T.R.
GAZIANTEP UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHING
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON REFLECTION AND TEACHER AUTONOMY IN TERTIARY LEVEL ONLINE EFL CLASSES

MASTER OF ARTS THESIS

AHMET KONUKOĞLU

GAZİANTEP
JUNE 2022

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Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fadime YALÇIN ARSLAN

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JUNE 2022

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RESEARCH ETHICS DECLARATION

The information contained here is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate. I have read the University's current research ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application in accordance with these guidelines, the University's policy on conflict of interest and any other condition laid down by the Gaziantep University Research Ethics Committee or its Sub-Committees. I have attempted to identify all the risks related to this research that may arise in conducting this research, and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. I have declared any affiliation or financial interest in this research or its outcomes or any other circumstances which might present a perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest, in accordance with Gaziantep University policy on Conflicts of Interest.

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DEDICATION

To my dear wife and beloved family…

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ÖZET

YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM KURUMLARINDA YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİLEN ÇEVRİM İÇİ SINIFLARDA YANSITICI DÜŞÜNCE VE ÖĞRETMEN ÖZERKLİĞİ ÜZERİNE NİTEL BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Covid-19 Pandemisi, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretimi (EFL) dâhil olmak üzere hemen hemen tüm alanlarda büyük değişiklikleri beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu durum İngilizce öğretmenleri tarafından verilen çevrim içi derslerin kullanımını tetiklemiştir. Öğretmen özerkliği ve yansıtıcı düşünce, çevrim içi ortamda etkili dil öğretimi sunmada hayati bir rol oynar. Bu bağlamda araştırma pandemi boyunca çevrim içi derslerde Türk İngilizce öğretmenlerinin yansıtıcı düşüncelerinin öğretmen özerkliği algılarını nasıl etkilediğini incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Durum çalışması deseni kullanılan bu betimsel nitel araştırma 2020-2021 eğitim-öğretim yılında Gaziantep'te yer alan bir vakıf üniversitesinin Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda (YDY) yürütülmüştür. Veriler, kolay ulaşılabilir örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak 5 Türk İngilizce öğretmeninden e-posta görüşmeleri, yansıtıcı günlükler ve derinlemesine görüşmeler yoluyla üç aşamada toplanmıştır. Bu çalışmada tümevarımsal içerik analizi kullanılmış olup bulgular, uzaktan eğitimde Türk İngilizce öğretmenlerinin yansıtıcı düşüncelerinin, öğretim becerileri, sınıf yönetimi ve mesleki gelişim açısından öğretmen özerkliği algılarını etkilediğini ortaya koymuştur. Buna göre öğrenci merkezlilik ve etkili öğretimi sağlamanın yolları öğretim becerilerinde en sık dile getirilen konular olmuştur. Benzer şekilde, katılımcıların yansıtıcı düşünceleri, sınıf yönetimi açısından öğretmenlerin bireysel özelliklerine ve sınıf yönetimi stratejilerine ilişkin algılarını da büyük ölçüde etkilemiştir. Ayrıca bulgular yansıtıcı düşünce ve sürekli mesleki eğitimin Türk İngilizce öğretmenleri tarafından en sık başvurulan mesleki gelişim yolları olarak ortaya çıktığını göstermiştir. Araştırma, eğitim kurumları, Türk İngilizce öğretmenleri ve müfredat tasarımcıları için önerilerde bulunmuştur.

Anahtar İfadeler: Öğretmen Özerkliği, Yansıtıcı Düşünce, Uzaktan Eğitim

ABSTRACT

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON REFLECTION AND TEACHER AUTONOMY IN TERTIARY LEVEL ONLINE EFL CLASSES

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The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about dramatic changes in almost all fields including teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). It has triggered the use of online classes by EFL teachers. Teacher autonomy and reflection play a vital role in offering effective language teaching in the online setting. In this respect, the present study aimed to examine how Turkish EFL teachers' reflection influenced their perception of teacher autonomy in online classes throughout the pandemic. This descriptive qualitative case study was conducted in the School of Foreign Languages (SFL) of a foundation university in Gaziantep, Turkey, during the 2020-2021 academic year. The data were collected in three stages from 5 Turkish EFL teachers through convenience sampling with the help of e-mail interviews, reflective journals and in-depth interviews. Inductive content analysis was employed in the current study, and the findings suggested that Turkish EFL teachers' reflection influenced their perceived teacher autonomy in terms of teaching skills, classroom management and professional development during online learning. Accordingly, learner-centeredness and ways of providing effective teaching were the most frequently mentioned issues in their teaching skills. Likewise, in terms of classroom management, the participants' reflection mostly influenced their perception of teachers' individual characteristics and classroom management strategies. The findings also indicated that reflection and CPD emerged as the most frequently referred ways of professional development by Turkish EFL teachers. The study suggested implications for educational institutions, EFL teachers and curriculum designers.

Keywords: Teacher Autonomy, Reflection, Online Learning

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL. English as a Foreign Language

EOL. Emergency Online Learning

ETE. End-of-term Exam

L1. First Language

L2. Second Language

LS. Listening (courses)

MP. Mini (oral) Presentations

MTE. Mid-term Exam

PT. Progress Test

SLF. School of Foreign Languages

SP. Speaking (courses)

TU. Testing Unit

WP. Writing Portfolio

WR. Writing

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Presentation

This chapter provides necessary information regarding the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study and the research questions related to the aim of the study. Afterwards, the significance of the study is discussed in detail, followed by the assumptions and limitations. Lastly, the definitions of the key terms mentioned in the study are provided.

1.2. Background of the Study

Teaching has been considered as one of the most significant professions across the world. As a profession, being a teacher basically necessitates high standards of professional conduct which is earned and restructured and thus developed by the practitioners themselves throughout their teaching career. Similarly, teaching English as a foreign language requires professional development in order to provide a better service to learners.

The way English is taught has been considerably and swiftly changed in view of advances in technology over the past years. Though face to face instruction was prevalent and regarded as almost the only medium of teaching English as well as any

other courses a few decades ago, it has now been accepted by plenty of educators that teaching English online has also established itself as a fundamental mode of delivery of English courses all over the world. Hicks et al. (2001) highlight the need for "emerging patterns on educational involvement which facilitate lifelong learning and to include technology-based practices in the curriculum'' at tertiary level (p. 143). Further, blended learning has started to play a vital role in integrating face to face and online English courses through various combinations particularly in universities in the world as the current technological era requires.

The worldwide Covid-19 pandemic also contributed to the shift of education offered in face to face and blended sessions into emergency remote education across the world. Emergency remote teaching is referred to as offering an instant and easy-to-follow online educational support for learners throughout global crises such as Covid-19 (Hodges et al., 2020). Turkey was not an exception to this worldwide radical tendency to survive in all areas of instruction to be provided to learners and in all subjects including English. This radical shift not only affected the way Turkish learners were offered English courses but also exposed Turkish EFL instructors to a partially or completely unfamiliar way of teaching process. At this point, Turkish EFL teachers were in need of developing themselves to gain a deeper insight into the requirements of this new era of teaching more than they were in any other period of their teaching career.

Teacher autonomy, one of the most significant skills that all teachers should ideally develop to a certain extent, gained prominence during this particular period characterized by instant decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, preventive classroom management strategies and continuous professional development. Thus, EFL teachers have been in pursuit of enjoying a satisfactory level of autonomy to acquire all the above-mentioned skills. The pursuit of teacher autonomy has accelerated the adoption of various ways of becoming more self-reflective as a practitioner within the language classroom context. The study conducted by Noormohammadi (2014) proves this interaction as it points out a positive correlation between teacher reflection and teacher autonomy.

Self-reflection has revealed itself as one of the most practical ways of enhancing teacher autonomy. Richards and Lockhart (1994) argue that self-reflection which is a kind of self-exploration of teachers' own teaching practice paves the way for a more enhanced conceptualization of their teaching and thus lays the foundation of self-evaluation as "an important component of professional development" (p.2). It is through the process of professional development that as language teachers become more aware of their own capabilities with regard to developing skills required for adoption of reflective teaching, they promote teacher autonomy through self-reflection during and following their teaching practices.

EFL teachers' perceptions of teacher autonomy have been studied by a few researchers. While the relationship between EFL teachers' reflection and their perceptions of teacher autonomy has been examined with the participation of in-service EFL teachers by Noormohammadi (2014) in the Iranian context, there are some other studies conducted in Turkey. For instance, Çakır and Balçıkanlı (2012) examine the relationship between pre-service Turkish EFL teachers' reflection and their perceptions of teacher autonomy. Similarly, Genc (2010) investigates the relationship between in-service Turkish EFL teachers' reflection and decision-making skills. Furthermore, a variety of challenges experienced by EFL teachers in online education during the pandemic are investigated in all levels (Ferri et al., 2020; Boonmoh et al., 2022; Civelek et al., 2021; Kamisli and Akinlar, 2021). However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the relationship between in-service Turkish EFL teachers' reflection and their perceptions of teacher autonomy in online learning has not been studied. Therefore, the current study may shed light on an interplay between in-service Turkish EFL teachers' reflection and their perceived teacher autonomy in the online setting.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

When English instruction in the Turkish context is taken into consideration, it can be stated that pre-service teachers lack 21st-century skills such as overestimating theory rather than teaching skills, lacking teaching strategies, failing to promote learner autonomy for learners, and underestimating reflections on teaching practices

(Atmaca, 2019). In order to handle these constraints, not only pre-service but also in-service language teachers are required to provide their learners with high-quality English language instruction by developing teacher autonomy and reflective practices. As Smith (2000) referred to the importance of teacher autonomy, "it is unreasonable to expect teachers to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they themselves do not know what it is to be an autonomous learner" (p.88).

In addition to developing teacher autonomy, it is crucial for teachers to develop skills for reflective practices along with their teaching processes. In spite of Little's (1995, p.175) conceptionalizing teacher autonomy as "a teacher's capacity to engage in self-directed teaching", Teng (2019) approached teacher autonomy as "a critical reflection on teacher-learning" (p.31). From these different but mutually complementary perspectives, it can be put forward that reflection is an inseparable element of fostering teacher autonomy in order for Turkish EFL teachers to better perform effective teaching skills in all language teaching situations.

The issues in English instruction provided in Turkey are not confined to areas that language teachers may make a change for the better such as teachers' professional development and teachers' teaching skills. The problems also include other areas which are beyond teachers' reach. For instance, British Council (2015) points out in the annual report that there are several concerns regarding the quality of English instruction given in Turkey such as the effect of high-stake national exams, quality of textbooks, curriculum designs, learners' lack of motivation, ineffective teaching methodologies and physical circumstances of the schools. Among these constraints, language teachers can develop themselves in exploiting course materials in an effective way, managing and motivating their classes well, and teaching their students effectively. Therefore, developing teachers' perceptions of teacher autonomy through reflection will help them handle most of the issues mentioned above.

Although there have been a few studies in the relevant literature that examine the relationship between in-service Turkish EFL teachers' self-reflection and their perceptions of teacher autonomy during face to face education over the last years, no study has been conducted to investigate how Turkish EFL teachers' reflection process influences their perception of teacher autonomy in online learning in Turkey.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

Considering the points stated above, the purpose of the study is to find out Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions of teacher autonomy during Covid-19. It also aims to investigate how Turkish EFL teachers reflect on their teaching practice and how their reflections influence their perceived autonomy in online learning.

1.5. Statement of the Research Questions

With regard to the purpose of the study, the researcher seeks responses to the following research questions:

1. How do Turkish EFL teachers perceive teacher autonomy in online learning?
2. What do Turkish EFL teachers reflect during online classes?
3. How does Turkish EFL teachers' reflection influence their perception of teacher autonomy in online learning?

1.6. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its scope with regard to personal and professional development of teachers as well as quality assurance of private and governmental educational institutions, which offer English language training to their learners in all levels of English proficiency.

Following a 4-year pre-service training, language teachers begin their teaching career with adequate knowledge of theoretical background. Depending on the institutions where they are employed, a new process of putting this theoretical knowledge into practice starts with its inherent challenges for language teachers. In order to back them up during this demanding process, teachers need continuing professional development through which they systematically build educational systems in their societies on strong foundations (Borg, 2018, Pishghadam et al., 2019). At this point, the possible effect of this study will provide a deep insight into how teachers perceive their capabilities by helping them develop their perception of teacher autonomy. Teacher autonomy is unquestionably required to be developed by teachers

so as to manage their classes more effectively and exploit teaching materials in a more skilful and efficient manner, and thereby, become more professional in their teaching practice (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). This study, thus, aims to provide various perspectives for teachers by contributing to developmental progress in their professions.

Another key point that the study puts forward will be the way how teachers can develop their perceptions of teacher autonomy. Considered one of the significant models employed in teacher development processes, the reflective model is believed to play a crucial role in shaping teachers' perceptions of teacher autonomy, and as a consequence, teachers develop a deeper understanding of personal responsibility for their teaching while enjoying cognitive and affective awareness of their professions (Little, 1995). Through reflection, practitioners will obtain a huge amount of experiences by integrating their perceived knowledge and experiential knowledge. The findings of the study will supposedly shed light on how they develop their decision-making skills while reflecting on their actions. By so doing, they will become reflective practitioners who can describe, evaluate and plan their future actions.

With respect to quality assurance, private and governmental institutions are currently undergoing comprehensive changes towards becoming more proactive bodies in the field. Accordingly, they are aware of providing a much better service to all their stakeholders with the help of more qualified teaching teams. In this respect, as this study suggests, language teachers may contribute a lot to their overall teaching skills through reflection. In order to foster their teacher autonomy, teachers may try to find ways to improve the level of their learners' autonomy. When the constraints mentioned above are taken into consideration, teachers and learners might have an opportunity to handle their own challenges in teaching and learning processes.

To conclude, the findings of the study are believed to enhance teachers' perspectives in terms of their teaching and learning practices while ensuring a high quality of English teaching service to be offered to all stake holders.

1.7. Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted with five participants who participated in the study on a voluntary basis. They were all informed that they would leave the process if they refused to go on providing the necessary data for the study. Therefore, it is assumed that the participants provided honest responses to the data collection tools of the study.

One limitation of the study is related to the generalizability of the findings to the whole population due to the number of participants. Though the data collected from the participants were deeply analysed as qualitative research requires, the findings were limited to the data from the participants only. Therefore, it cannot be generalized to other teachers.

Another limitation is that the current study investigated Turkish EFL teachers' perception of teacher autonomy in terms of teaching skills, classroom management and professional development only. The reason why the other dimensions of teacher autonomy are not examined in the study is because the participants do not make decisions on them. Thus, the findings are only limited to these three dimensions of teacher autonomy.

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) can be considered as a frame for reflection which focuses on critical points only. Thus, it may interfere with the selection of topics to be reflected by the participants.

Finally, the current study collected data from the participants that delivered their lessons mostly through online classes during the pandemic. Thus, the relevant data are limited to the pandemic period only.

1.8. Definitions of the Key Terms

Emergency Online Learning: Hodges et al. (2020) define it as "a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances" (para. 13).

Learner Autonomy: Learner autonomy was first coined by Holec (1981), who regards it as a process of one's managing his/her learning. He further clarifies this

broad definition by arguing that "to take charge of one's own learning is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all decisions" (p.3).

Online Learning: Online Learning “is teaching and planned learning in which teaching normally occurs in a different place from learning, requiring communication through technologies as well as special institutional organization” (Moore & Kearsley, 2012, p.2).

Reflective Teaching: Reflective teaching is “a cognitive process accompanied by a set of attitudes in which teachers systematically collect data about their practice, and, while engaging in dialogue with others, use the data to make informed decisions about their practice both inside and outside the classroom” (Farrell, 2015, p.123).

Reflection: Reflection is a conscious inquiry into practice in which reflective practitioners deal with problems that they face, reconsider their actions and make necessary modifications (Schön, 1983).

Teacher Autonomy: Teacher autonomy is the freedom, capacity and the responsibility to decide on one’s own teaching (Aoki, 2002).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Presentation

This chapter discusses autonomy, learner autonomy, teacher autonomy, teacher professional development, reflection and online learning involving relevant studies in the literature.

2.2. Definitions and Features of Autonomy

There has been an increasing amount of research on autonomy over the last few decades, and autonomy in language teaching and learning has become a shared interest among researchers. Despite the fact that autonomy has considerably maintained its significance in language education, it has gained various dimensions thanks to every single research.

In his attempt to define autonomy, Boud (1981) points out two parts which comprise the word autonomy – one is “autos” meaning “self”, and the other “nomos” meaning “rule”. With its historical and political reference to ancient Greece, the word autonomy refers to self-ruled individuals. In addition to Boud’s etymological approach, Littlewood (2000) describes autonomous people as individuals with an

independent capacity to decide and manage their actions. He emphasizes that there is a relationship between independence and making decisions.

A similar distinction between having autonomy and feeling independent may lead to a confusion. According to Ryan and Deci (2006), it would be wrong to consider autonomy and independence as synonymous. Instead, they put "self-regulation" forward as a synonym for autonomy. These suggestions regarding what the word autonomy really contains make it more comprehensive. At this point, Allwright's (1990) approach to autonomy brings new concepts to the literature such as "interdependence". He views autonomy as "…a constantly changing but at any time optimal state of equilibrium between maximal self-development and human interdependence" (p.12). With this approach, a new bond has been established between interdependence and self-development.

Another aspect of autonomy stresses the role of individuals' self-control in making decisions for their actions. To this end, Oshana (2003) defines autonomy as a way to handle one's actions in his/her life through a self-control mechanism. Cuypers (2010) contributes to Oshana's opinion by stating that individuals are supposed to manage themselves not only in their experiences but also in their cognitive processes so as to be completely autonomous. Erikson (1950) and Helwig (2006) associate autonomy with the development of self in children. Early childhood and adolescence are crucial periods for children to develop a sense of autonomy. Sahin, Ulusoy and Sahin (1993) stress three psychological dimensions of autonomy: 1) Subjective Self-confidence – an individual's confidence in his/her own capabilities, 2) Functional Autonomy – an individual's performance in coping with problems and problem solving skills, and 3) Emotional Autonomy – an individual's being independent of the pressure coming from the need for approval.

As regards the characteristics of autonomy, several approaches can be adopted to gain deeper insight into how it functions. It is argued by Little (1999) and Benson (2001) that autonomy can be interpreted by people differently, and it is an accepted notion across the world. The fact that people have different perceptions of autonomy naturally makes it distinctive. As Little (1991) and Benson (2007) suggest, autonomy

can be exercised by different people through distinctive patterns depending on the contexts and the time, and multidimensional capacity is involved in this process.

There are certain conditions under which autonomy can be best exercised. In order to perform autonomy meaningfully, individuals need to possess permission, knowledge, skills and power to set up goals in life (Winch, 2002). An individual cannot be expected to enjoy autonomy without necessary knowledge, skills or power as these are the basic requirements of it. This does not refer to autonomy exercised by individuals who are against collaboration. Rather, people develop autonomy through collaboration and interdependence, but not through individual isolation (Little, 1996, 2000; Littlewood, 1999, 2002).

Besides above mentioned features, autonomy also bears some features which have positive impacts of people's own lives. It enables people to reflect on their earlier actions and develop themselves through this reflection. According to Morgan (1996), if people have received a good education, then they are autonomous as people tend to keep or change their first-order choices, desires and wishes through a period of critical reflection period. Autonomy plays a crucial role as a second-order capacity in order to take the first-order choices and values up a higher level.

2.2.1. Autonomy in Education

Considering the above mentioned features of autonomy, it can be suggested that the critical functions of autonomy in making individuals collaborate with others and reflecting on their own development should be encouraged throughout their education. Teng (2019) states that the dynamic relationship between political developments and the role of education requires autonomy to become an active agent in shaping people's lives:

> "Autonomy plays a key role in political development in the twentieth century. After the Second World War, numerous minority rights movements (e.g., ethnic, feminist) came into existence. Education was used as an empowering tool to instil this awareness of freedom in people." (p.6)

It is apparent that autonomy underwent a transition from politics to education keeping its core idea *freedom*. In other words, the concept of freedom has found its way through various implications in education people over the years. In this respect,

Holec (1981) regards adult education as a tool to raise an awareness in people regarding freedom. This may also change the surrounding in which people live. Collins and Hammond (1991) argue that the purpose of education is "the betterment of society, and that critical awareness and social action to promote emancipation are desirable results of any educational intervention" (p.13). In any case people's perception of liberation is improved through education whose ultimate aim is to provide people with autonomy.

The rationale behind the requirement of autonomy in education is discussed by Teng (2019:7) who believes that "it is difficult to teach every student what he or she wants to know in a fast-changing society. Individuals need to learn specific skills to adapt to quickly-changing circumstances." From this argument it can be inferred that there might be some areas which education fails to reach. Further, Crabbe (1993) proposes that

> "Society does not have the resources to provide the level of personal instruction needed by all its members in every area of learning. Therefore, individuals must be able to provide for their own learning needs … if they are to acquire the knowledge and skill they want." (p.443)

Both arguments refer to the importance of providing people with autonomy which can be offered through education. By so doing, the purpose of education is to help people become competent enough to arrange their own learning besides setting their learning goals and monitoring their progress. At this point, Holec (1994) points out the fact that that learners are to be equipped with necessary essential skills through education so as to be able to keep up with the changes occurring in society.

2.2.2. Autonomy in Language Learning and Teaching

With regard to the scope of autonomy in language learning, it can be argued that every single opportunity that learners have while learning language may develop their autonomy. At this point, Little (1997:99) states that

> "Autonomy in language learning is not merely a matter of control over learning activities and resources. It is also a matter of a particular orientation towards language learning, in which 'for the truly autonomous learner, each occasion of language use is an occasion of language learning, and vice versa'" (p.99)

Language learning fosters autonomy in learners. This is supported by Allwright (1988, p.35) who argues that autonomy in learners is "associated with a radical

restructuring of language pedagogy" involving "the rejection of the traditional classroom and the introduction of wholly new ways of working"

Now that the relationship between autonomy and language learning is established, the next discussion is related to the owner of the responsibility in exercising autonomy in the language learning context. Dickinson (1987) views learners as having the sole responsibility, and argues that autonomy is "the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his learning and the implementation of those decisions" (p.11). He further argues learners act independently in the classroom context, and this independent act can be seen in cognitive and behavioural processes (Dickinson, 1992). On the other hand, Little (1991) focuses interdependence rather than independence in explaining psychological aspects of autonomy in learners. Moreover, Little (1995) draws a parallelism between the quality of autonomy in learners and that of pedagogical dialogue among teachers and students. The latter marks the quality of the former.

In addition to the interplay between autonomy and language learning, it could be suggested that learners may enjoy different degrees of autonomy. As Sinclair (2000) puts it, there are different levels of autonomy. People – learners in the learning context – enjoys a developmental stages of autonomy. In this respect, Nunan (1997) divides "learner action" into five sequential levels in terms of learning development activities found in textbooks: 1) Awareness level in which learners are "made aware of the pedagogical goals and content of the materials", 2) At the involvement level learners are asked to make decisions from a great variety of options related to the content and materials, 3) Learners have a chance to make rearrangements about their goals, tasks and content during the intervention level, 4) At the creation level learners set their goals on their own and design their own tasks, and 5) At the transcendence level, learners "make links between the content of classroom learning and the world beyond [and] become teachers and researchers" (p.195).

Littlewood (1997:81) takes Sinclair's (2000) suggestion a step further by proposing three stages regarding language acquisition, learning approach and personal development. Given the dimension of language acquisition, autonomy is "an ability to operate independently with the language and use it to communicate personal meanings

in real, unpredictable situations". In terms of classroom organization, autonomy means learners' "ability to take responsibility for their own learning and to apply active, personally relevant strategies". In a more generalized context, autonomy possesses "a higher-level goal of . . . greater generalized autonomy as individuals".

In addition to the involvement of autonomy in language acquisition process, language learning process is also associated with autonomy. However, there may not be a positive correlation between the two notions. Kumaravadivelu (2003) points out a crucial point in comparing the levels of autonomy and levels of language proficiency, and argues that "it would be a mistake to try to correlate the initial, intermediary, and advanced stages of autonomy . . . with the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of language proficiency" (p.144). This significant point suggests that learners at any level of language proficiency may develop completely unexpected degree of autonomy throughout their language learning process.

2.3. Definitions and Features of Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy was first coined by Holec (1981) who regards it as a process of one's managing his/her learning. He further clarifies this broad definition by arguing that "to take charge of one's own learning is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all decisions" (p.3). Keeping the ultimate responsibility for decisions is one of the key elements proposed by Little (1991) who defines learner autonomy as "having the capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action" (p. 4). Based on this definition, the word capacity seems to gain the concept of learner autonomy a degree of possessing it. Learner's isolation is emphasized to be able to reflect on his/her actions, which leads to taking decisions of his/her learning and eventually becoming independent learner.

Independence in learners is accentuated by Teng (2019) who argues that learners ought to decide on their goals, selecting learning materials and adopting the way they learn independently from others. Learners should be the independent explorers of their own learning patterns. Further, Nunan (1999) provides a broader account of the qualities of independent and autonomous learners which involves learners' setting clear and achievable goals, adopting appropriate methodologies,

monitoring and self-evaluation as well as strong motivation. From the very beginning till the end of the learning process, autonomous learners are expected to take control of their learning.

On the other hand, there is a disagreement among scholars as to whether learner autonomy is solely based on independence. Little (1994) strongly opposes to the concept of independence in learner autonomy and approaches learner autonomy from an opposing point of view - "relatedness" (p.435). Instead of simply encouraging learners to gain independence in fulfilling the above-mentioned requirements of learning process, this approach prioritizes "interdependence" among the learners, and between learners and teachers. Those who can attain autonomy through collaboration and mutual interaction are considered to be autonomous learners. Similarly, according to Teng and He (2015), learners exercise autonomy-related tasks such as setting goals and managing their learning process through a learning environment. They take charge of their learning in this environment with the help of their peers and teachers.

The sharp distinction made between these two groups of autonomous learners is expressed by Knowles (1975) who defines learners who take the responsibility of their learning as *proactive learners*, and learners who need guidance and directions to organize their learning as *reactive learners.* To this end, Littlewood (1999) puts forward two kinds of autonomy – *proactive autonomy* and *reactive autonomy*. In *proactive autonomy*, learners are capable of setting and tracking their own learning goals, executing their learning process and evaluating what they achieve throughout this process whereas in *reactive autonomy* learners are always in need of an external encouragement and guidance to be able to exercise autonomy through their learning. The former appears mostly in western societies while the latter is seen in eastern cultures.

Another component of learner autonomy is related to how eager learners are to gain autonomy during their language learning process. To this end, Gathercole (1990) adds willingness to learner autonomy, and argues that learners are ready enough to take on autonomy "when [they are] willing to and capable of taking charge of [their] own learning" (p.16). It is implied by this definition that motivation commences to take part in shaping autonomy in learners. Moreover, another important reference is

made to capability. Motivation and capability of taking control of learning process make learners more autonomous. Ushioda (1996) and Dickinson (1995) draw a positive correlation between autonomy and motivation, and put the more motivated language learners are, the more autonomous they become in terms of taking charge of their learning process. Better and effective works are mostly produced by highly motivated and autonomous learners. Given the roles of a motivated learner, Masgoret and Gardner (2003) state that:

> "The motivated individual expends effort, is persistent and attentive to the task at hand, has goals desires, and aspirations, enjoys the activity, experiences reinforcement from success and disappointment from failure, makes attributions concerning success and/or failure, is aroused, and makes use of strategies to aid in achieving goals. That is, the motivated individual exhibits many behaviors, feelings, cognitions, etc., that the individual who is unmotivated does not." (p.128)

When capacity for organizing one's own learning is integrated with enough motivation to do so, learners are inevitably actively engaged in the whole learning process. For instance, they tend to hold themselves responsible for determining their priorities, choosing learning materials and methods, and lastly monitoring their achievements during the process. With this dimension, the roles of a traditional teacher are overtaken by motivated and autonomous learners (Littlewood, 1999).

Regarding motivating and encouraging learners, self-determination theory and attribution theory are put forward by Dickinson (1995) who postulates that self-determination theory arises from the distinction between the two basic kind of motivation – intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. As Teng (2019) puts;

> … intrinsic motivation signifies learners' interests in learning tasks and outcomes for their own sake while extrinsic motivation refers to learners' interests in completing tasks for rewards. According to this theory, the intrinsic motivation to engage in a behavior arises from within the individual because it is intrinsically rewarding. Extrinsic motivation causes learners to engage in a behaviour to earn external rewards or avoid punishments. (p.12)

The role of motivation in self-determination has significant implications for learners in learning a language. Ryan and Deci (2000a, 2000b) regard motivation as a mechanism moving upward and downward in the scale of self-determination. Man et al. (2018) contribute to this moving mechanism by arguing that motivation does not have a steady nature, and it changes depending on the context as time passes by. As research demonstrates, learners with intrinsic motivation perform better at setting learning goals and taking charge of their learning (Brown, 2007; Griggs, 2010).

The other theory regarding motivation is attribution theory. It attempts to explain, as Weiner (1986) suggests, how individuals perceive the events that occur in their surroundings and how they associate this perception with the way they think and behave. Cook and Artino (2016) draw attention to this association by stating "attribution theory postulates that humans have a tacit goal of understanding and mastering themselves and their environment, and act as 'naive scientists' to establish cause-effect relationships for events in their lives" (p.1004). Four basic attributions are identified – ability, effort, task difficulty and luck, each of which might be incorporated in learning processes. They play a crucial role in one's success and failure in that if individuals believe that the reason why they fail is related to an internal factor, they may be motivated and programmed to achieve in the future situations, and the opposite is also true (Weiner, 1984; Weiner 2010). Dweck (2000) who emphasizes the bond between this theory and autonomy expresses that learners with positive attributions and intrinsic motivation within their learning process are more capable of setting their learning goals and accomplishing them.

Autonomy has strong bonds with cognitive psychology which involves students' mental processes in their learning process. Learners' experiences while they get engaged in learning a language contribute to the development of learner autonomy. As learning takes place within the individuals, they create innate knowledge, rather than habit formation, to cooperate with the language they are learning (Wenden, 1997). Similarly, Benson (2011) refers to the above-mentioned relationship between autonomy and cognitive psychology by adding learning management and learning content in order to clarify three dimensions of control over learning. It is stated by learning management that learners take control of all the elements related to language in the learning process. Learning content refers to the content and the amount of a language to be learnt.

2.4. Definitions and Features of Teacher Autonomy

There is a parallelism between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy. An adaptation to teacher autonomy is suggested by Aoki (2002), who draws a frame in which teachers enjoy the freedom, capacity and the responsibility to decide on their

own teaching. These two approaches to learner autonomy and teacher autonomy unveil their core ideas that they have in common: Freedom, capacity and responsibility.

In addition to the definitions mentioned above, McGrath (2000) proposes two interrelated dimensions of teacher autonomy. These are "Self-directed professional action or development" and "Freedom from control by other." According to Benson (2011), as teachers become self-directed, the degree they enjoy freedom from control by others increases. In return, as they have an increased freedom from control by others, they become more self-directed.

As shown in Table 2.1, Smith (2003) discusses teacher autonomy through two different dimensions and emphasizes the fact that B and E can be regarded to be "technical" or "psychological" aspect of autonomy as proposed by Benson (1997). This aspect also involves the concepts of "capacity" and "willingness" (Little, 1991; Dickinson, 1992). According to Benson (2000) C and F constitute the "political" aspect of autonomy as they refer to "right to freedom from control".

Table 2.1. *Dimensions of teacher autonomy (Smith, 2003, p.4)*

In relation to professional action:	
A. Self-directed professional action	(= 'Self-directed teaching')
B. Capacity for self-directed professional action	(= 'Teacher autonomy')
C. Freedom from control over professional action	(= 'Teacher autonomy')
In relation to professional development:	
D. Self-directed professional development	(= 'Self-directed teacher-learning)
E. Capacity for self-directed professional development	(= 'Teacher-learner autonomy')
F. Freedom from control over professional development	(= 'Teacher-learner autonomy')

In some studies, a close association has been established between teachers and learners. Tort-Moloney (1997) views autonomous teachers as autonomous learners referring to the capacity for self-directed professional development. Through this parallelism, it can be argued that teachers take the responsibility of their own development as professionals and make decisions on the professional events required. Further, it is through these professional decisions that teachers are equipped with pedagogical skills which contribute to their teaching.

Teacher autonomy is associated with self-development and relatedness through which teachers improve their teaching skills. Allwright (1990) considers the balance

between these two constructs as one which is “a constantly changing but at any time optimal state of equilibrium between maximal self-development and human interdependence” (p.12). In contrast, an autonomous person is defined by Littlewood (1997) as “one who has an independent capacity to make and carry out choices which govern his or her actions. This capacity depends on two main elements: ability and willingness” (p.428). It can be stated that interrelatedness, ability and willingness are the key concepts of teacher autonomy.

Another feature of teacher autonomy is that it is closely related with collaboration (Vangrieken et al., 2017). Parker (2015) agrees on this opinion by rejecting isolation from the educational institution and embracing mutual support and dedication between the teachers and the institution. To this end, Pineda and Frodden (2008) are critical of the traditional curriculum that requires a top-down communication pattern from field experts and teacher trainers to teachers. This obviously prevents teachers from solving problems. Teacher collaboration is stressed in order to encourage teachers to be more active in their teaching practice in which they exchange ideas regarding their lessons. In return, they are actively involved in and responsible for their personal and professional development. To support this, Huang et al. (2019) conduct a case study through which they investigate two novice ESL teachers for more than a year in secondary schools in Hong Kong. This study with a qualitative design aims to examine the factors that contribute to the teachers’ perceptions of teacher autonomy. The findings demonstrate that the school environment which supports teachers with its collaborative nature helps the teachers develop their autonomy.

Action research is thought to be one of the key factors that contribute to one’s perception of teacher autonomy. It provides teachers with logic and methodology, and enables them to take more control in their personal and professional lives (Hopkins, 1993). Further, Zeichner (2003) argues that it is through action research that teachers turn out more proactive and self-directive, and thereby, they reach knowledge with enhanced set of skills. The more collaboration among colleagues is encouraged, the more reflective and autonomous teachers become.

2.4.1. Teacher Autonomy in Language Teaching

Language learning is one of the fields with which teacher autonomy is closely associated, and the relationship between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy is widely discussed in the relevant literature.

In this respect, language learning situations can be regarded as the most appropriate circumstances under which learners take the responsibility of their learning. As Little (1997) suggests, "for the truly autonomous learner, each occasion of language use is an occasion of language learning, and *vice versa*" (p.99). Language learning and autonomy are in mutual relationship and provide not only learners but also teachers with a chance to become more autonomous. Defining teacher autonomy as "capacity to engage in self-directed teaching or professional action", Little (1995) highlights "continuous reflection and analysis" and "affective and cognitive control" in this professional action (p.178). It is clear from this approach that teachers' commitment to their professions fosters their sense of responsibility, and thereby, teacher autonomy.

The role that teachers play in fostering autonomy in learners is undeniably crucial. Teacher autonomy is viewed as a constant quest for teaching through which learner autonomy can be best promoted (Barfield et al., 2002). However, it is required for teachers to be qualified enough to exercise autonomy to be able to anticipate learners to be autonomous. Hurd (2005) provides a clear explanation that:

> "Teachers in all educational contexts are the human interface between learners and resources and cannot therefore expect or help their learners to develop a capacity for critical reflection unless they have this capacity themselves. In this sense, learner autonomy is dependent on teacher autonomy." (p.4)

Little (1995) holds the opinion that teachers should be aware of the meaning of being an autonomous learner and agrees with Hurd by stating that:

> "It is unreasonable to expect teachers to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they themselves do not know what it is to be an autonomous learner. In determining the initiatives they take in their classrooms, teachers must be able to apply to their teaching those same reflective and self-managing processes that they apply to their learning". (p.175)

When the above-mentioned considerations are taken into account, Smith (2000) takes the idea of teacher autonomy a step further and defines it, in a broader approach, as teacher-learner autonomy in which teachers are responsible for their learning of teaching. This definition involves interrelationship between teacher

autonomy and learner autonomy. At this point, Smith (2003) suggests that "what teacher educators may need to adopt then is a 'pedagogy for teacher(-learner) autonomy' in order to prepare teachers appropriately for their own engagement in a pedagogy for autonomy with students" (p.6). In addition, scaffolding turns out to be a significant role that teachers can adopt so as to provide assistance for learners if needed, but teachers should be sensitive towards learners' own perception of autonomy (Aoki, 2002).

The dynamic relationship between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy is examined in Steward's (2003) study. The researcher who is in collaboration with a supportive colleague shares exchanges his teaching experiences with each other. In the end, he discovers that teacher and learner autonomy affect one another positively and negatively. Thus, he begins to be involved in promoting learner autonomy, and thus, teacher autonomy. As he tends to be more reflective regarding this teaching practice, he develops his sense of teacher autonomy.

There are also several studies which focus on the ways to promote teacher autonomy. For instance, Akbarpour-Tehrani and Mansor (2012) conducts a research to investigate what sources of knowledge the ESL teachers use to obtain information with regard to their teaching methodologies as well as how much autonomy they enjoy in choosing these sources and apply them in class. The participants of this qualitative study are five Malaysian ESL teachers who work in secondary schools. The responds to the research questions regarding the sources of knowledge are basically workshops, senior colleagues, online resources, books, conferences and articles. Three categories arise as "full autonomy", "limited autonomy" and "heteronomous" under which these sources are listed. The findings indicate that the ESL teachers feel fully autonomous in online resources and colleagues while they feel partly autonomous in books and conferences. Workshops are the only source that the teachers have no autonomy. Given the contribution of these sources to the classroom practices, the ESL teachers benefit more from online resources and colleagues than workshops in reflecting the professional gains to their teaching practice.

Another study is related to the qualities of autonomous teachers. Eren (2020) examines the perceptions of EFL teachers regarding teacher autonomy and classroom

practices. The participants are from different nationalities and work in different universities in Turkey. They all have over 10 years of teaching experience. In his study, the researcher employs triangulation of sources – *the Repertory Grids, semi-structured interviews* and *classroom observations* in order to obtain in-depth qualitative data from the participants. The findings demonstrate that according to the participants, the characteristics of an autonomous teacher are being open to change, creative, energetic, good problem solver, caring for learners, proactive and competent technology users who support learners, reflect and think strategically. Furthermore, four main codes from the semi-structured interviews regarding the perception of teacher autonomy are fostering critical thinking, increasing self-esteem, autonomy for life-long learning and reflective practice.

In addition, different levels of autonomy can be enjoyed by teachers. To illustrate, Marshall (2019) investigates 18 English communication teachers' perceptions of teacher autonomy. The participants who work in Japanese state and private universities differ in years of teaching experience. The researcher collects data through a questionnaire on general autonomy and curricular autonomy. In the study, the findings about these two kinds of autonomy indicate that most of the participants perceive high level of autonomy in that they decide on the course materials, teaching methodology, classroom practices and even their own course schedules. The findings also demonstrate that the participants take the control of the content and sequence of topics, and the goals and objectives of the course that they teach. Accordingly, the participants enjoy high level of general and curricular autonomy no matter what their academic positions are.

Finally, administrators' perceptions of teacher autonomy as well as teachers' perceived autonomy are involved to provide a clearer understanding. For instance, Yıldırım (2017) conducts her Master's Thesis with fifty EFL teachers and five administrators working in a state university and the researcher investigates the EFL teachers' and administrators' perceptions of teacher autonomy through questionnaires and interviews. The findings of the study reveal that the EFL teachers have a low level of teacher autonomy with regard to professional development, curriculum, assessment, classroom management, instruction and institutional operations. The highest scores regarding their perception of teacher autonomy are professional freedom – *freedom to*

make instructional decisions and *freedom to make curriculum decisions*. On the other hand, the lowest scores are related to decisions on organization and classroom management, and responsibility for teaching. Further, the administrators' opinions partially disagree with the teachers' in that the administrators want the teachers to enjoy autonomy in classroom management and professional development rather than in assessment and institutional operations.

2.4.2. Teacher Autonomy and Reflection

The parallelism between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy proves to be valid for teacher reflection and learner reflection in that the reflective teacher can play a role in encouraging learners to reflect on their learning. It is required for teachers to reflect on their teaching practice regularly and perpetually to be able to engage learners in a reflective process. Teachers should also ensure that learners' reflection is developing through teacher reflection (Smith, 2003). Further, Head and Taylor (1997) argue that teacher development consists of a self-reflective process. The effectiveness of this process has a positive correlation with teachers' being aware of the factors that might affect the process.

Among a few studies that investigate the relationship between teacher autonomy and teacher reflection, Teng (2019) approaches such a relationship in line with the perspectives above and accentuates the role of reflection in developing teacher-learning. Teachers can also reflect on in-class teaching practices, the way they guide their learners, and particularly, on whether they feel obliged to handle the course materials and activities and update them if needed. It is through this extensive reflection on teacher-learning that teachers develop their learning skills on their own. He further points out Pinter's (2007) suggestion that the more engaged teachers are in reflective teaching, the more likely they tend to have a broader mind set to think over their professional practices. They become more self-confident and empowered adopting new methodological and pedagogical perspectives on condition that they are eager and develop a positive attitude towards in-depth reflection on classroom practices.

Self-efficacy is also referred to as another dimension in promoting teacher autonomy. Noormohammadi (2014) attempts to find out the relationship between teacher autonomy and reflection. 172 Iranian EFL teachers from state and private schools participate in the study. The researcher applies the participants English Language Teacher Reflective Inventory, Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale and Teacher Autonomy Inventory to measure reflection, efficacy and autonomy respectively. The findings demonstrate that there is a significant positive correlation between teacher reflection between the two components of teacher autonomy – general teaching autonomy and curriculum autonomy. This correlation is proposed to be directly based on the close relationship between reflectivity and teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy.

Cakir and Balcikanli (2012) conducts a similar study with students in pre-service language teacher education program in a Turkish state university. The study aims at seeking 25 student teachers' and four teacher trainers' perceptions of the impact of the use of European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) on their reflection, awareness and self-assessment. The results reveals that the use of EPOSTL during the teaching process fosters teacher autonomy in terms of above mentioned points among student teachers as reported by the teacher trainers.

There are also some researchers to examine this relationship in Turkey. For instance, Genc (2010) conducts a research on the relationship between reflective journals and decision-making skills with six in-service EFL teachers working in state schools in Turkey. The findings of this research provide evidence about lesson planning, learning/teaching processes, interaction, classroom management and assessment. The study also reveals that the participants can detect and examine the factors interfering with their teaching, exercise relatively more autonomy in redesigning the teaching and learning situation, reflect on their teaching practice with the skills that they have gained, develop an insight into their perceptions and knowledge of language teaching, respond to their learners' needs more effectively and adopt appropriate strategies in teaching, and have an experience in bottom-up teaching model.

Finally, such variables as gender and teaching experience are involved to explain whether they have an influence on developing teacher autonomy. To this end, İpek Şahin (2017) carries out her master's thesis with 284 classroom teachers 15 different elementary students in Turkey and researches if there is a correlation between teacher reflection and teacher autonomy. In this study with correlational design, the findings reveal that there is a positive correlation between teacher reflection and teacher autonomy. Certain subscales such as gender, years of teaching experience and teaching grade level are involved in this research, and among these subscales gender is the only one which has a significant difference with regard to teacher reflection. The findings also demonstrate that perceptions of teacher autonomy do not vary based on these subscales.

2.4.3. Constraints on Teacher Autonomy

Following the above mentioned factors affecting teachers' perceptions of teacher autonomy, several issues restricting its development are also mentioned in some research. As McLaughlin *et al*. (1986) cites in his study, argue "The classroom door provides a measure of autonomy for teachers, but it also fosters isolation, limits feedback about performance, and promotes staleness" (p.423). Accordingly, teachers can feel stressed, isolated, alienated, disenchanted and resistant to change keeping the status quo. Anderson (1987) also puts forward three reasons which account for the decline of teacher autonomy in in the United States: 1) *uniform staff development programs*, 2) *mandated classroom observations*, and 3) *principals as instructional leaders*.

In addition, there are some other explanations for the decline of teacher autonomy. To illustrate, Benson (2010) conducts a set of collective case studies with four EFL teachers working in secondary schools across Hong Kong. The findings indicate that schemes of work and school-based supervision systems are the most influential elements which constraint teacher autonomy. The working conditions, workloads and/or the attitudes of the directors towards teachers' development play an important role in affecting the perceptions of teacher autonomy.

Lastly, ideological, institutional and methodological limitations play a significant role in interfering with teacher autonomy. Benson (2000) points out four factors which probably limit teacher autonomy. To start with, policy factors are related to constraints outside the institution. Second, institutional factors comprise any related implementations within the institution. Third, conceptions of language mainly account for the ideologies regarding the target language use. Finally, language teaching methodologies are the way language teachers put their professional knowledge into practice.

2.5. Definitions and Features of Teacher Professional Development

The term professionalism is defined in various ways, but in general, it involves people's attitudes, behaviours as well as developmental stages. As Boyt et al. (2001) suggest, "professionalism consists of the attitudes and behaviour one possesses toward one's profession. It is an attitudinal and behavioural orientation that individuals possess toward their occupations." (p.322). In addition, Hoyle (2001) contributes to this definition with his attempt to define professionalism as "enhancement of the quality of service" (p.146). Considering the above definitions, it can be suggested that professionalism should promote quality assurance of the relevant institutions.

Besides, professionalism can be handled in terms of its different categorizations. To illustrate, Evans (2011, p.856) proposes three types of competences regarding professionalism. First, the behavioural competent refers to the actions done at the work place. This competent encompasses the way people apply relevant processes and procedures to their work as well as the required skills and competences they need to achieve their professional goals. *Processual*, *procedural*, *productive* and *competential dimensions* are the sub-categories of behavioural competent. Second, the attitudinal component involves *perceptual*, *evaluative* and *motivational dimensions* which explain people's beliefs, views, perceptions, job satisfaction, values and motivations related to their jobs. Third, the intellectual component consists of the *epistemological*, *rationalistic*, *comprehensive* and *analytical dimensions* of professionalism, which accounts, respectively, for *the bases of people's knowledge*; *the nature and degree of reasoning that they apply to their*

practice; *what they know and understand*; and *the nature and degree of their analyticism*.

When the term professionalism is specifically discussed from perspective of education, it can be argued that teacher professionalism is closely associated with "being good at his/her job", "fulfilling the highest standards", and "achieving excellence" (Demirkasımoğlu, 2010, p.2049). To this end, Villegas-Reimers (2003) agrees on the above qualifications and considers teacher professional development as "the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically" (p. 11). This systematicity is supported by Guskey (1986), who is of the opinion that there is a strong correlation between the strategies and techniques that the teachers employ during the lesson and teachers' professional behaviours. Given the elements of teacher professional development, Richards and Farrell (2005) regard professional development as a concept consisting of training and development which are the major goals to be achieved in teacher education. The distinction between training and development is made clear by the authors in that the former refers to pre-service teacher education while the latter is related to in-service development of teachers.

Teacher professional development is not only linked to teachers' growth professionally, yet it enables them to develop personally as well. Jurow (2009) clearly states:

> "TPD is an emerging approach to improving the personal and professional lives of practitioners in the serving professions, such as health care workers and teachers. Unlike traditional professional development, where experts impart the technical knowledge necessary to be successful in one's field, TPD assumes participants already possess the knowledge they need. The assumption underlying this approach is that self-knowledge, which one may have lost sight of in the busy-ness and stress of life, is the cornerstone of personal and professional success." (p.277)

As personal development of teachers is viewed as an inseparable element of professional development, the former contributes to the latter. In his study, Sockett (1993) points out to this contribution as one factor forming the features of professionalism, which is personality. The other four can be listed as being enthusiastic for continuing development and change, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and one's situation regarding profession relationships inside and outside the classroom.

In another study carried out by Rivzi and Elliot (2005), data collected from four hundred and fifty primary school teachers in Karachi, Pakistan, are analysed through a questionnaire on teachers' perceptions of teacher professionalism. The findings indicate that they perceive professionalism within and outside the classrooms as proposed by the above mentioned study. Further, three dimensions considered to be significant for developing teacher professionalism are listed as 1) *School leadership (delegated authority and teacher involvement in decision making)*, 2) *Classroom leadership*, and 3) *Centralized leadership*. Participants believe that they become more professional as they have the authority in choosing teaching methods and classroom affairs. Similarly, Rodríguez Bonces (2014) suggests that "it is important that educators create a space where they contribute to decision-making and have a voice" (p. 310).

2.5.1. Models and Ways of Teacher Professional Development

In order to gain a deeper insight into how professional development can be achieved, various models have been suggested. For instance, Wallace (1991) describes three models of professional development – *The Craft Model, Applied Science Model* and *the Reflective Model.* In the Craft Model, "an unexperienced professional practitioner" learns how to do the craft by observing and imitating the expert's methods and techniques. Similarly, as Stone and Morris (1972) state "the master teacher told the students what to do, showed them how to do it and the students imitated the master" (p.2). In Applied Science Model, the trainee reaches the findings of relevant scientific knowledge and experimentation through the specialists in a particular field of study. The trainee might also receive regular in-service education during his/her teaching practice in order to put the scientific findings into practice. The Reflective Model basically calls the practitioner to incorporate theory and practice throughout a reflective teaching process. The teacher gains teaching new perspectives through reflection and puts them into teaching practice.

In addition, there are different approaches as to how teaching is fulfilled so as to encourage professional development among teachers. Freeman (1991) examines teacher development from a different but related perspective which involves three

views of teaching called *teaching as doing*, *teaching as thinking* and *teaching as knowing what to do*. While the first view is associated with behavioural development involving a craft model, the second view is related to cognitive development through applied science model as it focuses the knowledge and the way teachers put this knowledge into practice. The third view "envisions an interpretative paradigm that encourages the development of frameworks of interpretation to theory and focuses on teachers' decision- making and reflection" (p.89).

Apart from these approaches, there are some suggestions with regard to how professional development evolves. For instance, Quattlebaum (2012) states that "teacher development has moved beyond simple in-service workshops and has expanded into a more robust system of continuing education. In order to advance in their careers, teachers should seek out professional development opportunities which are ongoing and aligned with standards and assessments" (para.1). This approach to teacher development points out Continuing Professional Development (CPD) which provides teachers with an opportunity of a constant development in their careers. As a consequence of CPD, teachers adopt broader points of view related to their professions. This is supported by Yoğun (2020) who conducts a research to examine how CPD is perceived before and after the process of peer coaching by EFL teachers working at tertiary level in Turkey. Findings of this case study are collected through open ended questionnaires and classroom observations demonstrate that EFL teachers view CPD as 1) *lifelong learning*, 2) *staying up to date*, 3) *skills development*, and 4) *team-building process*. Following the peer coaching process, *self-leadership* is perceived as a new concept regarding how the participants regard CPD.

A similar classification can be made to clarify the components of professional development. Gaible and Burns (2005) categorize teacher professional development under three headings. 1) *Standardized teacher professional development* which is mostly employed for dissemination of information among a huge number of teachers. For particularly teacher professional development programs incorporating information and communication technologies (ICT), through the Cascade model "champion" teachers are asked to participate in centralized workshops and share their learning with their colleagues. This contributes a lot to the integration of technology and education. 2) *Site-based teacher professional development* requires teachers to arrange their own

environments for intensive learning in their institutions or regions. The ultimate objective of this kind is to encourage to make comprehensive instructional changes in the long run. 3) *Self-directed teacher professional development* refers to independent learning as a consequence of experiences in an immediate classroom environment. Teachers benefit from any resources available to them for this independent learning.

In addition to above mentioned ways of teacher professional development involving centralized, collaborative and independent professional development, reflective approaches are also involved in the way teachers develop professionally. Reflective approaches have their own particular objectives as put forward by Richards (1998) who suggests that:

> "reflective approaches to teacher development start from the assumption that teachers, rather than methods, make a difference; that teachers are engaged in a complex process of planning, decision making, hypothesis testing, experimentation, and reflection; that these processes are often personal and situation-specific, and that they should form the focus of teacher education and teacher professional development" (p. 3).

In the above argument, teacher is viewed as the ultimate agent that takes the control of his/her own teacher development. In addition, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) hold the opinion that effective professional development promotes structured learning and improves learners' academic achievement as it leads to positive changes in teaching practices. Their study which reviews the relevant literature over the past few years finds out seven widely held features of effective professional development. Accordingly, professional development; 1) *is Content-focused*, which consists of teaching strategies, curriculum contents, and pedagogies in the classroom contexts, 2) *incorporates active learning* so that teacher can actively put different teaching strategies into practice through a variety of interactive tools appropriate for contextualized professional learning, 3) *supports collaboration* among teachers to exchange ideas and changes the culture and the instruction of the institution for the better, 4) *uses models of effective practice* that broadens teachers perspectives regarding their professions involving "video or written cases of teaching, demonstration lessons, unit or lesson plans, observations of peers, and curriculum materials including sample assessments and student work samples" (p.11), 5) *provides coaching and expert support* to satisfy teachers' individual needs by sharing "expertise about content and evidence-based practices" (p.12), 6) *offers feedback and reflection* which help teachers improve their teaching practice while adopting an expert vision in

their profession, 7) *is of sustained duration* during which "teachers have an opportunity to refine and apply their understanding of material in their classrooms" (p.16).

2.6. Definitions and Features of Reflection

The term reflection originally comes from Latin *re-flectio*, which means "turning back" in space and time (Postholm, 2008). Although various definitions have been made to explain the term, the sense of going back and re-examine what has happened still remains the same in essence. Dewey (1933) defines reflection as involving "not simply a sequence of ideas, but a consequence – a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each in turns leans back on its predecessors" (p.3), and adds that it is also an action based on "the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it'' (p. 9).

Among a number of definitions, Ryan (2015) highlights two key components of reflection: 1) *Making sense of experience* and 2) *Reimagining future experiences*. Reflection occurs throughout various levels, and those who aim to achieve the second component are to reach the point where they undergo a higher and more abstract level of reflection, also called "academic or professional reflection" (p.15). In order to fulfil these two key components, it is required to equip people with necessary qualifications. To this end, Yang (2009) argues that people are not born with a natural skill for reflection. Thus, they can only develop critical reflection on condition that they are provided appropriate environment in which they acquire this skill.

Reflective teaching can function as a regulating process through which academic reflection is achieved with the help of teacher professional development. Smith (2003) emphasizes the significance of reflective teaching as follows:

> "The importance of reflective teaching (reflection on and learning from the experience of teaching) has been recognized for some time now, and corresponds well with an overall focus within teacher education on developing a 'capacity for self-directed professional action' (our 'teacher autonomy'). What has not been discussed so much is the importance of reflective teacher-learning, in other words reflection by teachers on when, where, how and from what sources they (should) learn, including but not confined to any learning they can achieve via teaching. In order for teachers to gain better abilities

> and a greater willingness to learn for themselves in developing 'an appropriate expertise of their own', this kind of reflection seems to be essential" (p. 8)

Farrell (2015) outlines the framework for reflecting on practice as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

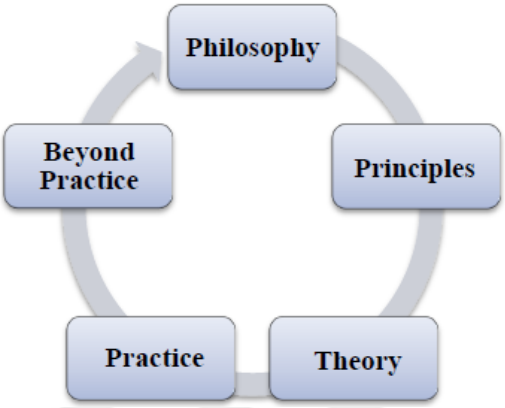


Figure 2.1. *Framework for reflecting on practice* (Farrell, 2015, p.23)

As shown in Figure 2.1, *Philosophy*, the first stage of reflection, refers to the integration of teachers' backgrounds and life experiences and their reflection process. By so doing, teachers develop a more in-depth insight into their identity as teachers. With the second stage, teachers reflect on their *principles* regarding second or foreign language learning and teaching while reflection of *theory* is related to the way teachers put theories into their teaching practice. When teachers reflect on their *practice*, they can observe the aforementioned three stages in their classrooms. The examination of classroom practice involves three kinds of reflection: Reflection-in-action (during the lesson), reflection-on-action (after the lesson) and reflection-for-action (before the lesson). Reflection beyond practice, also called critical reflection, the final stage, enables teachers to become aware of sociolinguistic factors such as political issues and their impacts on teaching.

Teachers not only develop their teaching practice but also shape their beliefs and attitudes through reflection within their professions. As Zwozdiak-Myers (2009) suggests, reflective practice is defined as "a disposition to enquiry incorporating the process through which … teachers structure or restructure actions, beliefs, knowledge and theories that inform teaching for the purpose of professional development" (p.84).

Problem-solving, which is another aspect of reflection, is associated with the development of positive feelings within novice teachers as put forward by Huisman et al. (2010) who state that "problem-solving through reflection is crucial to building resiliency and leading to success. As novice teachers persist in trying new strategies and are successful, they feel positive about their teaching" (p.490). However, reflective teaching is more related to the perception and refinement of teaching practice throughout a constant process than to a specific problem, and thus, connects to teacher autonomy (Flores, 2001).

Several studies have pointed out three types of reflection as reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action. In their study, Hung and Thuy (2021) investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of reflective teaching. 49 in-service Vietnamese EFL teachers participates in the study. Data collected from the participants through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews are analysed, and the findings indicate that three kinds of reflection-in-action, on-action and for-action – are exercised by the teachers who have positive perception of reflective teaching for their professional development. Moreover, the teachers prefer three strategies of reflective teaching such as workshops, classroom observation and student feedback to video recording and diary writing due to their work-related limitations.

The influence of teachers' presumptions and their outcomes are also examined in some studies. To illustrate, Kember et al. (2008) outlines four levels of reflection. 1) *Habitual Action* refers to the one involving little or no conscious thought while an academic task is conducted. 2) The level of *understanding* differs from the first level in that a student now attempts to understand a theory without relating it to their real life. Further, there is no personal meaning with regard to the theory. 3) *Reflection* basically refers to the association of a concept of a theory with a student's personal life through which a personal meaning is established. 4) *Critical Reflection* represents the highest level of reflection and signifies a thorough transformation of the one's perspective about an incident. Kember et al. (2008) put it as "to undergo critical reflection it is necessary to conduct a critical review of presuppositions from conscious and unconscious prior learning and their consequences" (p.374).

In addition, the way teachers reflect on their teaching practice is examined to find out what route they follow in order to have an effective reflection. Arslan (2019) investigates four EFL pre-service teachers' reflections in her longitudinal study which takes place throughout one year. Data collected through interviews from the participants are analysed and interpreted based on Korthagen's (2004) onion model of reflection which involves missions, identity, beliefs, competencies, behaviour and environment. The findings indicate that although the reflections are scattered across the sub-headings of the model, the participants tend to move from the outer level towards the inner level in their reflections throughout the study.

2.6.1. Wallace's Reflective Model

Among various models for professional development, the Reflective Model, as Wallace (1991) calls it, offers an opportunity for both pre-service and in-service teachers to conduct reflective practice. The model consists of three stages as shown in 2.2.

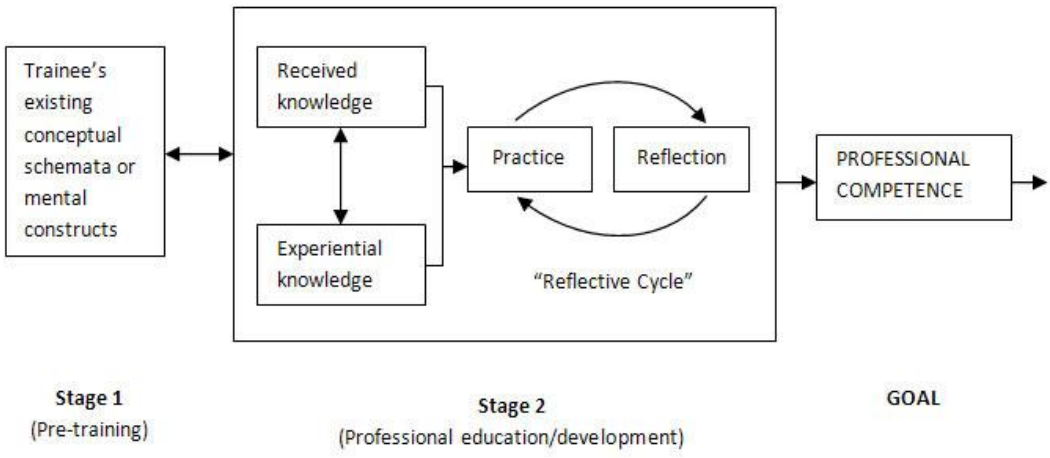


Figure 2.2. *Reflective Practice Model of professional education* (p.49)

In the pre-training stage, trainees bring their conceptual schemata or mental constructs such as attitudes, beliefs, ideas, etc. to the training process. Wallace (1991) points out the significance of these constructs by stating that "while it might be useful

to find out where trainees are ‘coming from’, it is vital to find out where they are ‘at’ now; and I would stress that no training or supervisory procedures can function with maximum effectiveness without this information” (p.51).

In the professional education/development stage, *received knowledge* involving facts, theories, data, etc. regarding the related profession interacts with *experiential knowledge*, or practical experience. Thanks to this mutual relationship of these two, trainees relate their own reflection and practice in the ‘Reflective Cycle’ by deciding on the possible and required changes that they are planning to make in the next courses so as to increase the effectiveness of their professional practice. Wallace (1991) warns us about some disadvantages of the reflective model. First, the experience gained through this reflection process is individual, nor shared, which may decrease the reliability of the data as the reflective practitioner possesses the absolute ownership of the experience. Second, when the experience is shared with, or discussed by others in the community, even some positive evaluations regarding a particular technique applied by the teacher in the classroom might offend the others by conveying messages to be misinterpreted. To illustrate, the same technique implemented in two different classes may not provide the same results due to various factors, and in this case, the teacher in whose classroom the technique is ineffective might think that this failure is due to his/her incapability. This leads a lack of focus in discussions. Lastly, the articulation process of reflection is to be neatly organized so that there will be no interruption, distraction or confusion.

In the third stage, professional competence is set as the goal in this reflective model. Wallace (1991) makes a distinction between the meanings of the term competence. One refers to fulfilling the requirements for beginning a profession such as certificate or diploma which he calls “initial competence” whereas the other, or “expertise”, refers to the developmental nature of the profession. As clearly put by him, “professional certification (in whatever form it might take) is not a terminal point but a point of departure” (p.58), and the latter must be given the same importance as the former in teacher training programmes.

2.6.2. Ways of Reflective Practice

Following the related models of reflection, several ways has also been suggested in some studies about different means that teachers can make use of. To illustrate, Richards (1991, p. 2-5) offered some approaches for critical reflection on his previous work listed as: 1) *Peer observation*, 2) *Written accounts of experience*, 3) *Self-reports*, 4) *Autobiographies*, 5) *Journal writing*, 6) *Collaborative diary keeping*, and 7) *Recording lessons*. A similar study conducted by Mathew et al. (2017) examines 13 participants' ways of reflection in their study. The participants who are enrolled B. Ed Programme at St. Joseph's College of Education in India are given a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Findings of this study with a qualitative study indicate that the student teachers use reflective journals to put what happens in the lesson as well as their feelings, collaborative learning through which they discuss and learn from their experiences, recording lessons, teacher educator's feedback, student feedback, peer observations, and action research. It is also argued that student teachers become more effective in their teaching practice by using the most appropriate form of reflection mentioned above.

Reflective journals are one of the most frequently applied ways of teacher reflection defined as "written documents that students create as they think about various concepts, events, or interactions over a period of time for the purposes of gaining insights into self-awareness and learning" (Thorpe, 2004, p.328). Apart from registering entries in the journals, the writer, or the teacher, experiences the journey of connecting to his/her own knowledge required for the teaching practice. O'Connell and Dyment (2013, p.3-4) argue that "journal, on the other hand, goes beyond simply recording the writer's experience. Questions are asked, scenarios debriefed, links to other experiences are made, thoughts are fused together to create something new, and connections to a writer's knowledge are made. A journal is introspective."

There are some studies investigating the impacts of journal writing on teachers' reflectivity. A previous study by O'Connell and Dyment (2011) examines more than 75 articles from various academic disciplines on reflective journals in their study and find out that journal writing provides the instructors with three benefits: Pedagogy, supporting various instructor roles and relationships with students. As pedagogy is

related to how learners' needs are satisfied, teachers develop the way they provide formative and summative feedback to their students thanks to journals. Teachers can also find a chance to get engaged in research, and personal and professional development. Finally, as teachers write journals, they develop a deeper understanding of their students, which leads to have a better relationship with them.

Journal writing provides data for classroom experiences involving the teacher's attitudes, feelings and reactions, any problem related to teaching facing the teacher in classroom as well as further steps to be taken for future actions (Richards et al., 1994). In Clarke's (2004) study, ten associate teachers write reflective journals during their internship program which take place in Sydney. The journal entries are analysed according to Diets model of professional learning involving exploration, organization, connection and reflection. The results demonstrate that the participants deal with planning a lesson plan and arranging administrative requirements and managing classroom in the exploration and organization stages whereas they are involved in their teaching practice in the connection and reflection stages.

2.7. Definitions and Features of Online Learning

Among several modes of teaching, distance education has gained its prominence in the field of language teaching all over the world recently. As Bates (2005) puts, distance education is a process by which students can learn without being physically present in the classroom as required in traditional learning settings. Likewise, Simonson et al. (2006) defines it as a formal education offered by institutions to connect teachers, learners and teaching materials at a distance. In this type of delivery, interactivity among learners is prioritized by the teachers with the help of telecommunications systems. Kaplan and Haenlein (2016) also agree that World Wide Web (WWW) or similar network technologies can be employed to increase learners' interactive participation.

Providing online language education requires teachers to consider several significant factors. To illustrate, EFL teachers are expected to arrange their online classrooms in a way that learners acquire necessary skills apart from digital literacy so as to learn English efficiently (Compton, 2009). Accordingly, encouraging learners to

have digital literacy in online classes is of secondary importance. Besides, if an effective online education is aimed, there should be carefully designed curriculum followed by competent online teachers with a sufficient degree of distance learning pedagogy (Van Deusen-Scholl, 2015). It is only through these suggestions that learners can benefit from effective language learning opportunities in online classrooms.

On the other hand, there are a few drawbacks regarding the effectiveness of delivering online classes to learners. For instance, it cannot be achieved in situations where both teachers and learners lack necessary requirements, such as the Internet. However, according to Moore and Kearsley (2012, p.7), "In distance education, the issue of Internet access is not the most important issue regarding technology and media" by suggesting that teachers can still offer online education with less advanced technology.

Another significant challenge in delivering online education is the outbreak of Covid-19 Pandemic. During the pandemic, the main problem is teachers' and learners' lack of familiarity with this new teaching method (Rosayanti & Hardiana, 2021). In spite of such negative impacts of the pandemic, Mukhtar et al. (2020) find out that teachers are able to provide their learners with effective education through online classes as in traditional teaching environment. It can be suggested from the above research that the handicaps brought by the pandemic have been successfully overcome without scarifying the quality of education even if it is provided in the online setting.

2.7.1. Emergency Online Learning

Emergency Online Learning (EOL), also called Emergency Remote Learning, is "rapidly developed, temporary instructional support in a crisis" (Whittle et al., 2020, p. 311). EOL has been followed by educators from all over the world in an effort to keep instructional practices during Covid-19 Pandemic. EFL teachers have also been involved in offering online English classes considering that EOL is "a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances" (Hodges et al., 2020, para. 13). The basic aim of such an alternative mode of delivery is to provide instant solutions to the restrictions brought about by the pandemic.

Although there are several similarities between online learning and emergency online learning, the latter is implemented in a way that certain immediate decisions can be taken by authorities that are supposed to deal with the problems emerging during a crisis. Among the differences, planning educational practices stands out as the most striking one as stated by Bozkurt et al. (2020). At this point, crisis management is inherently involved both in planning instructional practices and in making appropriate and instant decisions.

Researchers have conducted several studies investigating the overall impacts of emergency online learning across the globe. For instance, Ferri et al. (2020) conducts a qualitative study that aims to reflect on the experts' opinions provided on an online educational forum regarding the effects of emergency online teaching. Accordingly, the findings are categorized under three headings *Technological Challenges, Pedagogical Challenges* and *Social Challenges.* While the first category mainly consists of technology-driven problems such as lack of internet connections and learners' lack of digital devices, the second category involves teachers' and learners' lack of digital skills, lack of learner engagement and motivation, and lack of structured course content. As regards the social challenges, the findings point out insufficient amount of interaction between teachers and learners as well as learners' lack of appropriate learning environment.

In addition, another study has been conducted by Jiang et al., (2021) to assess learners' depression, stress and anxiety levels during the pandemic. The study with a quantitative descriptive research design is done with learners studying in tertiary level in Thailand, Malaysia, China and Indonesia, and the findings reveal that 38% of the learners undergo mild depression, stress and anxiety. The findings also indicate that 20.5 % of the students experience severe or extremely severe anxiety. All in all, anxiety emerges as the most commonly experienced problem followed by depression and stress.

Besides the experiences of learners mentioned above, Thai EFL teachers' challenges that they encounter during emergency online teaching and their needs for professional development are examined by Boonmoh et al. (2022) through an online survey and online semi-structured interviews. Accordingly, the findings regarding the

EFL teachers working at Thai universities include learners' not turning on their cameras, their lack of engagement in the online classes, lack of interaction between teachers and students as well as among students, teachers' being unfamiliar with the online platforms or applications and challenges with providing learners with feedback. It has also been found out that the EFL teachers' needs professional development activities include motivating learners and increasing learner engagement, online language teaching skills, creating online learning activities and learning and sharing on technology use.

In addition to the above mentioned studies conducted in various countries, there are a few studies providing data on the EFL teachers' accounts of emergency online learning within the Turkish context. To illustrate, Civelek et al. (2021) aim to explore the attitudes of Turkish EFL teachers' attitudes towards emergency online instruction in all age groups ranging from primary to tertiary levels. The study with a mixed-method design find out the reasons for 70 Turkish EFL teachers' negative attitudes towards teaching online classes referring to teachers' lack of adequate knowledge and skills required for online educational technologies, learners' lack of active involvement in online classes, problems regarding online meeting applications, lack of sufficient interactions in online sessions and occasional problems with having physical equipment to access online learning environments. The study also suggested that those having been instructed about online educational technologies develop more positive attitudes than the ones who do not have necessary training.

In the same vein, another study is conducted by Kamisli and Akinlar (2021) with the participation of Turkish EFL teachers working in a state university. The study with a qualitative phenomenological design explored the participants' experiences during the emergency online instruction from the perspective of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model. The findings demonstrated that the EFL teachers experience challenges and emotional stress resulting from the emergency online teaching. The study also finds out that the fundamental problems are lack of stable internet connection, lack of interaction between teachers and students as well as among students, and lack of adequate online teaching materials.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Presentation

This chapter provides information related to the research design of the study, participants, setting, data collection tools, data collection procedure, data analysis, and validity and reliability.

3.2. Research Design

A descriptive qualitative case study design was employed in the current study in order to examine the perception of the participants regarding teacher autonomy in online learning. It was also aimed to investigate what Turkish EFL teachers reflect during online classes and whether their reflection influenced their perceptions of teacher autonomy in online learning. Through this qualitative case study, the researcher develops “an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2012, p.206). The study was conducted in line with the definition mentioned above.

As Fraenkel et al. (2012) state, qualitative method provides the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials in detail. In addition, descriptive designs gather data from groups of individuals through instruments such as interviews, which help the researcher to obtain individuals’ attitudes and opinions on the relevant

issue (Ary et al., 2010). To achieve this, the researcher collected data from participants through open-ended questions provided in the e-mail interviews to obtain their perceptions of teacher autonomy in online learning in the pre-stage of the study and conducted in-depth interview with the participants to find out whether their reflection during online classes influenced their perception of teacher autonomy in online learning in the post-stage of the study.

Further, Burns and Grove (2003) state that such descriptive studies are "designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens" (p.201). Likewise, Yıldırım and Şimşek (2000) highlight the significance of natural setting in which data are collected via interview, observation and document analysis in a qualitative research. Thus, the researcher collected data within the natural environment of the participants, and the relevant data were collected in their usual working schedule rather than attempt to alter the circumstances which might affect the natural structure of the process.

3.3. Participants

The participants of the current study were 5 instructors aged 24 – 46 (3 females and 2 males) working at a School of Foreign Languages (SFL) of a foundation university in Turkey. Initially, six participants volunteered to participate in the study. However, after the data collection process began, one of the participants refused to continue. Teaching experience of remaining 5 participants ranged from 1 to 23 years. While one of them was a holder of Master's degree and the others were doing their master's and doctorate studies.

With regard to the aim of the study, convenience sampling was employed to collect data from the participants who were conveniently available within easy reach (Fraenkel et al.,2012). In addition, Dörnyei (2007) highlights the significance and practicality of convenience sampling by arguing that "the convenience of the researcher is the crucial criterion: participation depends on practical criteria like geographical proximity, availability, accessibility and willingness to volunteer" (p.99). The researcher, thus, intended to ensure that the participants could be provided immediate assistance if needed throughout 15 weeks. The consent forms were signed

by the participants who would volunteer to contribute to the study (See *Appendix A*). Further, anonymity was assured by appointing a pseudo name for each participant rather than explicitly referring to their real names. The pseudo names and demographic information of the participants were illustrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. *Pseudo names and demographic information of the participants*

Pseudo Names	Gender	Age	Years of Experience	Qualification
Betty	Female	45	23	Ph. D. in progress
Felix	Male	46	21	MA holder
Kaylie	Female	28	5	MA in progress
Sarah	Female	23	1	MA in progress
Zak	Male	36	12	MA in progress

3.4. Setting

All of the participants were employed in School of Foreign Languages (SFL) of Hasan Kalyoncu University situated in Gaziantep, Turkey. The SFL offered English courses to learners of departments with English medium instruction. Instructors were required to teach 20-24 hours of English on a weekly basis in addition to fulfilling administrative and/or academic tasks, if any. However, with the outbreak of Covid-19, universities in Turkey were asked by the Higher Education Council to teach either in online sessions only or in hybrid models which combined both face to face and online live sessions. Hasan Kalyoncu University decided to follow the hybrid model throughout 2020-2021 academic year. In the SFL, instructors taught English both in online and face to face sessions.

Given the hierarchical structure of the SFL, there were the director at the top under whom two vice-directors were employed, course coordinators and main course teachers. The management was in charge of planning, designing, implementing and evaluation the SFL curriculum with the help of course coordinators. The course coordinators were appointed by the SFL management to coordinate Integrated Skills (IS) courses, Writing (WR) courses and Listening & Speaking (LS) courses which were offered to learners according to their levels in different weekly hours. Moreover, there was a Testing Unit (TU) which designed, reviewed, administered, assessed and evaluated all the exams in the SFL.

Levels from A1 to C1 were taught in 5 terms with 7-8 teaching weeks. Learners were required to take one Progress Test (PT), one Mid-Term Exam (MTE) and one End-of-Term Exam (ETE), and complete four Writing Portfolio (WP) tasks and one Speaking Project (SP) each term in order to pass to the next level. WR courses were given in teaching sessions, WR sessions and feedback sessions, and WR instructors regularly informed their learners about their mistakes in their writing tasks. Also, learners were tracked and given feedback by their SP instructors throughout seven weeks, which ended up a SP project. Another alternative assessment tool was Mini Presentations (MP), which were conducted three times in every term. During the MPs, students were given a topic that required them to talk for a minute spontaneously. Finally, main course teachers were in charge of tracking their own classes particularly after the results of PTs and MTEs were announced.

It could be argued that all of the participants provided data to the researcher based on the different courses they taught both in their face to face and online classes. One of the participants (Zak) was the vice-director in charge of administrative affairs while others did not have any administrative responsibilities.

3.5. Data Collection Tools

The stages of the study, data collection tools and the research questions for each stage are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. *Stages of the study, data collection tools and research questions*

Stages of the Study	Data Collection Tools	Research Questions
Pre-Stage	E-mail interviews	**Research Question 1:** How do Turkish EFL teachers perceive teacher autonomy in online learning?
While-Stage	Reflective Journals (Gibbs' Reflective Cycle)	**Research Question 2:** What do Turkish EFL teachers reflect during online classes?
Post-Stage	In-depth Interviews	**Research Question 3:** How does Turkish EFL teachers' reflection influence their perceptions of teacher autonomy in online learning?

As illustrated in Table 3.2, the current study consisted of three stages – *Pre-Stage*, *While-Stage* and *Post-Stage*. In the pre-stage, the participants' perceptions of

teacher autonomy in online learning were collected via e-mail interviews for the first research question. In addition, data for the second research question were collected through reflective journals using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) in the while-stage. Finally, in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain data for the third research question during the post-stage of the study.

3.5.1. E-Mail Interviews

As shown in Table 3.2, in line with the first research question, five participants were asked to provide their opinions on their perceptions of teacher autonomy in online learning at the very beginning of the study. During the pre-stage of the study, three open-ended questions in the e-mail interviews were asked to participants with regard to their perceptions of online teaching skills, online classroom management and professional development in the online setting, respectively (See *Appendix B*). As Creswell (2012) puts it, "e-mail interviews consist of collecting open-ended data through interviews with individuals using computers … for qualitative analysis" (p.219). E-mail interviews also enable the respondents to have enough time to contemplate on their responses asynchronously (Cameron & Price, 2009). Due to Covid-19 pandemic, the most appropriate data collection tool is e-mail interviews (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021). The questions asked in the e-mail interviews were decided with the agreement of two experts from the field of English teaching.

3.5.2. Reflective Journals

Table 3.2 displays that the second research question aimed to examine what Turkish EFL teachers reflect during online classes. To this end, following a training session on journal keeping given by the researcher, each participant was asked to write six reflective journals throughout the While-stage of the study, which lasted for 15 weeks. O'Connell and Dyment (2013, p.3-4) argue that "journal, on the other hand, goes beyond simply recording the writer's experience. Questions are asked, scenarios debriefed, links to other experiences are made, thoughts are fused together to create something new, and connections to a writer's knowledge are made. A journal is introspective." To this end, Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) was employed as it helped

participants describe not only their critical experiences in detail but also their feelings that they had at the time of their reflection (See *Appendix C*).

3.5.3. In-depth Interviews

In the post-stage, participants were interviewed to obtain data regarding how the reflection period influenced their perceptions of teacher autonomy in online learning in line with the third research question as indicated in Table 3.2 (See *Appendix D*). As Ryan et al. (2009) state, interviews can be employed in order to collect in-depth information with regard to the interviewee's attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and experiences. The questions in the in-depth interviews were decided with the agreement of two experts from the field of English teaching. During the interviews, the researcher asked for further clarification for participants' responses to the interview questions to obtain more detailed data as the semi-structured in-depth interview provides "the interviewer [with] the space to seek clarity as to what the interviewee actually means and why they gave a particular answer" (Morris, 2015, p.10). The summary of relevant information about the interviews was illustrated as follows:

Table 3.3. *Summary of information regarding the interviews*

Interviewee	**Date**	**Duration (minutes)**	**Number of words**
Betty	10.05.2021	07.30	707
Felix	08.05.2021	11.01	1216
Kaylie	11.05.2021	09.08	948
Sarah	09.05.2021	07.52	648
Zak	12.05.2021	08.42	846
TOTAL		**44.13**	**4365**

As displayed in Table 3.3, each participant was interviewed over five days based on the participants' availability.

3.6. Data Collection Procedure

The current study which consisted of three stages *Pre-Stage, While-Stage* and *Post-Stage* took place across a 15-week teaching period. In the following figure, data collection procedure was illustrated.

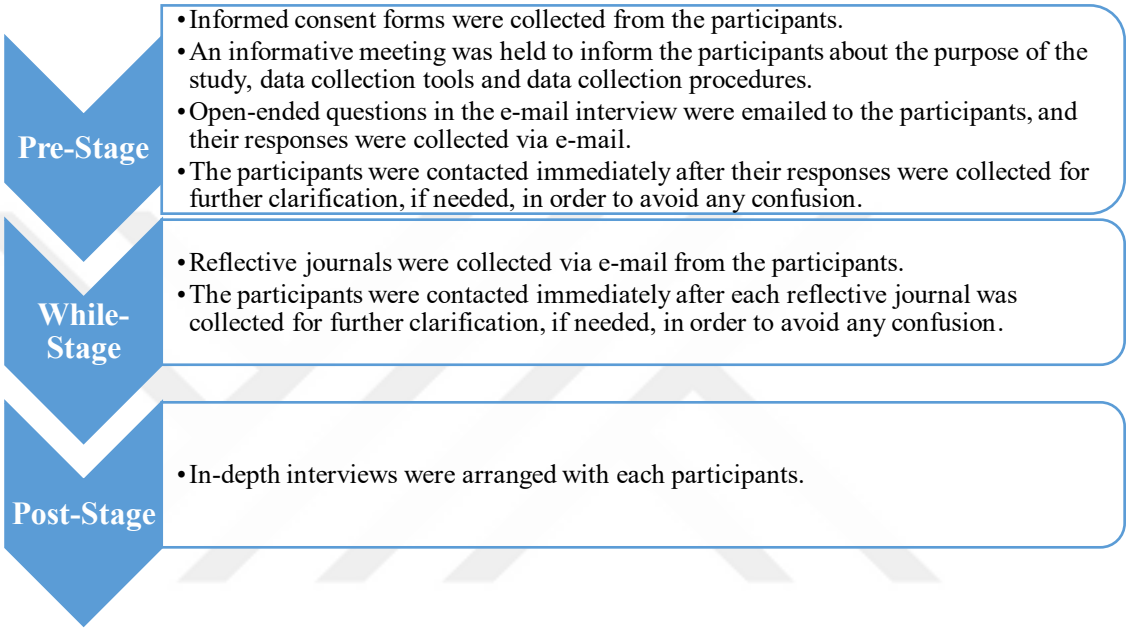


Figure 3.1. *Data collection procedure*

As shown in Figure 3.1, at the very beginning, all the participants were informed of the purpose of the study upon their consent regarding their volunteer participation in the study. A face to face 1-hour long informative meeting was held with five participants working as instructors in the SFL to discuss the details as to the three stages of the study. In the meeting, participants were explained that they would initially respond to the open-ended questions, and that they would write six reflective journals throughout the 15-week teaching period. Finally, they were informed that they would be interviewed by the researcher at the end of the process. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle was described in detail, and a sample reflective journal was demonstrated to the participants so that they could grasp what they were expected to write by taking Gibbs' Reflective Cycle into consideration.

Figure 3.1 also indicates that the researcher conducted e-mail interviews that involved some open-ended questions regarding their perceptions of teacher autonomy in online learning during the pre-stage of the study. The questions were about their perception of online teaching skills, online classroom management and professional development in the online setting. Owing to the pandemic, face to face contact was avoided as much as possible. After responses given to these question. The participants were contacted for further clarification, if needed, in order to avoid any confusion and to ensure that data collected during the pre-stage of the study were fully comprehended by the researcher.

During the while-stage of the study, the participants started to write a reflective journal every two weeks based on one critical point that they thought was significant and worth reflecting on as shown in Figure 3.1. It was aimed through these reflective journals to collect data as to what the participants reflected during their online classes. In order to avoid any kind of manipulation, the participants were not interfered with the choice of their critical points during the process. At the end of this stage, each participant provided six reflective journals, and thirty entries were collected in total.

During the post-stage of the study, the participants were interviewed via Zoom within three days based on their availability as displayed in Figure 3.1, and the interviews were recorded both in video and audio format. The purpose of these interviews was to find out whether the reflection period influenced their perception of teacher autonomy in online learning. For this reason, the participants were directed three questions with regard to online teaching skills, online classroom management and professional development in the online setting, respectively. Further details and clarification were asked during the interviews for a more comprehensive account when insufficient responses were received. Immediately after the interview sessions ended, transcription process was conducted.

3.7. Data Analysis

It is noted that qualitative content analysis can be utilized to explore information that describes an issue or a topic (Fraenkel et al., 2012). To this end, inductive content analysis was employed in the current study to analyse the data

collected through open-ended questions in the pre-stage, reflective journals during the while-stage and interviews during the post-stage of the current study as no "pre-existing definition" was provided to participants (McKibben et al., 2020, p.4). Also, Forman and Damschroder (2007) put it, "as compared to quantitative inquiry, the goal of all qualitative inquiry is to understand a phenomenon, rather than to make generalizations from the study sample to the population based on statistical inference" (p.41). Thus, the participants' perceptions of teacher autonomy in online learning as well as their reflection during online classes were only limited to the scope of the present study.

The following six-steps suggested by Creswell (2012) were followed in analysing the e-mail interviews, reflective journals and in-depth interviews across the three stages of the study:

1) The raw data provided in each text were all closely read, and an overall understanding of the whole data was achieved.

2) Relevant data were divided into smaller segments through codes.

3) The codes derived from the texts were labelled so that similar codes could be categorized.

4) The overlapping codes were checked, and the codes were reduced to a manageable number.

5) The texts were re-examined to see if there was a new code, and the participants' related statements for the codes were determined.

6) Themes were formed through the codes that were frequently mentioned.

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) was utilized as the main framework within which participants wrote their critical points throughout the reflection period. However, this framework only helped participants organize their ideas through six steps – *1) Description, 2) Feelings/thoughts, 3) Evaluation, 4) Analysis, 5) Conclusion,* and *6) Action Plan* rather than determine what the participants would write about. Thus, the participants were not restricted about the topic of their reflection. Data provided for each step of the reflective journals were closely read by two different researchers, and categories and themes were reached through emergent codes.

The interviews which were inductively analysed were recorded on Zoom, transcribed verbatim via www.azure.microsoft.com, and necessary corrections were immediately made in terms of spelling and punctuations. Then, the above-mentioned procedure was conducted to analyse the data from the interviews inductively.

3.8. Reliability and Validity

The trustworthiness of the data analysis process was ensured through a constant contact between two researchers, one of whom is an MA holder in ELT. Walther et al. (2013) pointed out this contact as "continuous dialogue between researchers to maintain consistency of the coding" (p. 650). Data collected from each data collection tool were analysed simultaneously immediately and with great care by two researchers, and frequent meetings were held to discuss the codes, categories and themes in each data set to see whether there was a discrepancy between the analyses of the researchers. The codes, categories and themes were reviewed in case of such discrepancy, and they were revised and/or excluded when a mutual agreement was reached. Finally, a third researcher, a Ph. D. holder in ELT, was involved in the process to check the analysis of the two researchers. Final revisions were made upon her evaluation. All these steps were conducted to establish a high inter-rater reliability.

The open-ended questions in the e-mail interviews and the questions in the in-depth interviews were designed so that they were in consistency with the research questions of the study. In order to have validity, the items in the data collection tools should measure what the study aims to measure. Kothari (2004) regards validity as the most significant criterion which ensures that the instruments in a study measure what they are supposed to measure. Therefore, after the questions in the interviews were first designed, they were submitted to an expert opinion. In an online meeting arranged on Zoom, each item was discussed by two experts from the field of English language teaching. Then, necessary changes were made as a consequence of the experts' agreement on the final versions of the questions.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

4.1. Presentation

This chapter presents the data collected by the participants throughout the pre-, while- and post-stages of the study. The data are presented through tables with relevant statistical information as well as the participants' statements in line with the three research questions of the study.

4.2. Results of Research Question #1: *How do Turkish EFL teachers perceive teacher autonomy in online learning?*

During the pre-stage of the current study, data were collected for the first research question through e-mail interviews. The responses were collected via email from the participants and analysed through inductive content analysis. In order to obtain a clearer insight into the first research question *How do Turkish EFL teachers perceive teacher autonomy in online learning?,* the participants were directed three sub-questions regarding their perceptions of online teaching skills, effective online classroom management and professional development in the online setting respectively. The sub-questions were listed as follows:

1) What is your perception of the teaching skills that you have in order to teach online effectively? How much control do you think you have over the way you teach in your online classes? Why do you think so? How does it make you feel?

2) What is your perception of effective online classroom management? How much control do you think you have over the classroom management strategies that you employ in your online classes? Why do you think so? How does it make you feel?

3) What is your attitude towards professional development in the online setting? How much control do you think you have over deciding on which training you need? Why do you think so? How does it make you feel?

4.2.1. Turkish EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Online Teaching Skills

The participants were asked the following sub-question with regard to their perceptions of online teaching skills:

> *What is your perception of the teaching skills that you have in order to teach online effectively? How much control do you think you have over the way you teach in your online classes? Why do you think so? How does it make you feel?*

Relevant data collected from the participants through e-mail interviews were analysed and categorized as presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1. *Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions of online teaching skills*

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes/Sub-codes	f	%
LEARNERS (f=21)	Learner Engagement and Motivation	Encouraging Student Learning	3	6,53
		Student Motivation	2	4,36
		• Encouraging Student Motivation	1	2,17
		• Learner Reluctance	1	2,17
	Learners' Individual Characteristics	Promoting Learner Autonomy	3	6,53
		• Higher Order Thinking Skills	1	2,17
		• Critical Thinking Skills	1	2,17
		• Learners' Control over Learning	1	2,17
		Learners' Needs	2	4,36
		• Learners' Needs Analysis	1	2,17
		• Satisfying Learners' Needs	1	2,17
		Factors Increasing Language Learner Anxiety	2	4,36
		• Authoritarian Way of Teaching		
		• Teachers' Role in Increasing Language Learner Anxiety	1 1	2,17 2,17

Table 4.1. *(Cont.)*

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes/Sub-codes	f	%
TEACHERS (f=18)	Teachers' Attitudes	Feeling Self-confident	4	8,70
		Feeling Demotivated	1	2,17
	Instructional Practice	Using Teaching Methods	2	4,36
		• Communicative Language Teaching	1	2,17
		• Adopting Eclectic Method	1	2,17
		Teaching Language Use	2	4,36
		• Role of Grammar	1	2,17
		• Contextual Grammar Teaching	1	2,17
		Teaching Strategy	1	2,17
	Teachers' Individual Characteristics	Having Communication Skills	2	4,36
		Having Time Management Skills	1	2,17
		Having Decision Making Skills	1	2,17
LANGUAGE LEARNING CONTEXT (f=5)	Language Teaching Materials	Authenticity	1	2,17
		Being Interesting	1	2,17
		Preparation of Appropriate Materials	1	2,17
	Learner-Centeredness	Considering Learners' Individual Differences	1	2,17
		Using Appropriate Techniques for Learners	1	2,17
MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT (f=2)	Monitoring Learners		1	2,17
	Testing Grammar in Context		1	2,17
Total			**46**	**100**

Table 4.1 illustrates four themes that emerged as *Learners* (f=21)*, Teachers* (f=18)*, Language Learning Context* (f=5) and *Monitoring and Assessment* (f=2). Data examined under the first theme *Learners* consist of two sub-themes *Learner Engagement and Motivation* and *Learners' Individual Characteristics*. *Learner Engagement and Motivation* was the first sub-theme which included two codes *Encouraging Student Learning* (f=3) and *Student Motivation* (f=2). The participants' statements regarding these codes were presented as follows:

> *I can create an electric current in a circuit, by activating the language learning mechanism.* (Kaylie – E-mail interview)

> *Students need to be given many opportunities to prepare projects and assignments.* (Betty – E-mail interview)

> *In my opinion, if I want to provide effective teaching to students, I need to get their attention first… by creating a personal connection.* (Sarah – E-mail interview)

Regarding the first code *Encouraging Student Learning*, the participants adopted different approaches as to how to promote student learning. For instance, Kaylie implied a collaborative way of engaging language learners in the lesson by activating an appropriate system that may help learners improve their language skills. Relatedly, Betty's suggestion was more specific than Kaylie's in that she directly referred to task-based activities for students' active involvement. Likewise, Sarah's approach was related to making the lesson appealing to the learners. She stressed that as learners made associations between the lesson and their own lives, they learned more effectively.

Given the second code *Student Motivation*, the participants handled motivation from two different angles via two sub-codes *Encouraging Student Motivation* (f=1) and *Learner Reluctance* (f=1) as presented below:

> [Being able to engage students] *requires teachers to have some certain skills like the ability to motivate students.* (Zak – E-mail interview)

> *However, my control over effective teaching is fifty-fifty because sometimes students don't want to share something about their own lives.* (Sarah – E-mail interview)

Zak expressed that engaging learners would be a real challenge for teachers without necessary skills possessed by teachers. It can be concluded that Zak put the responsibility of involving learners in the lesson on teachers' shoulders. On the other hand, Sarah believed that promoting learner motivation depended on how much learners were willing to share about themselves. The ownership of responsibility to encourage learners' motivation was discussed from different perspectives by these two participants.

As the second sub-theme, *Learners' Individual Characteristics* encompasses three codes *Promoting Learner Autonomy* (f=3), *Learners' Needs* (f=2) and *Factors Increasing Language Learner Anxiety* (f=2). Three sub-codes *Higher Order Thinking Skills* (f=1), *Critical Thinking Skills* (f=1) and *Learners' Control over Learning* (f=1) emerged under the first code *Promoting Learner Autonomy*. The following statements illustrated the sub-codes of *Promoting Learner Autonomy*:

> *A teacher should be able to improve a student's high order thinking skills which will help students be more autonomous and critical thinker.* (Zak – E-mail interview)

> [Engaging learners] *is a very good way of developing their learning autonomy.* (Kaylie – E-mail interview)

Zak pointed out the role of learners' high order thinking skills in improving their critical thinking skills. Similarly, another way of encouraging learner autonomy was put forward by Kaylie, who believed that language teachers could increase learners' autonomy through promoting learners' active involvement in the lesson, and thus, learners' control over their learning.

As for the second code *Learners' Needs*, finding out what learners need and how to meet these needs were examined under two sub-codes *Learners' Needs Analysis* (f=1) and *Satisfying Learners' Needs* (f=1). Relevant instances were presented below:

> *I try to know my students from the very beginning, try to know their needs, abilities and weaknesses.* (Zak – E-mail interview)

> *I have always tried to tailor design my classes to respond the needs of my students*. (Betty – E-mail interview)

Zak's strategy to analyse learners' needs was mainly based on understanding their capabilities and lacks as soon as the courses commenced. In addition, in terms of how to satisfy learners' needs, Betty also shared her opinions on the way she arranged her classes so that the lessons could meet learners' needs. In both ways, teachers took learners as a starting point while designing their courses.

Finally, the third code *Factors Increasing Language Learner Anxiety* consisting of two sub-codes *Authoritarian Way of Teaching* (f=1) and *Teachers' Role in Increasing Language Learning Anxiety* (f=1) basically pointed out the reasons for and solutions of language learners' anxiety. Kaylie shared her thoughts about this code as follows:

> *We cannot* [adopt] *authoritarian way of teaching in the normal set of teaching environment as this can trigger the classroom language learning anxiety*. (Kaylie – E-mail interview)
>
> *Teacher's attitude helps students play an active role in their language learning*. (Kaylie – E-mail interview)

Kaylie regarded teachers' authoritarian way of teaching as the key factor to increase anxiety among language learners. Moreover, her suggestion to solve this problem was to decrease such anxiety through a friendly attitude that teachers could have. As students were more and more actively involved in the lesson, they would feel less stressed and anxious. In short, teacher's attitude was both the cause and the solution of language learner anxiety.

The second theme *Teachers* constitutes three sub-themes *Teachers' Attitudes*, *Instructional Practice* and *Teacher's Individual Characteristics*. Listed as the first sub-theme under *Teachers*, *Teachers' Attitudes* involves two codes *Feeling Self-confident* (f=4) and *Feeling Demotivated* (f=1). These two codes basically referred to the participants' feelings as to their teaching experiences. With regard to the first code *Feeling Self-confident*, the participants' excerpts about were provided as follows:

> [A teacher] *should have a confidence to cope with the difficulties in teaching adventure*. (Kaylie – E-mail interview)
>
> *If I am aware of the climate of my class, I get prepared accordingly and feel more confident, therefore, more productive and peaceful as I can see I have achieved with my classroom practices.* (Zak – E-mail interview)
>
> *Having these skills together with 20-year long experience gives me confidence*. (Felix)
>
> *I feel confident and comfortable about my teaching.* (Betty – E-mail interview)

The above instances communicated the sense of confidence in teachers and the possible effects of its existence. To illustrate, Kaylie underlined the necessity of having confidence as a teacher to be able to deal with the challenges which can be encountered throughout the teaching practice. Zak also displayed in detail how confidence could enable teachers to offer a better teaching service by pointing out the function of self-confidence in instructional practices. In addition to these roles of self-confidence, a different perspective was mentioned by Felix, who attributed self-confidence to his extensive experience in teaching. Another evidence of having self-confidence about teaching was also provided by Betty, who implied that she enjoyed a stress-free teaching experience as a consequence of having self-confidence.

On the other hand, the second code *Feeling Demotivated* was associated with lack of learners' participation by Sarah, whose motivation was adversely affected when she needed to have a more engaging lesson for her indifferent students. There was a barren cycle between her students' lack of participation and her loss of motivation.

> *In such cases, I teach the unit only by focusing on the topic and answering incoming questions. Plus, I lose my motivation and my enthusiasm to make the next lesson more interesting*. (Sarah – E-mail interview)

Under the second sub-theme *Instructional Practice*, participants' opinions were categorized into three codes as *Using Teaching Methods* (f=2), *Teaching Language Use* (f=2) and *Teaching Strategy* (f=1). Given the first code *Using Teaching Methods*, which consists of two sub-codes *Communicative Language Teaching* (f=1) and *Adopting Eclectic Method* (f=1), the relevant instances of the participants were given as follows:

> *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) must definitely constitute the pillars of our lesson design.* (Betty – E-mail interview)

> *Since language is communication, in our classes, we need to employ our eclectic method in which we integrate different methods, approaches and activities for students to learn and practice all fours skills in language: reading, writing, listening and speaking.* (Betty – E-mail interview)

Betty referred to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the first sub-code as the key aspect of our teaching upon which we can build up our lessons. She also explained how communication should be achieved in language classes in the second sub-code by stressing:

> *The role of integrating not only different teaching approaches and methods but also four main language skills to promote communication among learners in the target language.* (Betty – E-mail interview)

The second code *Teaching Language Use* were divided into two sub-codes *Role of Grammar* (f=1) and *Contextual Grammar Teaching* (f=1), and the participants shared their opinions about each as can be seen in the following excerpts:

> *The role of grammar cannot be underestimated but should be integrated within the activities and it always needs to be taught within a context.* (Betty – E-mail interview)

> *This concise description demonstrated that grammar needs to be taught through an integrative approach, and that teaching grammar without an appropriate context should be avoided by the language teachers.* (Betty – E-mail interview)

The third code *Teaching Strategy* was also pointed out by Betty, who maintained that the most appropriate teaching strategies can be adopted by language teachers in order to provide effective teaching for language learners.

> *As language teachers, we need to apply the best strategies to make our students learn and use the language effectively.* (Betty – E-mail interview)

Teachers' Individual Characteristics was the third sub-theme consisting of three codes *Having Communication Skills* (f=2), *Having Time Management Skills* (f=1) and *Having Decision Making Skills* (f=1). The following instances provide a deeper insight into how the participants perceived the above mentioned codes:

> *A teacher should have good communication skills with students and have a great impact on their lives.* (Kaylie – E-mail interview)

> *I suppose I have … communication* [and] *time management skills.* (Felix – E-mail interview)

Having years of experience … eases my decision making in my classes. (Felix – E-mail interview)

Kaylie highlighted the significance of having communication skills that could be set up between teachers and learners. It could also be inferred that the possible effect of having strong communication with learners was not limited to class hours only, spreading throughout students' lives. In addition to this statement, Felix was clearly aware of the above mentioned skills to provide effective teaching. In particular, he made an association between the work experience that he had and his decision making skills.

The third theme *Language Learning Context* involves two sub-themes *Language Teaching Materials* and *Learner-Centeredness*. The first theme *Language Teaching Materials* contains three codes *Authenticity* (f=1), *Being Interesting* (f=1) and *Preparation of Appropriate Materials* (f=1). The following excerpts were listed below in line with each code mentioned above:

Language teaching materials should really prepare [learners] *for real life.* (Betty – E-mail interview)

The material prepared for the lesson doesn't seem attractive to [the learners]. (Sarah – E-mail interview)

I am ready to provide them with the appropriate material in the appropriate time and amount. If I am aware of the climate of my class, I get prepared accordingly. (Zak – E-mail interview)

The first two codes mainly provide the features that language teaching materials are supposed to carry while the third one refers to teachers' consideration of appropriate materials. Betty held the belief that language teaching materials needed to satisfy learners' needs in real life. To this end, encouraging a communicative classroom environment was the key responsibility of teachers. In addition to Betty's communication-based approach, Sarah's perception of teaching materials pointed out the role of such materials in encouraging learners' active involvement. Accordingly, her students were not engaged in the lesson due to the teaching materials being uninteresting. As for the third code, Zak associated an effective lesson with designing teaching materials considering his learners' profile and needs.

The second sub-theme *Learner-Centeredness* encompasses two codes *Considering Learners' Individual Differences* (f=1) and *Using Appropriate Techniques for Learners* (f=1). Zak contributed to these codes with his statements as follows:

> *In order to create an effective classroom environment, the students should be put first, which means their individual differences are taken into consideration.* (Zak – E-mail interview)
>
> … *adopting appropriate techniques to their students.* (Zak – E-mail interview)

Zak believed that providing effective language teaching required teachers to take learners' personal differences into consideration throughout the teaching process. To achieve this aim, he also stressed that language teachers should be aware of the significance of making necessary modifications to make the materials fit the learners.

The fourth theme *Monitoring and Assessment* presented data as to how the participants perceived the way they monitored and assessed the learning outcomes through two sub-themes *Monitoring Learners* and *Testing Grammar in Context*. Felix and Betty shared their opinions on these two sub-codes below:

> *Observation of each student was crucial.* (Felix – E-mail interview)
>
> *Even exam items for testing grammar should always be asked within a given context*. (Betty – E-mail interview)

Felix emphasized the importance of observing learners during the lesson and monitoring them while they were doing an activity. Further, Betty, who previously highlighted the function of teaching grammar in context, referred to the features of test items that tested learners' knowledge of grammar and emphasized the way grammar should be taught and assessed via contextualized test items.

4.2.2. Turkish EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Online Classroom Management

The participants were also asked the second sub-question given below to obtain their perceptions of effective online classroom management.

What is your perception of effective online classroom management? How much control do you think you have over the classroom management strategies that you employ in your online classes? Why do you think so? How does it make you feel?

The collected data were closely analysed and presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2. *Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions of online classroom management*

Themes	Codes/Sub-codes	f	%
TEACHERS' ROLE IN EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT (f=13)	Ways of Planning Teaching and Learning	4	11,42
	• Learners' Needs Analysis	1	2,86
	• Setting Learning Objectives	1	2,86
	• Planning Teaching Content	1	2,86
	• Providing Necessary Equipment	1	2,86
	Guiding Learners	3	8,57
	Knowing Learners	2	5,71
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES (f=9)	Handling In-class Problems	3	8,57
	• Discipline	1	2,86
	• Classroom Rules	1	2,86
	• Handling Misbehaviour	1	2,86
	Creating Positive Classroom Environment	3	8,57
TEACHERS' INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS (f=5)	Personality Traits	2	5,71
	Having Classroom Management Skills	2	5,71
	Having Problem Solution Skills	1	2,86
TEACHERS' ATTITUDES (f=5)	Feeling Motivated	2	5,71
	Feeling Self-confident	2	5,71
	Feeling Satisfied	1	2,86
CHALLENGES IN ONLINE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT (f=3)	Being Unfamiliar with Online Education	1	2,86
	Differences in Classroom Management between Face to Face and Online Education	1	2,86
	Facing Problems in Online Classes	1	2,86
Total		**35**	**100**

As shown in Table 4.2, data obtained from the participants were categorized under five themes listed as *Teachers' Role in Effective Classroom Management* (f=13), *Classroom Management Strategies* (f=9), *Teachers' Individual Characteristics* (f=5), *Teachers' Attitudes* (f=5) and *Challenges in Online Classroom Management* (f=3).

The first theme *Teachers' Role in Effective Classroom Management* encompasses three codes *Ways of Planning Teaching and Learning* (f=4), *Guiding Learners* (f=3) and *Knowing Learners* (f=2). The following excerpt displayed how

planning teaching and learning played a crucial role in promoting effective classroom environment:

> *In effective classroom management, teacher can decide the needs of her students, set the aims, plan inputs of learning and powering the learning with necessary equipment*. (Kaylie – E-mail interview)

Kaylie regarded the course planning based on learners' needs and learning outcomes as the key to effective classroom management. Her statement involved the four sub-codes *Learners' Needs Analysis* (f=1), *Setting Learning Objectives* (f=1), *Planning Teaching Content* (f=1) and *Providing Necessary Equipment* (f=1).

Given the second code *Guiding Learners*, the participants shared their opinions as stated below:

> C*lassroom management is an important issue for the success of the class but the teacher actually needs to be the guide for the students instead of the authority*. (Betty – E-mail interview)

> *Managing a language classroom is not just shepherding a group students enrolled for a class*. (Felix – E-mail interview)

> *Also, I am in contact with my students for academic purposes after class time, too … to lead them to go further academically*. (Zak – E-mail interview)

When the above mentioned statements were taken into account, it could be concluded that guiding learners was the key role that teachers played in promoting effective classroom management. For instance, Betty refused to have an absolute authority over the class and stressed that learners should be guided in order to help them achieve in a language classroom. Similarly, Felix implied that effective classroom management was beyond simply instructing learners what to do. Instead, they should be given a room to improve their language skills through effective guidance provided by the teacher. Further, providing learners with guidance outside the class for their academic progress was mentioned by Zak, who believed that contacting learners only in class hours would not be enough for an effective classroom management. Thus, such guidance should be extended so that learners would benefit from their teachers outside the class hours.

Participants also shared their opinions on the third code, which stressed the role of knowing students in managing the class effectively. Felix and Zak shared their opinions on how knowing students helped them have effective classroom management as follows:

> *Considering learners' personal differences…* (Felix – E-mail interview)
>
> *Spending time with students helps me know my students better*. (Zak – E-mail interview)

Felix put on an individualistic approach to classroom management rather than a holistic one as he referred to *personal differences* of the learners. He regarded learners as individuals with their unique personality traits and feelings. Zak agreed with Felix in the way he regarded students as individuals and maintained that creating opportunities to get to know his students better would definitely help him enjoy effective classroom management.

The second theme *Classroom Management Strategies* involves two codes *Handling In-class Problems* (f=3) and *Creating Positive Classroom Environment* (f=3). The participants' opinions about the first code are categorized as three sub-codes *Discipline* (f=1), *Classroom Rules* (f=1) and *Handling Misbehaviour* (f=1) and given below in the same order:

> *Classroom management is not only related to creating discipline in class but also engaging students in and outside class to be an active and responsible learner for their learning (both in face to face and online classes)*. (Betty – E-mail interview)
>
> *I try to instil communication and set of behaviours according to some basic classroom rules which are clearly defined and presented at the very beginning of the school year.* (Felix – E-mail interview)
>
> *My response to malicious behaviour in the classroom is not usually excessive… I also have some lines in the class, and if they are crossed, it is possible that I will react. When something like this happens, students compare my reaction "before" and "after" and see the severity of the situation.* (Sarah – E-mail interview)

Betty combined maintaining in-class discipline and encouraging learners' active involvement in order to manage her classes effectively by highlighting the ultimate responsibility that the learners should take for their learning. Similarly, Felix emphasized the importance of promoting expected student behaviours through clearly set classroom rules. Here, such key concepts as communication, clear instructions and the beginning of the school year positively added to the effectiveness of classroom rules in encouraging expected student behaviours. Further, Sarah's approach to handing misbehaviour depended on her principles as a teacher. It can also be concluded that she aimed to shape expected student behaviour by avoiding a direct way of confronting such misbehaviour in class.

The second code *Creating Positive Classroom Environment* consisted of the participants' opinions on friendly classroom environment. Instances for various ways of creating such a friendly classroom environment were listed as follows:

> *Caring students helps me to build a strong bridge between me and my students*. (Betty – E-mail interview)
>
> *... building rapport and good communication among the students.* (Felix – E-mail interview)
>
> *The relation with students in and out of the classroom is crucial for a peaceful classroom environment.* (Zak – E-mail interview)

With her statement, Betty referred to a bridge that linked her to her students by considering her students' opinions, feelings and attitudes. Another similar approach towards a peaceful environment was suggested by Felix, who stressed the significance of promoting effective communication in class. It was through these efforts that learners would enjoy a friendly atmosphere during their learning process, which could somehow contribute to their achievement. In addition to such in-class strategies adopted by the participants, Zak's approach to creating a positive classroom environment was beyond the borders of the classroom, and he also tried to achieved it by maintaining contact with his students outside the class.

The third theme *Teachers' Individual Characteristics* is composed of three codes *Personality Traits* (f=2), *Having Classroom Management Skills* (f=2) and *Having Problem Solution Skills* (f=1). Regarding the first code *Personality Traits*, the

participants commented on their characteristics from different points of views as follows:

> *Being very patient and listening to them are other key elements* [in effective classroom management] ... *When it comes to implementing the rules and wait for expected behaviour, I am a patient teacher and get the result sooner or later.* (Felix – E-mail interview)
>
> *Classroom management requires commitment… I am tolerant, flexible but consistent in my implementations*. (Zak – E-mail interview)

Felix believed patience and caring students were among the most significant features for teachers who desired to manage their classes effectively. In particular, he was sure that he achieved his goals in encouraging expected learner behaviour in class. Zak agreed with Felix and argued that being committed to the requirements of effective classroom management was one of his personality traits which played an important role in achieving his goal in this respect. Such a commitment also required tolerance, flexibility and consistency in the long run.

The participants also referred to the second code *Having Classroom Management Skills* by highlighting the skills that they possessed to manage the class effectively. The below instances were listed to provide a deeper insight into the second code:

> *I suppose I have classroom management skills*. (Felix – E-mail interview)
>
> *It can be said that the concrete control of the teacher in the classroom should be lessened in order to make the learning environment more opened to the conflict of minds to get a better sense of learning*. (Kaylie – E-mail interview)

Unlike Felix's general comment regarding having classroom management skills, Kaylie's approach to these skills uncovered the crucial influence of teachers' control on promoting student learning in class. She implied that teachers should be able to manage the degree of control that they have in class in a way that learners could have a chance to challenge their learning process to achieve better in language classes.

Finally, Zak referred to the third code *Having Problem Solution Skills,* and his statement below illustrated how he perceived his problem solving skills:

I find the problems occurring in the classroom as puzzles, which can/should be solved. (Zak – E-mail interview)

Rather than feel disheartened by the in-class problems, Zak developed an understanding regarding how to cope with such problems. Considering them as puzzles to be solved clearly showed a positive attitude towards combatting any problem that could be faced in his classes.

The fourth theme *Teachers' Attitudes* involved the participants' attitudes towards their classroom management under three codes *Feeling Motivated* (f=2), *Feeling Self-confident* (f=2) and *Feeling Satisfied* (f=1). Given the first code *Feeling Motivated*, the statements of the participants about classroom management were given as follows:

Feeling positive about classroom management makes me feel more motivated. (Zak – E-mail interview)

Classroom management is a great inspiration and motivation for me as most of the teaching professionals. (Betty – E-mail interview)

Zak held a positive attitude towards classroom management and stated that it was a source of motivation for him. A similar attitude was mentioned by Betty, who viewed classroom management as inspiring and motivating. Both participants implicitly argued that without sufficient motivation and inspiration, classroom management would be a real challenge for them.

With regard to the second code *Feeling Self-confident,* Betty underlined the confidence she had in managing classroom, suggesting:

I feel self-confident about [classroom management] *as a language lecturer.* (Betty – E-mail interview)

Apart from feeling motivated and inspired, Betty's self-confidence was also another key attitude towards effective classroom management.

Finally, Zak implied in the third code *Feeling Satisfied* that the reason why teachers felt inspired and motivated while managing their classes lay in the level of satisfaction they had. To this end, Zak maintained that:

This makes me feel more satisfied and think "I deserve what I've got". (Zak – E-mail interview)

The end result made this challenging process of classroom management more rewarding for Zak.

The fifth theme *Challenges in Online Classroom Management* contained three codes *Being Unfamiliar with Online Education* (f=1), *Differences in Classroom Management between Face to Face and Online Education* (f=1) and *Facing Problems in Online Classes* (f=1). Sarah pointed out all these codes in her statements provided below:

In online education, when I face difficult situations, there are times that I think about what I should do because this type of education is a system that I am not used to. (Sarah – E-mail interview)

There are significant differences between classroom management in face-to-face education and online education. (Sarah – E-mail interview)

Considering Sarah's arguments, it can be concluded that with the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic she experienced hard times getting used to online classroom management. What made things worse for her was the differences between managing classroom in online and face-to-face classes due to their peculiarities.

4.2.3. Turkish EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Development in the Online Setting

During the pre-stage of the current study, the participants were asked the third sub-question given below with regard to their perception of professional development in the online setting:

What is your attitude towards professional development in the online setting? How much control do you think you have over deciding on which training you need? Why do you think so? How does it make you feel?

The participants' responses to the third sub-question were analysed, and relevant themes and codes were presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. *Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions of professional development in the online setting*

Themes	Codes/Sub-codes	f	%
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (f=17)	Lifelong Learning	5	10,64
	Teachers' Positive Attitudes	4	8,50
	Keeping up to date	3	6,38
	Developing Teacher Knowledge	2	4,25
	Teachers' Professional Revitalization	2	4,25
	Setting Goals for Professional Development	1	2,13
CONSTRAINTS IN RECEIVING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES (f=14)	Time Constraints	3	6,38
	• Considering Lesson Planning	1	2,13
	• Considering Curriculum Needs	1	2,13
	• Having Busy Workload	1	2,13
	Financial Constraints	1	2,13
	• Having limited Budget for PD Activities	1	2,13
	Influence of Constraints on Teachers	3	6,38
	• Teachers' Lack of Motivation	1	2,13
	• Decline in Teacher Reflection	1	2,13
	• Decline in Receiving PD Activities	1	2,13
WAYS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (f=9)	Receiving Professional Development Activities	5	10,64
	Being a Member of Community of Practice	1	2,13
	Experiential Learning	1	2,13
	Doing Action Research	1	2,13
	Reflecting on Teaching	1	2,13
INFLUENCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES (f=7)	Mirroring Teachers' Weaknesses	3	6,38
	Mirroring Teachers' Strengths	2	4,25
	Mirroring Teachers' Needs	1	2,13
	Helping Teachers Provide Effective Feedback to Learners	1	2,13
Total		**47**	**100**

Table 4.3 displays data obtained from the participants that were categorized under four themes *Continuing Professional Development* (f=17)*, Constraints in Receiving Professional Development Activities* (f=14)*, Ways of Professional Development* (f=9) and *Influence of Professional Development Activities* (f=7).

The first theme *Continuing Professional Development* consists of the participants' perceptions of professional development as a never-ending process and is divided into six codes *Lifelong Learning* (f=5), *Teachers' Positive Attitudes* (f=4), *Keeping up to date* (f=3), *Developing Teacher Knowledge* (f=2), *Teachers' Professional Revitalization* (f=2) and *Setting Goals for Professional Development* (f=1). All the participants referred to the first code *Lifelong Learning* and agreed that lifelong learning is the key to professional development:

Teaching is a lifelong learning. (Betty – E-mail interview)

These practices should be lifelong. (Zak – E-mail interview)

A teacher should ask himself "Is the teaching and learning adventure a constant phenomenon?" (Kaylie – E-mail interview)

In short, we cannot stop learning during our working life. (Felix – E-mail interview)

I see [professional development activities] *as food for life in this rapidly changing world and work life.* (Felix – E-mail interview)

Betty pointed out teaching as a process by which teachers are expected to refresh the way they teach. Like teaching, participating in the professional development activities was regarded as a lifelong process by Zak as well. Similarly, Kaylie combined both teaching and learning and advised that teachers must be engaged in this never-ending process. Also, in his statements, Felix attracted attention to two key issues regarding lifelong learning: *Nature and Nurture.* He referred to the former by highlighting the nature of learning. He also stressed the latter in his above statement and implied that professional development nurtures teachers and widens their horizons.

Given the second code *Teachers' Positive Attitudes*, relevant instances of the participants were provided as follows:

I am happy about professional development. (Betty – E-mail interview)

I think very positively about PD Trainings. (Sarah – E-mail interview)

I have always taken part in professional development activities eagerly. (Felix)

This truth makes me feel I have a worthwhile experience. (Zak – E-mail interview)

As can be inferred from the above statements, the participants met on the common ground as they perceived professional development positively. It can also be concluded that they were open to developing professionally, and this professional development was intrinsically motivated. For instance, Felix's enthusiasm and Zak's "worthwhile" clearly demonstrated that they took the pleasure of any kind of professional development practices.

In addition, the third code *Keeping up to date* demonstrated how the participants viewed staying up to date in their teaching career:

> *After the graduation, there are lots of teachers who don't follow the trends.* (Kaylie – E-mail interview)

> *I do not want to be left behind in the field of education.* (Sarah – E-mail interview)

Kaylie was critical of most teachers' lack of enough participation in professional development activities to keep up with the current changes in their fields as of their graduation. Unlike this criticism, Sarah shared her enthusiasm about pursuing current trends in her field.

The participants also shared their perceptions of the fourth code *Developing Teacher Knowledge*. Felix was aware that:

> [I had] *subject knowledge in order to provide effective teaching*. (Felix – E-mail interview)

In a broader sense, Zak drew an analogy between the overall quality of the instructional system and that of the teachers by suggesting that:

> *I am strongly after the motto "an education system is as good as its teachers"*. (Zak – E-mail interview)

This motto revealed his perception of the close association between teacher knowledge and the quality of instructional system.

As for the fifth code, the following excerpts were listed to bring a clear insight into *Teachers' Professional Revitalization*:

> *These things make me feel like teaching is like being a phoenix which burns itself and reborn from its own ashes.* (Felix – E-mail interview)

> *I must continuously renew myself to reach these goals.* (Sarah – E-mail interview)

The phoenix metaphor was alluded by Felix, who viewed his continuing professional development as a rebirth. He stressed the influence of professional development activities on his teaching in his statement. Likewise, Sarah, who set

objectives for her professional development, was aware that the only way to her goals was through refreshing herself with the help of various activities designed for professional development.

At his point, Sarah also mentioned her plans for her career in the short and long run by referring to the last code *Setting Goals for Professional Development* by suggesting that:

> *I have long-term and short-term goals for my profession*. (Sarah – E-mail interview)

The second theme *Constraints in Receiving Professional Development Activities* involves three codes *Time Constraints* (f=3), *Financial Constraints* (f=1) and *Influence of Constraints on Teachers* (f=3). The first code *Time Constraints* was divided into three sub-codes as *Considering Lesson Planning* (f=1), *Considering Curriculum Needs* (f=1) and *Having Busy Workload* (f=1). Felix's statement regarding these sub-codes are presented as follows:

> *School managers have to consider the lesson planning and curriculum needs. Although they sometimes have the budget and will to send some teachers for professional development courses, they cannot do it because of the tight schedules*. (Felix – E-mail interview)

Felix pointed out school administrators' approach towards receiving professional development activities and stressed there was not enough time for such activities due to school works. Owing to lesson planning, curriculum needs and busy workload, teachers failed to be involved in these activities.

As for the second code *Financial Constraints*, Felix criticized the institutions due to lack of their financial supports for teachers. Together with time constraints that teachers had, financial burden of such trainings held in different cities also hindered teachers' participations in these events. At this point, Felix expressed that:

> *Trainings are usually in other cities or paid ones which have to be covered by your own budget or a small budget which is never enough provided by the institution*. (Felix – E-mail interview)

The third code *Influence of Constraints on Teachers* provided data regarding the adverse effects of the constraints mentioned above under three sub-codes *Teachers' Lack of Motivation* (f=1), *Decline in Teacher Reflection* (f=1) and *Decline in Receiving PD Activities* (f=1). The following excerpt clearly displayed how these constraints influenced teachers' active involvement in professional development activities:

> *This situation usually gives the teachers feeling that they cannot go to these programs because of the factors, so* [they cannot] *focus on their professional shortcomings… In the long run, this turns into a vicious circle (activity – cannot join), and reflection and considering personal or professional development decrease*. (Felix – E-mail interview)

It is apparent that the more constraints, whether time or financial, teacher faced throughout their teaching process, the less motivated the became in time. As a consequence, they were so discouraged that they even appeared in such professional trainings less and less.

The third theme *Ways of Professional Development* involves five codes *Receiving Professional Development Activities* (f=5)*, Being a Member of Community of Practice* (f=1)*, Experiential Learning* (f=1)*, Doing Action Research* (f=1) and *Reflecting on Teaching* (f=1). The relevant statements were provided as follows:

> *I have always done my best to attend trainings, seminars and conferences for language teaching* (Betty – E-mail interview)
>
> *I have always taken part in professional development activities.* (Felix – E-mail interview)
>
> *Teachers must receive professional development practices throughout their teaching service.* (Zak – E-mail interview)
>
> *… receive professional development trainings such as having a problem in classroom management or giving written feedback and getting courses in this area.* (Kaylie – E-mail interview)
>
> *I also participate in online trainings whenever I find the time*. (Sarah – E-mail interview)

All of the participants contributed to the first code through various points of views. For instance, Betty and Felix emphasized their efforts to receive a variety of professional development activities. While Betty gave details as to what kind of activities she received, Felix's statement displayed a broader approach towards receiving professional development activities. Furthermore, Zak highlighted the necessity for teachers to be involved in such activities. More specifically, Kaylie recommended language teachers that they should focus on particular areas and develop themselves accordingly through these professional development activities. In addition to these recommendations, Sarah held a different standing related to the professional development activities and pointed out the practicality of receiving online trainings depending on teachers' availability.

In terms of the second code *Being a Member of Community of Practice*, the importance of being involved in community of practice was stressed by Betty, who claimed that:

> *It is important to share experiences with colleagues and learn from the experiences of others*. (Betty – E-mail interview)

It was through such a process of exchanging experiences that teachers improved their teaching skills; in other words, as Betty put it, sharing and learning from others' experiences contributed to teachers' expertise throughout their practice.

Apart from the exchange of experience among teachers, *Experiential Learning* as the third code suggests was also referred to by Zak, who reported that:

> *It is undeniable truth that teachers get the majority of their expertise from their teaching process*. (Zak – E-mail interview)

It was suggested by this argument that teachers could benefit from their own experiences in order to maintain their professional development.

Another key to professional development was expressed by Betty, who referred to the fourth code *Doing Action Research* by remarking that:

> *Teachers' learning might also be supported through action research*. (Betty – E-mail interview)

It was concluded that doing action research could add to teachers' professional development in which teachers took active role in enhancing their experience by gaining a deeper insight into their teaching practice.

Finally, the last code *Reflecting on Teaching* displayed another way of professional development, namely teachers' reflection on their teaching. At this point, Felix reported that:

> *I like reflecting on my classes. This is sometimes one or two sentences written on my notebook, or it is sometimes just a five-minute thinking and flashback on my sessions.* (Felix – E-mail interview)

There was no specific way of reflecting on teaching as Felix maintained. The main point here was to stop and ponder on what had been experienced during the lesson.

The fourth theme *Influence of Professional Development Activities* consisting of four codes *Mirroring Teachers' Weaknesses* (f=3), *Mirroring Teachers' Strengths* (f=2), *Mirroring Teachers' Needs* (f=1) and *Helping Teachers Provide Effective Feedback to Learners* (f=1) demonstrates in what ways receiving professional development activities helped the participants find out their weaknesses, strengths and professional needs. As the first three codes are closely connected to each other, the relevant instances of the participants are listed below together:

> *If a teacher experiences a problem, he/she realizes the lacks at this point*. (Kaylie – E-mail interview)

> *Since I don't have much experience, I am more aware of what I am good at and bad at*. (Sarah – E-mail interview)

> *Professional development activities as mirrors which reflect all my mistakes, needs and qualifications.* (Zak – E-mail interview)

Kaylie's statement given above focused on problems encountered in class that could be turned into an opportunity to realize teachers' weaknesses. In addition, Sarah, who was at the beginning of her teaching career, implied that being a novice teacher was not an obstacle for her. Rather, this encouraged her to learn more since she realized better her strengths and weaknesses. As a more experienced teacher compared to

Sarah, Zak also mentioned the positive impacts of being involved in professional development activities on his self-realization of mistakes he made and needs and qualifications he possessed.

Given the fourth code *Helping Teachers Provide Effective Feedback to Learners*, Sarah shared her experience with regard to her immediate need to improve her skills to provide learners with effective feedback and expressed that:

> *I think I need to improve myself in giving verbal and written feedback because after giving feedback to students, I sense a negative atmosphere in the classroom*. (Sarah – E-mail interview)

The atmosphere that Sarah felt following the feedback caused her to realize that she must develop the way she provides her learners effective feedback.

4.3. Results of Research Question #2: *What do Turkish EFL Teachers Reflect during Online Classes?*

During the while-stage of the present study, the participants were asked to write reflective journals about any critical point they encountered throughout their online classes process over a 15-week period according to Gibbs' six-step reflective cycle (See Appendix C). The reflective journals that provided data for the second research question were collected through emails from the participants and analysed inductively. The collected data were categorized into six steps as *Description*, *Feelings and Thoughts, Evaluation*, *Analysis*, *Conclusion* and *Action Plan* in line with Gibbs' reflective cycle, and the findings were presented through Tables 4.4 – 4.9 respectively, followed by the participants' relevant statements so as to provide a clearer understanding of their reflection.

4.3.1. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle: Description

Description, the first step of Gibbs' six-step reflective cycle, provided information regarding the critical points on which the participants reflected during online classes. The participants reflected on a variety of critical points including, but not limited to, online teaching skills, online classroom management and professional

development in the online setting. Data obtained from the reflective journals regarding the first step were presented below as demonstrated in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. *Description: What critical points Turkish EFL teachers reflected on*

Themes	Codes/Sub-codes	f	%
CHALLENGES OF DISTANCE EDUCATION (f=9)	Lack of Digital Competence	3	8,57
	Challenges in Online Classroom Management	2	5,71
	Tracking Learners	2	5,71
	Lack of Technical Equipment	1	2,85
	Having Extra Workload	1	2,85
LEARNER ENGAGEMENT (f=8)	Participation	3	8,57
	Motivation	2	5,71
	Guiding learners	2	5,71
	Attendance	1	2,85
ENHANCING LEARNERS' PRODUCTIVE SKILLS (f=8)	Improving Speaking Skills	3	8,57
	Improving Writing Skills	2	5,71
	Correcting Errors	2	5,71
	Providing Feedback	1	2,85
LANGUAGE LEARNERS' INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS (f=6)	Having Anxiety	3	8,57
	Showing Resistance	2	5,71
	Being Indifferent	1	2,85
COMMUNICATION (f=2)	Communication among Teachers	1	2,85
	Communication with Learners	1	2,85
FACTORS AFFECTING LANGUAGE LEARNING (f=2)	Lack of Linguistic Competence in L1 and L2	1	2,85
	Disregarding the Context in Questions	1	2,85
Total		**35**	**100**

Table 4.4 displays data collected from the participants under six themes as *Challenges of Distance Education* (f=9)*, Learner Engagement* (f=8)*, Enhancing Learners' Productive Skills* (f=8)*, Language Learners' Individual Characteristics* (f=6)*, Communication* (f=2) and *Factors Affecting Language Learning* (f=2).

Under the first theme *Challenges of Distance Education*, five codes emerged as *Lack of Digital Competence* (f=3), *Challenges in Online Classroom Management* (f=2), *Tracking Learners* (f=2), *Lack of Technical Equipment* (f=1) and *Having Extra workload* (f=1). The first code *Lack of Digital Competence* was pointed out by the

participants, who commented on the troubles experienced in writing classes. During the online writing classes, learners were expected to upload their writing assignments onto the system (OBS) every two weeks. The following instances pointed out what the participants faced related to the first code:

> *At this point, when the students tried to submit their assignments, they had lack of some technological and informational competence.* (Kaylie – Journal 1)

> *This assumingly very simple and "familiar" process turned into a chaos during and after the class time as they could not get the idea of uploading a file to the system.* (Zak – Journal 3).

The above statements indicated that teachers had problems with time management owing to the fact that they had to spend a long time explaining to their learners how to handle the task. Meanwhile, the content that was supposed to be covered had to be delayed as teachers had to demonstrate their students how to upload the writing tasks. Besides, Zak, who asked their learners to write a short paragraph and upload it into the system, showed to what extent a simple task could become complicated, even creating a chaos in class. In short, learners' lack of digital competence caused big troubles in online classes.

Challenges in Online Classroom Management was the second code on which two participants commented. Their statements were provided as follows:

> *A student was talking in the background loudly. Me and the other students were discussing about the questions and the student A interrupted us and started to answer all of the questions in line…. Two of the students started to grumble, giving examples of the student A's misbehaviours. I stopped the students kindly and warned them not to talk about their friends' like this.* (Kaylie – Journal 4)

> *I had an incident with a school bully last week. The incident was interesting and is worth writing about because this student has been bullying his friends through online tools. During the semester we have to get ready for the end of the term Speaking Project. This needs exchanging emails and PPTs with the students in the class. One student was constantly making fun of his classmates' PPTs. He continued this by sending them email and WhatsApp messages.* (Felix – Journal 3)

Such a learner interference as Kaylie experienced with the ongoing lesson put the teacher and the other learners in class in a difficult position as it would be harder to control such misbehaviour online than face to face classes. Likewise, Felix highlighted an example of a bully who was disturbing his friends in online classes. In both cases, the participants' lessons were interfered by misbehaviours of the learners, causing the teachers to have difficulty in managing the online classroom.

The third code *Tracking Learners* was also touched on by two participants, and the relevant instances of the participants were presented as follows:

> *I asked my class (Elementary level Prep class) whether any of the students had done online activities of their course book but I noticed that nobody had done that.* (Betty – Journal 2)

> *I was not able to grade some students because of two things. First, I was only teaching them once a week two lessons (80 minutes). Secondly, I was not able to remember their face, voice or participation. I had to ask two other teachers whom we were teaching together.* (Felix – Journal 5)

Regarding Betty's experience, Betty had assigned the students the online platform of the coursebook as it was the only chance for learners to keep up with the content covered in online classes. However, she encountered a negative outcome as she was controlling whether the assignments were done. In addition to this kind of tracking during the learning process, Felix underwent a similar experience at the end of the term rather than during the process. Learners were given a grade for their overall participation by their teacher at the end of each term, and crucial handicaps as stated above prevented Felix from registering his students' participation grades as required. Though some administrative obstacles were involved in this experience, he was able to collaborate with his partners to find a solution to the problem.

The fourth code *Lack of Technical Equipment* was referred to by Betty, who was invigilating her students during the final exam. She reported that:

> *One of the students had a problem with his camera.* (Betty – Journal 4)

It had been institutionally decided that students' exams would be invalid without a properly functioning camera. Therefore, it was a critical point for her to reflect on.

As the fifth code, *Having Extra Workload* was mentioned by Zak, whose administrative role in the school necessitated his uploading the timetables for each class and all teachers onto the relevant system of the school, which cost Zak much more time and energy than face to face education. He implicitly complained about the situation by stating that:

> *I had to upload the new timetables to our management system (OBS) Learning Management System (OYS), which took quite a lot of time.* (Zak – Journal 6)

The second theme was *Learner Engagement* involving four codes *Participation* (f=3), *Motivation* (f=2), *Guiding Learners* (f=1) and *Attendance* (f=1). Given the first code *Participation*, the participants' following statements clarified their experiences:

> *In the online education system, which many of us didn't experience before, I encountered some difficulties. For example, recently, especially in morning classes, students ' participation is relatively low. They don't want to answer even the most straightforward question* (Sarah – Journal 1).

> *Most of my students were not that eager to join with their microphone and camera on… However, I realised that especially two of my students had attended with no participation at all. I was sure that they were in virtual classroom, typing on the chat box. First, I thought that there was a problem with the camera and mic. To prove it, I wanted one of them to do the activity, so that I could hear her. When she unmuted it, I could hear the sound and she hardly did the activity successfully but with a very low tone of voice. I asked her if she could turn on the camera if she* [didn't] *mind just like all her other friends in the classroom, but she rejected and left the meeting a few minutes later. I could not get the point.* (Zak – Journal 1)

The participants basically agreed that learner participation in online sessions was related to students' lack of motivation to take part in the activities as well as their reluctance to use their microphones and cameras during lessons. As Sarah pointed out,

her learners could not survive even daily conversations. This usual problem occasionally turned out to be a bigger one especially when learners were asked to turn on their cameras and microphones during the lessons. Their reactions to this request would go beyond teachers' control as Zak described his experience.

Motivation was the second code discussed by two participants, whose statements regarding how to motivate their students were listed below:

> *I explained him the importance of attending and following his classes regularly. When he also found out that there is a participation grade teachers give for each student then he tried to show himself more in the class* (Betty – Journal 3).

> *Throughout this period students' level of motivation has fluctuated: at the beginning the enthusiastic students are now less willing, and the silent students are more motivated, which is an expected reality of classroom environment. However, for the last two weeks, I have realised that majority of the students are less enthusiastic to participate; they are there following the lesson, answering my questions, but cameras are mostly off, and less eager to participate in discussions.* (Zak – Journal 4)

In a conversation with one of her students who had problems with attendance and participation, Betty found a way to help her student recover his motivation. In addition to the significance of attendance and participation, the function of instrumental motivation was highlighted. Similarly, Zak's statement indicated that the nature of motivation was destroyed towards the end of the term, especially when learners and teachers were not sharing the same physical classroom environment. This negative situation was directly reflected on learners' low participation in online classes.

Sarah's assistance to one of her students who lacked computer skills exemplified the third code *Guiding Learners.* She stated that:

> *I showed her the steps to do by screen sharing. In addition, in the previous weeks she was sending the file in word format, but I can only write feedback in pdf format.* (Sarah – Journal 2)

The fourth code *Attendance* was pointed out by Betty, who showed what learners' lack of attendance could cause. She reported that:

> *One of my students… was not able to attend some classes and also missed the mid-term exam.* (Betty – Journal 3)

The third theme was *Enhancing Learners' Productive Skills*, which included four codes *Improving Speaking Skills* (f=3), *Improving Writing Skills* (f=2)*, Correcting Errors* (f=2) and *Providing Feedback* (f=1). *Improving Speaking Skills* was the most frequently mentioned code by the participants that reported that:

> *It was the last Mini Presentation day, and we created the breakout rooms for students, gave their topics for speaking. After some time for preparation, I started visiting the rooms to see if they were helping each other.* (Felix – Journal 6)

> *Even though I introduced guidelines on how to prepare an effective presentation, I noticed that a couple of groups were not able to prepare it in a successful way.* (Betty – Journal 6)

> *Although the students were upper class students, one of the students was reading the words incorrectly and there were serious problems with his pronunciation. His emphasis on words stemmed from his inter-language transfers. I just thought it might be the cause of the problem. The first cause of the problem was that the student did little reading and listening both in the native language and the target language.* (Kaylie – Journal 6)

During a mini presentation session, Felix was checking whether his students were collaborating in Breakout rooms in Zoom. Tracking learners, especially during the preparation period prior to an oral presentation, was regarded quite significant by Betty as well. She encountered a problem while she was monitoring her students. Betty had already highlighted the importance of effective presentation, yet some of her students were having difficulty in organizing their speeches. Upon facing such problems, teachers were ready to take a step to overcome them as Kaylie mentioned in her statement. Though it seemed that the experience was about a reading class, it was actually related to how the correct pronunciation was supposed to be. Kaylie also held an analytical approach to find out the exact reasons for the problem.

As for the second code *Improving Writing Skills*, Kaylie noted that as new features were added to educational technology, the differences between face-to-face and online classes were about to disappear in terms of writing classes. Kaylie mentioned her satisfaction of applying group activities in online writing sessions as she put it:

> *In writing class, I experienced the breakout room feature of Zoom last week. I used this for group writing activity. Normally, group activities work in face to face education, but lately, in online education, it has become hard to apply such kind of activities in these platforms. With the help of this feature, students felt engaged in writing activity.* (Kaylie – Journal 2)

Correcting Errors, as the third code, was one of the most common issues that the participants had to handle. For instance, Kaylie had difficulty as to how she was supposed to approach repetitive cases of mispronunciation and described the moment as follows:

> *I had to deal with the student's mistakes because they were multiple and repetitive mistakes, but since it is difficult to correct errors in online education, I had to choose an indirect and subtle way. In order to maintain the flow of the passage and utterance, I reformulated the sentence into correct version. When I asked a few other students a question, I realized that some of them were also suffering from the same problem. These students were English Language Teaching students and have never emphasized on pronunciation until now.* (Kaylie – Journal 6)

Providing Feedback was also reported as the fourth code by Felix, who had a feedback session after he elicited some mistakes in learners' writing assignments. As he was trying to find the best way to inform his students about their mistakes, he encountered an unexpected event. He expressed that:

> *I had an interesting incident during my Writing class last week. This is an A2 group and we teach them types of paragraphs. I was trying to give them feedback on general mistakes I was encountering throughout the whole semester. Until that moment, I was taking example sentences from the students' papers and writing them on a separate A4 paper and sharing that page on*

> *Zoom. That week, I tried to change the feedback session and identified a paper which I thought had all types of mistakes I needed to focus on. I contacted the student and got his permission to share it with the classmates. However, presentation of those mistakes and trying to better their writing skills failed. It failed because the students started picking on each.* (Felix – Journal 2)

Language Learners' Individual Characteristics was the fourth theme encompassing three codes *Having Anxiety* (f=3)*, Showing Resistance* (f=2) and *Being Indifferent* (f=1). Three participants referred to *Having Anxiety,* as the first code, in their statements below as a factor affecting learners' sense of achievement:

> *Even though all students are at elementary level, a student finds himself very weak in English and does not feel comfortable with speaking but he still tried to arrange his talk for some time.* (Betty – Journal 1)

> *In these mini-presentations, students talk about some topics spontaneously. A student said he could not speak in English due to feeling anxious. He wanted to get 0 instead of speaking in English for 2 or 3 minutes.* (Sarah – Journal 5)

> *When the student* [finally] *joined, he was trying to speak too quickly and very nervously to breathe. I noticed that his tone of voice was very tense, stressful and excited. He confessed that he was, before I asked. First, I graciously told the student that we would just talk, there was no need to be nervous, and gradually I started asking questions to relieve his tension.* (Kaylie – Journal 5)

While learners were at a mini presentation session held periodically to encourage learners to speak spontaneously, Betty mentioned one of her student's speaking anxiety. Likewise, Sarah gave her account about a student who was so discouraged by his anxiety that he was not able to complete his speech. Besides, connection problems in online sessions also worsened the situation. After such a problem, Kaylie described the undesired impacts of having a high level of anxiety during the speaking exam. The way Kaylie tried to relieve the student also indicated that she was quite experienced to handle such a situation with ease.

Another critical point was reported by Kaylie, who was in a difficult situation when one of her students showed resistance against the correct answer. She described the situation by referring to the second code *Showing Resistance*:

> *Later, when his/her turn, the student* [gave] *the wrong answer. I told her/him that he/she should try again by rethinking, by reminding the rules and time expressions to let him/her remember the structure. Despite this, the student persistently claimed that the answer is correct.* (Kaylie – Journal 4)

The last code *Being Indifferent* was observed by one of the participants. Learners' indifference to a crucial piece of information related to grading made Felix share his experience as follows:

> *I realized something strange. Some students were asking their friends if they were going to get marks for final grade or not. I felt like I did not inform them well about the grading system. Then, I checked my checklist but I saw that I informed them.* (Felix – Journal 6)

The fifth theme *Communication* was handled in two different aspects in the study. One was related to the first code *Communication among Teachers* (f=1). Face to face communication was overvalued by Felix, who was critical of online communication tools such as *WhatsApp*. He explained that:

> *Last week, we had a communication problem within the Pre-Intermediate Integrated skills teachers. We as teachers in the same group started discussing the pacing schedule through WhatsApp messaging. At the end of the discussion we realized how difficult it can be to understand each other without face to face contact.* (Felix – Journal 1)

In addition to the problem with communication among colleagues, *Communication with Learners* (f=1) was also pointed out as the second code by Sarah, who was in favour of face to face communication as she claimed she could see the gestures and the body language of whomever she would talk to. When a student of hers asked permission to leave the online session, she was confused since she had no idea about the student. She remarked that:

> *I didn't see her facial expression as she didn't turn on her camera.* (Sarah – Journal 3)

Further, in another journal, Sarah underlined a critical point in which one of her students and she couldn't keep the conversation going any longer. According to her description of the event:

> *There is a student in the classroom who never speaks. He does not refuse to participate in the lesson, however he only responds to the question. This started to become an issue during speaking hours. Even if I ask follow-up questions, I cannot produce questions after a while since he doesn't give me anything to speak.* (Sarah – Journal 4)

Factors Affecting Language Learning was the sixth theme that consisted of two codes *Lack of Linguistic Competence in L1 and L2* (f=1) and *Disregarding the Context in Questions* (f=1). The first code was related to the participants' approaches to the difficulties faced by learners during their learning process. One of the striking points made by the participants was about how she compared her student's competence in his mother tongue (Turkish) and English. Kaylie stated that:

> *Last week, while I was teaching writing, I asked a question to one of my silent students. It was obvious that he was listening to the lesson, but he couldn't answer the question. Besides, he told me that he can't even know anything in Turkish about the topic and he can't* [speak] *his mother tongue properly. He assumed that he was never taught anything related to the linguistic component and the logic behind it. So, he tried to put forth how little he knows about everything.* (Kaylie – Journal 3)

Kaylie experienced a period of time referring to the links between L1 and L2 by stressing the learner's attitude to L1. Similarly, Betty referred to the second code *Disregarding the Context in Questions* by highlighting the significance of the context in grammar revision tests applied at the end of each week in her experience. She pointed out the situation in which the students paid no attention to the context given in the dialogue:

> *During one of integrated skills classes (A2 level), my students were working on a grammatical structure by answering questions in a revision test provided as a supplement to our course book. The students were first answering all the questions in the activity, and then, one by one, was presenting their responses.*

One of the students couldn't understand one question given in the form of a dialogue. (Betty – Journal 5)

Betty was critical of learners who did not take into account the context in which the questions were provided and added that learners should benefit from the context clues given in the dialogue in order to answer the question correctly.

4.3.2. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle: Feelings and Thoughts

The second step *Feelings and Thoughts* provided details about the emotional and mental processes underwent by the participants and other people existing in the immediate environment during the reflection period of each particular critical point. The participants' responses were analysed and the findings were presented in the following table.

Table 4.5. *Feelings and Thoughts: What Turkish EFL teachers and learners felt and thought*

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes/Sub-codes	f	%
FEELINGS (f=23)	Negative Feelings	Frustration	4	11,77
		Ambivalence	4	11,77
		Feeling Nervous	3	8,82
		Demotivation	3	8,82
		Feeling Authoritative	1	2,94
		Lack of Self-confidence	1	2,94
	Positive Feelings	Feeling Self-confident	2	5,89
		Feeling Responsible	1	2,94
		Feeling Cooperative	1	2,94
		Feeling Satisfied	1	2,94
		Feeling Proud	1	2,94
		Feeling Empowered	1	2,94
THOUGHTS (f=11)	Distance Learning	Promoting Learner Engagement	3	8,82
		Managing Online Classrooms	2	5,89
		Having Challenges about Teaching Online	1	2,94
	Ways of Enhancing Language Learning	Considering the Context	1	2,94
		Learning from Mistakes	1	2,94
	Guiding Learners	Psychological Guidance	1	2,94
		Academic Guidance	1	2,94
	Communication among Teachers		1	2,94
Total			**34**	**100**

Relevant data were categorized into two themes *Feelings* (f=23) and *Thoughts* (f=11) as displayed in Table 4.5. The findings were presented through two sub-themes *Negative Feelings* and *Positive Feelings* under the first theme *Feelings* and four sub-themes *Distance Learning, Ways of Enhancing Language Learning, Guiding Learners* and *Communication among Teachers* under the second theme *Thoughts*.

The first sub-theme *Negative Feelings* reflected the participants' and learners' emotional states at the time of critical incidents through six codes *Frustration* (f=4), *Ambivalence* (f=4), *Feeling Nervous* (f=3), *Demotivation* (f=3), *Feeling Authoritative* (f=1) and *Lack of Self-confidence* (f=1). The relevant excerpts were as follows:

> *At first, I wanted her to do the steps synchronously with me, but when I realized she was trying to find a different solution, I was annoyed.* (Sarah – Journal 2)
>
> *Except for being nervous, I was very upset since it was sudden, and I did not expect or receive such a reaction from any of my students.* (Sarah – Journal 6)
>
> *Although other students are very disturbed with the situation, they didn't react at all. It was strange.* (Kaylie – Journal 4)
>
> *I felt frustrated as a teacher (and colleague of others)*. (Felix – Journal 1, 2, 3 and 5)

The first code that was pointed out most frequently was *Frustration*. In case of any inconvenience caused by learners, the participants felt different levels of anger, as stated by Sarah, whose efforts to help a student send her paragraph were not taken into account by that student. Similarly, in her 6th journal, Sarah described her feelings of anger towards one of her students who found her writing feedback useless. The feeling disturbance was not limited to the teachers only as Kaylie argued when a student insisted on his wrong answer. Others in the same class were emotionally involved in the tense atmosphere at that moment. However, the most striking point was the frequency of fury statements by Felix, who repeatedly mentioned in four of his six journals. It can be concluded that Felix was one of the most experienced teachers, but at the same time he was the most unfamiliar with the online setting.

In addition, *Ambivalence* emerged as second code which was about the hesitation that the participants experienced. For instance, Felix mentioned the dilemma

as to whether he would share all the students' PowerPoint Presentations for the speaking project by projecting them on the board so that others could see each other's works. He argued that:

> *I felt ambivalent as a teacher. I was in between two concepts which are privacy and better learning. I know that privacy is important and must be respected. On the other hand, students wanted to see their peers' work and tried to learn from similar mistakes and learn how to deal with them. Afterwards, I started to feel that classroom is our own privacy and there is no harm in showing all the PPTs to everyone in the class.* (Felix – Journal 4)

In online education, it was quite hard to be able to recall the names and faces of the students as in face to face education. At the end of the term, Felix had to assess his students with confusion in his mind. He also pointed out the importance of collaboration in overcoming problems. He argued that

> *I felt confused and frustrated at the same time. I was in-between two aspects of being a teacher. They were "being fair and* [being an] *assessor".* (Felix – Journal 5)

Zak also underwent a similar process when he asked one of his students to unmute her microphone and participate in the lesson. However, he felt quite hesitant when she left the online session upon Zak's request of participation. He reported that

> *I asked myself "Did I force or humiliate my student just by asking to unmute for participation purpose or did she get me wrong?".* (Zak – Journal 1)

Further, as the third code *Feeling Nervous* suggested, the language learning process inherently involves a certain degree of anxiety during which both learners and teachers might feel nervous. The participants' statements about the third code were listed as follows:

> *The student also feels this very intensely. I realized that when both the test anxiety and the pre-match anxiety of the student came together, it affected him very badly.* (Kaylie – Journal 5)

> *Being questioned as a teacher made me feel nervous deeply.* (Sarah – Journal 6)

> *At first, I felt really nervous because in a pandemic time, meeting hundreds of people in a closed environment for hours was so risky.* (Zak – Journal 5)

Kaylie reported that one of her students who had an important match at the time of his speaking exam had to manage the situation. She expressed how her student was feeling then, and the negative impact of his anxiety on his speaking performance. On the other hand, when Sarah was negatively reacted by a student who insisted on his wrong answer, she felt nervous. Similarly, an academic meeting outside the classroom environment also had an influence on Zak, who had to spend a long time with a crowded group of academics in a closed area during the pandemic.

Given the fourth code *Demotivation*, Sarah explained why she felt demotivated when there was low participation in the lesson in the following excerpt:

> *I can't control the time well in such situations*. *I don't feel the lesson is effective, and I can't be motivated to prepare extra activities for the next lesson.* (Sarah – Journal 1)

It is clear that she lost her motivation, which caused her to deliver her lesson in a basic way and feel reluctant to provide her students with extra in-class activities.

Besides, a similar feeling was experienced by Zak when a student left the online session upon his insistence on turning on the camera. He expressed- that

> *I felt really sorry because one of my participating students had left and lost the rest of the lesson just because of my attitude.* (Zak – Journal 1)

Both attempts to make students participate in the lesson turned out to be a kind of demotivation in part of the teachers.

Adopting an authoritative manner in the classroom was pointed out by Sarah as the fifth code *Feeling Authoritative* when a student of hers asked permission to leave the online session for a moment to bring a cup of coffee. She stated that:

> *It made me feel like I was trying to control everything in the classroom. At that time, I felt like I was putting too much pressure on students because I told them to turn their cameras on over and over.* (Sarah – Journal 3)

The last code *Lack of Self-confidence* was referred to by Kaylie, who shared her feelings related to a silent student lacking self-confidence in class:

> *He had such a low self-esteem and efficacy for speaking even in his mother tongue. Probably, this student wasn't encouraged to learn a new language or any kind of information. When I looked at his portfolio, I realized that the student didn't write any sentence structure, just a couple of word formats.* (Kaylie – Journal 3)

The second sub-theme *Positive Attitude* involves six codes *Feeling Self-confident* (f=2), *Feeling Responsible* (f=1), *Feeling Cooperative* (f=1), *Feeling Satisfied* (f=1), *Feeling Proud* (f=1) and *Feeling Empowered* (f=1). The first code *Feeling Self-confident* referred to the fact that helping learners to recover their self-confidence was also observed during the teaching process. With regard to a motivational talk with learners, Zak argued that:

> *Surprisingly, they said "I am self-confident again, I believe I can do it", and they thanked for providing this opportunity… Seeing that talking of positivity has sent positive vibes is a great feeling of teaching.* (Zak – Journal 4)

In his two journals, Zak pointed out the term responsibility in the second code *Feeling Responsible*. The first reference was to participation as he maintained that

> *I felt responsible as I did not let them participate* [in the lesson in English] *and appear during the class time; their mics muted, camera off. I knew that that is not the way for those students.* (Zak – Journal 2)

He felt himself responsible for involving his students in the activities. His second statement was about his administrative task which was to upload the timetable into the system. He discussed that the delay in uploading the timetables was due to the IT department of the school and added that:

> *I felt responsible for this because no matter how much effort I put, the problem was not resolved. (*Zak – Journal 6)

The third code *Feeling Cooperative* was about collaboration among students observed in face-to-face and in online setting. Students volunteered to help others who

were having problems with each other's poor digital performance. For instance, Betty stated that:

> *One of the students in the class volunteered to help his classmates when others faced any problem in understanding the guideline for logging in.* (Betty – Journal 2)

Another case was related to a student who had some technical problems with the camera. Betty expressed her feelings about this situation as follows:

> *I felt caring about the student attention. I tried to be cooperative…. The student was also cooperative.* (Betty – Journal 4)

In addition, Kaylie, who pointed out the fourth code *Feeling Satisfied*, enjoyed the satisfaction that her students experienced in a group activity organized by her. She mentioned that:

> *I had a chance to think about the experience in which students felt satisfied in terms of the sameness of classroom instructions online.* (Kaylie – Journal 2)

It was clear from her statement that removing the barriers between face-to-face and online classes was satisfactory for teachers and learners.

The fifth and the sixth codes *Feeling Proud* and *Feeling Empowered* respectively consisted of Zak's experience with regard to attending an academic board meeting held by the rectorate. He referred to the feeling of empowerment that he felt in such an academic environment. As he put it:

> *I felt proud* [with the academic staff he is working with] … *Overall, I felt enhanced psychologically.* (Zak – Journal 5)

The first sub-theme *Distance Learning* under the second theme *Thoughts* included the participants' opinions that were presented through three codes *Promoting Learner Engagement* (f=3), *Online Classroom Management* (f=2) and *Challenges of Teaching Online* (f=1). Given the first code *Promoting Learner Engagement*, participants pointed out encouraging learners' active involvement not only in online classes but also in alternative assessment tools such as mini presentations, which were the short and spontaneous talks that students made. For instance, Sarah claimed that:

The fact that the course is online does not take many students out of their comfort zone. (Sarah – Journal 1)

In addition, participation in mini presentations was handled by Felix, who suggested that:

We must be sure that students participate in the mini presentations. (Felix – Journal 6)

In the above mentioned situation, Sarah and Felix were determined to encourage their students to take part in such speaking opportunities actively and try hard to achieve their goals.

The second code *Managing Online Classrooms* was also pointed out by the participants. To illustrate, Kaylie encountered a group of students making fun of one of their friends and thought that:

I sometimes faced these kinds of before, but when it was in face to face education. It was easier to cope with those kinds of difficulties. With the help of consultation forms and mini-talks, it was easier. (Kaylie – Journal 4)

Apart from the differences between face to face and online classroom management, another point was made by Felix regarding teachers' lack of adequate training for online classroom management. He maintained that:

Online classes are something new for us even if we are very experienced teachers. Basically, we do not know how to penalize online. Although we have the concrete evidence of bullying, making fun of others, or teasing them, we as teachers are not trained to come up with a solution to an online indiscipline problem. (Felix – Journal 3)

With regard to the third code *Having Challenges about Teaching Online*, the challenges facing the participants during online education were discussed. Following the beginning of distance learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the participants underwent a tough process in online classes. For instance, Kaylie was worried about the challenges which made the process so difficult that she expressed:

I mostly use web tools in face to face education, but since the beginning of the term, it seems to be very hard to conduct web-based instructions and tools in

online education. They are both time consuming to give all instruction related to how to use the tool. If it were in classroom setting, showing how to use and conducting could be easier. (Kaylie – Journal 2)

She thought of online education as time-consuming and impractical for language teaching. After a few weeks, she repeated her negative opinions stating that:

I felt that online education doesn't work as expected. (Kaylie – Journal 4)

The second sub-theme *Ways of Enhancing Language Learning* was presented through two codes *Considering the Context* (f=1) and *Learning from Mistakes* (f=1). As the first code *Considering the Context* suggested, Betty emphasized the context in learning by stating that:

That was an experience that could be observed with some other students too since some students may have the tendency not to pay attention to the context that grammatical structure is used in. (Betty – Journal 5)

She was critical of learners' lack of taking the context into consideration while doing activities.

As for the second code *Learning from Mistakes*, Kaylie wrote about a student who had low level of self-confidence and argued that:

I thought that this student wasn't given any chance to make mistakes and learn from them before. (Kaylie – Journal 3)

She explained why the student had a low level of self-confidence and implied that if he had made mistakes and learnt from them, he would have self-confidence in language learning. In another journal, Kaylie highlighted the possibility of learners' having fossilized mistakes in the pronunciation of some English words. She maintained that:

When faced with this situation, I thought that maybe these students fossilized these mistakes and they might have adopted habits that are difficult to return, and then urgent action should be taken in this regard. (Kaylie – Journal 6)

Guiding Learners, as the third sub-theme derived from the relevant data, was also pointed out by the participants through two codes *Psychological Guidance* (f=1)

and *Academic Guidance* (f=1). Regarding the first code *Psychological Guidance*, Zak reported that he assisted his students through a motivational talk which, seemingly, impressed the learners. He stated that:

> *They* [students] *defined this 20-minute talk as an "opportunity". I felt really good hearing this, but this made me think on their psychology more. They need more guidance, more psychological support.* (Zak – Journal 4)

In addition to such psychological guidance, learners were also given academic guidance as suggested in the second code *Academic Guidance*. For instance, Betty's students were given assistance through an informing talk with her students regarding how to tackle grammar questions. She argued that:

> *I felt that I had to underscore the importance of context while using the language and grammatical structures.* (Betty – Journal 5)

The fourth sub-theme *Communication among Teachers* was stressed by Felix, who was miserable due to the obstacles preventing effective communication among teachers during the online education process. He was quite critical of the lack of enough attention given by his colleagues. He shared his anger and criticism by stating that:

> *I felt frustrated as a teacher and colleague of others because clear communication has a key role in meeting the requirements of the weekly pacing and curriculum in Schools of Foreign Languages. I felt that Pandemic restricts face to face and we have to find alternative solutions for communication. Just writing messages and thinking that the message with two blue ticks does not mean that it was understood clearly. After this experience, I started to think on alternative ways to strengthen communication among the colleagues.* (Felix – Journal 1)

Familiar with face to face communication, Felix found it so hard to get accustomed to communicating with colleagues through less physical contact during the pandemic.

4.3.3. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle: Evaluation

Evaluation, the third step of Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, involved the participants' opinions regarding what went well and/or what went badly during that particular critical moment. They were expected to provide a review of whether the actions of the participants and the learners at the time of the relevant critical moments contributed to the situation positively or negatively. The findings with regard to the participants' evaluation of their critical moments were presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6. *Evaluation: How Turkish EFL teachers evaluated their reflections*

Themes	Codes/Sub-codes	f	%
LEARNER ENGAGEMENT (f=10)	Learner Interaction	3	9,67
	Providing Guidance	3	9,67
	Lack of Participation	2	6,45
	Tracking Learners	1	3,22
	Use of L1	1	3,22
WAYS OF DECREASING LANGUAGE LEARNER ANXIETY (f=6)	Holding a Positive Approach towards Learners	3	9,67
	Encouraging Learners to Speak	2	6,45
	Saving Students' Face	1	3,22
ENCOURAGING STUDENT LEARNING (f=5)	Peer Support among Learners	2	6,45
	Cooperation among Teachers	2	6,45
	Motivating Learners	1	3,22
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT (f=4)	Handling Misbehaviour	1	3,22
	Reminding Classroom Rules	1	3,22
	Promoting Learners' Motivation	1	3,22
	Reflection on Classroom Management	1	3,22
CHALLENGES OF DISTANCE LEARNING (f=4)	Limitations of Online Educational Technology	2	6,45
	Having Technical Problems	1	3,22
	Lack of Learners' Digital Competence	1	3,22
COMMUNICATION (f=2)	Face to Face Communication among Teachers	1	3,22
	Lack of Non-Verbal Communication in Online Setting	1	3,22
Total		**31**	**100**

As shown in Table 4.6, data collected from the participants were categorized under six themes *Learner Engagement* (f=10)*, Ways of Decreasing Language Learner Anxiety* (f=6), *Encouraging Student Learning* (f=5)*, Classroom Management* (f=4)*, Challenges of Distance Learning* (f=4) and *Communication* (f=2).

The first theme *Learner Engagement* consisted of five codes *Learner Interaction* (f=3)*, Providing Guidance* (f=3)*, Lack of Participation* (f=2)*, Tracking Learners* (f=1) and *Use of L1* (f=1). With regard to the first code *Learner Interaction*, the interaction among learners was basically referred to as a tool employed in writing and speaking classes. The participants' experiences were provided below:

> *The students were all engaged in discussing their opinions, which also gave them ideas for their own presentations.* (Betty – Journal 6)

> *Students' being engaged in the writing and brainstorming in their group positively impacted the situation. They did peer-correction and worked in a file altogether by exchanging their ideas.* (Kaylie – Journal 2)

> *The experience clearly showed that students were cooperating well with each other to find the mistakes and solving the problematic areas in PPTs. They were not offended by each other's comments. They were truly seeking for solutions.* (Felix – Journal 4)

As for the speaking projects, Betty was pleased that her students were actively involved in exchanging their ideas with each other regarding how to improve their speaking projects. Likewise, in a writing class**,** Kaylie's experience indicated that learners could correct each other's mistakes through the interaction process provided by the teacher. In addition, Felix highlighted the way his learners developed their own thinking. These comments clearly showed that learners contributed to the related critical experiences positively.

In addition, the second code *Providing Guidance* mainly displayed how significant guiding learners was when they had difficulty fulfilling their tasks. Relatedly, as the education was provided online, the way teachers demonstrated things to learners gained importance. For instance, Sarah described the situation in which a student had problems converting Word documents into PDF as follows:

> *I realized that she sent the writing file in pdf format. She used to send it in word format before even though I* [insisted] *they convert it to pdf. It displays that demonstrating the steps helped her!* (Sarah – Journal 2)

A similar experienced was from Zak, who explained a student how to upload writing portfolios into the online system. He explained that:

> *Then I shortly introduced how they could do it. Some of them managed it, but the ones who failed sent me the file via email. That way, we resolved it.* (Zak – Journal 3)

Apart from providing technical assistance to learners, an effective PowerPoint Presentation was also discussed in Betty's class, and she stated that:

> *By focusing on certain slides, I showed them the ways how information in per slide and in each sentence could be organised.* (Betty – Journal 6)

In terms of the third code *Lack of Participation*, Sarah pointed out the positive and negative sides of her experiences. She, for instance, was critical of the way students learnt the language without any active involvement by maintaining that:

> *The bad side of this experience is that the students learn the language as it is written in the book since they do not take an active part in the lesson.* (Sarah – Journal 1)

On the other hand, in another journal, she gave a slightly more positive picture of learner participation and mentioned that:

> *The student does not refuse to speak. He answers the questions. Maybe he doesn't want to be impolite. However, the main problem is that he doesn't prefer to participate in, speak, and keep the conversation going.* (Sarah – Journal 4)

As the fourth code *Tracking Learners* suggested, keeping track of learners' performance during the language process had an undeniable role. Felix referred to his experience regarding the difficulty of tracking his learners in online lessons and argued that:

> *The experience clearly showed that during this era of teaching, we must be very careful in taking notes on the participation level of the students. We do not have face to face or physical interaction in a decent classroom setting anymore. However, classic methods like note taking about students never lose its significance.* (Felix – Journal 5)

Felix not only highlighted the importance of physical interaction with learners but also regarded note-taking skills as the key to track learners.

The last code *Use of L1* was pointed out by Zak, who attempted to promote his student to speak in English by trying out a different approach. Despite the positive academic consequences of using L2 in class, Zak believed in the importance of using mother tongue (L1) in class, especially in promoting learners' participation. He stated that:

> *When they asked "Hocam, can I say in Turkish?", I let them go for it just because they asked this question in English; it was a gain, and it triggered an insight for me … Half of the sentence could be in English and the other half in Turkish. They were able to answer the questions in English (though inaccurately) and attempt to talk more.* (Zak – Journal 2)

As he reported, this approach helped his students break their barriers and participate in the lesson.

The second theme *Ways of Decreasing Language Learner Anxiety* mainly involved the way the participants handled their learners' anxiety in language classes through three codes *Holding a Positive Approach towards Learners* (f=3), *Encouraging Learners to Speak* (f=2) and *Saving Students' Face* (f=1). The first code *Holding a Positive Approach towards Learners* was pointed out by Kaylie, who put on a positive attitude towards a student with anxiety in a speaking test. She remarked that:

> *My approach helped reduce the student's stress and enabled him to do well on his exam. First of all, the student was perhaps stressed and annoyed for fear that he would see me for the first time, and that he would be greeted with an unfamiliar reaction, but I think, when he realized that there was an unnecessary stress feeling and did not face a tense reaction, he felt comfortable and managed to focus on his exam.* (Kaylie – Journal 5)

Optimism created at the end of this endeavour was similar to a stress-free environment formed by Sarah during a speaking test. Sarah described the technique she applied to relieve the student with speaking anxiety:

> *I told all the students to turn off their cameras. I turned off my camera, too. My students and I showed that he* [the student with speaking anxiety] *was in a friendly environment.* (Sarah – Journal 5)

Betty also displayed a similar approach to managing the anxiety that one of her students had during a mini presentation. She referred to the second and third codes *Encouraging Learners to Speak* and *Saving Students' Face* respectively and discussed that:

> *I tried to calm down some of my students about accepting their assignments in a way or another whether they are late. I tried to motivate him at least to talk and while doing that I tried to save the face of the student so that he does not feel uncomfortable with the experience. The good thing is that at least he talked even though it was a wrong topic. Other students did not comment on it which was also quite positive for him to feel comfortable.* (Betty – Journal 1)

All of the participants' efforts to try to lower the anxiety level of their learners especially during speaking activities positively contributed to the way these critical moments evolved.

The third theme *Encouraging Student Learning* involved three codes *Peer Support among Learners* (f=2)*, Cooperation among Teachers* (f=2) and *Motivating Learners* (f=1). As for the first code *Peer Support among Learners*, relevant instances were presented below:

> *He [Betty's student] also started asking questions to his friends which made me happy that he tries to learn things that he is not familiar with by interacting his classmates.* (Betty – Journal 3)

> *The students helped the anxious student and me greatly. Peer support is crucial in case of lowering and controlling anxiety. Afterwards, the student was convinced to speak in English. At the end of his speech, everyone applauded him.* (Sarah – Journal 5)

Betty witnessed that enough support from classmates could help a student recover his motivation. Sarah also supported this argument with her experience in a friendly classroom environment. The student was considerably encouraged to perform

his speaking tasks better. It can be concluded that peer support, particularly in a friendly classroom environment, developed certain survival skills in a language classroom context such as interacting with others, trying to find out the correct answer, lowering or controlling language learner anxiety and finally speaking.

Further, Kaylie referred to the second code *Cooperation among Teachers* by suggesting that collaboration had positive influences on correcting learners' mistakes. To illustrate, referring to her students' mispronunciation problem in her class, Kaylie suggested that:

> *I think this issue can be focused on in cooperation with the students- other lecturers and with their willingness.* (Kaylie – Journal 6)

Kaylie also shared her opinions on the last code *Motivating Learners* by highlighting that writing and speaking tasks were mainly what the participants wrote about in their journals. Kaylie, who stressed the organization of ideas and correct pronunciation in speaking, motivated one of her students who had some problems with putting his ideas together:

> She expressed that *I tried to encourage him to write and … develop himself in speaking.* (Kaylie – Journal 3)

The fourth theme was *Classroom Management*, which were referred to by the participants through four codes *Handling Misbehaviour* (f=1), *Reminding Classroom Rules* (f=1), *Promoting Learners' Motivation* (f=1) and *Reflection on Classroom Management* (f=1). Regarding the first code *Handling Misbehaviour*, Felix reflected on his approach to a student who displayed misbehaviour in class, and he stated that:

> *I showed a classic reaction first by increasing my volume of sound. Then, the students started interfering with the situation and this made it worse… I talked to the bully alone and gave him some warnings about the outcome of his behaviour.* (Felix – Journal 3)

Unlike Felix's approach that worsened the situation, Kaylie's case, which referred to the second code *Reminding Classroom Rules*, was an example of the positive effects of reminding the classroom rules on the students. When learners

encountered one of their classmates insisting on his wrong answer, Kaylie managed to control the situation and reported that:

> *Some of the other students responded the situation angrily. They started to grumble, as they were complaining about the situation. Reminding the rules implicitly worked in this situation, and the students stopped talking.* (Kaylie – Journal 4)

In addition, Zak pointed out the third code *Promoting Learners' Motivation* when he shared his critical experience about encouraging students' motivation. He believed creating opportunities for a motivational talk to a whole class was beneficial as it triggered a collective motivation. Zak stated with regard to such a talk in class that:

> *It was good that they can talk about their lives more, they see me a more "real" one, not a "robotic" teacher. There is more life in our classes, so more participation. A 20 minutes talk about their future life, possibilities, opportunities of the university made them feel more optimistic. It is great knowing that I have a part of this positive effect.* (Zak – Journal 4)

The fourt code *Reflection on Classroom Management* was also highlighted by Zak, who started to think about his online classroom strategies. He maintained that:

> *It was good because I had a chance to question my virtual classroom application. All the rest was a bad experience I tried not to reflect my worry and continued my teaching.* (Zak – Journal 1)

Reflecting on classroom management strategies in the online setting provided a deep insight into Zak's perceptions of the way he managed his classes.

The fifth theme that emerged under this step was *Challenges of Distance Learning*, under which three codes were categorized as *Limitations of Online Educational Technology* (f=2), *Having Technical Problems* (f=1) and *Lack of Learners' Digital Competence* (f=1). The participants mentioned the first code *Limitations of Online Educational Technology* suggesting that no matter how many useful changes online teaching introduced us to, it undeniably impacted how teachers taught and managed their classes. Felix, at that point, claimed that:

> *The experience* [bullying] *clearly showed that new technological advances in technology, specifically in communication platforms like Zoom change the students' behaviour.* (Felix – Journal 2)

It can be understood from Felix's experience that learners' misbehaviours evolve in line with the recent changes in online educational tools. His specific example about the bullying student had a negative impact on the situation. Likewise, online educational technology had some limitations in monitoring learners as well. Kaylie criticised this lack:

> *Group working in writing activity went very well in online, but not reaching all the students at the same time in this platform created some problem. When students have problem or question* [during] *jigsaw activity, the platform didn't allow me to reach every student at a time.* (Kaylie – Journal 2)

Given the second code *Having Technical Problems*, technical problems doubled with lack of digital competence created difficulty not only for learners but also for teachers. During the online assessment, learners without adequate digital competence put many pressures on teachers' shoulders as Betty described her experience while she was invigilating the class during the exam:

> *Even though I could see my student during the exam and he could do his exam, I had the feeling that he had to take the responsibility to fix the situation for the following exams…* [As the teacher didn't want to distract him] *I let him to do his exam with his camera in a lateral position.* (Betty – Journal 4)

In addition, the third code *Lack of Learners' Digital Competence* was mentioned by Kaylie. Unlike the positive expectations from the learners in terms of digital proficiency, cases that obstructed the teaching process were observed. Lack of learners' knowledge or competence in uploading their assignments onto the online system was a big problem for Kaylie, who expressed that:

> *I stopped every one of my students and asked to listen to me from the beginning of every single detail. I solved half of the problem. Then I wanted to focus on the second most common problem by sharing the screen of my students, answering the question.* (Kaylie – Journal 1)

The sixth theme *Communication* involving two codes *Face to Face Communication among Teachers* (f=1) and *Lack of Non-Verbal Communication in Online Setting* (f=1) was mainly about an overall tendency to face to face communication according to participants' opinions regarding what went well and badly during their critical moments. In terms of the first code *Face to Face Communication among Teachers*, Felix was quite dissatisfied by the meetings with his colleagues through online communication tools such as *WhatsApp*, and he maintained that:

> *The experience clearly showed that new technological advances in technology, specifically in communication platforms, do not necessarily mean that we can put the traditional ways aside. Classic short face to face meetings are better in for conveying the messages clearly to the other side. I chose to walk in the other party's room and talked about the situation face to face and it took a few minutes to understand each other.* (Felix – Journal 1)

Similarly, given the second code *Lack of Non-Verbal Communication in Online Setting*, during an online class, Sarah was hesitant about the request of one of her students to leave the session for a while to take a cup of coffee. She expressed that:

> *Since I couldn't see her gestures, mimics, and body language, I got into different thoughts.* (Sarah – Journal 3)

The importance of non-verbal communication was also enunciated in that particular situation. As a whole, these instances showed that communication in the online setting did not help the participants' experiences develop positively due to previously mentioned handicaps faced in the online setting.

4.3.4. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle: Analysis

The fourth step of the reflective cycle was *Analysis*. Following the first three steps, participants either discussed their critical points with their colleagues or researched them to gain a deeper insight into their reflections. Then, they noted how they combined what had already happened during their critical experiences and what the relevant literature offered them. Briefly, *Analysis* involved participants' awareness

regarding the link between their practices and theory. The responses obtained from the participants were categorized and presented in the following table.

Table 4.7. *Analysis: How Turkish EFL teachers related their reflections to theory*

Themes	Codes/Sub-codes	f	%
DISTANCE EDUCATION PEDAGOGY (f=7)	Promoting Learner Engagement	3	11,52
	Classroom Management Strategies	2	7,69
	Imitation Learning	1	3,85
	Teachers' Lack of Training for Distance Education	1	3,85
IMPROVING COMMUNICATION SKILLS (f=7)	Classroom Interaction	3	11,52
	Non-verbal Communication	2	7,69
	Effective Communication among Teachers	1	3,85
	Encouraging Narrative Structure	1	3,85
TRACKING LEARNERS (f=4)	Providing Feedback	2	7,69
	Correcting Learners' Errors	2	7,69
EMPOWERING MOTIVATION (f=3)	Motivating Learners	2	7,69
	Motivating Teachers	1	3,85
WAYS OF DECREASING LANGUAGE LEARNER ANXIETY (f=3)	Providing Learners with Teacher Support	1	3,85
	Increasing In-class Interaction	1	3,85
	Encouraging Learners to Write Reflective Diaries	1	3,85
ASSESSMENT (f=2)	Contextualization in Test Items	1	3,85
	Providing Learners with Fair Grades	1	3,85
Total		**26**	**100**

As demonstrated in Table 4.7, data gathered from the participants were examined under six themes *Distance Education Pedagogy* (f=7)*, Improving Communication Skills* (f=7)*, Tracking learners* (f=4), *Empowering Motivation* (f=3)*, Ways of Decreasing Language Learner Anxiety* (f=3) and *Assessment* (f=2).

Based on references made by the participants to the literature regarding the first theme *Distance Education Pedagogy,* four codes were categorized as *Promoting Learner Engagement* (f=3)*, Classroom Management Strategies* (f=2)*, Imitation Learning* (f=1) and *Teachers' Lack of Training for Distance Education* (f=1). Sarah referred to the first code *Promoting Learner Engagement* and found out how online participation should take place by arguing that:

> *Wenger (1998) describes it differently, except that the participation must be verbal or non-verbal. For example, a person's presence in a room shows that*

> *he/she participates in that situation. The existence is enough to call it participation.* (Sarah – Journal 1)

In addition, Zak considered participation as eagerness within students to interact with others. He stated that:

> W*illingness to Communicate (WTC) varies from student to student… Text and audio chat are considered to be less face-threatening than video chat, and thus, under conditions of lower social presence, some learners are more likely to participate,* and he concluded that *The more social presence students feel they have in the online world, the less their WTC (Cunningham & Watson, 2018).* (Zak – Journal 1)

Zak also referred to social isolation as the key to engagement and expressed that:

> *Vayre and Vonthron (2017) argued social support provided by teachers was the only inter-individual factor that influenced students' engagement. Moreover, the sense of community was also a significant direct predictor of online learners' engagement.* (Zak – Journal 4)

Another important moment was witnessed by Zak, who was critical of the use of L1 in his language class, unlike common tendency. Upon his experience regarding low participation of his students due to their being willing to use L1, he did research and he found out that:

> *The 100% English medium instruction policy was a barrier for some students although this policy contributes to overall L2 learning process of a country, and speeds up the process of learning L2 (Macaro, 2018). I gave a try to switch the language and it was worth. I could see more participating students are in my classroom. Unless I remove that barrier, I would not be able to see them survive behind that barrier.* (Zak – Journal 2)

It should be noted that Zak's tendency to ask his students to use L1 in class was not because of academic purposes but because of learner participation in the lesson.

Classroom Management Strategies was the second code about which the participants discussed or researched. Felix focused on in-class discipline problems and recommended that:

> *We as teachers must keep in mind that this is a process, and we must approach this phenomenon professionally. The mass media system through television, magazines and computer have added to the increase of deviant practices among most students in Cameroon (Yaduma and Abdulhamid, 2007).* (Felix – Journal 3)

Further, problem-solving and coping strategies were highlighted to manage disciplinary problems by Kaylie, who maintained that:

> *I believe that teachers having more adaptive system or ignorance to the problematic situations could use more coping strategy in the teaching environment (Van Dick and Wagner, 2001). Also, problem solving strategies used in the stressful environment or the calling for the support can be involved in the learning environment by the teacher.* (Kaylie – Journal 4)

The third code *Imitation learning* was mentioned by Sarah, who made an important point related to its academic benefits to learners. She argued that:

> *I actually knew how important it was to teach by demonstrating. However, after I encountered this problem, I did a research and found out how huge place it takes in learning. Teaching by demonstrating is called Imitation Learning or Learning from Demonstrations. As well as playing a major role in learning a subject in a school environment, it also supports learning from real life conversations (Buchsbaum et al., 2011).* (Sarah – Journal 2)

Considering the online classes, imitation learning had a distinctive significance as some learners were in need of such a support from their teachers.

On the other hand, lack of enough training at the graduate level regarding distance learning was at the core of Kaylie's criticism, as the last code *Teachers' Lack of Training for Distance Education* suggested. She highlighted this lack both in graduate and post-graduate programs of relevant fields by clearly stating that:

> *The reason we face problems in online teaching is that we didn't have enough experience of it before. We had lessons at the university related to online teaching, but we did not dwell on the subject enough, even in MA.* (Kaylie – Journal 1)

Improving Communication Skills was listed as the second theme that involved four codes *Classroom Interaction* (f=3)*, Non-verbal Communication* (f=2)*, Effective Communication among Teachers* (f=1) and *Encouraging Narrative Structure* (f=1). Given the first code *Classroom Interaction*, Kaylie reflected on the positive classroom interaction created by the teacher and discussed that:

> *When the students' expectation was investigated, positive student-lecturer and student-student interaction in group activities attributed to positive communication and satisfaction of the students in-class activities.* (Kaylie – Journal 2)

Betty also pointed out the significance of creating an appropriate environment to promote classroom interaction between teachers and learners as follows:

> *Classroom interaction and the teacher-student interaction is crucial for the success of the learners. In that respect the way I tried to make the student feel comfortable and encourage him to talk was a necessary initiative. Without considering it at the time of our interaction, by teacher instinct, I applied politeness theorists Brown and Levinson's (1987) face work to keep the public self-image of the student in class. I guess it is important to construct productive environment in class in order to encourage students to talk without being threatened of their face during the presentation.* (Betty – Journal 1)

The second code *Non-verbal Communication* was placed huge importance in the online setting where gestures, facial expressions and body language did not function as properly as in the face to face setting. Felix reported that:

> *According to Katz and Kahn (1978) communication is the exchange of information and the transmission of meaning. They also told that It is essential in a social system of an organization. Starting from this point, I can easily say that when two parties think that they understand each other, this is not always the case. The sentences or the words used during the message exchanges*

usually have ambiguity because of the lack of gestures, facial expressions and exclamations. (Felix – Journal 1)

Likewise, Sarah underlined the significance of the existence of non-verbal communication and argued that:

Goofman (2008) stated that with the help of visible bodily action, people provide information about their purpose, emotion, curiosity, and wish to the listener. In this way, based on the expression on the face, people determine the next movement they will make. Even by not using words, people can communicate with visible bodily actions. (Sarah – Journal 3)

The third code *Effective Communication among Teachers* was examined by Felix, who highlighted effective communication that teachers were supposed to have among themselves. Whether verbal or non-verbal communication, the ultimate purpose of the communication was to be achieved through exchanges of messages between the sender and the receiver. As Felix proposed, an appropriate environment was required for such effective communication. He maintained that:

According to Şimşek, Ş. (2010), management has five functions. These are planning, organizing, guidance, autonomy (coordination), and monitoring (control). In this respect, institutional leaders take initiatives to increase the communication among the teaching team. To achieve this, the management *can organize meetings and monitor the staff during these meetings, and they can also guide them to reach fruitful conclusions.* (Felix – Journal 1)

The fourth code *Encouraging Narrative Structure* was pointed out by Betty, who shared her experience with a student having difficulty fixing his camera and argued that:

I employed Labov and Waletzky's (1967) narrative structure to tell his personal experience by reporting his problem with his camera in the exam. Narrative Structure involved four steps called orientation of action, complication of the action, evaluation of the action, coda (lesson from the action). This is a good way of getting students to reflect on their action. (Betty - Journal 4)

The third theme *Tracking Learners* involved two codes *Providing Feedback* (f=2) and *Correcting Learners' Errors* (f=2). As the first code *Providing Feedback* suggested, one way of tracking learners was to provide them with regular, systematic, meaningful and corrective feedback. As a result of the research that Felix did, he found out that:

> *Ferris and Roberts (2001) … stated the importance of accuracy and therefore error correction in students' writings and the students' eagerness to get feedback on their mistakes. However, providing feedback needs careful preparation and it must not stigmatize the learners. There are two basic types of feedback in Writing classes. They are called Direct and Indirect feedback. What we try to do in our classrooms is to give Indirect feedback. Chandler (2003) and Ferris (2003) have claimed that the use of indirect coded feedback with novice writers is more preferable. Leki (1991) mentioned that students choose indirect feedback on college writing rather than direct corrections.* (Felix – Journal 2)

Providing feedback in writing classes as defined above was as necessary as giving feedback to learners for their speaking performances. After Kaylie analysed her experience regarding providing oral feedback, she reported that:

> *Oral feedback of the lecturer and interaction can be regarded as the supporters of the cognitive developments. It is an easier process to detect the mistake and take action after seeing the gap in the learning process. After the first phase is completed, readings in the field and consultations among colleagues make me think that the situation will improve, and turn out well.* (Kaylie – Journal 6)

Given the second code *Correcting Learners' Errors*, Felix argued that, in general, the term feedback involved correction errors made by learners during their learning process. In this respect, error correction was an inseparable part of language teaching. He attracted attention to the importance of error correction as follows:

> *Error correction is important and it cannot be put aside. We as teachers must keep in mind that this is a scientific process and we cannot change it according to our own understanding. According to Ferris (2002), error correction is widely seen by teachers and students as an important factor in development of*

> *the written and oral skills. However, providing feedback needs careful preparation and it must not stigmatize the learners.* (Felix – Journal 4)

Similarly, Kaylie shared the research she did regarding the significance of error correction, highlighting the correct types of error correction to be taken into consideration by teachers. She noted that:

> *Student/learner should realize their output in the target language and analyse it in order not to make errors through conveying (Schmidt, 2010). Identifying the error type and correcting in on the other hand of the teacher. Error correction of the teacher/lecturer can ignite the learners' awareness in the field of language learning (Ferris, 2011).* (Kaylie – Journal 6)

The fourth theme *Empowering Motivation* was presented through two codes *Motivating Learners* (f=2) and *Motivating Teachers* (f=1). Regarding the first code *Motivating Learners*, Betty researched theories about motivation and associated her own way of motivating her class with Dörnyei's motivation theory. She reported that she always asked her class to visualize themselves as follows:

> *Fluent speakers of English at the end of the academic year.* As she argued, *This is related to the first component of Dörnyei's motivation theory, the ideal L2 self, which is "a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because we would like to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves" (Dörnyei and Chan, 2013, p.438.)* (Betty – Journal 2)

With regard to the second code *Motivating Teachers*, Zak mentioned motivation not for his class but for himself. As a consequence of the academic board meeting he attended, he felt motivated and remarked with reference to the literature that:

> *This was a productive meeting for me because some institutional questions were answered, if some newly-emerged questions are disregarded. Also, I was encouraged that I can do more. Now, I know that all these positive and negative feelings will motivate me with their adaptive properties (Reeve, 2015).* (Zak – Journal 5)

The fifth theme *Ways of Decreasing Language Learner Anxiety* consisting of three codes *Providing Learners with Teacher Support* (f=1)*, Increasing In-class Interaction* (f=1) and *Encouraging Learners to Write Reflective Diaries* (f=1) mainly discussed the strategies that the participants adopted to deal with language learner anxiety. For instance, given the first code *Providing Learners with Teacher Support*, Sarah stressed the importance of teacher support provided to learners with learner anxiety. Regarding teacher support as the key solution, Sarah referred to the result of her research and reported that:

> *Huang and Eslami (2010) conducted a study… which revealed that anxiety affects academic performance negatively. In addition to that, students felt less anxiety after they experienced the support of their teachers and peers.* (Sarah – Journal 5)

The second code *Increasing In-class Interaction* was pointed out by Kaylie, who attempted to research ways of overcoming this problem in her classes. According to her research, promoting interaction in class was proposed below as the key to deal with language learner anxiety:

> *Owing to the positive effects of interaction, students' speaking anxiety in front of the classroom and teacher could be lessened. Exposure to a virtual community and speaking activities play a vital role in decreasing foreign language speaking anxiety (Anderson et al., 2005).* (Kaylie – Journal 2)

Kaylie, in another journal, highlighted the reasons, instead of ways of solution, for such anxiety in language learners. With regard to the last code *Encouraging Learners to Write Reflective Diaries*, she reported that:

> *Students' speaking anxiety, worrying if I make mistakes, could be caused by negative experiences, fear of classroom environment, and self-confidence (Spielberger, 1983). In such cases, the approach to the student should be different from the normal and expected. I had focused on this issue a lot in my previous study and looked at whether reflective diary writing would reduce students' anxiety. When learners experience anxiety, they may feel mentally blocked because they feel anxious, tenderness, or stress (Horwitz et al., 1986).* (Kaylie – Journal 5)

She pointed out the importance of reflective diaries that her students wrote and thought that these reflective diaries decreased her learners' anxiety.

Assessment emerged as the sixth theme discussed under two codes *Contextualization in Test Items* (f=1) and *Providing Learners with Fair Grades* (f=1). With regard to the first code *Contextualization in Test Items*, Betty explained why her experience with a student who did not care for the context in a grammar activity took place as it did. She maintained that:

> *This is an issue that we all need to take into consideration while preparing test items or exercises for our classes. Rea-Dickins (1991) provides five factors for a "task-based approach to grammar testing" namely: contextualisation, communicative purpose, audience, meaning and production of relevant grammatical responses appropriate in a given context (p.8).* (Betty – Journal 5)

The second code *Providing Learners with Fair Grades* was as significant as contextualization in designing test items. At the end of each term, participants were asked to register their evaluation of learners' participation into a chart sent by Testing Unit. Felix stated that:

> *Grading is one of the most important parts of being a teacher. We must keep in mind that just one point higher or lower grade can change a lot. One of the functions of a good teacher is that a teacher is a "Monitor". This function helps us give fair grades at the end of the term for Teachers' Evaluation part.* (Felix – Journal 5)

Felix associated providing fair grades to learners with the quality of a good teacher. He also stressed the significant role of monitoring learners in grading learners' participation throughout their learning process.

4.3.5. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle: Conclusion

Conclusion, the fifth step of the cycle, consisted of data provided by participants regarding what they learnt from their critical points they reflected on. In other words, this step was related to what participants could have done differently if

they had faced the same experience under the same or similar circumstances. Data collected from the participants were examined closely and presented below in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8. *Conclusion: What Turkish EFL teachers learnt from their reflections*

Themes	Codes	f	%
ONLINE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT (f=7)	Managing Online Classes	2	7,40
	Holding Preventive Approach	2	7,40
	Managing In-class Discipline	1	3,70
	Handling Misbehaviour	1	3,70
	Creating Democratic Classroom Environment	1	3,70
TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE (f=6)	Correcting Mistakes	1	3,70
	Providing Contextualized Teaching	1	3,70
	Designing Lesson Plan	1	3,70
	Integrating Theory and Practice	1	3,70
	Using Online Educational Technology	1	3,70
	Integrating Language Skills	1	3,70
TEACHERS' INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS (f=5)	Having Problem-solving Skills	2	7,40
	Having Communication Skills	2	7,47
	Balancing Personal and Professional Life	1	3,70
ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT (f=4)	Promoting Learners' Engagement	3	11,12
	Evaluating Learners' Participation	1	3,70
WAYS OF DECREASING LANGUAGE LEARNER ANXIETY (f=3)	Creating Stress-free Classroom Environment	1	3,70
	Promoting Self-confidence	1	3,70
	Motivating Learners	1	3,70
PROMOTING COLLABORATION (f=2)	Collaboration among Learners	1	3,70
	Collaboration among Teachers	1	3,70
Total		**27**	**100**

The participants' opinions on this step were categorized as six themes *Online Classroom Management* (f=7), *Teachers' Instructional Practice* (f=6), *Teachers' Individual Characteristics* (f=5), *Active Involvement* (f=4), *Ways of Decreasing Language Learner Anxiety* (f=3) and *Promoting Collaboration* (f=2) as demonstrated in Table 4.8.

The first theme *Online Classroom Management* focused mainly on what the participants learned in terms of online classroom management through five codes *Managing Online Classes* (f=2), *Holding Preventive Approach* (f=2), *Managing In-class Discipline* (f=1), *Handling Misbehaviour* (f=1) and *Creating Democratic Classroom Environment* (f=1). Regarding the first code *Challenges in Online Classroom Management*, as previously stressed, teachers did not receive adequate

training regarding how to manage online classes in their graduate and post-graduate studies. At this point, Kaylie highlighted the fact that she could survive in the online setting even if she had some problems. She stated that:

> *I learned how I could sustain online classroom management in a challenging situation, which may not go as expected.* (Kaylie – Journal 1)

The second code *Holding Preventive Approach,* which referred to actions previously taken by the participants to prevent undesired problems that might take place in class. In other words, having a preventive approach could help teachers cope with such problems in class with ease, which might require them to take necessary actions in advance. Sarah was aware that her request to keep all the cameras on prevented possible problems. She argued that:

> *This experience reminded me once again how important it is to see students in the learning environment. At the same time, I realized that I was preventing possible communication problems when I said "Turn your camera on".* (Sarah – Journal 3)

Another example could be given for whether English medium instruction was beneficial or not. As Zak mentioned earlier, keeping 100% English medium of instruction in the lessons negatively affected learners' active participation in the lesson. In this respect, he concluded that:

> *I could have reviewed the literature on English medium instruction more, so that I could have resolved this problem proactively.* (Zak – Journal 2)

Given the third and fourth codes *Managing In-class Discipline* and *Handling Misbehaviour* respectively, Felix raised awareness about how to manage in-class discipline and handle misbehaviour, such as bullying that occurred in his class. He shared his learning from his experience by warning against changing bullying patterns in time. He maintained that:

> *I have learned from this experience that time is changing, and bullying types are also changing. Indiscipline problems will retain as long as the teaching practises continue. However, this does not mean that the solutions will be more*

> *difficult. The teachers or classroom practitioners will find ways to cope with them.* (Felix – Journal 3)

The emphasis was on learners' misbehaviours in the online setting. Therefore, in his above statement, Felix suggested his projection regarding the future of how teachers would handle this problem.

As the last code *Creating Democratic Classroom Environment* suggested, democracy in language classes was emphasized by Felix, who, in his fourth journal, reflected on members of Generation Z as well as the way they perceived the world. With regard to his experience, he clearly put that:

> *I have learned from this experience that we as teachers must keep the needs and perceptions of generation Z in mind. Their understanding might contradict the rules or privacy settings. To create a more democratic atmosphere in our classrooms, we can still comply with their expectations from us.* (Felix – Journal 4)

This statement was, in theory, in contradiction with the traditional way of classroom management that forced students' obedience to the teachers' rules, points of view and decisions. However, the term *democracy* itself made Felix's opinion reach the new generation in the classroom environment with ease.

The second theme *Teachers' Instructional Practice* involving six codes *Correcting Mistakes* (f=1), *Providing Contextualized Teaching* (f=1), *Designing Lesson Plan* (f=1), *Integrating Theory and Practice* (f=1), *Using Online Educational Technology* (f=1) and *Integrating Language Skills* (f=1) essentially provided details as to how the participants planned and conducted their lessons. With regard to the first code, Kaylie argued that making mistakes was natural indicators of producing a language and referred to her study, suggesting that:

> *As a result of my study, students stated in their reflective diaries that in terms of stress before and during the exam, teacher's approach to error were the biggest stressors. In such cases, the approach of the teacher should be to comfort, to encourage the students not to avoid making minor mistakes, to state that the main thing is to produce the language.* (Kaylie – Journal 5)

Teacher's role in correcting mistakes not only determines the quality of learners' performance but also builds up an effective bridge between the mistakes and the way they need to be corrected. However, the teacher did occasionally not have absolute control throughout learners' production. As Kaylie discussed:

> *In this case, education that is not carried out face to face can cause some trouble. The inability to intervene in the error immediately or the intervention of other factors can make it difficult to control the error.* (Kaylie – Journal 6)

The second code *Providing Contextualized Teaching* was pointed out by Betty, who experienced a lack of learners' attention to the context provided in English sentences of an activity sheet. Thinking that context was an indispensable part of a sentence, she argued that:

> *I guess course materials we use have significant importance and since language is communication, our students should practise what they learn by considering the context that it is used in.* (Betty – Journal 5)

In the third code *Designing Lesson Plan*, another aspect of the language teaching process that teachers managed was referred to by Felix, who attributed one of his experiences to a poorly designed lesson plan. He explained that:

> *I have learned from this experience that lesson planning and implementation of your plans must be well organized and considered.* (Felix – Journal 2)

As the fourth code *Integrating Theory and Practice* suggested, Felix also underlined the importance of maintaining parallelism between language teaching theories and teachers' practices and reported that:

> *Our classroom practices must not contradict the scientific literature.* (Felix – Journal 2)

Given the fifth code *Using Online Educational Technology*, when designing lesson plans and providing contextualized teaching as mentioned above were taken into account, fulfilling the teaching requirements of having online classes due to the pandemic forced Felix to make use of online educational technology in his classes. Therefore, Felix particularly emphasized that:

> *I have learned from this experience that we as teachers must keep the needs and perceptions of generation Z in mind. They prefer to visualize and make everything solid in their mind. We as teachers should make use of applications like Zoom in a better and more effective way.* (Felix – Journal 6)

Kaylie concluded that learners should be provided an effective learning context in which they could make use of other skills involved in their learning process. She thought that:

> *I could have applied more activities by intermingling the other skills. I have experienced that the sameness of contents could be changed and canalized by the instructor.* (Kaylie – Journal 2)

The third theme *Teachers' Individual Characteristics* pointed out teacher-specific skills that were presented through three codes *Having Problem-solving Skills* (f=2)*, Having Communication Skills* (f=2) and *Balancing Personal and Professional Life* (f=1). Given the first code *Having Problem-solving Skills*, the participants referred to having problem solving skills as a requirement for academic and administrative process. To start with the academic process, attempting to assist learners in being more successful could vary depending on face to face and online settings. Kaylie, who compared both settings to overcome the problem, noted that:

> *I could help the student better if we were in the face to face education. I could apply a consultation form to have a better understanding of his low self-efficacy in courses.* (Kaylie – Journal 3)

Consultation forms were used in face to face settings as a written contract between the teacher and the student upon his/her misbehaviour in class, being late for class or having a low mark in a test. Kaylie focused on this lack. Given the administrative process, Zak wrote about his failed collaboration with IT department for preparing the online system for timetables on time. He concluded that:

> *I learnt two things from this time consuming experience. First, I learnt that I should tract the works I requested from someone more closely and be more insistent before it is the last minute. Second, I learnt that it is worth taking the responsibility and taking action for the sake of resolving an existing trouble despite it is time and energy consuming.* (Zak – Journal 6)

The second code *Having Communication Skills* was pointed out by the participants who basically shared their opinions of face to face communication and control over emotions. As Felix remarked:

> *Communication is crucial for managing the relationship among colleagues. This situation could be better managed by colleagues if the face to face communication was chosen by colleagues.* (Felix – Journal 1)

As he was not satisfied with online communication at all, he insisted that face to face contact with colleagues to communicate was incomparable. Further, Sarah, who essentially meant to refer to online communication with her students, argued that prejudice, namely showing immediate reaction to learners, was to be stopped, and emotions should have been controlled for better communication. She clearly stated that:

> *In challenging situations, I learned that I had to stay a little calmer and warn the behaviour, and then make the necessary explanation. At the same time, I learned not to force a student to learn if he or she resists not learning.* (Sarah – Journal 6)

Zak referred to the third code *Balancing Personal and Professional Life* by pointing out the balance between his personal and professional life. Overwhelmed with the extreme academic and administrative responsibilities especially with the outbreak of Covid-19, he underwent a tough process during which private and professional life were intermingled. Regarding the academic board meeting he attended, he reported that:

> *What I got was that I should find an equilibrium in my professional and private life. I am sure maintaining professional equilibrium will have positive reflection on my instructional effectiveness too (Hiver, 2017). Also, this will make me a more productive member of the institution I work for.* (Zak – Journal 5)

The fourth theme was *Active Involvement* involving two codes *Promoting Learners' Engagement* (f=3) and *Evaluating Learners' Participation* (f=1) encompassed participants' reconsideration of their attempts to encourage learners' active involvement in the lesson and how they evaluated the actions they took to

achieve this. The following excerpts showed what the participants learnt after their reflections:

> *Lecturing and demonstrating samples are not enough in the production stage of the slides. It is important to work on students' works to make them experience how they can do it better.* (Betty – Journal 6)

> *I could have provided my students with more space for sharing their real-life stories embedded into their lessons.* (Zak – Journal 4)

> *Previously, I used to think that class participation should be verbal, but after researching, I learned that students could express their thoughts by writing in a chat box. Students do not prefer to speak if they do not know the answer of the question. However, mistakes are proof that you are learning. People can learn from their mistakes and this knowledge can be permanent since there is a story/experience behind it. However, I learnt it after researching about silent students.* (Sarah – Journal 4)

Betty was satisfied with what she did in her speaking class – letting her students do the task on their own, and she confirmed that it was an appropriate way to promote her students' engagement. She helped and let her students prepare more effective PowerPoint slides for their speaking projects. On the other hand, in terms of involving learners in the lesson, Zak confessed that it was possible to encourage more learner participation by asking them to share their own stories in class. In addition, Sarah's account for non-participating students clearly showed that her research upon her experience with students who did not participate in her lessons changed her mind. She was now convinced that students could take part in the lesson in different ways.

In addition to the period through which teachers observed the extent to which learners showed participation, the end of this period when teachers were expected to grade their students' participation was also significant. However, Felix referred to the second code *Evaluating Learners' Participation* and confessed that he couldn't follow the required path for grading students due to the online setting where the teacher was not able to keep record of every single student in every single session. He stated that:

> *This incident reminded me that functions of a good teacher must not be ignored and must always be kept in mind. I gave grades according to my colleagues'*

grades and by checking their pictures and watching a lesson recording. I actually cannot say this was the best way of evaluating a student. On the one hand, it increases collegiality, on the on the hand, it decreases fairness. (Felix – Journal 5)

The fifth theme *Ways of Decreasing Language Learner Anxiety* consisted of three codes *Creating Stress-free Classroom Environment* (f=1)*, Promoting Self-confidence* (f=1) and *Motivating Learners* (f=1). The participants who faced situations in which learners had difficulty in producing the language owing to their learner anxiety suggested their ways of overcoming such cases. As the first code *Creating Stress-free Classroom Environment* maintained, Betty implied that her previous knowledge about how to approach learners with speaking anxiety worked well, and she underlined that:

Since speaking is one of the most challenging skills, it is very important to make all students to do the activity without being stressed. (Betty – Journal 1)

In addition to creating a friendly classroom atmosphere, Kaylie pointed out the second code *Promoting Self-confidence* by referring to one of her students who underwent heavy stress in a speaking test. She explained what could be done in that situation:

In this case, the situation can be recovered by increasing this low self-efficacy and low confidence a little by choosing a step from short and simple questions that the student can easily answer, to more difficult ones. It is necessary to reflect the signal that the student can do, not what he cannot do at that moment. (Kaylie – Journal 5)

Given the third code *Motivating Learners*, motivating learners was a prerequisite for effective language teaching. As Betty put it, there were different ways of achieving this in class. She claimed that she applied Dörnyei's approach to motivation without being aware of doing it as stated as follows:

Dörnyei's Ideal L2 self is crucial for understanding motivation. I also applied that for another student who sent me an email at the beginning of the term, saying that her English level was very low compared to their class mates. Without considering this motivation theory which I am quite familiar with, I

tried to motivate my student to study hard to achieve her goal and she is one of the most hard working and successful students in class now. (Betty – Journal 2)

Similarly, Betty also discussed her experience with a student who recovered his motivation after hearing about the passing grade to another level. She argued that:

That situation made me think that there are students in our classes with instrumental motivation only which we need to do our best to help them to learn the language for their future (Betty – Journal 2).

In Betty's statement, it was clear that encouraging learners to ponder on why they learned English helped them to be aware of their future goals. It also helped them to become more motivated while learning English.

Listed as the sixth theme, *Promoting Collaboration* was examined under two codes *Collaboration among Learners* (f=1) and *Collaboration among Teachers* (f=1). The participants made it clear that collaboration not only among learners but also among teachers helped learners academically and socially. For instance, regarding the first code *Collaboration among Learners*, Sarah reported that:

My experience displayed how significant it is for students to support each other. Students' relationships with each other are effective not only in social terms but also in increasing their academic success. (Sarah – Journal 5)

As well as collaboration among learners in class, teachers also made use of a similar collaboration among themselves to solve learners' problem with mispronouncing words. Referring to the ways of overcoming the problem, Kaylie pointed out the second code *Collaboration among Teachers*, suggesting that:

I think it is one of the saviours of the situation that academic individuals are more in contact with each other and act in a joint and supportive way. (Kaylie – Journal 6)

Kaylie's main point was to make the best use of collaboration among colleagues in order to act in harmony while handling problems. It was underestimated due the pandemic. Therefore, she felt the urgent need for academics to gather and work together.

4.3.6. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle: Action Plan

Action Plan, the last step of Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, illustrated what participants have decided to do for future action in a similar experience based on their learning from their critical experiences. While some participants claimed that they would react to a similar situation in the same way as they had done, others argued that they would do things differently in order not to experience the same outcome. In the following table, data gathered from the participants were presented.

Table 4.9. *Action Plan: What action plans Turkish EFL teachers made*

Themes	Codes	f	%
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (f=9)	Staying up-to-date	3	10
	Being a Member of Community of Practice	3	10
	Reflecting on Teaching Practice	2	6,67
	Classroom Observation	1	3,33
TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE (f=8)	Guiding Learners	2	6,67
	Tracking Learners	2	6,67
	Providing Effective Feedback	2	6,67
	Providing Task-based Instruction in Writing Classes	1	3,33
	Providing Contextualized Teaching	1	3,33
WAYS OF PROMOTING LEARNERS' ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT (f=6)	Providing Written and Verbal Responses	2	6,67
	Decreasing Language Learning Anxiety	2	6,67
	Motivating Learners	1	3,33
	Using L1 in Classes	1	3,33
ONLINE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT (f=4)	Holding Preventive Approach	2	6,67
	In-class Discipline	1	3,33
	Crisis Management	1	3,33
WAYS OF PREVENTING ONLINE COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS (f=3)	Providing Learners with Clear Instructions	1	3,33
	Asking Learners Information Check Questions	1	3,33
	Activating Cameras during the Online Lesson	1	3,33
Total		**30**	**100**

As shown in Table 4.9, the responses of the participants regarding their future actions were categorized into five themes as *Professional Development* (f=9), *Teachers' Instructional Practice* (f=8), *Ways of Promoting Learners' Active Involvement* (f=6), *Online Classroom Management* (f=4) and *Ways of Preventing Online Communication Problems* (f=3).

The first theme *Professional Development* encompassed four codes *Staying up-to-date* (f=3), *Being a Member of Community of Practice* (f=3), *Reflecting on Teaching*

Practice (f=2) and *Classroom Observation* (f=1) through which the participants shared how they perceived professional development. The first code was referred to by Felix, who argued that:

> *I personally chose to focus on my self-understanding and to improve my knowledge as a teacher.* (Felix – Journal 2)

Similarly, overwhelmed with efforts to find a solution to non-participating students, Zak's plan for future action was presented below:

> *In order not to experience a similar situation, I need to read more, search more from the literature and be more prepared for camera-shy learners.* (Zak – Journal 1)

Regarding the challenges of managing online classes, Kaylie also maintained that:

> *We seem to encounter more with such situations in online education. For this reason, we can closely follow the trend training developments in our field, be prepared for the situations and problems that may be encountered in online education, and discuss how we will react in different scenarios with our colleagues in our field and follow the necessary studies conducted in our field.* (Kaylie – Journal 5)

The participants also pointed out the second code *Being a Member of Community of Practice,* highlighting the importance of collaboration and exchanging ideas among teachers. When Kaylie's attitude was taken into account, it was concluded that communicating with colleagues as well as following trainings related to the online setting were the keys to be followed in the future. She also was aware of the significance of community of practice. As she put it:

> *This is a dynamic process. When I encounter this or similar situation again, I can take a different action depending on the situation. There are up-to-date articles on different topics in our field every day. Although we do not have the opportunity to follow all of them, we can follow and examine the ones that are closest to our focus on a regular basis every week. In fact, I wish we had the opportunity to analyse and discuss this with our colleagues. But I think we may*

still need to focus on the practical side of this work for a while and put theory in second place, because of these difficult processes. (Kaylie – Journal 6)

Since the courses were taught by the teacher in coordination with the head of the relevant committees such as the writing committee, the teacher contacted the coordinator at the first place in case of a problem. Kaylie detected certain problems regarding the content of the writing classes, so she stated that:

I could discuss the types of techniques in writing with the writing coordinator so as not to overload the students and be sure of using them well-advised. (Kaylie – Journal 2)

Likewise, collaboration with colleagues about any kind of problem encountered was considered to be quite significant by Sarah, who argued that:

Also, it is a scientific fact that peer support and teacher support have a huge place. Therefore, it may be more helpful to talk about anxiety and try to find solutions together. (Sarah – Journal 5)

Sarah referred to the third and fourth codes *Reflecting on Teaching Practice* and *Classroom Observation* respectively regarding making wrong assumptions about her students existing knowledge and reported that:

This increases my awareness, I will no longer make assumptions about students' knowledge. Therefore, I will re-watch the lecture recordings, focus only on this topic, and ask my colleagues to observe my lesson if ... necessary. (Sarah – Journal 2)

She thought that at the beginning of the term her students had at least basic knowledge about digital applications. Therefore, she did not take any extra precautions to prevent possible problems in this regard.

The second theme *Teachers' Instructional Practice* was examined under five codes *Guiding Learners* (f=2)*, Tracking Learners* (f=2)*, Providing Effective Feedback* (f=2)*, Providing Task-based Instruction in Writing Classes* (f=1) and *Providing Contextualized Teaching* (f=1). The first code *Guiding Learners* was referred to by Betty, who was planning to follow the same procedure to encourage her students to

give an effective presentation in case she should encounter a similar case. She maintained that:

> *I guess I would do the same - I mean, introduce them the ways to prepare an effective presentation, first by showing them some samples from my own presentations but then by showing and discussing students' presentations in class (if those students are comfortable with it) in the form of a collaborative work.* (Betty – Journal 6)

In addition to demonstrating learners the steps of effective oral presentation, Kaylie shared her plans for future action for learners who had difficulty learning or left behind the class during the process by stating that:

> *I could have benefited from the courses online related to remedial methods for a student who is left behind his peers in the class.* (Kaylie – Journal 3)

Some back-up lessons were believed to help those learners perform better in class.

Given the second code *Tracking Learners*, the participants also mentioned tracking learners in academic and administrative terms. Regarding the assignment of online activities to learners, Betty was disappointed to see nobody had done them. Upon this situation, she decided that:

> *In the following term, as soon as the system has been set, I will start following online activities and talking about them with my students right from the beginning of the term.* (Betty – Journal 2)

Thinking that learners would do them as they were important for their academic success did not work since reminding about or insisting on the assignment was regarded as a necessary step to get the tasks done by learners. Likewise, in administrative terms, Zak changed the way he approached the tasks he assigned to teachers and related staff in other departments due to his administrative duties. He clearly argued that:

> *Division of work saves time and energy. In order to be able to do my job more properly, I need to be more insistent to make the person I assigned a work submit it on time. Also, taking the responsibility of multiple duties will make*

> *me run out of energy and maybe motivation, but I am not sure if I can be successful next time in a similar situation. At least, I have learnt that I should update myself in this point.* (Zak – Journal 6)

Providing Effective Feedback, as the third code suggested, was also given importance by participants who basically referred to feedback in speaking and writing classes. Speaking projects necessitated regular, effective and supportive feedback provided to learners by their teachers. Betty, at this point, implied what she would do for the next time as follows:

> *The most important stage* [of an effective presentation is] *delivering their presentations in class (in public) in an efficient and effective way ... That requires a lot of effort both on the side of the student and the teacher in terms of productive feedback that will help them to be good public speakers.* (Betty – Journal 6)

In addition to feedback in speaking classes, providing feedback in writing classes was also pointed out by Felix, who mainly focused on giving open feedback allowing all the students in the class to see each other's mistakes. He reported that:

> *I once again understood that I should have read about the advantages and disadvantages of giving open-name feedback.* (Felix – Journal 2)

Regarding the fourth code *Providing Task-based Instruction in Writing Classes*, Kaylie's consideration of a new schedule for writing classes as well as the implementation of task-based instruction was pointed out by her. She outlined her future plans in her writing classes as follows:

> *I am planning to use more flexible plan of teaching writing which enables student to divide in groups and writing group work and stress free environment for the students by implementing some interactive tools in my teaching writing (letting students brainstorm and active writing in online platforms)*. (Kaylie – Journal 1)

She also mentioned the necessity of assigning extensive writing activities in order to have more efficient time management in her writing classes. She discussed that:

Overcoming the time constrain in writing activities by encouraging them to do extensive writing. I am planning to use more examples of task-based instruction for more effective writing courses. (Kaylie – Journal 2)

Given the fifth code *Providing Contextualized Teaching*, Betty's plans for future action remain the same as she already emphasized the significance of providing contextualized teaching in class. She clearly stated that:

I am going to embed context into course materials and teaching. (Betty – Journal 5)

The participants contributed to the third theme *Ways of Promoting Learners' Active Involvement* in terms of four codes *Providing Written and Verbal Responses* (f=2)*, Decreasing Language Learning Anxiety* (f=2)*, Motivating Learners* (f=1) and *Using L1 in Classes* (f=1). Regarding the first code *Providing Written and Verbal Responses*, Sarah underwent a change in her thoughts about participating in the online lesson only verbally and she now believed that learners could take part in the online lesson both by writing (in the chatbox) and by speaking. At this point, Sarah maintained that:

I think I need to increase the variety of questions I'm asking and stop expecting only verbal feedback. Students should also be able to give feedback and participate in the lesson by writing. (Sarah – Journal 1)

Sarah also referred to the second code *Decreasing Language Learning Anxiety* arguing that she would talk to the learners to reduce their speaking anxiety before a speaking test in a similar situation. She argued that:

Although the student presented his speech in English at the end, he felt anxious. Talking with the students and encouraging them about reducing anxiety may make a big difference for the future mini presentations. (Sarah – Journal 5)

On condition that the techniques used to engage learners were appropriate, learners would start to participate accordingly without feeling stressed, especially in a speaking activity. Sarah came up with a solution to achieve this mentioned as follows:

While I was researching and reading about students' belief, a game came to my mind. I could overcome this issue by playing a guessing game. For example,

> *the students can guess the age of a famous person, the height of a building, etc. After emphasizing what guessing is, the next step is to guess the answer of the question that is related to the topic. Asking* [for] *the correct answer directly may stress the students. Therefore, it is important to guess the answer first. In this way, they may find out that it is not wrong to make mistakes.* (Sarah – Journal 4)

In the third code *Motivating Learners*, Sarah was of the opinion that learners should be appreciated just because there were present in the online lesson rather than criticizing their lack of participation. She stated that:

> *Considering that their presence in the classroom is an indication of participating in the class, I should motivate them for their efforts. In this way, the continuity of motivated good behaviour and more can be achieved*. (Sarah – Journal 1)

Regarding the fourth code *Using L1 in Classes*, Zak proposed the use of L1 as a means to encourage participation by stating that:

> *From now on, I can see that I need to find ways to make all my students participate more. The mother language can be a tool for me.* (Zak – Journal 2)

It can be concluded from Zak's experience that allowing learners to use their mother tongue in class could promote a wider participation in the lesson.

Under the fourth theme *Online Classroom Management*, three codes were categorized as *Holding Preventive Approach* (f=2), *In-class Discipline* (f=1) and *Crisis Management* (f=1). Betty and Felix referred to the first code *Holding Preventive Approach* as the key to better classroom management. Betty argued that:

> *In future experiences, I may consider this problem earlier and can provide more support for those who need more guidance in this respect.* (Betty – Journal 1)

In the online setting, learners needed teachers' support to be able to keep up with the online system. For such technical problems as cameras, she stated that:

> *I will definitely remind again my students to check their cameras earlier – before the class time.* (Betty – Journal 4).

Likewise, Felix mentioned some techniques for a better end-of-term evaluation of learner participation:

> *After this incident I have prepared a notebook for the third term to take notes on the classroom participation for each week. As the British proverb says, "Let the paper know it". I will not risk forgetting a single student's name or face for the sake of a good evaluation.* (Felix – Journal 5)

The online setting inherently involved expected and unexpected, preventable and unpreventable situations. After some time with distance learning, Kaylie reached a point that, as suggested in the second and third codes *In-class Discipline* and *Crisis Management* respectively:

> *I could have benefited from the courses online related to coping strategies for the problematic situations to increase the level of preparedness.* (Kaylie – Journal 4)

Lack of formal training regarding online education could be compensated by taking personal steps such as (online) training about crisis management, action research, and collaboration with colleagues.

Listed as the fifth theme, *Ways of Preventing Online Communication Problems* indicated the strategies that the participants would employ to promote effective communication in class in case of a similar incident. The three codes under this theme were *Providing Learners with Clear Instructions* (f=1), *Asking Learners Information Check Questions* (f=1) and *Activating Cameras during the Online Lesson* (f=1). With regard to the first code *Providing Learners with Clear Instructions*, the participants highlighted the misunderstanding between teachers and students, which might have been caused by online education. For instance, Zak referred to providing clear instructions to learners as a step to prevent possible problems by arguing that:

> *Since that moment, I have planned and conducted my lessons considering the profile and tried to make every expectation clear for students not to experience another disappointment or shock.* (Zak – Journal 3)

Given the second code *Asking Learners Information Check Questions*, Felix wanted to make sure that various important dates including dates for the speaking project and the final exam were clearly understood by the learners and reported that:

> *I started using instruction check questions more to see if they were keeping the announcements in mind or not.* (Felix – Journal 6)

Finally, in the third code *Activating Cameras during the Online Lesson,* Sarah believed the last way of ensuring effective communication in class was keeping learners' cameras on throughout the online lesson. She suggested that:

> *In fact, the root of the problem is that students do not turn on their cameras and this causes communication problems. That's why, I will read articles on this topic and discuss the issue with my colleagues.* (Sarah – Journal 3)

It can be concluded from Sarah's statement that she managed to find out the reason for communication problems during the class, and that she planned to overcome the problem through research about the issue and sharing the findings with her colleagues.

4.4. Results of Research Question #3: *How does Turkish EFL teachers' reflection influence their perception of teacher autonomy in online learning?*

Following the reflection period, data for the third research question were collected during the post-stage of the study through in-depth interviews, all of which were conducted and recorded on Zoom, and transcribed via an online website (https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/services/cognitive-services/speech-to-text/#features). Inductive content analysis was conducted to examine the in-depth interviews. Three sub-questions provided below were asked to explore in detail how the reflection period influenced the participants' perception of teacher autonomy in terms of online teaching skills, online classroom management and professional development in the online setting, respectively:

> *1. Do you think the reflection period has an influence on your perception of online teaching skills? If so, how? If not, why not?*

2. Do you think the reflection period has an influence on your perception of effective online classroom management? If so, how? If not, why not?

3. Do you think the reflection period has an influence on your attitude towards professional development in the online setting? If so, how? If not, why not?

4.4.1. Influence of Reflection Period on Turkish EFL Teachers' Perception of Online Teaching Skills

The first sub-question that was asked to the participants about their perception of online teaching skills is as follows:

Do you think the reflection period has an influence on your perception of online teaching skills? If so, how? If not, why not?

Data obtained from the participants were closely analysed, and the findings were presented in the following table.

Table 4.10. *Influence of Turkish EFL teachers' reflection on their perceptions of online teaching skills*

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes/Sub-codes	f	%
TEACHERS (f=20)	Teachers' Individual Characteristics	Teachers' Personality Traits	2	5
		Being Aware of Teaching Skills	2	5
		Having Problem Solution Skills	1	2,5
		Having Organisation Skills	1	2,5
		Having Multitasking Skills	1	2,5
		Underestimating Teaching Skills	1	2,5
	Ways of Providing Effective Teaching	Enhancing Teaching Skills	3	7,5
		Considering Students' Opinions	2	5
		Employing Effective Lesson Plans	1	2,5
	Teachers' Instructional Practice	Using Teaching Methods	2	5
		• Eclectic Method	1	2,5
		• Communicative Language Teaching	1	2,5
		Adopting Interdisciplinary Approach	1	2,5
	Teachers' Attitudes	Feeling Enthusiastic about Teaching	1	2,5
LEARNERS (f=19)	Learner Centeredness	Ways of Lowering Language Learner Anxiety in Online Classes	6	15
		• Turning off the Teacher's Camera	1	2,5
		• Removing Pressure on Learners	1	2,5
		• Providing Enough Wait Time to Learners	1	2,5
		• Increasing Non-verbal Communication	1	2,5
		• Letting Students Speak in Mother Tongue	1	2,5
		• Switching back to English	1	2,5
		Considering Students' Needs	1	2,5

Table 4.10. *(Cont.)*

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes/Sub-codes	f	%
	Language Learner Engagement in Online Classes	Encouraging Student Learning	2	5
		Factors Affecting Learners' Participation	2	5
		• Learners' Personality Traits	1	2,5
		• Keeping Cameras and Microphones off	1	2,5
LANGUAGE LEARNING CONTEXT (f=1)	Language Teaching Materials	Preparing Better Online Materials	1	2,5
Total			**40**	**100**

As shown in Table 4.10, the participants' responses obtained from the in-depth interviews were categorized into three themes as *Teachers* (f=20)*, Learners* (f=19) and *Language Learning Context* (f=1). Four sub-themes emerged under *Teachers* as *Teachers' Individual Characteristics*, *Ways of Providing Effective Teaching*, *Teachers' Instructional Practice* and *Teachers' Attitudes*; two sub-themes were derived under *Learners* as *Learner Centeredness* and *Language Learner Engagement in Online Classes*, and one sub-theme was listed under *Language Learning Context* as *Language Teaching Materials.*

The first theme *Teachers* involved four sub-themes *Teacher's Individual Characteristics*, *Ways of Providing Effective Teaching*, *Teachers' Instructional Practice* and *Teachers' Attitudes*. The first sub-theme *Teacher's Individual Characteristics* consisting of six codes *Teachers' Personality Traits* (f=2), *Being Aware of Teaching Skills* (f=2)*, Having Problem Solution Skills* (f=1)*, Having Organisation Skills* (f=1)*, Having Multitasking Skills* (f=1) and *Underestimating Teaching Skills* (f=1) mainly reflects how the participants perceive the personality traits as well as the skills they had. With regard to the first code *Teachers' Personality Traits*, Zak mentioned the way he managed to increase learners' active participation in the lesson by letting them switch between Turkish and English, referring to altering his personality traits and reported that:

At first I was so strict, and then a little bit loose. (Zak – In-depth Interview)

Furthermore, the second code *Being Aware of Teaching Skills* was pointed out by the participants with regard to their awareness of their teaching skills. The relevant excerpts were listed as follows:

I think I was aware of the classroom teaching skills. (Zak – In-depth Interview)

So now I'm more aware of the differences between online teaching skills and face to face teaching skills. (Sarah – In-depth Interview)

While Zak stressed that he already knew he was employing his teaching skills during the reflection period, Sarah provided more specific data as to how her perception of teaching skills changed after the reflection period. It was also clear that Sarah had different perceptions of her awareness of the skills she had in delivering her courses in the face to face and online setting.

In terms of the third code *Having Problem Solution Skills*, Betty expressed how she could find solutions to in-class problems she faced in the following statement:

When I focus on the problems [about teaching] *in the classes, it helps me to find solutions and to tailor design solutions for different students*. (Betty – In-depth Interview)

She thought she had the necessary skills to detect the problems emerging in class and find appropriate ways of solving them.

Similarly, Felix referred to the fourth code *Having Organisation Skills* and claimed that during the reflection period he underwent a change in his mindset about having more communicative skills, suggesting that:

I started using organisation skills like more communicative skills. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

As suggested in the fifth code *Having Multitasking Skills*, Felix also pointed out that he developed his multitasking skills in terms of managing communication in online classes as well as designing online materials. He reported that:

By the way, I started to become a more multitasking person as well because of the communication, and I learnt how to use Zoom to prepare some better online materials. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

Given the sixth code *Underestimating Teaching Skills*, Felix confessed that he neglected some teaching skills just because he thought he had a lot of teaching experience. He argued that:

> *Because after working for a long time as an English teacher, I usually forget or ignoring some skills I already have in your mind*. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

His sincere confession showed that the reflection period helped him realize the teaching skills he already had.

The second sub-theme *Ways of Providing Effective Teaching* examined the participants' strategies that they adopted to offer a more effective teaching to the learners through three codes *Enhancing Teaching Skills* (f=3)*, Considering Students' Opinions* (f=2) and *Employing Effective Lesson Plans* (f=1). Regarding the first code *Enhancing Teaching Skills*, the participants reported that the reflection period influenced the way they enhance their teaching skills. For example, Betty argued that the reflection period did not change her perception of teaching skills completely. However, as she put it:

> *While I am trying to create an effective class,* [the reflection period] *still helps me to polish my teaching*. (Betty – In-depth Interview)

Felix also pointed out the influence of his reflection on his perception of teaching skills and suggested that:

> *When the reflection started, I started using all the techniques, all the teaching skills more and more, and I had to consider those teaching skills to create a much better classroom environment*. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

It is apparently seen that the reflection period had a positive impact on Felix's perception of his teaching skills since he always had to consider how he was teaching in class.

Another strategy used to enrich the learning environment for learners was maintained by Kaylie, who emphasized that:

> *… understanding learning outcomes of my students*. (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

By focusing on what her students were supposed to achieve at the end of their learning process, she developed a new approach towards how to deliver her lessons more effectively.

Felix and Kaylie also referred to the second code *Considering Students' Opinions* about involving learners' opinions regarding their learning process and stressed that students' perceptions of their learning should be taken into consideration in order to provide effective teaching. The related instances were given below:

> *I realised that I need their opinion*. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

> *I can have a look at what is going on in my classroom. After writing my first reflective Journal, I just prepared some questions to get some information from my students about their feelings and learning process.* (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

Both participants were aware that they needed to involve their learners' opinions and feelings about their learning process so that they could modify their teaching. Also, Kaylie particularly stressed that she started to collect her students' opinions about the lessons just after the first reflective journal was written.

As for the last code *Employing Effective Lesson Plans*, Felix mentioned that the reflection period enabled him to change the way he designed his lesson plans. He reported that:

> *I started preparing more detailed lesson plans*. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

The third sub-theme *Teachers' Instructional Practice* was categorized into two codes *Using Teaching Methods* (f=2) and *Adopting Interdisciplinary Approach* (f=1) and involved the participants' perceptions of their teaching experience. Given the first code *Using Teaching Methods* consisting of two sub-codes *Eclectic Method* (f=1) and *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)* (f=1), Betty argued that:

> *Eclectic methods and the communicative language teaching are the fundamentals to our teaching… and I always use CLT. We need to integrate communication into our teaching*. (Betty – In-depth Interview)

Considering Betty's opinions with regard to the teaching methods mentioned above, there was no change in her perception about this specific issue. Her relevant statements remained almost the same before and after the reflection period.

As for the second code *Adopting Interdisciplinary Approach*, Betty also illustrated in detail how she achieved such integration as follows:

> *What I noticed with this study was that I was integrating different approaches from different fields. For example, I was integrating applied linguistics. I was integrating language and communication while trying to create an effective class, like motivation, or second language acquisition, which is related to applied linguistics. I was integrating all these things in the class, which I wasn't aware of, so it created awareness.* (Betty – In-depth Interview)

It was concluded that the while-stage of this study raised awareness about interdisciplinary approach that she employed to provide effective teaching.

The fourth sub-theme *Teachers' Attitudes* which had one code *Feeling Enthusiastic about Teaching* (f=1) encompassed Felix's positive feeling towards teaching. He maintained that:

> *As everyone knows, the first thing in teaching skills is actually you should have an enthusiasm about teaching, and it's somehow increased my enthusiasm on teaching.* (Felix – In-depth Interview)

As Felix remarked, the reflection period triggered his enthusiasm about teaching, and thus, he was eager to reflect on his teaching while he was writing his journals.

The second theme *Learners* provided data regarding learner-specific issues encountered throughout the language learning process through two sub-themes *Learner Centeredness* and *Language Learner Engagement in Online Classes*.

The first sub-theme *Learner Centeredness* consisted of two codes *Ways of Lowering Language Learner Anxiety in Online Classes* (f=6) and *Considering Students' Needs* (f=1). The first code basically included the strategies that the participants applied to deal with language learner anxiety through six sub-codes as shown in Table 4.10. The following excerpts clearly demonstrated what kind of techniques the participants employed to decrease language learner anxiety:

> *When I gave them a task, I started turning off my camera because when they see your head there, they are pressurised. They feel anxious.* (Felix – In-depth Interview)

Just imagine this in the real life - in face to face classroom setting - when you give students the task and then you walk around a lot, students become more anxious. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

Actually teachers should go and sit somewhere and wait quietly for a while, just let them do the task. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

I invented such a thing like to increase my non-verbal communication with them just to lower their anxiety, I started turning off my cam. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

In online classes I did this because I realised that when they speak in Turkish, somehow speak, then it will lead… and… help them to speak in English as well. (Zak – In-depth Interview)

Felix explained the reason why learners felt anxious during an activity and the way he handled the situation. He also compared the face to face and online setting in terms of learners' anxiety. To ease this negative feeling, Felix attempted to provide learners with sufficient amount of wait time for the activity. Moreover, he shared another way of coping with anxiety and made himself invisible to the students by turning off his camera. Likewise, Zak proposed a different strategy by allowing his students to switch to Turkish, their mother tongue, and to share their opinions and then to switch back to English. By so doing, the students felt less anxious while speaking in English.

Given the second code *Considering Students' Needs*, Betty's suggestion also helped the lesson to be more learner-centered. Involving learners' needs in the teaching process contributed to the effectiveness of the lesson. She maintained that:

We try to tailor design our classes according to the needs of the students. (Betty – In-depth Interview)

The second sub-theme *Language Learner Engagement in Online Classes* examined learner engagement in two different perspectives as suggested through two codes *Encouraging Student Learning* (f=2) and *Factors Affecting Learners' Participation* (f=2). With regard to the first code *Encouraging Student Learning*, the

participants shared their perceptions of engaging learners in the lesson. For instance, Felix argued that:

> *I have to encourage them to learn*, so *students actively join and answer the poll* [on Zoom]. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

Asking learners to take part in the online poll on Zoom designed by the teacher during the lesson enabled them to have a word about the topic. By so doing, Felix had a chance to involve his students in sharing their ideas on the lesson. Also, Kaylie was looking for another way to achieve active participation and effective teaching, suggesting that:

> *I was asking myself how I can maintain the best teaching period and how they can benefit from my teaching*. (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

Further, the participants pointed out the second code *Factors Affecting Learners' Participation* about the possible reasons hindering learner participation in online classes by referring to two sub-codes *Learners' Personality Traits* (f=1) and *Keeping Cameras and Microphones off* (f=1). As the first sub-code *Learners' Personality Traits* suggested, learners' individual characteristics were the key to lack of active involvement. Learners' shyness was stressed by Zak, who reported that:

> *When we started the lesson, I saw that they were shy*. (Zak – In-depth Interview)

He also emphasized that learners were reluctant to keep their cameras and microphones off throughout the online classes. Referring to the second sub-code *Keeping Cameras and Microphones off*, he stated that:

> *They don't turn on their camera, and this affects their classroom participation. They were not speaking.* (Zak – In-depth Interview)

In addition, he criticized that although his students own technological devices which are equipped with cameras and microphones, they simply did not want to use them when they were in online lessons. He expressed that:

> *They have cameras; they have their mobile phones. Every day, they take photos and selfies. Therefore, it wouldn't be a problem for them to join the online classes visually and verbally.* (Zak – In-depth Interview)

The third theme *Language Learning Context* consisted of one theme *Language Teaching Materials* (f=1). Designing more effective online course materials was considered as a new area in which Felix developed himself during the reflection period. He argued that:

> *I became a better user of Zoom and used it better preparing online materials*. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

Felix, who had not had an idea about designing online materials beforehand, realized that he was able to have more control over the online platforms such as Zoom in order to offer a variety of materials to be exploit in his online classes.

4.4.2. Influence of Reflection Period on Turkish EFL Teachers' Perception of Online Classroom Management

The second sub-question below was directed to the participants to find out if the reflection period had an influence on the participants' perception of online classroom management:

> *Do you think the reflection period has an influence on your perception of online classroom management? If so, how? If not, why not?*

Responses to the second sub-question were analysed and categorized as can be seen in Table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11. *Influence of Turkish EFL teachers' reflection on their perceptions of online classroom management*

Themes	Codes/Sub-codes	f	%
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES (f=8)	Handling In-class Problems	2	10,53
	Promoting Interaction among Students	2	10,53
	Encouraging Expected Student Behaviour	2	10,53
	• Classroom Rules	1	5,26
	• Modelling Ideal Behaviour	1	5,26
TEACHERS' INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS (f=5)	Having Classroom Management Skills	3	15,78
	Having Problem Solution Skills	2	10,53
TEACHERS' ATTITUDES (f=4)	Feeling Intimidated	2	10,53
	Feeling Competent	2	10,53
CHALLENGES IN ONLINE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT (f=2)	Lack of Effective Communication	1	5,26
	Lack of Student Participation	1	5,26
Total		**19**	**100**

Data obtained from the participants were presented under four themes *Classroom Management Strategies* (f=8)*, Teachers' Individual Characteristics* (f=5)*, Teachers' Attitudes* (f=4) and *Challenges in Online Classroom Management* (f=2) as demonstrated in Table 4.11.

The first theme based on the data obtained from the participants was *Classroom Management Strategies*, and it provided insight into how they maintained effective classroom management in their lessons through three codes *Handling In-class Problems* (f=2)*, Promoting Interaction among Students* (f=2) and *Encouraging Expected Student Behaviour* (f=2). With regard to the first code *Handling In-class Problems*, Sarah remarked that:

> *Sometimes, when you encounter an issue, you think you are handling well, but when you pay attention, you realise that you could actually manage this situation differently*. (Sarah – In-depth Interview)

Her opinion on such situations displayed that being more aware of the problems enabled her to adopt a better approach to deal with them. She also drew a parallelism between understanding the meaning of a song instead of just listening to it, and the core of the problem, such as learners' misbehaviour, encountered in class. She remarked that:

> *I believe there is a huge difference between hearing and listening. I mean that sometimes you cannot hear or perceive anything other than the melody unless you focus on the lyrics of the song. And then, you listen to it fully and perceive the story behind it. The same thing, I think, goes for effective classroom management.* (Sarah – In-depth Interview)

It was clear from her metaphor that more appropriate strategies could be employed to deal with such in-class problems. Another point that she made was that:

> *… tolerating the problems and not reacting to them right away*. (Sarah – In-depth Interview)

As for the influence of the reflection period on her reactions to these problems, she clearly stated that:

I can say that it affected my behaviour to the students, so I started to tolerate some issues. Now, I don't react right away or immediately. I believe that tolerating problems is very important. (Sarah – In-depth Interview)

Given the second code *Promoting Interaction*, Betty referred to a classroom environment in which she established a convenient atmosphere for an effective interaction. As she put it:

... an effective communication with the students. (Betty – In-depth Interview)

Also, Felix, who turned off his camera while the students were doing an in-class activity, claimed that this enabled the learners to start interacting with each other, suggesting that:

It really helped because when they didn't see me and started asking each other. They can communicate among themselves when the task is completed. That's fine for me. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

In terms of *Encouraging Expected Student Behaviour* as the third code suggested, Felix shared his opinions that were categorized mainly under two sub-codes *Classroom Rules* (f=1) and *Modelling Ideal Behaviour* (f=1). Regarding the first sub-code *Classroom Rules*, he attempted to create a democratic classroom environment in which learners' involvement in setting classroom rules was ensured. He argued that:

I started asking them about what kind of rules we should have. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

He implicitly referred to another positive impact of the reflection period on the way he determined the classroom rules with the participation of the whole class. In addition to involving learners in the process of setting classroom rules, Felix also set himself as a role model to encourage his students to act appropriately, such as going online for the lesson a few minutes earlier rather than arrive late. Felix referred to the second sub-code *Modelling Ideal Behaviour* by arguing that:

A teacher must be a very good model, and all the documents and rules must be clarified beforehand. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

He shared one of his experiences as to how he changed the way he started his lessons:

> *When this* [reflection] *process first started, I was just getting online at like - if the lesson was at 2:00 pm, I was just getting online at 1:59 or 2:00 pm sharp. Then, I realised that this wasn't a good idea because whenever I started my zoom lesson, I saw that students were waiting in the waiting room. But this helped me develop a strategy. If students are there before me, this is not good. Just like face to face classes, I have to be earlier than my students. I have to go to my classroom and get ready. I did this! I went online like 10 minutes before my lessons. I even shared my screen (the coursebook). When students were in the waiting room, everything was already projected and waiting for them.* (Felix – In-depth Interview)

The second theme *Teachers' Individual Characteristics* involved two codes *Having Classroom Management Skills* (f=3) and *Having Problem Solution Skills* (f=2), encompassing the participants' skills required for effective classroom management. Regarding the first code *Having Classroom Management Skills*, it was clearly stated by the participants that the 15-week reflection period positively influenced their perceptions of effective classroom management. The participants' relevant statements were provided as follows:

> *It already has had great influence on me*. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

> *It contributed to my classroom management throughout this 15-week period*. (Zak – In-depth Interview)

> *I can say that my awareness of this issue increased during this reporting period.* (Sarah – In-depth Interview)

It is clear from the above opinions of the participants that the 15-week period of reflection positively contributed to their perception of classroom management – as a part of teacher autonomy. Felix and Zak also provided some more details regarding in what ways their reflection positively affected them:

> *Also, I started learning some non-verbal communication skills, and this is very important in effective classroom management because like face to face classroom setting, you are there; students are there in the online setting*. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

This reflection helped me to implement some different techniques in my classroom management activities or practices. (Zak – In-depth Interview)

Given the second code *Having Problem Solution Skills*, Betty did not experience a considerable change during the reflection period in terms of her perception of the problem solution skills she had. She essentially implied that she would make use of the same skills that she already has to solve in-class problems that might emerge in her classes in the future. In this respect, she reported that:

I believe I will still be using my existing problem solving skills in the future. (Betty – In-depth Interview)

On the other hand, Zak was in search of new techniques for effective problem solution skills and stated that:

I try to find some ways to resolve problems, and the reflection period helped me a lot. (Zak – In-depth Interview)

The third theme *Teachers' Attitudes* consisted of two opposing feelings of teachers towards online classroom management as provided through two codes *Feeling Intimidated* (f=2) and *Feeling Competent* (f=2). Felix and Kaylie pointed out the difficulty of teaching and managing online classroom in the first code *Feeling Intimidated* as they were unfamiliar with such a teaching mode. For instance, Felix and Kaylie maintained that:

The online classroom setting it was very difficult at the beginning. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

In terms of effective classroom management, as you know, in online education, maintaining effective classroom management is really hard. (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

As opposed to these negative feelings towards the online setting, the two participants reported that the reflection period had a positive influence on their perception of effective classroom management. The second code *Feeling Competent* was mentioned in the following instances of the participants:

But, then, yes, I could do it. I realised that I could do it! (Felix – In-depth Interview)

It is now really good in terms of effective classroom management. (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

The fourth theme *Challenges in Online Classroom Management* was mainly about the adverse effects of lack of sufficient communication. Actually, as regards the two codes *Lack of Effective Communication* (f=1) and *Lack of Student Participation* (f=1), Sarah reported her experience as follows:

A student told me something. Now I don't remember it, but I misunderstood her and then I reacted according to what I thought. But actually she gave examples about what she told and then I realised that I misunderstood the situation. Now I can clearly see that it was because of the online education because at that time I couldn't see her. So I couldn't see her body language or expressions. (Sarah – In-depth Interview)

In her statement, Sarah highlighted a cause and effect relationship by arguing that the communication between the teacher and the student was broken due to the fact that the student was not participating in the lesson with her camera and microphone on.

4.4.3. Influence of Reflection Period on Turkish EFL Teachers' Perception of Professional Development in the Online Setting

The participants were asked the last sub-question to explore any possible influence of their reflection on the way they perceive professional development in the online setting:

Do you think the reflection period has an influence on your attitude towards professional development in the online setting? If so, how? If not, why not?

The findings regarding the participants' responses to the third sub-question stated above were presented in Table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12. *Influence of Turkish EFL teachers' reflection on their perception of professional development in the online setting*

Themes	Codes/Sub-codes	f	%
REFLECTION (f=20)	Influence of Reflection on Teachers' Professional Development	5	11,11
	• Teachers' Opinions	1	2,22
	• Gaining Deeper Insight into Teaching Practice	1	2,22
	• Developing Problem-solving Skills	1	2,22
	• Raising Awareness about Interdisciplinary Approach	1	2,22
	• Keeping up with Developments in Language Teaching	1	2,22
	Reflection-on-action	4	8,89
	• Reflecting on Teaching Skills	2	4,44
	• Reflecting on Classroom Management	2	4,44
	Reflection-in-action	2	4,44
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (f=10)	Teachers' Professional Development Needs	3	6,67
	Lifelong Learning	2	4,44
	Teachers' Positive Attitudes	2	4,44
	Developing Teacher Knowledge	2	4,44
	Keeping up to date	1	2,22
WAYS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (f=9)	Receiving Professional Development Activities	3	6,67
	Being a Member of Community of Practice	3	6,67
	Reviewing the Literature	2	4,44
	Production of Academic Publications	1	2,22
REASONS FOR CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN DISTANCE EDUCATION (f=6)	Lack of Adequate Preservice Training for Distance Education	3	6,67
	Negative Impacts of Covid-19 Pandemic on Professional Development	3	6,67
Total		**45**	**100**

Data collected from the participants were examined under four themes *Reflection* (f=20)*, Continuing Professional Development* (f=10)*, Ways of Professional Development* (f=9) and *Reasons for Challenges Encountered in Distance Education* (f=6) as displayed in Table 4.12.

The first theme *Reflection* examined the data obtained from the participants under three codes *Influence of Reflection on Teachers' Professional Development* (f=5)*, Reflection-on-action* (f=4) and *Reflection-in-action* (f=2). All these codes involved relevant evidence regarding the positive impacts of the reflection period on the participants' perceptions of their professional development, teaching skills and classroom management. The first code *Influence of Reflection on Teachers' Professional Development* was mainly about how the reflection period influenced the participants' perceptions of professional development from various perspectives as presented through subsequent sub-codes. Regarding the first sub-code, the positive

attitudes of the participants towards the effectiveness of the reflection period were illustrated by Kaylie, who argued that:

> *This reflection period was a really good indicator because I thought that* from *the first to the last phase of the study, you can have a look at all of the points, and you can just analyse what is going on in your classroom whether it is online or not.* (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

She also pointed out the significance of such experiences by suggesting that:

> *The reflection period is really important especially in English language teaching and learning process*. (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

Betty also had similar consideration to Kaylie's and expressed her suggestions that such reflective studies could be implemented at universities:

> *I think the literature reviewing part of the study was very interesting and very helpful for professional development*. *I believe that* it*'s a very good process, especially for the teachers who are at the beginning of their careers. Maybe those things can be applied in the related departments* [of the universities] *as a continuing professional development activity.* (Betty – In-depth Interview)

Another sub-code was related to the extent to which the participants benefited from their reflection during their teaching. For instance, Kaylie argued that:

> *I sometimes stop and think what I have done wrong or right*. *The reflective journals helped me to detect the critical points form the different points of view.* (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

In particular, Sarah shared her opinion on the benefits of the literature review part of the current study and remarked that:

> *… It helped me to learn the underlying reasons of the problems that I encountered in online education.* (Sarah – In-depth Interview)

Another positive influence was on developing problem solving skills of the participants. Kaylie pointed out that:

> *After detecting our problems or our weak points in the teaching period, we just try to seek some solutions about this issue*. (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

In addition, as Betty argued, searching a specific topic in the relevant literature had some benefits as well in detecting more effective ways:

Finding out better solutions from the field. (Betty – In-depth Interview)

According to Betty's statement, finding better solutions was the result of reviewing the literature as part of the reflective journals. Betty stressed that the reflection period did not create a big change on her teaching skills or classroom management, but it created awareness, which she thought helped her to realize what she had already done in class was actually supported by the relevant evidence available in the field. For instance, she maintained that:

> *It created awareness on my side that I was integrating different approaches from different fields*. She also reported that *Especially the phase with literature review, which I think was very important, even though I already used some theories or approaches that I was already familiar with*. (Betty – In-depth Interview)

The second code *Reflection-on-action* examined how the reflection period influenced the participants' reflections on their teaching skills and classroom management as discussed in the two subsequent sub-codes *Reflecting on Teaching Skills* (f=2) and *Reflecting on Classroom Management* (f=2) respectively. Regarding the first sub-code *Reflecting on Teaching Skills*, Betty's statement demonstrated that she had an awareness of her teaching skills, which she confirmed throughout the reflection period:

> *What I noticed was that the study helped me to self-reflect what I have already been doing… without being aware of what I was doing*. (Betty – In-depth Interview)

Likewise, Kaylie referred to a similar positive impact of the reflection period on her teaching skills:

> *During this period, week by week, I have revised my old teaching skills, and I stop and think what I have done so far. For example, while you're teaching, you may not realise what you do, but when you stop and think about your*

teaching period, you can detect some important points. (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

In addition, Felix pointed out two ways of self-reflection, suggesting that

I started writing self-reflection reports after this process started, and I took notes on my teaching. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

He also stressed the benefits of watching his recorded online lessons in determining his professional development needs and stated that:

I started reflecting on my own practises by watching my videos. That really increased my need for professional development because when I watched those videos and did some self-reflection according to my recorded videos, I started to feel the need to do something for my career. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

As the second sub-code *Reflecting on Classroom Management* suggested, the participants also mentioned reflecting on their classroom management strategies. For instance, Kaylie and Zak expressed that:

In terms of effective classroom management, I watched my recorded online lessons again and I thought what I have done wrong or right. (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

I was trying to evaluate my applications. *I considered my classroom management techniques or applications, especially considering we are in a distance learning period.* (Zak – In-depth Interview)

Besides reflecting on teaching skills and classroom management strategies, the participants also referred to the third code *Reflection-in-action*. Zak clearly emphasized the importance of the reflection period in considering his application at the time of teaching, suggesting that:

When I was in the classroom, I tried to reflect considering this study. Being a part of your study actually helped me to think densely in the classroom. It made me think more when I was teaching. (Zak – In-depth Interview)

Kaylie also shared below her experience regarding a particular moment of teaching during which she asked herself about how to tackle that problem:

> *While teaching the Present Continuous Tense, some problems arose in the online lesson, and I stopped and asked myself how I could handle such problems in a better way.* (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

The participants also contributed to the second theme *Continuing Professional Development* involving five codes *Teachers' Professional Development Needs* (f=3), *Lifelong Learning* (f=2), *Teachers' Positive Attitudes* (f=2), *Developing Teacher Knowledge* (f=2) and *Keeping up to date* (f=1). Given the first code *Teachers' Professional Development Needs*, teachers' needs for their professional development were discussed from various perspectives. For example, Sarah focused on the need for learning theoretical knowledge first and then put it into practice, suggesting that:

> *I think we need to learn the theoretical background and everything about it, and then how to integrate it into teaching*. (Sarah – In-depth Interview)

She specifically referred to teaching online without having sufficient training about it, and she believed that after the reflection period she was more aware of what she actually needed. She reported that:

> *They are needs to be met separately… and this reflection period made me realise that I need to develop my online teaching skills*. (Sarah – In-depth Interview)

Despite his long years in teaching, Felix also thought that his professional development did not tend to slow down, or even stop. He argued that:

> *After working 21 years, I can say that I still need professional development*. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

As the second code *Lifelong Learning* put it, the participants regarded teaching as a lifelong process without any limits. Zak stated that:

> *As lifelong learners, as teachers, we are learners. We learn. We don't stop learning and reflection period made me rethink on this issue.* (Zak – In-depth Interview)

His statement displayed the importance of reflection in the participants' perception of continuing professional development. Likewise, Betty remarked that:

It's a lifelong learning, so as teachers, we shouldn't think like "Okay, I know everything, and I'm an experienced teacher". (Betty – In-depth Interview)

Betty highlighted the significance of this never-ending process of professional development and challenged the idea that the more experienced teachers are, the less professional development they need.

In addition, the participants discussed their positive attitudes through the third code *Teachers' Positive Attitudes* referring to the contribution of the reflection period to their perception of professional development. Zak and Kaylie remarked that:

In terms of professional development, yes, it contributed a lot. It influenced positively… I want to learn more, so I want to do more in terms of professional development. (Zak – In-depth Interview)

It was really good in terms of my professional development. (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

The fourth code *Developing Teacher Knowledge* was handled by Felix and Betty, who shared their opinions about the role of their reflections in their awareness of teacher knowledge. The following excerpts explain how the participants' perceptions of teacher knowledge changed after their reflections:

I started to become a much better teacher. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

Normally, as a teacher, I follow the pedagogical implications that I have been taught and that I have learnt during my teaching experiences. *And I confirmed with this reflection that I did the right things in class.* (Betty – In-depth Interview)

Felix's statement involved a plain but deep expression "become a much better teacher" that needed further explanation. Becoming a better teacher is related to everything which makes a teacher feel satisfied and qualified, such as teachers' personality traits, various skills that teachers employ during the lessons, teachers' subject knowledge, the pedagogical knowledge that they have and their positive attitude towards their job. Further, Betty held a different point of view about the effects of her reflection on her perception of teacher knowledge. Thanks to this reflection

period, she was able to make sure that she was on the right path in teaching with the relevant teacher knowledge she already possessed.

As the fifth code *Keeping up to date* suggested, Betty, who believed that obtaining information by doing research enabled teachers to stay updated, argued that:

> *By doing a research we learn other things from the field*. (Betty – In-depth Interview)

The third theme *Ways of Professional Development* reflected the participants' endeavours to develop themselves professionally in various ways that were presented through four codes *Receiving Professional Development Activities* (f=3)*, Being a Member of Community of Practice* (f=3)*, Reviewing the Literature* (f=2) and *Production of Academic Publications* (f=1). Regarding the first code *Receiving Professional Development Activities*, Zak stressed that he began to deliver online classes with very few academic back-ups. He argued that:

> *We started teaching online without almost any professional development activities*. (Zak – In-depth Interview)

Kaylie also decided which activities she needed depending on her weaknesses, suggesting that:

> *I just detected the weak points in my teaching process, and from this point I think I can get this lesson or training*. (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

She emphasized the practicality of receiving online trainings by maintaining that:

> *It is really easy to reach online trainings these days because every training is online nowadays, so you can go online; you don't have to be physically.* (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

Sarah also shared her short-term professional development plans as follows:

> *In the near future, probably I will attend more workshops or conferences on about online education.* (Sarah – In-depth Interview)

It can be concluded that the participants realized they needed to receive professional development activities thanks to their reflection through which they found

out their weaknesses. Another factor that encouraged the participants to develop themselves professionally was their lack of enough training regarding online education. They suddenly found themselves in online education owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Given the second code *Being a Member of Community of Practice*, exchanging information and experiences with colleagues was regarded another way of professional development by the participants. Zak, for instance, expressed that:

> *We are talking with our partners, and there's a collegiality. We share ideas.* (Zak – In-depth Interview)

Kaylie also needed to be in such community of practice for some problems she faced in her classes and reported that:

> *I was always asking my colleagues about some issues to get their opinions, and I just tried to get different information so that I will do the best for my students.* (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

In order to enhance his teaching online, Felix decided to learn in detail he could make better use of online educational tools such as Zoom. He remarked that:

> *I even took a private lesson from my friends on how to use Zoom*. (Felix – In-depth Interview)

With regard to the third code *Reviewing the Literature*, the participants shared their experiences when they researched the incidences they faced as part of their critical reflections, and it can be stated that reviewing the relevant literature broadened their horizons and changed their perspectives. For instance, Betty found it quite important to:

> *… follow the literature on like the suggestions for how to control the class, or how to provide an effective classroom management as teachers*. *At the same time, doing a mini research and finding out better solutions from the field enabled teachers to cope with any in-class problems*. (Betty – In-depth Interview)

Further, Zak pointed out his experience about classroom participation with no learners' cameras on and reported that:

I tried to think on it. I read a lot about it… I realised that this was not something new only in my classroom, so it is something possible and there are some ways to resolve it. (Zak – In-depth Interview)

As the fourth code *Production of Academic Publications* suggested, producing academic publications rather than simply read the existing ones was one of the main focuses regarding professional development. To illustrate, Zak clearly reported that:

I want to produce some more. Now, I think more often that each class is a case. Each class is a case study for me, and each term is a source of an article maybe or a source of a thesis. So in terms of professional development, now I can see my classes and all the school environment as a source of producing some academic works (Zak – In-depth Interview)

The fourth theme *Reasons for Challenges Encountered in Distance Education* consisted of two main factors affecting the effectiveness of the education provided online, as illustrated under two codes *Lack of Adequate Preservice Training for Distance Education* (f=3) and *Negative Impacts of Covid-19 Pandemic on Professional Development* (f=3). With regard to the first code, Zak and Kaylie made the following statements:

Distance learning is a new area for us. (Zak – In-depth Interview)

At the beginning, it was really hard because we were just amazed by the wide world of these online platforms, and we didn't know what to do in some parts. (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

These statements indirectly displayed the fact that the participants did not receive appropriate preservice instruction for distance learning. However, Sarah clearly maintained that:

We were trained for face to face education at the Faculty of Education, and the possibility of education being online could not be predicted when I was a student. As far as I remember, what we did about distance learning was designing materials by using technology, and that was all. Apart from that, there was no option to choose courses such as classroom management in online

> *education, and that's why we haven't received any theoretical training about online education.* (Sarah – In-depth Interview)

Sarah, who was sure that online education would be an inseparable part of our teaching career in the future, also recommended that immediate actions be taken in the English language teaching departments of our universities. She suggested that:

> *Now, I'm questioning the system… Maybe changes should be made in lesson planning or the curriculum … at the Faculty of Education. And it has to be adapted definitely… to the new conditions because online education has entered into our lives due to the pandemic. It comprises a large space and it doesn't seem to go out.* (Sarah – In-depth Interview)

The other factor that had an adverse effect on the instruction provided through distance education was the participants' lack of adequate professional development on account of the Covid-19 pandemic. For instance, Kaylie referred to a kind of procrastination in receiving relevant trainings on online education as she was more concerned about health issues and learning outcomes than her professional development. As she put it:

> *In terms of professional development, actually at the beginning of this Coronavirus period, we didn't have time to think about our professional development. We first thought about our students, their well-being, their learning outcomes and then our teaching process. And later on, we just started to think about our professional development.* (Kaylie – In-depth Interview)

Felix, on the other hand, associated the lack of appropriate professional development regarding distance learning with the feeling of isolation brought about the pandemic, arguing that:

> *We were always just by the laptop; we were in our own rooms; we were not seeing each other. The communication was a bit lacking among the colleagues, so observing each other's lessons and peer coaching were lacking.* (Felix – In-depth Interview)

Felix was not content with the new communication pattern followed by his colleagues during the pandemic as it clearly restricted face to face communication

among teachers. This restriction interfered with his professional development since he did not have a chance to observe other teachers' lessons.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

5.1. Presentation

This chapter presents the interpretation and evaluation of the findings of the current study in the light of relevant studies in the literature with reference to data collected by participants under three research questions.

5.2. Research Question #1: *How do Turkish EFL Teachers Perceive Teacher Autonomy in Online Learning?*

Data for the first research question collected from the participants during the pre-stage of the current study explored how Turkish EFL teachers perceive teacher autonomy in terms of online teaching skills, online classroom management and professional development in the online setting. Thus, the findings of the pre-stage of the current study were compared to the relevant studies in the literature referring to the above-mentioned dimensions.

Pineda and Frodden (2008, as cited in Teng, 2018) criticized the conventional curriculum which involves a top-down operating pattern by providing little control, if any, to teachers so as to take part in professional development activities more actively. Similarly, the current study provided data to agree on the above-mentioned criticism indicating limited amount of time and budget, which was provided through the codes

Time Constraints and *Financial Constraints* under the theme *Constraints in Receiving Professional Development Activities,* in reaching professional development activities. Tight schedules are also considered by one participant as another factor that prevented teachers from attending such activities. In addition, the findings of the study by Pineda and Frodden (2008, as cited in Teng, 2018) revealed that teachers were deprived of necessary problem-solving skills in case of various problems emerging not only in the teaching process but also in classroom management as a consequence of not participating related trainings. A similar conclusion was reached in the present study. As stated in the codes *Being Unfamiliar with Online Education* and *Differences in Classroom Management between Face to Face and Online Education* under the theme *Challenges in Online Classroom Management,* one participant implied that lack of having problem solving skills made the classroom management process more difficult as she never got any training about online education, particularly about how to tackle in-class problems in online education.

Furthermore, the case study conducted by Huang et al. (2019) examined two novice ESL teachers for over one year and concluded that the perception of teacher autonomy was fostered in a school environment in which collaboration was supported by the teachers as well as by the institution. Likewise, collaboration among teachers was highlighted in the current study, particularly under the theme *Being a Member of Community of Practice* in the professional development section. It was pointed out that sharing teaching experiences with colleagues helped teachers to learn from each other, and hence, contributed to the overall teaching performance of the institution.

Hopkins (1993) and Zeichner (2003) indicated the significance and benefits of action research that provided teachers with more control throughout their personal and professional lives. Further, as regards the benefits of action research, they found out that there was a positive correlation between collaboration, and reflection and teacher autonomy. As teachers spent more time with action research, they enhanced their teaching skills and became more reflective and autonomous. In line with these findings regarding action research, the current study also revealed that active involvement in research by teachers was the key to professional development as indicated in the code *Doing Action Research* under the theme *Ways of Professional Development*.

Moreover, it was concluded that the learning obtained from the action research could be shared with colleagues to extend the knowledge among teaching staff.

In Eren's (2020) study, in which he investigated EFL teachers' perceptions of teacher autonomy and classroom practices, certain qualities of an autonomous teacher such as *open to change, creative, energetic, caring for learners*, *good problem solver,* and *proactive and competent technology users who support learners, reflect and think strategically* were put forward by the participants working in Turkish universities. The present study also supported two of these characteristics *caring for learners* and *good problem solver* with the code *Guiding Learners* under the theme *Teachers' Role in Effective Classroom Management,* and with the code *Having Problem Solution Skills* provided under the theme *Teachers' Individual Characteristics* respectively. On the other hand, the findings of the current study also contributed to Eren's (2020) study by revealing three more characteristics of an autonomous teacher, which are *Having Communication Skills, Having Time Management Skills* and *Having Decision Making Skills* under the theme *Teachers' Individual Characteristics.* Furthermore, in Eren's (2020) study four main codes were presented as *fostering critical thinking, increasing self-esteem, autonomy for life-long learning* and *reflective practice* with regard to the perception of teacher autonomy. The findings of the present study also suggested *Critical Thinking Skills* as a code under the theme *Promoting Learner Autonomy*. Likewise, one participant referred to *Reflecting on Teaching* listed under the theme *Ways of Professional Development*. It can be concluded that both studies shared similar data with regard to the participants' perceptions of teacher autonomy.

In order to seek possible ways of professional development for teachers, Akbarpour-Tehrani and Mansor (2012) conducted a study involving five Malaysian ESL teachers. Participants' responses involved workshops, senior colleagues, online resources, books, conferences, and articles under three categories: full autonomy, limited autonomy, and heteronomous. While participants enjoyed full autonomy in reaching online resources and colleagues, they had limited autonomy in books and conferences. Although the present study did not derive different levels of autonomy as categorized in the above mentioned study, it supported the above research findings in that participants in both studies tend to reach online seminars and be in close contact with their colleagues for exchanging ideas regarding their teaching practice. These

conclusions were reached through the codes *Receiving Professional Development Activities* and *Being a Member of Community of Practice* under the theme *Ways of Professional Activities.* Owing to the pandemic, the participants had to adapt themselves to the quickly changing instructional circumstances so as to survive emergency online teaching. Thus, being in close contact with their peers as well as receiving professional development activities facilitated their instant and effective decision making and problem solving skills.

On the other hand, in his MA thesis, Yoğun (2020) investigated the impact of the peer coaching process on participants' perception of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Participants working in a Turkish university focused on five main codes: lifelong learning, staying up to date, skills development, team-building process, and self-leadership. In the present study, though *Lifelong Learning* and *Staying up to date* appeared as two of the most frequently mentioned codes as listed in the above thesis, four different codes *Teachers' Positive Attitudes, Developing Teacher Knowledge, Teachers' Professional Revitalization* and *Setting Goals for Professional Development* were reached regarding how the participants perceive professional development through lifelong learning. Through these different codes, the participants' perception of Continuing Professional Development was more extensively provided. It can be discussed that the participants developed a new mind-set regarding their professional development during the emergency online learning. *Teachers' Professional Revitalization*, for instance, referred to a painful experience of professional revival based on individual efforts.

In addition, the study conducted by Bozkurt et al. (2020) established a difference between online learning and emergency online learning. It was concluded that the fundamental difference lies in the way how teaching and learning are planned. Accordingly, quick and effective decisions should be made in order to ensure the continuity of instruction. Likewise, the current study found out arranging learning and teaching during the emergency online learning is significant. The participants regarded *Ways of Planning Teaching and Learning* as one of most important issues that can be discussed under the theme *Teachers' Role in Effective Classroom Management*. Such a planning involved analysing learners' needs, setting their learning objectives, designing learning content and providing necessary equipment. Another significant

point was that planning teaching and learning was considered as a part of effective classroom management.

5.3. Research Question #2: *What do Turkish EFL teachers reflect during online classes?*

In total 30 reflective journals were written by the participants based on Gibbs' 6-step reflective cycle throughout the while-stage of the study, and data collected from the participants displayed certain similarities and differences when compared with previous studies in the relevant literature.

Reflective practice was defined by Zwozdiak-Myers (2090) as "a disposition to enquiry incorporating the process through which … teachers structure or restructure actions, beliefs, knowledge and theories that inform teaching for the purpose of professional development" (p.84). The current study had evidence that agreed on the above definition in that a participant mentioned how they restructured the way they taught and thought in the code *Reflecting on Teaching Practice* under the theme *Professional Development* in the *Action Plan* step of the Gibbs' cycle. Accordingly, making wrong assumptions regarding learners' digital competence was the major factor which caused her to demonstrate the course content to her students by ignoring their lack of digital competence. Hence, they failed to be able to upload their writing portfolio assignments onto the system.

Online teaching was reported to have a negative impact on students lacking self-regulation and digital skills which were underestimated by teachers who simply focused on their subject matter rather than provide assistance for their students (Lin & Hwang, 2019; Rasheed et al., 2020; Efriana, 2021). In this study, similar points were made regarding learners who lacked computing and digital skills, preventing them from performing basic skills such as uploading portfolio documents in the system. However, relevant data from the study revealed that teachers did not ignore such skills. Instead, they spent some of their class time demonstrating to their students how to send digital files online. Further, this study had no data with regard to teachers' lack of digital skills and digital competence, as mentioned by Rasheed et al. (2020).

Regarding the online classes, the large-scale systematic review of Akçayır and Akçayır (2018) revealed that teachers searched for various ways to make their online teaching as effective as possible and concluded that students were encouraged to learn English effectively through online classes. In the same vein, the present study also found out that the teachers learnt how to provide effective classroom management to make the language learning context appropriate for better learning outcomes as indicated through the relevant themes *Online Classroom Management, Active Involvement, Promoting Collaboration* and *Ways of Decreasing Language Learner Anxiety* in the Conclusion Step of Gibbs' Reflective Cycle. For instance, though occasional problems were observed, the participants in the current study began to make use of breakout rooms in Zoom to integrate group activities into writing classes, which promoted learner interaction and peer support.

On the other hand, Arslan's (2019) longitudinal study with EFL pre-service teachers displayed a tendency in participants' reflection towards the inner levels of Korthagen's (2004) onion model of reflection such as identity and missions. In this respect, although the model for reflection employed in Arslan's (2019) study was different from that of the current study, it was apparent that participants in both studies reflected on their various experiences. Moreover, reflective practitioners who took part in both studies learnt from critical experiences. However, the findings of this study concluded that the participants did not show a regular pattern towards a particular area of reflection, such as classroom management across the reflection period, but they reflected on whatever incident they thought was critical.

When the study conducted by Huisman et al. (2010) was taken into account, the findings suggested a correlation between novice teachers' positive feelings and their problem-solving skills. In the study, the main emphasis was on the resilience and problem-solving competence that novice teachers showed in case of an incident. However, the current study put forward that problem-solving through reflection was not true only for novice teachers but also for experienced teachers as well. For instance, unfamiliar with online teaching and related problems caused by the online setting, three participants came up with a solution to prevent their students from feeling stressed due to the teacher's and students' immediate existence during an in-class activity as well as a speaking test. As a result, the participants asked all the cameras to

be turned off in order not to make their learners feel anxious as revealed in the theme *Ways of Decreasing Language Learner Anxiety* in the Evaluation Step of Gibbs' Reflective Cycle.

The impacts of emergency online learning on teachers were discussed by Ferri et al. (2020), who categorized the challenges encountered during this period under *Technological Challenges, Pedagogical Challenges* and *Social Challenges.* The present study agreed with the above mentioned findings, also suggesting reasons behind these challenges. The participants reflected on the challenges of the distance learning and focused basically on learners' lack of digital competence, teachers' lack of distance learning pedagogy and lack of adequate interaction in the online classes. In this study, it was also pointed out that pre-service EFL teachers did not receive extensive pedagogy for online learning before they began teaching.

Besides the above mentioned challenges encountered by the participants, Boonmoh et al. (2020) researched the reflections of Thai EFL teachers on the problems faced during the emergency remote teaching at the tertiary level. Accordingly, some of the problems were listed as learners' not turning on their cameras, their lack of engagement in the online classes, lack of interaction between teachers and students as well as among students. The same problem areas mentioned above were also pointed out in this current study. However, this study contributed to the research of Boonmoh et al. (2020) in that the participants reflected on the possible ways of overcoming these problems. To illustrate, the theme *Ways of Promoting Learners' Active Involvement* consisted of four codes *Providing Written and Verbal Responses, Decreasing Language Learning Anxiety, Motivating Learners* and *Using L1 in Classes*, which provided solutions as to how to deal with learners' lack of active participation in the online classes. Furthermore, this study also provided data regarding how to establish an effective communication during the online sessions with the theme *Ways of Preventing Online Communication Problems*. To this end, the participants asked learners to activate their cameras throughout the online classes and provided them with clear instructions in order to prevent online communication problems between teachers and students and among learners.

In addition to the challenges that EFL teachers faced during the emergency online learning, their stress levels were also examined in a study conducted in the Turkish context by Kamisli and Akinlar (2021). The recent study has found out that emotional stress was the most common feeling that the Turkish EFL teachers underwent throughout the online classes delivered at a Turkish university. Likewise, the present study also examined the Turkish EFL teachers' emotions during their reflections presented under the sub-theme *Negative Feelings.* However, the findings indicated that the most frequently experienced negative feelings were *Frustration* and *Ambivalence*. In this respect, the possible effects of emotional stress on the participants were more severe and resulted in a state of extreme anger and hesitation. It should be noted that it is quite natural for the teachers to undergo such negative feelings before making effective instructional decisions, especially in such an emergency period.

5.4. Research Question #3: *How does Turkish EFL teachers' reflection influence their perception of teacher autonomy in online learning?*

The relevant literature was re-examined to find out whether the current study was consistent with the previous studies in terms of possible impacts of reflection on EFL teachers' perception of teacher autonomy with three related dimensions *Online Teaching skills, Online Classroom Management* and *Professional Development in the Online Setting.*

The role of teacher reflection in developing teacher autonomy was significant, particularly in terms of teachers' methodological and pedagogical implementation (Pinter, 2007; Teng, 2018). Further, it was pointed out that it was the teacher's positive attitude towards in-depth reflection that gained the teacher self-confidence with which he/she felt more empowered to develop professionally. In line with the above-mentioned findings, the present study also suggested that all the participants developed a positive feeling for their reflection throughout the reflection period, and that they attempted to find solutions for such classroom practices as learners' low participation or reducing learners' speaking anxiety. These positive impacts of teachers' reflection helped the participants to take actions in their following classes to promote language learners' active involvement in the lessons as illustrated in the relevant sub-themes

Learner Centeredness and *Language Learner Engagement in Online Classes* under the theme *Learners*.

In addition, the research conducted by Genç (2010) displayed that participants reflected on lesson planning, learning and teaching processes, interaction, classroom management and assessment. It was also reported that the participants developed a deeper insight into the above-mentioned areas of reflection by adopting the bottom-up teaching model. Likewise, the current study was also in agreement with Genç's (2010) research in terms of implementing bottom-up teaching, classroom management and communication strategies following a 15-week reflection period, and the findings revealed that the participants took their own decisions in the above mentioned areas rather than expect the approval of school management. By so doing, the participants developed control over classroom practices which were presented under the themes *Teachers* and *Classroom Management Strategies.* On the other hand, in the current study, the participants experienced positive influences of their reflection on their perceptions of professional development, which was not mentioned in Genç's (2010) study, as illustrated through the four themes *Ways of Professional Development, Continuing Professional Development, Reflection* and *Reasons for Challenges Encountered in Distance Education.*

Teacher professionalism was regarded as having the best qualifications which required professional development in the light of systematic reflection conducted by teachers (Guskey, 1986; Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Demirkasımoğlu, 2010). The present study was consistent with the opinion mentioned above in that it provided evidence about participants' weaknesses in various areas, such as providing more effective feedback in writing classes as well as the need they felt to compensate for this lack through a variety of professional development activities including attending online seminars and workshops, reviewing relevant literature to come up with a solution for in-class problems and collaborating with colleagues. These findings that were reached through the in-depth interviews with the participants during the post-stage of the present study emerged as the codes *Receiving Professional Development Activities, Being a Member of Community of Practice* and *Reviewing the Literature* categorized under the theme *Ways of Professional Development*.

Similarly, Jurow's (2009) argument that teacher professional development consisted of not only a growth in professional practices but also in personal attitudes and behaviours. The current study suggested evidence which supported this perspective in that one participant pointed out the excessive workload imposed by emergency distance learning due to the pandemic by eliciting the negative effects of this heavy work schedule on his personal life and pending academic studies. After the related reflection session, he made a decision to create a smooth balance between the time he spent at work and the time with family so as to become a more empowered teacher and a healthier individual at home. The enthusiasm that the participant had about being involved in academic publications was provided in the code *Production of Academic Publications* under the theme *Ways of Professional Development.* In addition, the current study shared similar findings regarding developing personal attitudes suggested in Jurow's (2009) study in that it was concluded from the data obtained from the participants that they developed positive feelings towards professional development after their reflection, and relevant findings were presented in the code *Teachers' Positive Attitudes* under the theme *Continuing Professional Development.*

Reflective teaching as a term referred to refining one's teaching practices based on his/her constant reflection, and it was closely associated with teacher autonomy (Flores, 2001; Okay, 2018). In line with this definition, the participants of the present study expressed their opinions about refinement in their teaching thanks to the 15-week reflection period although occasional neutral or negative responses were received as to whether the reflection period had an influence on the participants' perception of teacher autonomy. Participants who tried to survive online teaching with their experiences on face to face teaching practice believed that every single critical event they faced during the teaching process helped them to revise their attitudes, behaviours and/or teaching practices for the following teaching sessions as indicated in the code *Influence of Reflection on Teachers' Professional Development* under the theme *Reflection*.

In their study, Çakır and Balçıkanlı (2012) investigated EFL student-teachers' and teacher trainers' opinions on the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL), and the findings demonstrated that reflection through EPOSTL

helped student teachers to raise awareness for enhanced teaching practices, to detect their strengths and weaknesses and to exchange their ideas with others to gain a better insight of their learning from reflection. The current study was consistent with the research conducted by Çakır and Balçıkanlı (2012) in that raising awareness was frequently mentioned in terms of participants' strengths and weaknesses in teaching practices, classroom management and professional development. Further, community of practice was also pointed out by participants as a way of exchanging ideas, knowledge and experiences. The nature of the current study allowed participants either to research the critical points individually or to consult and learn from each other.

In addition, O'Connel and Dyment (2011) investigated over 75 articles in their study and concluded that instructors experienced three essential benefits of journal writing. While one was related to pedagogy, the others were related to how instructors provided formative and summative feedback to learners and how they established good relationships with their students. The present study also reached a similar conclusion that participants, who were EFL teachers, reported that they developed the way they taught for effective teaching, attempted to invest more time in their personal and professional development, and they highlighted the significance of rapport with learners.

In the tertiary level, the pandemic influenced the learners in terms of their psychological states. As a study conducted by Jiang et al. (2021) provided data on how students felt in Thailand, Malaysia, China and Indonesia during the emergency online learning setting. Accordingly, more than half of the students underwent depression, stress and different levels of anxiety due to the uncertainty of the pandemic. At this point, the present study contributed to the above mentioned research by suggesting some ways of reducing such negative psychological experiences. The possible solutions were presented with the sub-codes *Turning off the Teacher's Camera, Removing Pressure on Learners, Providing Enough Wait Time to Learners, Increasing Non-verbal Communication, Letting Students Speak in Mother Tongue* and *Switching back to English*. The participants prioritized learner-centeredness in order to deal with their anxiety by gradually providing their learners with more space and encouraging them to take more active involvement in the online classes.

The challenges that teachers faced during the emergency online learning were also discussed by Civelek et al. (2021) from a different perspective. In their research, Turkish EFL teachers' lack of necessary knowledge and skills required for effective online teaching practices was handled. A similar conclusion was also reached in this current study that provided more detailed justifications for this problem. According to the findings, Turkish EFL teachers related their lack of distance learning pedagogy to two important factors as stated in the codes *Lack of Adequate Preservice Training for Distance Education* and *Negative Impacts of Covid-19 Pandemic on Professional Development.* They were critical of the fact that they had not been offered sufficient education regarding online teaching in their graduate programs. Besides, they could not find enough opportunities for their professional development during the pandemic. Both reasons explained why they felt incompetent throughout the emergency online instruction.

CHAPTER VI

CONLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Presentation

This chapter provides information regarding the conclusion of the study, pedagogical implications as well as suggestions for further studies.

6.2. Conclusion of the Study

The current study aimed to investigate Turkish EFL teachers' perception of teacher autonomy in online learning, and how their reflection during online classes influences their perceived teacher autonomy. Among a few studies conducted in the field of English teaching as foreign language in Turkey during Covid-19, the current study provided data to the relevant literature in several aspects. The first data set was related to the perception of Turkish EFL teachers' perception of teacher autonomy in online learning, and the findings concluded that the participants had a chance to review their own beliefs of and attitudes towards teacher autonomy just after the emergency remote teaching began. The autonomy that they had in teaching skills, classroom management skills and professional development was different in face to face classes than in online classes. It was apparent through the relevant findings of this study that what teachers understood by autonomy evolved into a restructured version of teacher

autonomy as new concepts like online teaching, learner engagement in online classes and online teacher professional trainings occasionally emerged in their responses. Even before the reflection period commenced, participants seemed to have constructed their own perceptions of teacher autonomy.

The degree to which EFL teachers possessed teacher autonomy varies greatly depending on several factors including the mode of delivery e.g. online learning. One of the conclusions of the current study was that various ways of professional development activities, such as action research, could be followed to increase the awareness of teacher autonomy among EFL teachers in the online setting. Moreover, there were a number of challenges that prevent teachers from receiving professional development activities owing to some constraints (Pineda & Frodden, 2008). The most common constraints were related to time and financial matters. Due to an unpredictable amount of workload that the pandemic brought about, the teachers found it hard to catch up with the current issues in their fields.

Self-reflection in English language teaching has gained popularity thanks to its functionality and practicality by which EFL teachers have developed themselves personally and professionally. Every single chance for reflection has varied forms such as keeping reflective diaries, writing reflective journals, and recording and overviewing previous lessons, and the areas which are thought by teachers as critical points naturally differ from person to person. In this regard, the current study provided a variety of critical points for reflection, most of which were mainly related to the constraints that Covid-19 period had brought about, such as lacking technical equipment and digital knowledge as well as problems with online communication among teachers and learners as stated by Ferri et al. (2020). As every reflective journal required participants to make a decision regarding what they could do in a similar case for the next time, they became more and more capable of making appropriate decisions, and this led them to enjoy more autonomy.

Pinter (2007) suggests that teachers' involvement in reflective teaching promotes more self-confidence and positive attitude towards classroom practices. Further, a positive correlation between teacher reflection and teacher autonomy is pointed out by Noormohammadi (2014). As the present study suggested, a 15-week

period necessitated teachers to constantly reflect on their teaching practice including classroom management and professional development. During this period, numerous plans and decisions were made by the reflective teachers, which naturally and expectedly increased their awareness of teacher autonomy. Also, the EFL teachers were capable of taking effective decisions during their reflection in emergency online learning in order to solve immediate problems including language learners' anxiety, learners' lack of digital competence and learners' lack of active involvement in the lessons. In brief, the EFL Turkish reflection in the present study not only detected the challenges during the teaching period but also suggested solutions regarding the challenges mentioned above (Rasheed et al., 2020; Boonmoh et al., 2020).

The study also suggested that reflective practice was one of the most direct and most practical ways of enhancing one's control over his/her teaching practice as he/she was in the centre of learning mechanism. For this reason, any educational institution that prioritizes reflective teaching could contribute substantially to the personal and professional development of its teaching team. In the current study, participants were basically asked either to contact their colleagues or review relevant literature to find out necessary steps to be taken in a similar case in the future. In both cases, collaboration and research were promoted. As a result of their reflection, the EFL teachers developed their awareness of teacher autonomy in online teaching skills, online classroom management and professional development in the online setting. Adopting a positive attitude towards reflection helped the teachers gain a deeper insight of the challenges, and thus improved the way they solved problems effectively (Teng, 2018). Reflection also encouraged them to be able to detect their weaknesses, which paved the way for their professional development.

6.3. Implications of the Study

The current study has offered certain implications for educational institutions and individual EFL teachers. These implications can be recommended for all state and private institutions offering English courses as foreign language, for EFL teachers and for curriculum designers as follows:

6.3.1. Implications for Educational Institutions

The findings of the present study have suggested some implications for institutions offering English to learners as foreign language in primary, secondary and tertiary level including schools of foreign languages of state and private/foundation universities across the world. With their reflective teachers whose perceived teacher autonomy has also been enhanced, such institutions may offer more effective teaching to their students.

In addition, as the level of EFL teachers' perceived autonomy rises, the level of EFL learners' autonomy increases. This positive correlation is put forward by Little (1995) who argues that promotion of learner autonomy essentially requires promotion of teacher autonomy. Accordingly, institutions that desire to have autonomous learners are recommended to take into account the findings of the current study in order to achieve required learner outcomes in learners' language learning process.

6.3.2. Implications for EFL teachers

Two of the most significant indicators for enjoying high level of teacher autonomy are decision-making skills and problem-solving skills which teachers need to adopt to handle possible problems emerging particularly during online language teaching and classroom management process. The findings of the study demonstrated what the participants reflected during online learning. The same or similar critical points can also be reflected on by other EFL teachers, and these findings could contribute to their reflectivity and perception of teacher autonomy.

Further, ELF teachers working for institutions that follow a top-down administrative pattern which restricts teachers' involvement in decision-making processes to some extent may benefit from the findings of the study so as to shape their teaching and classroom management styles in online learning. At this point, in line with Wallace's (1991) reflective cycle, EFL teachers could have a chance to incorporate their *existing conceptual schemata* such as their beliefs and values into the integration of their *received knowledge* and *experiential knowledge* through the cycle of *practice* and *reflection* to reach *professional competence*. Data obtained through the

reflection period of the current study agreed with the above-mentioned process of reflective cycle.

6.3.3. Implications for Curriculum Designers

The study also provided sufficient data which could be taken into consideration by curriculum designers working at national and/or institutional levels. For instance, more flexible curriculum for English language teaching process might be developed so that EFL teachers could have more room to put the implications of their reflection into practice.

In the following Table 6.1, the summary of implications of the study was provided:

Table 6.1. *Summary of implications of the study*

	Implications for Educational Institutions	✓ Providing more effective teaching to learners ✓ Having more autonomous learners
	Implications for EFL teachers	✓ Solving in-class problems more effectively ✓ Contributing to their reflectivity ✓ Taking appropriate decisions during their teaching process
	Implications for Curriculum Designers	✓ Developing flexible curriculum which enables teachers to have more opportunities to reflect on their teaching practice

6.4. Recommendations for Further Research

When the purpose and the findings of the study are taken into consideration, the following points can be suggested for further research:

1) Due to practicality and easy access to the participants, convenience sampling was employed in the study. This preference confined the population of the study to one place only. With an appropriate change in the sampling, more educational institutions could be included in other studies.

2) The reflection period during which participants wrote their reflective journals was limited to one academic semester (15 weeks). This period could be extended up to 30 weeks covering the second academic semester.

3) In this study, each participant wrote six reflective journals. For further studies, more reflective journal could be involved per participant.

4) In terms of data collection tools, the current study collected data through e-mail interviews, reflective journals and in-depth interviews. In-class observations could also be included in the future studies to observe the impacts of teacher reflections on classroom practices.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form of Each Participant

BİLGİLENDİRİLMİŞ ONAM FORMU

Bu formun amacı katılmanız rica edilen araştırma ile ilgili olarak sizi bilgilendirmek ve katılmanız ile ilgili izin almaktır.

Bu kapsamda *"A Qualitative Study on Reflection and Teacher Autonomy in Tertiary Level Online EFL Classes"* başlıklı araştırma "Hasan Kalyoncu Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu Öğretim Görevlileri" tarafından **gönüllü katılımcılarla** yürütülmektedir. Araştırma sırasında sizden alınacak bilgiler gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırma amaçlı kullanılacaktır. Araştırma sürecinde konu ile ilgili her türlü soru ve görüşleriniz için aşağıda iletişim bilgisi bulunan araştırmacıyla görüşebilirsiniz. Bu araştırmaya **katılmama** hakkınız bulunmaktadır. Aynı zamanda çalışmaya katıldıktan sonra çalışmadan **çıkabilirsiniz.** Bu formu onaylamanız, **araştırmaya katılım için onam verdiğiniz** anlamına gelecektir.

Araştırmayla İlgili Bilgiler

Araştırmanın Amacı: Hasan Kalyoncu Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda görev alan öğretim görevlilerinin öğretmen özerkliği algılarını belirlemektir ve vermiş oldukları derslerle ilgili yaptıkları yansıtmanın öğretmen özerkliği algılarını ne ölçüde etkilediğini tespit etmektir.

Araştırmanın Nedeni: Türk İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğretmen özerkliği algıları verdikleri dil eğitiminin etkililiği noktasında önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Öğretmen özerkliği algı düzeylerini yükseltmek için öğretmenlerin vermiş oldukları çevrim içi dil eğitimi süresince karşılaştıkları önemli noktaları detaylı bir şekilde irdelemeleri ve gerekli çıkarımları yapmaları gerekmektedir. Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarının, yabancı dil eğitimi veren tüm kurum ve kuruluşlarda görev yapan Türk İngilizce öğretmenlerinin yansıtıcı düşünce yoluyla öğretmen özerkliği algı düzeylerini yükseltebileceği ve böylece daha etkili yabancı dil eğitimi verebilecekleri düşünülmektedir.

Süresi: 2020-2021 akademik yılı güz dönemi boyunca

Araştırmanın Yürütüleceği Yer: Hasan Kalyoncu Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu

Çalışmaya Katılım Onayı:

Katılmam beklenen çalışmanın amacını, nedenini, katılmam gereken süreyi ve yeri ile ilgili bilgileri okudum ve gönüllü olarak çalışma süresince üzerime düşen sorumlulukları anladım. Çalışma ile ilgili ayrıntılı açıklamalar sözlü olarak araştırmacı tarafından yapıldı. Bu çalışma ile ilgili faydalar ve riskler ile ilgili bilgilendirildim.

Bu araştırmaya kendi isteğimle, hiçbir baskı ve zorlama olmaksızın katılmayı kabul ediyorum.

Katılımcının	**Araştırmacının**
Adı-Soyadı:	**Adı-Soyadı:** Ahmet KONUKOĞLU
İmzası:	**İmzası:**

Appendix B: E-Mail Interview Form

The study entitled *A Qualitative Study on Reflection and Teacher Autonomy in Tertiary Level Online EFL Classes* aims to examine how Turkish EFL teachers' reflection during online classes influences their perceptions of teacher autonomy. The responses to be obtained from the following open-ended questions will provide data for the analysis of Turkish EFL teachers perceptions of teacher autonomy in the online setting. The findings will only be used for the current study, and your personal information will be kept confidential.

1) What is your perception of the teaching skills that you have in order to teach online effectively? How much control do you think you have over the way you teach in your online classes? Why do you think so? How does it make you feel?

2) What is your perception of effective online classroom management? How much control do you think you have over the classroom management strategies that you employ in your online classes? Why do you think so? How does it make you feel?

3) What is your attitude towards professional development in the online setting? How much control do you think you have over deciding on which training you need? Why do you think so? How does it make you feel?

Appendix C: Gibbs' 6-step Reflective Cycle

Reflective Journal

1. Description

Choose one critical/significant experience that you have experienced over the last two weeks. Describe it in detail. *(What happened? / When and where did it happen? / Who was present? / Why were you there? / What were you and the other people doing? / What was the outcome of the situation?)*

2. Feelings and Thoughts

Discuss your feelings and thoughts about the experience. (How did you feel at the time? Why did you feel as you did? / How do you think other people were feeling about the situation? What did you think at the time? What did you think about the experience afterwards?)

3. Evaluation

Evaluate what worked and what didn't work in the situation. *(What was good and bad about the experience? / What went well? / What went wrong? / What did you and other people contribute to the situation positively or negatively?)*

4. Analysis

Consider what sense you can make of the situation. Explain in what ways the new learning either confirms or contradicts your prior knowledge, theories, or understanding, the knowledge you might have gained at university. *(Why did things go well? / Why didn't it go well? / What sense can you make of the situation? / What knowledge – your own or others (for example academic literature) can help you understand the situation?)*

5. Conclusion

Discuss what else you could have done in the situation. *(What did you learn from this experience? / How could this have been a more positive situation for everyone involved)*

6. Action plan

Discuss your plan for what you would do differently in a similar or related situation in the future. *(What skills do you need to develop for you to handle a situation like this better in the future? / How will you develop the required skills you need? / How can you make sure that you can act differently next time?)*

Appendix D: In-depth Interview Questions

The study entitled *A Qualitative Study on Reflection and Teacher Autonomy in Tertiary Level Online EFL Classes* aims to examine how Turkish EFL teachers' reflection during online classes influences their perceptions of teacher autonomy. The responses to be obtained from the following interview questions will provide data for the analysis of how Turkish EFL teachers reflection during online classes influence their perceptions of teacher autonomy. The interview will be held on Zoom, and it will be recorded. The findings will only be used for the current study, and your personal information will be kept confidential.

1. Do you think the reflection period has an influence on your perception of online teaching skills? If so, how? If not, why not?

2) Do you think the reflection period has an influence on your perception of effective online classroom management? If so, how? If not, why not?

3) Do you think the reflection period has an influence on your attitude towards professional development in the online setting? If so, how? If not, why not?

Appendix E: Permission Paper form the University

T.C.
HASAN KALYONCU ÜNİVERSİTESİ

Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu Müdürlüğü

Sayı :80348065-044-E.2008310029 **Tarih**:31.08.2020
Konu :Anket Çalışmaları Hk.

REKTÖRLÜK MAKAMINA

İlgi: Gaziantep Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü'nün 87841438/302.08.01/E12910 sayılı ve 05.08.2020 tarihli yazısı.

Gaziantep Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dali İngiliz Dili ve Eğitimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı ögrencilerinden Ahmet KONUKOĞLU isimli öğrenci "Yansıma ve Ögretmen Özerkliği Üzerine Bir Çalışma: Türk İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Yansıma Süreçlerindeki Ögretmen Özerkliği Algıları" adlı tez çalışması ile ilgili yüksekokulumuz bünyesinde uygulama talepleri ilgi yazı ile tarafımıza iletilmiştir.

Buna göre öğrenci Ahmet KONUKOĞLU'nun tez çalışması ile alakalı yüksekokulumuz bünyesinde uygulama çalışması talepleri tarafımızca uygun bulunmuştur.

Bilgilerini ve gereğini arz ederim.

e-imzalıdır
Mehmet Salih YOĞUN
Müdür

OLUR

e-imzalıdır
Prof. Dr. M. Hanifi ASLAN
Rektör V.

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Ahmet Konukoğlu ilk, orta ve lise eğitimini Gaziantep'te tamamladıktan sonra 2008 yılında Gaziantep Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünden mezun oldu. Yüksek Lisans eğitimine Gaziantep Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü İngiliz Dili ve Eğitimi Ana Bilim Dalı'nda devam etmektedir. 2008-2012 yılları arasında Gaziantep'te çeşitli özel eğitim kurumlarında İngilizce öğretmenliği yapmıştır. 2012 yılından itibaren Hasan Kalyoncu Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksek Okulu'nda öğretim görevlisi olarak çalışmaktadır. 2016 yılından itibaren aynı üniversitede Yabancı Diller Yüksek Okulu'nda akademik işlerden sorumlu müdür yardımcısı olarak görevine devam etmektedir.

VITAE

Having completed his primary, secondary and high school education in Gaziantep, Ahmet Konukoğlu graduated from Department of English Language and Literature at Gaziantep University. He is studying Master of Arts in the Department of English Language Teaching at Gaziantep University Educational Sciences Institute. He worked as an English language teacher at various private educational institutions in Gaziantep between 2008 and 2012. He has been working as an instructor in School of Foreign Languages at Hasan Kalyoncu University since 2012. He has been serving as Vice-Director in charge of academic affairs in School of Foreign Languages at the same university since 2016.