CoE, in a proper fashion (Mirici, 2015).

Despite its efforts to integrate into the EU, FLE in Turkey is not without problems. Jimbo, *et al.* (2010) report that the problems of teacher quality and accountability emerge in contexts where teachers are employed on a permanent basis and it would not be wrong to claim that similar problems are suffered in Turkey because teachers in state schools are employed permanently in contrast to many European countries where teachers are usually employed on a contractual basis (Büyükgöze, 2015) and it is not possible to speak of a duly working language teacher supervision and evaluation method across the country. Additionally, the washback effect of high-stakes exams have been reported by many researchers (Özmen, 2011a; 2011b; Sert, 2010; Yildirim, 2010) and this influences both language teacher education and foreign language teaching processes. The situation becomes even worse when we consider crowded classes, mixed ability groupings, MoNE mandated materials and curricula, additional extra-curricular and administrative responsibilities to be fulfilled by teachers. Last but not the least, some of the foreign language teachers are graduates of departments other than ELT departments with an ELT Programme certificate and the number of English language teachers who haven't taken any methodology courses in their undergraduate level education is still high.

There have been several studies in Turkey in terms of the implementation of the EPOSTL and other related publications. For example, Çakır & Balçıkanlı (2012) conducted a study on the use of the EPOSTL in promoting language teacher autonomy in Turkish context and concluded that the EPOSTL makes it possible to compare the contents of teacher education programmes nationwide and across Europe as well as fostering reflection, self-assessment, and awareness. Furthermore, the authors of the study suggested integrating the EPOSTL into teacher education programmes and employing the EPOSTL as an online tool and even renaming it as E-EPOSTL. The results of another study, carried out by Hişmanoğlu (2013), show a high level of CEFR awareness and willingness for a CEFR-based ELTE curriculum among pre-service teachers of English. Hişmanoğlu (2013) argues that the attempts to implement the principles of the CEFR in teacher training institutions throughout Turkey have been far from systematic and the EPOSTL may act as a systematic instrument for making use of the fundamental principles put forward by the CEFR.

According to Mirici & Hergüner, it has become a necessity "…to introduce the use of the EPOSTL to students in foreign language teacher training departments in Turkey" (2015, p. 2). Currently, the EPOSTL has been incorporated into the curriculum of ELT departments as content to be covered within the 'Special Teaching Methods I' course; however, it has been observed that the implementation of the EPOSTL is far from the desired levels and has not become widespread yet (Mirici, 2015). In her PhD dissertation, Su Bergil (2015) conducted a complementary study on the EPOSTL and the EPG with the aim of defining the didactic competency levels of 38 prospective English language teachers studying at Hacettepe University and concluded that the EPOSTL "…is a useful tool which can be used for English language teacher education in Turkey" (Su Bergil, 2015, p. vi). In a similar fashion, Okumuş & Akalın (2015) have aimed to determine the student teachers' opinions on the use of the EPOSTL in Methodology (Special Teaching Methods) course offered at the ELT Department of a Turkish State university via a qualitative study and concluded that the participants are quite positive about the integration of the EPOSTL into the course, believing that the EPOSTL has enabled them to become more aware of their weaknesses and strengths. Mirici & Hergüner (2015) conducted a study on the functions and the

effectiveness of the EPOSTL in English Language Teaching (ELT) and German Language Teaching (GLT) departments in a state university in Turkey and underlined the fact that the EPOSTL enables the users to improve their metacognitive strategies and become autonomous learners.

In another study conducted by Bergil & Sarıçoban (2016), the researchers aimed to assess prospective English language teachers' qualifications with the help of the EPG referring to the prescribed teacher evaluation forms prepared by the HEC to be used by all teacher education departments across Turkey. The evaluation rubric promoted by the HEC contains four main sections (see below) and includes 46 items, featuring a three point Likert-type format (1. has deficiencies; 2. acceptable; 3. well-trained).

1- Subject Field and Qualifications on Field Education

a. Knowledge about Subject Field

b. Knowledge about Field Education

2- Qualifications on Teaching-Learning Process

a. Planning

b. Teaching Process

c. Classroom Management

d. Communication

3- Observation of the Students' Teachers, Evaluation and Keeping Records

4- Other Vocational Qualifications (Council of Higher Education, 2007).

In sum, Bergil & Sarıçoban (2016) point to the insufficiencies of the HEC's teacher evaluation rubric and conclude that "EPG has significant effects on prospective EFL teachers in that it can be proposed to use commonly in English language teacher education instead of the Council of Higher Education's assessment form for prospective teacher education" (Bergil & Sarıçoban, 2016, p. 206).

It has been reported by Hişmanoğlu (2013) that a series of seminars entitled 'Training of English Teachers' and covering topics such as the CEFR, new English language curricula, and portfolio assessment in language learning have been conducted throughout Turkey; however, in-service training (INSET), administered nationwide by the Chair of INSET Department and district wide by INSET Offices

(Şahin, 2006), are insufficient in terms of their frequency, number, methodology, organization, and content as well as highlighting the lack of coordination and cooperation between the MoNE and the ELT departments of the Education Faculties at the universities (Küçüksüleymanoğlu, 2006). In spite of these shortcomings, Mirici & Demirbaş (2013) suggest that seminars, symposiums, and conferences need to be organized in cooperation with the MoNE, national contact persons, portfolio developers, academics, and teachers so that the stakeholders have the opportunity to communicate their ideas and broaden the viewpoint in terms of the development, implementation, and dissemination of the EPOSTL. Furthermore, postgraduate students majoring in the field of Foreign Language Teaching need to be informed of the current foreign language teaching policies and concepts adopted internationally (Mirici, 2015). As a final remark, Turkey is to design and update its foreign language education structure in view of shared objectives, educational policies, and planned reforms of the EU to accelerate and reinforce the accession negotiations. Having undertaken many of the regulations, strategies, and legislation by the EU's responsible commissions, Turkey has still some way to achieve harmonization with the EU (Büyükgöze, 2015).

2.16. Conclusion

The EPOSTL started as a project in the summer of 2004 with the main aim of harmonizing language teacher education across Europe and it was finally published in 2007. In order to assess the overall influence of a project, its dissemination (how widely and in what depth it is understood), its current use, its flexibility (whether it is possible to adapt it to meet the requirements of diverse contexts), and its overall effectiveness (whether it has brought about concrete improvements in the field) are issues that need to be evaluated (Heyworth, 2013). It has also been argued by Little, *et al.* (2007) that major educational innovations that call for paradigmatic shifts in teacher thinking, pedagogical action, and school culture need time as well as collaborated effort and support on behalf of all the stakeholders.

In consequence, an overall assessment of the EPOSTL since its publication in 2007 reveals that it has, in general, been positively welcomed by all the stakeholders (Newby, *et al.*, 2011) and in addition to having been translated into

several languages, two Japanese versions (JAPOSTL, JAPOTL) have been created to be employed in pre-service and in-service teacher education, respectively (Newby, 2012b). All in all, Newby argues that “the EPOSTL has filled a gap among previously existing European instruments by providing a focus on the (student) teacher – as opposed to the learner or to language itself” (2012a, p. 14).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter contains information as to the methodological principles of the study. The research design that has been employed to collect the data is explained in the first part. The second part of the chapter includes information concerning the participants. Data collection instruments will be explicated within the following part. Finally, data collection and analysis procedures will be dwelled upon in the next part of this chapter.

3.2. Research Design

The aim of this dissertation, as has been stated, is to arrive at an understanding of the perceptions of in-service English Language Teachers on the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors in relation to Turkish FLE context. Accordingly, a questionnaire in the format of a '5 point Likert-type scale' (1; unimportant, 2; of little importance, 3; moderately important, 4; important, 5; very important) has been employed with the aim of gathering relevant quantitative data. In addition, an open-ended question has also been included in the questionnaire, which renders this study quasi-qualitative. The mean scores of the in-service English language teachers' answers for the 195 items forming the self-assessment section of the EPOSTL and for the categories of the self-assessment descriptors have been analyzed using descriptive statistics via SPSS statistical package 23. The findings have been given in numbers and tables and the results have been discussed.

3.3. Population and Sampling

The technique of 'convenience sampling' (Dörnyei, 2007; Nunan, 1992) has been adopted in this study in that the participants have been selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. The participants of the study comprises of in-service English language teachers working for primary, secondary, and tertiary level institutions in Isparta, a city in the southern part of Anatolia. For primary and secondary levels, English language teachers working for state schools in Isparta and for tertiary level, English language instructors working

for Isparta Suleyman Demirel University have been contacted. In the first part of the questionnaire, demographic data of the participants have been obtained. A total of 75 in-service English language teachers have participated in this study. As can be seen in Table 3.1., 49 of the in-service English language teachers (65,3 %) are female whereas 26 of them (34,7 %) are male. In other words, more than half of the in-service English language teachers are female, which is hardly surprising because English language teaching is a profession mostly preferred by women in Turkish context.

Table 3. 1. Distribution of Participants in terms of Gender.

Genders of Participants	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	49	65,3	65,3	65,3
Male	26	34,7	34,7	100,0
Total	75	100,0	100,0	

Table 3.2. summarizes the distribution of in-service English language teachers in terms of the type of school they work at. 18 of the in-service English language teachers (24 %) work at primary level schools, 32 of the in-service English language teachers (42,7 %) work at secondary level schools, and 25 of the in-service English language teachers (33,3 %) work at a tertiary level institution.

Table 3. 2. Distribution of Participants in terms of Type of School They Work at.

Level of Institution	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary	18	24,0	24,0	24,0
Secondary	32	42,7	42,7	66,7
Tertiary	25	33,3	33,3	100,0
Total	75	100,0	100,0	

In Table 3.3., distribution of in-service English language teachers in terms of their teaching experience is provided. 9 of the in-service English language teachers (12 %) have a teaching experience of between 1-5 years, 29 of the in-service English language teachers (38,7 %) have a teaching experience of between 6-10 years, 21 of the in-service English language teachers (28 %) have a teaching experience

of between 11-15 years, 7 of the in-service English language teachers (9,3 %) have a teaching experience of between 16-20 years, and 9 of the in-service English language teachers (12 %) have a teaching experience of more than 20 years. As can be understood, more than half of the in-service English language teachers (66,7 %) have been teaching for between 6 and 15 years, which comes to mean that they are neither too inexperienced nor too experienced.

Table 3. 3. Distribution of Participants in terms of their Teaching Experience.

Level of Experience	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-5 years	9	12,0	12,0	12,0
6-10 years	29	38,7	38,7	50,7
11-15 years	21	28,0	28,0	78,7
16-20 years	7	9,3	9,3	88,0
20+ years	9	12,0	12,0	100,0
Total	75	100,0	100,0	

In Turkish context, it has been and is still possible for graduates of departments other than ELT to work as English language teachers in both state and private institutions. Accordingly, Table 3.4. presents data as to the distribution of in-service English language teachers in terms of their Department of Undergraduate Education. As can be seen, an overwhelming majority of the in-service English language teachers (76%) are graduates of English language Teaching (ELT) departments. In a similar way, 16 of the in-service English language teachers (21,3 %) are graduates of English Language and Literature (ELL) departments and 1 of the in-service English language teachers (1,3 %) is a graduate of an English Linguistics (EL) department. Interestingly, 1 of the in-service English language teachers (1,3 %) is not a graduate of an ELT related department as s/he has circled the option of ‘other’ although there are options such as American Culture and Literature (ACL) and English Translation and Interpreting (ETI) as well as ELT, ELL and EL. This in-service English language teacher is a graduate of Chemistry department in the Faculty of Science and Letters and s/he does not hold an MA or PhD degree. Most probably, this in-service English language teacher has completed an ‘ELT Certificate Program’ and become entitled to work as an English language teacher.

Table 3. 4. Distribution of Participants in terms of their Department of Undergraduate Education.

Department of Undergraduate Education	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
English Language Teaching (ELT)	57	76,0	76,0	76,0
English Language and Literature (ELL)	16	21,3	21,3	97,3
English Linguistics (EL)	1	1,3	1,3	98,7
Other (Chemistry)	1	1,3	1,3	100,0
Total	75	100,0	100,0	

Table 3.5. provides information about the in-service English language teachers' level of education. Not surprisingly, 62 of the in-service English language teachers (82,7 %) have a BA degree, 12 of the in-service English language teachers (16 %) have an MA degree, and only 1 of the in-service English language teachers (1,3 %) has a PhD degree. Obtaining a BA degree is required to become an English language teacher in Turkish context and more than 4 out of 5 in-service English language teachers who have participated in this study only hold a BA degree. The importance of professional and personal development for teachers has been underlined in the previous sections of this dissertation, however, only 17,3 % of the in-service English language teachers have an MA or PhD degree.

Table 3. 5. Distribution of Participants in terms of their Level of Education.

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
BA	62	82,7	82,7	82,7
MA	12	16,0	16,0	98,7
PhD	1	1,3	1,3	100,0
Total	75	100,0	100,0	

3.4. Data Collection Instrument

In line with the aim of this dissertation, a quantitative and quasi-qualitative research design has been employed by the researcher to arrive at an understanding as to in-service English language teachers' perceptions of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors. As Dörnyei has stated, "quantitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in numerical data

which is then analyzed primarily by statistical methods" (2007, p. 24). Questionnaires are commonly used in quantitative research and this dissertation employs a questionnaire in the format of a '5 point Likert-type scale' with the aim of gathering relevant quantitative data. In addition, for the quasi-qualitative dimension of the study, an open-ended question has been included at the end of the questionnaire for the in-service English language teachers to write down any missing descriptors for Turkish context.

The first section of the questionnaire aims to collect demographic information about the participant in-service English language teachers such as their gender, type of school they work for, their teaching experience, their department of undergraduate education and their level of education. The second section of the questionnaire contains 195 self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL in a table and the cells next to each descriptor have been arranged in the format of a '5 point Likert type scale' (1; unimportant, 2; of little importance, 3; moderately important, 4; important, 5; very important). The wording of the descriptors within the EPOSTL follows the pattern of 'I can …'; however, as the aim of this study is to arrive at an understanding of in-service English language teachers' perceptions of the document rather than encouraging in-service English language teachers to assess themselves, the wording of the questionnaire has been slightly modified. More precisely, instead of 'I can …' pattern, gerund phrases (Ving) have been employed in the wording of the descriptors. Additionally, in-service English language teachers are asked to express their opinion by putting a cross (X) for each of the items into the appropriate cell in the table.

In the final part of the questionnaire, in-service English language teachers are encouraged to add any other competence descriptors that have not been covered by the questionnaire in relation to their particular context. As the participants of the study are in-service English language teachers, the questionnaire has not been translated into Turkish; however, the researcher has explained the rationale and content of the EPOSTL as well as the concepts that have been frequently employed throughout the EPOSTL before the participants have started filling in the questionnaire. In addition, the researcher was present while the in-service English

language teachers filled in the questionnaire to answer any questions and clear any misunderstandings.

The EPOSTL has been developed by a team of teacher educators and aims to harmonize language teacher education across Europe. Although the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL have been applied and evaluated by various previous researchers, the reliability level of the data collection instrument has been re-evaluated for the context in which the present study has been conducted.

Table 3. 6. Reliability Coefficiency of Data Collection Instrument.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
,988	195

As can be seen in Table 3.6,, the reliability level of the data collection instrument is ,988, which indicates that the data collection instrument has a high reliability as scales in social sciences are to have at least ,70 reliability statistics.

The EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors are categorized into seven main sections and 31 sub-sections with a total number of 195 descriptors. The outline of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors can be seen in Table 3.7.:

Table 3. 7. Outline of the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Descriptors.

SECTION	SUB-SECTION	NUMBER OF DESRIPTORS
1. CONTEXT	1.a. Curriculum	4 descriptors
	1.b. Aims and Needs	7 descriptors
	1.c. The Role of the Language Teacher	10 descriptors
	1.d. Institutional Resources and Constraints	2 descriptors
2. METHODOLOGY	2.a. Speaking/Spoken Interaction	12 descriptors
	2.b. Writing/Written Interaction	12 descriptors
	2.c. Listening	8 descriptors
	2.d. Reading	9 descriptors
	2.e. Grammar	5 descriptors
	2.f. Vocabulary	3 descriptors
	2.g. Culture	8 descriptors
3. RESOURCES		11 descriptors
4. LESSON PLANNING	4.a. Identification of Learning Objectives	6 descriptors
	4.b. Lesson Content	12 descriptors
	4.c. Lesson Organization	4 descriptors
5. CONDUCTING A LESSON	5.a. Using Lesson Plans	6 descriptors
	5.b. Content	4 descriptors
	5.c. Interaction with Learners	6 descriptors
	5.d. Classroom Management	5 descriptors
	5.e. Classroom Language	6 descriptors
6. INDEPENDENT LEARNING	6.a. Learner Autonomy	6 descriptors
	6.b. Homework	4 descriptors
	6.c. Projects	6 descriptors
	6.d. Portfolios	5 descriptors
	6.e. Virtual Learning Environments	3 descriptors
	6.f. Extra-Curricular Activities	4 descriptors
7. ASSESSMENT	7.a. Designing Assessment Tools	3 descriptors
	7.b. Evaluation	8 descriptors
	7.c. Self- and Peer- Assessment	3 descriptors
	7.d. Language Performance	6 descriptors
	7.e. Culture	3 descriptors
	7.f. Error Analysis	4 descriptors
TOTAL	**31 SUB-SECTIONS**	**195 DESCRIPTORS**

The order of the descriptors has not been modified in the questionnaire and, as has been highlighted by Newby, *et al.* (2007), the order of the self-assessment descriptors in the EPOSTL stands for that of a particular teaching sequence. In other words, the descriptors start with the peculiarities of the context and end with the process of assessment.

3.5. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Data collection process for this study lasted from October 2015 to April 2016. The researcher visited one or two state schools every Thursday as it was his off day. The researcher contacted in-service English language teachers in person and explained the importance and necessity of their participation in the study. The questionnaire consists of 15 pages and there are more than 3000 words to be read and processed by the in-service English language teachers. The completion

of the questionnaire by an average in-service English language teacher took nearly one hour; therefore, some of the teachers the researcher had contacted refused to participate in this study due to the bulkiness of the questionnaire. As a result, the total number of in-service English language teachers in this study from primary and secondary level schools is 50 although the researcher has contacted more than 100 English language teachers. As to the tertiary level, the total number of in-service English language teachers is 25. As the researcher himself works for Suleyman Demirel University, he contacted his colleagues working for the School of Foreign Languages and the ELT Department of the Faculty of Education.

Following the process of data collection, the data has been analyzed by using SPSS statistical package 23. Descriptive statistics such as mean and frequency (percentages) have been used with the aim of describing the data and presenting statistical information as to the participant in-service English language teachers' demographic background. In the second part of the questionnaire, in-service English language teachers have been asked to give their opinions by putting a cross (X) into a cell in the table which contains the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors and the cells have been organized in the format of a '5 point Likert type scale'. In-service English language teachers' perception of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors is aimed to be specified considering their ratings. For the first five research questions, the means of the in-service English language teachers' answers have been computed for the whole document and for the categories of the self-assessment descriptors employing mean and frequency analyses because descriptive statistics is to be employed in order to expose "…general tendencies in the data and the overall spread of the scores" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 213).

For the 3 sub-research questions, the distribution of the data has been analyzed via 'Kolmogorov-Smirnov Goodness-of-Fit Test' and it has been found that the distribution of the data is not normal. Therefore, rather than a parametric test, a non-parametric test has been employed in order to find out the level of differences between and among the groups of in-service English language teachers. Moreover, as the in-service English language teachers have been classified into more than two groups, 'Kruskal-Wallis H Test' has been conducted and 'pairwise

comparisons' have been performed as a last step in order to identify the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL that have been attached meaningfully different importance by in-service English language teachers working for different levels of institutions, with different levels of experience and education.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The researcher contacted in-service English language teachers in person and gave them the required information as to the study and the ethical issues both orally and in written form. In addition, in-service English language teachers were assured that their responses to the items in the questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential and no responses would be linked to their names. Finally, any in-service English language teachers who did not volunteer to complete the questionnaire were not forced to do otherwise; that's why although the researcher contacted more than 100 potential participants, only 50 of them participated in the study.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

In section 1.4.1. of this dissertation, six research questions and three sub-research questions have been raised. Accordingly, in this section the findings of the data analysis with regard to the research questions will be presented and discussed.

4.2. RQ1. What is In-Service English Language Teachers' Overall Perception of the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Descriptors in Turkish Context?

The EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors consist of 7 main categories, 31 sub-sections, and 195 descriptors and they are centered on concepts such as reflection, self-assessment, interculturality, life-long learning, autonomy, and plurilingualism. Many of these concepts are quite new and innovative in the field of Foreign Language Teaching. In view of the fact that 66 of the teachers (88%) who have participated in this study have been teaching for at least 6 years and finished university no less than 7 years ago, it has been hypothesized by the researcher that they may have insufficient or no acquaintance with these concepts, and therefore; their overall perception of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors would be meaningful. Table 4.1. below clearly shows that in-service English language teachers' overall perception of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors has been positive.

Table 4. 1. In-service English Language Teachers' Overall Perception of the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Descriptors.

Main Group	Number	Mean	Std. Error of Mean	Std. Deviation
Total	14625	**4,13**	,007	,849

In the questionnaire, there were 195 self-assessment descriptors and the questionnaire was designed in the form of a '5 point Likert type scale'. 75 in-service English language teachers participated in this study; therefore, 75 x 195 = 14625 answers were recorded in total. As can be seen in Table 4.1., in-service English language teachers' overall perception of the EPOSTL self-assessment

descriptors is 4,13 out of 5. In other words, in-service English language teachers' overall rating of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors is nearly 83% and, in line with the wording of the questionnaire, in-service English language teachers have regarded the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors 'very important'. It would not be wrong to assume that in-service English language teachers who have participated in this study welcomed the core principles of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors and perceived them in a positive manner. This does not come to mean that in-service English language teachers always practice the principles suggested by the EPOSTL in their classes as teachers "…sometimes do not practice what they preach" (Graves, 2009, p. 122). However, for in-service English language teachers, being aware of what is useful and what is not useful in their classroom practices is something to be appreciated. The in-service English language teachers who have participated in this study may not be practicing the principles of the EPOSTL in their classes and they may have welcomed the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors possibly owing to 'social desirability bias' (Dörnyei, 2007). Anyway, the findings clearly indicate that their theoretical viewpoint is compatible with the rationale of the EPOSTL.

4.3. RQ2. Which Categories of the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Descriptors will be Perceived as More/Less Important by In-Service English Language Teachers in Turkish Context?

As has been previously stated, the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors have been categorized into 7 main sections. It has been aimed by the project team to order the main sections and sub-sections in line with the arrangement of a teacher's decision making processes and activities (Newby, 2012a). Accordingly, the first main category of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors is 'Context', consisting of 4 sub-sections; namely, 'curriculum', 'aims and needs', 'the role of the language teacher', and 'institutional resources and constraints' (Newby, *et al.*, 2007). The context has a significant effect on the decision-making processes throughout the process of teaching. In addition to the necessities of the national curricula and institutional limitations, the innovations introduced by international documents need to be considered. It has been argued that the particular needs and global aims of the learners have a say in the teacher's in-class activities, which comes to mean that the roles to be played by language teachers are multi-

faceted (Newby, *et al.*, 2007). The importance of learning languages is to be highlighted among not only the learners but also their parents and the society in which they operate. Additionally, it is important that teachers not fall behind innovations in their field and pursue professional development opportunities.

The second main category of the EPOSTL is 'Methodology', which is defined as "…the implementation of learning objectives through teaching procedures" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 20) or "…the theoretical rationale that underlies everything that happens in the classroom" (Brown, 2002, p. 11). Methodology consists of sub-sections such as 'speaking/spoken interaction', 'writing/written interaction', 'listening', 'reading', 'grammar', 'vocabulary', and 'culture'. How one describes the process of language learning and use will certainly determine his/her methodology, but it should not be forgotten that communication is the principal function of the language. It should not go without saying that the interrelationship between language and culture is another issue to consider in terms of methodological decisions (Newby, *et al.*, 2007). In short, teaching procedures adopted by the teacher reflects the methodology s/he implements.

'Resources' is the third main category of the EPOSTL and language teachers are to make use of various sources when conducting their lessons. The main source of the input is usually the coursebook; however, the national and local context as well as the prescribed curricula determines the particular use of a coursebook. Ideally, the determinants of the resources utilized in a language classroom should be the learners' aims, needs, ages, language levels, interests and motivations; nevertheless, the constraints dictated by the context and institution certainly shape the practice of selecting and designing materials. In sum, as well as ready-made materials, teacher- and learner-generated materials should be used in the classroom and in the process of independent learning (Newby, *et al.*, 2007).

'Lesson Planning' follows the main category of 'resources' and it is closely related to "…the main didactic questions of why, what and how: why one should focus on a specific learning objective, what material to choose and how to use the learning material" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 33). 'Lesson Planning' consists of sub-sections such as 'identification of learning objectives', 'lesson content', and 'lesson

organisation'. In accordance with the requirements of the curriculum and the characteristics of the learners, the teacher is expected to decide on the materials and activities to employ in the class and take the responsibility of his/her decisions. As the teacher chooses the content taking the objectives into consideration, the curriculum along with its objectives and aims is to be mastered by him/her. It shouldn't go without saying that course books usually serve as the blueprint of lessons; however, a course book, in itself, would probably prove insufficient as it does not consider individual learners and it reflects the author's didactic interpretations. All in all, a teacher's repertoire of methodology and resources as well as his/her understanding of language learning theory and his/her learners' skills and abilities play a major role throughout the process of lesson planning.

The main category of 'Conducting a Lesson' ensues the phase of 'Lesson Planning', reflecting the actual order of a teacher's routine. What a language teacher is to do in a class and what skills are entailed in doing it are highlighted in this category and it includes sub-sections such as 'using lesson plans', 'content', 'interaction with learners', 'classroom management', and 'classroom language'. The first step of conducting a lesson is putting the lesson plan into action, by ordering the procedures in both a coherent and flexible fashion, considering the learners' prior learning, and reacting to in-class individual performance. The teacher's communication with the learners has also been highlighted within this category with a specific reference to preliminary settling down and maintaining learners' attention, promoting learners' initiatives and responses as well as taking various learning styles and strategies into account. Teachers' classroom management skills including the utilization of resources, information and communications technology (ICT), and instructional media have been dealt with as well. The thorny issue of teachers' L2 use in class has been included within the final set of descriptors in this section. It has been implied that a language teacher should be able to decide "…when it is most effective in terms of learning to use the target language and for what purposes, and when recourse to the home language might be more appropriate" (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 38). In short, a language teacher should support his/her learners' use of L2 in their interactions with both him-/herself and their peers.

The sixth main category of the EPOSTL is ‘Independent Learning’, consisting of further sub-sections such as ‘learner autonomy’, ‘homework’, ‘projects’, ‘portfolios’, ‘virtual learning environments’ and ‘extra-curricular activities’. A language learner in a school context learns the target language not only under the supervision of the teacher but also individually and in collaboration with peers, which comes to mean that in a modern classroom learners should take charge of their progress with the aim of realizing their full potential. In line with the principles and claims of learner autonomy, a learner should participate in the processes of choosing and defining the objectives, content, activities, outcomes, and assessment procedures (Newby, *et al.*, 2007). The principles of autonomous learning are to be seen as essential components of any kind of instruction rather than supplementary didactic techniques and teachers should organize their instruction considering their learners’ choices and skills. Accordingly, portfolios, projects and a wide range of extra-curricular activities help the teachers and the learners themselves observe their development more closely and accurately as well as complementing language learning that takes place in the class. Descriptors involving ICTs have been presented under the heading of ‘virtual learning environments’ and language teachers’ awareness of computer-mediated communication (CMC) and latest information systems have been underscored.

The final main category of the EPOSTL is ‘Assessment’, involving further sub-sections such as ‘designing assessment tools’, ‘evaluation’, ‘self- and peer assessment’, ‘language performance’, ‘culture’, and ‘error analysis’. A teacher often has to make decisions in order to assess the process and/or outcomes of his/her instruction and “these choices relate to broad questions such as what to assess, when to assess, how to assess and how to use the information provided by the assessment process to support learning and to improve one’s own teaching” (Newby, *et al.*, 2007, p. 51). Assessment related terms such as ‘validity’, ‘reliability’, ‘practicality’, ‘washback’, ‘portfolio assessment’, ‘ongoing assessment’, ‘summative evaluation’, and ‘formative evaluation’ have been covered by the descriptors within this section and the distinction between competence and performance has not gone unnoticed. It has also been argued by Newby, *et al.* (2007) that the ELP serves as an important tool for self-assessment. As a final

note, the role of culture in language learning has not been neglected throughout the descriptors within the category of assessment.

The second research question of this dissertation aims to identify the categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors that have been perceived as more/less important by in-service English language teachers in Turkish context. Table 4.2. below shows the importance attached to each category in ascending order. The category of 'independent learning' has been regarded as the least important and 'conducting a lesson' has been seen as the most important. Between these two, the ascending order of the other categories is 'assessment', 'context', 'resources', 'methodology' and 'lesson planning'.

Table 4. 2. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL in Ascending Order.

Main Group	N	Mean	Std. Error of Mean	Std. Deviation
s6	2100	**4,02**	,019	,868
s7	2025	**4,05**	,020	,893
s1	1725	**4,08**	,021	,868
s3	825	**4,15**	,028	,813
s2	4275	**4,16**	,013	,843
s4	1650	**4,18**	,020	,821
s5	2025	**4,24**	,018	,797

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

Although all categories of the EPOSTL have been regarded as 'very important' (at least 4,02 out of 5,00), the actual in-class performance has been seen as the most important skill of a language teacher by in-service language teachers while developing independent learning skills of the learners has been considered as the least important. Understandably, the most direct indicator of a language teacher's performance is his/her way of 'conducting his/her lesson'; however, it should not be overlooked that skills such as being aware of the peculiarities of a particular 'context', the 'resources' available, and the appropriate 'assessment' procedures among others contribute to an effective instruction to a great extent.

4.4. RQ3. Which Categories of the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Descriptors will be Perceived as More/Less Important by In-Service English Language Teachers Working for Primary, Secondary, and/or Tertiary Level Institutions in Turkish Context?

In-service English language teachers working for primary, secondary, and tertiary level institutions have been included within the study. More specifically, 18 (24 %) of the in-service English language teachers work for primary level schools, 32 (43 %) of the in-service English language teachers work for secondary level schools and the remaining 25 (33 %) of them work for tertiary level institutions. As can be seen in Table 4.3., the most important category of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors for all groups is ‘Conducting a Lesson’ whereas the least important category for in-service teachers working for primary level schools is ‘Context’; for those working for secondary level schools is ‘Assessment’; and for in-service teachers working for tertiary level institutions is ‘Independent Learning’.

Table 4. 3. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers from Different Levels of Institutions.

Type of School	Sub-section	s1	s2	s3	s4	s5	s6	s7	Average
Primary	N	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
	Mean	**3,93**	4,22	4,19	4,31	**4,32**	4,04	3,99	4,15
	Std. Error of Mean	0,245	0,227	0,205	0,207	0,2	0,222	0,231	0,222
	Std. Deviation	1,04	0,961	0,869	0,878	0,849	0,942	0,979	0,94
Secondary	N	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32
	Mean	4,16	4,18	4,19	4,2	**4,26**	4,11	**4,1**	4,17
	Std. Error of Mean	0,13	0,127	0,128	0,125	0,127	0,13	0,136	0,129
	Std. Deviation	0,736	0,718	0,721	0,704	0,718	0,737	0,767	0,728
Tertiary	N	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
	Mean	4,09	4,1	4,08	4,07	**4,15**	**3,91**	4,03	4,06
	Std. Error of Mean	0,15	0,154	0,162	0,17	0,159	0,182	0,179	0,164
	Std. Deviation	0,749	0,772	0,809	0,851	0,794	0,908	0,894	0,82
Total	N	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75
	Mean	4,08	4,16	4,15	4,18	**4,24**	**4,02**	4,05	4,13
	Std. Error of Mean	0,096	0,093	0,091	0,093	0,09	0,099	0,101	0,095
	Std. Deviation	0,828	0,808	0,791	0,803	0,777	0,855	0,878	0,821

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

Table 4.4. shows the importance attached to each category by in-service English language teachers working for primary level schools in ascending order. From the least to the most important, the order of categories is as follows: 'Context', 'Assessment', 'Independent Learning', 'Resources', 'Methodology', 'Lesson Planning', and 'Conducting a Lesson'. The mean scores of 'Context' and 'Assessment' are 3,93 (78,6 %) and 3,99 (79,8 %), respectively. In line with the wording of the questionnaire, the categories of 'Context' and 'Assessment' have been regarded 'important' while the other categories have been considered 'very important'. The ages of the students in primary level institutions in Turkey range from 5 years old to 14 years old; therefore, the characteristics of the context needs to be recognized and paid attention to by the teachers working at primary level schools because learners' ages, interests, motivations, and cognitive and affective needs are covered by the descriptors within the category of context. On the other

hand, the categories of ‘Lesson Planning’ and ‘Conducting a Lesson’ have been perceived to be relatively more important than the others, which implies that a properly planned and implemented period of instruction is the indicator of a good teacher. However, all the other descriptors listed below the other categories are the building stones for effective and successful instruction.

Table 4. 4. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers from Primary Level Institutions.

Type of School	Sub-section	s1	s7	s6	s3	s2	s4	s5	Average
Primary	N	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
	Mean	**3,93**	**3,99**	**4,04**	**4,19**	**4,22**	**4,31**	**4,32**	**4,15**
	Std. Error of Mean	0,245	0,231	0,222	0,205	0,227	0,207	0,2	0,222
	Std. Deviation	1,04	0,979	0,942	0,869	0,961	0,878	0,849	0,94

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

Table 4.5. shows the importance attached to each category of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers working for secondary level schools in ascending order. From the least to the most important, the order of categories is as follows: ‘Assessment’, ‘Independent Learning’, ‘Context’, ‘Methodology’, ‘Resources’, ‘Lesson Planning’, and ‘Conducting a Lesson’. It should be noted that all categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors have been regarded ‘very important’ (ranging from 4,1 to 4,26 out of 5) by teachers working for secondary level schools. Brown (2004) maintains that assessment is an integral part of teaching; however, it can be assumed from the findings that assessment has not been given due significance by in-service teachers from secondary level schools owing to the fact that ‘Assessment’ is the least important and ‘Conducting a Lesson’ is the most important categories for teachers from secondary level schools.

Table 4. 5. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers from Secondary Level Institutions.

Type of School	Sub-section	s7	s6	s1	s2	s3	s4	s5	Average
Secondary	N	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32
	Mean	**4,1**	**4,11**	**4,16**	**4,18**	**4,19**	**4,2**	**4,26**	**4,17**
	Std. Error of Mean	0,136	0,13	0,13	0,127	0,128	0,125	0,127	0,129
	Std. Deviation	0,767	0,737	0,736	0,718	0,721	0,704	0,718	0,728

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

Table 4.6. shows the importance attached to each category by in-service English language teachers working for tertiary level institutions in ascending order. From the least to the most important, the order of categories is as follows: 'Independent Learning', 'Assessment', 'Lesson Planning', 'Resources', 'Context', 'Methodology', and 'Conducting a Lesson'. The mean of scores for the category of 'Independent Learning' is 3,91 out of 5 (78 %), implying that it has been regarded 'important' while the other categories have been regarded 'very important' by in-service English language teachers working for tertiary level institutions. Accordingly, the learners attending tertiary level schools are expected to be more autonomous with more advanced self-studying skills and they need to take part in projects and portfolio works supported by virtual learning opportunities and extra-curricular activities. Taking this requirement into account, it is surprising that the category of 'Independent Learning' has been perceived relatively less important by in-service English language teachers.

Table 4. 6. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers from Tertiary Level Institutions.

Type of School	Sub-section	s6	s7	s4	s3	s1	s2	s5	Average
Tertiary	N	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
	Mean	**3,91**	**4,03**	**4,07**	**4,08**	**4,09**	**4,1**	**4,15**	**4,06**
	Std. Error of Mean	0,182	0,179	0,17	0,162	0,15	0,154	0,159	0,164
	Std. Deviation	0,908	0,894	0,851	0,809	0,749	0,772	0,794	0,82

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

4.4.1. Are there any Significant Differences in the Perceptions of the Self-Assessment Descriptors of the EPOSTL by In-Service English Language Teachers Working for Primary, Secondary, and/or Tertiary Level Institutions in Turkish Context?

As can be seen in Table 4.7., significant and meaningful differences in terms of their perceptions between in-service English language teachers working for tertiary and secondary level institutions on descriptors 8, 75, and 79; between in-service English language teachers working for tertiary and primary level institutions on descriptors 34, 69, and 123; and between in-service English language teachers working for secondary and primary level institutions on descriptor 67 have been identified as a result of the analyses conducted. More precisely, in-service English language teachers working for secondary level institutions attached meaningfully more importance to the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors 8, 75, and 79 than those working for tertiary level institutions; in-service English language teachers working for primary level institutions attached meaningfully more importance to the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors 34, 69, and 123 than those working for tertiary level institutions; and in-service English language teachers working for primary level institutions attached meaningfully more importance to the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptor 67 than those working for secondary level institutions.

Table 4. 7. Differences in the Perceptions of the Self-Assessment Descriptors of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers Working for Primary, Secondary, and/or Tertiary Level Institutions.

Descriptor	Sample1-Sample2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj. Sig.
8	**tertiary-secondary**	12.852	5.191	2.476	.013	.040
34	**tertiary-primary**	19.137	6.447	2.968	.003	.009
67	**secondary-primary**	14.599	5.918	2.467	.014	.041
69	**tertiary-primary**	14.956	6.146	2.433	.015	.045
75	**tertiary-secondary**	16.460	5.407	3.044	.002	.007
79	**tertiary-secondary**	14.024	5.452	2.572	.010	.030
123	**tertiary-primary**	15.799	6.384	2.475	.013	.040

Table 4.8. shows the comparison of differences in the perceptions of the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers working for primary, secondary, and/or tertiary level institutions. First of all,

descriptor 8 (under the category of 'Context – Aims and Needs' in the EPOSTL) is formulated as "I can take into account the cognitive needs of learners (problem solving, drive for communication, acquiring knowledge etc.)" (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 16). Although both groups of teachers consider it 'very important', this descriptor is 4,2 out of 5 important for in-service teachers working for tertiary level institutions whereas it is 4,63 out of 5 important for those working for secondary level institutions. Such cognitive needs of learners as problem solving and acquiring knowledge are meaningfully less important for in-service teachers working for tertiary level institutions. Nevertheless, in-service teachers working for tertiary level institutions should not disregard the fact that all learners have cognitive needs that are to be catered for, though in differing aspects and levels. More specifically, tertiary level students also need to develop their problem solving skills and they have a great desire to communicate.

Descriptor 34 (under the category of 'Methodology – Speaking/Spoken Interaction' in the EPOSTL) is as follows: "I can evaluate and select a variety of techniques to make learners aware of and help them to use stress, rhythm and intonation" (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 22). In-service teachers working for primary level institutions consider this descriptor 'very important' with an average grade of 4,17 out of 5 while in-service English language teachers working for tertiary level institutions regard this descriptor 'important' with an average grade of 3,32 out of 5 (see Table 4.8.). Although intelligibility rather than native-like proficiency in speaking is seen satisfactory by some authors (Jenkins, 2000), suprasegmental features of phonology such as stress, rhythm and intonation, as has been highlighted by descriptor 34, should not be disregarded.

Another descriptor that features a meaningful difference between two groups of in-service English language teachers is descriptor 67 (under the category of 'Methodology – Grammar' in the EPOSTL), formulated as "I can deal with questions learners may ask about grammar and, if necessary, refer to appropriate grammar reference books" (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 27). In-service teachers working for secondary level institutions consider this descriptor 'important' with an average grade of 3,78 out of 5 whereas in-service English language teachers working for primary level institutions regard this descriptor 'very important' with an

average grade of 4,33 out of 5 (see Table 4.8.). Learners of all ages may ask questions about grammar; however, primary level students are more unlikely than learners of other levels and ages to ask questions about grammar since such an attitude is at odds with the cognitive development of young children. In cognitive terms, children are not capable of performing such formal operations until the age of 11 (Brown, 2007). Additionally, employing metalinguistic explanations and deductive/explicit grammar teaching techniques will not work with primary level learners and such a skill would possibly be needed more often by in-service English language teachers working for tertiary level institutions.

Another descriptor that embodies a meaningful difference between two groups of in-service English language teachers under the category of 'Methodology - Grammar' in the EPOSTL is descriptor 69 formulated as "I can evaluate and select grammatical exercises and activities, which support learning and encourage oral and written communication" (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 27). Although both groups of teachers consider it 'very important', this descriptor is 4,08 out of 5 important for in-service teachers working for tertiary level institutions whereas it is 4,61 out of 5 important for those working for primary level institutions (see Table 4.8.). Rather than teaching grammar for the sake of itself, language teachers need to relate grammar to real-life communicative examples because "grammar includes all language skills, and the main objective of teaching grammar is to open the doors to the actual use of the target language for communicative purposes" (Sarıçoban, 2001, p. 37). Therefore, the interrelationship between grammar and the context should be built for learners at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.

Descriptor 75 under the category of 'Methodology - Culture' in the EPOSTL, worded as "I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source materials and activities which make learners aware of similarities and differences in sociocultural 'norms of behaviour'" (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 29), also bears meaningful differences. More specifically, in-service teachers working for tertiary level institutions consider this descriptor 'important' with an average grade of 3,52 out of 5 whereas in-service English language teachers working for secondary level institutions regard this descriptor 'very important' with an average grade of 4,22 out of 5 (see Table 4.8.). Similarly, descriptor 79 under the same category,

formulated as “I can evaluate and select activities which enhance the learners’ intercultural awareness” (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 29), has also been regarded less important by teachers working for tertiary level institutions. This descriptor is 3,56 out of 5 important for in-service teachers working for tertiary level institutions whereas it is 4,22 out of 5 important for those working for secondary level institutions (see Table 4.8.). Furthermore, descriptor 123 (under the category of ‘Conducting a Lesson – Content’ in the EPOSTL), formulated as “I can relate the language I am teaching to the culture of those who speak it” (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 40), has been regarded less important by in-service teachers working for tertiary level institutions. Strictly speaking, in-service teachers working for tertiary level institutions consider this descriptor ‘important’ with an average grade of 3,64 out of 5 whereas in-service English language teachers working for primary level institutions regard this descriptor ‘very important’ with an average grade of 4,33 out of 5 (see Table 4.8.). Although the concept of ‘culture’ has mainly been integrated into the category of ‘Methodology’ as a further sub-section within the EPOSTL, it has also been deployed across the document owing to its significance in learning a second/foreign language. In a similar fashion, the importance of culture in language learning has been highlighted by Brown as follows:

> *A language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language … is also the acquisition of a second culture (2007, pp. 189-190).*

In short, foreign/second language learning should be regarded as a process of enculturation and the current model of education should aim to develop the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) of learners by promoting their awareness of cultural differences, providing them with practical strategies to tackle these differences (Alptekin, 2002). The fact that in-service English language teachers working for tertiary level institutions regard these three culture-related descriptors less important than their secondary and primary level institution working counterparts is disappointing because international mobility is easier for and more common in tertiary level learners thanks to opportunities such as Erasmus Student Exchange Program. .

Table 4. 8. Comparison of Differences in the Perceptions of the Self-Assessment Descriptors of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers Working for Primary, Secondary, and/or Tertiary Level Institutions.

Descriptor	Level of Institution	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
8	secondary	32	4,63	,554	,098
	tertiary	25	4,20	,645	,129
34	primary	18	4,17	1,043	,246
	tertiary	25	3,32	,988	,198
67	secondary	32	3,78	,832	,147
	primary	18	4,33	,594	,140
69	primary	18	4,61	,608	,143
	tertiary	25	4,08	,759	,152
75	secondary	32	4,22	,659	,117
	tertiary	25	3,52	,770	,154
79	secondary	32	4,22	,608	,108
	tertiary	25	3,56	,961	,192
123	primary	18	4,33	,970	,229
	tertiary	25	3,64	1,036	,207

4.5. RQ4. Which Categories of the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Descriptors will be Perceived as More/Less Important by In-Service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Experience in Turkish Context?

The research design of this study has not specified any limitations as to the experience of in-service English language teachers; therefore, in-service English language teachers with various levels of experience have contributed to the study. In particular, 9 (12 %) of the in-service English language teachers have an experience of 1 – 5 years, 29 (39 %) of the in-service English language teachers have an experience of 6 – 10 years, 21 (28 %) of the in-service English language teachers have an experience of 11 – 15 years, 7 (9 %) of the in-service English language teachers have an experience of 16 – 20 years, and 9 (12 %) of the in-service English language teachers have an experience of 20+ years. In other words, 50 (67%) of the in-service English language teachers have an experience of 6 – 15 years and they are neither overly nor slightly experienced. Table 4.9. shows the importance attached to categories of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with different levels of experience. Accordingly, all the groups regarded the category of ‘Conducting a Lesson’ as the most important except for the group consisting of in-service teachers with an experience of 16 – 20 years,

who considered the category of ‘Context’ as the most important. Furthermore, the least important category for teachers with an experience of 1 – 5 years is ‘Context’, for those with an experience of 6 – 10 years is ‘Assessment’, for those with an experience of 11 – 15 years is ‘Independent Learning’, and for those with an experience of 16 – 20 years and 20+ years is ‘Resources’.

Table 4. 9. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Experience.

Level of Experience	Sub-section	s1	s2	s3	s4	s5	s6	s7	Average
1 – 5 years	N	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
	Mean	**3,9**	3,99	3,94	4,09	**4,1**	3,95	4,08	4,01
	Std. Error of Mean	0,308	0,301	0,27	0,28	0,253	0,278	0,275	0,284
	Std. Deviation	0,925	0,903	0,809	0,839	0,76	0,833	0,825	0,853
6 – 10 years	N	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
	Mean	4,07	4,26	4,3	4,28	**4,34**	3,99	**3,97**	4,17
	Std. Error of Mean	0,147	0,15	0,131	0,14	0,14	0,171	0,184	0,154
	. Deviation	0,79	0,809	0,707	0,754	0,753	0,922	0,993	0,829
11 – 15 years	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
	Mean	4,08	4,18	4,18	4,16	**4,23**	**4,06**	4,15	4,15
	Std. Error of Mean	0,187	0,158	0,179	0,187	0,165	0,175	0,17	0,171
	Std. Deviation	0,855	0,724	0,821	0,856	0,756	0,803	0,78	0,784
16 – 20 years	N	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
	Mean	**4,12**	3,97	**3,88**	4,11	3,97	4,04	4,05	4,02
	Std. Error of Mean	0,304	0,319	0,311	0,336	0,359	0,337	0,326	0,328
	Std. Deviation	0,804	0,843	0,822	0,89	0,951	0,892	0,862	0,867
20+ years	N	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
	Mean	4,25	4,14	**4,02**	4,08	**4,27**	4,1	4,04	4,14
	Std. Error of Mean	0,233	0,236	0,251	0,219	0,21	0,236	0,235	0,231
	Std. Deviation	0,699	0,709	0,753	0,656	0,63	0,708	0,704	0,693
Total	N	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75
	Mean	4,08	4,16	4,15	4,18	**4,24**	**4,02**	4,05	4,13
	Std. Error of Mean	0,096	0,093	0,091	0,093	0,09	0,099	0,101	0,095
	Std. Deviation	0,828	0,808	0,791	0,803	0,777	0,855	0,878	0,821

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

When it comes to interpreting the findings of the groups in an isolated fashion, as shown in Table 4.10., teachers with an experience of 1 – 5 years have considered the categories of 'Conducting a Lesson', 'Lesson Planning' and 'Assessment' 'very important'. On the other hand, the categories of 'Context', 'Resources', 'Independent Learning' and 'Methodology' have been regarded 'important' in line with the wording of the questionnaire. Supposing that most of these in-service English language teachers have completed their undergraduate studies within the previous 5 years, and therefore, more familiar with the recent trends in the field of ELT, one would expect them to rate the category of 'Independent Learning' as more important due to the fact that descriptors that cover learner autonomy and virtual learning environments are included within this category. Additionally, teachers with an experience of 1 – 5 years are generally classified as 'inexperienced'; thus, the category of 'Context' with descriptors related to curriculum, aims and needs, the role of language teacher, and institutional resources and constraints could be more relevant to their daily routines because they are somehow in a period of adjustment to the profession of teaching.

Table 4. 10. Importance Attached to Cateories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with an Experience of 1 – 5 Years.

Level of Experience	Sub-section	s1	s3	s6	s2	s7	s4	s5	Average
1 – 5 years	N	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
	Mean	**3,9**	**3,94**	**3,95**	**3,99**	**4,08**	**4,09**	**4,1**	**4,01**
	Std. Error of Mean	0,308	0,27	0,278	0,301	0,275	0,28	0,253	0,284
	Std. Deviation	0,925	0,809	0,833	0,903	0,825	0,839	0,76	0,853

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

Table 4.11. presents the level of importance attached to categories of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with an experience of 6 – 10 years in an ascending order. From the least to the most important, the order of the categories of the EPOSTL is 'Assessment', 'Independent Learning', 'Context', 'Methodology', 'Lesson Planning', 'Resources', and 'Conducting a Lesson'. The categories of 'Assessment' and 'Independent Learning' have been regarded 'important' whereas the other categories have been seen 'very important'. First of all, the category of 'Assessment' has been regarded the least important, which is worthy of attention

as the interrelationship between teaching and assessment cannot be overstated. Secondly, the category of 'Resources', involving descriptors ranging from choosing a proper coursebook and other written materials to designing ICT materials and activities, comes second in the sequence. The necessity of being able to evaluate, adapt and design instructional materials effectively has been highlighted by McDonough & Shaw (2003) and this requirement has been recognized by in-service English language teachers with an experience of 6 – 10 years.

Table 4. 11. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with an Experience of 6 – 10 Years.

Level of Experience	Sub-section	s7	s6	s1	s2	s4	s3	s5	Average
6 – 10 years	N	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
	Mean	**3,97**	**3,99**	**4,07**	**4,26**	**4,28**	**4,3**	**4,34**	**4,17**
	Std. Error of Mean	0,184	0,171	0,147	0,15	0,14	0,131	0,14	0,154
	Std. Deviation	0,993	0,922	0,79	0,809	0,754	0,707	0,753	0,829

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

The level of importance attached to categories of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with an experience of 11 – 15 years has been shown in Table 4.12. All categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors have been regarded 'very important' in line with the wording of the questionnaire. From the least to the most important, the sequence of the categories is 'Independent Learning', 'Context', 'Assessment', 'Lesson Planning', 'Methodology', 'Resources', and 'Conducting a Lesson'. Similar to the in-service English language teachers with an experience of 6 – 10 years, the category of 'Resources' comes second after 'Conducting a Lesson'. The category of 'Independent Learning' has been somewhat understated, which can be construed as in-service English language teachers' lack of appreciation of concepts such as learner autonomy and virtual learning environments.

Table 4. 12. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with an Experience of 11 – 15 Years.

Level of Experience	Sub-section	s6	s1	s7	s4	s2	s3	s5	Average
11 – 15 years	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
	Mean	**4,06**	**4,08**	**4,15**	**4,16**	**4,18**	**4,18**	**4,23**	**4,15**
	Std. Error of Mean	0,175	0,187	0,17	0,187	0,158	0,179	0,165	0,171
	Std. Deviation	0,803	0,855	0,78	0,856	0,724	0,821	0,756	0,784

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

Table 4.13. provides data as to the level of importance attached to categories of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with an experience of 16 – 20 years in ascending order. More specifically, from the least to the most important, the arrangement of the categories of the EPOSTL is 'Resources', 'Methodology', 'Conducting a Lesson', 'Independent Learning', 'Assessment', 'Lesson Planning', and 'Context'. The categories of 'Resources', 'Methodology', and 'Conducting a Lesson' have been considered as 'important' while the other categories have been regarded as 'very important'. The opinions of in-service English language teachers with an experience of 16 – 20 years differ from the previous groups of in-service English language teachers in that they consider the category of 'Context' rather than 'Conducting a Lesson' as the most important. In contrast to the previous less experienced groups of in-service English language teachers, in-service English language teachers with an experience of 16 – 20 years regard the category of 'Conducting a Lesson' only the fifth most important, which deserves close attention. Unfortunately, the main indicator of a teacher's performance is, sometimes misleadingly, declared to be his/her way of 'conducting a lesson'; nevertheless, "our professional activities as language teachers are not carried out in a vacuum" (McDonough & Shaw, 2003, p. 14) and Kumaravadivelu (1994; 2001; 2006) offers principled eclecticism in postmethod condition, stressing the role of a language teacher who takes the peculiarities of a specific context, the aims and needs of learners, and institutional characteristics into consideration before planning, and subsequently conducting, his/her lesson. Accordingly, 'Methodology' has been regarded the second least important category, which can be attributed to experienced teachers' approval of the postmethod condition.

Table 4. 13. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with an Experience of 16 – 20 Years.

Level of Experience	Sub-section	s3	s2	s5	s6	s7	s4	s1	Average
16 – 20 years	N	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
	Mean	**3,88**	**3,97**	**3,97**	**4,04**	**4,05**	**4,11**	**4,12**	**4,02**
	Std. Error of Mean	0,311	0,319	0,359	0,337	0,326	0,336	0,304	0,328
	Std. Deviation	0,822	0,843	0,951	0,892	0,862	0,89	0,804	0,867

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

The level of importance attached to categories of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with an experience of 20+ years has been presented in Table 4.14. The order of the categories of the EPOSTL from the least to the most important is ‘Resources’, ‘Assessment’, ‘Lesson Planning’, ‘Independent Learning’, ‘Methodology’, ‘Context’, and ‘Conducting a Lesson’. All the categories have been regarded ‘very important’ by in-service teachers with an experience of 20 years and more. Similar to the majority of the other groups, the category of ‘Conducting a Lesson’ is considered the most important while the category of ‘Resources’ has been rated as the least important. It is noteworthy that the category of ‘Context’ has also been seen highly important in that it comes second after ‘Conducting a Lesson’.

Table 4. 14. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with an Experience of 20+ Years.

Level of Experience	Sub-section	s3	s7	s4	s6	s2	s1	s5	Average
20+ years	N	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
	Mean	**4,02**	**4,04**	**4,08**	**4,1**	**4,14**	**4,25**	**4,27**	**4,14**
	Std. Error of Mean	0,251	0,235	0,219	0,236	0,236	0,233	0,21	0,231
	Std. Deviation	0,753	0,704	0,656	0,708	0,709	0,699	0,63	0,693

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

4.5.1. Are there any Significant Differences in the Perceptions of the Self-Assessment Descriptors of the EPOSTL by In-Service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Experience in Turkish Context?

As can be seen in Table 4.15., significant and meaningful differences in terms of their perceptions between in-service English language teachers with an experience of 1 – 5 years and 6 – 10 years on descriptors 96 and 114; and between in-service English language teachers with an experience of 16 – 20 years and 20+ years on descriptor 132 have been identified as a result of the analyses conducted. Strictly speaking, in-service English language teachers with an experience of 6 – 10 years attached meaningfully more importance to the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors 96 and 114 than those with an experience of 1 – 5 years; similarly, in-service English language teachers with an experience of 20+ years attached meaningfully more importance to the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptor 132 than those with an experience of 16 – 20 years.

Table 4. 15. Differences in the Perceptions of the Self-Assessment Descriptors of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Experience.

Descriptor	Sample1-Sample2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj. Sig.
96	1-5 - 6-10	-22.201	7.768	-2.858	.004	.043
114	1-5 - 6-10	-22.665	7.445	-3.044	.002	.023
132	16-20 - 20+	-29.468	9.564	-3.081	.002	.021

Table 4.16. shows the comparison of differences in the perceptions of the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with different levels of experience. To start with, descriptor 96 (under the category of 'Lesson Planning – Identification of Learning Objectives' in the EPOSTL) is formulated as "I can decide whether to formulate objectives in terms of skills, topics, situations, linguistic systems (functions, notions, forms, etc.)" (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 34). In-service teachers with an experience of 1 – 5 years regard this descriptor 3,44 out of 5 important whereas teachers with an experience of 6 – 10 years consider it 4,34 out of 5 important. In other words, teachers with an experience of 1 – 5 years rate this descriptor as 'important' while their counterparts with an experience of 6 – 10 years rate it 'very important' in line with the wording of the questionnaire. Lesson planning and lesson delivery are the two aspects of

teaching that are usually concentrated on throughout pre-service teacher education procedures and “the success with which a teacher conducts a lesson is often thought to depend on the effectiveness with which the lesson was planned” (Richards, 1998, p. 103). A teacher needs to identify the objectives to be attained by the end of the lesson whether s/he is preparing a formal or an informal lesson plan. In doing this, s/he should base the objectives on a rationale such as skills, topics, situations, forms, tasks, functions, or notions. Needless to say, the context in which the instruction is performed also plays a crucial role in this process. The findings imply that, for less experienced teachers, the role of lesson plans and the significance of specifying learning objectives in a clear and consistent manner has not been sufficiently appreciated.

The second descriptor that has been rated by in-service English language teachers with an experience of 1 – 5 years as less important is also related to using lesson plans. More specifically, descriptor 114 (under the category of ‘Conducting a Lesson – Using Lesson Plans’ in the EPOSTL), formulated as “I can start a lesson in an engaging way” (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 39), has been regarded 3,78 out of 5 important by teachers with an experience of 1 – 5 years whereas it has been considered 4,66 out of 5 important by teachers with an experience of 6 – 10 years (see Table 4.16.). Put differently, descriptor 114 is simply ‘important’ for less experienced teachers. At the beginning of a period of instruction, the students’ previous knowledge (schemata) needs to be activated using appropriate activities. Whether it is named as ‘warm-up’, ‘lead-in’, or ‘motivation’, a language teacher should provide the learners with prediction activities, make use of visual, audio, or audio-visual materials, stimulate brainstorming activities among others in order to ensure a smooth transition to the content. It can be argued with reference to the findings that inexperienced teachers do not pay due attention to the importance of introduction phase of a lesson.

Finally, descriptor 132 (under the category of ‘Conducting a Lesson – Classroom Management’ in the EPOSTL), expressed as “I can make and use resources efficiently (flashcards, charts, etc.)” (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 42), has been regarded as ‘important’ by in-service English language teachers with an experience of 16 – 20 years while it has been regarded as ‘very important’ by

teachers with an experience of 20+ years. As can be seen in Table 4.16., descriptor 132 is 3,43 out of 5 important for teachers with an experience of 16 – 20 years whereas it 4,89 out of 5 important for those with an experience of 20+ years. The main aim of designing and using materials is to facilitate and accelerate the process of teaching and learning a foreign language and rather than the authors and publishers, it is the job of teachers to make most use of materials although it is an undeniable fact that designing, adapting, and using materials is a tough and challenging task (Tarakcıoğlu, 2012). Furthermore, for an effective classroom management, the teacher should be able to attract as many students as possible to the lesson; hence, by making best use of visuals, the teacher will direct more students to the content by catering for visual learners in line with the multiple intelligences theory (MIT) (Gardner, 1983). To sum up, it is noteworthy that teachers with an experience of 20+ years regard the use of visuals more important than their counterparts with an experience of 16 – 20 years.

Table 4. 16. Comparison of Differences in the Perceptions of the Self-Assessment Descriptors of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Experience.

Descriptor	Level of Experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
96	1-5	9	3,44	,726	,242
	6-10	29	4,34	,769	,143
114	1-5	9	3,78	,833	,278
	6-10	29	4,66	,484	,090
132	16-20	7	3,43	1,272	,481
	20+	9	4,89	,333	,111

4.6. RQ5. Which Categories of the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Descriptors will be Perceived as More/Less Important by In-Service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Education in Turkish Context?

75 in-service English language teachers have participated in this study and 62 (82,7 %) of them have BA degrees, 12 (16 %) of them have MA degrees, and only 1 (1,3 %) of them has PhD degree. The in-service English language teachers that participated in this study work at primary, secondary, and tertiary level institutions; however, a great majority of the in-service English language teachers hold BA degrees although 25 (33,3 %) of them work at tertiary level institutions. This

finding may be interpreted as in-service English language teachers' lack of concern and effort about their professional development. Alternatively, this may be attributed to their heavy teaching load, which causes them to feel indifferent and unwilling in terms of their professional and personal development.

The level of importance attached to categories of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with different levels of experience is provided in Table 4.17. In-service English language teachers with a BA and MA degree have considered the category of 'Conducting a Lesson' the most important whereas the in-service English language teacher with a PhD degree has regarded the categories of 'Resources' and 'Lesson Planning' as the most important. On the other hand, the category of 'Independent Learning' has been regarded the least important by all in-service English language teachers. Additionally, for in-service English language teachers with a BA degree, the category of 'Assessment' is also equally less important.

Table 4. 17. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Education.

Level of Education	sub section	s1	s2	s3	s4	s5	s6	s7	Average
BA	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
	Mean	4,11	4,2	4,21	4,22	**4,28**	**4,08**	**4,08**	4,17
	Std. Error of Mean	0,105	0,102	0,098	0,098	0,099	0,107	0,112	0,103
	Std. Deviation	0,831	0,804	0,771	0,772	0,781	0,843	0,88	0,815
MA	N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
	Mean	3,96	4	3,82	3,98	**4,06**	**3,78**	3,88	3,94
	Std. Error of Mean	0,227	0,227	0,243	0,274	0,216	0,257	0,255	0,24
	Std. Deviation	0,788	0,787	0,842	0,95	0,75	0,889	0,882	0,831
PhD	N	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Mean	3,83	3,63	**4,27**	**4,27**	3,93	**3,57**	3,89	3,83
	Std. Error of Mean	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Std. Deviation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	N	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75
	Mean	4,08	4,16	4,15	4,18	**4,24**	**4,02**	4,05	4,13
	Std. Error of Mean	0,096	0,093	0,091	0,093	0,09	0,099	0,101	0,095
	Std. Deviation	0,828	0,808	0,791	0,803	0,777	0,855	0,878	0,821

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

Table 4.18. presents the level of importance attached to the categories of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with BA level education in an ascending order. The order of the categories of the EPOSTL from the least to the important is ‘Independent Learning’, ‘Assessment’, ‘Context’, ‘Methodology’, ‘Resources’, ‘Lesson Planning’, and ‘Conducting a Lesson’. Additionally, all the categories have been regarded ‘very important’ in line with wording of the questionnaire. In-service English language teachers with a BA degree, forming the majority, assume that ‘Independent Learning’ and ‘Assessment’ are relatively less important than ‘Lesson Planning’ and ‘Conducting a Lesson’, from which it can be deduced that such concepts as ‘learner autonomy’, ‘portfolios’, ‘self- and peer-assessment’, and ‘error analysis’ have been either undervalued or regarded as irrelevant to their context. On the other hand, planning and performing a lesson has been regarded more important, probably due to the traditional view that actual performance of a teacher is reflected by his/her in-class activities.

Table 4. 18. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with BA Level Education.

Level of Education	sub section	s6	s7	s1	s2	s3	s4	s5	Average
BA	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
	Mean	**4,08**	**4,08**	**4,11**	**4,2**	**4,21**	**4,22**	**4,28**	**4,17**
	Std. Error of Mean	0,107	0,112	0,105	0,102	0,098	0,098	0,099	0,103
	Std. Deviation	0,843	0,88	0,831	0,804	0,771	0,772	0,781	0,815

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

The level of importance attached to the categories of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with MA level education in an ascending order has been presented in Table 4.19. The order of the categories of the EPOSTL, from the least to the most important, is 'Independent Learning', 'Resources', 'Assessment', 'Context', 'Lesson Planning', 'Methodology', and 'Conducting a Lesson'. In particular, only the categories of 'Methodology' and 'Conducting a Lesson' have been regarded 'very important' while the other categories have been seen as 'important'. From these findings, it can be inferred that in-service English language teachers holding an MA degree deem 'Methodology' and 'Conducting a Lesson' substantially important; however, as put forward by Sarıçoban, "…there is no best method in teaching a language on earth" (2001, p. 11). The requirements dictated by the particular context and the necessity to provide independent learning opportunities and appropriate materials for the learners should also be taken into account by in-service English language teachers.

Table 4. 19. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with MA Level Education.

Level of Education	sub section	s6	s3	s7	s1	s4	s2	s5	Average
MA	N	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
	Mean	**3,78**	**3,82**	**3,88**	**3,96**	**3,98**	**4**	**4,06**	**3,94**
	Std. Error of Mean	0,257	0,243	0,255	0,227	0,274	0,227	0,216	0,24
	Std. Deviation	0,889	0,842	0,882	0,788	0,95	0,787	0,75	0,831

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

Only 1 of the in-service English language teachers holds a PhD degree and Table 4.20. shows the importance attached to categories of the EPOSTL in an ascending order by him/her. From the least to the most important, the order of the categories is 'Independent Learning', 'Methodology', 'Context', 'Assessment', 'Conducting a Lesson', 'Resources', and 'Lesson Planning'. In line with the wording of the questionnaire, the categories of 'Resources' and 'Lesson Planning' have been regarded 'very important' whereas the other categories have been considered 'important' by the in-service English language teacher. In contrast to the other in-service English language teachers holding BA or MA degrees, this in-service English language teacher believes that 'Conducting a Lesson' is not the first most important, but it only comes as the third most important category after 'Resources' and 'Lesson Planning'. The contribution of proper lesson planning to the overall course of instruction is undeniable because it answers critical questions such as 'what- / in which order- / how- / when- / whom to teach' (Sarıçoban, 2001). Nonetheless, the category of 'Independent Learning', featuring concepts such as 'learner autonomy', 'extra-curricular activities', and 'virtual learning environments' has once more been overlooked by the in-service English language teacher with PhD level education.

Table 4. 20. Importance Attached to Categories of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with PhD Level Education.

Level of Education	sub section	s6	s2	s1	s7	s5	s3	s4	Average
PhD	N	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Mean	**3,57**	**3,63**	**3,83**	**3,89**	**3,93**	**4,27**	**4,27**	**3,83**
	Std. Error of Mean	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Std. Deviation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

(s1: Context, s2: Methodology, s3: Resources, s4: Lesson Planning, s5: Conducting a Lesson, s6: Independent Learning, s7: Assessment)

4.6.1. Are there any Significant Differences in the Perceptions of the Self-Assessment Descriptors of the EPOSTL by In-Service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Education in Turkish Context?

As can be understood from Table 4.21., significant and meaningful differences in terms of their perceptions between in-service English language teachers with an MA degree and BA degree on descriptors 10, 24, 55, 56, 81, 87, and 153 have

been detected as a result of the analyses conducted. Of the 75 in-service English language teachers, 62 teachers have a BA degree, 12 teachers have an MA degree and only 1 teacher holds a PhD degree. Interestingly though, in-service English language teachers with a BA degree attached meaningfully more importance to the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors 10, 24, 55, 56, 81, 87, and 153 than those with an MA degree. Item by item analysis of the results and possible reasons for the differences are dealt with in the following part.

Table 4. 21. Differences in the Perceptions of the Self-Assessment Descriptors of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Education.

Descriptor	Sample1-Sample2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj. Sig.
10	MA -BA	16.012	6.523	2.455	.014	.042
24	MA -BA	13.349	5.124	2.605	.009	.028
55	MA -BA	15.531	6.326	2.455	.014	.042
56	MA -BA	14.414	5.996	2.404	.016	.049
81	MA -BA	15.656	6.106	2.564	.010	.031
87	MA -BA	16.353	6.404	2.554	.011	.032
153	MA -BA	16.683	6.064	2.751	.006	.018

Table 4.22. presents the comparison of differences in the perceptions of the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with different levels of education. First of all, all 7 descriptors that bear meaningful differences in terms of education level of in-service English language teachers have been attached more importance by in-service English language teachers with a BA degree than those with an MA degree. Descriptor 10 (under the category of 'Context – Aims and Needs' in the EPOSTL) is formulated as "I can take into account and assess the expectations and impact of educational stakeholders (employers, parents, funding agencies etc.)" (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 16). In-service teachers with an MA degree regard this descriptor 3,25 out of 5 important whereas teachers with a BA degree consider it 3,95 out of 5 important. In other words, both groups of teachers with a BA degree and an MA degree consider this descriptor only 'important' in line with the wording of the questionnaire. Throughout the whole process of language education (from the planning to the evaluation), teachers and students are not the only participants; on the contrary, there are other stakeholders such as policymakers, employers, supervisors, parents, and

the society in which they all operate. In line with this, many questions that need to be answered have been directed by Kaplan & Baldauf throughout this process:
-Who learns what when?
-Where do teachers come from and how they are trained?
-What is the objective in language teaching/learning?
-What methodology and what materials are employed over what duration?
-How is everything paid for?
-Who is consulted/involved?
-What's the connection between assessment on the one hand and methods and materials that define the educational objectives on the other? (2005, p. 1014).

Consequently, these questions need to be contemplated on by all the stakeholders, and especially by the teachers. The fact that the expectations and influence of educational stakeholders have been regarded only 'important' (not 'very important') by in-service English language teachers with MA and BA degrees is disappointing as they should be aware of the contributions and restrictions other stakeholders bring to the process of language education in a particular context.

The second descriptor that has been rated as less important by teachers with an MA degree is related to methodology. Descriptor 24 (under the category of 'Methodology – Speaking/Spoken Interaction' in the EPOSTL), formulated as "I can create a supportive atmosphere that invites learners to take part in speaking activities" (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 21), has been regarded 4,17 out of 5 important by teachers with an MA degree whereas it has been considered 4,79 out of 5 important by teachers with a BA degree (see Table 4.22.). Put differently, descriptor 24 is 'very important' for in-service English language teachers both with an MA and BA degrees. The skill of speaking brings many difficulties with it in that learners may feel inhibited about speaking in a foreign language as they cannot think of anything to say, some students may dominate speaking activities whereas others speak very little, learners may tend to use their L1, having to make structural and lexical choices may slow down their fluency, and their personality features and level of anxiety may influence their performance (Sarıçoban, 2001). In order to eliminate these obstacles, a language teacher needs to plan speaking activities very carefully and try to integrate all his/her students into the activities.

In-service English language teachers with both MA and BA degrees have considered this descriptor ‘very important’ even though those with MA degrees have regarded it comparatively less important.

Descriptor 55 (under the category of ‘Methodology – Listening’ in the EPOSTL), put into words as “I can evaluate and select a variety of post-listening tasks to provide a bridge between listening and other skills” (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 25), has been considered 3,50 out of 5 important by teachers with an MA degree whereas it has been considered 4,18 out of 5 important by teachers with a BA degree (see Table 4.22.). In other words, descriptor 55 is ‘important’ for in-service English language teachers with an MA degree whereas it is ‘very important’ for in-service English language teachers with a BA degree. Traditionally, the teaching of skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking have been divided into three stages; namely, pre-, while, and post- stages. Furthermore, rather than handling in an isolated fashion, integrating skills in a coherent manner will probably lead to more success because it is more down to earth. In fact, in their daily lives, people rarely use their language skills in isolation; on the contrary, they employ two or more skills simultaneously in an integrated fashion. Therefore, linking a listening task to another skill as an extension is a good idea, which has been attached less importance by in-service English language teachers with an MA degree than those with a BA degree. One would expect the teachers with a higher level of education to appreciate the practice of integrating four language skills, though.

The fourth descriptor that has been rated as less important by teachers with an MA degree is also related to methodology. Descriptor 56 (under the category of ‘Methodology – Reading’ in the EPOSTL), formulated as “I can select texts appropriate to the needs, interests and language level of the learners” (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 26), has been regarded 4,00 out of 5 important by teachers with an MA degree whereas it has been considered 4,56 out of 5 important by teachers with a BA degree (see Table 4.22.). Put differently, descriptor 24 is ‘very important’ for in-service English language teachers both with an MA and BA degrees. When selecting reading materials, a language teacher should take his/her learners’ interests and goals as well as the text’s length, readability, and difficulty into account (Chastain, 1988). Moreover, with specific reference to Krashen’s (1981)

Comprehensible Input Hypothesis, the correlation between the level of the text and level of learners also requires elaboration. Surprisingly though, in-service English language teachers with an MA degree have undervalued this necessity in comparison to those with a BA degree.

Descriptor 81 (under the category of 'Resources' in the EPOSTL), put into words as "I can identify and evaluate a range of course books/materials appropriate for the age, interests and the language level of the learners" (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 31), has been considered 3,75 out of 5 important by teachers with an MA degree whereas it has been considered 4,45 out of 5 important by teachers with a BA degree (see Table 4.22.). In other words, descriptor 81 is 'important' for in-service English language teachers with an MA degree whereas it is 'very important' for in-service English language teachers with a BA degree. In Turkey, course books for all subjects have been provided by the MoNE for more than a decade in state schools; therefore, language teachers usually do not need to identify, select or evaluate course books. Yet they may need to adapt these materials in order to meet the needs, interests and levels of their learners (McDonough & Shaw, 2003) or they may want to make use of supplementary materials, which comes to mean that language teachers still need to be able to adapt, design, and evaluate instructional materials in accordance with the peculiarities of the context in which they operate.

In a similar fashion, descriptor 87 (under the category of 'Resources' in the EPOSTL), formulated as "I can guide learners to produce materials for themselves and for other learners" (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 31), has been considered 3,25 out of 5 important by teachers with an MA degree whereas it has been considered 4,00 out of 5 important by teachers with a BA degree (see Table 4.22.). Put differently, descriptor 87 is 'important' for in-service English language teachers with an MA degree whereas it is 'very important' for in-service English language teachers with a BA degree. Descriptor 87 implies that, as direct participants of teaching and learning process, learners should also have a say in all stages of this complicated process from planning to assessment as well as material design. Such a viewpoint is compatible with the notions of learner autonomy and individualization of learning. In this way learners may have the chance of

experiencing a journey from being externally directed recipients to becoming self-directed individuals. In addition, materials that have been produced by learners themselves will most probably prove more interesting and motivating than those designed or adapted by the teacher. Considering the facilities provided by today's ICTs, learners may create instructional materials effortlessly, which will render them active participants of the process of learning. Therefore, language teachers should try to incorporate their learners into each stage of instructional decision making. The fact that such a concept embodied within descriptor 87 has been underrated by in-service English language teachers with an MA degree is unfortunate.

Finally, the seventh descriptor that has been rated as less important by teachers with an MA degree is related to independent learning. Descriptor 153 (under the category of 'Independent Learning – Projects' in the EPOSTL), formulated as "I can assist the learners in their choices during the various stages of project work" (Newby, *et al.,* 2007, p. 47), has been regarded 3,50 out of 5 important by teachers with an MA degree whereas it has been considered 4,18 out of 5 important by teachers with a BA degree (see Table 4.22.). In other words, descriptor 153 is 'important' for in-service English language teachers with an MA degree whereas it is 'very important' for in-service English language teachers with a BA degree. Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) organize project work in three steps; firstly the learners are to plan the content and size of the project as well as deciding on the strategies to employ while conducting the tasks, secondly they compile relevant information and prepare their project work, and finally the learners review their work and receive feedback from their teacher and their peers. "At each of these three stages, the teacher will be working with the students, acting as counselor and consultant, not as the project director" (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 158). Nevertheless, in-service English language teachers with an MA degree have perceived this descriptor not as 'very important' but 'important' in line with the wording of the questionnaire.

Table 4. 22. Comparison of Differences in the Perceptions of the Self-Assessment Descriptors of the EPOSTL by In-service English Language Teachers with Different Levels of Education.

Descriptor	Level of Education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
10	MA	12	3,25	,754	,218
	BA	62	3,95	,876	,111
24	MA	12	4,17	1,030	,297
	BA	62	4,79	,484	,061
55	MA	12	3,50	,905	,261
	BA	62	4,18	,736	,093
56	MA	12	4,00	,853	,246
	BA	62	4,56	,692	,088
81	MA	12	3,75	1,055	,305
	BA	62	4,45	,881	,112
87	MA	12	3,25	,965	,279
	BA	62	4,00	,868	,110
153	MA	12	3,50	,798	,230
	BA	62	4,18	,713	,091

4.7. RQ6. What Descriptors are Missing in the EPOSTL Self-Assessment Section according to In-Service English Language Teachers in Turkish Context?

The total number of the self-assessment descriptors in the EPOSTL is 195 and almost every aspect of a language teacher's profession has been tried to be covered. Nevertheless, the researcher has aimed to investigate if there are any issues that have not been covered by the descriptors and included an open ended question as the 196th question into the questionnaire. It has also been thought that this open-ended question would add a quasi-qualitative dimension to the study. The question has been formulated as "Are there any other competences for your context that have not been covered by this questionnaire? What are they?" and enough time and space has been allotted for the in-service English language teachers to express their ideas. Unfortunately, out of the 75 in-service English language teachers who have participated in this study, only 12 bothered to write something. More precisely, 4 of the in-service English language teachers have only written '*No, there are not*'; 2 of the in-service English language teachers referred to the sufficiency of the descriptors by writing '*It's detailed enough*' and '*It has been perfectly prepared*'. Another 3 in-service English language teachers

have written '*I wish the questionnaire hadn't been so long*', '*There are lots of similar, unimportant questions and I didn't like your questionnaire*', '*There are a lot of similar questions, so it is very boring*', implying the bulkiness of the questionnaire. Of the remaining 3 in-service English language teachers, one has written '*Multiple choice tests. Evaluation of multiple choice tests.*', possibly suggesting that descriptors related to designing and evaluating multiple choice tests are missing within the EPOSTL. Another in-service English language teacher has written '*Preparing materials are very difficult for teachers. So universities should organize and prepare materials for us.*'. The self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL have been classified under 7 categories and the title of the 3rd category is 'resources', containing 11 descriptors. Additionally, descriptors that touch on material design and use have also been integrated into other categories. In response to the in-service English language teacher's proposal, it can be argued that centrally prepared and distributed materials may not fit the specific requirements of a context, which means that teachers need to be able to design and adapt materials that meet the requirements of the context they work in. Finally, the last in-service English language teacher has expressed his/her opinion broadly as follows:

'*In my opinion, using a language in a natural environment is very important. No other way can replace the natural environment. This is called natural acquisition. If we want to learn a foreign language effectively and speak fluently, we have to go to a country where this language is spoken. At least we must contact with the native speakers. If these opportunities are not available, we must benefit from the media resources. Besides if people need to learn a foreign language for their business, somehow they will learn it.*'

Rather than offering additional descriptors for the EPOSTL, this in-service English language teacher refers to the importance of exposure in language learning, the difference between EFL and ESL settings as well as learning and acquisition dichotomy. Moreover, the in-service English language teacher suggests that by making use of media resources, the lack of exposure can be tried to be compensated; however, the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors already include descriptors related to virtual learning environments under the category of

‘Independent Learning’. Finally, the in-service English language teacher seems to refer to the importance of motivation, which has also been covered by the EPOSTL. To be more precise, a language teacher’s role in motivating his/her students has been highlighted throughout the EPOSTL.

When the remarks of in-service English language teachers have been reviewed, it can be understood that they have not offered any reasonable additional descriptors for their context. Accordingly, this implies that the EPOSTL does not lack any potential descriptors and the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL are comprehensive enough for Turkish context.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Within this final chapter of the study, a brief review of the findings of the study and suggestions for further research are provided. The findings for each research question have been presented and results have been discussed within the previous section. In this section, an overall discussion as well as conclusions arrived at as a result of the findings will be presented. As a final point, possible suggestions as to the interpretation of the findings of this study as well as further similar studies in the field are offered.

5.1. Conclusion

As a direct result of advances in transportation, technology, communication tools, and trade, the importance of learning foreign languages have become greater than ever before. Becoming bilingual or even multi-lingual offers countless benefits to individuals and nations in social, cultural, educational, occupational, political and financial terms among many others. Accordingly, learning foreign languages has become a top priority for many individuals who wish to function more effectively in the global economy. There are a myriad of complex and interdependent variables such as the educational policy-makers' decisions, the peculiarities of the context, teachers, students, and materials available that play a role in the process of foreign language teaching and learning. Among these, the determinant factor, arguably, is the language teacher (Cochran-Smith, 2010). The urgent necessity of learning foreign languages has also been recognized by the educational policy-makers of the governments and the importance of training competent and successful foreign language teachers has come to the fore.

Training competent language teachers, however, is not a straightforward undertaking as it encompasses many other multifaceted and challenging aspects to consider. As has been explained in depth within the first half of the second chapter of this study, these aspects can be summarized as:

-language teachers need to be more aware of the importance of on-going professional development,

-the process of language teacher development needs to be attached the same, if not more, importance as the process of language teacher training,
-the theories and models of language teacher education should be appreciated and internalized by teacher trainers,
-the curriculum for second language teacher education should be designed skillfully and implemented effectively,
-practicum and micro-teaching procedures should be conveyed properly so that in-service language teachers can transform their theoretical base into actual practice,
-innovations in language teacher education should not be ignored,
-training reflective and autonomous teachers should become one of the aims of language teacher education,
-the procedures of pre-service and in-service language teacher evaluation should be paid due attention with a specific view to intricacies inherent in the process of evaluation,
-the supervision of language teachers needs to be conducted in an effective manner, and
-the competencies a language teacher is expected to master need to be clearly defined and stated.

The benefits and necessity of accommodating plurilingual and pluri-cultural citizens have already been recognized by the EU and the whole process of foreign language education has been reorganized and restructured across the continent. As a concrete evidence, the year 2001 was declared as 'the European Year of Languages' and it has encouraged foreign language learning across Europe. As a result, it has been proposed that European citizens should be taught at least two foreign languages from an early age besides their first language (Kelly & Grenfell, 2004). In line with this, several projects and publications as to foreign language education have been released. These include the EPLTE, the EPG, the ELP, the CEFR, and the EPOSTL.

Accordingly, the second half of chapter two initially presents relevant information as to the rationale, content and use of the EPLTE, EPG, ELP and CEFR. The EPOSTL, the core of this study, has been dealt with in more detail in that its background, aims and contents, implementation, advantages as well as criticisms

have been discussed. Additionally, the potential use of the EPOSTL in in-service teacher development, the connection between the EPOSTL and other documents, the concepts of plurilingualism and alternative assessment with reference to the EPOSTL have also been dwelled upon. The implementation of the EPOSTL in Turkish context brings Chapter two to a conclusion.

In Chapter three of this study, the research design of the study has been explained and data as to in-service English language teachers who have participated in this study have been presented in tables, numbers and percentages. In addition, data collection instrument as well as data collection and analysis procedures and ethical considerations have been expounded within Chapter three.

In Chapter four, findings for the research questions that have been directed in section 1.4.1. of this study have been presented in tables and the results have been interpreted and discussed. The first research question aims to arrive at an understanding of in-service English language teachers' overall perception of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors. It has been found that in-service English language teachers' overall perception of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors is 4,13 out of 5. Put differently, in-service English language teachers' overall rating of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors is nearly 83% and, in line with the wording of the questionnaire, in-service English language teachers have regarded the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors 'very important'. Interpreting this finding as in-service language teachers practice the principles of the EPOSTL in their classes would definitely be a far-fetched argument; however, it clearly indicates that in-service language teachers in Turkish context, in general, have welcomed the principles suggested by the EPOSTL and they are informed of modern trends and concepts in the field of language education.

The second research question aims to reveal the order of importance attached to the categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors by in-service English language teachers in Turkish context. From the least to the most important, the order of the categories is '*Independent Learning*', '*Assessment*', '*Context*', '*Resources*', '*Methodology*', '*Lesson Planning*', and '*Conducting a Lesson*'. The findings of the second research question clearly show that all categories of the

EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors have been regarded as ‘very important’ in the wording of the questionnaire.

The participants of this study include in-service language teachers working for primary, secondary and tertiary level institutions. Accordingly, the third research question aims to identify the order of importance attached to the categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors by in-service language teachers working for primary, secondary and tertiary level institutions. It has been observed that the most important category of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors for all groups is ‘*Conducting a Lesson*’ whereas the least important category for in-service teachers working for primary level schools is ‘*Context*’; for those working for secondary level schools is ‘*Assessment*’; and for in-service teachers working for tertiary level institutions is ‘*Independent Learning*’.

The category of ‘*Independent Learning*’ includes sub-sections such as learner autonomy, homework, projects, portfolios, virtual learning environments and extra-curricular activities. Accordingly, tertiary level learners are expected be more competent and autonomous in terms of their self-study skills and use of virtual learning environments. However, in-service English language teachers working for tertiary level institutions have undervalued the role of independent learning as they have regarded it the least important category. This comes to mean that in-service English language teachers working for tertiary level institutions believe that spoon-feeding rather than scaffolding their learners is more effective. This conflicts the view that learners become more autonomous as they grow older and more competent.

In accordance with the sub-research question, the researcher has also looked into whether there are any significant differences in the perceptions of the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers working for primary, secondary and tertiary level institutions. Consequently, significant and meaningful differences in terms of their perceptions between in-service English language teachers working for tertiary and secondary level institutions on descriptors 8, 75, and 79; between in-service English language teachers working for tertiary and primary level institutions on descriptors 34, 69,

and 123; and between in-service English language teachers working for secondary and primary level institutions on descriptor 67 have been identified. To be more precise, in-service English language teachers working for secondary level institutions attached meaningfully more importance to the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors 8, 75, and 79 than those working for tertiary level institutions; in-service English language teachers working for primary level institutions attached meaningfully more importance to the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors 34, 69, and 123 than those working for tertiary level institutions; in-service English language teachers working for primary level institutions attached meaningfully more importance to the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptor 67 than those working for secondary level institutions.

The study included in-service English language teachers with varying levels of experience and the fourth research question aims to specify the order of importance attached to the categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors by in-service language teachers with different levels of experience. The results indicate that except for the group consisting of in-service teachers with an experience of 16 – 20 years, who considered the category of '*Context*' as the most important, all the groups regarded the category of '*Conducting a Lesson*' as the most important. On the other hand, the least important category for teachers with an experience of 1 – 5 years is '*Context*', for those with an experience of 6 – 10 years is '*Assessment*', for those with an experience of 11 – 15 years is '*Independent Learning*', and for those with an experience of 16 – 20 years and 20+ years is '*Resources*'.

It is remarkable that in-service English language teachers with more than 16 years consider the category of '*Resources*' as the least important. A teacher needs to able to select, adapt and design proper materials taking the age, level, interests and motivations of his/her students into consideration. As the teacher gains experience, his/her competence in the process of material design improves and s/he builds his/her material base. The fact that in-service English language teachers with more than 16 years consider the category of '*Resources*' as the least important means that more experienced teachers are at more ease in terms of designing and making use of resources.

In line with the sub-research question, the researcher has also examined whether there are any significant differences in the perceptions of the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with different levels of experience. Significant and meaningful differences in terms of their perceptions between in-service English language teachers with an experience of 1 – 5 years and 6 – 10 years on descriptors 96 and 114; and between in-service English language teachers with an experience of 16 – 20 years and 20+ years on descriptor 132 have been detected as a result of the analyses conducted. More particularly, in-service English language teachers with an experience of 6 – 10 years attached meaningfully more importance to the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors 96 and 114 than those with an experience of 1 – 5 years; likewise, in-service English language teachers with an experience of 20+ years attached meaningfully more importance to the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptor 132 than those with an experience of 16 – 20 years.

In-service language teachers with varying levels of education have participated in this study and the fifth research question aims to ascertain the order of importance attached to the categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors by in-service language teachers with different levels of education. It has been seen that in-service English language teachers with a BA and MA degree have considered the category of '*Conducting a Lesson*' as the most important whereas the in-service English language teacher with a PhD degree has regarded the categories of '*Resources*' and '*Lesson Planning*' as the most important. On the other hand, the category of '*Independent Learning*' has been regarded the least important. Additionally, for the in-service English language teachers with a BA degree, the category of '*Assessment*' is also equally less important.

The most noteworthy interpretation of this finding is that while the in-service English language teachers with a BA and MA degree believe that the category of '*Conducting a Lesson*' is the most important, the in-service English language teacher with a PhD degree has considered the categories of '*Resources*' and '*Lesson Planning*' as the most important. In other words, for the participants with a BA or MA degree, the implementation of the instruction is the most important aspect. On the other hand, for the participant with a PhD degree, the theoretical

rather than the practical aspect of teaching is more important. From this point of view, it would not be wrong to argue that professional development shifts the focus of teachers from practice to theory. As a final remark, when the coordination and cooperation between the theoreticians and the practitioners have been achieved, the process of foreign language education is certain to be enhanced.

With reference to the sub-research question, the researcher has looked into whether there are any significant differences in the perceptions of the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL by in-service English language teachers with different levels of education. Consequently, significant and meaningful differences in terms of their perceptions between in-service English language teachers with an MA degree and BA degree on descriptors 10, 24, 55, 56, 81, 87, and 153 have been detected as a result of the analyses conducted. Of the 75 in-service English language teachers, 62 teachers have a BA degree, 12 teachers have an MA degree and only 1 teacher holds a PhD degree. Interestingly though, in-service English language teachers with a BA degree attached meaningfully more importance to the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors 10, 24, 55, 56, 81, 87, and 153 than those with an MA degree.

The sixth research question aims to find out what descriptors are missing in the EPOSTL self-assessment section for Turkish context and it has been located at the end of the questionnaire in the form of an open-ended question. Only 12 of the 75 in-service English language teachers have bothered to answer this question. More specifically, 4 of the in-service English language teachers have only written '*No, there are not*'; 2 of the in-service English language teachers referred to the sufficiency of the descriptors by writing '*It's detailed enough*' and '*It has been perfectly prepared*'. Another 3 in-service English language teachers have written '*I wish the questionnaire hadn't been so long*', or '*There are lots of similar, unimportant questions and I didn't like your questionnaire*', or '*There are a lot of similar questions, so it is very boring*', implying the bulkiness of the questionnaire. Of the remaining 3 in-service English language teachers, one has written '*Multiple choice tests. Evaluation of multiple choice tests.*', possibly referring to the inadequacy or lack of descriptors related to designing and evaluating multiple choice tests are missing within the EPOSTL. Another in-service English language

teacher has written '*Preparing materials are very difficult for teachers. So universities should organize and prepare materials for us.*'. The last in-service English language teacher has written his/her ideas at length; however, s/he has not offered additional descriptors for the EPOSTL. Instead, s/he has referred to the importance of exposure in language learning, the difference between EFL and ESL settings as well as learning and acquisition dichotomy. Moreover, the in-service English language teacher suggests that by making use of media resources, the lack of exposure can be tried to be compensated for. Finally, the in-service English language teacher refers to the importance of motivation in learning a foreign language. None of the in-service English language teachers who have participated in this study have offered any missing descriptors for the context in which they function; therefore, it can be argued that the scope and content of the EPOSTL is satisfactory for Turkish context.

The findings and results of this study clearly indicate that the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL have in general been welcomed by in-service language teachers in Turkish context. This conclusion substantiates the findings of previous studies (such as Bergil & Sarıçoban, 2016; Çakır & Balçıkanlı, 2012; Hişmanoğlu, 2012; Hişmanoğlu, 2013; Mirici & Hergüner, 2015; Okumuş & Akalın, 2015; Su Bergil, 2015) that have been conducted in Turkish setting with pre-service English language teachers as participants. To be more specific, Okumuş & Akalın (2015) argue that pre-service English language teachers are in favor of incorporating the EPOSTL into their Methodology courses as the EPOSTL helps them become more aware of their instructional practices and promotes self-assessment. In a similar vein, Mirici & Hergüner conclude that "…the use of the EPOSTL is helpful in developing student teachers' metacognitive strategies as autonomous learners" (2015, p. 1) and underline the function of the EPOSTL as a self-assessment tool that encourages the users to reflect on their progress and potential for further learning. Likewise, Çakır & Balçıkanlı (2012) believe that the EPOSTL is a useful self-assessment tool and the EPOSTL may be employed with the aim of complementing the current ELT curriculum as the EPOSTL systematically deals with the content of the ELT curriculum and functions as an effective reflection tool. In her PhD dissertation, Su Bergil (2015) conducted a complementary study on the EPOSTL and the EPG with the aim of defining the didactic competency levels of

38 prospective English language teachers studying at Hacettepe University. She concludes that the EPOSTL "…is a useful tool which can be used for English language teacher education in Turkey" (Su Bergil, 2015, p. vi). Moving one step further from her conclusion, it would be justified to argue that the EPOSTL can also be presented to in-service English language teachers in order to make them become more familiarized with such concepts as plurilingualism, ICC, self-assessment, learner and teacher autonomy, etc.

Although the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL have largely been welcomed by in-service English language teachers in Turkish context, some categories of the EPOSTL such as '*conducting a lesson*' have been considered comparatively more important than such categories as '*independent learning*' and '*context*'. This result is compatible with the findings of a previous study (Su Bergil, 2015) that employed pre-service English language teachers as participants in that Su Bergil (2015, p. 172) also observed that the most important category was '*conducting a lesson*' and the least important category was '*independent learning*' for pre-service language teachers. Therefore, the actual in-class performance of a teacher is regarded as more decisive by in-service language teachers who participated in this study, too. However, it should be noted that the self-assessment descriptors listed below other categories (such as '*lesson planning*' or '*methodology*') also pave the way for a successfully and efficiently conducted lesson, which can be interpreted as all the categories with all the self-assessment descriptors are equally important. As an example, the category of '*independent learning*', regarded as the least important in Su Bergil (2015) and in this present study, covers descriptors related to such aspects as learner autonomy, virtual learning environments and portfolios, the importance of which for current trends in ELT literature cannot be refuted.

When in-service English language teachers' perceptions of the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL have been analyzed and compared in terms of the level of institution (primary, secondary or tertiary) they work for, their experience (1 – 5 years, 6 – 10 years, 11 – 15 years, 16 – 20 years and 20+ years) and their level of education (MA, BA or PhD), it has been observed that the category of '*conducting a lesson*' has been attached more importance than the other

categories in most cases. On the other hand, it should not go without saying that all the categories of the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors have been regarded as either 'important' or 'very important' by in-service English language teachers in accordance with the wording of the questionnaire. In other words, the fact that the category of '*conducting a lesson*' has been considered as the most important does not come to mean that the other six categories are viewed as 'unimportant'. Needless to say, other categories of the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL such as '*resources*' and/or '*assessment*' contribute greatly to '*conducting a lesson*' that is effective and fruitful. Understandably, in-service English language teachers have regarded the actual in-class performance more important than the other causative factors without ignoring the relative value of them.

The underlying reason for this tendency is possibly that in-service teachers are most of the time supervised and evaluated in terms of their in-class instructional performance and their way of '*conducting a lesson*' functions as a showcase of their overall performance. Such a way of thinking may be the outcome of 'negative washback effect' in that the supervisors observe and evaluate in-service language teachers in terms of their success in conducting their lessons and, in return, in-service teachers attach more importance to their way of conducting a lesson than other didactic skills such as lesson planning or using resources. Nevertheless, the profession of language teaching cannot be limited to just observable in-class performance of the teacher as it requires many other competences such as 'understanding the characteristics of the *context*', '*planning a lesson*' or 'conducting reliable and valid *assessments*'. Therefore, '*conducting a lesson*' is only the visible part of the iceberg in the profession of language teaching and the value of other didactic competences should not be dismissed.

As to the findings of the sub-research questions, the total number of self-assessment descriptors that have been attached significantly different importance by in-service English language teachers in terms of the level of institution (primary, secondary or tertiary) they work for, their experience (1 – 5 years, 6 – 10 years, 11 – 15 years, 16 – 20 years and 20+ years) and their level of education (MA, BA or PhD) is only 17 out of 195. In other words, only 8 % of the 195 descriptors have been attached significantly different importance by in-service English language

teachers in terms of the level of institution they work for, their experience and their level of education. As has been aforementioned, in Japan the number of the descriptors have been reduced to 100 and the EPOSTL has been renamed as JAPOSTL and JAPOTL to be employed in pre-service and in-service teacher education, respectively (Newby, 2012b). More precisely, the Japanese have regarded nearly half of the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL as irrelevant for their context whereas in-service English language teachers in Turkish context have regarded the self-assessment descriptors of the EPOSTL over 3 out of 5 important, which can be translated as all the descriptors have been regarded as either 'important' or 'very important' in line with the wording of the questionnaire. This conclusion also attests to the argument that the EPOSTL self-assessment descriptors have been positively welcomed by in-service English language teachers in Turkish context.

In a similar vein, in-service English language teachers who have participated in this study have been asked to add any other descriptors necessary for Turkish context at the end of the questionnaire in the form of an open-ended question. None of the in-service English teachers have offered any relevant or promising descriptors for the context they work in. This indicates that the self-assessment section of the EPOSTL with 195 descriptors is perceived to be satisfactorily comprehensive and detailed for Turkish context.

As to the principle of self-assessment, which is an inherent characteristic of CoE publications such as the ELP and the EPOSTL, the concept of self-assessment may lead to uneasiness in some users. It is true that the practice of self-assessment is a highly subjective undertaking and the students may not be satisfactorily competent in assessing their own performances in that "students may be either too harsh on themselves or too self-flattering" (Brown, 2004, p. 270). In other words, the possibility that the learners tend to overstate their performances and cannot carry out an accurate process of assessment may worry many teachers. With the aim of reducing the contamination created by this possibility and enhancing the reliability of the assessment, the teacher may require his/her students to provide evidence of their performance and assessment within the '*dossier*' section of their portfolios. In addition, rather than building the whole

process of assessment on students' self-assessments, Kırkgöz (2007) argues that a twofold and combined arrangement of formal assessment and self-assessment would be a good idea. In this way, potential drawbacks of traditional assessment procedures can be compensated for and more consistent and triangulated data as to the students' performances may be gathered (Brown, 2004). Such an approach will also make it possible to achieve a favorable balance between objective and subjective assessment. As a final remark, it should not be forgotten that the principle of '*self-assessment*' is based on many other well-established principles in the field of foreign language teaching such as 'autonomy', 'intrinsic motivation', and 'reflection'. Becoming skillful in self-assessment will enable the learners to set their own goals for further learning, to develop a self-initiated desire to learn more and to cogitate over their performance, strengths and weaknesses.

All in all, the world changes at an unprecedented pace and language education is not an exception to this trend. Therefore, the whole process of education, in particular foreign language education, should be constantly reconstructed and upgraded to keep up with the changes in every aspect of life. In the implementation of this process of reconstruction, international requirements and internationally validated scales offer a viable solution. It has been underlined throughout this study that the EPOSTL, originally designed for pre-service language teachers, can also be used at least as effectively by in-service language teachers in order to enhance their professional development.

The basic way of attaining high quality in education is introducing harmonization and standards to the process of pre-service teacher education, the benefits of which can only be enjoyed in the long-term. On the other hand, if the improvements are wished to be observed in a shorter-term, in-service language teachers' professional development procedures should be bettered by providing them with effective INSETs. As has been reported by Küçüksüleymanoğlu (2006), the INSETs for language teachers in Turkey are unsatisfactory in terms of their number, frequency, content, organization and methodology and there is a lack of communication and coordination between the MoNE and ELT department professionals. As a response to these problems, Su Bergil (2015) calls for an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration on the part of all the stakeholders;

namely, pre-service and in-service English language teachers as well as policy makers, teacher trainers and mentors with the aim of enhancing the current level of English language teaching across Turkey. To be more precise, as suggested by Mirici & Demirbaş (2013), seminars, symposiums, and conferences should be arranged in collaboration with the MoNE, national contact persons, portfolio developers, academics, and teachers. In this way, all the stakeholders may have the chance to express their opinions and broaden the viewpoint in terms of the development, implementation, and dissemination of the EPOSTL.

Admittedly, such an extensive professional development operation for in-service language teachers across Turkey calls for thorough planning and enthusiastic coordination, self-devotion and laborious effort on the part of all stakeholders. Many other unforeseen problems may crop up during the process; however, positive and motivating results of such an application will possibly be observed in a very short-term and the whole process of foreign language education will become more effective and successful.

5.2. Suggestions

It has been considered that the limitations listed in section 1.6. of the study may serve as the starting point for the suggestions for future and further researches. Accordingly, the number of the in-service English language teachers who have participated in this study is limited to 75; however, a similar study with a larger population may yield more generalisable results and might be accepted and funded by the EU as a project. The participants of this study include in-service English language teachers working for primary, secondary, and tertiary level institutions in Isparta, Turkey. A similar study can be carried out in another city with a larger population or comparisons between two or more cities may be conducted. Alternatively, a similar study may be carried out with participants who are teachers of other languages such as German, French, Russian or Arabic and their perceptions of the EPOSTL may be collected and analyzed.

Only the ‘self-assessment’ section of the EPOSTL that includes 195 descriptors has been utilized within this study and ‘Personal Statement’ and ‘Dossier’ sections

of the EPOSTL have been excluded. Integrating these sections into a future study may reveal promising results in that the users are encouraged to reflect on didactic aspects in the 'Personal Statement' section and the 'Dossier' section allows the users to provide tangible evidences regarding their self-assessment. In addition, with the aim of compensating for the shortcomings of the use of a questionnaire, a future study may be supported by a qualitative research design such as an interview with the participants.

As an alternative, a further study may adopt a longitudinal approach and the participants' perceptions of the EPOSTL may be collected as a first step. Following this, the participants may be provided with a period of INSET that covers the didactic skills of a language teacher as exemplified by the EPOSTL. Then the participants' level of perceptions and understanding of the EPOSTL may again be collected and the differences may be compared and evaluated. Such a longitudinal aspect would possibly yield more reliable and promising results.

As a final remark, the EPOSTL may function as a framework for pre-service language education; therefore, the curriculum of the ELT departments across Turkey should be restructured with a specific reference to the EPOSTL. Furthermore, the awareness and understanding of in-service language teachers in terms of the EPOSTL should be improved by organizing efficient INSETs nationwide. Although the EPOSTL has been in use in Europe for nearly a decade and a myriad of studies has been conducted as to its implementation, it still promises rewarding findings in diverse contexts and with diverse participants and research designs.

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APPENDICES

EK 1. ETİK KOMİSYON ONAY BİLDİRİMİ

T.C.
HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Genel Sekreterlik

Sayı : 76000869/ 433 – 3546 03 Kasım 2014

EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

İlgi: 25.09.2014 tarih ve 1746 sayılı yazınız.

Enstitünüz Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bilim Dalı Doktora Programı öğrencisi **Ahmet ÖNAL**'ın **Doç. Dr. Arif SARIÇOBAN** danışmanlığında yürüttüğü **"Görev Yapan İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Öğretmen Adaylarına Yönelik Avrupa Dil Portfolyosu Öz-Değerlendirme Tanımlayıcılarını Türkiye'deki Yabancı Dil Eğitim Durumu Açısından Algılamaları Üzerine Betimsel Bir Çalışma"** başlıklı tez çalışması, Üniversitemiz Senatosu Etik Komisyonunun **21.10.2014** tarihinde yapmış olduğu toplantıda incelenmiş olup, etik açıdan uygun bulunmuştur.

Bilgilerinizi rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Ü. Şebnem HARPUT
Rektör a.
Rektör Yardımcısı

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EK 2. ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION

Date: 10/07/2017

Thesis Title :
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN PORTFOLIO FOR STUDENT TEACHERS OF LANGUAGES (EPOSTL) IN TURKISH SETTING

The whole thesis that includes the *title page, introduction, main chapters, conclusions and bibliography section* is checked by using **Turnitin** plagiarism detection software. Take into the consideration requested filtering options. According to the originality report obtained data are as below.

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I declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Educational Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports; that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

10/07/2017 Signature

Name Surname: Ahmet ÖNAL
Student No: N10144724
Department: Foreign Languages Education
Program: English Language and Teaching
Status: ☐ Masters ☒ Ph.D. ☐ Integrated Ph.D.

ADVISOR APPROVAL

APPROVED

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nuray ALAGÖZLÜ

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HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ
DOKTORA TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORİJİNALLİK RAPORU

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
EĞİTİM BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİMİ ANA BİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA

Tarih: 10/07/2017

Tez Başlığı : TÜRKİYE BAĞLAMINDA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN DİL ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARINA YÖNELİK AVRUPA PORTFOLYOSU (DÖAYAP) ALGILARI

Yukarıda başlığı verilen tez çalışmamın tamamı (kapak sayfası, özetler, ana bölümler, kaynakça) aşağıdaki filtreler kullanılarak **Turnitin** adlı intihal programı aracılığı ile kontrol edilmiştir. Kontrol sonucunda aşağıdaki veriler elde edilmiştir.

Rapor Tarihi	Sayfa Sayısı	Karakter Sayısı	Savunma Tarihi	Benzerlik Endeksi	Gönderim Numarası
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Uygulanan filtreler:
1- Kaynakça hariç
2- Alıntılar dâhil
3- 5 kelimeden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve çalışmamın herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

10/07/2017 İmza

Adı Soyadı: Ahmet ÖNAL
Öğrenci No: N10144724
Anabilim Dalı: Yabancı Diller Eğitimi
Programı: İngiliz Dili Eğitimi
Statüsü: ☐ Y.Lisans ☒ Doktora ☐ Bütünleşik Dr.

DANIŞMAN ONAYI

UYGUNDUR.
Doç. Dr. Nuray ALAGÖZLÜ

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EK 3. ANKET

QUESTIONNAIRE
PERCEPTION OF EPOSTL

Dear Participant;

This questionnaire has been prepared in order to assess the practising English Language Teachers' perceptions of EPOSTL Descriptors. The data gathered via this questionnaire will be used in my doctoral dissertation "A Descriptive Study on In-Service English Language Teachers' Perception of European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) Self-Assessment Descriptors in Relation to Turkish Foreign Language Education Context", which I write as a part of my doctoral studies at Hacettepe University, Institute of Educational Sciences. The answers will be kept confidential. Thank you for answering the questions truly and sincerely.

PART 1

Name/Surname: _____ _____ **Age: _____** **Gender:** Female / Male

Type of School: Primary / Secondary / Tertiary **Name of the School: _____**

Teaching Experience: _____ years

Department of Undergraduate Education:

a) English Language Teaching

b) English Language and Literature

c) American Culture and Literature

d) English Linguistics

e) English Translation and Interpreting

f) Other: _____

Level of Education: BA / MA / PhD

Have you ever joined any "In-service Training Seminars" on CEFR or ELP? If yes, when and how many hours? _____

PART 2

How important are the following teacher competences for the context you are working in? Please give your opinion by putting a cross (X) for each of the items into the appropriate part of the table.

Descriptors	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Of Little Importance	Unimportant
1. Understanding the requirements set in national and local curricula.					
2. Designing language courses around the requirements of the national and local curricula.					
3. Understanding the principles formulated in relevant European documents (e.g. Common European Framework of Reference, European Language Portfolio).					
4. Understanding and integrating content of European documents (e.g. Common European Framework of Reference, European Language Portfolio) as appropriate in my teaching.					
5. Understanding the personal, intellectual and cultural value of learning other languages.					
6. Taking account of overall, long-term aims based on needs and expectations.					
7. Taking into account differing motivations for learning another language.					
8. Take into account the cognitive needs of learners (problem solving, drive for communication, acquiring knowledge etc.).					
9. Taking into account the affective needs of learners (sense of achievement, enjoyment etc.).					
10. Taking into account and assessing the expectations and impact of educational stakeholders (employers, parents, funding agencies etc.).					
11. Taking into account attainment target levels set in curricula (e.g. deriving from the Common European Framework of Reference).					
12. Promoting the value and benefits of language learning to learners, parents and others.					
13. Appreciating and making use of the value added to the classroom environment by learners with diverse cultural backgrounds.					
14. Taking into account the knowledge of other languages learners may already possess and helping them to build on this knowledge when learning additional languages.					
15. Drawing on appropriate theories of language, learning, culture etc. and relevant research findings to guide my teaching.					
16. Critically assessing my teaching on the basis of experience, learner feedback and learning outcomes and adapting it accordingly.					
17. Critically assessing my teaching in relation to theoretical principles.					
18. Accepting feedback from my peers and mentors and building this into my teaching.					

19. Observing my peers, recognizing different methodological aspects of their teaching and offering them constructive feedback.					
20. Locating relevant articles, journals and research findings relating to aspects of teaching and learning.					
21. Identifying and investigating specific pedagogical / didactic issues related to my learners or my teaching in the form of action research.					
22. Assessing how I might use the resources available in my school (OHP, computers, library etc.).					
23. Recognizing the organizational constraints and resource limitations existent at my school and adapting my teaching accordingly.					
24. Creating a supportive atmosphere that invites learners to take part in speaking activities.					
25. Evaluating and selecting meaningful speaking and interactional activities to encourage learners of differing abilities to participate.					
26. Evaluating and selecting meaningful speaking and interactional activities to encourage learners to express their opinions, identity, culture, etc.					
27. Evaluating and selecting a range of meaningful speaking and interactional activities to develop fluency (discussion, role play, problem solving, etc.).					
28. Evaluating and selecting different activities to help learners to become aware of and use different text types (telephone conversations, transactions, speeches, etc.).					
29. Evaluating and selecting a variety of materials to stimulate speaking activities (visual aids, texts, authentic materials, etc.).					
30. Evaluating and selecting activities which help learners to participate in ongoing spoken exchanges (conversations, transactions etc.) and to initiate or respond to utterances appropriately.					
31. Evaluating and selecting various activities to help learners to identify and use typical features of spoken language (informal language, fillers, etc.).					
32. Helping learners to use communication strategies (asking for clarification, comprehension checks, etc.) and compensation strategies (paraphrasing, simplification, etc.) when engaging in spoken interaction.					
33. Evaluating and selecting a variety of techniques to make learners aware of, discriminate and help them to pronounce sounds in the target language.					
34. Evaluating and selecting a variety of techniques to make learners aware of and help them to use stress, rhythm and intonation.					
35. Evaluating and selecting a range of oral activities to develop accuracy (grammar, word choice, etc.).					
36. Evaluating and selecting meaningful activities to encourage learners to develop their creative potential.					
37. Evaluating and selecting a range of meaningful writing activities to help learners become aware of and use appropriate language for different text types (letters, stories, reports, etc).					
38. Evaluating and selecting texts in a variety of text types to function as good examples for the learners' writing.					
39. Evaluating and selecting a variety of materials to stimulate writing (authentic materials, visual aids, etc.).					
40. Evaluating and selecting activities which help learners to participate in written exchanges (emails, job applications, etc.) and to initiate or respond to texts appropriately.					
41. Helping learners to gather and share information for their writing tasks.					
42. Helping learners to plan and structure written texts (e.g. by using mind maps, outlines, etc.).					

43. Helping learners to monitor, reflect on, edit and improve their own writing.					
44. Using peer-assessment and feedback to assist the writing process.					
45. Using a variety of techniques to help learners to develop awareness of the structure, coherence and cohesion of a text and produce texts accordingly.					
46. Evaluating and selecting a variety of techniques to make learners aware of and use spelling patterns and irregular spelling.					
47. Evaluating and selecting writing activities to consolidate learning (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, etc.).					
48. Selecting texts appropriate to the needs, interests and language level of the learners.					
49. Providing a range of pre-listening activities which help learners to orientate themselves to a text.					
50. Encouraging learners to use their knowledge of a topic and their expectations about a text when listening.					
51. Designing and selecting different activities in order to practice and develop different listening strategies (listening for gist, specific information, etc.)					
52. Designing and selecting different activities which help learners to recognize and interpret typical features of spoken language (tone of voice, intonation, style of speaking, etc.).					
53. Helping learners to apply strategies to cope with typical aspects of spoken language (background noise, redundancy, etc.).					
54. Helping learners to apply strategies to cope with difficult or unknown vocabulary of a text.					
55. Evaluating and selecting a variety of post-listening tasks to provide a bridge between listening and other skills.					
56. Selecting texts appropriate to the needs, interests and language level of the learners.					
57. Providing a range of pre-reading activities to help learners to orientate themselves to a text.					
58. Encouraging learners to use their knowledge of a topic and their expectations about a text when reading.					
59. Applying appropriate ways of reading a text in class (e.g. aloud, silently, in groups, etc.).					
60. Setting different activities in order to practice and develop different reading strategies according to the purpose of reading (skimming, scanning, etc.).					
61. Helping learners to develop different strategies to cope with difficult or unknown vocabulary in a text.					
62. Evaluating and selecting a variety of post-reading tasks to provide a bridge between reading and other skills.					
63. Recommending books appropriate to the needs, interests and language level of the learners.					
64. Helping learners to develop critical reading skills (reflection, interpretation, analysis, etc.).					
65. Introducing a grammatical item and helping learners to practice it through meaningful contexts and appropriate texts.					
66. Introducing, and helping students to deal with, new or unknown items of grammar in a variety of ways (teacher presentation, awareness-raising, discovery, etc.).					
67. Dealing with questions learners may ask about grammar and, if necessary, referring to appropriate grammar reference books.					
68. Using grammatical metalanguage if and when appropriate to the learners' needs.					
69. Evaluating and selecting grammatical exercises and activities, which support learning and encourage oral and written communication.					
70. Evaluating and selecting a variety of activities which help learners to learn vocabulary.					

71. Evaluating and selecting tasks which help learners to use new vocabulary in oral and written contexts.					
72. Evaluating and selecting activities which enhance learners' awareness of register differences.					
73. Evaluating and selecting a variety of texts, source materials and activities which awaken learners' interest in and help them to develop their knowledge and understanding of their own and the other language culture (cultural facts, events, attitudes and identity, etc.).					
74. Creating opportunities for learners to explore the culture of target language communities out of class (Internet, emails, etc).					
75. Evaluating and selecting a variety of texts, source materials and activities which make learners aware of similarities and differences in sociocultural 'norms of behaviour'.					
76. Evaluating and selecting activities (role plays, simulated situations, etc.) which help learners to develop their socio-cultural competence.					
77. Evaluating and selecting a variety of texts, source material and activities which help learners to reflect on the concept of 'otherness' and understand different value systems.					
78. Evaluating and selecting texts, source materials and activities to make the learners aware of stereotyped views and challenge these.					
79. Evaluating and selecting activities which enhance the learners' intercultural awareness.					
80. Evaluating and selecting a variety of texts and activities to make learners aware of the interrelationship between culture and language.					
81. Identifying and evaluating a range of course books/materials appropriate for the age, interests and the language level of the learners.					
82. Selecting those texts and language activities from course books appropriate for my learners.					
83. Locating and selecting listening and reading materials appropriate for the needs of my learners from a variety of sources, such as literature, mass media and the Internet.					
84. Making use of ideas and materials included in teachers' handbooks and resource books.					
85. Designing learning materials and activities appropriate for my learners.					
86. Recommending dictionaries and other reference books useful for my learners.					
87. Guiding learners to produce materials for themselves and for other learners.					
88. Selecting and using ICT materials and activities in the classroom which are appropriate for my learners.					
89. Designing ICT materials and activities appropriate for my learners.					
90. Guiding learners to use the Internet for information retrieval.					
91. Using and critically assessing ICT learning programmes and platforms.					
92. Identifying curriculum requirements and setting learning aims and objectives suited to my learners' needs and interests.					
93. Planning specific learning objectives for individual lessons and/or for a period of teaching.					
94. Setting objectives which challenge learners to reach their full potential.					
95. Setting objectives which take into account the differing levels of ability and special educational needs of the learners.					
96. Deciding whether to formulate objectives in terms of skills, topics, situations, linguistic systems (functions, notions, forms, etc.).					
97. Setting objectives which encourage learners to reflect on their learning.					
98. Structuring lesson plans and/or planning for periods of teaching in a coherent and varied sequence of content.					
99. Varying and balancing activities to include a variety of skills and competences.					

100. Planning activities to ensure the interdependence of listening, reading, writing and speaking.					
101. Planning activities to emphasize the interdependence of language and culture.					
102. Planning activities which link grammar and vocabulary with communication.					
103. Planning to teach elements of other subjects using the target language (cross- curricular teaching, CLIL, etc.).					
104. Identifying time needed for specific topics and activities and plan accordingly.					
105. Designing activities to make the learners aware and building on their existing knowledge.					
106. Varying and balancing activities to enhance and sustain the learners' motivation and interest.					
107. Varying and balancing activities in order to respond to individuals learners' learning styles.					
108. Taking on board learners' feedback and comments and incorporating this in future lessons.					
109. Involving learners in lesson planning.					
110. Selecting from and planning a variety of organizational forms (frontal, individual, pair, group work) as appropriate.					
111. Planning for learner presentations and learner interaction.					
112. Planning when and how to use the target language, including metalanguage I may need in the classroom.					
113. Planning lessons and periods of teaching with other teachers and/or student teachers (team teaching, with other subject teachers, etc.).					
114. Starting a lesson in an engaging way.					
115. Being flexible when working from a lesson plan and responding to learner interests as the lesson progresses.					
116. Ensuring smooth transitions between activities and tasks for individuals, groups and the whole class.					
117. Adjusting my time schedule when unforeseen situations occur.					
118. Timing classroom activities to reflect individual learners' attention spans.					
119. Finishing off a lesson in a focused way.					
120. Presenting language content (new and previously encountered items of language, topics, etc.) in ways which are appropriate for individuals and specific groups of learners.					
121. Relating what I teach to learners' knowledge and previous language learning experiences.					
122. Relating what I teach to current events in local and international contexts.					
123. Relating the language I am teaching to the culture of those who speak it.					
124. Settling a group of learners into a room and gaining their attention at the beginning of a lesson.					
125. Keeping and maximizing the attention of learners during a lesson.					
126. Being responsive and reacting supportively to learner initiative and interaction.					
127. Encouraging learner participation whenever possible.					
128. Catering for a range of learning styles.					
129. Making explicit and helping learners to develop appropriate learning strategies.					
130. Taking on different roles according to the needs of the learners and requirements of the activity (resource person, mediator, supervisor,					

etc.).					
131. Creating opportunities for and managing individual, partner, group and whole class work.					
132. Making and using resources efficiently (flashcards, charts, etc.).					
133. Managing and using instructional media efficiently (OHP, ICT, video, etc.).					
134. Supervising and assisting learners' use of different forms of ICT both in and outside the classroom.					
135. Conducting a lesson in the target language.					
136. Deciding when it is appropriate to use the target language and when not to.					
137. Using the target language as metalanguage.					
138. Using various strategies when learners do not understand the target language.					
139. Encouraging learners to use the target language in their activities.					
140. Encouraging learners to relate the target language to other languages they speak or have learned where and when this is helpful.					
141. Evaluating and selecting a variety of activities which help learners to reflect on their existing knowledge and competences.					
142. Evaluating and selecting a variety of activities which help learners to identify and reflect on individual learning processes and learning styles.					
143. Guiding and assisting learners in setting their own aims and objectives and in planning their own learning.					
144. Evaluating and selecting tasks which help learners to reflect on and develop specific learning strategies and study skills.					
145. Assisting learners in choosing tasks and activities according to their individual needs and interests.					
146. Helping learners to reflect on and evaluate their own learning processes and evaluate the outcomes.					
147. Evaluating and selecting tasks most suited to be carried out by learners at home.					
148. Setting homework in cooperation with learners.					
149. Providing necessary support for learners in order for them to do homework independently and assisting them with time management.					
150. Assessing homework according to valid and transparent criteria.					
151. Planning and managing project work according to relevant aims and objectives.					
152. Planning and organizing cross-curricular project work myself or in cooperation with other teachers.					
153. Assisting the learners in their choices during the various stages of project work.					
154. Encouraging learners to reflect on their work (diaries, logs, etc.).					
155. Helping learners to use relevant presentation tools.					
156. Assessing the process and outcome of project work in cooperation with learners.					
157. Setting specific aims and objectives of portfolio work (for coursework, for continuous assessment, etc.).					
158. Planning and structuring portfolio work.					
159. Supervising and giving constructive feedback on portfolio work.					
160. Assessing portfolios in relation to valid and transparent criteria.					

161. Encouraging self- and peer assessment of portfolio work.					
162. Using various ICT resources (email, web sites, computer programmes, etc.).					
163. Advising learners on how to find and evaluate appropriate ICT resources (web sites, search engines. computer programmes, etc.).					
164. Initiating and facilitating various learning environments (learning platforms, discussion forums, web pages, etc.).					
165. Recognizing when and where the need for extra-curricular activities to enhance learning arises (learner magazines, clubs, excursions, etc.).					
166. Setting aims and objectives for school trips, exchanges and international cooperation programmes.					
167. Helping to organize exchanges in cooperation with relevant resource persons and institutions.					
168. Evaluating the learning outcomes of school trips, exchanges and international cooperation programmes.					
169. Evaluating and selecting valid assessment procedures (tests, portfolios, self-assessment, etc.) appropriate to learning aims and objectives.					
170. Negotiating with learners how their work and progress should best be assessed.					
171. Designing and using in-class activities to monitor and assess learners' participation and performance.					
172. Identifying strengths and areas for improvement in a learner's performance.					
173. Assessing a learner's ability to work independently and collaboratively.					
174. Using the process and results of assessment to inform my teaching and planning learning for individuals and groups (i.e. formative assessment).					
175. Presenting my assessment of a learner's performance and progress in the form of a descriptive evaluation, which is transparent and comprehensible to the learner, parents and others.					
176. Using appropriate assessment procedures to chart and monitor a learner's progress (reports, checklists, grades, etc.).					
177. Using assessment scales from the Common European Framework of Reference.					
178. Using a valid institutional/national/international grading system in my assessment of a learner's performance.					
179. Assigning grades for tests and examinations using procedures which are reliable and transparent.					
180. Helping learners to set personal targets and assess their own performance.					
181. Helping learners to engage in peer assessment.					
182. Helping learners to use the European Language Portfolio.					
183. Assessing a learner's ability to produce a spoken text according to criteria such as content, range, accuracy, fluency, appropriacy of register, etc.					
184. Assessing a learner's ability to produce a written text according to criteria such as content, range, accuracy, cohesion and coherence, etc.					
185. Assessing a learner's ability to understand and interpret a spoken text such as listening for gist, specific or detailed information, implication, etc.					
186. Assessing a learner's ability to understand and interpret a written text such as reading for gist, specific or detailed information, implication, etc.					
187. Assessing a learner's ability to engage in spoken interaction according to criteria such as content, range, accuracy, fluency and conversational strategies.					

188. Assessing a learner's ability to engage in written interaction according to criteria such as content, range, accuracy and appropriacy of response, etc.					
189. Assessing the learners' knowledge of cultural facts, events, etc. of the target language communities.					
190. Assessing the learners' ability to make comparisons between their own and the culture of target language communities.					
191. Assessing the learner's ability to respond and act appropriately in encounters with the target language culture.					
192. Analyzing learners' errors and identifying the processes that may cause them.					
193. Providing constructive feedback to learners concerning their errors/interlanguage.					
194. Dealing with errors that occur in class in a way which supports learning processes and communication.					
195. Dealing with errors that occur in spoken and written language in ways which support learning processes and do not undermine confidence and communication.					

196. Are there any other competences for your context that have not been covered by this questionnaire? What are they?

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THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!

EK 4. ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Kişisel Bilgiler

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