

**T.C.
BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL
ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT**

**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) INTEGRATION IN A
TERTIARY-LEVEL ENGLISH PREPARATORY PROGRAM: EFL
INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES**

**PhD THESIS
GÖKALP GÜNEŞ**

ISTANBUL 2024

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Thesis Defense Date	04.06.2024

It has been approved by the Graduate School that this thesis has fulfilled the necessary conditions as a PhD thesis.

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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) INTEGRATION IN A TERTIARY- LEVEL ENGLISH PREPARATORY PROGRAM: EFL INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES

GÜNEŞ, GÖKALP

PhD Programme in English Language Education

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Derin Atay

June 2024, 78 pages

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an educational approach emphasizing the development of learners' social and emotional skills to enhance their well-being, academic performance, lifelong success as well. SEL aims to help learners manage and understand their emotions by ensuring positive relationships and making responsible decisions (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). This study aimed to find the level of SEL skills of 50 EFL instructors in the English language preparatory program at a foundation university in Istanbul, Türkiye. The goal was to integrate SEL instruction practices into the existing program and explore how SEL training affected the instructional practices of participating five EFL instructors. Additionally, the study examined the perceptions of five EFL instructors regarding the implementation process. Piloting was conducted as for the first step. Prior to the implementation, SEL training sessions were given to the EFL instructors. Then, five instructors implemented SEL activities in their lessons. The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools including a questionnaire and teacher reflections. The quantitative data were analyzed descriptively whereas the qualitative data were analyzed using inductive content analysis. It was detected that participants had moderate level of SEL skills; however, after the SEL training, SEL implementation affected instructors'

instruction practices positively and further discussions as well as implications of integration of SEL instruction practices into the programs are provided in this study.

Keywords: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), EFL Instructors, SEL instruction practices, SEL training



ÖZET

YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM İNGİLİZCE HAZIRLIK PROGRAMINA SOSYAL DUYGUSAL ÖĞRENME ENTEGRASYONU: İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ALGILARI VE UYGULAMALARI

Güneş, Gökalp

İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Doktora Programı

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Derin Atay

Haziran 2024, 78 sayfa

Sosyal ve duygusal öğrenme (SDÖ), öğrencilerin sosyal ve duygusal becerilerinin geliştirilmesini vurgulayan bir eğitim yaklaşımıdır; bu, öğrencilerin iyi olma durumlarını, akademik performanslarını ve ömür boyu başarılarını artırmayı hedefler. SDÖ, öğrencilerin duygularını yönetmelerine ve anlamalarına yardımcı olmayı amaçlar, bunu pozitif ilişkileri sağlayarak ve sorumlu kararlar alarak gerçekleştirir (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Bu çalışma, İstanbul, Türkiye'deki bir vakıf üniversitesinde İngilizce hazırlık programında görev yapan 50 İngilizce öğretmenin SDÖ becerilerinin düzeyini bulmayı amaçlamıştır. Amaç, SDÖ öğretim uygulamalarını mevcut programa entegre etmek ve SDÖ eğitiminin katılımcı beş İngilizce öğretmenin öğretim uygulamalarını nasıl etkilediğini keşfetmektir. Ek olarak, çalışma beş yabancı dil eğitmeninin uygulama sürecine ilişkin algılarını incelemiştir. İlk adım olarak pilot uygulama yapılmıştır. Uygulama öncesinde SDÖ eğitim anketi İngilizce öğretmenlerine verilmiştir. Daha sonra, beş öğretmen derslerinde SDÖ etkinliklerini uygulamıştır. Çalışmada, bir anket, ve öğretmenlerin yansımaları dahil olmak üzere hem nitel hem de nicel veri toplama araçları kullanıldı. Nicel veriler betimsel olarak analiz edilirken, nitel veriler, tümevarımsal içerik analizi kullanılarak analiz edildi. Katılımcıların orta seviyede SDÖ becerilerine sahip olduğu tespit edildi, ancak SDÖ eğitimi sonrasında SDÖ uygulamasının öğretmenlerin öğretim

uygulamalarını olumlu yönde etkilediđi tespit edilmiř ve bu alıřmada SDÖ öđretim uygulamalarının programlara entegrasyonunun yanı sıra tartiřmalara ve önerilere yer verilmiřtir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal ve Duygusal Öđrenme (SDÖ), İngilizce Öđretmenleri, SDÖ öđretim uygulamaları, SDÖ eđitimi





To my beloved father, mom, sis and Boni

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing this dissertation was a very challenging journey to complete. Therefore, I would love to express my gratitude to individuals who were by my side throughout my academic journey.

First and foremost, I am truly grateful to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Derin ATAY who supported me with her academic guidance and constructive feedback all the time. She guided me by sharing her invaluable knowledge and experience with me throughout the process. She has always been kind to give me constant support since the beginning. Without her guidance and mentorship, none of this would have been possible. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the rest of my thesis committee members, Assoc. Prof. Enisa MEDE and Assist. Prof. Kemal AKOĞLU. I am deeply grateful for their endless encouragement and ongoing feedback throughout the process. Their invaluable feedback and comments guided me a lot in my dissertation.

Moreover, I would also love to thank my close friends, colleagues and students who stood by my side, offering not only academic but also emotional support. I also want to thank the participants in my dissertation, this study would not have been possible without them.

Finally, I must express my gratitude to my family. My mother and my sister provided constant encouragement for me especially after the loss of my father. Their support and understanding during this process have meant the world to me. I would love to extend special thanks to my late father. His belief in my potential, and the values he taught me have always been in the center of my academic pursuit. Even though he is no longer with us, his memory and influence will forever guide me. The world will not be the same without him.

I would love to express my thank to Furkan whose presence and support in my life has been a constant source of motivation. To everybody who has played a part in my academic pursuit, Deniz, Tuğba, Gökçe, Ece, Aslı, Özen and my other close friends, I extend my deepest thanks.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
L2	Second Language
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences



Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter provides information about the research that aims to integrate social and emotional learning (SEL) instruction practices in the English language preparatory program and explore the perceptions of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors regarding SEL instruction practices after the implementation and find out how SEL training affected participants' instruction practices. The chapter starts with a theoretical framework, then the statement of the problem, and continues with the purpose of the study, research questions of the study, significance of the study, and finally the chapter ends with definitions of the terms.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

In the 21st century, both families and educators aim to bring up and educate children that are knowledgeable, responsible, caring, as well as socially competent to ensure that each and every student achieve mastery in academic subjects as well as become culturally literate and lifelong learners by also teaching them to interact in social and respectful ways with their families, peers, and school staff, community members as well (Schaps & Weissberg, 2014).

Due to the fact that life conditions of children have changed noticeably during the last century, families undergo increased not only economic but also social pressures (Weissberg, Walberg, O'Brien, & Kuster, 2003). Children are exposed to a complex world by means of media and consequently, they have unmediated access to information and social contacts via diverse technologies. Nevertheless, in numerous communities, there is not enough support and involvement in institutions which help children's social-emotional development as well as their character. Today, educators and stakeholders face the main challenge of educating an increasingly both multicultural and multilingual group of students having racially, ethnically, as well as economically various backgrounds. Thus, numerous students lack social-emotional competence which also lowers their academic performance and interrupts the educational experiences of their peers as well (Benson, 2006).

There is a growing trend not only in the United States (US) but also around the world that schools need to meet the social and emotional developmental needs of students for both successful teaching and learning to happen and for students to reach their full potential (Brackett & Rivers, 2014). Therefore, today's schools need to provide more than academic instruction so as to prepare students both for life and work (National Research Council, 2012). SEL provides a systematic process in order to boost students' social and emotional development by also increasing their academic success while improving the quality of relationships between teachers and students as well as decreasing their problem behavior (Durlak et al., 2011).

Nowadays, schools have been gradually implementing school wide SEL policies and curricula to promote caring relationships between teachers and students, cooperation and conflict reduction amongst students, and the improvement of both social and emotional skills in students and teachers. SEL programming suggests a combined and coordinated approach which targets a broader scale of positive youth outcomes to achieve lifelong success by means of boosting social-emotional climates of classrooms and schools (Greenberg et al., 2003). SEL programs are planned to form learning environments which meet students' developmental needs, incorporating feelings of belonging, safety as well as community by means of providing ideal conditions for success into their lives, academics, relationships as well (Becker & Luthar, 2002).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

21st-century schools face the challenge of serving culturally varied students having different abilities as well as learning motivations (Learning First Alliance, 2001). Most students develop a lack of social-emotional skills and consequently lose their interest in learning due to the fact that they move from elementary to middle school and then to high school, and this disconnection has an effect on their academic performance as well as behavior in a negative way (Blum & Libbey, 2004). Therefore, today with the help of SEL programming, schools are being advised more to provide students with social as well as emotional assistance (CASEL, 2012). SEL integrated courses boost students' attitudes, skills, and behaviors in terms of empathy, respect, cooperation, controlling emotions, self-control, goal setting, critical thinking and

problem-solving (Varela et al. 2013) as well as use of language for L2 (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). Nevertheless, despite the fact that emotions are vital for L2 learning as well as accomplishment, SEL research has not been conducted widely in L2 English contexts (Shao et al., 2019) which increases the portion of the studies conducted on SEL recently. Even though SEL has been a popular area of research lately in several countries including Türkiye, studies on SEL have generally focused on the effects of SEL regarding L2 English learners (Najafi, 2006; Kabakçı & Korkut, 2010; Arslan & Demirtas, 2016; Aygün & Taşkın, 2017; Rakap et al., 2018; Işık, 2019; Bademci et al., 2020; Turan, 2021; Özgünlü, Erbil & Göl-Güven, 2022; Ozturk, 2022; Asra, 2022; Çelik & Çetinkaya, 2022). However, in terms of the SEL studies investigating teachers from the Turkish context, there have been only a few studies conducted (Gol-Guven, 2016; Aygün & Taşkın, 2017; Rakap et al., 2018). Therefore, SEL studies including EFL teachers as well SEL implementation is an issue that needs to be examined in depth in the Turkish context as well. Regarding the research lacuna, this study aimed to not only uncover the level of SEL skills of EFL instructors but also, incorporate SEL instruction practices. Moreover, it also aimed to discover the effects of the SEL training in their lessons as well as the perceptions of five EFL instructors regarding SEL implementation. Findings will contribute to the literature by providing pedagogical strategies as well as improving teacher training programs.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

In the context of language teaching and learning in Turkey, there haven't been a lot of studies conducted on SEL. It is crucial that gathering additional data as well as knowledge is required to have a better grasp of Turkish EFL teachers' perspectives as well as implementations regarding SEL. Due to the fact that there has been a research lacuna in terms of SEL studies regarding teachers in the Turkish context, this current dissertation tries to fill this gap and it first examines the level of SEL skills and sub-skills of EFL instructors in the English language preparatory program of a foundation university in İstanbul, Türkiye, then integrates SEL instruction practices in the current existing English language preparatory program and finds out how SEL training affected participating EFL instructors' instruction practices in their own lessons and finally explores the perceptions of the EFL instructors regarding SEL instruction practices after the SEL implementation.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to fulfill the research purpose of this dissertation, the following research questions were addressed.

- 1) What is the level of SEL skills of EFL instructors in the English language preparatory program?
- 2) How does SEL training affect participating EFL instructors' practices?
- 3) What are the perceptions of the participating EFL instructors regarding the SEL implementation after the training sessions?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Existing research on SEL mostly utilizes quantitative methodologies with surveys and meta-analyses of students' academic as well as their behavioral outcomes. There is a research lacuna regarding teachers' perspectives on SEL as well as their implementation of SEL. Especially, in the Turkish context, more comprehensive research on teachers' implementation of SEL is needed since there have been only a few studies conducted in the field.

This current dissertation is critical since it delves into the exploration of SEL among 50 full-time EFL instructors at an English Preparatory School in the Turkish context. A thorough examination of SEL levels of instructors along with an evaluation of the impact of the SEL implementation are provided by means of adopting an explanatory sequential design involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools in order to offer a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of participants' SEL practices and perceptions. The study's effectiveness was ensured by conducting a meticulous pilot study before the SEL implementation, surveying 50 EFL instructors to gauge their SEL levels and skills, and carrying out in-depth interviews with five instructors. The pilot study consisted of piloting the training sessions and SEL implementation. Five instructors involved in the piloting of the training session. Moreover, SEL implementation was also piloted by the researcher. Regarding the feedback from the piloting study, some modifications and adaptations were made to increase the effectiveness of the actual SEL training and implementation. After the piloting phase of the study, another five EFL instructors received SEL training sessions

which were essential to prepare them for the subsequent implementation of SEL activities designed to promote core competencies of SEL such as relationship skills, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision-making, regarding the framework of CASEL before the implementation in their classrooms. SEL training sessions as well as SEL implementation were designed and prepared regarding CASEL's framework to boost SEL skills (CASEL, 2012). Over a period of five weeks, participating five EFL instructors implemented purposeful activities with a strategic focus on the SEL abilities. SEL activities were also customized to meet the B1 level student language objectives (SLOs) of the English preparatory program, guaranteeing alignment with the curriculum. Integrating SEL instruction practices in the existing program and finding out how SEL training affected their instruction practices and the perceptions of five EFL instructors in terms of SEL instruction practices are provided comprehensively.

The distinctiveness of this dissertation lies in its all-encompassing approach, merging quantitative as well as qualitative data collection instruments. Thus, this research intends to offer a comprehensive response to its research questions. Furthermore, this exploration of SEL as well as the implementation of SEL in the Turkish context is both valuable for academic advancement and also it provides practical implications for educators, institutions, curriculum developers as well. The findings may have an impact on the influence of future pedagogical strategies, improving the enrichment of teacher training programs, and ultimately cultivating a more socially aware as well as emotionally intelligent teaching community.

1.6 Definitions

CASEL: Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2012)

English as a foreign language (EFL): English taught and learned where it is used for communication purposes (Nunan, 1999)

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): The process of improving crucial social and emotional skills which allow human beings to understand and manage their emotions, build positive relationships as well as make reliable decisions (CASEL, 2012)

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Chapter 2 starts with history of SEL, then continues with CASEL's framework, and implementation of SEL including SEL programs. The chapter ends with research on SEL, research on SEL in Türkiye and lastly, summary of literature review is presented.

2.1 History of SEL

The term "SEL" emerged from a long journey including multiple concepts, research as well as practices which involved significant contributions from moral and character education (Zins, Elias & Greenberg, 2007). Regarding John Dewey's suggestion to the education environment, not only empathy but also interpersonal management are required skills in order to lead the discussion into the educational realm (Dewey, 1933).

In the 1980s, Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence suggested that intelligence can be categorized in seven ways, namely logical, spatial, linguistic, musical, kinesthetic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal (Gardner, 1983). SEL appeared around the early 1990's as an emphasis in terms of education (Hoffman, 2009) and SEL evolved from prevention as well as resiliency research (Zins & Elias, 2006). Later, Goleman's (1995) "*Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*" book caught the attention of the public about SEL. The book basically speculates that all human beings are social and emotional first, and if educational and social systems don't take this into consideration, eventually they will be unsuccessful in terms of developing people who are well-rounded (Goleman, 1995). In other words, the SEL movement has its roots from scientific research on emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), it was later popularized by Goleman (1995). Salovey & Mayer (1990) described emotional intelligence (EI) as "*the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions*" (p.189). A diagram that illustrates EI skills and the

psychological processes was formed by Mayer and Salovey (1997). Figure 1 depicts the four-branch model of emotional intelligence.

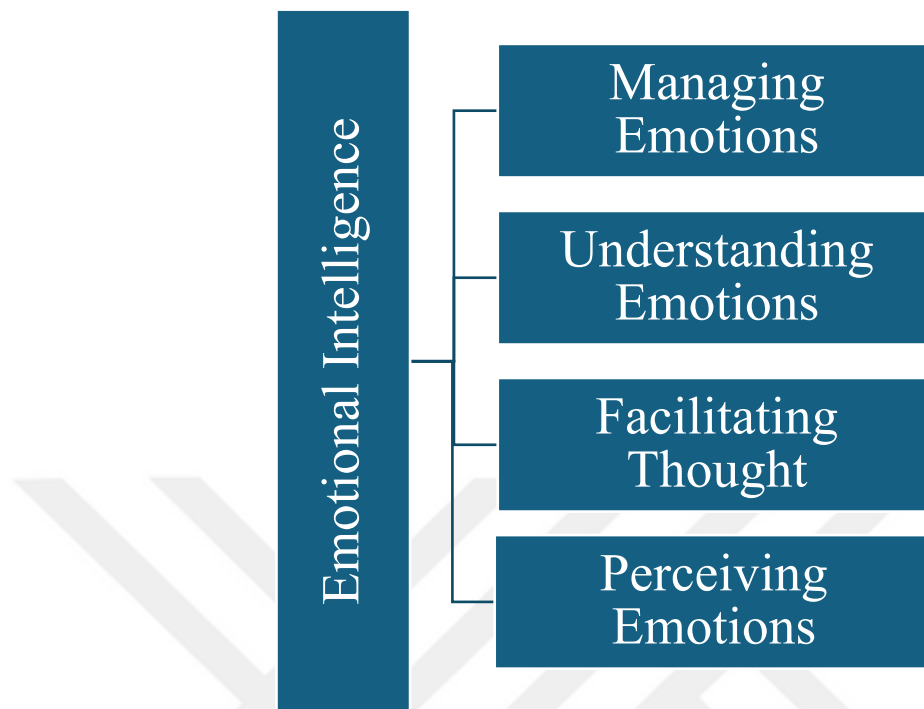


Figure 1. Four-Branch Model of Emotional Intelligence. Adopted from Mayer et al., (2012)

According to the diagram, the lower branch is related to the ability of perceiving and expressing emotions, including perception, appraisal, and expression of emotions. The lower branch covers the skills necessary to identify emotions in oneself and others, to express emotions appropriately, and to differentiate between accurate and inaccurate emotional expression. The higher branches involve emotional thinking facilitation including directing attention, forming judgment as well as allowing emotional conditions to solve problems. The diagram's second highest-positioned branch stands for the understanding, analysis, and application of emotional knowledge including the ability to identify and analyze the meaning of emotions, as well as the understanding of complex feelings and emotional transitions as well. Finally, the diagram's highest-positioned branch represents reflective regulation of control in order to promote emotional as well as intellectual growth which incorporates the ability to remain receptive to a range of emotions, to monitor emotions, and to regulate emotions by means of the cultivation of positive as well as moderating negative emotions.

In essence, EI indicates the mental abilities related to processing and responding to emotions, involving recognizing the expression of emotions of others as well as using emotions to improve thinking, and regulate emotions in order to operate efficient behaviors (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

2.2 CASEL's Framework

A group of educators as well as researchers met in 1994 at the Fetzer Institute to consider effective strategies to boost students' social-emotional competence and academic performance as well as to prevent and decrease health, mental health, and behavior problems as well. They introduced the term of *social and emotional learning* as a conceptual framework in order to endorse the social, emotional as well as academic competence of students and also to coordinate school, family, community programming to address goals of education (Elias et al., 1997). Having meeting attendees established the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning so called CASEL, as an organization with the duty to improve the science of SEL, advance efficient SEL practice, and improve federal and state policies which support the implementation of evidence-based programming as a crucial part from preschool to high school education (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013).

CASEL, a nonprofit entity at the University of Illinois-Chicago aims to create a unifying framework from preschool to high school regarding a coordinated set of evidence-based practices in order to boost the social, emotional, cognitive development as well as academic performance of students (CASEL, in press). When the National Conference of State Legislators in 2001 considered it necessary to pass a resolution aiding the teaching of social and emotional skills in schools, the emphasis on SEL was given (Hoffman, 2009). Therefore, CASEL provided leadership for high quality SEL programming and classified five core competencies related to SEL namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making (Zins et al., 2004) that contribute to student growth and mastery. According to CASEL, these competencies need to be taught to all students regardless of their age (Jagers, Rivas-Drake & Borowski, 2018). Figure 2 demonstrates these competencies.



Figure 2. SEL Competencies (From Brackett & Rivers, 2014: p.5)

In 2017, a more recent and detailed set of SEL competencies has been acknowledged by CASEL highlighting the fact that all students as well as adults are supposed to master to be successful both in school and life. Figure 3 demonstrates the recent and detailed of a set of five competencies.

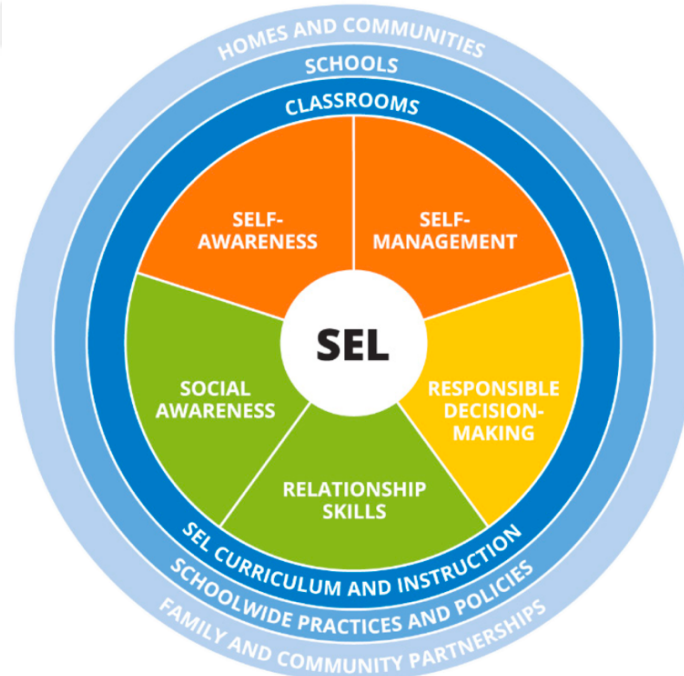


Figure 3. Framework for Systemic Social and Emotional Learning (From CASEL, 2017: p. 8)

Firstly, *self-awareness* and *self-management* are considered as “intrapersonal skills”. *Self-awareness* is defined as the ability to truly assess one’s feelings, interests, values, as well as strengths in order to sustain a well-grounded sense of self-confidence which involves capabilities to recognize one’s strengths as well as limitations with a well-grounded sense of purpose and confidence. Next, *self-management* refers to the ability to control one’s emotions to handle stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles in order to set and monitor progress regarding personal and academic goals while expressing emotions properly which includes the capabilities to delay gratification, handle stress, feel motivation as well as agency to fulfill both personal and collective goals.

Regarding “interpersonal skills”, those are *social awareness* and *relationship skills*. In terms of *social awareness*, it is the ability to take the perspective of others while empathizing with people from various backgrounds and cultures to understand social and ethical norms for behavior as well as recognizing family, school, and community resources, supports as well. Therefore, it involves the capabilities to feel compassion for other people, understand wider social and also ethical norms for behavior in terms of different settings. Regarding *relationship skills*, it is the ability to form strong, healthy, and supportive relationships with different individuals and groups which involves capacities to communicate openly, listen actively, cooperate, negotiate conflict with various social and cultural demands as well as opportunities, provide leadership as well, and seek and also offer help if needed.

Finally, *responsible decision-making* is considered as the “intra and interpersonal skills” and it is the ability to make both constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior by means of taking into consideration ethical standards, safety concerns and social norms in terms of evaluating not only the benefits but also the consequences of different actions for the well-being of self and others in academic and social situations (Goleman, 2005). Table 1 illustrates the basic SEL competencies and skills (Özgünlü, Erbil & Göl-Güven, 2022: p.140).

Table 1
SEL Competencies and Skills

Self-awareness	Self-management	Social Awareness	Relationship Skills	Responsible Decision-making
Identifying Emotions	Impulse control	Perspective taking	Communication	Identifying problems
Accurate self-perception	Stress management	Empathy	Social engagement	Analyzing situations
Recognizing strengths	Self-discipline	Appreciating diversity	Relationship building	Solving problems
Self-confidence	Self-motivation	Respect for others	Teamwork	Evaluating
Self-efficacy	Goal setting			Reflecting
	Organizational skills			Ethical responsibility

2.3 Implementation of SEL

SEL is an educational approach which basically emphasizes the development of learners' social and emotional skills so as to improve their well-being, academic performance as well as lifelong success. SEL targets to help learners how to manage as well as understand their emotions by means of ensuring positive relationships and making responsible decisions (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). SEL includes implementing practices as well as policies which help students and also adults gain and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to improve personal development, create satisfying interpersonal relationships, and lead to ethical work and productivity as well including competencies to understand and also manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and display caring and concern for others, create and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions accordingly. SEL includes promoting social and emotional competencies by means of explicit instruction and student-centered learning approaches which help students participate in the learning process and develop communication as well as collaborative skills (CASEL, 2012). With the

help of explicit instruction, social and emotional skills can be taught, modeled, practiced, and applied to various situations where students can utilize them as part of their daily behaviors. Moreover, SEL programming improves students' social and emotional competence by means of providing a positive classroom, school cultures, climates for learning which are safe, caring, cooperative and participatory (Zins et al., 2004).

The implementation of SEL requires several key strategies so that the implementation can be successful in the classroom environment. Firstly, a safe and supportive school environment need to be ensured. Therefore, schools need to prioritize both positive as well as inclusive environment which promotes learners' emotional well-being and sense of belonging for each and every learner (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013). Secondly, SEL needs to be integrated into curriculum as well as instruction. Both academic subjects and daily routines should be included to strengthen the progress of SEL. Teachers need to introduce SEL into lessons, activities and also discussions. Finally, professional development for teachers needs to be provided. Teachers need to be supported and provided with professional development opportunities so that they can improve their SEL implementation. When the SEL program is implemented by teachers delivering the program they are also crucial for the program's success. Teachers need professional development in order to promote their implementation of SEL programs since when teachers lack SEL skills themselves or suffer from stress or have poor physical and mental health, their ability to promote their students' SEL is severely compromised. Hence, teachers have a vital role in promoting SEL, professional development opportunities need to be arranged for teachers to equip them with adequate knowledge, skills as well as strategies in order to integrate SEL into their classroom practices efficiently (Dusenbury et al., 2018).

In order to implement SEL in an educational setting, there are several approaches. SEL programs in schools should be designed to enhance students' SEL skills and competencies in several key ways. First, specific SEL skills should be taught through direct instruction using a structured curriculum. Second, the school and classroom environment should be modified by incorporating effective teacher practices, fostering positive teacher-student interactions, and updating school rules and expectations. Third, programs should aim to shape students' mindsets, influencing

their perceptions of themselves, others, and their environment. By focusing on these areas, SEL programs can effectively support the holistic development of students. Some schools integrate SEL into their regular curriculum by means of combining social and emotional skill-building activities with academic subjects (Payton et al., 2008) whereas other schools implement separate programs which purposely focus on SEL, and those programs are delivered by means of structured lessons or embedded practices (Durlak et al., 2011). Both sufficiently trained and supported educators are needed in order to implement effective SEL since teachers have a significant role in building a supportive as well as inclusive classroom environment so that they can model SEL skills successfully.

The design of SEL programming aims for schools to use curricular tools as well as strategies in order to advance students' competencies (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004). CASEL's best practices guideline in terms of SEL programming incorporate the development of a specific set of skills regarding social and emotional development by means of active learning techniques which are both connected and coordinated. The five core competencies of SEL (CASEL, 2012) namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, they help students form the necessary skills for both their personal and academic success. Thus, by means of implementing SEL strategies in the classroom environment, teachers can foster learners' well-being and academic as well as personal skills (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). Furthermore, CASEL suggests that SEL programming is supposed to incorporate a comprehensive and systematic approach which combines all the stakeholders involved in the students' education (Devaney, O'Brien, Resnik, Keister, & Weissberg, 2006). Four SEL programs which offer emotion skill-building opportunities for students are 1) Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), 2) The Responsive Classroom (RC) Approach, 3) The Reading, Writing, Respect, and Resolution (4Rs) Program, 4) The RULER Approach to SEL. The following explains SEL programs in detail.

2.3.1 Promoting alternative thinking strategies (PATHS). PATHS is a SEL program regarding preschool and elementary schools, it was designed to boost social and emotional competence of students, prevent violence and aggression, and also other behavior problems while improving critical thinking skills, and enhancing classroom

climate (Greenberg, Kusche, & Mihalic, 1998). PATHS stems from the affective-behavioral-cognitive dynamic (ABCD) model of development claiming that social competence is gained when affect, behavior, and cognition work together in tandem (Greenberg, Kusche, & Riggs, 2004). The collaboration of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive systems arise over the course of development when emotional responses start to be verbalized and processed cognitively so behavior is able to be controlled accordingly. During the lessons, teachers focus on self-control, social problem solving, emotional awareness and understanding and they teach three 20–30-minute lessons each week. It has been shown that PATHS for the elementary level develops students' understanding of their own feelings and those of others (Greenberg et al., 1995) while increasing their inhibitory control and verbal fluency by reducing behavioral problems (Riggs, Greenberg, Kusche, & Pentz, 2006).

2.3.2 The responsive classroom (RC) approach. The RC approach is a way of teaching which combines the social, emotional, and academic needs of students including ten classroom practices planned for optimal learning and creating a classroom where children feel “safe, challenged, and joyful”. It has activities such as children and teachers greeting each other, sharing the day's news, using teacher-led collaborative problem-solving strategies such as role-playing and conferencing (Rimm-Kaufman, Fan, Chiu, & You, 2007). It has been suggested that RC influences the social and emotional climate of the classroom and student outcomes. According to Brock et al., (2008) students in third to fifth grade classrooms adopting RC have more positive feelings towards learning from their teachers, and their classmates. Regarding the studies in RC classrooms (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2007; Rimm-Kaufman & Chiu, 2007), there has been an increase in reading scores and closer relationships with teachers, more pro-social skills, more assertive behavior among students. Moreover, according to Sawyer and Rimm Kaufman (2007), teachers trained on the RC approach state engaging in more association with other teachers and also having more positive perceptions towards the school environment.

2.3.3 The reading, writing, respect, and resolution (4Rs) program. Teachers trained on 4Rs utilize a literacy-based curriculum which includes lessons on conflict resolution, cultural difference as well as cooperation. 4Rs combines not only specific instructional, skill-building techniques but also models positive social norms

(Jones, Brown, & Aber, 2008). According to Brown et al., (2010), it was seen that 4Rs positively influences the social and emotional climate within classroom settings. This is evidenced by the interactions observed between teachers and students, characterized by friendliness, support, and a notable absence of anger. Teachers consistently respond to students' needs, fostering a conducive environment for learning activities. Moreover, having been two years in the program, students were evaluated as more socially competent as well as more attentive, and less aggressive than their peers in other classrooms (Jones, Brown, & Aber, 2011).

2.3.4 The RULER approach to SEL. RULER includes an emotional literacy curriculum for students in terms of comprehensive professional development for teachers as well as training for families (Brackett et al., 2009). Five key emotion literacy skills such as recognizing emotions in the self and others, understanding both causes and consequences of emotions, labeling emotional experiences including accurate and diverse vocabulary, and expressing and regulating emotions in ways which boost not only intra, but also interpersonal growth are central to RULER. These RULER skills are crucial for effective teaching as well as learning, decision-making and well-being for children and adults (Mayer et al., 2008). RULER is based on the achievement model of emotional literacy which is an outgrowth of the ability model of EI (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). EI theory proposes that students with higher EI capacity perform better in school (Gil-Olarte Marquez, Palomera Martin, & Brackett, 2006), they also have better relationships (Brackett, Warner, & Bosco, 2005) and also they resolve conflict in constructive ways (Brackett, Rivers, Shiffman, Lerner, & Salovey, 2006) by means of solving social reasoning problems more effectively as well (Reis et al., 2007).

To sum up, even though the term of SEL has been in focus for around 20 years, there has been a rapid surge in interest in SEL amongst parents, educators, and policymakers as well. Thus, CASEL is promoting ten large school districts and also fourth-five smaller ones by means of its Collaborating Districts Initiative, they have begun to incorporate a range of SEL programs with their practices into the schools. Today, SEL is embedded into K-12 learning standards to some extent in most states which can be possibly explained as a result of the “No Child Left Behind Act”. The act was structured in 2001 so as to contain the development of social and emotional

competencies as part of the Title IV-Successful, Safe and Healthy Students (Humphrey, 2013). Then, “No Child Left Behind” was replaced by the “Every Student Succeeds Act” in 2015 which allows the states to build on their own liability by offering flexibility as well so that the best local solutions can be found (Jones, 2016). Furthermore, CASEL has also created a Collaborating States Initiative to assist in the States as they develop policies, standards, and also guidelines for SEL in schools. Each 50 states have SEL standards at the preschool level, and four states namely Illinois, Kansas, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania have SEL standards from kindergarten to 12th grade (Jones & Doolittle, 2017). Illinois in the US became the first and only state to improve explicit SEL goals and benchmarks for K-12 students in 2004 (Dusenbury et al., 2011). Consequently, other states in the US started considering the same route (Hoffman, 2009). Other leading states in order to integrate social and emotional competencies into their general curriculums were Iowa, South Carolina, Wisconsin, New York, and New Jersey (Kress et al., 2004).

2.4 Research on SEL

A few research studies were carried out regarding SEL from the teachers’ perspectives (Buchanan et al., 2009; Brackett et al., 2012; Ee & Cheng, 2013; Jones, 2016; Van Huynh et al., 2018).

Buchanan et al., (2009) attempted to examine 263 participating teachers’ knowledge, perceptions, as well as practices in terms of SEL in the classroom. The responses of the participating teachers were gathered regarding how to promote SEL in their classrooms and boosting the effectiveness of SEL, as well as decreasing barriers to the implementation. Regarding the findings, it was seen that most of the teachers perceived SEL as crucial and schools should take an active role to promote SEL.

Brackett et al., (2012) aimed to determine school readiness for SEL programming due to the fact that teachers’ beliefs about SEL may affect program delivery, evaluation, as well as outcomes, a tool to measure 935 teachers’ beliefs was applied by school administrators. Regarding the findings, it was concluded that teachers as well as their beliefs about SEL form the learning environment and consequently it has a huge impact on students’ developmental outcomes.

Another study by Ee & Cheng (2013) the infusion of SEL in students' academic subjects in English, mathematics, science and character education was investigated including 76 teachers from four schools. The data were gathered by means of a teacher questionnaire and also 19 teacher interviews in order to assess teachers' perceptions of SEL, teachers' views on their SEL infusion in class as well as their perceptions regarding factors which boost or impede SEL implementation. The findings of the study showed that teachers' perceptions of their role in implementing SEL as well as teachers' uncertain beliefs that SEL leads to students' academic achievement is likely to impede the success of SEL implementation in class.

Jones (2016) conducted a study that aimed to explore school principals' beliefs as well as attitudes in terms of SEL. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data from eight principals in the U.S. Regarding the findings of the study, lack of passion for SEL, lack of understanding of SEL, social influences on SEL school integration, and principal presence and staff proficiency in modeling and implementing were the themes that emerged from the data. Late majority adopter principals showed lack of passion for SEL integration whereas early adopters were passionate about SEL integration.

In another study carried out by Van Huynh et al., (2018) the perceptions of SEL education among 250 Vietnamese primary school teachers were measured. The data of the study were collected by means of Teachers' Perceptions of Social Emotional Learning Scale (TPSEL) that included four subscales namely Teachers' Perceived Level of the Necessity of SEL Education in Primary Schools (TPN), the Teachers' Perceived Level of the Importance of SEL Education in Primary Schools (TPI), the Teachers' Perceived Level of Concern about SEL Education in Primary Schools (TPC), and the Barriers to the Implementation of SEL Programs (BISEL). According to the results of the study, significant differences in BISEL among the teachers with different years of teaching experience were discovered. Therefore, different educational backgrounds influenced TPN and BISEL extensively.

Apart from the studies on teachers' perceptions about SEL, a number of research investigated this issue from the learners' perspectives (Harlacher & Merrell, 2010; Durlak et al., 2011; Gunter et al., 2012; Whitcomb & Merrell, 2012;

Korpershoek et al., 2016; Mantz 2017; Taylor et al., 2017; Ahmed et al., 2020; Lewis et al., 2021).

Harlacher and Merrell (2010) aimed to find out whether the use of a SEL curriculum brings about better social as well as emotional functioning over a moderate time by hypothesizing that students who received the curriculum would have more gains in SEL competency rather than students who did not receive the curriculum. The participants included 106 elementary school students in grades 3 and 4. The data were gathered by means of SK Knowledge Test, which was used to measure knowledge of SEL skills and to measure a student's self-perceived use of SEL skills, Coping Scale as well as The Social-Emotional Assets and Resiliency Scales-Child Self-Report Version (SEARS-C) were used. Finally, to measure social functioning, School Social Behavior Scales (SSBS-2) was used for each student by their teachers. Regarding the findings, it was detected that students who received the curriculum scored higher regarding SEL knowledge at posttest and follow-up. Moreover, SK curriculum showed that lessons can lead to beneficial gains in terms of SEL knowledge.

Also, Durlak et al., (2011) presented findings of SEL programs from a meta-analysis of 213 school-based programs consisting of 270,034 students. School teaching staff directed SEL programs in a successful way. Consequently, improvements in students' social-emotional skill, attitudes as well as positive classroom behaviors were observed with the help of SEL programs which highlighted both the importance and positive impact of SEL programs. The findings also contribute to the empirical evidence and support the combination of evidence based SEL programming into standard educational practices.

Moreover, Gunter et al., (2012) assessed the inclusion of SEL curricula in preschools in order to prevent emotional and behavioral problems and the effects of a SEL curriculum was evaluated using a quasi-experimental, non-equivalent control group design including 52 preschool students. Teachers graded students' emotional regulation, internalizing behaviors as well as the quality of the student-teacher relationship. The findings of the study showed a significant decrease of internalizing behaviors and more improvement in the student-teacher relationship.

Whitcomb and Merrell (2012) conducted a study to assess the feasibility as well as quality of “*Strong Start*” implementation which was a K-12 SEL curriculum, and it was designed to be used among children in kindergarten through grade 2. The effect of *Strong Start* on 1st grade students’ perceptions of emotion and teacher ratings of social behavior and affect were also examined. Regarding the results, it was detected that “*Strong Start*” was implemented with integrity, there was a significant increase in student knowledge about emotional situations whereas there was a significant decrease in student internalizing behaviors associated with the exposure to the program.

Korpershoek et al., (2016) investigated which classroom management strategies and programs improved students’ academic, behavioral, social-emotional, as well as motivational outcomes in primary education consisting of 54 studies published between 2003 and 2013. According to the findings, classroom management strategies integrating SEL principles were linked to improved academic, behavioral, emotional, as well as motivational outcomes for students by means of ensuring positive teacher-student relationships and supportive classroom environments.

Mantz (2017) carried out a study to explore the teaching of social-emotional skills with students’ social-emotional competence as well as the association of grade level, teacher-student relationship quality, student-student relationship quality including 29,671 students in grades 3-12 from 115 public schools. Regarding the findings, it was seen that students’ perceptions of their social-emotional competence was positively related to their perceptions of teacher-student relationship quality, student-student relationship quality, and the degree of SEL is taught in their school. It was also detected that elementary schools had lower social-emotional competence scores than high schools. Moreover, a stronger association between the perceptions of teacher-student relationship quality and social-emotional competence in high schools compared to elementary schools was detected.

Taylor et al., (2017) reviewed universal SEL interventions with 97,406 students from kindergarten to high school including 82 schools. Regarding the follow-up outcomes as post-intervention, SEL’s enhancement of positive youth development was seen regardless of students’ race, socioeconomic background, or school location. Therefore, the findings proved that SEL interventions had noteworthy long-term

positive effects on students' social-emotional skills, attitudes, as well as academic performance and the benefits persevered for at least six months after the end of the intervention.

Another study by Ahmed et al., (2020) the effect of SEL approach on student social-emotional competence was examined with 207 junior secondary school students. The students were divided into an experimental and a control group. The experimental group was taught by means of SEL approach, whereas the control group was taught regarding the traditional teaching approach. The results of the study showed that students in the SEL approach classroom had positively exhibited significant social-emotional competence rather than students in the traditional teaching approach group.

Furthermore, in a recent study Lewis et al., (2021) evaluated SEL programs' impact on social and emotional outcomes in terms of the effectiveness of a school-based, universal program consisting of 930 students in late elementary school in a low-income, urban, minority population. Regarding the findings, it was observed that SEL boosts students' social-emotional and ethical behaviors and teaches them how to implement these skills in their lives, how to set positive goals, make positive decisions, recognize the perspectives of others, by means of understanding how to act together with others effectively.

2.5 Research on SEL in Türkiye

Considering the Turkish context some studies regarding SEL were investigated (Najafi, 2006; Kabakçı & Korkut, 2010; Arslan & Demirtas, 2016; Aygün & Taşkın, 2017; Rakap et al., 2018; Işık, 2019; Bademci et al., 2020; Turan, 2021; Özgünlü, Erbil & Göl-Güven, 2022; Ozturk, 2022; Asra, 2022; Çelik & Çetinkaya, 2022).

In a study by Najafi (2006), the effects of SEL regarding L2 English learners' speaking skills were examined, and it was also aimed to find out whether teachers' awareness of SEL skills had an effect on the development of students' speaking skills or not. The data of the study were gathered from 14 English teachers working at a public university's preparatory school in Turkey and their 295 students who were at the upper-intermediate level. The data were gathered by means of a teacher and a

student questionnaire. Regarding the findings of the study, it was found out that some teachers did not have an idea regarding SEL skills which resulted in lack of motivation among L2 English learners and due to the fact that personal bonds between students and teachers were not adequate in the classroom, this also negatively affected the learning and teaching process.

Kabakçı and Korkut (2010) examined SEL skills of 431 middle school students to find out if SEL skills differ according to gender, class level, and socio-economic status (SES). The data were gathered through Social Emotional Learning Skills Scale (SELSS) and regarding the findings of the study, it was seen that female students had a higher level of SEL as well as communication skills than male students. Moreover, students in the 6th grade had a higher level of SEL skills as well as a better level of self-esteem enhancing skills and students in the 6th and 7th grades had a better level of coping with stress skills than students in the 8th grade. Finally, it was also detected that students with an upper level of SES had a higher level of coping with stress than students with lower SES.

Arslan and Demirtas (2016) carried out a study to find out the relationship between SEL and critical thinking disposition involving 289 university students. Social Emotional Learning Scale and Critical Thinking Disposition Scale were used to gather data from the participants. To investigate the correlations between SEL and critical thinking, correlation analysis and structural equation modeling were used and regarding the findings of the research study, it was found out that critical thinking and SEL correlated positively.

Işık (2019) carried out a study in order to investigate the effect of types of school on SEL skills including 201 students from ninth grade. The students were from Public Anatolian High School, Private Anatolian High School, Science High School, and Religious High School. The data were gathered by means of SEL skills scale. Regarding the findings of the study, it was detected that problem solving, copying stress and communication skills of Science High School students were higher than other school groups.

Bademci et al. (2020) carried out a study to explore positive attachment relationships in developing children's social and emotional development. Due to the fact that an important number of children attending the school had come across with social and emotional problems, an innovative psychosocial program was implemented including 40 university student mentors and their professors by providing weekly psychosocial support to primary schoolchildren over a period of 8 months. The data of the study were gathered from 18 teachers and school staff working in a primary school in İstanbul by means of interviews. Regarding the findings of the study, it was seen that the program ensured a safe and secure atmosphere for elementary students who had behavioral problems and they also grew a sense of self-worthiness, they felt more self-confident and regulated their emotions.

Turan (2021) examined the mediating role of academic resilience in relationship between adolescents' SEL competencies and life satisfaction. Self-report measurement tools were applied in the study to collect data from 371 participants. In order to investigate the mediating role of academic resilience in the relationship between SEL and life satisfaction, structural equation modeling was used. Regarding the findings, it was seen that SEL competencies predicted life satisfaction as well as academic resilience. Moreover, academic resilience predicted life satisfaction. Therefore, it was proven that academic resilience had a mediating effect on the relationship between SEL competencies and life satisfaction.

In another study by Özgünlü, Erbil & Göl-Güven (2022), SEL skills as defined by CASEL in the Turkish Early Childhood Education Curriculum (TECEC) was identified to point out that SEL skills at early ages have many benefits for development. Therefore, the TECEC document was examined based on CASEL's framework and document analysis was used to detect how SEL standards and objectives in TECEC were conceptually designed. Regarding the findings of the study, it was shown that out of 17 standards in order to support social and emotional development, only 10 of them were related to SEL, whereas 7 of them were identified as social studies standards. Moreover, out of 53 stated objectives, thirty-one of them were related to SEL skills.

In a study by Ozturk (2022) SEL levels as well as the social support perceptions of students in physical activities were examined. The data were collected from 542 high school students by means of Personal Information Form, Social Support Scale in Physical Activities and Social Emotional Learning Scale. Regarding the findings of the study, it was seen that social support levels of high school students in physical activities influenced their SEL skills in a positive way.

Similarly, Asra (2022) carried out a study in order to find out the effect of literature circles on SEL skills among high school students. The data were gathered from 63 students in the 9th grade. The data of the study were gathered by means of a SEL scale and semi-structured interviews. Regarding the findings of the study, it was detected that the students who were exposed to intervention exhibited statistically significant differences in SEL's all skills by means of articulating their feelings, improving their self-confidence, increasing their self-efficacy skills, and reflecting their self-awareness skills as well as displaying responsible decision-making skills in the literature circle activities.

Çelik and Çetinkaya (2022) studied SEL competencies of Turkish learners of English. The data of the study were gathered from 344 students who participated in a compulsory English course at a state university. The data were collected by means of Social-Emotional Foreign Language Learning Scale and a foreign language-oriented psychometric test. The results proved that participants deemed themselves to have a good SEL capacity regarding self-regulation, social relations, and responsible decision-making.

Finally, in examining the Turkish context, a comprehensive investigation was carried out, delving into numerous studies that examined the implementation and efficacy of SEL. Regarding these studies, particular emphasis was given on understanding the perspectives as well as practices of teachers from the Turkish context. The findings of these studies were combined in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the opportunities as well as challenges of SEL integration in Turkish classrooms (Gol-Guven, 2016; Aygün and Taşkın, 2017; Rakap et al., 2018).

In a study by Gol-Guven (2016), teachers' classroom implementations of the Turkish version of The Lions Quest Program© aiming to equip elementary school students with social and emotional skills, and also inspire them to contribute to society by teaching them how to protect themselves and others from violence were explored. The teachers participated in the study were the teachers from first to eighth grades and they were from two elementary schools. They were interviewed about the program as well as their classroom practices. They were also observed to gather data. Regarding the findings of the study, it was detected that even though the teachers had positive attitudes towards the program, they were uncertain about teaching SEL as a subject and having the responsibility for SEL.

In order to find out Turkish EFL primary school teachers' perceptions of SEL, a study by Aygün and Taşkın (2017) was conducted. The data of the study were gathered by means of semi-structured interviews including 14 teachers. Regarding the findings of the study, it was found out that most teachers had somewhat heard about SEL before whereas they were not able to elaborate on the concept. It was also detected that the teachers who participated in the study had no training on SEL during their pre-service training.

Moreover, to find out preschool teachers' use of strategies to support the development of young children's social and emotional skills, Rakap et al., (2018) carried out a study involving 103 teachers. Regarding the descriptive findings, it was found that preschool teachers were not ensured sufficient support by means of training and professional development so as to meet the required qualifications regarding how to address the challenging behaviors. However, they still tried to implement social and emotional competencies in young children. Finally, it was seen that there had been no significant difference across classroom types and levels regarding teachers' overall use of strategies to promote SEL skills of students and the number of children in the classroom was detected to be strongly negatively correlated with preschool teachers' use of strategies.

2.6 Summary of Literature Review

Since teaching and learning of SEL have been promoted all around the world as well as in Turkey, effective implementation is an extremely complex process

depending on teachers' implementation as well as perceptions. Even though there have been some studies conducted regarding students in terms of SEL in the Turkish context (Najafi, 2006; Kabakçı & Korkut, 2010; Arslan & Demirtas, 2016; Aygün & Taşkın, 2017; Rakap et al., 2018; Işık, 2019; Bademci et al., 2020; Turan, 2021; Özgünlü, Erbil & Göl-Güven, 2022; Ozturk, 2022; Asra, 2022; Çelik & Çetinkaya, 2022), there have been only a few studies carried out regarding teachers in the Turkish context in terms of SEL (Gol-Güven, 2016; Aygün & Taşkın, 2017; Rakap et al., 2018). Therefore, SEL regarding teachers is still an issue that needs to be investigated in detail in the Turkish context. Considering this gap of the literature, the main aim of this present study is to have a better grasp of Turkish EFL teachers' perspectives regarding SEL by firstly examining the level of SEL skills of EFL instructors in the English language preparatory program of a foundation university then integrating SEL instruction practices in the current existing English language preparatory program and finding out how SEL training affected participating EFL instructors' instruction practices in their own lessons and finally exploring the perceptions of the EFL instructors regarding SEL instruction practices after the SEL implementation.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Chapter 3 presents information about the methodology of the study. First, research design is presented, then setting and participants, data collection instruments of the study, procedures followed in the study, and finally data analysis and limitations of the study are explained in detail.

3.1 Research Design

Due to the fact that randomly assigning the population elements to treatment is not always feasible and possible in many research studies (Ary et.al, 2010), for this research study, nonrandom procedures in terms of selecting the EFL instructors of the sample therefore, nonprobability sampling was applied. This current study employed 50 full-time EFL instructors working in an English Preparatory School of a foundation university in Istanbul, Turkey. Therefore, in the study, no random groups were made.

Educational research typically falls into two main categories as quantitative and qualitative models (Creswell, 2013). Quantitative research design is advantageous for collecting large amounts of data and reaching a wide participant base. This approach enables researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the issue. Additionally, qualitative methods can assist in identifying and solving problems. Creswell (2013) explains that qualitative research aims not to generalize findings from a diverse sample, but to conduct an in-depth examination of the phenomenon being studied. Mixed-method research design consists of the utilization of not only qualitative but also quantitative data collection techniques by means of offering the advantages of both approaches while eliminating the deficiencies. Mixed-method research designs are categorized regarding their purpose of utilization (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). Creswell and Clark (2011) classified mixed-method research design types into six major groupings namely the convergent parallel design, the explanatory sequential design, the transformative design, the exploratory sequential design, the embedded design, and the multiphase design.

The explanatory sequential design, which is also known as the explanatory design, unfolds in two distinct, interactive phases. Initially, the design focuses on

gathering and analyzing quantitative data that is prioritized for addressing the study's questions. Then, it is followed by a subsequent phase of collecting and analyzing qualitative data. The second, qualitative phase is designed to build on the results from the first, quantitative phase. The researcher interprets how the qualitative findings help to explain the initial quantitative results. In other words, according to Ivankova et al. (2006), explanatory sequential mixed method involves collecting and analyzing quantitative and then qualitative data in two consecutive phases within one study. It is termed explanatory because the initial quantitative data results are further explained with the qualitative data collected. In short, the process starts with the quantitative phase, then it is followed by the qualitative phase. Therefore, in order to assess teachers' SEL levels, along with evaluating the effect of SEL training as well as SEL implementation's impact regarding instructors' perceptions, this study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed method design (Creswell, 2012), integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In figure 4, explanatory sequential mixed methods design is depicted.

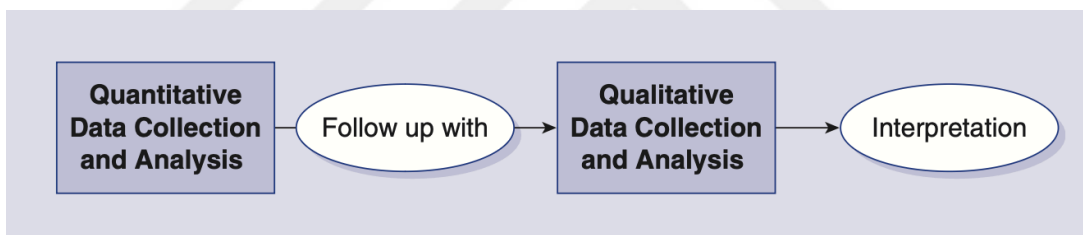


Figure 4. Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design (Creswell, 2009)

To sum up, this study utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments. The quantitative data of the study were obtained from a sample of 50 full-time EFL instructors in terms of a questionnaire, while the qualitative data were collected by means of teacher reflections from five full-time EFL instructors selected from the same sample. The quantitative data collection tool, a questionnaire aimed to measure SEL levels of EFL instructors before the SEL training as well as SEL implementation, whereas the qualitative data collection tool, teacher reflections aimed to collect in-depth information from the EFL instructors regarding the SEL training as well as the implementation of SEL. Timeline of the study is depicted in the following figure 5:

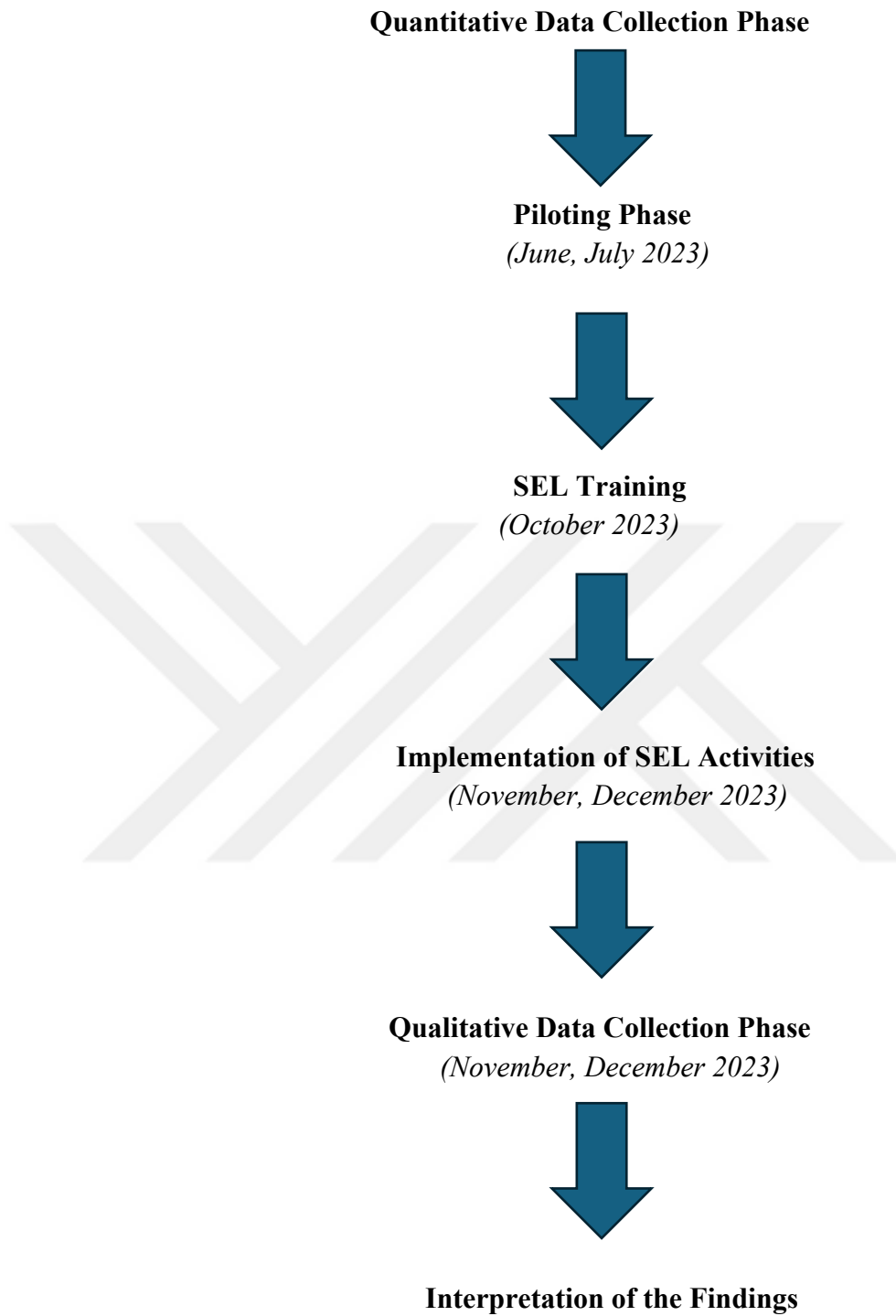


Figure 5. Timeline of the study

Moreover, Table 2 demonstrates the study’s research questions, data collection instruments and analysis in brief.

Table 2

Research Questions, Data Collection Instruments and Analysis

Research Questions	Instruments	Analysis
1. What is the level of SEL skills of EFL instructors in the English language preparatory program?	“Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies (SASEC): A Tool for Teachers” questionnaire by Yoder (2014)	Descriptive Statistics
2. How does SEL training affect participating EFL instructors’ practices?	Teacher Reflections	Inductive, Content Analysis
3. What are the perceptions of the participating EFL instructors regarding the SEL implementation after the training sessions?	Teacher Reflections	Inductive, Content Analysis

3.2 Setting and Participants

This study was conducted with EFL instructors at the English Preparatory School of a foundation university in Istanbul, Turkey. English Preparatory School in other words, the school of foreign languages is accredited by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) from August 2023 to August 2033 and agrees to maintain the CEA Standards for English Language Programs and Institutions. CEA is one of the leading establishments in the world in the field of the accreditation of language teaching and it is also recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

English Preparatory School has a modular system, each semester consists of two modules. In the beginning of the academic year, students are supposed to sit for the placement exam so that their level of English proficiency is determined. The placement of the students is regulated regarding the standardized levels of Common

European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) as A1 (breakthrough or beginner), A2 (way stage or elementary), B1 (threshold or intermediate), B2 (vantage or upper intermediate) levels and a Proficiency Exam Preparation Course (PREP-C). However, if students are successful with an average of 30 out of 60 in the placement exam, they become qualified to take the proficiency exam (with an average of 60), the TOEFL exam (with an average of 74), or YDS/YÖKDİL (with an average of 60) to be eligible enough to start their undergraduate departments.

The academic year at the English Preparatory School consists of a total of 4 eight-week modules as well as a summer module. The students are exposed to 22 hours of English instruction every week including integrated-skills and academic-skills lessons as 14 hours of integrated-skills and 8 hours of academic-skills. Use of English, reading, listening and vocabulary are the focus of integrated-skills lessons whereas speaking and writing are the main focus of academic-skills lessons. Students are supposed to complete each module successfully with an overall grade of at least 65% before they move on to the following level.

For the purpose of the study, convenience sampling, which is also known as availability sampling, was used in the study. A convenience sampling strategy consists of choosing available population members in order to take part in a study. This strategy is usually preferred in educational settings due to the fact that administrative limitations prevent random selection as well as assignment of participating members to experimental or control groups (Best & Khan, 2006). The English Preparatory School comprised of a cohort of 103 full-time EFL instructors, 82 of them were Turkish and the remaining 21 were international instructors.

As for the first step, “Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies (SASEC): A Tool for Teachers” was handed to 103 full-time EFL instructors. Amongst 103 full-time EFL instructors, 50 full-time EFL instructors responded to the questionnaire. Among them, 11 of them were men whereas 39 of them were female. The range of the EFL instructors’ age was between 22 and 46 whereas the range of teaching experience of the EFL instructors was between 2 and 22 ($M = 9.58$; $SD = 5.57$).

In the next step, five EFL instructors from B1 level among 50 full-time EFL instructors who responded to the questionnaire volunteered to take part in the piloting phase of the study. Five EFL instructors were females. Their age ranged between 25 and 37 the range of the teaching experience of the EFL instructors was between 3 and 19 ($M = 9$; $SD = 5.66$). None of the EFL instructors had prior training on SEL. The demographic information of the EFL instructors who participated in the pilot study is presented below in Table 3.

Table 3
Demographic Information of EFL Instructors Participated in the Pilot Study

Participants	Gender	Age	Teaching Experience	Previous Training on SEL
EFL instructor 1	Female	25	3	-
EFL instructor 2	Female	30	5	-
EFL instructor 3	Female	36	7	-
EFL instructor 4	Female	35	11	-
EFL instructor 5	Female	37	19	-

After the piloting phase of the study, another five EFL instructors volunteered to participate in SEL training and implement SEL activities in their classroom. Regarding participating five EFL instructors who implemented SEL activities as well as partook in teacher reflections, they were teaching in B1 level on the CEFR in the English preparatory school. Amongst them, all of them were female. The range of the EFL instructors' age was between 29 and 40 and the range of the teaching experience of the EFL instructors was between 4 and 15 ($M = 8$; $SD = 4.52$). EFL instructors had no prior training on SEL. All of the participating EFL instructors held a bachelor's degree in English Language Education as well as a master's degree in the same field. The demographic information of the EFL instructors is presented below in Table 4.

Table 4
Demographic Information of EFL Instructors for the Qualitative Phase

Participants	Gender	Age	Teaching Experience	Previous Training on SEL
EFL instructor 1	Female	29	6	-
EFL instructor 2	Female	32	4	-
EFL instructor 3	Female	33	5	-
EFL instructor 4	Female	35	10	-
EFL instructor 5	Female	40	15	-

EFL instructors in the B1 level have the same curriculum with the same weekly syllabus that needs to be followed by using the same materials which are previously prepared by the faculty’s level coordinating department. Moreover, EFL instructors have to cover a coursebook which was specifically designed and prepared following a skills-based approach for the English preparatory school. The coursebook has six units in total and each unit includes four chapters. Regarding the units of the coursebook, unit 1: “Learning” includes chapters on Language Learning & Education, unit 2: “The Mind” has chapters on Love & Impulse, unit 3: “Ideas” covers on Thinking like an Engineer & Large-scale Projects, unit 4: “Business” consists of chapters on Productivity & Start-ups, unit 5: “Social Issues” discusses chapters on Prejudice & Tolerance and Inequality, lastly, unit 6: “The Environment” addresses chapters on Climate Change & Animal Rights. Each unit focuses on communication, collaboration as well as engaging group work activities including contemporary topics. Chapter one includes vocabulary, reading, listening (while listening/note taking) and grammar parts. Chapter two has another vocabulary, reading, listening (while listening/note taking) and grammar. Chapter three includes writing (opinion paragraph). Finally, chapter four includes speaking (speaking skill as well as presentation skill). Furthermore, there are also backmatter activities, audio scripts as well as wordlist provided at the book. The instructors have three days of face-to-face lessons and two days of online instruction lessons.

Finally, at the beginning of the study, the EFL instructors were informed regarding the aims of the study, and they volunteered for their participation in the study, and they were informed that confidentiality would be maintained throughout the research. The written consent was taken from the instructors. The institution was also informed about the study and the ethics council approval was granted in the beginning of the study. EFL instructors were also told that they had the right to withdraw from the study any time they wanted.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

This study was designed as mixed-method research involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Therefore, the data of the study were collected by means of using quantitative as well as qualitative data collection instruments. The quantitative part consists of the questionnaire named “Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies (SASEC): A Tool for Teachers” by Yoder (2014) with participating 50 EFL instructors whereas the qualitative part includes teacher reflections collected regularly after each implementation from the participating five EFL instructors. The following part describes each instrument used in detail.

3.3.1 Quantitative data collection instrument. In order to find out and assess EFL instructors’ SEL skills as well as subskills, “Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies (SASEC): A Tool for Teachers” adopted from Yoder (2014) was administered. The scale was created and developed by the American Institute of Research along with social–emotional competencies field experts as well as state department of education staff (Yoder, 2014). The questionnaire was used to gather data from 50 full-time instructors in the English preparatory school regarding their SEL skills.

The questionnaire was designed as a 4-point Likert Scale including 21 items in total. It was provided with its original language, which was English, to the EFL instructors. They were given an online copy of the questionnaire in English. The participants were requested to designate how much they agree or disagree with the statements given. The questionnaire comprised of statements which evaluate the subjective level of the 5 core competencies of SEL, proposed by CASEL. The 21-item

measure included the following factors of social emotional competencies: (1) *Self-Awareness* (5 items, $\alpha = .92$); (2) *Self-Management/Emotion Regulation* (4 items, $\alpha = .86$); (3) *Social Awareness* (4 items, $\alpha = .82$); (4) *Relationship/Social Skills* (4 items, $\alpha = .90$), and (5) *Responsible Decision-Making* (4 items, $\alpha = .91$). Each item included a 4-point score as 1 = *Strongly disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Agree* and 4 = *Strongly agree*. Top scores on the subscales stand for highly developed social emotional competencies and a total score means a sum of the subscale scores.

Moreover, the validity of the questionnaire for subscales was tested by experts and the result of the Cronbach's Alpha test proved that the reliability value of the scale was 0.840. Due to the fact that the value was higher than 0.8, it proved that the questionnaires had good internal consistency and reliability. Finally, reliability analysis results of the scale confirm good psychometric properties for the total score $\alpha = .93$. Thus, it was decided that the questionnaire is valid and also reliable in order to use in the study.

3.3.2 Qualitative data collection instrument. After the implementation of each activity regarding SEL skills throughout the module for five weeks, teacher reflections were regularly collected from participating five EFL instructors following each implementation during the entire process of integrating SEL instruction practices. The aim of teacher reflections was to encourage EFL instructors to comment on significant points and to create an ongoing conversation in order to gather in-depth information in terms of the implementation regarding EFL instructors' perspectives as well (Nunan, 2012). Therefore, the participating EFL instructors were asked open-ended questions in order to elicit a thick description to probe further. The participating five EFL instructors' participation was voluntary, and they were the instructors who joined SEL training sessions and consequently implemented SEL activities in their lessons.

The purpose of the teacher reflections was to find out about the SEL implementation. Regarding the teacher reflections, the participants were asked questions regarding SEL activities that they implemented during the module. Thus, teacher reflection questions were prepared around general themes. They were asked questions in terms of student engagement as well as task impact during the

implementation process. Moreover, some questions were addressed to the participating EFL instructors to collect information in terms of the effect of SEL training and their perspectives regarding SEL practices. In short, the participants were questioned on how they would promote SEL in their lessons regarding their further goals on implementing SEL into their instructional approaches. Furthermore, they were also asked to reflect on their experiences of implementing SEL practices into their lessons by means of specific activities as well as strategies that they used, they were asked to reflect on the impact of SEL regarding students' learning and performance. The reflection questions were addressed to the participants both in Turkish and English and the participating EFL instructors were free to answer in any language they felt more comfortable with. The reflections were collected online. The participants' answers were audio-taped, digitally recorded throughout the sessions, and they provided consent for recordings as well as transcription of their reflections. When all teacher reflections collected, all of the recordings were transcribed verbatim. Finally, a qualified peer researcher who was specialized in the field reviewed the reflections questions in order to ensure peer debriefing to boost the credibility of the research study (Creswell & Garrett, 2008).

3.4 Procedures

3.4.1 Piloting phase. Prior to conducting the actual study in order to determine the possible problems, a pilot study was implemented in June and July of 2023. The researcher piloted both the training and implementation. The rationale of the piloting phase was to check the efficiency, applicability, and feasibility of the SEL training and SEL implementation. Therefore, a piloting process in order to create the best input opportunities for the training and promote not only SEL skills but also its sub-skills in SEL activities were ensured.

As for the first phase of the piloting, SEL training was piloted before the actual SEL training in June 2023. The piloting of SEL training consisted of three consecutive sessions via Zoom meetings including five instructors and the rationale behind the piloting of the training was to check and detect the possible problems regarding the training beforehand. After the piloting of the training sessions, regarding the feedback from the instructors as well as the researcher some modifications were made in the actual training in order to increase the effectiveness of the actual SEL training. For

example, in session two, how to integrate SEL activities into the lessons were shown to the instructors; however, they were not confident about the integrations of SEL in their classroom. Due to the demand and feedback from the instructors, the researcher demonstrated some SEL activities and examples from the implementation so that the instructors could have a clear idea about the implementation of SEL. Therefore, in the actual training, a demo lesson by the researcher as well as its lesson plan were added.

As for the second phase of the piloting, before the actual implementation of SEL, SEL implementation was piloted by the researcher in July 2023. Eleven SEL activities in order to improve students' SEL skills were piloted for five weeks before starting the actual implementation. Each SEL activity was piloted in order to determine if they were appropriate, suitable both for the context and aim and also for the students' level which was B1, as well. Regarding the outcomes of the activities as well as with the help of the teacher and student feedback, the activities were adjusted according to the recommendations for the actual implementation. For example, in activity 1, students were supposed to role-play a conversation between a therapist and a client, and some scenarios were provided with suggested problems. However, suggested problems were mostly related to school issues at first, but after the feedback more suggested problems regarding the private life such as phobia, heartbreak were added. Moreover, in activity 7, the students were supposed to choose a story and write their alternative versions without having any gender stereotypes. However, there were some difficulties at finding and working on the stories. Therefore, the task was modified into choosing a traditional fairytale such as Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, Beauty and the Beast, Rapunzel, etc. and some examples were given to guide students.

To conclude, the piloting phase proved valuable insights to improve the effectiveness of the SEL training as well as implementation. Moreover, it was also seen that the SEL activities and implementation were suitable and appropriate for the level of the students as well as the feasibility of the implementation. After the piloting, first, actual SEL training was given to other volunteered five EFL instructors, then they implemented SEL activities in their own classes.

3.4.2 SEL training. SEL training comprised of two sequential phases, the initial phase involved structured instructional sessions whereas the subsequent phase

consisted of practical implementation of the practices and activities. In the initial phase, structured instructional sessions were provided to the participants. Prior to the implementation of SEL activities in the classrooms, the participating EFL instructors were given SEL training sessions in October 2023. The aim of the training sessions was to prepare instructors for the SEL implementation aiming to introduce and promote core competencies of SEL as well as demonstrate activities to boost SEL skills in the lessons. Another five EFL instructors volunteered to participate in SEL training and implement SEL activities in their classroom. They participated actively in each session. The training sessions were conducted by the researcher himself and they were held online by means of Zoom meetings consisting of three sessions in total. The rationale of the training sessions was to prepare and guide EFL instructors regarding SEL before the implementation of the SEL activities in their lessons. The training sessions were prepared regarding the CASEL framework for implementing SEL (CASEL, 2012). Moreover, regarding the results of the questionnaire, SEL training sessions aimed at focusing on increasing EFL instructors' lowest aspects of SEL. Therefore, by means of identifying the lowest-rated items from the questionnaire, SEL training sessions' content was strategically designed. For example, in terms of self-awareness, the instructors felt less confident in terms of effectively implementing instructional teaching practices with the students. Thus, some demo lessons and implementation examples as well as lesson plans were provided to the participants. Finally, regarding relationship/social skills, the instructors felt less comfortable helping students resolve interpersonal conflicts during their instructional teaching practices. Therefore, more activities in terms of resolving conflicts were added to the implementation. Every session started with the input sessions first and then led by some discussions. The detailed information of each session is as follows:

Session 1: In the first session, the instructors were given general information regarding SEL. The objective of the first session was to foster an understanding of SEL amongst instructors, emphasizing both its importance and effects. They were taught the science behind SEL as well as its effect on human well-being to make instructors cultivate an understanding of SEL. This session also encouraged the instructors to engage with common SEL frameworks and support them in their journey of emotional as well as mental well-being.

Session 2: In the second session, the instructors were taught how to integrate SEL activities into their own lessons. The objective of the second session was to focus on practical application of the SEL by means of guiding instructors to incorporate SEL into their lesson plans and also their everyday interactions. The researcher demonstrated how to integrate SEL activities in the lessons. Therefore, the instructors learnt the integrations of SEL in their lesson plans as well as everyday interactions.

Session 3: In the final session, the instructors were shown the ways to build, accomplish and preserve healthy relationships inside the classroom such as classroom motivation and behavior, student performance and instructor well-being as well. In other words, the objective of the last session was to give emphasis on relationship-building by covering aspects in regard to classroom motivation, behavior, student performance, and instructor well-being. Moreover, the instructors were also taught the tools of conflict resolution in order to navigate challenging encounters in their lessons so that they could establish as well as manage and maintain healthy relationships in their classroom.

Overall, all training sessions were successfully carried out with participating EFL instructors. The training sessions addressing not only the theoretical but also practical aspects of integrating SEL into the instructors' lessons appeared to be comprehensive and educative for the EFL instructors. Finally, the instructors were also supported with the related readings to both guide and support them throughout the process.

In the subsequent phase, the practical implementation of the practices was performed. Over the course of the five-week in the module from November to December of 2023, the instructors who participated in SEL training sessions, implemented a total of eleven SEL activities in their lessons. Each week the instructors implemented activities aiming to enhance students' SEL skills as relationship skills, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2012). The SEL activities were prepared and modified regarding the coursebook units and the topics of the B1 level. Therefore, English preparatory program's student-language goals (SLOs) for the B1 level English preparatory curriculum were taken into consideration while creating the SEL activities. SEL

activities were implemented either in groups or pairs successfully by the instructors. The suggested activities by CASEL for each core competencies of SEL are as follows:

Regarding *self-awareness*, the suggested activities for teachers were to lead class activities which probe student to recognize their feelings they may have in different situations by providing scenarios and asking them how those situations or experiences would make them feel.

In terms of *self-management*, the suggested instruction for teachers was to guide students to think about stopping for a while before making a decision if they feel angry or hurt etc., since it is always better to make important decisions when people feel calm. Therefore, suggested activities for teachers were to lead discussions about how students are able to express their feelings in a positive way (Oberle et al., 2020).

Regarding *social awareness*, the suggested activities for teachers were to take the perspective of others and identify their feelings as well as thoughts by means of providing students with opportunities to share how they would feel in various situations in groups in order to build on the classroom diversity by making students share their different cultural perspectives on given situations such as analyzing the effects of stereotyping and prejudice etc.

About *relationship skills*, the suggested activities for teachers was to practice collaborative work groups such as project-based learning in order to promote the importance of working together so as to solve problems as well as achieve goals together such as resolving conflicts in a peaceful way.

Finally, in terms of *responsible decision-making*, the suggested instructions for teachers were to teach students how to make good decisions by giving them problem scenarios and then asking them to work in groups or pairs to decide what they would decide in these cases (Dobia et al., 2020). To sum up, considering the suggested activities (CASEL, 2013; Oberle et al., 2020; Dobia et al., 2020) regarding SEL skills, the activities to implement in the study were prepared to promote core competencies of SEL regarding the coursebook units and the topics of the B1 level by the researcher himself.

Furthermore, regarding the implementation of SEL activities, throughout the module for five weeks, the instructors implemented 11 class activities in total. Every week the instructors applied activities purposefully in order to boost students' SEL skills and the activities were prepared regarding English preparatory program's SLOs (student-language objectives) for the B1 level.

In terms of the main objectives of the B1 level, SLOs for *reading* skill were to identify the main idea(s), specific information, the reference words, guess the meaning of unknown words, identify the audience and the purpose, put events in order, make inferences by drawing conclusions as well as identify writer's point of view in a text.

In terms of the *listening* skill, SLOs were to identify the main idea, specific information and make inferences in everyday conversations and interviews delivered at a normal speed on reasonably familiar topics for students. Moreover, another SLOs were to take notes while listening to a mini-lecture or a short talk delivered at a slow speed and identify the structure of a lecture while listening for note-taking, listen for phrases that signal paraphrasing while taking notes, use general strategies for note-taking before, during and after a lecture, note down key words and use abbreviations and symbols while listening to a lecture, identify the main idea using their notes and specific information using their notes.

As for the *writing* skill, SLOs were to generate ideas on familiar and theme-related topics and produce a cohesive paragraph consisting of a topic sentence, supporting sentences and details, and a conclusion sentence.

Finally, for the *speaking* skill, SLOs were to make a presentation of around five-seven minutes demonstrating a good understanding of the topic using visuals and respond to questions on familiar and/or theme-related topics. Each SEL activity was also designed as either pair work or group work. The activities implemented were as followed:

3.4.2.1 Unit 2: *The mind / Love and impulse.* The objectives of unit 2 regarding the SLOs of the B1 level were to make students extend their knowledge of issues as well as use words to talk about relationships, mental health, and crime, identify specific information, the main idea(s), and use the strategies of previewing

and predicting to make accurate guesses. Therefore, the activities prepared, activity 1, in unit 2 regarding SEL was related to role-playing a conversation between a therapist and a client. The students were supposed to work in pairs and choose a role and a problem from the list given by the teacher and create a dialogue. The students were given roles, Student A was the therapist and Student B was the client. They were also given the following scenario: “*Student A*: You are an experienced psychotherapist. Listen to your client, ask questions about his/her problems and feelings. Analyze his/her problems and offer advice and suggestions.” and “*Student B*: You have an appointment with a therapist. Talk about your problems and feelings. Ask for advice and suggestions.” Suggested problems were procrastination, exam anxiety, family conflicts, jealousy, anger management, stress, depression, phobia, heartbreak etc. The students were supposed to perform their dialogues in pairs in front of the whole class.

3.4.2.2 Unit 3: Ideas / Thinking like an engineer and large-scale projects.

The objectives of unit 3 regarding the SLOs of the B1 level were to make students expand their knowledge of issues related to design, use words to talk about engineering and large-scale projects as well as express their views on design and large-scale projects, make inferences to understand what is not stated directly as well. Therefore, the activities prepared, activity 2, in unit 3 regarding SEL was about a job interview. The aim of the activity was to role play a job interview. The students were supposed to work in pairs and choose a job from the list given by the teacher (e.g. babysitter, veterinary assistant, waiter/waitress, delivery rider, shop assistant, cook, flight attendant, model, barista, security guard, their own ideas). Then they were supposed to choose a role (e.g interviewer and candidate) and perform their role play. Student A was supposed to be the *interviewer* and interview Student B for the job, while Student B was the *candidate* and was supposed to talk about job requirements, skills and qualifications needed, strengths and weaknesses of the candidate, working conditions (hours, holidays, etc.), salary and benefits (e.g., health insurance, meals, transportation, etc.). After that the students were supposed to role play in pairs in front of the whole class.

Activity 3, in Unit 3 regarding SEL was about a project development. The aim of the activity was to discuss the problems and needs of their city and develop a project to solve a problem or address a need. The students were given some ideas by the

teacher from the categories (e.g traffic jams, entertainment and cultural events, infrastructure, public transportation, environment and pollution, poverty and unemployment, parks and green spaces, security and crime, housing and rents, overpopulation, recreational and social facilities). Then they were supposed to sketch or make a model of their project, introduce their project to the rest of the class talking about issues (e.g What is the city's problem or need?, How will the project address it?, Who will benefit from it?, How long will it take to develop?, How much will it cost to develop?, What is needed to develop it such as equipment, permits, workforce, etc.?, What problems are likely during development?, How to overcome potential problems?) The students were supposed to work in groups and present their project to the whole class.

Activity 4, in Unit 3 regarding SEL was related to making a TV show. The aim of the activity was to role play a TV show in groups. The students were given some suggested roles, student 1 was the host, students 2 and 3 were a famous musician, actor-actress, entrepreneur, scientist, athlete etc. They were supposed to make up the situations and preparations that people may experience in a TV show by creating drama, conflict, and comedy during the scenario. They were supposed to collaborate as a group in creating the dialogue and take part in the role-play.

3.4.2.3 Unit 4: Business / Productivity and start-ups. The objectives of unit 4 regarding the SLOs of the B1 level were to make students expand their knowledge of issues related to work and business, use words to talk about work and business, identify the writer's point of view, make inferences to understand what is not stated directly, identify the main idea(s). Therefore, the activity prepared, activity 5, in unit 4 regarding SEL was about a poster presentation. The students were required to work in groups of three and create their own company and make a poster about it. They were supposed to include the following information in their poster such as company name, industry (e.g., technology, education, food), product/service description, employees (number, positions), working conditions (salary, working hours, holidays, extra benefits). Then they were supposed to present their poster to the whole class.

3.4.2.4 Unit 5: Social Issues / Prejudice and tolerance and inequality. The objectives of unit 5 regarding the SLOs of the B1 level were to make students use

words to talk about prejudice and inequality, identify facts and opinions, use the strategies previewing and predicting to make accurate guesses and identify the narrator's point of view/ tone, make inferences to understand what is not stated directly. Therefore, the activities prepared, activity 6, in unit 5 regarding SEL was analyzing a type of discrimination and finding authentic materials accordingly in terms of reading or watching something about one of the common types of discrimination such as race/ethnicity, religion, gender, age, disability. The students were supposed to work in pairs, and they were either supposed to find a reading (e.g., a graded reader, a news article, a blog entry, etc.) or find a film (e.g., movie, documentary, TV series, etc.) that interests them about prejudice and discrimination. After that, the task required them to create a file giving information about their text or film including title, genre, type of discrimination explored, main characters/events, main message/moral. Finally, they were supposed to present it to the whole class.

Activity 7, in unit 5 regarding SEL was that the students were supposed to work in pairs and choose a traditional fairytale, e.g., *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Snow White*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Rapunzel*, etc. and write their alternative versions. The aim of the activity was to rewrite the traditional fairytale by creating their own alternative versions without having any gender stereotypes and then present it to the whole class.

Activity 8, in unit 5 regarding SEL was related to going abroad. The aim of the activity was to role play a conflict between the teacher/student/parents in groups of four. The students were given the following scenario: *"You have just passed the proficiency exam, but you do not want to start your education at the department immediately. You are thinking about improving your English even more and living abroad for some time before you start your department next September. You want to go to the USA for the Work & Travel program! However, your parents don't want you to go. You want your teacher from your B1 class to talk to your parents and persuade them. So, you contact your teacher and ask him/her to meet your parents."* The students were supposed to collaborate as a group in creating the dialogue and taking part in the role-play.

3.4.2.5 Unit 6: The environment / Climate change and animal rights. The objectives of unit 6 regarding the SLOs of the B1 level were to make students express their opinions using compare & contrast structures, use words to talk about climate change and animal rights, identify problem and solution structures, use the strategies previewing and predicting to make accurate guesses. Therefore, the activity prepared, activity 9, in unit 6 regarding SEL was to create a Public Service Announcement (PSA) to raise awareness about an environmental issue such as global warming, endangered species, deforestation, overfishing, pollution (water, air, noise), burning fossil fuels, plastic bags, water bottles, wasting water, energy, etc., their own ideas. The aim of the activity was to do research about the issue they have chosen and find some facts, statistics and/or solutions and then write the script of their PSA including the introducing a problem, offering a solution and/or a calling to action. The students were supposed to work in groups and present it to the whole class.

Activity 10, in unit 6 regarding SEL was about role-playing scenarios. The aim of the activity was to role play given scenarios. The students were supposed to work in pairs and role-play the scenarios. The given scenarios were as follows: Scenario 1) *“Student A: You want to adopt a stray cat or dog but can't decide which. Ask Student B for advice. Student B: Give advice to Student A, telling him/her the reasons why s/he should get either a cat or a dog.”* Scenario 2) *“Student A: Student B leaves litter in your classroom. S/he also leaves things on (lights, AC, the projector, the computer, etc.) when s/he leaves the classroom. Talk to Student B and give reasons why it's not good to do these things and ask him/her politely to stop. Student B: Apologize to Student A and explain why you sometimes don't pay much attention. Then assure him/her that you will be more careful.”* Scenario 3) *“Student A: You look after the stray animals on the campus. It's taking a lot of your time and energy, and it's costly. So, you need help. Talk to Student B and try to convince him/her to help you. Student B: You love animals, but you are not sure that you can take on the responsibility of looking after one. Make excuses to Student A as to why you cannot help him/her.”* Scenario 4) *“Student A and Student B: Take turns to ask each other what you would do in the following situations: a kitten stuck in a tree, a big spider in your room, a person mistreating an animal.”* Finally, the students were also supposed to change partners after each scenario.

Activity 11, in unit 6 regarding SEL was related to role-playing dissatisfied customers. The aim of the activity was to role play an argument about a product/service in groups of three or four. The students were given the following scenario: *“You will role-play a scenario with three people who are having an argument about a product/service. Two of them are angry customers who are dissatisfied with the product/service they got, and they want a refund or a replacement. The other two people are the sales representative and the manager (the manager exists in groups of four). Angry customers will come to the store/shop/restaurant/airport etc. and complain about a product or service they received. They expected something better because of the advertisement they saw on TV and now they feel cheated. One person will be the sales representative who wants to save his/her company from damage and get rid of these angry customers as soon as possible, with minimal expense. (In groups of four, the fourth person is the manager who supports the sales representative against customers). Customers are stubborn and they won’t leave without getting any sort of refund or replacement.”* The students were supposed to collaborate as a group in creating the dialogue and taking part in the role-play to the whole class.

In brief, eleven activities in total to boost students’ SEL skills were implemented by the instructor of the class each week throughout five weeks in the module. The activities related to SEL were successfully implemented as either pair work or group work. Table 5 provides an overview plan of the implementation chronologically:

Table 5
Overview Plan of the Implementation

Units	Activities	Date
Unit 2: The Mind Chapters: Love & Impulse	Activity 1: Role-play: A Therapist and a Client	Week 2 (November 27, 2023)
Unit 3: Ideas Chapters: Thinking like an Engineer & Large-scale Projects	Activity 2: A Job Interview	Week 3 (December 4, 2023)
	Activity 3: A Project Development	
	Activity 4: Making a TV Show	
Unit 4: Business Chapters: Productivity & Start-ups	Activity 5: Poster Presentation	Week 4 (December 11, 2023)
Unit 5: Social Issues Chapters: Prejudice & Tolerance and Inequality	Activity 6: Analyzing a Discrimination Type by Authentic Materials	Week 5 (December 18, 2023)
	Activity 7: Rewriting a Traditional Fairytale without Gender Stereotypes	
	Activity 8: Role-play: Going Abroad	
Unit 6: The Environment Chapters: Climate Change & Animal Rights	Activity 9: Creating a Public Service Announcement (PSA)	Week 6 (December 25, 2023)
	Activity 10: Role Play the Scenarios	
	Activity 11: Role Play: Dissatisfied Customers	

3.5 Data Analysis

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. Therefore, in order to answer the study's research questions, not only quantitative but also qualitative analyses were conducted. Each analysis applied for this research study is explained in detail in the next section.

3.5.1 Quantitative analysis. The quantitative data were gathered by means of a 4-point Likert Scale questionnaire including 21 items regarding SEL with its subskills by Yoder (2014) and it was collected by means of using an online survey platform (Google Forms). The questionnaire was analyzed descriptively using statistics by means of the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program version 25 so as to get the means, standard deviations as well as frequency analyses of the items in the questionnaire. Therefore, descriptive statistics were computed and before the analysis, the normality assumption test of the data was checked.

3.5.2 Qualitative analysis. The qualitative data were collected by means of teacher reflections from five EFL instructors. All of the reflections were first transcribed then analyzed. The data gathered from teacher reflections were analyzed by means of Content Analysis (Creswell, 2012) which is the process of reading the transcribed data to reveal hidden facts, then creating codes, categories, as well as themes in order to merge similar concepts. In other words, content analysis refers to *“a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns”* (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Therefore, data analysis's final product is the identification of categories as well as themes. This research utilized inductive data analysis process (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) which represents the content or meaning of the statements of the participants that were not previously categorized and they emerged during the process of coding and data analysis as well (Braun & Clarke, 2006) Finally, as a result of the thematic analysis, major themes as well as sub-themes emerged which allowed to develop initial insight regarding the data.

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the qualitative phase of the study, Guba and Lincoln's (1994) terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were applied. In order to ensure credibility, the participants were

described and identified in an accurate way. To ensure transferability, thick descriptions of the data collection and analysis process were provided by paying the utmost attention to the description of the process in a very comprehensive way. In terms of the dependability, the opinions of two experts from the field were asked. Finally, for the confirmability, member checking was applied by independently creating codes, sub-categories as well as the main themes. After the coding process, the researchers studied the codes in order to reach a common consensus on the final themes and the intercoder agreement was found to be 89%. Finally in order to improve the trustworthiness of the study, debriefing is applied, and the analysis processes were also audited by Atay who is an expert in the field and the thesis adviser. To conclude, reviewing as well as interpreting the data with the help of a highly experienced researcher ensured an objective analysis of the study.

3.6 Limitations

In this study, the data were gathered by means of both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools including a questionnaire and teacher reflections. Even though the data were analyzed using different data analyses methods, this research study had its own potential limitations which were not possible to avoid.

Firstly, the sample size of the study does not represent a random ratio of a greater population due to the fact that the convenience sampling was used. Secondly, the questionnaire responses represented instructors' SEL perceptions of their practices rather than their actual practices, consequently they might not reflect their reality. Thirdly, regarding the data from teacher reflections, the participating EFL instructors may be biased when they were sharing their implementation of SEL as well as their perceptions. Furthermore, more instructors may have implemented SEL activities in their lessons and consequently, they may have provided more robust as well as representative information from teacher reflections. Moreover, student perceptions were not elicited in this study which is an additional limitation of the research study. Therefore, the data reflects only EFL instructors' experiences as well as perceptions. Integrating student perceptions could have provided more information regarding the implementation process of SEL regarding its activities. Finally, in order to increase the validity of the research study, more qualitative data collection instruments could

be integrated in the study such as observations or reflective journals of the EFL instructors so that a more comprehensive picture could be obtained.

All in all, the findings of this study need to be interpreted within the context of the study since it only investigated a single case that does not allow generalizations.



Chapter 4

Findings

In this chapter, the obtained findings of the current study are presented regarding each research question. Firstly, the findings of the level of SEL skills of EFL instructors in the English language preparatory program are presented. Secondly, how SEL training affected the participating EFL instructors' instruction practices in their lessons and finally, the perceptions of the EFL instructors in terms of SEL instruction practices regarding the SEL implementation are provided.

4.1 Research Question 1: What is the level of SEL skills of EFL instructors in the English language preparatory program?

To answer the first research question of the study, before the implementation of SEL instruction practices, the questionnaire of “Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies (SASEC): A Tool for Teachers” adopted from Yoder (2014) was administered in order to assess 50 EFL instructors' SEL skills as well as their subskills at the English Preparatory School of a foundation university.

The findings of the first research question aimed at measuring SEL levels as well as SEL sub-skills of the EFL instructors in the beginning of the study. The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program version 25 to get the means, standard deviations as well as frequency analyses of the items in the questionnaire.

Each subskill of SEL namely self-awareness, self-management/emotion regulation, social awareness, relationship/social skills, and responsible decision-making was analyzed and presented in detail using descriptive statistics. Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics of self-awareness.

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics of Self-Awareness

	<i>n</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1) I am aware of instructional teaching practices that I need to improve upon and grow professionally.	50	1	4	3.48	.735
2) I can effectively implement instructional teaching practices with my students.	50	1	4	2.56	.837
3) I am usually aware of how my emotions, culturally grounded beliefs, and background are precursors to my emotional reactions, and I understand how they impact my instructional teaching practices with my students.	50	1	4	3.12	.689
4) I understand how student responses (positive and negative) affect my emotions and my behaviors during instructional teaching practices.	50	1	4	3.22	.648
5) I am aware of how my cultural beliefs and background affect my instructional teaching practices with my students.	50	1	4	3.14	.670
OVERALL	50			3.10	.336

Regarding the results of the descriptive statistics of self-awareness, Table 6 showed that the mean values for self-awareness items of EFL instructors ($n=50$) range from 2.56 ($SD=.837$) to 3.48 ($SD=.735$). The lowest mean value for EFL instructors was item 2 which was “I can effectively implement instructional teaching practices with my students.” whereas the highest mean value was item 1 which was “I am aware of instructional teaching practices that I need to improve upon and grow professionally.” Finally, the total mean value of self-awareness items of EFL instructors were 3.10 ($SD=.336$). Next, Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics of self-management/emotion regulation.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics of Self-Management/Emotion Regulation

	<i>n</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
6) I continuously refine my personal goals about how I will best implement instructional teaching practices with my students.	50	1	4	2.48	.909
7) I effectively use multiple strategies (e.g., breathing techniques and mindfulness) when I have a strong emotional reaction in the classroom (e.g., stress, anger) when implementing instructional teaching practices.	50	1	4	2.26	1.00
8) Through the effective management of my emotions (e.g., use of stress reduction techniques), I am better able to implement instructional teaching practices, use positive approaches to discipline, and develop a positive learning environment that is free from bias and prejudice.	50	1	4	2.84	.976
9) I model behaviors (e.g., form guidelines, set boundaries) to help students learn to regulate emotions during instructional teaching practices.	50	1	4	2.54	.885
OVERALL	50			2.53	.239

According to Table 7, the results of the descriptive statistics of self-management/emotion regulation proved that the mean values for self-management/emotion regulation items of EFL instructors ($n=50$) range from 2.26 ($SD=1.00$) to 2.84 ($SD=.976$). The lowest mean value for EFL instructors was item 7 which was “I effectively use multiple strategies (e.g., breathing techniques and mindfulness) when I have a strong emotional reaction in the classroom (e.g., stress, anger) when implementing instructional teaching practices.” while the highest mean value was item 8 which was “Through the effective management of my emotions (e.g.,

use of stress reduction techniques), I am better able to implement instructional teaching practices, use positive approaches to discipline, and develop a positive learning environment that is free from bias and prejudice.” Finally, the total mean value of self-management/emotion regulation items of EFL instructors were 2.53 ($SD=.239$). Then, Table 8 shows the descriptive statistics of social awareness.

Table 8
Descriptive Statistics of Social Awareness

	<i>n</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
10) To effectively implement positive instructional teaching practices, I usually understand the perspectives of my students and can pay attention to their emotional cues during classroom interactions.	50	2	4	3.24	.625
11) I try to understand why my students are or are not actively participating, and I am usually successful at providing my students the necessary skills to participate in the instructional teaching practices.	50	2	4	3.08	.601
12) I successfully support positive emotions and respond to negative emotions during instructional teaching practices.	50	2	4	3.28	.536
13) I address the commonalities and differences (e.g., racial, ethnic, cultural) that exist among students when I implement the instructional teaching practices.	50	1	4	3.10	.678
OVERALL	50			3.17	.099

In terms of the results of the descriptive statistics of social awareness., Table 8 revealed that the mean values for social awareness items of EFL instructors ($n=50$) range from 3.08 ($SD=.601$) to 3.28 ($SD=.536$). The lowest mean value for EFL instructors was item 11 which was “I try to understand why my students are or are not actively participating, and I am usually successful at providing my students the

necessary skills to participate in the instructional teaching practices.” Yet the highest mean value was item 12 which was “I successfully support positive emotions and respond to negative emotions during instructional teaching practices.” Lastly, the total mean value of social awareness items of EFL instructors were 3.17 ($SD=.099$). Next, Table 9 shows the descriptive statistics of relationship/social skills.

Table 9
Descriptive Statistics of Relationship/Social Skills

	<i>n</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
14) I clearly communicate behavioral and academic expectations in a manner that addresses students’ individual needs and strengths when implementing instructional teaching practices.	50	2	4	3.12	.521
15) I am comfortable helping my students resolve interpersonal conflicts that come up during instructional teaching practices, and I have experienced success with this.	50	2	4	2.76	.847
16) I use the instructional teaching practices to help form meaningful relationships with my students and cultivate their SEL (social emotional learning) skills, and I am usually successful at building meaningful relationships.	50	2	4	3.08	.665
17) I use the instructional teaching practices to help cultivate my students’ SEL skills, and I am usually successful at building their SEL skills.	50	2	4	2.78	.708
OVERALL	50			2.93	.191

Regarding the results of the descriptive statistics of relationship/social skills, Table 9 demonstrated that the mean values for relationship/social skills items of EFL instructors ($n=50$) range from 2.76 ($SD=.847$) to 3.12 ($SD=.521$). The lowest mean value for EFL instructors was item 15 which was “I am comfortable helping my students resolve interpersonal conflicts that come up during instructional teaching

practices, and I have experienced success with this.” while the highest mean value was item 14 which was “I clearly communicate behavioral and academic expectations in a manner that addresses students’ individual needs and strengths when implementing instructional teaching practices.” Moreover, the total mean value of relationship/social skills items of EFL instructors were 2.93 ($SD=.191$). Finally, Table 10 shows the descriptive statistics of responsible decision-making.

Table 10
Descriptive Statistics of Responsible Decision-Making

	<i>n</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
18) I am effective at considering multiple forms of evidence, such as balancing the needs and the behaviors of my entire class, while implementing the instructional teaching practices.	50	2	4	3.06	.652
19) I regularly include my students and/or collaborate with colleagues to solve problems that arise in the classroom related to the instructional teaching practices.	50	1	4	2.98	.714
20) I stay focused and consistent when I implement instructional teaching practices.	50	1	4	2.58	.883
21) When I implement the instructional teaching practices, I balance students’ emotional needs and academic needs.	50	1	4	2.88	.824
OVERALL	50			2.87	.210

According to Table 10, the results of the descriptive statistics of responsible decision-making demonstrated that the mean values for responsible decision-making items of EFL instructors ($n=50$) range from 2.58 ($SD=.883$) to 3.06 ($SD=.652$). The lowest mean value for EFL instructors was item 20 which was “I stay focused and consistent when I implement instructional teaching practices.” However, the highest mean value was item 18 which was “I am effective at considering multiple forms of evidence, such as balancing the needs and the behaviors of my entire class, while

implementing the instructional teaching practices.” Finally, the total mean value of responsible decision-making items of EFL instructors were 2.87 ($SD=.210$).

All in all, regarding the results of the questionnaire of “Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies (SASEC): A Tool for Teachers” among 50 EFL instructors, it was detected that in terms of all subskills of SEL, the lowest mean value for EFL instructors in the questionnaire was the subskill of self-management/emotion regulation with the mean value of 2.26 ($SD=1.00$) which was the item 7 “ I effectively use multiple strategies (e.g., breathing techniques and mindfulness) when I have a strong emotional reaction in the classroom (e.g., stress, anger) when implementing instructional teaching practices.” Furthermore, the highest mean value for EFL instructors in the questionnaire was the subskill of self-awareness with the mean value of 3.48 ($SD=.735$) which was item 1 “I am aware of instructional teaching practices that I need to improve upon and grow professionally.” Finally, the total mean value of all items in the questionnaire was 2.93 ($SD=.311$). In short, SEL was found to be moderate among EFL instructors in terms of the mean value of all questionnaire items.

4.2 Research Question 2: How does SEL training affect participating EFL instructors’ practices?

In order to answer the second research question of the study, after the implementation of SEL instruction practices, teacher reflections were collected from participating five EFL instructors to gather in-depth information in terms of their instruction practices in their lessons. The findings of the second research question aimed at presenting the effects of the implementation of SEL in EFL instructors’ instruction practices in their lessons. After analyzing and coding the data from teacher reflections, two major themes namely increasing empathy levels and one sub-theme namely perspective taking, preparation for real-life challenges and one sub-theme namely prioritizing problem-solving skills emerged from the data. Table 11 presents the two major themes, and the sub-theme arose from the data of the teacher reflections.

Table 11

Major Themes and Sub-themes of the Findings of the Second Research Question

	Major themes	Sub-theme
Theme 1	Increasing Empathy Levels	Perspective taking
Theme 2	Preparation for Real-life Challenges	Prioritizing Problem-solving Skills

4.2.1 Theme 1: Increasing empathy levels. Regarding SEL implementation, in unit 2: “*the mind / love and impulse*” activity 1, the students role-played a conversation between a therapist and a client by choosing a role and a problem, they created dialogues, analyzed problems, and offered suggestions. In terms of the analysis of the qualitative data collected by means of teacher reflections, the instructors (2/5) mentioned that SEL activities highlighted the focus on boosting empathy. Therefore, after the implementation they started to focus more on improving students’ essential life skills to make them more self-aware and socially aware. The excerpts below mirrored these findings.

(...) The focus of empathy in our SEL implementation impacted us profoundly. When I am doing some activities, I try to include their different cultures so that everybody can share something from their own backgrounds, and they can learn to respect and sympathize towards one another (Özen, Teacher Reflections data, 25.12.2023).

(...) Thanks to the SEL implementation, as a teacher not only in the class but also for the outside of the class, I make my students focus on respecting others, so I try to create activities to foster a deeper sense of empathy as well as compassion. We as teachers need to teach students that they are not only learning academic subjects but also learning essential life skills (Gökçe, Teacher Reflections data, 25.12.2023).

The excerpts above proved that after the implementation of SEL instruction practices, the instructors started to include different cultures in the activities to make students more self-aware and social aware by also focusing more on improving students’ essential life skills in their lessons.

4.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Perspective taking. In the implementation of SEL, in unit 3: “*ideas / thinking like an engineer and large-scale projects*” activity 2, the aim was to role-play a job interview. The students worked in pairs and chose a role either interviewer or candidate and a job by talking about job requirements, skills and qualifications needed, strengths and weaknesses of the candidate, working conditions, salary and benefits and performed their role play. Regarding the analysis of the qualitative data collected by means of teacher reflections, the instructors (2/5) mentioned that SEL activities helped students understand as well as acknowledging the perspectives and feelings of other people. The participants expressed their viewpoints:

(...) After the implementation, since I gave much importance to the gains from SEL training, I started to give some scenarios when I am doing speaking activities with them and I ask them about their feelings, how they would feel in each situation etc. I create small-group discussions so that they can practice their speaking skills at the same time while giving importance to their feelings so that they can be both more self-aware and social aware (Ece, Teacher Reflections data, 25.12.2023).

(...) I try to make my students more understanding and appreciative of each other's perspectives and feelings since there are many international students in our classes. (Özen, Teacher Reflections data, 25.12.2023).

The excerpts above prove that according to the instructors, SEL is relatively linked to aid students understand and acknowledging the perspectives as well as feelings of other people.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Preparation for real-life challenges. In the implementation, in unit 4: “*business / productivity and start-ups*” activity 5, the students created a poster presentation by creating their company and made a poster, provided information in the poster including company name, industry, product/service description, employees, working conditions etc. and they presented their poster to the class. The instructors (2/5) stated that after the implementation they started to create similar activities in their instruction practices in order to prepare students for real-life challenges since SEL provided students with the skills that they need in order to

navigate the difficulties of real-life situations, not only in but also outside of the class as expressed in the excerpts:

(...) Because SEL equips students with the abilities they need to handle real-life challenges, we should prepare students not just academically, but also for real life. Therefore, role plays as well as presentations give students a chance to practice for what comes after university, including those kinds of activities in class that are essential for their development as well (Aslı, Teacher Reflections data, 25.12.2023).

(...) In the SEL implementation, activities were related to real-life situations, problems etc. not only for their academic lives but also for their personal as well as professional lives, so the idea was to prepare students for real-life. Thus, even after the implementation finished, I started to allocate time for more similar activities for the sake of my students to make them practice essential life skills such as responsible decision-making (Deniz, Teacher Reflections data, 25.12.2023).

As it can be seen in the excerpts above, the instructors focused on making students ready for real-life challenges as well as the skills that the students need in order to navigate the challenges of real-life situations in their lessons after the implementation of SEL instruction practices.

4.2.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Prioritizing problem-solving skills. In terms of the SEL implementation, in unit 3: “*ideas / thinking like an engineer and large-scale projects*” activity 3, the students developed a project by discussing the problems such as traffic jams, infrastructure, public transportation, environment and pollution, poverty and unemployment, security and crime, housing and rents, overpopulation etc. and needs of a city and they developed a project in order to solve the problems and created a model of their project to introduce their project to the rest of the class. The instructors (2/5) stated that not only SEL offered the skills that students need to navigate the difficulties of real-life situations, but also SEL promoted critical thinking as well as problem-solving skills, providing a more positive and constructive mindset to approach challenges. Therefore, after the implementation they started to prioritize

problem-solving skills of students. The participants expressed the following viewpoints:

(...) With the help of the SEL activities, I have observed that SEL enhances our students' problem-solving skills since they try to approach challenges with a positive mindset as well as critical thinking, so I started to promote those skills with similar activities to benefit them not only academically but for real-life situations. (Deniz, Teacher Reflections data, 25.12.2023).

(...) Since SEL fosters 21st century skills such as collaboration, critical thinking skills, social skills, and problem-solving skills among our students, we should integrate SEL into our curriculum to make students practice them. That's why in my lessons, I try to integrate 21st century skills to my activities for the sake of my students to make them find solutions, analyze situations, consider various perspectives, as well as approach problems with creativity. It's truly inspiring to see my students grow into problem-solvers ready to face the world. (Aslı, Teacher Reflections data, 25.12.2023).

The excerpts above showed that after the implementation of SEL instruction practices, the instructors started promoting critical thinking as well as problem-solving skills of students more in their lessons.

4.3 Research Question 3: What are the perceptions of the participating EFL instructors regarding the SEL implementation after the training sessions?

In order to answer the last research question, teacher reflections were gathered from participating five EFL instructors regularly after each implementation throughout the process of implementing SEL instruction practices to collect in-depth information regarding the perceptions of the participating EFL instructors. The findings of the last research question aimed at providing the perceptions of the participating EFL instructors regarding their SEL instruction practices.

The data gathered from teacher reflections was analyzed and coded. After the analysis of the data, three major themes namely implementation of SEL practices regarding student engagement, implementation of SEL practices regarding the task impact on learning and implementation of SEL practices regarding teacher

perspectives with their sub-themes emerged. Table 12 shows the three major themes and their sub-themes emerged from the teacher reflections.

Table 12
Major Themes and Sub-themes of the Findings of the Third Research Question

	Major themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1	Implementation of SEL Practices regarding Student Engagement.	Boosting Confidence Effective Group Dynamics Encouraging Collaboration
Theme 2	Implementation of SEL Practices regarding the Task Impact on Learning	Educational Impact of the Task Promoting Creativity
Theme 3	Implementation of SEL Practices regarding Teacher Perspectives	Teachers' Role Teacher Guidance

4.3.1 Theme 1: Implementation of SEL practices regarding student engagement. Regarding SEL implementation, in unit 3: *“ideas / thinking like an engineer and large-scale projects”* activity 4, the students created a TV show and role-played a TV show in groups. They were given some suggested roles as the host, a famous musician, actor-actress, entrepreneur, scientist, athlete etc. then, they made up some situations that people might experience in a TV show by means of creating drama, conflict, and comedy in their scenarios. They collaborated as a group to create their dialogues and took part in the role-play in class. Moreover, in unit 5: *“social issues / prejudice and tolerance and inequality”* activity 8, students role-played a conflict about going abroad between the teacher/student/parents in groups. They were handed a scenario and they collaborated as a group to create their dialogues and role-played their scenarios in class. In unit 6, activity 10, the students were provided with various scenarios, and they role-played the scenarios by working in pairs. They were asked what they would do in the given situations, they also changed their partners after every scenario and created their dialogs. Finally, in unit 6: *“the environment / climate change and animal rights”* activity 11, the students role-played an argument about a product/service in groups of three and four. They were handed a scenario as well as roles such as angry customers, a sales representative and the manager and they

collaborated as a group and created their dialogue by taking part in their role-play in class. In terms of the analysis of the qualitative data, which was gathered by means of teacher reflections, it was proved that SEL activities had a positive effect and improvement on classroom dynamics in terms of student engagement.

4.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Boosting confidence. SEL activities in class contributed to the improvement of students' confidence. The instructors (2/5) stated that with the help of the SEL practices in class, students had a chance to improve their self-confidence as expressed in the excerpts below:

(...) The thing that I realized was that they were very excited during the performance, they gave it so much importance, so it was also obvious that the task helped them to improve their self-confidence as well (Deniz, Teacher Reflections data, 27.11.2023).

(...) Even the students who were very introverted did well in their performance with their group members. All of a sudden, they turned into extroverts, and I realized that their self-confidence enhanced (Ece, Teacher Reflections data, 27.11.2023).

The excerpts above prove that the instructors think that SEL is relatively linked to boosting confidence of the students in class.

4.3.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Effective group dynamics. SEL practices in class positively affected the dynamic of the class regarding working in groups as well as group work activities. The instructors (2/5) indicated that SEL gives students an opportunity to work in groups. The instructors expressed the following viewpoints below:

(...) Students find a chance to communicate with each other and socialize at the same time while working on their task in groups. They work together with their peers who normally are not close with, this gives them an opportunity to bond one another (Özen, Teacher Reflections data, 04.12.2023).

(...) The activity created a positive impact on class dynamics. Students displayed increased motivation and enthusiasm while working together with their group members, as they found the task refreshing and engaging. Their

interest in participating actively was maintained throughout the task (Gökçe, Teacher Reflections data, 27.11.2023).

As it can be seen in the excerpts above, the instructors view SEL practices as a way to support classroom dynamics regarding working in groups.

4.3.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Encouraging collaboration. In terms of SEL practices, the students collaborated with each other as well as supported one another in order to overcome the difficulties of the task. The instructors (3/5) articulated that SEL gives students an opportunity to support one another while working on the tasks which promoted their collaboration as well as stated by the instructors in the excerpts below:

(...) The strength of this task was that the students had the chance to collaborate with peers with whom they do not normally collaborate with since the pairs and groups were randomly created. It made them break their shyness and collaborate with their peers at ease to complete the task (Aslı, Teacher Reflections data, 04.12.2023).

(...) They were more motivated and enthusiastic about maintaining their interest during the task. Everybody actively participated; some even allocated time from their breaks to study with their group members to complete the task (Deniz, Teacher Reflections data, 25.12.2023).

(...) The random distribution of teams allowed students to collaborate with peers they don't typically work with. This feature of the task effectively broke down shyness barriers among students, encouraging interaction with different classmates in order to complete the task. It promoted a sense of unity and inclusivity in the classroom (Ece, Teacher Reflections data, 11.12.2023).

The excerpts above reflected that the instructors support that SEL practices promoted collaboration in class as well as gave students an opportunity to support one another in order to achieve a task.

4.3.2 Theme 2. Implementation of SEL practices regarding the task impact on learning. Regarding the implementation, in unit 5: “*social issues / prejudice and tolerance and inequality*” activity 6, the students worked in pairs, and found authentic materials, either a reading or a film about prejudice and

discrimination. Then, they analyzed the type of discrimination by creating a file, providing information about their text or film. Finally, they presented to the class. Moreover, in unit 5, Activity 7, the students worked in pairs and chose a traditional fairytale and wrote their alternative versions without any gender stereotypes and then they presented it to the whole class. In terms of the analysis of the qualitative data gathered through teacher reflections, it was seen that SEL activities as well as tasks, activities contributed to the learning atmosphere of the class in a progressive way regarding students' learning.

4.3.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Educational impact of the task. Regarding the SEL practices, students practiced the language in the tasks as well as what they had learnt in the lessons. The instructors (2/5) stated that SEL gives students an opportunity to revise what they have learnt while producing the language at the same time. The instructors articulated the following excerpts below:

(...) The task also gave them a chance to practice the words that they have learned so far. The task was challenging for them in terms of presenting it to the whole class and creating something regarding grammar etc. Yet all of them did their best and the task also gave them a chance to practice the language and what they have learned so far in the lessons (Gökçe, Teacher Reflections data, 11.12.2023).

(...) They turn the topics we studied that week into speaking activities by preparing the task together with their partners in class. Not only they revise what they have learnt while producing the language but also, they spend time together and learn group work and practice what they learn at the same time (Aslı, Teacher Reflections data, 04.12.2023).

The excerpts above verified that the instructors view SEL as a way to revise learning as well as practice and produce the language.

4.3.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Promoting creativity. SEL practices in class contributed to the thinking skills of the students positively. Students gathered collective, creative ideas from their peers in the group work as well as pair work. One of the instructors (1/5) stated that SEL improved students' critical thinking skills with the help of the practices and tasks.

(...) Students can also gather creative ideas from their partners and improve their critical thinking skills as well during the preparedness stage of the task while they are getting ready for the task. When they work together, they are able to share their own ideas freely and gather collective ideas from one another to achieve something together (Özen, Teacher Reflections data, 18.12.2023).

The excerpts above proved that the students gathered collective ideas from their peers in order to achieve the task and they improved their thinking skills as well.

4.3.3 Theme 3. Implementation of SEL practices regarding teacher perspectives. In the implementation, in *unit 6*: “the environment / climate change and animal rights” activity 9, the students created a public service announcement in order to raise awareness about an environmental issue by doing some research about the issue, finding facts, statistics and solutions and then they wrote their script by working in groups and then they presented to the whole class. The analysis of the qualitative data collected through teacher reflections proved that teachers’ role as well as guidance played a vital role in terms of both implementation of SEL activities but also the effectiveness of the practices of SEL.

4.3.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Teachers’ role. Regarding the SEL practices, teachers’ role contributed to the effectiveness of the SEL practices as well as implementation. The instructors (2/5) mentioned that teachers’ role in class plays a crucial role in the implementation of SEL practices as expressed in the excerpts below:

(...) The task is very educating for students, dividing them into groups, introducing the topic, explaining it, giving examples, and then giving feedback to the students about the performances and the dialogues they prepared, I think it's all a part of the learning process and it's nice to be involved the process (Ashi, Teacher Reflections data, 04.12.2023).

(...) They started working in pairs and they were attentive not to speak in Turkish. Only a couple of students turned to Turkish from time to time and I warned them, and they didn’t again. For teachers, we need to monitor students lest they turn to Turkish or their L1. We need to remind them that they should always stick to English since they tend to turn to their L1 when they are having

difficulties during the preparation (Gökçe, Teacher Reflections data, 27.11.2023).

The excerpts above reflected that the instructors' role in the learning process improved the quality of the SEL practices.

4.3.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Teacher guidance. In SEL practices, teachers' guidance had a vital importance in terms of the promotion of SEL skills in class. The instructors (3/5) stated that with the help of teachers' guidance and support in class, students can accomplish the tasks easily in the implementation of SEL practices. The instructors expressed their viewpoints below:

(...) What I observed in the classroom is that they were kind of silent while processing the task. I gave them some time to brainstorm the ideas about the task and what the task is related to so that if they can create contextualization in their brain, they can easily bring up some ideas. Otherwise, they find it difficult to produce some speech before they act out. It was really effective to help them by asking some leading questions to gather some more ideas about the task (Aslı, Teacher Reflections data, 18.12.2023).

(...) Students focus so much on accuracy, that's why they might turn to Turkish, their L1s; however, with the teacher's help, they can be guided when they are having difficulties so that they can turn to English to focus on their fluency. If we as teachers set the task clear, pair students with other students such as matching international students with national students and warn them that fluency is the key, not the accuracy, this can boost classroom dynamics as well (Ece, Teacher Reflections data, 27.11.2023).

(...) I think we should give them a kind of rapport. We should set the rapport first because students need a lot of support so once they get motivated, they feel free making mistakes, they start their task with enjoyment which is important. Motivation is key in the classroom before you set your goals and objectives as an instructor. I had a lot of fun observing their performances as well (Deniz, Teacher Reflections data, 04.12.2023).

As it can be proved from the excerpts above, instructors' guidance as well as support during the SEL practices and tasks enhance the quality of the SEL implementation.



Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusions

In chapter 5, the discussion of the study's findings as well as the conclusions drawn from findings are presented in order. Firstly, the findings of each research question have been examined by means of their comparison with the related research as well as underlying reasons and possible explanations for the findings. Then, pedagogical implications, overall conclusions of the study and recommendations for future research have been provided.

5.1 Discussion of Findings for Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to first examine SEL levels and sub-skills of 50 full-time EFL instructors in the English language preparatory program of a foundation university, then five EFL instructors integrated SEL instruction practices in the current existing program after their SEL training sessions to promote SEL core competencies namely relationship skills, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision-making, regarding the framework of CASEL. To this end, the study also found out how SEL training had affected participating EFL instructors' instruction practices, and finally explored the perceptions of the EFL instructors gathering data regularly from teacher reflections in terms of SEL instruction practices after the implementation of each SEL activities during five weeks. For these purposes, in order to answer the research questions of the study, both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments were applied. The following discuss the findings of this study regarding research questions.

The first research question of the study aimed to find out SEL levels as well as SEL sub-skills of 50 EFL instructors at the English Preparatory School of a foundation university in the beginning of the study. In order to gather data, the questionnaire of "Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies (SASEC): A Tool for Teachers" adopted from Yoder (2014) was applied. To analyze the gathered data, descriptive statistics was used by means of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program version 25 in order to calculate the means, standard deviations and frequency analyses of the items in the questionnaire. The results proved

that among each subskill of SEL namely self-awareness, self-management/emotion regulation, social awareness, relationship/social skills, and responsible decision-making, the lowest mean value for EFL instructors in the questionnaire was self-management/emotion regulation with the mean value of 2.26 ($SD=1.00$) and it was the item 7 “ I effectively use multiple strategies (e.g., breathing techniques and mindfulness) when I have a strong emotional reaction in the classroom (e.g., stress, anger) when implementing instructional teaching practices.” whereas, the highest mean value for EFL instructors in the questionnaire was the self-awareness with the mean value of 3.48 ($SD=.735$) and it was the item 1 “I am aware of instructional teaching practices that I need to improve upon and grow professionally.” Lastly, the total mean value of all items in the questionnaire was 2.93 ($SD=.311$). Overall, SEL among EFL instructors was found to be moderate, based on the mean value of all questionnaire items. Buchanan et al. (2009) examined 263 teachers’ knowledge, perceptions, and practices regarding SEL in the lessons. A survey was used in order to gather data. The participants were asked to provide their responses about in their lessons, how to promote SEL, how to increase the effectiveness of SEL, whereas how to reduce barriers to implementation of SEL. It was found out from the findings that the majority of participating teachers recognize SEL as vital therefore, there is a need for schools to promote SEL actively by means of providing training as well as guidance from a variety of professionals for teachers. In a similar vein, Brackett et al., (2012) carried out a study including 935 teachers in order to assess their beliefs regarding SEL due to the fact that teachers’ belief regarding SEL have an influence on program delivery, evaluation, as well as outcomes. The data were collected by means of survey items from 935 teachers. In terms of the findings, it was seen that both teachers and their beliefs about SEL shape the learning environment consequently influencing students’ developmental outcomes as well. Therefore, this finding underlines the importance of understanding as well as addressing perceptions and readiness of teachers regarding SEL implementation in educational settings.

The second research question of the study attempted to collect in-depth information regarding the effects of the SEL training on EFL instructors’ L2 practices in their lessons after the implementation of SEL. In order to answer the research question, teacher reflections were collected from participating five EFL instructors. To

analyze the gathered data by means of teacher reflections, inductive, content analysis was applied by analyzing and coding the data. Two major themes named increasing empathy levels and a sub-theme named perspective taking, preparation for real-life challenges and a sub-theme named prioritizing problem-solving skills arose from the data. The findings of the research question suggest that SEL activities underlined the emphasis of empathy levels of the students, helping students understand and acknowledge the views and feelings of others by highlighting problem-solving skills of the students. This finding was commensurate with the study of Schonert-Reichl et al., (2015). In their study, it was postulated that SEL is linked with improved prosocial behavior among learners. Involving in prosocial behavior, such as helping others and displaying empathy, nurtures a more caring as well as understanding society, stressing the wider social influence of SEL. Similarly, Lewis et al., (2021) evaluated the effectiveness of school-based, universal SEL programs including 930 students in terms of supporting their social-emotional and ethical behaviors. It was seen that SEL programs aimed to equip students with the skills in order to set positive goals, make logical decisions, and recognize the viewpoints of other people which eventually enabled them to direct social interactions in an effective way. Furthermore, in this study, after the implementation it was detected that EFL instructors' practices aimed to focus more on enhancing students' important life skills by connecting different cultures in the activities to make students more self-aware and socially aware. More activities in order to prepare students for real-life challenges as well as the skills for students to overcome the challenges of real-life situations in terms of promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills of students were aimed to be designed by the instructors. This finding is parallel to what Jones and Bouffard (2012) emphasized in their study that SEL promotes the development of effective social skills of students that are highly crucial in order to form healthy relationships as well as manage social interactions not only in school but also throughout their lives. The finding is also consistent with Asra (2022). The effect of literature circles on SEL skills among high school students was investigated by means of collecting data from 63 students in the 9th grade using a SEL scale as well as semi-structured interviews. In the study, it was found out that there were statistically significant differences in different SEL skills amongst students that joined the intervention in terms of articulating feelings, boosting

self-confidence, improving self-efficacy, enhancing self-awareness, and fostering responsible decision-making skills in the activities.

The third research question of the study intended to find out the perceptions of the participating EFL instructors regarding their SEL instruction practices after the training sessions. To answer the research question, teacher reflections were gathered regularly after each implementation throughout the process of implementing SEL instruction practices with participating EFL instructors so as to gather in-depth information in terms of their perceptions. To analyze the data from teacher reflections, inductive, content analysis was used by means of analyzing and coding. Three major themes from the teacher reflections namely implementation of SEL practices regarding student engagement, implementation of SEL practices regarding the task impact on learning and implementation of SEL practices regarding teacher perspectives as well as their sub-themes emerged. The findings postulate that SEL instruction practices affected and improved the classroom dynamics regarding student engagement in a positive way. SEL practices also improved students' confidence by providing opportunities to students to cooperate with each other in order to overcome difficulties of the tasks. Moreover, it was proven that SEL practices aided the learning atmosphere of students' learning by means of providing opportunities to practice both the language and their thinking skills by collecting creative ideas among one another. This finding is consistent with Korpershoek et al., (2016). Classroom management strategies and programs integrating SEL principles in primary education involving 54 studies were investigated. It was seen that programs combined with SEL principles resulted in improving students' academic, behavioral, emotional, and motivational outcomes in terms of positive teacher-student relationships and supportive classroom environments. Likewise, Bademci et al. (2020) explored positive attachment relationships in social and emotional development of elementary school children including 18 class teachers, 40 university student mentors and their professors by providing psychosocial support to class teachers throughout 8 months. It was found out that the program fostered a safe and secure environment for students who had behavioral challenges leading to increased self-worthiness, enhanced self-confidence, and improved emotional regulation. Finally, in this study it was seen from the teacher reflections that teachers' role and guidance played a central role in the implementation

of SEL practices. Therefore, the success of the SEL implementation was ensured by the teachers' role as well as guidance in the promotion of SEL skills. In a similar vein, Durlak et al., (2011) inspected 213 school-based SEL programs and improvements in students' social emotional skills, attitudes, and positive classroom behaviors were detected. It was found out that students who partook in SEL programs improved their academic performance since they could control their stress, focus on tasks, as well as endure positive relationships with both peers and teachers. Similarly, Gunter et al., (2012) evaluated the inclusion of SEL curricula in terms of avoiding emotional and behavioral problems involving 52 preschool students. It was revealed that there were enhancements in the student-teacher relationship with the help of SEL by fostering a positive social dynamic. Likewise, Brackett et al., (2012) proved that SEL programs contribute to the decrease of behavior problems in terms of educating self-regulation and emotional management skills to students which also ensures a less disrupting and aggressive behavior among students. Thus, it leads to a positive school climate increasing both student and teacher satisfaction due to the fact that students learn how to manage conflicts and control challenging conditions.

5.2 Pedagogical implications

In this study, EFL instructors received SEL training sessions before the implementation of SEL in their classrooms in order to offer EFL instructors with preparation and guidance on SEL. After the training sessions, EFL instructors implemented a total of eleven SEL practices in their lessons in order to enhance the students' SEL skills. Regarding the findings of this study, there are some pedagogical implications worth suggesting to teachers, institutions, practitioners, curriculum planners, material developers as well as education policymakers.

Based on the previous research studies (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2011), it has been suggested that teachers aim to address the behavioral as well as social emotional needs of their students. Yet, how SEL should be implemented in the lessons and how it should be applied into the instruction practices of teachers mainly remain unknown and this makes it challenging for teachers to implement SEL instruction practices consequently. A practical approach in order to address student's social and emotional needs is providing a curriculum that highlights SEL sub-skills such as communication,

cooperation, respect, empathy, problem solving, as well as self-management and self-control. Therefore, emphasizing how teachers need to integrate subskills and also classifying ways in order to expand the lessons into existing curriculums in the classroom environment are crucial for teachers, students as well as stakeholders. Since it is highly crucial to guarantee the quality of SEL program implementation, there is a need to adjust the current curricula regarding SEL programming in order to reduce problematic behaviors amongst students, to improve their attitudes as well so that students' academic performance can be increased accordingly.

In the same respect, this current study aimed to contribute to the existing literature by means of investigating Turkish EFL instructors' perceptions towards SEL as well as their implementation of SEL practices in their lessons. Beyond the study's practical applications, this study extends the current literature on SEL by demonstrating meaningful implications regarding how to implement and foster SEL in a tertiary education by means of providing lesson plans as well as activities of SEL instruction practices due to the fact that practitioners are supposed to focus more on SEL in order to successfully implement SEL in their lessons. Even though there are many alternatives of SEL programming and implementation, there is still so much to learn about the implementation of SEL in a best way. Hence, EFL teachers are also supposed to guide with SEL knowledge regarding the implementation process for their lessons so that they can practice SEL in their lessons as much as possible.

In short, it is expected that the findings of this research study can provide teachers, institutions, practitioners, curriculum planners, material developers as well as education policymakers to reinforce their support regarding SEL implementation in schools as well as encouraging teacher professional development opportunities both in pre-service and in-service teacher education in terms of SEL by means of diminishing the gap between the theory and classroom instruction practices.

5.3 Conclusions

Social and emotional skills are allied with abundant essential outcomes for students, involving more reciprocal friendships (Gest & Rodkin, 2011), having bigger academic achievement (Crosnoe et al., 2004), providing better school engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004) and also having fewer crime involvement and fewer substance

abuse (Moffitt et al., 2011). Hence, SEL skills are very vital for teacher's professional development, flexibility, controlling self-performance as well as emotions in order to manage both sensitive and practical situations. Therefore, social and emotional competence plays a fundamental role in the success of teacher education. To deal effectively with students' social emotional development, teachers need to have social and emotional skills. Moreover, to cope with problematic student behaviors such as bullying and aggression in the classroom, teachers need to have skills related to social emotional competencies. In order to attain the desired language outcomes and to maximize student learning, there is a need to educate competent teachers both socially and emotionally. Teachers having high self-awareness are able to identify their emotions, and therefore they can use positive feelings in order to motivate not only themselves but also their students. Due to the fact that having high social awareness skills aid teachers predict how emotions can affect interactions accordingly and they can establish strong relations by means of mutual understanding. Furthermore, having prosocial values as well as responsible decision-making skills support teachers to respect others and it also yields to ownership of their decisions and actions. Yet, when teachers lack such awareness as well as management skills, they are not unlikely to experience emotional stress which leads to negatively affecting their job satisfaction, and relationships with colleagues and students, and it also leads to poor classroom management skills (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

The present study considerably contributes to the existent literature by examining SEL skills of EFL instructors in the English language preparatory program and integrating SEL instruction practices in the current existing program and finding out how SEL training affected participating EFL instructors' instruction practices and finally exploring the perceptions of the EFL instructors regarding SEL instruction practices after the implementation in order to fill the research lacuna regarding SEL implementation of teachers in the Turkish context. 50 full-time EFL instructors at an English Preparatory School in the Turkish context participated in the study and the explanatory sequential design, involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments were applied. After conducting a meticulous pilot study prior to the implementation of SEL, a questionnaire was given to 50 EFL instructors to measure their SEL levels as well as sub-skill. Five participating EFL instructors were

given SEL training sessions before the implementation of SEL in order to promote core competencies of SEL such as relationship skills, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision-making, regarding the framework of CASEL in their lessons. During five weeks, five EFL instructors implemented a total of 11 SEL activities in their lesson in B1 level. During the implementation, teacher reflections from five EFL instructors were collected.

To answer the research questions, the quantitative data of the study was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program. Each subskill of SEL was presented in detail using descriptive statistics. The result of the questionnaire confirms that regarding all subskills of SEL, the lowest mean value was the subskill of self-management/emotion regulation with the mean value of 2.26 ($SD=1.00$) whereas the highest mean value was the subskill of self-awareness with the mean value of 3.48 ($SD=.735$). Lastly, the total mean value of all items in the questionnaire was 2.93 ($SD=.311$) of 50 EFL instructors.

Regarding SEL implementation, in order to enhance students' SEL skills namely relationship skills, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2012) eleven activities were implemented by instructors in total over the course of the five-week in the module. The activities were prepared regarding CASEL's SEL framework while taking into consideration of English preparatory program's student-language goals (SLOs) for the B1 level and they were successfully implemented as either pair work or group work.

The findings of the effects of the SEL implementation in EFL instructors' instruction practices highlights the fact that EFL instructors' instruction practices focused more on enhancing students' important life skills by means of involving different cultures in the activities in order to make them self-aware as well as socially aware and they began to design more activities to prepare students for real-life challenges and the skills that students need to overcome the challenges of real-life situations by promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills after the implementation of SEL. In other words, SEL activities highlighted the focus on boosting empathy levels of the students, helping students understand and also

acknowledge the viewpoints as well as feelings of others by means of prioritizing problem-solving skills of the students.

Finally, the findings of the teacher reflections after the implementation of each SEL practice suggest that SEL instruction practices positively affected and had an improvement on classroom dynamics regarding student engagement. SEL practices improved students' confidence. Working in groups as well as group work activities during SEL practices gave students opportunities to collaborate with each other to overcome the task difficulties. SEL practices also contributed to the learning atmosphere in terms of students' learning since the students had a chance to practice the language as well as their thinking skills by means of gathering collective, creative ideas in groups in the SEL practices. Moreover, teacher reflections showed that teachers' role and guidance had a crucial role in implementation of SEL practices. Regarding the SEL practices, teachers' role contributed to the effectiveness of the SEL implementation due to the fact that teachers' guidance had a vital importance in the promotion of SEL skills.

Regarding the findings, this research study presents several suggestions for the education field as well. SEL should start with the pre-service education in order to prepare teachers prior to their clinical experience. Pre-service teachers are supposed to recognize and comprehend interpersonal as well as intrapersonal skills before, during, and also after completing their education (Davies & Bryer, 2003). An effective professional teacher training should aim to boost teachers' SEL skills. Support and guidance should be offered to pre-service teachers in their teacher training by means of different professional development opportunities to reinforce teachers' self-efficacy, confidence as well as commitment. To accomplish the necessary qualifications, teaching styles need to be modified to suit the individual needs of students by means of integrating the subjects concerning SEL in their teaching practices. Therefore, pre-service teachers need to be provided with focused training as well as theoretical knowledge during their pre-service education regarding how to support social emotional competence in their school environment. Teachers value SEL in an educational setting consequently, they prefer SEL concepts to be implemented by teachers or other school professionals, since they are eager to receive consultative support to implement SEL in their educational setting which highlights the importance

of embedding SEL in teacher preparation programs. There have been a few pre-service teacher education programs that started to incorporate both theory and practical application of SEL. In pre-service teacher education programs, teachers not only learn about SEL research as well as theory in their coursework but also, they learn how to implement SEL in their classroom environment in their student-teaching practicum. By doing so, teacher candidates are able to review SEL programs and they can integrate SEL strategies that they learn. Pre-service teacher education programs' aim is to provide teacher candidates with knowledge about SEL and also tools and strategies so as to build their social and emotional skills. Thus, teacher candidates are taught SEL approaches in order to help them build safe and caring classroom and school environments. In short, promoting SEL in pre-service teacher education programs is a crucial step in order to create a generation of students that acquired the social and emotional skills they need for their adult roles as 21st century citizens and parents. However, school policy makers also carry a heavy burden of responsibility so that they can create innovations to educational policy and initiate requirements in order to improve the quality of education as well as provide with a school atmosphere including high efficiency and create an encouraging school atmosphere where all students can feel both psychologically, socially, and also emotionally secure.

To sum up, this present study highlights the exploration of SEL and the implementation of SEL in the Turkish context. Hence it is valuable not only for academic advancement but also it offers practical implications for educators, institutions, curriculum developers. The findings of the study will influence future pedagogical strategies, enrich teacher training programs, and eventually create a more socially aware and emotionally intelligent community. Since teachers are the primary deliverers of the SEL program, their beliefs, attitudes, as well as support towards SEL influence the adoption, sustainability, and the success of the implementation. Finally, the role of administration, level coordinators as well as materials used in class play a key role in terms of implementation of SEL, therefore to ensure the future of SEL in schools, teachers, educators, institutions, curriculum developers, policymakers need to bear in mind that students succeed when SEL is encouraged and reinforced in school, and modeled, taught by teachers supported by families as well as community members.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

This research study presents several recommendations for future research in the education field. Firstly, this study was conducted with EFL instructors in the tertiary level who had not received any training on SEL. Therefore, for further research, similar studies can be replicated involving teachers from K-12 settings as well as recruiting teachers who had received either pre-service or in-service teacher training on SEL. Furthermore, another direction is to exploit a larger sample including more EFL instructors implementing SEL in their lessons and this might provide more in-depth findings. Future studies might also involve two groups both as experimental and control groups in order to explore the effectiveness of the implementation.

Secondly, future research should investigate the efficiency of the implementation among other English proficiency levels due to the fact that this study had its own limitations, and the implementation was merely applied in B1 level. Finally, for future studies it is highly suggested to use a longitudinal design so that the implementation process can last longer as well as involve a follow-up period in order to provide a more extensive picture regarding the effectiveness of the implementation. Last but not least, further research may as well make use of other qualitative data collection instruments such as classroom observations, video recordings, stimulated recalls and reflective journals of the teachers in order to increase the triangulation of the findings of the research.

To sum up, regarding the limitations of this research study, future research will help to gain a comprehensive understanding of SEL by means of revealing the nature of SEL in detail as well as exploiting an inclusive SEL approach and significantly contributing and shedding light on how to implement SEL lucratively in the education field.

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