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Institute of Educational Sciences  
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Department of English Language Teaching**

**NATIVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING TEACHERS' VIEWS ON TEACHING  
EFL IN TURKISH PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND THEIR OPINIONS  
ABOUT TURKISH EFL LEARNERS**

**İlke Menekşe GEREDE HOYLAND  
(Master's Thesis)**

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**ANADİLİ İNGİLİZCE OLAN ÖĞRETMENLERİN, TÜRKİYE'DEKİ  
ÖZEL OKULLARDA YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE  
ÖĞRETİMİNE İLİŞKİN GÖRÜŞLERİ VE İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENEREN TÜRK  
ÖĞRENCİLER HAKKINDAKİ DÜŞÜNCELERİ**

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**İstanbul, 2021**



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İlke Menekşe GEREDİ HOYLAND

## **Ethical Declaration**

In this thesis study, which I prepared in accordance with the Graduate Thesis Writing Guide of Marmara University Institute of Educational Sciences;

- I have obtained the information, documents and data I have presented within the framework of academic and ethical rules,
- I have cited all the works that I have used in my work,
- I declare that I have not made any changes in the data and results I have obtained, otherwise I declare that I accept all the loss of rights that may arise against me.

09/08/2021

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## **Abstract**

### **NATIVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING TEACHERS' VIEWS ON TEACHING EFL IN TURKISH PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND THEIR OPINIONS ABOUT TURKISH EFL LEARNERS**

English is the primary medium of international communication in the globalized world today, and the demand to learn English is very high. English is also an important part of education in Turkey. In this process, a great number of native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) are hired in Turkey. Thus, NESTs as well as non-native Turkish English teachers (NNTETs) are the major stakeholders, and their views and experiences are worth searching. There is ample research on NNTETs' views on various issues as well as learners' views on NESTs, yet there is a scarcity in terms of NESTs' experiences and opinions. Thus, the aim of this study is to provide insights into NESTs' views and opinions on teaching EFL in Turkey. Specifically, the following research question is addressed:

1. What are native English-speaking teachers' experiences of and views about teaching EFL in a Turkish private school setting in terms of the following issues:
  - a) the Turkish EFL learners and their learning preferences
  - b) positive and negative aspects they encounter in the school environment
  - c) teaching strategies they employ
  - d) the suggestions they could make for Turkish EFL learners

This qualitative study employed a case study design. The participants were four NESTs working at primary and secondary levels of a private school in Istanbul. Data were collected through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted with the participants individually, recorded and transcribed verbatim, and the data gathered from the questionnaire and interviews were analysed qualitatively using the thematic analysis technique. The findings showed whereas the overall experience of the NESTs is positive related to teaching in Turkey, factors such as the attitude of management and parents, traditional education implementations in classrooms and evaluation and assessment system in Turkey affect their views negatively and challenge them while teaching. Turkish EFL learners are believed to be motivated, eager to learn, respectful, and

good at verbal skills. However, the NESTs think they often can be dependent, goal-oriented learners and need critical thinking skills. While Turkish EFL learners' fluency is considered as the strength, accuracy, reading and writing skills are evaluated as areas of development.

**Keywords:** Native English-speaking teachers, English as a foreign language, Teaching and learning, EFL in Turkey, Teacher experiences, Teacher views



## Özet

İngilizce, günümüz küreselleşen dünyasında uluslararası iletişimin birincil aracıdır ve İngilizce öğrenme talebi çok yüksektir. İngilizce, Türkiye’de de eğitimin önemli bir parçasıdır. Bu süreçte, Türkiye’de anadili İngilizce olan çok sayıda öğretmen istihdam edilmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu dili öğrenme sürecinde İngilizce öğretmenleri, Türk İngilizce öğretmenleri gibi ana paydaşlardır ve görüş ve deneyimleri araştırmaya değerlidir. Türkiye bağlamına bakıldığında, gerek ana dili İngilizce olmayan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin çeşitli konular hakkındaki görüşleri, gerekse öğrencilerin ana dili İngilizce olan öğretmenler hakkındaki görüşleri üzerine yapılmış birçok araştırma vardır. Ancak, ana dili İngilizce olan öğretmenlerin deneyimleri ve fikirlerinin araştırılması noktasında bir yetersizlik söz konusudur. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın amacı, ana dili İngilizce olan öğretmenlerin Türkiye’de yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretimi konusundaki deneyimlerine ve görüşlerine ilişkin bilgileri açığa çıkarmaktır. Bu çalışmada aşağıdaki araştırma soruları ele alınmaktadır:

1. Ana dili İngilizce olan öğretmenlerin, Türkiye’de bir özel okul ortamında İngilizce öğretime ilişkin deneyimleri ve görüşleri aşağıdaki konular açısından nelerdir:
  - a) İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrenciler ve tercihleri
  - b) okul ortamında karşılaştıkları olumlu ve olumsuz yönler
  - c) uyguladıkları öğretim stratejileri
  - d) İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrenciler için önerileri

Bu nitel çalışmada vaka araştırması metodu kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılar ana dili İngilizce olan, İstanbul’da bir özel okulun ilk ve orta okul düzeyinde çalışan dört İngilizce öğretmenidir. Nitel veri anket ve gevşek yapılandırılmış mülakat tekniği kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Görüşmeler katılımcılarla bireysel olarak gerçekleştirilmiş, kayıt altına alınmış ve kelimesi kelimesine yazıya dökülmüş, anket ve görüşmelerden elde edilen veriler tematik analiz tekniği kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, ana dili İngilizce olan öğretmenlerin, Türkiye’de öğretimle ilgili genel deneyiminin olumlu olduğunu; ancak yönetim ve velilerin tutumu, sınıflardaki geleneksel eğitim uygulamaları ve Türkiye’deki ölçme ve değerlendirme sistemi gibi faktörlerin, görüşlerini olumsuz etkilediğini ve öğretim yaparken onları zorladığını göstermiştir. İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen

Türk öğrencilerin, motive, öğrenmeye istekli, saygılı ve sözel becerilerde iyi olduklarına inanılmaktadır. Ancak, Ana dili İngilizce olan İngilizce öğretmenleri, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin çoğunlukla bağımlı, hedef odaklı öğrenciler olabildiklerini ve eleştirel düşünme becerileri geliştirmeleri gerektiğini düşünmektedir. İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin, dil kullanımındaki akıcılığı güçlü yanları olarak görülürken, dilin kurallı kullanımı, okuma ve yazma becerileri gelişmesi gereken alanlar olarak değerlendirilmektedir.



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## Kısaltmalar Listesi

<b>ALTs</b>	: Assistant language teachers
<b>BA</b>	: Bachelor Degree
<b>CBLT</b>	: Content-based learning teaching
<b>CELTA</b>	: Certificate in teaching English to speakers of other languages
<b>EFL</b>	: English as a foreign language
<b>ELT</b>	: English language teaching
<b>ESL</b>	: English as a second language
<b>ETAs</b>	: English-speaking teaching assistants
<b>FL</b>	: Foreign language
<b>K-12</b>	: From Kindergarten to 12th grade
<b>LGS</b>	: Liseye giriş sınavı
<b>MoNE</b>	: Ministry of National Education
<b>NESTs</b>	: Native English-speaking teachers
<b>NNESTs</b>	: Non-native English-speaking teachers
<b>NNTESTs</b>	: Non-native Turkish English teachers
<b>PhD</b>	: Doctor of Philosophy
<b>SL</b>	: Second language
<b>TEFL</b>	: Teaching English as a foreign language
<b>TESOL</b>	: Teaching English to speakers of other languages

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## Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter will present the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, and research question.

### 1.1. Background to the Study

Globalization has a profound impact on various areas such as economy, politics and education (Tollefson & Tsui, 2014). While it leads to a system that entails a transnational corporation without a particular local base in economy, the effect of this unification idea can be seen in curricula, language learning and use and language policies in education of many countries (Tollefson & Tsui, 2014). Thus, inevitable consequences of internationalization of English have resulted in the way it is used and conceptualized, and implications for the way it is taught (Cogo, 2012).

In parallel with associating English with technological development, economical progress, and globalization, people have started to show a tendency to learn English and to have their children learn the language at early ages (Spolsky, 1998). English is now perceived as a key to a better life, better education and better job opportunities (Sarıgül, 2018). Thus, English language learning and teaching is prioritized in the *Expanding Circle* according to Kachru's (1985) classification. In his model, Kachru (1985) proposed three concentric circles to explain the spread of English worldwide considering the historical conditions, status, and functions of English in the world. The *Inner Circle* demonstrates the societies where English is the first language such as the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The *Outer Circle* indicates a multilingual community in which English is used as co-official language in formal, legal, and educational areas (e.g. India, Nigeria, and Singapore). English language is considered as a second language (SL) in this circle. The *Expanding Circle* ascribes to using English as an international and a foreign language (FL) as in Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, and China (Kachru, Kachru & Nelson, 2006).

As one of the countries in the *Expanding Circle*, Turkey desired to be part of the modern world and to be in contact with the West after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The desire to establish ties and connections with other countries in the world influenced the foreign language teaching policy in Turkey. The importance of English increased at all education levels (Kırkgöz, 2009). Furthermore, English Language Teaching (ELT) was given precedence over other languages (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998). In

1955, English had a prominent place in the secondary school curriculum as a FL. Nowadays in Turkish schools, English is taught as a compulsory foreign language (Kırkgöz, 2007) starting at Grade 2 at state schools and at Grade 1 at private schools (Yaman, 2018). As Yaman (2018) states English education starts at Grade 1 at private schools and private kindergartens that are part of private schools as of age three.

With the law enacted by the parliament in 1983, private schools at different levels started to be established in Turkey (Official Gazette [OG], June 23, 1985), which resulted in the propagation of private schools all over the country, particularly in Istanbul (Sarıgül, 2018). That increase led to the demand for native English-speaking teachers (NESTs). NESTs started to be recruited at private schools for a variety of reasons. Despite the research results that show that being a good and an effective language teacher relates to being proficient in English and being trained in language teaching, NESTs are still viewed as more effective language teachers as their mother tongue is English (Tatar, 2015). As it is believed that NESTs use '*Standard English*' due to being native speakers of English, they are considered as the only authority of appropriate use of the English language (Foley, 2007). For the same reason, it is presumed that authentic communication can be provided only by NESTs (Doğançay-Aktuna & Kiziltepe, 2005). Also, the expectation on learners to have native-like competence is believed to be met by NESTs (Jenkins, 2006). Another reason for hiring NESTs at private schools is to increase enrolment rates by attracting attention from both parents and students (Öztürk & Atay, 2010).

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Due to the indicated reasons hereinabove, many native speakers work at private schools, and they are highly valued in the Turkish education system. According to the reports of the Ministry of Family, Work and Social Services Work Permit of Foreigners (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018), the number of foreigners who work in the education sector in Turkey was 1,284 in 2011; 1,926 in 2012; 2,049 in 2013; 2,453 in 2014; 2,646 in 2015; 3,128 in 2016; 3,446 in 2017, and 3,658 in 2018. Given the fact that there is a steady increase in the numbers of foreign teachers in years, it can be concluded that there is an increase in the number of NESTs working in Turkey (Aydın, Toptaş, Güner-Demir & Erdemli, 2019). This increase means not only Turkish teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) but also foreign teachers of EFL are the stakeholders of English language education in Turkey. Also, it indicates that they are highly valued and

hired as teachers in Turkey. As NESTs working at private schools in Turkey have an important role and place in learning and teaching EFL in the Turkish context, their experience and opinions are valuable as much as those of NNETs for EFL education. However, that has not been the focus of the studies much in the literature, and therefore it calls for attention.

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

Each language has its own system, and how a teacher sees a language affects the way it is believed to be taught, and that belief results in how that language is taught. As Richard and Lockart (1999) define:

Teaching is a complex process which can be conceptualized in a number of different ways. Traditionally, language teaching has been described in terms of what teachers do: that is, in terms of the actions and behaviours which teachers carry out in the classroom and the effects of these on learners. (p. 29)

As clarified with the example given by Ur (2013), if a teacher thinks that grammar and vocabulary are the essentials of a language, and gives importance to basing instruction on both grammatical and lexical forms as well as meanings, the method that is used by that teacher is a conventional method. It can be also understood that teachers shape and guide the way students learn, and their preference in learning and teaching activities. Apart from the effects of teachers' views and opinions on language learning and teaching, learners also construct their learning environment actively (Mitchell & Myles, 2004), and they are believed to be responsible for that environment (Guoxing, 2004), which indicates that learners can affect and shape their learning environment and attitude, and teachers' decisions on teaching and classroom implementations. By considering the impact of teachers on learning and teaching that takes place in classroom, researchers started to inquire about teachers' beliefs that have an impact on their teaching and learning to understand teaching better (as cited in Erkmen, 2010).

NESTs are the participators of EFL teaching in Turkey as well as non-native Turkish English teachers (NNTETs), and they have an important role in teaching EFL to Turkish learners especially at private schools as they are mostly hired by private schools rather than state schools. Despite their prominent roles in English language education at private schools, there is a scarcity in studies that explore NESTs' experiences and opinions in the

realm of ELT. There is no study that specifically focuses on NESTs' experiences and opinions about Turkish learners who are at a private school in the Turkish context other than the study of Aydın et al. (2019), which focused on the views of expatriate teachers at private schools in Turkey. Thus, the aim of this research is to provide insights into both NESTs' views on teaching EFL in a Turkish private school classroom setting and their opinions about Turkish learners as they have an important role in EFL education at private schools. NESTs' suggestions to Turkish EFL learners are also sought in this study. The findings of this research can shed light on the views and opinions of NESTs in Turkey and provide an opportunity to evaluate Turkish learners of English from a different point of view. Moreover, guidance to become more successful learners can be provided to Turkish learners of English in light of the findings. In addition, the findings might provide insight into working at a private school in Turkey for NESTs who intend and plan to teach English to Turkish EFL learners in private schools in Turkey. Also, teachers might be guided in finding the appropriate and effective teaching and classroom activities for Turkish learners of English in consideration of the findings. Furthermore, the findings might help publishers that are in search of designing materials for learners in the Turkish context. Lastly, an understanding in how to cooperate with NESTs for better educational atmosphere at a private school might be developed or the existing one might be reviewed considering the findings that indicate what the NESTs have been going through and how they evaluate the education system at a private school in Turkey.

#### **1.4. Research Question**

The following research question with the indicated issues is referred to in this study.

1. What are native English-speaking teachers' experiences of and views about teaching EFL in a Turkish private school setting in terms of the following issues:
  - a) the Turkish EFL learners and their learning preferences
  - b) positive and negative aspects they encounter in the school environment
  - c) teaching strategies they employ
  - d) the suggestions they could make for Turkish EFL learners

## **Chapter II: Review of Literature**

This chapter addresses the brief review of the theoretical framework of the study, the importance of English in the world today and its impact on ELT, the concise review of the Turkish Education system and EFL, the importance of teachers' views and experiences in ELT, and NESTs and NNESTs in the EFL context.

### **2.1. Theoretical Framework**

Sociocultural theory is the basis of the theoretical framework in this study. The study was developed on this theory as it indicates the importance of culture and context both in cognitive development and in the way we perceive the world and understand what goes on in the society (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996), and as Vygotsky (1934) asserted culture and context postulate the schema that we experience, communicate, and understand reality through. Moreover, this perspective is closely aligned with the native speaker teachers who shape their views about learners in a specific context, in a private school in Turkey in this thesis, to understand the culturally and socially structured learning attitudes and to apply those opinions into the language teaching process to give opportunity to learners to become successful learners.

#### **2.1.1. Sociocultural theory**

Sociocultural theory is also named as social constructivism or socioculturalism. It is a theory "of the development of higher mental practices which regards social interaction as the core of communication and learning process" (Behroozizad et al., 2014, p. 219). In this theory, social and cultural interactions are viewed as the mediators of learning (Nagel, 2012), and social interactions with others such as family, teachers and friends are believed to construct knowledge (Bates, 2019). Knowledge is believed to be constructed in contexts, thus, to understand the learning developed, individuals' actual experiences must be investigated (Ebednar et al., 1991).

Vygotsky's (1981) work on the role of social experience in the expansion of individual knowledge is the foundation of the sociocultural perspective of second or foreign language acquisition. Learning is seen as a collaborative process, and knowledge is built up on one's interaction with their own culture and society. Perspectives as well as individual and cultural expectations are developed as a result of interactions, and these interactions

include individual interactions with cultural norms one lives in (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Individuals generalize on the meanings they create both from their individual experiences and social interactions and learn through them as well as views they shape as a result of the experiences and interactions (Ertmer & Newby, 2013; Fosnot & Perry, 1996). Learning is seen also as an active process, and people shape the way of their thinking by internalizing the thought patterns of others they interact with, especially more knowledgeable others (Vygotsky, 1986).

Learners and factors related to the environment are critical as it is believed that what creates knowledge is the *interaction* between these variables (Ertmer & Newby, 2013). Thus, it can be implied that individual differences exist as well as cross-cultural differences in learning and development (Polly et al., 2017).

Learners are believed to be the active constructors of their learning environment (Mitchell & Myles, 2004), and they are responsible for that environment (Guoxing, 2004). As well as learners, teachers are viewed to be active constructors of their teaching environment. It is believed that views of teachers about learners' language learning have an effect on constructing their teaching environment, though learners are the main focus of the teaching activities (Behroozizad et al., 2014).

As can be understood, sociocultural theory centres on “the causal relationship between social interaction and individual cognitive development” (Leonard, 2002, p.178). Socially and culturally situated context of cognition is emphasized in the sociocultural theory (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). A great number of sociocultural views indicates the cultural integration of learning, applying the methods and framework of cultural anthropology to consider how learning and cognition find meaning in the context.

It is clearly stated that children learn differently in relation to the social environment that they are in. It signifies that for effective teaching, teachers would want to evaluate and understand their students and their needs from cultural perspectives and to apply their views into the scope of teaching activities. Moreover, specifying culturally shaped learning preferences of learning activities might help teachers enrich their lessons, reach their students and meet the needs of learners, which results in success in the learning and teaching process. Apart from the teaching and learning process, as can be concluded from the basis of sociocultural theory, the views of NESTs and their experiences are shaped in

relation to and in the context of the current educational environment. Their views on teaching EFL in a Turkish private school classroom setting and their opinions about Turkish learners of English are results of the interactions with learners in the specific cultural and social environment. Students are also part of the knowledge construction process that teachers go through. However, this thesis has limited its scope to teachers only.

## **2.2. Literature Review**

### **2.2.1. Importance of English in the world today**

Beside Britain's colonial expansion, political and military power and the rise and activities of the United States (Trivedi, 2016), information revolution and globalized human activities that created a need to use a common language to communicate globally resulted in the elevation of English to the global language status (Smokotin, Petrova & Gural, 2017).

Among the 7,139 languages spoken in the world, today the widely used one is English (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig, 2021), and it has many roles in the modern era of globalization (D'Souza, 2001). 70 per cent of emails and half of the scientific literature are written in English (Geoffrey, Brumfit, Flavell & Pincas, 1980), and each year 50 per cent of the millions of published academic papers are composed in English (Goodson, 1994; Hayes, 2005; Nunan, 2003). Graddol (2000) states that English was used in 70 per cent of cases in international tourism in 2004. It is also the dominant language used in business, popular culture, diplomacy, medicine and education (Hitchings, 2011) as well as science, commerce, politics, finance, sport, media and the entertainment sector (Dornyei, 1998; Nunan, 2003; Ostler 2010). Moreover, it is used as the medium of communication in various areas such as press, airports and air-traffic control, academic conferences, international competitions, and advertising (Trivedi, 2016).

Nowadays, in the modern and globalized world, English is not only a medium of communication. Knowing English and showing competency in the language provides a variety of job opportunities in areas from trade to technology, and it gives candidates an occupational advantage (Trivedi, 2016). In some societies (e.g. in the United Arab Emirates), English is associated with being modern and well-educated (Hitchings, 2011). People are expected to show proficiency in English in business as well as other sectors. (Block & Cameron, 2002; Crystal, 1997; Oktaviani & Fauzan, 2017; Tudor, 2001). It is

also believed that English is the language to be known to be part of the “Global Village” and to communicate with the rest of the world for different purposes such as education and trade (Liaw & Chen, 1998; Smokotin et al., 2017; Trivedi, 2016). Proficiency in English is a requisite for a country to be seen as powerful and prestigious (as cited in Nair et al., 2014).

### ***2.2.1.1. Impacts on ELT***

Being associated with technology, power in economy and globalization, English became the language people want to learn, and parents want their children to learn at early ages (Spolsky, 1998). It is believed that knowing English leads to better opportunities in life, education and professions (Sarigül, 2018). Due to its escalating importance and dominance in a wide range of realms including national interests, English plays a prominent role in education as well. Countries that are in the Expanding Circle according to Kachru’s (1985) classification give precedence to ELT.

In Kachru’s (1985) model, three concentric circles are defined to explain the escalation of the use of English worldwide considering sociolinguistic contexts (Nayar, 1997) in relation with the historical conditions, status, and functions of English in the world. The Inner Circle includes the societies where English is the first language such as the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The Outer Circle describes a multilingual community in which English is used as a co-official language in formal, legal, and educational areas such as India, Nigeria, and Singapore. The English language is viewed as a SL in this circle. The Expanding Circle indicates using EFL such as in Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, and China (Kachru et al., 2006).

English is used as the medium of education at all levels in many schools and institutes around the world and taught as the foreign language in 100 countries (Trivedi, 2016). Thus, countries revised their policies and included English to their education systems, and many of them start teaching English at the primary level and even at younger ages (Choklap, 2015; Jenkins, 2015).

The status and significance of English today has had similar impacts in Turkey, one of the countries in the Expanding Circle. The desire to have ties and be in contact with other counties for various reasons and to comply with the educational necessities of the globalized world influenced the FL teaching policies in Turkey (König, 1990). The

importance of English increased at all education levels (Kırkgöz, 2009). Moreover, ELT was given precedence over other languages (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998). In 1955, English started to have an important role in the secondary school curriculum as FL. Nowadays in Turkey, English is taught as a compulsory FL at schools (Kırkgöz, 2007) starting at Grade 2 at state schools and at Grade 1 at private schools and private kindergartens that are part of private schools as of age three (Yaman, 2018).

### **2.3. Turkish Education System and EFL**

#### **2.3.1. Brief history of FL teaching in Turkey**

English has been used as an international language over the years, and due to the importance attributed to English, it has been taught as a SL or a FL in the world (Gürkan & Yüksel, 2012). As to be used as a tool to gain new knowledge and access new opportunities in the global context (Oder & Eisenschmidt, 2018), EFL started to have an important role in education in many countries (Tollefson & Tsui, 2014) as well as in Turkey.

Foreign language education in Turkey traces back to the Ottoman Empire. In that period, not only Arabic but also Persian languages were taught mostly for religious reasons (Solak & Bayar, 2015) and with the purpose of translation of texts into Ottoman Turkish (Işık, 2008). Western languages such as French, German and English started to gain prominence during the Ottoman period in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as part of the Westernization movement (*Tanzimat*) (Kırkgöz, 2007) as they provided access to commerce and technology (Üzüm, 2007) as well as military development in the West (Demircan, 1988). As the result of the trade agreement made between the United States and the Ottoman Empire, the first American school, Robert College was founded in Turkey, yet teaching English at state schools didn't begin until 1908 (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998). Even though English was taught in schools, as Doğançay-Aktuna (1998) stated due to the scarcity of schools and the high percentage of illiteracy of Turkish people, mainly the children of ethnic minorities were taught English and the other languages in religious schools.

With the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the priority given to Arabic and Persian as foreign languages was shifted to Western languages so as to secularize the education. Although Turkish was the priority to spread the literacy all over the country,

where only 6 % of the population was literate, in March 1924 a western FL became compulsory at schools (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998). The modernization and westernization acts with Europe were mostly in French at the beginning, thus it was the dominant western language, yet after the 1950s, the relations with the United States regarding military and economy had an impact on spreading English in Turkey (İnceçay, 2012). Also, the foundation of Robert College to educate initially the non-Muslim population in Istanbul in 1863 contributed to the spread of English language education in Istanbul (Sarigül, 2018). English gained more importance (Kırkgöz, 2009), and ELT was given precedence over other languages (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998).

The spread of English had an impact on language policies in Turkey. During the period of 1983/1984-1996, two prominent language policy acts were enacted. The first one was the Foreign Language Education and Teaching Act (*Yabancı Dil Eğitim ve Öğretim Kanunu*) in 1983 that started FL teaching at secondary and high school levels (Foreign Language Teaching and Learning Act, 1983). The second one was the Higher Education Act issued in 1984 (YOK, 1984), and it emphasized the importance of English as a medium of instruction and a tool to access professional knowledge (Kırkgöz, 2009).

Compulsory education lasted five years in Turkey until 1997, and no foreign language was taught at state primary schools. The duration of compulsory education was changed in 1997 through act 4306 and extended to eight years (MEB, 1997), and that resulted in teaching English as a FL at primary schools as of Grade 4 (Kırkgöz, 2014). With the change made by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in 2012, English started to be taught as a compulsory FL starting at Grade 2 at state schools (Bayyurt, 2012; Kırkgöz, 2014).

### **2.3.2. EFL education at state and private schools**

Teaching English started in the 1900s at some private schools such as Robert College and Tarsus American College in Turkey. However, English language education did not start at state schools until 1908 (Sarigül, 2018). Although English was a subject at state schools, the minority of the population was educated at those schools (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998). In the 1950s, five Anatolian High Schools where English was the medium of instruction were founded in different cities under the name of *Maarif Koleji* which were changed to Anatolian High Schools later (Sarigül, 2018). Due to the high demand in

English medium instructed education, yet inadequate numbers of schools, private schools were permitted to be opened in 1983 (Official Gazette [OG], June 23, 1985), which resulted in the increase of private schools all over the country, particularly in Istanbul (Sarigül, 2018). According to the 2019-2020 National Formal Education statistics released by the MoNE, there are 54,063 state schools, and 12,809 private schools in Turkey. 15,189,878 of 16,658,076 students are educated at state schools, and 1,468,198 students go to private ones (MEB, 2020).

English has become a compulsory subject at all levels as a FL with the changes in policies over the years in Turkey (Kırkgöz, 2007), yet there are differences in myriad areas between state and private schools. Currently, English education starts at Grade 2 at state schools whereas students at private schools start to learn English at Grade 1, even at kindergartens that are part of private schools (Yaman, 2018).

Apart from the age difference in starting to learn English, the weekly hours of English lessons vary as well. At state schools, students have two English lessons weekly from grade 2 to 4, three at grades 5 and 6, and four at grades 7 and 8. At high school level, four English lessons are provided to students (MEB, 2017; 2018). The weekly hours of English lessons change according to private schools' institutional policies, yet students at private schools are taught English more compared to students at state schools. More extra hours are added to weekly schedules under the name of extracurricular activities from Grade 1 in order to introduce the English sound system to students. After vocabulary development, formal language instruction starts at Grade 4 with weekly hours ranging from eight or 10 lessons. Content-based instruction that starts afterwards is followed by English medium instructed maths and science lessons at high school (Daloğlu, 2004).

Beside the numbers of hours allocated to English, instructional methods, materials used, curricula followed, and diversity of teachers (NESTs and NNESTs) as well as the sufficiency in numbers of teachers vary between state and private schools. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) prepares the English curriculum in Turkey working with experts, and teachers who work at state schools have to follow that curriculum (Başok, 2017) whereas private schools create their own curricula taking the one determined by the MoNE into consideration. In a similar vein, while state schools use textbooks prepared locally under the authority of the MoNE, private schools opt for any books from

international publishers according to students' needs and institutional and educational objectives (Doğançay-Aktuna & Kiziltepe, 2005).

#### **2.4. Importance of Teachers' Views and Experiences in ELT**

Teaching is so complex that there are various ways to conceptualize it. In a traditional way, language teaching is what teachers do in the classroom (Richard & Lockart, 1999). The beliefs and opinions of teachers are the base of their instructions and methods (Kuzborska, 2011; Ur, 2013).

Beliefs are the indicators of reality or truth, and they regulate our thoughts and actions (Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000). Similarly, Peacock (2001) claims that beliefs constitute of psychological appreciations, premises, or theorems about the world that are believed to be right, and they are based on observation or rational thinking (Khader, 2012) and experiences (Ford, 1994; Khader, 2012). The same concept is termed as "*opinions*" and "*ideas*" or "*views*" by Kunt (1997) and Wang (1996).

As Medgyes (1992) states "the road to the learner leads through the teacher (p.340)". Varied factors affect teaching and learning, yet what teachers believe or think, and how they view main components of education such as learners, system and environment are believed to have more effect than what they know about planning and classroom practice. Also, teachers' behaviours towards learners are identified by their beliefs and opinions, and teachers decide on educational preferences, and how to act and change their behaviours according to what they know about students and their abilities (Abdi & Asadi, 2015; Li, 2012; Pajares, 1992; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Moreover, teachers' beliefs play an important role in understanding the obstacles of teaching and learning and establishing better education programs (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017).

Due to the prominent impact on their teaching and on learning that takes place in the classroom, teachers' beliefs were inquired in order to understand teaching better by researchers (as cited in Erkmen, 2010). As can be concluded, both teachers and learners are the leading factors of teaching and learning process, thus it is necessary to explore teachers' experiences and see learners from their perspectives to improve educational acts, to provide a successful teaching and learning process, and to reach and guide learners efficiently.

## 2.5. NESTs and NNESTs

Nowadays, English is the primary medium of international communication in the world, and thus, the demand to learn English is very high (König, 1990). Today, English is an important part of education, and NESTs work at private schools apart from NNESTs for various reasons.

The concept of *native-speakerism* as Holliday (2006) termed has been discussed from different approaches, and the definition of it has been revised, redefined and changed over the years. While theoretical linguists such as Chomsky (1965) and Coulmas (1981) describe it as being idealized and an authority figure in linguistics, applied linguists depict it as an amenable term that is defined socially in relation with actual ability or proficiency of speakers (Lowe, 2017). On the other hand, there is a common definition that focuses on learning the language from the beginning of being born (Bloomfield, 1984), yet it is criticized to be so simple (Davies, 2003). Although the continuity of using the language as the dominant one fluently and accurately, having insights into grammar, and being part of the community the language is spoken in are added into the definition made by Richards and Schmidt (2010) in *the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, there have been many questions raised to challenge the validity of the specifications in different situations (Lowe, 2017).

From another point, the '*native speaker*' is viewed as a social construct and believed to be shaped in society by processes and interactions (Burr, 2015; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001; Shuck, 2006) while another term "*expert speaker*" is suggested to be used rather than "native speaker" (as cited in Lowe, 2017), and it is asserted that intelligibility of English should be focused on (Jenkins, 2000, 2015).

As can be concluded, the categorization of native and non-native speakers has been questioned and objected by many researchers and scholars (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Widdowson, 1994) by looking at the term from different perspectives, and there is not a clear-cut definition that can be completely agreed on in ELT. Throughout this thesis, 'NESTs' reference is preferred to be used to refer to the participants of this thesis since they are from Inner Circle countries according to Kachru's (1985) classification.

### 2.5.1. NESTs in the EFL context

Starting with the discussion in Medgyes' (1992) article, the inquiry comprising NESTs has hinged on differences in NESTs and NNESTs. There is ample research concerning the perceptions of EFL/ESL learners towards NESTs and NNESTs in different contexts (Cheung, 2002; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Mahboob, 2004; Medgyes, 1992) as well as in the context of Turkey (Demir, 2011; Devrim & Bayyurt, 2010; Ustunluoglu, 2007).

Another matter concerning NESTs is contrast qualifications and working conditions between NESTs and NNESTs (Demir, 2016). The challenges NESTs faced with have also been studied (Demir, 2017; Mousavi, 2007; Rao & Yuan, 2016) in the ELT literature.

Apart from the studies that base the inquiry on NESTs and NNESTs dichotomy, there are studies that provide insights into the beneficial effect of a combination of NESTs and NNESTs on both learning and teaching (Carless & Walker, 2016; Gürkan & Yüksel, 2012; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005).

Despite the fact that both NESTs and NNESTs are the participants and contributors of ELT, and NESTs are highly valued as teachers, mostly NNESTs' perceptions have been notably researched on EFL learning (Diab, 2009; Erkmen, 2014; Diaz-Larenas et al., 2015) and teaching (Eveyik-Aydın, 2003; Shin & Son, 2007). However, studies concerning NESTs related to EFL learning and teaching have been surprisingly scant.

Chin (2002) conducted a study to examine the perceptions of NESTs on EFL learning and teaching in Korea. 18 NESTs (three American and 15 Canadian) between the age of 29 and 41 who work at a university participated in the study. Two different questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. The first questionnaire was given to the participants to investigate student-student interaction in their classes and their beliefs about language learning. To explore the perceptions of participants about teaching EFL to Korean students, the second questionnaire was used. With the purpose of further data collection on their beliefs of learning and teaching EFL in the Korean context, semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted with each participant. The results showed that the NESTs in Korea believe in communicative language teaching, and they relate language learning to learning skills by making mistakes. Over-sized classes, level differences of students in the same class, and low self-confident and less autonomous learners profile due to teacher dominant conventional education in Korea are the

perceived drawbacks of EFL learning and teaching by the NESTs. Related to the classroom activities, the NESTs reported that group and pair works are favoured by Korean learners. Also, it was found that taking English out of textbooks and relating it to real life, and assisting learners to be productive rather than repetitive learners are the teaching strategies that the NESTs in Korea employ.

In the Korean context, another study was conducted by Chun (2013) to explore NESTs' experiences and attitudes. She investigated NESTs' teaching and interaction with Korean elementary school children. Five NESTs with working experience in the Korean elementary school context participated in the study, and data were collected by using semi-structured and in-depth interviews. The study showed that all of the participants have a positive attitude towards the Korean young learners and teaching them. The NESTs take responsibility in the learning process of the Korean children and use different techniques and strategies to encourage them and improve their skills. The young Korean learners are viewed as more eager, engaging and responsive learners compared to older graders. It was found that the NESTs think Korean children are better at reading and writing than speaking and listening skills. Not knowing the first language of learners, having students at different levels in the same classroom, and classroom management issues especially in after-school classes are indicated challenges by the NESTs. It was also revealed that although the NESTs do not agree with teaching styles and the discipline techniques of the NNESTs, the NESTs do not openly talk about these conflicts.

In a similar vein, Kesevan, Madzlan and Kanapathy (2018) conducted a study to explore whether NESTs and NNESTs differ in teaching ideologies and practices in the Malaysian context. They also focused on students' perspectives on the issues of concern by the study. Three groups of participants took part in the study. The first group consisted of three local Malaysian English teachers, the second group was four native English speaking teachers who work as English teacher assistants, and the third group amounted to 150 students who were taught by both of these groups of teachers. Interviews were conducted with teachers to understand teachers' ideological stances regarding questioning, providing feedback, wait time after questioning, and teaching approaches. To collect data on students' perspectives on the implementation of these four aspects, a questionnaire was used. The findings showed that the NESTs and NNESTs in Malaysia

share some common perspectives on teaching approaches. Both groups of teachers agree that learner-centred teaching style is more communicative and serves better ESL classroom goals. However, while the NESTs believe that the learner-centred teaching style is the best approach and must solely be used, the NNESTs think that other approaches can be utilized accompanied by a learner-centred teaching style. Interaction in the classroom is seen as vital for each group of teachers, and they all agree that wait time, types and ways of questions and types of given feedback are vital interaction promoting elements, yet they differ in the technicalities of those elements. Although the NESTs prefer giving students excessive wait time to answer questions and a chance to choose the questions to answer, and using referential questions, the NESTs favour less wait time allocation, individual nomination for questions and answers and referential questions. Similarly, the NESTs promote giving implicit feedback to mistakes whereas explicit feedback is supported by the NNESTs. It was also found that while students perceive the NESTs as strong in learner-centred teaching style, longer wait time, referential questions and implicit feedback, the NNESTs are perceived as strong only in explicit corrective feedback.

In relation to NESTs, Choklap (2015) investigated NESTs' experiences, motivation and, cultural adaptations required to teach English at language institutions in Thailand. Four NESTs who are experienced in teaching EFL in Thailand for more than a year participated in the study. Data gathered from semi-structured, face-to-face interviews showed that the NESTs believe the top-below educational system leads to an inappropriate and out-of-date curriculum in Thailand that cannot meet learners' needs. Most of Thai learners are considered as unenthusiastic learners due to low numbers of English classes and lack of English use outside the classroom. The findings showed that the motivations of NESTs to teach English were about appreciation, students, pay rates, and enjoyment of teaching. Not being given a chance at administration is viewed as a limitation in career path by the NESTs. It was also found that the NESTs appreciate and put effort into understanding the culture and adapt their teaching style according to cultural and individual preferences as well as learners' needs.

Related to NESTs' experiences, the perceptions of NESTs on team teaching and the challenges they face at secondary schools in the Korean context were focused on in the study conducted by Nam (2011). The data that was collected through interviews with

three NESTs, the field notes of the researcher, and the researcher journal revealed that unfamiliar demands of new educational context are found challenging. Vaguely designed team teaching combined with unstable teaching goals makes setting goals and dealing with Korean classrooms pedagogically difficult for the NESTs. Unclear responsibilities also cause confusion to the NESTs about their roles and lead to problems about responsibilities distributed in team teaching between the NESTs and the NNESTs. Large-size and mixed-ability classrooms, exam-oriented culture and classroom issues are the challenges the NESTs encountered in Korea. Apart from calling for solutions to the challenges encountered, NESTs in the Korean context suggest that administration reduce the workload of the NNESTs' to allow them to work collaboratively with the NESTs for effective team teaching. Making effort to understand the culture and students' expectations is also recommended to the NESTs for effective team teaching.

Regarding the experiences of NESTs who work in the EFL setting, Tanaka (2009) made an inquiry about what teaching English to Japanese students was like to three Canadians worked as Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) at state schools in Japan, and what kind of influence those experiences had on their lives. Three, semi-structured, conversational interviews were conducted with the participants. Data collected through narrations and stories the participants shared with the researcher in regarding the motive to be and teach in Japan, their lives in Japan, incidents of teaching, their students and co-workers, their teaching views and opinions on their experience in Japan. The findings showed that having had expectations about what teaching would be like in Japan beforehand led to more difficulties to face. The participants expected to have more active roles as ALTs in the classroom and to have eager and active students, yet their roles were less than expected, and there were not attentive and eager students in their classes. It was also found that the NESTs believe that being trained as teachers and having more teaching experience could be beneficial in order to experience fewer difficulties. In view of the participants' report on having a new perspective towards life, people and teaching, the empowering impact of teaching experience in Japan was also revealed in the study as all the participants reported.

In the matter of NESTs' experiences and challenges, Kim (2004) conducted a study to investigate the main difficulties novice NESTs' encounter while teaching EFL in a non-English speaking country with the purpose of understanding their experiences to a

greater degree. Six experienced native American EFL instructors working at foreign language institutions of Korean universities participated in the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant, and follow-up questions formed by the researcher during the interviews for clarification were adopted for in-depth data collection. It was revealed that culture shock related to the new environment, being looked upon as foreigners, communication problems due to language barriers are the major problems the NESTs encountered outside the classroom. As the difficulties faced in the classroom, it was found Korean learners are not active in the classroom and unwilling to participate in communicative activities due to their rote memorization learning habits and teacher-centred teaching model of the system. Having theoretical knowledge rather than that of practical is viewed as a source of problems the NESTs encountered while teaching in EFL settings.

NESTs are the focus of some studies that aim to explore their experiences related to various factors such as cultural ones. In the dissertation study of Kung (2015), the influence of cultural factors on NESTs' teaching strategies and materials was investigated. Ten American NESTs with a minimum one year of teaching-abroad experience participated in the study. Face-to-face interviews that include in-depth, opened-ended, and semi-structured questions were used to collect data. The analysis of the data showed that the NESTs encountered differences between Western cultures and cultures they taught in. Cultural factors such as oversized classes with mixed ability students, students' attitudes and views on learning English, governmental decisions on education, lack of resources and support from administration and government as well as expectations of students and parents from English teaching and classes influenced the way the NESTs teach. It was found that the NESTs adjusted their teaching strategies and changed their methodologies according to cultural factors of the country they worked for and the expectations of the students in their classes, and the system they worked in. The findings also revealed that the NESTs were provided with an opportunity to develop their teaching skills by teaching abroad.

Along with the studies that focus primarily on NESTs' experiences, there are various studies that explore the experiences of NESTs aiming to find answers to different inquiries. In this regard, Lee (2011) conducted a study with six experienced NESTs working at universities. He aimed to explore the conflicts that NESTs have experienced

regarding the differences between Korean and English language, and the ways of thinking of Canadian and Korean teachers. In the interviews conducted with the participants, Korean EFL learners are described as passive and shy learners. It is also mentioned that English classes in Korea are teacher-centred and not based on creativity and thought-provoking activities. Product of teaching is more valued by all parties (teachers, students, administration and parents) than the process of learning. Thus, rather than spending time and making effort to think, find answers or produce their own opinions, learners prefer rote-learning and memorization.

Starting with the inquiry emerged from her journals about EFL learning and teaching ESL/EFL, Wang (2005) conducted a study into two teachers' EFL/ESL teaching in the Chinese and Canadian social, educational and cultural contexts to explore her loss of motivation for teaching. Chinese learners are described as inactive learners by her and the Canadian participant who worked as a NEST in China contrary to Western language learners. Similar to the Korean context, product-oriented education is valued in China, and learners prefer learning passively and not thinking independently. It is mentioned by the participants that Chinese learners have passive roles in learning due to the rooted Chinese tradition of learning although there have been changes in education as the result of globalization.

The study conducted by Aydin et al. in 2019 sought to understand the opinions of expatriate teachers in relation to education, teaching, administration processes, and the relationship between parents and students at private schools in Turkey. However, in this study, the participants were expatriate teachers rather than NESTs. 25 expatriate teachers from different countries regardless of Kachru's (1985) classification participated in the study. The analysis of the data collected through semi-structured and in-depth interviews showed that the education system in Turkey is considered as heavy and out of date by the expatriate teachers. They also believe that there are some problems with the assessment and evaluation system. The administrators are viewed as not sufficient in terms of competence by the expatriate teachers. Turkish learners are considered as motivated students, yet they tend to learn by memorization.

To gain insight into the views of native English speaking teaching assistants (ETAs) on English language education at tertiary level in Turkey, Yılmaz (2014) collected data from 25 ETAs working at different state universities in Turkey through a questionnaire.

The finding related to Turkish EFL learners at universities showed that although ETAs think that Turkish university students have an aptitude to learn English, they are not motivated to do. It is believed that university students in Turkey do not lack the technological facilities but the environment that can facilitate language learning.

The review of the literature in regard to EFL teaching and experiences in a foreign country showed that experiences of English speaking people in teaching regardless of their ELT training background have been studied as well. In Romero's (2012) case study, experiences of English speaking volunteers in teaching EFL as part of a volunteer program in Chile are sought, and the impacts of these experiences on shaping their understanding of English teaching are inquired. Data was collected through a questionnaire from 123 volunteers about their background and expectations, and from interviews with eight selected participants about their experiences. The findings related to the language teaching experiences and challenges faced during the teaching experience showed that classroom management was a big challenge for the participants. The volunteers had difficulties in teaching due to oversized classrooms, unmotivated and undisciplined learners, and also lack of experience in planning and teaching. The language barrier was stated as a factor that has a negative impact on teaching.

The review of the studies that have been conducted so far related to the perceptions of NESTs revealed the necessity of this study. Despite the broad research on perceptions in ELT, there is a scarcity of inquiry based on NESTs' views in the EFL context in the literature. To the best knowledge of the researcher, apart from the study of Aydin et al. (2019) that focused on the views of expatriate teachers at private schools in Turkey, there is no other research that has been conducted specifically on NESTs' views on teaching EFL at private schools in the Turkish context.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to gain insights into NESTs' perceptions about teaching EFL in Turkey and to inform other parties such as NESTs as co-teachers, teacher educators, policymakers, administrators, and language learners.

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

This is a qualitative case study that aims to understand Native English-speaking teachers' views on teaching EFL in a Turkish private school setting and their opinions about Turkish learners of English. In this chapter, setting, context and participants of the study, research design, data collection, and data analysis procedures are discussed in detail.

#### **3.1. Setting and Context**

The study was conducted at a private school in Istanbul. The private school where this study was conducted is one of the top ten highly prestigious private schools in Istanbul, Turkey. It is located in the centre of the city where people from a higher socioeconomic class live. At this school, there are approximately 1,000 students at K-12 levels. Almost 600 of those students are at primary and secondary levels. Based on personal experience and observations, it can be asserted that most of the parents have a university degree, and some of them even have a M.A. or a PhD degree. While some of them work as white collar employees in upper management positions, most of them have their own business. When the school fee is taken into consideration, it can be asserted that families who choose to send their children to this private school are from a high income group. At this private school, some of the parents know at least one foreign language. On holidays, parents of this private school generally travel abroad. Thus, students have a chance to be exposed to English and to use it outside school. Besides, some students have foreign babysitters who speak English, and some have private English lessons from native speakers. Moreover, all of the students have access to the internet and use it to be exposed to English outside school by using language learning platforms chosen by school or watching videos or by following foreign channels. As can be understood, the students of this private school are not isolated from English in their lives, and their exposure to English is not restricted to formal language education provided at school.

At private schools in Turkey, English lesson hours that students have on a weekly basis are a lot more compared to state schools. In this private school, English is taught as a FL from kindergarten to the end of high school. In kindergarten, both NESTs and NNESTs teach English, and the CBLT (Content- Based Learning Teaching) method is used. In secondary school (from Grade 5 to 8), apart from CBLT lessons, students have English Literature classes and grammar-focused lessons.

Hours of English classes and the distribution of these hours to NESTs and NNESTs vary according to levels as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Distribution of English Lesson Hours to Levels

Levels	Grades	NESTs	NNESTs	Total Hours Per Week
Primary	1	10	-	10
Primary	2	10	-	10
Primary	3	6	5	11
Primary	4	10	-	10
Secondary	5	9	7	16
Secondary	6	3	6	9
Secondary	7	3	6	9
Secondary	8	-	6	6

Duration of each lesson is 40-minute at all levels. At primary level, in Grades 1, 2 and 4 students have lessons only from NESTs whereas five of 11 English teaching hours in Grade 3 are given by NNESTs. Grade 5 is considered as a preparation-year for English education according to the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Foreign Language Education Program. Apart from other subjects, such as Turkish, Maths, and Art, an intense English program is provided to students with the purpose of enhancing FL development at early ages. Thus, students have 16 lessons of English at Grade 5. As shown in Table.3.1, nine of those teaching hours are given by NESTs, and seven lessons are given by a Turkish teacher of English. In Grades 6 and 7, students have nine lesson hours of English, and three of them are given by a NEST whereas in Grade 8 only NNESTs have classes due to the preparation studies for the national high school admission exam called *Liseye Giriş Sınavı* (LGS). At each level, English is used to communicate and be in contact with students all the time regardless of teachers' nationalities.

In this private school, there are 14 NESTs in total at K-12 levels. Eight of them work at primary and secondary levels. When the distribution of works expected to be done and responsibilities are considered, it can be said that only works that are required to be prepared in Turkish, or official paperwork and responsibilities fall within the remit of NNESTs. Apart from them, NESTs have most of the responsibilities NNESTs have. NESTs are responsible for preparing curriculum of the grades they teach, for English language teaching and planning activities as well as preparing assessment materials. They

are in contact with parents to inform them about the progress and participation of students in classroom activities.

### 3.2. Participants

In this qualitative case study, the *purposeful sampling* technique was used regarding the view that “(...) it is the best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (Creswell, 2009, p.178), and it provides researchers in-depth focus on a phenomenon as well as learning considerably much about the focus of the research (Patton, 2002).

As the purpose of this study was to find out NESTs’ experiences in and views about teaching EFL in a Turkish private school classroom setting and to understand their opinions about Turkish learners of English, the frame of participant sampling was native English speaking teachers from one of *the Inner Circle* (Kachru, 1985) countries with a minimum one year of experience in teaching EFL at a private school in Turkey.

As mentioned by Creswell (2013), sample size can be flexible as the important point in qualitative studies is not the number of the participants of the study, but the quality of the data provided by the participants. Therefore, the number of participants can start from one (Patton, 2002), yet the sampling size is suggested to be between three and 10 (Choklap, 2015). In line with the purpose of purposeful sampling that is “(...) to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study (Patton, 2002, p.46)” and with the suggested number of participants, six NESTs who work at the same private school were chosen as participants for this study. All these NESTs were emailed and informed about the scope of study. With reference to the volunteer participation response, the questionnaire was sent to all six volunteer participants via email. Of six volunteer participants, four NESTs completed the data collection procedure. Two of those participants work merely at primary levels, one of them works at both primary and secondary levels, and one participant works only at secondary levels. All of these participants are from the *Inner Circle*. Among the participants, there is one British, one Canadian, one American, and one South African NEST, which provided the researcher to collect data from different angles.

### 3.2.1. Demographic information of the participants

The data gathered from the participants related to their background by means of the questionnaire (Part I) and the interviews are shown in Table 3.2. below. Pseudonyms were used.

Table 3.2. Background Information of the Participants

Participant	Age	Nationality	Qualifications	Overall Experience	Experience in Turkey
Mary	40	South African	BA in Language and Culture TEFL	5 years	5years
Larry	40	American	BA in History CELTA	11 years	11 years
Emily	53	Australian	BA in Education	34 years	24 years
Nancy	44	British	BA in English Language and Literature TESOL	24 years	20 years

Mary is a 40 years old NEST from South Africa. She graduated from the Language and Culture department in 2002. After she decided to teach English in another country, she got her TEFL training in 2015. She went to Thailand and worked there for three months as an EFL teacher. As the reason of living and teaching EFL in Turkey, she mentioned that she had wanted to start a new life in another country, and Turkey was one of the options for her to teach English abroad legally as a South African. She added that she chose Turkey due to the culture of Turkey and the similarities in the life styles between South Africa and Turkey.

When she first arrived Turkey, she worked at a kindergarten for three weeks as part of the morning play group teacher. She has worked at two different private schools in Turkey so far. She taught English to 2 - 4 year olds at the private school, which is one of the most prestigious private schools in Istanbul, she first worked for. She taught EFL there for about three or four months. After that private school, she started to work at the private school this study took place. She has been working at this school for four years, she has been teaching EFL to students in Grades 1 and 2. She defines herself as an introvert and a perfectionist. She claims that she is open to professional development, and she learns from others and any sources prepared for teachers. She understands Turkish to a certain point, she can communicate in Turkish when she needs to. She uses her Turkish with her students for

urgent needs. She describes her experience in Turkey as an opportunity, and she has positive attitude towards working at a private school in Turkey in general.

Larry is a 40 years old NEST from the USA. He graduated from the History department in 2003. After he decided to teach English in another country, he came to Turkey. He got his CELTA training in 2009 in Turkey. He mentions that he heard about working in Turkey from his friends who had worked in Turkey previously. The benefits of working in Turkey and the easy adaptation to the culture that were mentioned by his friends are his reasons of having started to live and teach EFL in Turkey. When he first arrived in Turkey, he worked at a language school for a few months. Later, he found a job at a private school and worked as a NEST there. He has 11 years of teaching experience at primary, secondary and high school levels at various private schools. He has been teaching EFL to students in Grades 5 and 6 at his current private school for three years. Teaching English in Turkey is his first and only experience as a NEST. Although he can communicate easily using Turkish in his daily life, he mentions that his writing ability is lower than the other skills. He expresses that he does not inform his students of his language ability in order to prevent any attempt of them using Turkish with him. His opinions on working in Turkey as a NEST are positive in general.

Emily is a 53 years old NEST from Australia. She graduated with an Education major in 1988. As she has a teaching degree that qualifies her to be a teacher, she does not require to hold a certificate to teach English. After she graduated as a primary school teacher, she taught in Australia for about two years. Then, she went to Japan and worked there for six years: in a high school in Japan for three years, and in a language school for three years. After having worked in Japan, she went to England and taught in London for two and a half years in primary schools as an emergency supply teacher. After her working visa in the UK expired, she looked for another job, and had an interview in Istanbul. As she liked what she was offered, she decided to take the job. She has been working at the same school since then. The current private school that she has been working at for 24 years is her only experience in Turkey. Throughout 24 years, she has taught from Grade 1 to 6, yet the last 10 or 12 years she has been teaching at primary levels. Although she has taught EFL to Grades 2,3 and 4, she has been teaching to just Grade 3 students for the last few years. She expresses her level of Turkish as “shamefully basic”. She describes her working experience in Turkey as “mostly positive”.

Nancy is a 44 years old NEST from England. She graduated from the English Language and Literature department in 1995. After she decided to teach English in another country, she got her TESOL training. Before she started to work in Turkey, she worked in China for two years, in Thailand for a year, and in England for a year as an English teacher. She expresses that she heard from her friends while working in another country about Turkey and how they liked working there, and decided to come to Turkey and work in Istanbul. She has worked at different private schools at primary and secondary levels in Turkey since she came to Turkey. She has been working in Turkey for 20 years, and she has been teaching EFL at the current private school to Grades 4, 5 and 6 for 12 years. She mentions that her listening and speaking skills are enough to communicate in Turkish; however, her level of reading and writing skills is low. She evaluates her experience in Turkey as positive in general.

### **3.3. Data Collection**

#### **3.3.1. Data collection instruments**

In qualitative studies, “data collected through interviews, observation and document analysis are primarily qualitative in nature and it is these data that are used directly to build the intensive, thick description of a case study” (Merriam, 1985, p. 205). As the use of single method might lead to bias (Williamson, 2005), in order to increase certainty in the findings and for the completeness of data, more than one approach is used, and that technique is called *triangulation* (Denzin, 1978). Four types of this technique were identified by Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999): method triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and data source triangulation (as cited in Carter et al., 2015).

Of four triangulation types identified by Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999), method triangulation and data source triangulation types were used in this study for the *validity* or *trustworthiness*, the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Polit & Beck, 2014). In method triangulation, data is collected by using multiple methods about the same case (Polit & Beck, 2012). The reason of utilizing different data collection instruments is to gather data by using a variety of sources, with the purpose of enhancing the trustworthiness of the study findings and of developing a comprehensive understanding of the study inquiry, and to validate the data

collected (Patton, 1999; Yin, 1981). Thus, to collect data for this qualitative case study, two types of data collection techniques were used: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. In data source triangulation, data are collected from different types of people in order to look at the phenomenon from different perspectives and to ensure data validation (Carter et al., 2015). In this study, four NESTs from different nationalities were selected, and both of the data collection instruments were used to collect data from those participants.

There are other strategies used in this qualitative study to account for the four criteria of trustworthiness suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. For credibility, method and data source triangulation was employed in this study. As mentioned in the data collection procedure, the participants had the chance to refuse to participate in this study. Thus, as suggested by Shenton (2004), “only those who are genuinely willing to take part and prepared to offer data freely (p.66)” were the participants. Also, the participants were encouraged to give sincere responses to the questions, and they were reminded that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions that would be asked. With the purpose of confirmability, a coder who has a PhD degree in ELT besides the author of this thesis analysed the data.

As this study is a case study, and the findings are restricted to the context of the study, it is not possible to apply the findings to general situations, which is related to transferability of a study. However, as offered by Lincoln and Guba (1985), practitioners may link the findings of a study with the situation they are in provided that they think that there are similarities between the situation of the study and that of theirs. Thus, a rich and detailed description of the context was presented in this study. Also, to be able to enable other researchers to replicate the study, detailed methodology information was provided, and the data collection tools were shared. Detailed methodological description was provided also to serve the purpose of dependability in the study apart from the strategies used for credibility that help to demonstrate dependability.

Questionnaires, as a typical data collection tool in educational research, are used to “(...) obtain information about the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions, personality, and behavioural intentions of research participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2019, p.274)”. As to be suitable for the purpose of this study, a questionnaire was prepared in light of the literature review and align with the purpose of the study (see Appendix A)

As “the participants respond by writing their answers in their own words, open-ended questions can provide rich information” (Johnson & Christensen, 2019, p.282)”. Thus, the questionnaire used in this study consists of 18 open-ended questions asked in two parts: 12 questions in the first part were formed to collect demographic information about the participants, and six questions in the second part were prepared in open format to obtain general information about the NESTs’ views on teaching English in the Turkish EFL context and to Turkish EFL learners. As explained and clarified by Datt and Priya (2016),” Reliability of questionnaire is a way of assessing the quality of the measurement procedure used to collect data. In order to consider a result valid, the measurement procedure must first be reliable (para.1)”. Hence, with the purpose of ensuring reliability of the questionnaire, it was sent to experts who have PhD degrees in ELT and work as academics at a university in Turkey. The changes suggested were made, and the final version of the questionnaire was sent to native teachers and colleagues with the purpose of checking the clarity of the questions. After being approved by the experts, the native teachers and the colleagues, the final version of the questions was used for data collection.

As aforementioned reasons, interviews, as a commonly used data collection tool in educational research, are used in this study as well. To gain insight into NESTs’ opinions on Turkish learners’ EFL learning and teaching EFL to Turkish learners in Turkey, and styles and techniques that NESTs employ while teaching, semi-structured interviews, among three types of interviews, were utilized as they include key questions that assist to define the areas intended to be explored as well as provide opportunity with the interviewer or interviewee to expand on responses or ideas (Britten, 2006). Moreover, semi-structured interviews enable researchers to reveal or elaborate ideas or information that is notable to participants, yet not have been considered by the researcher (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). In parallel with the scope and the purpose of this study, interview questions were prepared considering the literature review. The data collection tools of the studies that focus on perceptions and opinions of NESTs in the literature were reviewed, and the interview questions were elaborated, and the interview questions that are parallel with the questions in the second part of the questionnaire were formed. To ensure reliability of the interview questions, the steps taken for the questionnaire questions were followed along the same line for the interview questions. The questions were sent to experts. The necessary changes were done considering the feedback received from the experts, and the final version of the questions was sent to native speakers and colleagues

for clarity check of the questions. After being approved by the experts, the native teachers and the colleagues, the final version of the questions was established (see Appendix B)

### **3.3.2. Data collection procedure**

The participants of the study were emailed and informed about the inquiry of this study. The data collection procedure was explained in detail in the email as well. The consent form (see Appendix C) was attached to the email and sent to the participants, and they were asked to read it and respond to the email to give consent. The hard copy of the consent form was also printed and signed by each participant. Upon receiving the written consent of the participants, the questionnaire was emailed to them. All participants were informed once again about the purpose of the study and reminded to give answers sincerely. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire within a week. Editing the responses was possible until the interviews were conducted.

In a two weeks' period following the questionnaire completion, the participants were contacted to arrange an interview date. The interviews were conducted with the participants individually on ZOOM due to the health concerns regarding COVID-19 all around the world. The tips suggested for an effective interview by Johnson and Christensen (2019) were taken into consideration. Before the interview started, the participants were reminded the purpose of the interview, and they were asked to give detailed responses as possible. During the interviews, among the interview types suggested by Patton (as cited in Johnson & Christensen, 2019) the interview guide approach was applied. As mentioned by Johnson and Christensen (2019), in this approach, it is possible for the interviewer to change the wording and the order of the questions that is written and provided on an interview protocol prior to the interview session. In spite of the fact that the wording and the order of the interview questions prepared for the purpose of this study was changed depending on the participants' responses, all questions were directed to the participant. The interviews lasted minimum for 40 minutes. Each of them was recorded and transcribed verbatim for data analysis. No grammar changes were made in the responses of the participants; they were used for quoting purposes as uttered by the participants in the findings part.

### 3.4. Data Analysis Procedure

Due to the advantages of being applicable to qualitative data, examining communication using text, providing a close look to data, allowing insights into human thought, and being a powerful tool to analyse interviews and documented responses (Columbia University Public of Health, 2021), thematic analysis was implemented in this study.

The responses of the participants were printed. The data were read repeatedly to get a sense of the whole (Tesch, 1990). While going through the responses, the data were divided into segments, which are meaningful analytical units (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). The steps suggested by Bryman (2008) were considered to code the data. The segments were coloured according to the general topics of the questionnaire questions. Inductive codes, which are defined as codes generated by the researcher directly (Johnson & Christensen, 2019), were generated. The codes were written in the right-hand margin of the transcriptions. The same procedure was followed for the data gathered from each participant. The responses related to the codes were entered and listed in an excel sheet by stating the participant name. By examining the codes, the repeated codes were identified, categorized and grouped under the issues related to the research question. The coded data of the questionnaire were combined with the analysed interviews data later.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim using a digital transcriber. The accuracy was checked by the researcher. In-depth data collected from the semi-structured interviews were read line by line and segmented. Those segments were coloured, and as mentioned by Johnson and Christensen (2019), the meaningful segments were assigned a code. The codes were listed according to the issues focused on in the interview questions. The steps taken while analysing the data gathered from the questionnaire were followed after having listed the codes. The documented and grouped codes both from the questionnaire and the interviews were elaborated, and the themes occurred from the codes were identified. The occurred themes were reviewed and named. The themes and the codes that generated those codes were listed were entered in the excel sheet.

As “the need for knowledgeable coders is especially important when working with in-depth semistructured interviews (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013, p.297), to address the concern “whether different coders would code the same data the same way”

(Campbell et al., 2013, p.295), which is called inter-rater reliability, a coder who has a PhD degree in ELT besides the author of this thesis analysed the data. The themes defined by the second coder were compared to those of the author, yielding a high rate of agreement. Whenever there was a mismatch, the coders discussed and the themes used in this study were agreed upon.



## Chapter IV: Results

In this section, the results of the data collected from the questionnaire (Part II) and the interview analysed will be explained in detail.

The questions asked to the participants in the questionnaire and in the interview were in relation to the NESTs' views and opinions on Turkish EFL learners, private school environment and teaching in Turkey in alignment with the research question of this study. The participants were also asked about the strategies they utilize in their classes and suggestions they could make for Turkish EFL learners. From the responses given to the questions both in the questionnaire and the interview, different themes occurred for each aspect. In this section, the themes occurred in the data related to the aspects of research question inquiry will be presented in detail.

### 4.1. Views on Turkish EFL Learners and Their Learning Preferences

In relation to Turkish EFL learners, four major themes emerged from teachers' comments. The NESTs evaluated Turkish EFL learners regarding (1) their characteristics, (2) learning styles, (3) their attitudes towards English, and (4) language competence of Turkish learners.

#### 4.1.1. Characteristics of Turkish learners

When the NESTs were asked about their views and opinions about Turkish learners, being respectful is one of the positive characteristics that was mentioned. Larry expressed that they call you "*Hocam (master)*" while addressing you and you can see that there is a level of respect there".

In a similar vein, having a good rapport is another positive characteristic of Turkish learners mentioned by the NESTs. Emily expressed it as:

Kids are really good rapport, and they ask you about things that Western kids wouldn't be so interested in. Like they, they know I have nine cats so that they will ask me about that. And Turkish kids love to share things about their personal life, about what they did on the weekend or anything they have, a new pencil ...

As part of having a good relationship with teachers, Larry stated that most of his students come up to him, speak to him and chat with him at break times, especially when

he is on duty. The same idea is expressed by Mary as well, and she indicated that good relationships she has with her young learners are based on trust and the feeling of safety she could establish with her learners. Nancy added that even though an authority oriented relationship is dominant between Turkish teachers and students, students have a friendly relationship with their English teachers.

Contrary to their respectful behavior towards the NESTs and having a positive relationship with them, Turkish learners are mentioned to have a lack of discipline in classrooms. Mary mentioned that her students are not well-behaved; however, she stated that it is normal when their age is considered. Larry complained that the same students who are respectful and helpful at break times act differently in the classroom and “they are talking amongst themselves or not doing a task that you've asked them to do”. Emily expressed a similar problem comparing it as follows:

(...) I think the boundaries need to be set. Turkish kids generally are well-behaved compared to Western kids. Um, but I don't know. I think the kids feel more freedom with the foreign English teacher. I think they play up more with a foreign English teacher than they do with their class teacher because of the language barrier, but this was worse in the past.

While describing Turkish learners, “spoon-fed”, “not responsible” and “dependent” are the adjectives used by all of the NESTs. Larry said it is because of the way they have been brought up in their lives so far. Mary expressed the similar reason saying “(...) But it is not their fault, it's their parents fault” after giving the comparative example:

(...) in Thailand, the students, um, in the mornings before school, they had rooms and they were sweeping the, uh, you know, the outside play areas and stuff. They tied it up, they collected the leaves and tied it up the places, the way they were going to play. You know, there's an incredible humanity. (...) Here, it's definitely not like that. Definitely not. Um, you know, I had a student, um, yesterday highly upset with me because she didn't, she couldn't do a cut and stick activity in school because I didn't tell her to bring scissors and glue to school. And it was my fault, and she refused to participate, and I'm quite firm with them. I say, X don't throw a tantrum every time you can't get your way. (...)

Emily mentioned the dependency of Turkish learners as well as other participants. She explained its reason saying “(...) they (parents) want to keep their kids as kids longer and they hold them back” and compared how it is like in the West by saying:

(...) in the West they would let kids in more independent. We, we praise independence in the West. We strive the kids to be independent. (...) And in some ways it's a good thing when it comes to school and learning and being responsible for your own learning, you know what your homework is, go to your room, get it done. I think it's better to let your child be independent.

Nancy stated Turkish learners are dependent, and they do not take responsibilities, yet she accounted not only parents but also the school system for it. She explained that saying "(...) we give everything on a plate and we, I think we're going onto the part where we actually put it in their mouth with a spoon". She added that she did not blame kids as they could think in a way that "why would I have taken responsibility if it was given to me from the parents and from school?".

From the point of the NESTs, Turkish learners are considered competitive. Larry expressed that Turkish learners participate more in activities that involve playing against each other or groups against groups. Nancy said "It's more about winning. They're very competitive". Mary also stated that she can make use of competitive activities with Turkish young learners as she can get maximum participation and enthusiasm and learning. Emily mentioned the same point, and she gave the following example to illustrate the lack of fair play concept of Turkish learners and the problems occur in classroom:

(...) but (they) can't cope with competition. They get upset when they don't win. They get too competitive. They get angry. I mean, I'm fearful of doing competitive activities because I know the outcome will not be good. When they don't win, they switch off. They don't try, they don't join in. Um, yeah. And if a kid is winning and then he loses a point, he argues about that point and refuses to take parts, but they do not have the concept of fair play.

Lacking of critical and creative thinking skills are mentioned by two of the NESTs regarding secondary school Turkish learners. Larry stated that in his response mentioning "(...) from a young age, students are used to being spoon fed information in lessons. Students haven't been shown how to think critically which affects their education later on". As a response to the question related to his observation, he pointed out that Turkish learners are more goal-oriented and focus on grades and exam results more than the process of learning. He said that as "there's very little expected of students in order to achieve a pass grade" Turkish learners are not guided to develop higher thinking skills. He put it in perspective raising the question:

(...) the result of this (*low expectancy of the system*) is that students don't think that it's necessary to put effort in, you know, if they just have to do the bare minimum to get a very high score, why, why would they possibly need to do any, any more than that?"

Nancy addressed the same saying "They can do choose. They can do tests. They can choose, but anything that involves doing kind of creative, where they have to do it from beginning to end".

Related to Turkish learners, Emily made another point other participants did not mention directly. She said that students in Turkey are "starters" but not "finishers". She explained that as follows:

(...) you ask them to copy from the board. They'll copy from the board. They will do their things. Most of the things you ask them to do, they will do it. They may not necessarily complete it. Turkish kids are bad at making a quick start and completing things. Often making a start is enough, but completing it is not seen as a requirement for them.

She also made a comparison and attributed that to the system saying:

(...) They start things, but they never finish anything. Yeah. But some kids never start. Whereas in the West, you'd never have a kid who didn't start, they would finish everything. And if they didn't finish, I would be allowed to keep them into finish. In Turkey, you're not allowed to keep a child in during break to finish work.

#### **4.1.2. Learning styles of Turkish learners**

From the point of views and experiences of three participants, Turkish learners are perceived as passive and teacher-dependent learners who prefer conventional teaching and learning methods. Larry mentioned that they prefer traditional ways of learning where teacher presents knowledge, and they are required to memorize it. He highlighted that the reason of this learning preference being based on memorization rather than learning is about grade or exam-oriented studying habits, and he noted its impact on his lessons as follows:

(...) And then the only real reason that they're memorizing it is because they know that there's an exam that they just then regurgitate everything that they've just learned on paper. So in this, in this respect, I think when you try to conduct lessons where you want to test the students' critical thinking skills, um, the students don't really know how to handle this because they've never had these kinds of lessons before.

Emily expressed her views on Turkish learners' dependency on teachers while learning as well and said "teacher makes all the decisions and you're (learners) doing what we say for 30 minutes".

In parallel with what was mentioned by Larry and Emily, Nancy stressed that learners in Turkey are rule-oriented and want to formulize knowledge or want it to be presented in a formulized way by teachers. She expressed her opinions on how it should be and how it is in Turkey in her response as:

(...) the best learners are the ones that break this rule where English is not just made up of, not English, but language is not made up of just rules. It's creative. You need to add a bit of yourself. You need to add different things. You need to listen to it. It's something that's alive, and it keeps on changing, and there's daily talk as well. So I think that's the major thing that I find in Turkey that everything has to be a rule, and you have to give them a rule sometimes.

Another point stated by two of the NESTs is that Turkish learners are not into group and pair works. Larry mentioned that it is a challenge for Turkish learners to work in groups as "they don't seem to have the skills to kind of brainstorm together and create something". He added that they cannot handle the requirements of group work activities, and thus, group work activities create a lot of problems such as noise and classroom management issues. Emily stated the preference of individual works by Turkish learners and evaluated it considering the system in Turkey and the development of it as:

Turkey hasn't really progressed that much in the 24 years that I've been there. Still you've got kids working individually. There's very little group work, although there's more than when I was first there. I must admit there is more than when I was first there. I mean, now teachers are more willing to have the kids sit in groups, but still kids are working individually, and still the teachers are out the front, making all the, all the decisions.

It is mentioned by all of the NESTs that Turkish learners prefer learning through games and competitive activities most and want to have fun while learning. Mary expressed that she can get maximum participation, involvement, enthusiasm and learning when she uses games and fun activities. Nancy commented on students' willingness to play games no matter how old they are as:

(...) they love games, um, and it's age wise cause I go into grade four, five, six. I mean you think with age because when they come to a grade six, it's like 12, we think they're so big because we're going, it's such deeper topics, but it's not actually, they all want to have fun while learning. So, um,

a grade four and five, they're definitely into games. Like every lesson I go into , doesn't mind if we played like two hours, straight playing games with English, of course, um, the next lesson, they will still ask for games as well. They, they want to be intrigued. They want to have fun.

Larry pointed out that even the low or less motivated students participate in lessons and make an effort when games or competitive activities are involved in. Emily mentioned that as well as competitive ones, Turkish learners also enjoy activities that involve movement.

#### **4.1.3 Attitude of Turkish learners towards English**

All the NESTs agreed that Turkish learners are generally eager to learn English and have a positive attitude towards learning it. Emily mentioned that Turkish kids are happy to be at school, and they are not resistant to learning English. She added that there are some students who are shy and afraid of making mistakes, yet they still show willingness to attend English classes. Mary stated the eagerness of Turkish young learners towards English learning and mentioned the positive effect of language exposure outside the classroom on their attitude as:

Mostly the ones who have some English exposure are fantastic. Even if their English is terrible, they are more enthusiastic and not scared. The ones who had no no English exposure and whose parents don't understand a single English word, they are much more timid, and it takes a lot longer to open up and start trusting, start speaking in an audible voice.

Nancy believed that Turkish learners give importance to learning English and show a positive attitude due to the reason she explained as follows:

(...) generally they love it. I mean, I have to say, um, I don't really have to struggle with most students, like 90% of students, to motivate them. They know it's important. Um, and the thing is because in private schools, generally, most students have seen it since they've been in, um, primary school nursery school. So they know it, and they don't want to be very different from their friends. They want to be as good as them. And actually, we have the naughtiest boys and the girls that have really, really good English. So, um, not knowing English is not cool. It's not cool. So they want to be like them and they, because, um, they're the, minority in the class. They don't want to be like that. So they're always motivated by their peers.

Even though Larry expressed that Turkish learners show a positive attitude towards learning English, he mentioned that they do not maintain that good attitude after reaching the level of English that is enough for them.

(...) the ones who are interested are the ones who maybe want to pursue, pursue, go to university or go go, and uh, sorry, go and study abroad. Um, but I think, you know, a lot of the students, they, they just think, well, you know, I, I'm going to stay here in Turkey. I don't really know why I need to learn English once I've learned enough to a certain, to a certain level. Maybe I don't need to learn any, any higher than that.

He emphasized the effect of Turkish learners' motivation level on their attitude, and stated that Turkish learners at higher levels are less motivated and less eager, and "see it (English) as another subject" apart from the ones who see English as "a key to open doors for them" and "are more forward thinking". Another point Larry made was that Turkish learners at his teaching levels tend to show minimum effort to get maximum result in English classes as they do in other subjects. He mentioned that it is related to the system at private schools in Turkey. However, he emphasized the change reporting what he heard from his colleagues who have been teaching in Turkey for many years as:

I don't think it was always like this. You know, some of my colleagues who have been worked in Turkey for many years said that, you know, you know, a couple of decades ago, the amount of effort the students put in was far more than,, than is seen now.

Contrary to Larry, Nancy as a NEST who teaches upper levels as well commented on Turkish learners' motivation level as follows:

(...) they're really motivated students, they are really willing to learn because I think they know how important it is. And especially in Turkey, it's not, it's not a plus anymore. It's you have to have this, it's mandatory now.

Related to motivation, both Emily and Mary stated that young English EFL learners are very motivated to learn English and eager to participate in lessons and activities and to use English.

#### **4.1.4. Language competence of Turkish learners**

Related to the language abilities of Turkish learners, all of the NESTs stressed that Turkish learners are capable of understanding English, and good at verbal interaction in English. Emily stated that even the worst kid is capable of getting a message across even though they just use individual words, and the grammar is completely wrong. Larry expressed similar opinions as:

(...) they generally do very good in terms of listening, they understand a lot, uh, speaking they're generally good, although their accuracy isn't, isn't very good. They're generally fluent at the schools that I've taught at.

Larry also indicated that “for higher age groups, it's not necessary for me to simplify my language when giving oral instruction”. He explained the reason of their competency and high level of English by indicating the parts they are not good at as follows:

(...) these students have been learning English from a young age, so they are kind of, you know, their level of English is comparatively high to, to a lot of other students who've not had that kind of, uh, background of English. Um, they are, I usually find that students are fluent. So they, you know, they don't tend to pause and stop that often, but in terms of accuracy, I think they make a lot of mistakes. They still have, you know, the things that they say still have meaning, and they put meaning across, well, they can be understood, but they do make a lot of mistakes in terms of their accuracy, whether it be a choice of vocabulary, um, or just general sentence structure.

Mary mentioned the strength of Turkish young learners in speaking as well, yet she stressed the lack of accuracy as Larry did saying “Speaking is the best cause you listen and repeat, but speaking grammatically correct is not strong in younger grades”. Beside expressing speaking skill competency of Turkish learners, Nancy shared her observation about the imbalance in skills development of learners as:

But there are two things that have, I have really, really notice is that they're either very good at grammar. So the ones that are very good at grammar generally, aren't very good at speaking. And generally they are afraid or it's vice versa where you have the kids that can speak like a native can speak, just like I am with you. Um, but when it comes to reading and writing, you'll be shocked. You think the student hardly knows any English whatsoever. So generally they have the really good, um, in one skill, Either, it's speaking or it's a grammar with the rules. It's like, you'll only have like 2%. That's very, very good at both.

As Nancy pointed out, reading and writing skills are seen as the weakest skill by all of the NESTs. Larry mentioned that in spite of the fluency and competency in speaking, the students he has taught find reading and writing difficult, and he added “if they have to do writing or reading any kind of long passage, they generally, uh, switch off very quickly in these kinds of lessons”. Emily indicated the incompetency of reading and writing skills likewise and explained the reason of it as follows:

They've got a core basic set of vocab. Um, writing, writing, writing requires that grammar, that knowledge of vocab, um, extensive vocab to express an idea. I mean, if you just put some basic

vocab on a page, you haven't got a sentence. You haven't got any cohesion. You haven't got, uh, any length to what you've written. So I would say writing, writing, whenever I say I teach writing, I know that's the one they struggle with and that's the skill I find hardest to teach.

Apart from not being good at reading and writing, Mary said that Turkish young learners have difficulties in pronunciation, especially some words or letters such as “v” and “w”. Larry added punctuation to the incompetency of Turkish learners while using the language. Moreover, Nancy expressed that Turkish learners lack the skills that enable them use the language creatively.

## **4.2. Views on the Teaching and Learning Context**

### **4.2.1. Working environment in Turkey**

In relation to views and experiences on working in Turkey, three major themes emerged from teachers' responses. The NESTs evaluated the working environment in Turkey regarding (1) management attitude, (2) parental involvement, and (3) colleagues.

#### ***4.2.1.1. Management attitude***

All of the NESTs criticized management attitude of principals. Nancy complained about not having a proper and consistent management system, and put her discontentment about constant changes and last minute decisions into words as follows:

(...) Every day is a surprise. Um, it's not continuous and that is what should happen. Like we can just be going PYP (*Primary Years Program*). We can be doing this and then say why, but, okay, we're leaving this now we're starting this new thing, we're going for this new, um, program we're going for this new, um, I don't know, something new every day. It keeps on changing. Um, I think admin is the biggest problem for me, maybe in Turkey

Mary was more positive about the management, yet she criticized the management about making decisions unforeseeably.

I feel it is very well managed overall. However, I do often experience a lack of forethought. Decisions are made and systems are changed without thinking things all the way through and without brainstorming the reasons why it might go wrong. When things then do go wrong, it is the teachers who suffer from having to adapt on short notice, and it could have been avoided if the teachers who have to carry out the decisions were consulted before going ahead.

As Mary stated in her response, not being involved in the decision making process is another point the NESTs made about the attitude of management. Larry said “decisions are made without consulting teachers and can rarely be changed”. He also mentioned in his comments that due to the language barrier, there is a lack of contact between NESTs and management, and messages are passed through the head of department. Emily indicated the same point saying “I find as a foreign English teacher, I have basically nothing to do with management”.

Apart from not being included into the decision making process and not being contacted directly by management, all the NESTs expressed that they are listened to, but not heard and not understood.

Oh, well listen to, but will it be put into action? Will they take it seriously? Will they give me an answer back? They will give me an answer back. Would if my idea fits in with that idea, is that, is that where that is when I'm listened to, but apart from that, they will listen to, they will ask for my advice, they will do whatever needs to be done. A meeting where I do something, maybe an email, something there, um, there will be some kind of survey, but will it make any change? No. (Nancy)

Emily mentioned that NESTs are not listened to and are not valued by management as indicated in the following example she gave:

(...) somebody said to me just last week, actually, that hybrid education doesn't work and I agree hybrid education does not work at all. Some kids behind you on Zoom, some kids in front of you, it's really difficult for the teacher. And it's difficult for the kids. It slows down learning actually. And this foreigner was a foreigner. Another foreigner said to me, why don't we all band together and go down and say, we want this changed. And the first thing I said to her was they won't listen to us. We mean nothing to them, because I think as a foreigner, you are on the outside. You can always be replaced. I think you can always be replaced by another foreigner. You can always be replaced by a Turkish teacher. You would be cheaper; you would be less problematic.

However, she expressed that it is not the fault of the management only and explained it as follows:

I think some foreign teachers have created a bad name for all foreign teachers and that really upsets me. Um, some foreign teachers are here for a bit of a holiday and a lot of foreign teachers are not qualified teachers in their home country.

As a positive comment, Emily stated that the management has a supportive attitude when it comes to educational steps mentioning, “I never saw them standing the way and

stop anything to do with English learning that the kids were doing, that we wanted to do, that we planned. They never ever stood in the way, was my experience”. While she showed her appreciation to the importance given to the development of school, she criticized the inequality in their attitude as:

My school has a long standing reputation and it's always working at maintaining and improving on that. I think the school has focussed on advertising and proving itself with the CIS (*Council of International Schools*) and PYP accreditations, international projects and pushing what is going on outside of the classroom when what is important are the basics of what is going on inside the classroom. The school runs smoothly but there is an emphasis on student welfare and success that does not balance the attention given to teacher well-being.

The last opinion expressed was on the use of Turkish in e-mails and meetings. All of the NESTs complained that they cannot understand meetings held in Turkish and emails sent about works required to be completed. Mary indicated it saying, “I struggle in school meetings and miss out on a lot of information. Reading official e-mails via Google Translate can be problematic”.

#### ***4.2.1.2. Parental involvement***

All of the NESTs mentioned having experienced parental involvement in the working environment; however, it was more to criticize parents due to their interference in various areas rather than stating their supporting attitude. It was just Mary who talked about parents mainly in a positive way expressing that:

I have had mostly positive experiences with the family members of my students. The majority of my students' parents have a tertiary education. I feel this contributes greatly to my students' curiosity and willingness to learn and be inspired to become citizens of the world.

However, she criticized some for being extreme parents and being too involved in kids' lives and education. She mentioned that showing her planning notebook and saying:

Every child, every reading turn is written out and planned out. This is the reader. There is the speaking part. How many times have they spoken? I care and write down who spoke how many times to be fair. Also, because the parents are watching, I say it's fair, here is my proof.

Nancy stated that parents act in a manner that they know everything, and everything must be done as they wish. When she was asked about her observation about parents' role in Turkey, she criticized their attitude saying:

Oh, everything that the coach, um, they, the educator they, the headmaster there, the teacher, everything, they decide on everything. Um, they will know better than the teacher. They will know better than everyone else.

She expressed that dominant and demanding attitude of parents affects the working environment, the decisions both teachers and management make, the teachers' behaviours in the classroom, and even their mood as follows:

(...) it's not just a fact of the parents being controlling in the student's life. It's also all lives as well and the education and the classroom. And this also affects me going into the classroom because then I feel like I sometimes have to tiptoe around some students. And when you do that, you don't feel like a natural teacher in the classroom behaving naturally.

I can't say all parents, but most parents, um, mind it's what they think is right. And that will be, that is what should be done. And if it's not done, they're not happy with it. And they will complain, uh, in the groups to the headmaster, uh, parents will never, ever come to you. They would go directly to administration. And generally the top of the line is which one they prefer. Um, and then you would just find yourself again, um, proving yourself that you are right by doing actually what a teacher should normally be doing.

Even though Larry said that there are some parents who are supportive and helpful to teachers and students, he commented on the similar attitude he observed in parents as Nancy mentioned by saying:

(...) unfortunately there are some parents as well, who, you know, they, they, they believe that their child can do no wrong. So they think that it might be, you know, the real issue is either the other students at school, the school itself, or even you as a teacher. So, um, and a lot of the time as well, rather than come to you directly with any issues, they might choose to go directly over your head and speak to your, your supervisor, your line manager, your team leader.

Emily criticized parents about being too involved in kids' responsibilities and pointed out that there are two extreme types of parents and parental attitudes she has experienced in Turkey as follows:

They sit back and let the teacher do it. You've got the two extremes, the two extremes here. You've got parents who are too involved doing the work for the child, um, to feeding the answers to the kid. You know, I had a lot of this last year, admittedly, it was the the school's first experience of zoom. And I would hear parents whispering the answers. I don't have that so much this year because, um, they're more used to zoom, I think, and the kids can cope better. So you've got kids, parents who are too involved doing the homework for the child, feeding the answers. That's not helpful. Then you've got parents who do nothing, do nothing who say, you know, I tell them, well,

X student hasn't done any homework all year. Okay. I'll talk to her. Student X three months on still hasn't done any homework, but two extremes and a little bit in the middle. I mean, it's a bit of everything.

She also stated that even though all parents want their kids to be successful, most of them do not take any responsibilities in guiding or supporting kids and putting boundaries to kids to be more disciplined learners. Her complaint about parents who do not have any control over their kids' learning is as below:

(...) parents want their kids to learn English. They want their kids to do well at English, but they don't want to put the pressure on kids who can't do that themselves, who don't have that. Self-discipline that self-management if you want your child to do well at English, the child has to do the homework. If the kid isn't doing the homework on their own parents, you have to make them do the homework. But parents don't want to be seen as the bad guy. So often I'm asked by parents, can you please tell him to do his homework? Can you please tell him, read on Raz-Kids They say he will listen if it comes from you. Well, you're the parent. He should listen If it comes from you as well.

Related to the communication between teachers and parents, all of the NESTs said that they cannot be direct to parents while talking to them about their kids' situation, development, behaviour or attitude, which makes their job more difficult. They explained that situation, its reasons and effects as:

We're always told not to be so direct but to put it in a nice way. I have been, it depends. Um, I have been direct to parents, but 90% no. The moment because the moment you say something you can tell from the parent that is not what they want to hear. So you have to put it in a way that's more positive, um, or more vague should I say? And, or like you say, I'll try to do this and you won't say you'll, you will do this. Um, or he might get a higher grade. He might, you have to quite think vague because you know, the moment you tell something upfront that you will be, um, from admin, you will be put down, you'll be questioned. (...) we have to be very indirect and this is very tiring. I think this is the most tiring part for me, where I can't speak my mind. Of course not in a brutal way, but in a more direct way I would like to speak instead of having to, um, be so indirect, which is very, very tiring. (Nancy)

I want to say I am not honest with parents but I am also very honest with parents. I will try to explain what it means. I was told before parents' meetings what I was not allowed to say to parents, which is awful. I sugar-coat things in a way and say what I want to say. (...) I imply things, don't say as they are or what I really think. I haven't been allowed to be direct. (Mary)

(...) the management are usually quite, uh, quite direct in, in how they tell you what you can, and can't say to the parents, um, you know, you, you can be honest to a certain degree, but, but not

overly honest, you know, and, you know, at the end of the day, you know, they, they believe the parents views are more important than anything else, in my opinion, in my opinion, unfortunately. (Larry)

*(Being direct to the parents)* About the homework? Yes. About the discipline level? No. About their academic level? No it's said in such a roundabout polite way. I don't know if the parents get it. I don't think, I think they get it. I often say for a week called he finds English difficult instead of outright saying your child is weak. I say your child finds English difficult and he struggles. But I can't say directly how serious it is. (Emily)

#### **4.2.1.3. Colleagues**

All of the participants mentioned positive opinions about working with their associates in their department. Emily stressed the strengths of NNESTs' and her observations about their teaching style as:

The Turkish English teachers I have worked with have always had a very good understanding of grammar and been competent in all 4 skills. I believe they teach the way they were taught as students. They are very thorough in the way they present material and successful at getting what they teach across to the students. I don't see Turkish English teachers as natural risk takers but tend to play it safe. I think this is due to the expectations that management have of Turkish English teachers being much higher than the expectation they place on foreigners who are there for the 'experience of English' through a challenging, alternative and more interactive style of teaching.

Larry commented on NNESTs in a similar vein, and pointed out it is the NESTs who are difficult to work with saying:

(...) I've always had good relationships with all of my Turkish colleagues. I've never had any problems. Uh, in fact, if I'm being completely honest, the, the problems that I've seen, uh, usually come from other foreign teachers actually. Um, so, you know, they, they are generally very, very helpful. Um, they they're competent, they know what they're doing, and, you know, they, they're free to kind of, uh, you know, you can work with them. They understand that there's certain responsibilities within the office that only really they can do effectively, um, being Turkish speakers. Uh, and they're, you know, they're more than happy to do those things, as long as everybody's obviously doing, doing their own work, you know, and, and being part of the team. I think it can, it generally all works very well.

Emily made a remark about the NESTs who are not qualified teachers or about the ones who work in Turkey as a teacher due to having nothing else, but to work as a teacher. She stated that it is difficult to work with those kind of colleagues as they cannot see teaching from the same perspective qualified teachers can do.

(...) if you're working with somebody who sees teaching starts at eight o'clock when I get to school and teaching finishes the minute I walk out the door, it's hard to work with people like that. Teaching does extend beyond those hours.

Mary shared her observation about the NESTs she has come across with as follows:

I cannot base this on facts, but it is my general impression that there are rather a lot of foreigners teaching English in Turkey with insufficient capabilities to do so. I think there is a lot of room for improvement in regards to the quality of education offered by foreign English teachers here. My impressions are based mostly on attending training workshops with teachers I don't know and hearing them speak and listening to their questions and contributions.

She commented on how helpful and supportive colleagues are at the school she has been working, and how much she has learned from them.

All the NESTs mentioned that there is less work they are required to complete compared to the NNESTs.

(...) I have to say, Turkish teachers get lots of extra admin kind of work, become classroom teachers, they also, um, do translations, they have to attend meetings or do things because we don't know Turkish, we are not given these kind of things. (Nancy)

#### **4.2.2. Classroom environment**

In relation to views and experiences on classroom environment, 2 major themes emerged from teachers' responses. The NESTs commented on the classroom environment at a private school in Turkey regarding (1) class size, and (2) physical layout.

##### **4.2.2.1. Class size**

All the NESTs think that classrooms are overpopulated. Emily mentioned that classroom population varies from 20 to 24. She stated the ideal classroom size and gave her reasons as follows:

Fewer is always better because there's more speaking time. There's less waiting time. And I think that's where I lose my kids. When it's one, child's turn to talk, I lose the others because they're waiting for their turn. Well, you can wait until the next lesson. So I think the ideal number when I think I was working in a language school, the ideal number is 12, 12. It's, it's always best to have an even number and even number. You can pair them up. You can make groups of three groups of four, but 12, 14 max, so that I get too bored working with the same person. But at the moment I've got a class of 18, 19 that's too many nineteen is too many.

She expressed that class size does not affect the classroom management, but the attitude and self-discipline management skills students have. She added “the discipline problems are more there because of the kids' level of motivation”.

Larry stated that 20 is the ideal number for effective education. Similar to Emily, he mentioned that even though having many students can create problems, classroom management issues are derived mainly from unmotivated students.

Nancy said that the class size changes between 20 and 25, yet she believes that it should not be more than 21. She explained it and gave her reasons saying:

I would definitely say shouldn't go over 21 students because after that, it really doesn't matter because we do go in for hybrid lessons, even though there's like half of the class, um, which is like close to 13, 14, and that's even still quite a lot. Um, and when I had 20 students and the year I had 24 students against the massive difference and a lot of burden on the teacher as well with all the extra paperwork you have to do. But my main thing is the classroom to give enough attention to each student. It shouldn't go beyond 21.

She remarked that class size has an effect on classroom management in some ways. She made it clear as follows:

(...) I mean, it takes longer for them to realize what the rules and the boundaries are, because it's much easier acceptable when you have a smaller class, but when it's a bigger class, there's more the variety of students there. And the level of the attitudes will change. So yes, it does take a bit longer, but in the long, uh, after you put down your rules and, uh, the classroom atmosphere, then it does work, but still it's so much higher.

Mary reported that there are 22 students in a class on average, yet she mentioned that 18 is the ideal number especially for young learners to be able to give enough attention and time to learners. Different from other 3 NESTs, based on her experience Mary brought up that classroom management is easier for male teachers and explained it as:

I got the sense that male teachers have an easier time with classroom management. Just, I can't know if it's cultural or if it's, um, biological, if it's a man's voice, if it's the sound of the voice whether if it's because it's a patriarchal society or what or what, but I feel men have a bit of a, um, advantage.

She highlighted that management problems occur when there is a student with special needs in the same classroom with other students rather than class size. She explained it saying, “you have one student who is special needs, um, and it's a kind of special needs

where you have to deal with aggression and things like that, uh, classroom management is impossible”.

#### **4.2.2.2. Physical layout**

The NESTs commented on physical layout differently. Neither Mary nor Emily thinks that the classroom layout is convenient for young learners. Emily stated it is a challenge as “I can't get the kids to move around because it's just too much effort to move tables and desks. I just give up because you'd have to move everything around”. She added that “the classroom, the physical layout and set up of Turkish classrooms are not user-friendly, they're not learner friendly” and explained it as:

I want the kids to sit on the floor because you have that physical closeness. They can all see what you've got in your hand or whatever, but who wants to sit on a dirty line over floor? Whereas in the UK, in Australia, we had a carpeted area for kids to sit on the floor. I think the structure of the room, how there's nothing extra in the room. Like there isn't an, a book corner for the kids to go to and read a book. There's an, a games corner for the kids to go to and play a game. Um, none of that exists. And so there's no reward for a kid. You know, you have these kids who finish early and I think we'll a nice reward would be to go to the book corner, go to the games corner, but it doesn't exist.

Another point she made related to the physical layout is that it is so basic that nothing inspires interest in learning. She clarified it saying:

You've got 24 kids crammed into a tiny room. All it is. It's a space with chairs, tables, and a board. Really there's a cupboards. I mean, how is this appealing in any way? There isn't enough colour in the class. Everything's white or beige. There isn't a colour. You know, there's no kind of murals, there's no artwork. There's not much of the kids' work. Um, they can only go on the, you know, the white of the pin board at the back, the *pano* (*bulletin board*). And also there's very little opportunity for incidental learning.

Mary described her dream class and indicated what Emily mentioned in her comment:

I would want my own classroom. That is wall to wall, floor to ceiling dedicated to my subject. So wherever you look, whatever you do, there's fantastic stimulus things that engage you that pull your attention, that make you want to be here. A magical world of English and the students when they change, they change classes and they come to your classroom.

She stated that classroom itself and most of the activities done in the classroom are not as fun as she would want them to be due to the physical layout and design of the class, thus

she views end-of-year shows as a chance to provoke creativity and to become the dullness of classrooms.

Nancy commented on the same classroom design as being enough and manageable for classroom activities. She also mentioned that classrooms are equipped with technology, which is enough for her.

When asked about classroom environment, Larry did not make any comment related to the classroom layout.

### **4.2.3. Teaching in Turkey**

From the responses of the NESTs to the questions related to teaching in Turkey, two major themes emerged. The NESTs commented on teaching in Turkey regarding (1) the academic based system, and (2) traditional teaching implementations.

#### ***4.2.3.1. Academic based system***

The NESTs highlighted how the education system has changed over years, and criticized the point it reached in their comments. Two of the NESTs who teach students who have to sit an exam or take tests to be evaluated mentioned that teaching in Turkey is exam and grade oriented. Below are some comments of those NESTs related to the academic oriented learning and teaching system:

(...) It wasn't so much academic base or score--based should I say because it's language learning. It's more about learning rather than getting grades and stuff, but now it's become, um, one of the major lessons like Math in Turkey. So, um, I have to say, because it's coming to that league before it used to be in a learning league, but now it's more of a academic league. It's changed so much.  
(Nancy)

Unfortunately, we've gone to a place now where we, things are very grade oriented, sorry, grade orientated. Um, you know, it might have been before that, you know, it was seen as a privilege to learn English, um, and something that will be very useful for you in the future. Whereas now, you know, everything's just based on grades. If you get a good grade, then, then that's it, that's all you need to do. (Larry)

Emily who teaches at primary levels where there is no formal assessment complained about the similar aspect of the system and its effect on teaching to young learners. She mentioned product oriented but not process valued system as follows:

I find the education focus and indicator that learning has taken place is still very much on the product as opposed to the process. 24 years on and the school, parents and students still attach more importance to test results than the skills they have acquired whether they be academic, social or self-management skills. It is a very exam based education system which can be stressful. Even at the grade 3 stage I teach I know that of everything I have taught my students what will matter most will be the exam grades they get in grade 4.

As Mary teaches English to Grade 1 and 2 at which there is no exam, she did not comment on academic oriented system in her responses.

#### ***4.2.3.2. Traditional teaching implementations***

Most of the NESTs stated that teaching is done through conventional implementations, and the expectation from the education they provide is shaped accordingly. Emily criticized teacher dominant teaching style in Turkey expressing that there is little place to group work, and teachers are out the front. She mentioned lessons must be student-centred, and explained why she cannot implement her ideas into her classes as much as she wants to do as below:

I don't think we give kids, other kids as role models often enough. And you think who does most of the talking in the lesson, I already know how to speak English. I don't need to learn how to speak English, but often. And I'm guilty of this a lot of the time too. I do. Most of the speaking in the lesson, it should be the kids that are doing most of the speaking in the lesson. And I think we all need to be reminded of that. And I think because we've got so much material to get through and the class management reasons the teacher dominates, but if this was happening where it was more of an even, even kind of playing field, the kids more involved in the lesson, in their Turkish lessons, as well as their English lessons, it would be easier to do. But I think we don't do it for mainly classroom management reasons and also to get through material faster.

Larry stated the effect of traditional educational habits into his lessons as below:

I think there are issues in terms of sometimes the students' expectations. I think that they've been, they've been taught, uh, in a certain, in a certain way throughout their educational careers, um, for no better words. Like they've kind of been spoon-fed everything, in their lessons. And I guess maybe this is not just English. They seem to be, I think they've relied on a system where the teacher just gives them knowledge that they may put on the board or something. The students just simply memorize it.

Emily indicated traditional implementations of other teachers saying:

I mean, there's sitting for a big part of the day and the classroom teachers don't get them and sit on the floor like we do in the West, in the West. We often have them sitting on the floor. We take them to a multi-purpose room and do an activity in the multi-purpose room. Um, whereas he it's all classroom based. Even the drama lesson is in the classroom, you know, everything's classroom-based.

She shared the reaction she got when she tried to implement the way she had used in another country into Turkish classes as follows:

When I came from the UK, I did this, I just taught the way I taught in the UK. So I'd have, we'd all be sitting on the floor, doing something in a circle and then not have the kids sit at the front of the group and read a story and I'd sit on the floor with the kids. And it was reported that I was doing with the, she does weird things. She has the kids sitting on the floor.

Apart from the comments made on an academic based system and traditional education implementations, three of the NESTs mentioned the dominance of parents in various areas of teaching in Turkey. Below are some comments of the NESTs related to the dominant role of parents in teaching:

Parents all vary but I can say that they all have the expectation of their children achieving great results in English but many fail to do the follow up needed on their part to make it happen. Parents find it very hard here to accept that their child struggles academically, is lazy or disruptive. Even the most honest and sane of parents often fail to acknowledge any fault in their child. There seem to be 3 groups - those that are over involved in their child's studies, those who take no responsibility whatsoever with their child mirroring the same behaviour and those comfortably in the middle. (Emily)

Most parents are helpful and often ask how they can help us with their children at home. However, they can be very demanding if their children fail or their grades are low. (Larry)

(...) there's so much stress and controlled by the parents. They just want more and more. And if a kid can even speak native like, it's not even enough for them, they will ask you what else can we do to improve it? Whether it's actually nothing else. The kid is very happy learning, continuing, and he is doing extra stuff, but it's never enough for the parents. They just want more and more of this English. (Nancy)

In addition to her comments related to the discussed themes, Emily expressed her opinion on the school system comparing it with the others she taught in as follows:

Operating like a high school, every 30 minutes, every 40 minutes or 30 minutes on Zoom, 40 minutes on regular, there they're out having a 10-minute break instead of developing their own independence and doing a series of activities over say an hour and 15 minutes. Like we would in the West where the kids make the decision. Okay, I've got this task. When I finished this task, I can go and take a book from the corner and do from silent reading. We're not finished silent reading. I can go and get a puzzle and do a puzzle. So you're developing that independence that way. And the child is making their own decisions. Structuring, what do I do next? What do I do next learning some self-discipline? Whereas the way the Turkish system is the teacher makes all the decisions and you're doing what we say for 30 minutes.

### 4.3. Strategies Used by NESTs

The strategies the NESTs use to overcome the challenges they face with and to help students be better learners vary.

Emily mentioned that she teaches as she used to teach in England in terms of student-centred activities saying, "I teach a bit differently because I often have the kids out the front doing things". She stated that "I do move kids around. I do move the chairs around" to overcome the physical layout problems. She also expressed that apart from using lots of verbal praise to motivate learners, "I read out their work as the example, what their work on the board with their name in brackets, so give them some reward and recognition that way, but reward and recognition for student efforts".

Larry prioritized intriguing lessons for effective learning and teaching, and explained what he does as below:

I, I just try and, you know, try and make my lessons as interesting as possible and in, in engaging as possible. Um, I think there are a lot of good, um, programs that you can use online programs, uh, which, you know, can create game-like activities or, you know, they really just make the lesson different in, in some kind of way. Um, rather than just giving, you know, straight, uh, you know, unoriginal, you know, um, activities, like word, word, blanks, and everything, you know? Um, so yeah, I think that's, you just have to try and make your lessons stand out, be different, you know, make the, the, the kids interested, so they'll participate.

For Mary, building in a good relationship with classroom teacher of the classes she teaches gives her a chance to decorate the classrooms, use the space as she wants and change the desks according to activities she wants to use in her classes. She reported the using end-of-year show preparations as a learning facilitator as "It's the most English they learn is through the shows and um, people skills, self-management skills. They grow up,

uh, in the rehearsals for the shows". In addition to shows, she said she makes use of games as Turkish learners love learning through games.

Nancy gives chances to learners to be creative and use activities that can challenge learners to go beyond rules and mechanic aspects of the language as she believes and expresses:

English is not just made up of not English, but language is not made up of just rules. There are it's creative. You need to add a bit of yourself. You need to add different things. You need to listen to it. It's something that's alive and it keeps on changing and there's daily talk as well.

#### **4.4. Suggestions to EFL Learners**

Based on their experiences, opinions on learning English and the way Turkish learners are and how they learn, below are the suggestions the NESTs made to Turkish EFL learners to become more successful learners:

Um, I would definitely say, um, do not, I think the main thing again, I'm just going to repeat myself. It's like, don't just be so, um, focused on just grammar rules. I mean, that would be the best thing. Um, it's changed. We need to change our attitude like that, that worked in the past and that made you not talk, be able to talk and understand things in English, but to now, um, [inaudible] awful skills. You definitely need to listen and, um, listen to daily things, not just very informative, kind of, um, news and stuff like that. Daily things that interest you, it doesn't have to be boring learning. Doesn't have to be boring and also definitely try to use it as much as you can, not just leave it with the classroom. (Nancy)

Definitely reading, but reading but listening before reading for pronunciation. Much more listening. For my age groups watch your favourite TV show in English, play in English. Any exposure. Reading but listening and reading. Students don't listen but just read so their pronunciation is a bit poor. Reading aloud to hear themselves. (Mary)

Emily emphasized the importance of taking responsibility in learning and of improved social skills. She recommended to work on writing accuracy as she believes it is the part Turkish EFL learners neglect. As Emily stated, Larry focused on critical thinking and note taking skills as he thinks that Turkish EFL learners are lack of them. He believes that note taking is an important skill, and students will make use of it in the future as well. Apart from the skills needed to be improved, he stated that punctuation is generally found difficult by students, and it is recommended being focused on as well as reading and writing.

In relation to the question that focuses on the NESTs future plans in their teaching career, it was found Mary and Nancy do not want to work as a teacher any longer, whereas Larry wants to continue his career at a university. Nancy responded the question about her future as follows:

(...) coming to an end, uh, actually it's coming to an end. Um, it is because it's not just because I've been teaching for a very long time. It's also because, especially with the new things that have been going on and the rules and the things that teachers have been put through, like I have to say, we're not, again, being put through as much as the other teachers are. Um, it changes the people that like it can be with the native teachers as well. Some of them are being the burden that being put on the things that we have to go through everything. Um, it's not a time to be a teacher, at private school in Turkey, at the moment.

Among the NESTs, only Emily mentioned that she wants to continue teaching at a private school saying:

To teach as long as I can. To teach as long as I can, um, to still enjoy teaching, to still get, although it kills me, I still get stressed out about teaching. I still stress about lessons, about choosing material, about sequencing material, about what things I should teach first. Should I do this activity? Should I not do this activity? I still get stressed about this. It still worries me. The minute I stopped getting stressed about walking into a classroom is the, the time I give up teaching, because that's the time you no longer care.

In relation to the NESTs' experiences of and views about teaching EFL in a Turkish private school setting, the positive findings regarding Turkish EFL learners are:

- showing respectful behaviours towards teachers and having a good relationship with them
- being into sharing about their lives
- enjoying learning through games
- being mostly eager and motivated to learn English
- showing positive attitude towards learning English
- being happy to be at school and to attend English classes
- being capable of understanding English

- being good at verbal interaction in English and speaking fluently

The findings also showed that there are some features that the NESTs observed in Turkish EFL learners and mentioned about critically. These are as follows:

- not being fully on task in classes, especially secondary school learners
- not being well-behaved depending on young age groups
- not being responsible and independent learners due to the way of upbringing
- being too competitive even in learning focused games
- lacking of critical and creative thinking skills due to the grade oriented system and insufficient training in using those skills
- being passive learners as result of the traditional education implementations
- not being capable of working in groups or pairs
- showing low motivation after a certain level of English competency
- being in tendency to show minimum effort for maximum result
- showing less interest to reading and writing skills development
- being weak at accurate verbal production despite of being fluent

Related to working environment, working with helpful and competent NNESTs in a supportive team, having less administration work, and fewer responsibilities compared to the NNESTs are the positive experiences mentioned by the NESTs in this study. On the other hand, inconsistency in decisions, lack of stable and planned management system, not including teachers into decision making process, constant use of Turkish in emails and at meetings, and too much parental involvement in educational decisions and activities are the views of the NESTs that are negatively mentioned.

Apart from the negative findings related to the working conditions and environment, unfriendly learning and teaching physical layout of classrooms, especially for young learners, and overpopulated classes are the areas the NESTs commented on negatively.

Yet, technology integrated classrooms are viewed as the positive feature of the classroom environment that the NESTs work in.

For successful language learning and improvement in English competency, Turkish EFL learners are advised to enhance their reading and writing skills as well as pronunciation and punctuation. Thus, more exposure to English through different sources, such as TV and the internet is recommended. To be well-prepared for their future, Turkish EFL learners are recommend to work on critical thinking and note taking skills.

Despite of the mostly positive attitude towards teaching at a private school in Turkey, traditional teaching implementations and academic success dominancy of the system are the encountered challenges by the NESTs. Due to the changes in working conditions and a demanding attitude of stakeholders, two of four NESTs in this study do not plan to continue their career as a teacher. One NEST wants to work at tertiary levels. Just one NEST wants to teach as long as she can.

## Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to provide insights into both NESTs' views on teaching EFL in a Turkish private school classroom setting and their opinions about Turkish learners. Their experiences in a Turkish private school environment were also sought in terms of advantages and challenges they face. NESTs' suggestions to Turkish EFL learners were also examined in this study.

### 5.1. Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this study revealed the experiences of the NESTs and their views and opinions on teaching EFL to Turkish learners in a private school setting. Although the literature is replete with research delving into perceptions in ELT, there is a scarcity of inquiry based on NESTs' views in the EFL context in the literature, and with the exception of the study conducted with expatriate teachers at private schools in Turkey by Aydın et al. in 2019, no research has specifically focused on NESTs' views and experiences on teaching English to Turkish EFL learners at a private school in the Turkish context. Considering the necessity of it, this study hopes to shed light on the views and opinions of NESTs who work at a private school in Turkey and to provide an opportunity to evaluate Turkish EFL learners at a private school from a different perspective as “views of teachers about learners' language learning have an effect on constructing their teaching environment” (Behroozizad, et al., 2014, p.219). Moreover, Turkish EFL learners at private schools might be provided with guidance to become more successful learners in light of the findings. In addition, the findings may inform NESTs who are planning to teach to Turkish EFL learners in a private school in Turkey about the system, and how it is like to work at a private school in Turkey. Also, the findings might guide teachers to find appropriate and effective teaching and classroom activities for Turkish learners of English, and help publishers that are in search of designing materials for learners in the Turkish context. Finally, Turkish principals and parents in Turkey can understand what the NESTs have been going through and how they evaluate the system and can develop a new understanding in how to cooperate with NESTs for a better educational atmosphere for kids at a private school.

In terms of overall experience, all the NESTs stated to have a positive attitude towards working in a private school in Turkey and teaching EFL to Turkish learners. This finding is

similar to the attitude of the NESTs towards Korean learners and the Korean setting revealed in the study conducted by Chun (2013). In spite of the positive attitude indicated by the NESTs, it was found that there are negative changes in working conditions, the attitudes of parents and students that affect the NESTs opinions correspondingly. Among various reasons, not being content with working environment and conditions leads to job dissatisfaction that might result in quitting (Okke & Mtyuda, 2017). As the contributions of teachers to education and students' developments, and the continuity of education are important, the dissatisfaction the NESTs addressed to should be taken into consideration to prevent teacher shortage that might occur in the long run in a similar context of the study.

In relation to Turkish EFL learners, it was seen that Turkish EFL learners at a private school are observed to be eager to learn English, to display positive attitude towards English and not to resist to learning it by the NESTs. Giving importance to English learning and being motivated learners is another aspect revealed related to Turkish learners according to the NESTs' observations. Concerning the motivation, it was found that according to the NESTs, the motivation level of Turkish EFL learners may go down as the competence in English gets higher and reaches to a certain level as well as exams and grades begin to gain value in the education system. This finding echoes in the Korean context according to the findings of Chun (2013). As Turkish EFL learners are considered to give importance to English learning and be motivated to learn and use it, it might be easy for teachers to implement different developmental techniques and strategies according to the needs of the learners. As part of their characteristics, it was revealed that Turkish EFL learners are seen to be very competitive and thus, their favourite classroom activities are observed to be the ones that include games and competitions. As Turkish learners are perceived to lack a fair play and playing for fun concept, some problems such as losing focus or complaining and giving attitude to teachers or other students have been experienced in classrooms by the NESTs. Concerning the preference of Turkish EFL learners, group and pair work are specified to be the less favoured activities of Turkish learners by the NESTs. This finding is not the same with the finding Cheongsook (2002) reported about the Korean learners. Unlike Korean learners, Turkish EFL learners in this study are seen not to be into group and pair work. As pair and group work activities require collaborative work (Saeed, 2012), use of more pair and group work activities in EFL classes in Turkey might be effective considering the finding related to competitive characteristics of Turkish EFL learners. Yet, the point made by Bruton (2002) that pair and

group work activities can be good for fluency, but not for accuracy should be taken into consideration while planning group and pair work activities in the similar context of this study where Turkish EFL learners show high fluency but low accuracy. To increase participation and motivate learners in EFL classes, games can be utilized more; however, the emphasis may not be put on winning or losing, but learning. In this case, team games can be preferred in light of the finding related to indicated the characteristics of Turkish learners by the NESTs.

As strengths of Turkish EFL learners at a private school, it was stated by the NESTs that Turkish EFL learners are good at understanding English and using it in verbal interactions. In spite of the mistakes made related to accuracy, Turkish learners at a private school are believed to be fluent speakers. By contrast with their competency in listening and speaking, it was found that the NESTs perceived Turkish EFL learners to be weak in reading and especially writing skills. This finding is different from the one revealed in Chun's (2013) study concerning Korean EFL learners. Unlike Turkish EFL learners, Korean students are found to be better at reading and writing skills compared to speaking and listening ones. This finding may indicate that Turkish EFL learners at a private school are into verbal expressions of their opinions and thoughts, thus activities based on speaking, such as presentations and debates can be utilized in Turkish EFL classes.

Despite the positive views and observations, it was revealed that according to the observations of the NESTs, Turkish EFL learners adopt a disorderly manner in classes such as not listening to teachers, not working on assigned tasks or not completing it in spite of their respectful behaviour towards the NESTs and having a positive relationship with them. This suggests that Turkish EFL learners at private schools may lack self-discipline, display immature behaviour and may not take responsibility in their learning process. The findings showed that from the NESTs' perspectives, due to the excessive parental interference into kids' lives and the system in which students are not required to do much to get what they want to, the Turkish EFL learners at a private school are perceived not to be able to display independent and responsible learner behaviours. It may be concluded that Turkish learners at a private school akin to the school of this study need to be equipped with skills that can assist them to become independent learners. As the prerequisites of becoming an independent learner, Wilson and Conyers (2018) suggest the establishment of motivation for learning in students, a good relationship with students, and

the provision of guiding, coaching and encouraging students for developing goals and managing learning. As the findings indicate that motivation and a good rapport with teachers exist at the private school setting, actions related to assisting learners should be taken. This puts emphasis on teachers as it is important “for teachers to understand the pedagogical implications of developing independent learners and the importance of structuring the environment to enable increasing learner independence” (Livingston, 2012, p. 1528). In order to understand learners and the educational environment for more efficient learning and teaching implementations and guidance, it may be beneficial for teachers to know the culture, expectations of the educational system, parents and students. Thus, NESTs may be provided orientation related to culturally shaped expectations of the students and parents, the school and educational system they will work within.

Another point that was revealed is that Turkish learners are perceived to hold a goal and grade oriented attitude in learning, and as a result of this, they focus on exam results rather than the process of learning and their achievement and improvement within time. It was understood that according to the NESTs, this attitude reflects on their expectations of learning and teaching environment and classroom behaviour as being passive and teacher-dependent learners. Instead of taking initiative, making decisions in the learning process and being creative, they expect to be presented knowledge and taught by teachers and to memorize knowledge to pass exams or get high grades. These traditional expectations are believed to have a negative effect on the students’ skills development such as critical thinking, note-taking, creative use of language and working within groups by the NESTs. Being passive, less autonomous and dependent learners, rote learning and memorization habits due to the conventional education system is in line with the finding Kim (2004) revealed in the Korean context related to university students, and with that of Cheongsook’s (2002) study related to Korean learners. The criticisms of the NESTs related to education and assessment and evaluation system, and Turkish learners’ tendency to memorization rather than learning echo in the study of Aydın et al. (2019) related to the expatriate teachers’ views on Turkish EFL learners at primary and secondary level.

Considering the fact that learning habits of learners are shaped in relation to educational environment provided in cultures, how learners apt to or prefer to learn is important for the efficiency of education. Learning styles indicate that different people

learn information in different ways, which emphasizes the importance of knowing learners and their tendency individually. With the purpose of fostering learning and instruction, different learning style assessment tools are utilized. Yet, the tools developed on the basis of Dunn and Dunn's (1990) learning style models are the most popular and extensively used assessment tools (Pashler et al., 2008). As one of the purposes of this study was to shed light on Turkish learners at private schools in general from the points of the NESTs who work at a private school, none of the learning style assessment tools was used in this study. However, the views of the NESTs may provide us some valuable information about how Turkish learners at private schools are apt to learn. The findings showed that Turkish learners are perceived to learn through active participation, by taking part in classroom activities based on speaking and competitive games. They are not apt to reading and writing, and they prefer traditional instruction. As assessment in Turkish education system is based on assessing all students using the same tool and according to same criteria, it may be difficult to base educational practices solely on learning styles of learners. However, it is known that "instruction should be provided in the mode that matches the learner's style" to provide effective and efficient learning and teaching (Pashler et al., 2008, p.108). Thus, teachers of Turkish EFL learners at private schools may benefit from enriching their teaching approach by using various activities and materials that appeal to different learning styles. As teachers need to be informed about learners for enriched classroom activities, in-service training may be provided to NESTs in designing materials that match with the needs and preferences of their learners.

When the NESTs were asked about the positive and negative aspects they have encountered in the school environment, it was found that not having a proper management system, decisions made unforeseeably, not being involved in decisions related to them, being listened but not heard are their stated concerns in respect to management. This finding is similar to the views of expatriate teachers in the study of Aydın et al. (2019). Another point was use of Turkish instead of English in meetings and mails. It was revealed that following the meetings and emails is a challenge the NESTs face as they are not competent in Turkish. Being given less administrative work due to the language barrier is found to be seen as an advantage by the NESTs, yet it was understood that they show appreciation to work done by the NNESTs instead.

Parental involvement was stressed while evaluating and talking about opinions and experiences related to working in Turkey. However, it was revealed that parental involvement is seen as interference in teachers' jobs, management, school life, kids' learning and development as an individual rather than being in a collaborative manner in the education and development process of children. It was found that parents are perceived to be a source of stress due to their "know-it-all" attitude and not setting boundaries to their kids and taking responsibilities in guiding or supporting students. This finding is in line with the finding related to the views of some expatriate teachers on parents in the study of Aydin et al, 2019).

The findings may imply that more responsibilities are supposed to be taken by students rather than parents, and parents need to become the supporter of education. Although it is suggested by the literature that parental involvement is important and has positive impact on children's outcome in education, it might affect education negatively (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997) as it can be seen in the attitude of *helicopter parents* and its effect on students' performance at school (Tabaeian, 2016). Bearing that in mind, working with people who are pertinent to children's education within the framework of defined roles, establishing information exchange between teachers and parents based on realistic and guiding information change may increase the positive impact of parental involvement.

The findings relevant to the opinions and views of the NESTs on their colleagues showed that all of the participants have positive opinions about working with their associates in their department. It was found that NNESTs are viewed as competent EFL teachers, helpful and supportive. Unlike the finding of the study conducted by Kesevan et al. (2018), it was indicated by the NESTs that NESTs and NNESTs do not share common perspective on the teaching approach. Yet, it was stated by one of the NESTs that it is because of the expectations put on NNESTs by the system in Turkey, and the way NNESTs were taught when they were students as well. The comments made by the NESTs showed that the problem is mostly not well-trained NESTs or the ones who do not have teacher mind set.

The responses given to the questions related to the classroom environment showed that all of the NESTs think that classes are overpopulated, which prevents them giving enough attention to each learner in classes. This finding is in line with the opinions of the NESTs

on classroom sizes in Korea revealed by Cheongsook (2002). Similar to another finding of Cheongsook (2002), having mixed ability students in the same class is perceived as a problem that causes classroom management problems by a NEST in this study as well. Little or no motivation was found to be the main reason of classroom management problems at this private school. From the viewpoint of physical layout, the findings showed that physical layout is not seen to be very learner friendly for and not convenient to young learners. It was also understood that the physical classroom environment is perceived to be so basic that activities such as storytelling on the floor or using different learning corners cannot be used in the classes of this private school.

These findings imply that a system that includes teachers into the decision making process and values them more is longed for at schools. Also, considering that the setting of the study is a private school, which indicates financial power and source independent from the government, classrooms can be redecorated and turned into learner friendly places, which enables teacher to be more free to implement various activities into their classes.

According to the NESTs, the system in Turkey is product oriented. In parallel with their beliefs, it was found that the NESTs regard classroom implementations as being shaped conventionally. Moreover, from the NESTs' point of view, students are perceived to get used to being taught in a traditional way as students in Turkey are thought to develop passive learning habits and traditional teaching expectation. In such classrooms, it is observed by the NESTs that teacher-dominant education is preferred. It was found that it affects the NESTs' teaching in a negative way when they want to implement new and contemporary methods or enhance skills through nonconventional classroom activities. However, to overcome challenges and problems they face in the classroom, the NESTs reported to apply different strategies. Making use of student-centred activities, using lots of verbal praise, integrating technology into lessons and creating engaging and creative activities, and taking advantage of end-of-year shows to foster learning are found to be used by the NESTs. As explained in the study of Aydın et al. (2019), teacher-dependent and traditional way of education may be proceeded from the intensive focus on educational program (Özpolat, 2013) and from the way teachers were taught in their education process (Tatar & Ceyhan, 2018). Yet, factors "such as individual characteristics, institutional culture, and local organizational factors all dynamically interact to shape how teachers plan and then teach their courses" (as cited in Olesan & Hora, 2014, p.30) must be considered

while evaluating the reasons of conventional education to come up with an appropriate solution.

As can be understood, the NESTs believe that traditional education system in Turkey that bases success on product rather than process has a negative impact on students' attitudes. Grades that students get from exams are more important than guidance, support or appreciation they get from teachers within the process of learning as that is what the system values. In that system, educational goals may not go beyond the first two levels shown in the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (2001), which are *Remembering and Understanding*. Thus, students might tend to take a passive role in education, memorize what is required to be known and remembered and represent it in the exam. As a consequence, in parallel with the findings of this study, classroom activities that require a high level of thinking and knowledge use and that are based on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills might be resisted by learners and seen unnecessary. As this attitude might be culturally rooted and the result of the system, authorities might consider to make some changes in evaluation and assessment system. In a school setting, all teachers, not just English teachers, might utilize *dynamic assessment* which "is concerned with the different ways in which individuals who earned the same score achieved that score" (Scott & Palincsar, 2013, p.5). In addition, they might emphasize the importance of progress and the positive coloration between the progress and the product. Also, considering the sociocultural perspective that indicates "learning is thought to occur through interaction, negotiation, and collaboration" (Scott & Palincsar, 2013, p.5), more interactional activities, pair and group work may be made use of in classrooms.

In order to become more successful learners, it was suggested by the NESTs that Turkish EFL learners need to focus on activities that require creativity more, be in contact with the language as much as possible by means of listening, watching and reading as well as speaking. Reading aloud especially after listening to a text is found to be very beneficial for Turkish EFL learners for pronunciation improvement. It was revealed that Turkish learners are advised to practise writing more and paying attention to punctuation as writing in English will be the part of their life. Furthermore, as note-taking skills are needed in their further education, Turkish learners are also recommended to improve those skills as well as those of critical thinking.

These findings can be considered while choosing and designing materials for Turkish EFL learners by teachers. As well as teachers, publishers can take the findings into consideration while designing books or materials to be used with Turkish EFL learners. When 21<sup>st</sup> century habits and interests of learners are considered, it can be concluded that technology integrated reading and writing activities, and online platforms designed for reading and writing skills can attract students' interest and assist them improve in these skills. Consultancy from experts in integrating technology into education can be provided or teachers can be led into related courses by conducting a training needs analysis.

The study also showed that two of four participants of this study do not have any career plans in teaching. On the contrary, they are in the opinion of continuing their career in a different sector or on a different platform such as online teaching due to how stressful and difficult working at private schools has become. One NEST want to continue teaching, yet at tertiary level rather than K-12 levels. Only one NEST is willing to continue working as a teacher. As similar to the belief of the NESTs that was revealed by Choklap (2015) in the Thai context, one of the NESTs believes that there is no career chance given to NESTs in the Turkish context. This finding implies that working conditions need to be revised and improved. Also, giving a career chance to NESTs by providing necessary trainings and qualifications calls for attention.

## **5.2. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

There are various limitations of the present study. First of all, the study was conducted with a small sample of NESTs who work at a private school in Istanbul even though an effort to reach more NESTs was made to be able to provide a broader description of the inquiry. Despite the fact that the number of the participants was sufficient for a case study, had the study included two NESTs working at the same level, the findings could have been more generalizable to grades. Thus, more than one NEST from the same level or grade can be dealt in further studies.

Moreover, experiences and backgrounds of NESTs vary according to schools they work at and age group they teach to. Thus, in future research, the experiences and opinions of NESTs from various schools teaching at different levels may be studied, and diverse perspectives may be elicited comparing the results. Also, the experiences and opinions of NNESTs may be focused on in future research. When the findings about the parents and

their involvement are considered, expectations and opinions of parents may be studied to look at the problem from their perspective as well.

Finally, the qualitative design of this study was not appropriate to interview with a large number of NESTs. Hence, the findings are pertinent to Turkish EFL learners at the private school that the study was conducted at. Conducting a quantitative study with a vast number of NESTs from different private schools may enable broader perspectives and experiences this study could not provide.

In relation to the dissatisfaction the NESTs addressed to in this study, for further studies, the level of NESTs' satisfaction, the reasons of their dissatisfaction, and the areas of their discontentment can be searched to inform authorities. Also, action research can be conducted on teachers' views on their current working conditions and their ideas on ideal working conditions at working places to identify the problems that cause discontentment. In addition, a study that is on working conditions and environment at different private schools in Turkey can be done to inform NESTs who plan to work at private schools in Turkey.

Considering the findings related to Turkish EFL learners, students' opinions related to individual work, group and pair work activities might be investigated by conducting a large-scale study to identify reasons of their preference and to develop solutions accordingly. Moreover, in-depth analysis of students' dependent behaviours as learners can be investigated and factors that hinder their development as independent and autonomous learners can be identified. In light of the findings, necessary trainings can be provided to teachers, parents or students. In addition, teachers and counsellors at schools might conduct an action research to identify students' learning styles cooperatively. The findings that can shed light on individual preferences may be utilized while planning classroom activities.

Although this thesis provides some insights into native English-speaking teachers' views on teaching EFL in Turkish private schools and their opinions about Turkish EFL learners, many aspects stand open to further research and discussions. Further studies on the inquiry of this thesis in various contexts will shed more light on views and experiences of NESTs related to teaching EFL in Turkey.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A. Questionnaire Questions

#### Part I

- 1) How old are you?
- 2) What is your nationality?
- 3) Which university did you graduate from? Which major? What year?
- 4) What training(s) did you get to teach English? When? and Where?
- 5) Do you have a Master or PhD degree? If yes, which university, which major and what year?
- 6) How long have you been teaching English?
- 7) How did you decide to live and teach in Turkey?
- 8) How long have you been in Turkey?
- 9) Have you worked as a teacher in another country before? If yes, which country and how long?
- 10) What is your Turkish proficiency level in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing?
- 11) What are the advantages/disadvantages of your current level of Turkish in your personal environment?
- 12) What are the advantages/disadvantages of your current level of Turkish in your professional environment?

**Part II**

- 13) Describe your experiences teaching English as a foreign language at a private school in Turkey.
- 14) Which words best describe Turkish EFL students and why according to your experiences?
- 15) What are your opinions on Turkish English teachers in Turkey and working with them at a private school?
- 16) What do you think about Turkish EFL learners' parents?
- 17) How would you evaluate school management in Turkey?
- 16) Additional comments if you have

**Appendix B. Interview Questions**

- 1) Can you talk about yourself briefly?
- 2) How long have you been teaching English in Turkey?
- 3) What type of schools have you worked at in Turkey so far?
- 4) What grade (or age) level are you currently teaching?
- 5) How many students are there on average in your classes?
- 6) How many hours of English lessons do you teach per week?
- 7) What are your general experiences of teaching English in Turkey?
- 8) What are the main advantages of teaching English in Turkey for you?
- 9) What are the challenges / difficulties of teaching English in Turkey for you?
- 10) What are the strategies you use to overcome these difficulties / problems?
- 11) What are your opinions about Turkish EFL students/learners?
- 12) What are your suggestions to Turkish EFL learners? What should they focus on to be better?
- 13) What are your opinions about parents in Turkey?
- 14) What are your opinions about colleagues in Turkey?
- 15) What are your opinions about principals in Turkey?
- 16) What are your future plans as an English teacher in Turkey?

## Appendix C. Consent Form

### MARMARA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES ACADEMIC RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION ETHICS COMMITTEE CONSENT FORM

We invite you to take part in the research conducted by İlke Menekşe GEREDE HOYLAND for her thesis as a participant on " Native English-Speaking Teachers' Views On Teaching EFL in Turkish Private Schools and Their Opinions About Turkish EFL Learners". Participation in the research is entirely voluntary.

The purpose of this research is to reveal NESTs' views on and opinions on teaching EFL at a private school in Turkey. For this purpose, I kindly ask you to complete the questionnaire and to participate in the interview that will be conducted on the same topic at a later date.

In order to achieve the purpose of the research, you are expected to provide the most appropriate answers objectively and sincerely. The information obtained from this study will be used solely for research purposes, your personal information will be **kept confidential** within the scope of KVKK (Personal Data Protection Board), data will be processed collectively and will only be used for publication purposes. If you want the general/specific results to be shared with you when the research is completed, please send a message to \*\*\*\*\*@\*\*\*\*\*.com.

If you read and approve this form, it will mean that you agree to participate in the research.

I have read the above information and understood the scope and purpose of the study I am asked to participate in and my responsibilities as a volunteer. Written and verbal explanations about the study were made by the researcher/researchers named below and sufficient confidence was given that my personal information would be protected.

In these circumstances, I agree to participate in the research voluntarily, without any pressure or constraint.

Participant's (own handwriting)

Name &amp; Surname :

Signature :

For Those Under Custody or Guardianship (if any):

Parent or Guardian (in own handwriting)

Name &amp; Surname :

Signature :

Researcher's

Name &amp; Surname : İlke Menekşe GEREDE HOYLAND

Signature :