

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING AS A
JOB-EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOL

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ABSTRACT

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING AS A *JOB-EMBEDDED* PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOL

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This study aimed to explore (a) how “Peer Observation of Teaching Process” is conducted in a higher education institution in Central Turkey, (b) observees’ perceptions of this operation and (c) possible problems that may emerge during the process. Moreover, another objective of the study is to propose solutions to these possible problems that may arise. In order to achieve these goals, a qualitative case study was conducted. The data were gathered through reflection diaries and interviews. The reflection diaries, pre and post observation, were written by the instructors at pre-determined dates and the interviews were carried out with the instructors after the observations were completed. The head of the Professional Development Unit and the Coordinator and the Teaching Unit Heads were also interviewed. The data were gathered periodically over the duration of an observation cycle and were analyzed by content analysis (coding and identifying and interpreting themes that arose interim). The results revealed that POT was desirable, but there were some problems pertaining to the procedure, including voluntariness, forming peer cycles, training, controlling the process and timing. The results also indicated that if the implementation of POT was changed, the process would be more effective. Therefore, the results were discussed along with these problems and a suggested model was presented for POT for future implementations. It was recommended that POT be improved implementing the suggested method and the ideas of the students during the POT be investigated in further studies.

Keywords: Peer Observation of Teaching, Job-embedded Professional Development, Higher Education

ÖZ

İŞLE BİRLİKTE SÜRDÜRÜLEN PROFESYONEL GELİŞİM ARACI OLARAK ÖĞRETMEDE AKRAN GÖZLEMİ ÜZERİNE NİTELİKSEL BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin merkezindeki bir yükseköğrenim kurumunda öğretimde akran gözlemi sürecini, gözlenen kişilerin bu süreç hakkındaki görüşlerini ve süreç boyunca ortaya çıkabilecek sorunları keşfetmek amacıyla oluşturulmuştur. Bu araştırmanın diğer bir amacı, bu süreçte ortaya çıkabilecek olası problemlere çözümler üretip sunmaktır. Bu hedeflere ulaşmak için, niteliksel bir durum çalışması yapılmıştır. Gerekli veriler, fikir günlükleri ve görüşmelerle elde edilmiştir. Gözlem öncesi ve sonrası olarak oluşturulan günlükler, belirlenen tarihlerde İngiliz Dili öğretim görevlileri tarafından tamamlanmış ve görüşmeler de gözlemler tamamlandıktan sonra aynı öğretim görevlileriyle yapılmıştır. Profesyonel Gelişim Ünitesi başkanı, koordinatör ve eğitim birimi başkanlarıyla da görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Veriler, bir gözlem döngüsü süresince periyodik olarak toplanmış ve içerik analizi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir (Kodlama, temaları saptama ve yorumlama). Sonuçlar akran gözleminin bahsedilen kurumda istenilen bir süreç olduğu, ancak süreçle ilgili gönüllülük, döngüleri oluşturma, eğitim, süreci kontrol etme ve zamanlamayı içeren problemlerin varlığı saptanmıştır. Sonuçlar bu problemler doğrultusunda tartışılmış ve öğretimde akran gözlemi sürecinin ilerideki uygulamaları için yeni bir metod önerilmiştir. Öğretimde akran gözleminin önerilen yöntem kullanılarak geliştirilebileceği savunulmuş ve ilerideki çalışmalarda öğrencilerin fikirlerinin de başvurulabileceği belirtilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretimde Akran Gözlemi; İşle Birlikte Sürdürülen Profesyonel Gelişim; Yüksek Öğretim

To My Beloved Family and Teachers

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PO	Peer Observation
POT	Peer Observation of Teaching
POP	Peer Observation Process
PD	Professional Development
PDU	Professional Development Unit
ELT	English Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
HTU	Head of Teaching Unit

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Presentation

This chapter offers an introduction to the study. First of all, it provides a background to the study and presents the problem. Besides, it explains the significance of the study and justifies the need for it. Furthermore, this chapter points out the purpose of the study. Finally, it describes the research questions.

1.1 Study Background

This study focuses on implementation of peer observation of English language teaching as a professional development (hereafter PD) tool at a state university in Central Turkey and the instructors' perceptions of this process as well as the discussion of the possible problems that may arise during this process and the possible solutions to these problems.

Teaching is a complex activity which enables teachers to convey information to learners and it includes various strategies and philosophies of teachers. It is a complex process involving the dynamic interaction between the students, teachers, and their beliefs, and the power of teaching prevails in the strength of the interactions between these three. Enhancing and building these interactions requires the teacher to be creative, knowledgeable, and passionate about the subject (Donnelly, 2007). Teaching is a complicated process, for even though it seems to include specific guidelines, it is not possible to apply them to every situation. Therefore, it can be suggested that teaching be a domain that undergoes changes in time, which introduces a necessity for teachers to reflect upon their own teaching and adapt to new ideas and applications and develop themselves professionally. Thus, it can be suggested that *development* which is defined as a process that deals with “individual teacher” and their reflection on their teaching, “their personal growth” and positive change in teaching are the indispensable components of teaching (Freeman, 1982, p.21). In consequence, as the quality of teaching has a significant role in becoming successful in education, there have been a great number of studies that investigate the possible ways to suggest teachers and institutions to adopt and implement in order to enable *personal growth* and *professional development* (Freeman, 1982; Harris, 1992; Munson, 1998; Farrel, 1999; Cosh, 1999; Peel, 2005; Lomas & Kinchin, 2006; Blase and Blase, 2006; McMahon, Barret & O'Neill, 2007). Moreover, to be informed by the research in the field and with the aim of helping their teachers keep up-to-date with the latest developments in their field, enabling

personal growth and positive change in teaching context, a wide variety of education institutions provide a broad array of PD opportunities for their teachers.

One of these development opportunities provided by institutions for their teachers is *observation of teaching* in teaching environment. *Observation of teaching* can be described as observing someone or being observed by someone in the course of teaching and receiving or providing feedback after the observation. Moreover, in the literature, observation of teaching is classified into different categories in terms of its application. In her study, Munson (1998) proposes three categories of observation of teaching, namely “clinical supervision”, “peer coaching” and “peer observation” by explaining that all of them differ in their implementation. According to Munson (1998), the first category of observation of teaching is “clinical supervision”, which is named as “supervisory observation” by most of other researchers. This type of observation is considered as a process of supervisors’ or administrators’ observing the classes and teaching practices of teacher (Freeman, 1982, p.21). While this type of observation is one of the earliest types of observation that provides teachers with a development opportunity in their field, it is regarded as undesirable in literature because of being judgmental and creating anxiety for teachers more than helping them develop professionally (Munson, 1998; Blase and Blase, 2006; McMahon, Barrett & O’Neil, 2007; Yeşilbursa, 2009). The second observation type is “peer coaching”. Munson (1998) defines “peer coaching” as “reinforcing correct instructional skills and identifying incorrect behaviors according to a prescribed model of instruction by providing written or oral feedback for the teacher being observed by the teacher who acts as a coach” (p.108). She argues that Peer coaching in its nature also includes the “judgment” factor; therefore, it is also threatening for teachers. The last and most recent observation type is peer observation (hereafter PO) which is argued and supported by many researchers in the literature (Munson, 1998; Cosh, 1999; Peel, 2005; Martin & Double, 2006; Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmand, 2007; Donnelly, 2007; Yeşilbursa, 2009; Bell & Cooper, 2013). PO refers to peers’ observing each other in turn and giving “constructive” feedback on each other’s teaching, as a result of which they gain new perspectives from one another (Munson, 1998; Cosh, 1999; Peel, 2005; Bell & Cooper, 2013). This type of observation is advocated in the literature as it offers collaboration among teachers and their peers without creating a “judgmental” or “threatening” atmosphere (Cosh, 1999; Peel, 2005; Donnelly, 2007; Hirsch, 2011; Bell & Cooper, 2013; Hamilton, 2012).

In recent years, peer observation of teaching (hereafter POT) has gained importance in teacher development and researchers have started to explore and analyze the procedure of the process, argue the contributions of it to teachers’ professional development and identify the perceptions of teachers who participate in this process. Martin and Double (1998) identify the procedure of the peer observation process (hereafter POP) and its benefits to PD

in their action research study. They pointed out that POP consists of three phases including pre-observation meeting, observation phase and post-observation feedback meeting. Moreover, they suggested that training on POP be provided before the observation cycle starts as it has a potential of “helping the process to be understood as positive and constructive”. Furthermore, they explored participants’ perceptions of the POP and they proposed that peer observation process is evaluated positively by a majority of their participants. In a similar action research study, Sandt (2012) has investigated the possible contributions of PO to a more collaborative environment and teacher development and he has come to the conclusion that PO can lead to a more collaborative environment and PD if it is not obligatory. To put it in a different way, he points out that POT should be voluntary in order to have positive results concerning the professional development of teachers and collaboration in educational settings. Moreover, in a case study on POT, Bell and Cooper (2013) have evaluated a PO program in terms of its aims, design, process and outcomes. The results of this study have indicated that PO is effective in developing collegiality among teachers and improving their teaching skills. In the same study, Bell and Cooper (2013) have based the program success on four elements including “(1) educational leadership by the head of school, (2) staged, voluntary, opt-in/opt-out process, (3) partnering early-career and experienced academic staff and (4) an external to faculty coordinator.”

As has been noted, POT has been investigated by many researchers and it has become a trend in the literature in 1990s and has attracted attention with regard to PD and personal growth of teachers, and collaboration in educational settings. Hence, the issues investigated and proposed about POT in the literature raise significant questions about the implication of PO, teachers’ perceptions on these implications and whether there is one way or other which is the most suitable in conducting peer observation of teaching. In addition, another aspect that is controversial is whether there is an ideal way to apply POT and what possible problems may occur in the course of this process. Furthermore, whether teachers’ perceptions of POT should shape the process or the institutions should present a role model for them, they just adapt to the process and try to gain PD. What is more, the role of training before the POP starts is also an issue that should be considered.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

POT which is thought to contribute to the PD of teachers in educational settings has been studied in many studies. These studies mainly focus on the process of PO, perceptions of teachers and the contributions of PO to teacher development as well as its drawbacks in implementation. The studies emphasizing the POP explain it in several ways. Martin and Double (1998) describe the process of PO as having three phases such as “pre-observation

meeting”, “observation” and “feedback meeting”. They define these processes in a detailed way in their study which adopts an action-based approach:

The purpose of the pre-observation meeting is to enable the observed person to brief the observer on the specific nature of the event to be shared. The observer must be clear about the teaching program so far, the learning intentions for that particular session and the teaching strategies to be adopted.

In observation phase,

The observer should be involved in the experience without being drawn in the dialogue or intellectual debate. Appropriate body language is very helpful in relaxing the teacher and the students, as a stiff inspectorial stance with a stern face does little to support normal interaction.

In feedback meeting phase,

If peer observation and reflection are to be productive, discussion must be honest and constructive. The feedback meeting should be held soon after the session so that its nuances are still fresh in mind. Both parties should take time to refresh their memories of the observed session, read their notes and prepare the significant issues to be explored (pp. 163-164).

In a similar study, Yeşilbursa (2009) also outlines PO procedure in her action research. She points out that POT has three phases: (a) pre-observation, (b) observation and (c) post-observation. In pre-observation stage, the observer and the observee come together to talk about “their perceived problems” and decide on an area that “can be observed” during the observation process. In the *observation stage*, the observer observes the class and the observee with regard to the discussed problem. After the observation phase, there is *post-observation stage* in which the observer and the observee have a meeting and discuss the issues that they experience during the observation. The observer provides feedback for the observee, and they discuss the lesson and generate new ideas together (pp.3-4).

On the other hand, in another study which provides a different implementation for POT, Bell and Cooper (2013) have provided a model for school- /department-based peer observation of teaching. The model is described as an adaptable program that cannot survive without four significant elements including (1) the head of the school; (2) groups of educators consisting of experienced teachers and the ones that are new in their career; (3) a coordinator outside the department; and (4) the POT process itself which is voluntary. They explain that the head of the department is the leader of the process while experienced and less experienced teachers are equal in partnership in POT. Moreover, in this model, Bell and Cooper (2013) delineate the operation as voluntary so the teachers can get involved in or leave the process whenever they desire to do so. They propose four phases in implementing POT in schools. The first phase is “initiation” which covers the scheduling the process, deciding on a format under the guidance of principals and informing the teachers about the aims and objectives of the POT. The second phase is “preparation” and it contains a

“workshop” on the concept of feedback in POT and “model observation sessions”. In the third phase, the coordinator establishes the groups of teachers without explaining the selection criteria and the observation process starts. This operation has such elements as observation itself and feedback after it. The fourth phase is “evaluation and embedding”. In this stage, the process is evaluated by all participants of the program and additional ideas are presented (pp. 69-70).

The studies concerning the procedure of POP have created a need to study perceptions of the teachers as the main stakeholders in the process. Donnelly (2007) has investigated the perceptions of teachers towards a PO program. She has identified that the perceptions of the teachers are mostly positive. They supported the idea that they have gained new insights thanks to the program, the program improved collegiality among them and provided them with the opportunity to learn from their peers. Especially teachers who have newly started their career suggested that they have gained perspectives on teaching practices and techniques (pp.19-28). She explains the benefits of peer observation in her study as follows:

Peer observation of teaching has been perceived by participants to be particularly useful for self-assessment and improvement of teaching skills. Peer observers have learned through the process of watching another teacher and those being observed have learned through the valuable comments and observations of their observer. Within this context an attitude of trust and helpfulness has been essential for the success of the peer observation scheme so that the positive outcome is for both observer and teacher to enhance their understanding of their professional practice (pp. 29-30).

The perceptions of teachers specifically indicate positive attitudes towards POT, which creates an enthusiasm for researchers to seek the positive impact of POT. Hendry and Oliver (2012) have explored the ideas of teachers about the employed POT program and they reached some results that suggest that PO contributed to the development of teachers via observation, feedback and discussion. This study also has revealed that the process has improved the self-efficacy beliefs of the teachers (pp. 4-6).

Aforementioned studies display that there are different kinds of implementations for POT and they include some components that cannot be disregarded in the process such as pre-observation meeting, observation itself and post-observation conference. Moreover, the perceptions of teachers are also indicators of the contributions of POT to teachers’ PD. Furthermore, the studies on benefits of PO also support its effectiveness in educational settings. However, another issue that should be taken into account in this process is about how to adapt this process into the program of schools or departments as they continue their education while POT is in progress as the observers also have their lessons to teach at the same time with the observees. To put it in another way, as observers are also colleagues of the observees and they have the same schedule in their work environment, how can they

observe their colleagues when they have their own lessons meanwhile? Therefore, the issue of how to adapt PO to school/department schedule is significant and it may create some complexities in applying the process. Even if a solution is found, it may arouse some dissatisfaction among teachers and can affect their perceptions of peer observation of teaching. Norbury (2001) emphasizes in her study, which aims to find out the results of a PO program at Aston University, that although peer observations have benefits such as professional development and personal growth for the observers and the observees, it also has some drawbacks regarding time. She explains this referring to the program: “It is difficult to find a time when the observer is free to observe and for pre- and post- observation meetings” (p. 90). Another debate is about the training of the teachers about the process. In other words, it is suggested that the teachers be knowledgeable enough about the PO in order to be aware of the gain they are likely to get so as not to perceive the process as threatening for their profession. Afterwards, before, during and after the process, teachers’ perceptions are to be asked and the next program is to be organized within this context, which provides for the problems of the program (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2004; Bell & Cooper, 2013; Sandt, 2012).

As mentioned previously, there are a great number of studies on POT, its procedure, implementation, perceptions of teachers and possible benefits and drawbacks related to it. However, when the literature is reviewed, it can be noticed that there are a limited number of studies on this issue in Turkey (Yeşilbursa, 2009; Bozak, Yıldırım and Demirtaş, 2011). Yeşilbursa (2009) has conducted an action research based on the beliefs, perceived problems and suggested solutions to these problems. Similarly, Bozak, Yıldırım & Demirtaş (2011) have described PO and compared it to other types of observation and they have evaluated the process of PO.

In this qualitative case study, the process of POT will be explored in a Higher Education Institution. The perceptions of observees are investigated and the possible problems that may arise in this process are identified and possible solutions to these problems will be proposed. In this regard, this study will reveal new insights within the context of peer observation of teaching.

1.3 The significance of the study

This study is significant for four main reasons. The first reason is that when the literature is reviewed, it is seen that the research studies on POT are very limited in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) (Freeman, 1982; Farrell, 1999; Cosh, 1999; Yeşilbursa, 2009). Therefore, this study will provide a new perspective on POT in English Language Teaching (hereafter ELT). The second reason is that a very limited number of studies in Turkey have investigated the issue of POT (Yeşilbursa, 2009; Bozak, Yıldırım and

Demirtaş, 2011) and this study will be conducted at a state university in Turkey, which will expand literature on this issue in Turkey. The third reason is that there is no other study that explores the ideas and perceptions of just observees and relates these ideas to the procedure of PO. The last reason is that not so many institutions in Turkey adopt POP in their education and PD aims possibly because of not being aware of the possible benefits or not knowing how to insert this process into their education program during an academic year. Therefore, this study aims at inspiring these institutions about employing PO for their staff's PD , if it is seen as a PD opportunity by the observees.

1.4 The Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This study aims to explore the procedure in designing the POT, the observees' perceptions of the process, and possible problems that may arise during the observations. Moreover, the study aims at suggesting possible solutions to the problems that may occur during the observation. The research questions of this study are as follows:

- (a) How is PO planned and carried out in the institution?
- (b) What are the observees' perceptions of the observation process?
- (c) What are the possible problems of implementing POT process?
- (d) What could be a suggested model for POT for future implementations in educational institutions?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Presentation

The literature review will address three areas related to POT. The first section will focus on research aimed at defining POT and explaining different types of observation of teaching. This section has three subsections: Supervisory Observation, Peer Coaching and PO. The second section will address literature on PO in Education. In this section, there will be subsections referring to the issues investigated on POT in education, namely aims of PO, procedure in PO, training in PO, confidentiality in PO, benefits of PO and difficulties in PO. Finally, the third section will discuss the literature on PO in ELT.

2.1 Types of Observation of Teaching

Teaching is defined as an activity that is observed (McMahon, Barrett and O'Neill, 2007). Hence, it is suggested that observation of teaching can be an opportunity to provide PD for teachers as well as enhancing teaching quality (Freeman, 1982; Munson, 1998; Atkinson and Bolt, 2010). In literature, generally three types of observation of teaching are mentioned and identified: Supervisory Observation, Peer Coaching and PO.

2.1.1 Supervisory Observation

The first and earliest type of observation of teaching is Supervisory Observation. This type of observation is defined as a classroom observation of teaching which welcomes supervisors or administrators as observers and teachers as observees, which is asserted to create anxiety, fear and threatening emotions among teachers as well as providing objective feedback about teaching. Supervisory Observation of teaching is studied in the literature and is still popular. Freeman (1982) describes Supervisory Observation as including an observer who is generally “a supervisor” or “an administrator”. In Supervisory Observation, the supervisor or the administrator goes to the class, observes the teacher, takes notes about the lesson. After the lesson, s/he talks to the teacher about the positive and negative sides of the lesson as well as the role of the teacher during the lesson. Then, s/he gives advises to the teacher on future teaching practices and performance. The aim of this observation is to evaluate the teaching practice according to the criteria which emphasize that teaching should occur in a “certain” way (p.22).

Moreover, Munson (1998) refers to Supervisory Observation as Clinical Supervision and explains it as following:

Clinical Supervision was initially developed as an effective professional development technique in the 1960s. The emphasis is on detailed observational data and close interaction between supervisor and the teacher with a focus on the teacher's classroom behavior (p.108).

Similarly, Harris (1992) also describes Supervisory Observation; however, he also mentions its drawbacks. He states that Supervisory Observation is the observation that includes the observer who is not the peer of the observed, but the person who has the *responsibility* for evaluating the observed and showing the right way (p.130). As Supervisory Observation includes the terms "evaluation", "supervisor", "administrator", it is not desirable as a professional development opportunity by many teachers. However, it is regarded as an *objective* evaluation of teaching performance by some. As Blase and Blase (2004) suggests Supervisory Observation is both seen as an advantageous and disadvantageous process for educators:

On the dark side, instructional supervision has been referred to as *inspection*, *snooper-vision*, and a *nonevent*. On the bright side, theoretically at least, instructional supervision has been oriented to collaboration between teachers and supervisors and the development of teacher reflection on practice; in fact, it has been described as a collegial and transformational event (p. 5).

Freeman (1982) also emphasizes the possible drawbacks of Supervisory Observation. He asserts that this type of observation may give harm to teachers rather than provide development. He indicates that being criticized by the observer who just focuses on the negative sides of the lesson taught may "lead to personal animosity rather than improvement" (p.23). Therefore, this type of observation is generally considered as threatening by the observed.

As aforementioned, although Supervisory Observation is the earliest development opportunity for teachers and it enables teachers to learn about their teaching in an objective way, because it refers to evaluation of teachers by a supervisor, it is not the preferred type of development opportunity for teachers due to its nature of creating a threatening atmosphere in teaching environment. In 1990s, supervisory observation is criticized for including the terms such as "appraisal" and "judgement" as such terms are considered as generating threatening feelings such as anxiety and fear for teachers (Munson, 1998; Cosh, 1999). In addition, it is thought to decrease the possibility of natural teaching due to the fact that teachers may display their "best" teaching performance while being observed so as not to be evaluated negatively (Cosh, 1999). To put it in a different way, even though Supervisory Observation is regarded as a good source to learn about one's own teaching by evaluating it to a prescribed criterion, it is not accepted as an effective opportunity to provide professional development because of the negative factors that it includes in its nature.

2.1.2 Peer Coaching

Peer Coaching is another type of observation of teaching. It is defined as a process in which a teacher observes another teacher according to specific criteria and these observers are seen like a coach who tries to provide correct type of teaching by signaling the negative sides of the observed lesson. By focusing on the missing points in a lesson, a peer coach is seen to judge his/her peer, which can create problems among colleagues and in the workplace (Munson, 1998, p.108). Similarly, Blase and Blase (2006) identified four roles for coach: (1) gives advises to the teacher according to pre-determined criteria; (2) emphasizes accurate teaching methods; (3) decides whether the teacher uses the right method of teaching; and (4) evaluates teacher's proficiency. In literature, peer coaching is regarded as a professional development opportunity; however, it is criticized for disrupting collegial relationship among colleagues as they evaluate each other, leading to undesirable work environment.

2.1.3 PO

The most recent type of observation of teaching is PO. PO refers to the classroom observation in which peers observe each other and give constructive feedback to each other and develop professionally during this operation. Richards and Farrel (2005) define PO as a process in which "a teacher or other observer closely watching and monitoring a language lesson or part of a lesson in order to gain an understanding of some aspect of teaching, learning, or classroom interaction" (p.85). They (2005) distinguish "evaluation" and "observation" from each other in their study. They suggest that both novice teachers and experienced teachers can benefit from PO as they see each other in real teaching settings without judgment and while observing they are trying to gain new perspectives on teaching. They support the idea that teachers can improve their self-reflection skills by being observed by another teacher since they will see themselves from other point of views. Furthermore, they explain that POT is not just a way of PD, it is also a social tool to help both observers and observees come together and share their ideas as well as their own experiences. They also point out that the benefits of POT are multifaceted. Regarding this, they suggest the following:

For both teachers, observation also has social benefits. It brings teachers together who might not normally have a chance to interact and provides an opportunity for the sharing of ideas and expertise, as well as a chance to discuss problems and concerns. Observation provides a chance to see how other teachers teach, it is a means of building collegiality in a school, it can be a way of collecting information about teaching and classroom processes, it provides an opportunity to get feedback on one's teaching, and it is a way of developing self-awareness of one's own teaching (p. 86).

Richard and Farrel (2005) also propose two steps to implement POT. In the first step, the teachers choose one of their colleagues. In the second step, the teachers teach and observe each other by turns. The second step also requires teachers to schedule the time for pre-observation meeting, observation itself and post observation meeting.

Likewise, Whitlock & Rumpus (2004) identifies POT as follows:

PO:

- (a) is a collaborative process between individuals, who share good practice, encourage reflection, exchange constructive criticisms and debate the approaches to their teaching and student learning, based on the observation of each other's classes;
- (b) when developed as a non-threatening process, can be an agent of dissemination of good practice for continuous enhancement in teaching and learning;
- (c) is not about making judgments of colleague but is a matter of fine-tuning, giving praise and, most importantly, helping an individual reflect on their practice;
- (d) is developmental not inspectorial; a professional and enabling process that is meaningful and non-threatening;
- (e) is a confidential process; and
- (f) to be fully effective, has to be organized at School/Departmental (and/or Campus) level (p.1).

With a similar point of view, Bozak, Yıldırım & Demirtaş (2011) describe POT as “a process in which two or more teachers observe each other in their lessons to share experiences. By the end of the observation process, the teachers share their views on their peer's strong and weak points in terms of teaching activities.” (p. 66). In addition, PO is described by Hendry and Oliver (2012) as an opportunity for teachers to observe their colleagues in their teaching. Moreover, PO is regarded as reflective practice as teachers can also reflect on their teaching and learn from their own teaching. According to Hendry and Oliver's study (2012), PO needs to include two groups of teachers as observers and observees. In their study, Hendry and Oliver (2012) explain the POP as to be observed by a peer, to get feedback from him/her and to observe your peer in turn. Similarly, Kohut, Burnap and Yon (2010) have found in their study that POT for PD is a useful tool for teachers since both observers and observees report that they have gained new perceptions and new ideas for effective teaching. Moreover, Cosh (1999) also explains POT process as follows:

In a reflective context, peer observation is not carried out in order to judge the teaching of others, but to encourage self-reflection and self-awareness about our own teaching. The focus is on the teacher's own development, rather than on any presumed ability to develop the teaching of one's peers or colleagues (p. 25).

2.2 Peer Observation in Education

There have been a wide range of studies on POT in education in the last decade (Munson, 1998; Martin and Double, 1998; Mento and Giampetro-Meyer, 2000; Norbury, 2001; Peel, 2005; Richards and Farrel, 2005; Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond, 2005; Blase and Blase, 2006; Lomas and Kinchin, 2006; McMahon, Barrett and O'Neill, 2007; Kohut, Burnap and Yon, 2007; Donnelly, 2007; Atkinson and Bolt, 2010; Shortland, 2010; Bozak, Yıldırım and Demirtaş, 2011; Sandt, 2012; Karagiorgi, 2012; Doyle, 2012; Bell and Cooper, 2013; Hamilton, 2013) These studies have identified POT in terms of its aims, procedure, training needed, confidentiality terms, benefits and difficulties in application.

2.2.1 Aims of PO

Peer Observation of Teaching is described as an alternative PD tool as it obviously has different aims and objectives from other development tools which include the component of judging and evaluating teachers (see Supervisory Observation and Peer Coaching). There are a vast number of studies that reveal the aims of POT. Atkinson and Bolt (2010) indicated in their study that “peer observation of teaching is conducted to improve teaching and learning practice” (p.3). Similarly, Bell and Cooper (2013) points out the aims of a PO program conducted in an engineering school at an Australian university. He firstly mentions that this PO program is implemented with a “partnership approach”. Then, he emphasizes the aims of the program as:

The Head of School and coordinator designed the program to encourage and support staff and to ensure positive experiences and outcomes, demonstrate the ways in which peer observation could take place, and recognize and take part in the cultural change within the school (p.62).

In a broader context, Martin and Double (1998) identify six aims of Peer Observation of teaching in their study as follows:

- (a) To extend and enhance an understanding of personal approaches to curriculum delivery.
- (b) To develop and define curriculum planning skills in collaboration with a colleague.
- (c) To enhance and extend teaching techniques and styles of presentation through collaborative practice.
- (d) To engage in and refine interpersonal skills through the exchange of insights relating to the review of a specific teaching performance.
- (e) To identify areas of subject understanding and teaching activity which have particular merit or are in need of further development.
- (f) To develop personal skills of evaluation and self-appraisal (p.162-164).

Therefore, it can be said that POT has specific aims that mainly focus on the terms “collaboration”, “exchange of insights”, “development”, “evaluation” (in this context constructive feedback by observers) and “self-appraisal”.

2.2.2 Procedure in PO

POT is generally implemented as a job-embedded process, which creates a need for consideration about how to conduct POT while the education process is going on simultaneously. Moreover, the components forming POT are of great importance as they actually indicate how the operation will happen. Therefore, a large number of studies are conducted to identify the procedure of POT. These studies demonstrate that at the macro level the process of POT in diverse contexts is more or less the same, but in some finer detail differ from each other. Munson (1998) proposes that POT as “three-step process” including a brief pre-observation conference, observation itself and a brief post-observation conference. She further describes the role of the observee in brief pre-observation conference in detail. During this conference, the teacher to be observed; (a) describes the lesson; (b) explains expected student behaviors; (c) discusses a specific problem or concern; (d) agrees on the data to be recorded by the observer; and (e) arranges time for the observation and post-observation conference (pp.109-110). Munson (1998) identifies that while observing the observer comes to the class on predetermined time and take objective notes on the problematic area or concern that the observed has mentioned to be observed before. She also indicates that how post-observation conference is held by the observer and the observee. She clarified that after the observation, the observee and the observer come together to revise the data and have comments on the teaching practices. She emphasized that especially the observee reflects on his/her own practices; therefore, the observer just presents the observed data and aids the observee to think about this objective data and s/he does not give “direct advice” to the observee.

On a different note, in their case study, Bell & Cooper (2013) explain the design and process of POT in an engineering school at an Australian University. Bell and Cooper (2013) attribute the positive results of the program to four factors such as “(1) educational leadership; (2) a staged, voluntary, opt-in/out-out process involving a hands-on preparatory workshop and trial observation; (3) partnering early-career and experienced academic staff; and (4) an ‘external to faculty’ coordinator.” They clarify that the program has some certain stages and it is voluntary. The first stage of the program is prepared by the head of school (HOS hereafter) and the coordinator. They collect information about the PO Program and present it to the disciple leaders and get feedback from them. After receiving feedback from the leaders, HOS and coordinator initiate a workshop to inform the teachers about the program. Afterwards, they prepare trial observations and following discussions to evaluate the process, after which they ask groups of teachers to plan observations and meetings to be held. Then, the observations are conducted and the discussing meetings are held, teachers who attend the POT program are questioned about the process in order to evaluate the whole program and complete the missing points for future implementations. Cooper and Bell

(2013) prove in their case study that this program is useful for developing teaching skills, confidence in teaching, skills in providing and receiving feedback and creating a collegial environment in teaching area (p. 60- 65).

In a different study, Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond (2004) report on the evaluation of two systems of PO program in two different departments at a university in their study. One of these departments is School of Law and the other one is School of Sciences. In these two different departments, different processes of POT are adopted. In the School of Law, the POP is formed by the instructors. Although firstly more senior lecturers are requested to be volunteers in being observers, later these lecturers have training in observing the lecturers. Then all lecturers prepared the necessary materials for the observation process altogether. However, as stated in the study, as the training session is not so efficient, the observers decide the aims and objectives they have in the observation process. A coordinator is selected to have the observers come together and argue the strategies that are to be used in the process. In this type of POP, the coordinator also has the role of collecting feedback sheet from the observers and writing a report to the dean about the development needs of the staff. However, the confidentiality of the process is protected in a strict way. In the School of Law, the observers have special training for POT and they are provided a list of observees to observe. The observees do not have a training for POT, but they are given a form which explains the operation to them and gives the chance to the observee to choose or decide which areas s/he desires to be observed. Both the observer and the observee have forms to fill. The observer provides feedback with the help of these forms while the observees have self-reflections for their lessons. Moreover, the rule is that observers are to observe the same person for a long time which may be for three years. The observees have the opportunity to discard the observer if they do not want to be observed by them because of some acceptable reasons. After that process, the POT includes three stages. The first stage happens before the observation, in which the observer and the observee come together and discuss the lesson, its aims and activities to be done. The second stage represents the observation itself in which the observation form is filled by the observee. The third stage occurs after the observation involving the feedback by the observer and reflection by the observee.

On the other hand, POP is conducted differently in School of Sciences. In this Observation Process, groups of three instructors observe each other reciprocally, which means that everybody observes and is observed. Then, in this process, a coordinator is selected as in the former. This coordinator forms groups randomly or instructors select their group members that they are to observe and be observed by. The people in each group complete feedback forms and the process is confidential. The forms enable the process to be monitored. In each group which includes three teachers, there is a teacher who is the “facilitator”. The facilitator of the group summarizes the matters appeared during feedbacks

and convey this information to the coordinator. The coordinator examines the information provided by the group facilitators and puts an emphasis to the “good practice” and “professional development”. Moreover, the coordinator informs the associate dean about the operation enabling him/her to monitor the process.

The two application of POT is evaluated by Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond (2004). All lecturers who attended the two POT programs are interviewed and most of the lecturers in School of Law mentioned that an observer who is more experienced in his or her field is more effective in this process rather than a best colleague and they also have the opinion of having formalized structure for this process is more effective. However, in School of Social Sciences, while some instructors support the idea that formalizing the process may create stress, the others prefer more formalization. Although the lecturers are not pleased with the feedback which includes criticism, POT is regarded as a useful tool to gain in both schools. Considering the results in their study, Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond (2004) suggest that POT process be combined with and implemented through the learning and teaching strategies of the departments (pp. 501 - 502).

In this study, it can be understood that POT can be applied in various ways and can provide development for the teachers regardless of how it is conducted. However, as Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond (2004) also mention, it is debatable whether the lecturers in both programs have gained equal development opportunity or not as the instructors in School of Law do not have the experience of observing their friends due to the fact that just experienced and the trained ones can observe the classes. Another argument can be made about the program in School of Social Sciences as the instructors have the chance of choosing their group members, they also have the chance of choosing their best friends and this can lead to the problems in receiving feedback because the best friends may not tell about the actual process, but just about the positive sides and they may sometimes exaggerate these positive sides, interfering with the development aim of POT as also suggested by Cosh (1999).

Pressick-Kilborn & Riele (2008) argue their experience with reciprocal POT. In their study, they identify the process of POT which is conducted at their university including three phases. The first phase is “pre-observation planning”, which provides information about the observation process and prepare basis for feedback. The second phase is “observation itself”, including observation notes and student questionnaire. The last phase is “post-observation discussion” which enables teachers to collaboratively reflect upon teaching, gain new insights and lead them to make changes to their teaching as a result of feedback. In this observation process, they as observers observe one lesson each semester. Moreover, they as observees introduce the observers to the class and they make the students be aware of process by explaining that this is a part of their PD. In their research, Pressick-

Kilborn & Riele (2008) conclude that this procedure of POT has helped them to a great extent as they realized that they hadn't known anything about each other's teaching strategies and techniques. Therefore, they suggest that this process has helped them gain new insights into their own teaching as well.

In another study proposing a reflective model of POT, Bell (2001) reports the outcomes of a structured POT program. This program is described as having Teacher Development Program cycles. In this program, the observee selects a "support colleague with at least two years of tertiary teaching experience". The observation has four cycles and in three cycles the "support colleague" observes the observee and in one cycle the "support colleague" is observed. In three cycles, the observee prepares a lesson plan and teaches the class during which s/he is observed by the "support colleague" and get feedback after the lesson on the techniques used during the teaching session. Then, the "support colleague" has the role of the observee to show his/her teaching to the observer and clarify his/her teaching beliefs to him/her. In the feedback sessions, the observees also reflect upon their teaching (p.30).

This process of POT is determined to be effective in practicing innovative ideas, improving teaching skills, enabling teachers to modify their practices in teaching, communicate about the techniques of teaching and learning and generate and enhance collegiality (Bell, 2001, pp. 32 – 35).

2.2.3 Training in PO

Training is important in POT operation because of two reasons. The first reason is that it provides teachers who will undergo the process of POT with information about the POT, how it will be conducted, what the aims are, what benefits they can get from it, which roles they will have during it and why they experience it. If this information is not provided for teachers, they may feel like spending time in vain, which can decrease the effectiveness of the process and lead observer to negative feelings such as burn-out. Therefore, training has an important role in implementing POT. The second reason why training is significant in POT is feedback. Feedback is an inseparable part of POT as teachers who observe each other give feedback to each other in order to enable new insights, development and growth. Nevertheless, the question of how to give feedback is very important as it can lead to anxiety, fear or even hostility between the observer and the observee if it is not given in a suitable way. If the feedback is given correctly, it becomes useful and initiates trust among observers and observees (Munson, 1998). Therefore, the observer should know how to give feedback to avoid judgmental comments on the teaching practice of the observed. Similarly, Bell and Cooper (2013) present a framework for implementation of POT in their case study. In this study, they indicate a training program which is called "Preparatory Workshop" that

is conducted within the POT process for the teachers. This workshop has the aim of explaining every step in POT specifically including observation and the feedback. Role plays are displayed in order for the teachers to be informative about what they are going to do during the POT. DVDs including observation and feedback scenarios are supplied for the teachers to watch them themselves and have a visual practice sample about POT. Thus, the teachers not only learn about the procedure of POT, but also they become knowledgeable about the aim of POT. In this study, this workshop is proved to be useful for teachers to understand the aims and the procedure of POT, and become more comfortable about the process (pp. 65- 66).

2.2.4 Confidentiality in PO

Confidentiality is another significant component of POT as it enables teachers to develop trust among themselves and have the potential of decreasing feelings such as anxiety and fear which are likely to appear in some observees. Mento & Giampetro-Meyer (2000) propose that POT process be confidential in order to initiate and strengthen trust between the observer and the observed. If the process lacks in trust among observers and the observees, they may see the process as threatening and may not be willing to join it. According to Mento & Giampetro-Meyer (2000), the teachers should be assured to undergo POT with the aim of professional development, not appraisal or evaluation purposes; therefore, confidentiality is of great importance.

2.2.5 Benefits of PO

POT is described as providing a wide range of benefits for teachers in their profession. Firstly, it is considered as a new and innovative PD opportunity in teaching context, which is asserted to increase teaching quality. Secondly, it is proposed that POT is also a way to enable personal growth for teachers during their profession. Thirdly, it is suggested in the literature that POT is a means that is to develop collegiality among colleagues. Norbury (2001) has conducted a study on the results of a PO Program undertaken in the Library and Information Service at Aston University. She concludes that the teachers mainly points out the gain they have had during the process. She firstly describes these benefits from the perspective of the observer as a result of review meetings she has held after the observation operation. She proposes that the observers have new perspectives to help them for their own practice in teaching, that POT improves collegiality among groups as well as individuals, that observers can have the opportunity to reflect upon their own teaching and that POT can enable knowledge of other subjects (pp. 89-90). Secondly, Norbury (2001) identifies the gains in POT from the viewpoints of the observed by listing that POT: (a) sharpens your focus on your own teaching, (b) boosts confidence, (c) provides useful feedback, and (d) support. In this study, Norbury (2001) also points out that POT is

proved to be effective no matter which subject is being taught. This study shows that POT is a useful tool to provide teachers with professional development with the help of observing peers as well as being observed by them. Another study by Donnelly (2007) indicates that POT is a useful way to enable teachers to talk about and reflect on their own and each other's teaching, which leads to broadening their perspectives and enhancing their professional development. She asserts that the participants, who are academic staff in the program of Postgraduate Certificate in Third Level Learning and Teaching, find the POT beneficial for their teaching experience as they think that this process helps them improve their teaching skills and provide a new viewpoint of self-assessment. Therefore, Donnelly (2007) argues that the benefits of POT are multifaceted by writing as follows:

Peer observers have learned through the process of watching another teacher and those being observed have learned through the valuable comments and observations of their observer. Within this context an attitude of trust and helpfulness has been essential for the success of the peer observation scheme so that the positive outcome is for both observer and teacher to enhance their understanding of their professional practice (pp. 29-30).

Similarly, Hamilton (2013) has conducted a study on POT which she calls "peer-to-peer observations". She has investigated the teachers' experiences with POT and the gains, if any, they gain from this process. In her study, she has conducted a survey for faculty members and interviews with eight teachers and one administrator. The results of her study show that in the survey the faculty members all have positive ideas about POT and they think that it is a useful process that enhances PD and collegiality among teachers. Interviews also illustrate positive results in terms of PD and collegiality enhancement. However, Hamilton (2013) also suggests that POT be implemented in an organized way and the aims and objectives of it be clear and be flexible for teachers to help them choose their peer to observe and to be observed in order to offer these benefits to the teachers during the operation (pp. 50-57). With a similar point of view, Hirsch (2011) has conducted a study on POT in her doctoral thesis, and she has tried to explore the experiences of teachers who participate in POT program as a job-embedded practice. The results of her study have indicated that thanks to POT, teachers have gained new teaching ideas including their content knowledge and classroom management, they collaborate with each other and collegiality has improved among them. Hirsch (2011) presents five key benefits that are mentioned by participants in her study. The first benefit is described as providing new teaching perspectives to the teachers. The second advantage is that POT enables teachers to improve their abilities in teaching and enable them to be more knowledgeable about their subject matter. The third profit gained during POT is that it gives the opportunity to the teachers to be aware of their own teaching in classroom. In other words, it is a mirroring experience for the teachers. The fourth gain is that POT generates collegiality among

colleagues. The last benefit is that POT enhances cooperation and friendship in the workplace.

2.2.6 Difficulties in PO

In addition to a broad set of benefits provided by POT in teaching context, it is also indicated that there can be some difficulties in conducting POT in a teaching environment. These difficulties are mentioned in the literature in terms of time, lack of training and unwillingness of teachers who are to undergo this process. Hirsch (2011) has suggested that even though the process of POT is very useful for teachers for their PD, personal growth, self-reflection as well as enhancing collegiality and collaboration among them, it may have some drawbacks in being implemented. One of these weaknesses is time as it is mentioned by participants as being challenging to find time to observe each other and give feedback to each other while having other responsibilities as teachers. Correspondingly, Sandt (2012) has also found out in his study that teachers perceive time issue as problematic and stressful. He shows this by writing as follows:

Time allocation is a difficult but important aspect for a peer observation program to work. Teachers see a lack of time as a major hindrance for the introduction of a sustainable peer observation program. Any peer observation program without adequate provision of time would lead to a deterioration of teachers' working conditions and schools would become more stressed and rushed places. (p. 362).

Another weakness of this process is the schedule designed in the practice of POT. The schedule is seen as a drawback as it creates problems during the operation because of the lack of training in POT. Another weakness of the process of POT stated by Hirsch (2011) is that it is still seen as an evaluative system by some teachers and this is also possibly because of the beliefs of the teachers about the *observation* itself (pp. 121- 122). Likewise, Chamberlain, D'artrey & Rowe (2011) propose some difficulties in conducting the process of POT in terms of the procedure employed and the attitudes of administrators towards and during this operation. They indicate their findings regarding the procedure employed in their study as follows:

Although some staff felt the POT process could be beneficial, even those who were positive about it argued that staff engagement toward it varied and on occasion it was being approached in a superficial form-filling manner. That is, they considered it a 'tick box exercise', meaning that they went through the process of ticking boxes on a form but paid superficial attention to what they were doing and why they were doing it (p.196).

In addition, Chamberlain, D'artrey & Rowe (2011) state their findings about the attitudes of administrators towards and during this operation. They highlighted that how the members of the management approach the POT process affects the teachers' beliefs on it.

Therefore, the teachers consider the behaviors of the administrator in this operation, which also influenced their performance and willingness for POT.

Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond (2004) identify the issue from a different perspective as they mention lack of training as a missing point in practicing POT. They support the idea that lack of training in POT may lead to teachers' unwillingness in the process and it may also cause problems to the teachers to misunderstand the process creating anxiety and fear among them. With a different point of view, Shortland (2009) takes feedback as a threatening factor in POT if it is not conveyed in a constructive and positive manner. She puts forward that evaluative feedback can destroy relationships among teachers instead of developing collegiality among them.

3.1 PO in ELT

POT is also described and studied in ELT. However, there is very limited number of studies on POT in ELT (Freeman, 1982; Wang & Seth, 1998; Farrel, 1999; Cosh, 1999; Yeşilbursa, 2009). In his study, Farrel (1998) suggests that POT is an effective method of professional development as the results of his study indicate that just self-reflection is not sufficient to maintain development. Farrel (1998) conducted a study on reflective practice, which included three English as a foreign language (hereafter EFL) teachers as participants of his study. In his study, the participants had weekly meetings to discuss their teaching in a reflective way. They also observed each other and shared their ideas with the help of professional journals. In his study, Farrel (1998) describes his participants as having different educational backgrounds and different teaching experience. He used an adapted version of Ho and Richard's (1993) categories as a framework for his data analysis. These categories included "theories of teaching, approaches and methods used in participants' classes, evaluating teaching, participants' self-awareness of their teaching, questions about teaching and direct references to the group". Firstly, he analyzed the experienced teachers' reflections on their work when they come together as a group. He found out they discuss mostly the personal theories and problems in this context. Then, he sought to find out the degree of critical reflection involved and to what extent the participants were critical about their teaching while reflecting. The results showed that teachers generally had a descriptive reflection about their teaching. He was also interested in finding out whether reflection develops over time or not. At the end of the research cycle, he concluded that reflection did not develop over time as he had expected, just one participant showed a little improvement in that sense. The participants of the study explained their reasons for taking part in this study for demanding to observe themselves and wanting to improve themselves. Also, they desired to know if there were any differences between their knowledge and practice in teaching. They also wanted to become better teachers and tried to develop themselves in

teaching practice and become more effective in their profession. As an implication of his study, Farrel (1998) suggests that teachers' just coming together and discussing ideas does not mean that they will reflect on themselves critically. Therefore, he points out that if the teachers had been observed, they would have been more reflective on their teaching which indicates the significant role of POT in professional development.

While this study emphasizes the necessity of a POT program in EFL context, some other studies focus on the benefits of POT and the reasons why it is different from other types of classroom observations. Wang and Seth (1998) conducted a study on classroom observation in an English language teaching setting in China. They explained that observation in Chinese classrooms is not a desirable process and seen as a very discouraging experience by teachers because observers are "important" people that mostly judge them in a negative way. Considering this, Wang and Seth (1998) conducted a study in order to change teachers' views about classroom observation and tried to turn observation process into a beneficial development opportunity for Chinese EFL teachers. In their study, they enabled teachers to choose the person to observe themselves and also the aspect of the lesson to be observed. In turn, this helped teachers to perceive the observation process as a chance to develop professionally and see their self-development. In order to do this, they mostly focused on peer partnership in order to show that classroom observation is not a discouraging element of teaching setting, but indeed it is encouraging. The observation continuum includes "understander" as observer and "speaker" as observee, which means that observer tries to understand what happens in class and asks questions accordingly, and Speaker gives his/her opinions about their teaching, which also enables reflection. As a result of the study, they found out that there is a change in all of the participants' perceptions of classroom observation in a positive way as they all believe that they had benefited from this observation program in terms of self-development. Also, the participants mentioned that the observers' feedback were "constructive" and "supportive". Therefore, Wang and Seth (1998) point out that POT is a useful professional development tool, and it has a distinctive feature from other types of observations that are associated with anxiety and fear.

As POT is different from other observation types, it is important to describe the procedure and the roles of the teachers as they have the leading roles in the process. Therefore, some ways of POT are suggested to be applied. Cosh (1999) proposes a reflective approach to POT in his study. Firstly, he suggests that an observation process be capable of enabling self-awareness and self-criticism in order to be effective by claiming that teachers lacking these qualities cannot gain any experience or new insights from a reflective POT. Thus, he explains the process of POT. He supports the idea that the teachers should have the control of deciding on when the observation is conducted, which specific areas will be observed by the observer and what should be done before and after the observation. In other

words, the teachers are to “have the control” and “ownership of the process”. He also remarks a need for a form of feedback such as “seminars, discussion groups, feedback forms, pre-and post discussion with the teacher observed”. However, he emphasizes that in this process the focus should be on “what the observer has learnt”, not on what mistakes have been done by the observee (p.25). By explaining the procedure, Cosh (1999) puts forward two possible reflective PO models as follows:

Model 1: An idea of general interest or potential problem is selected. e.g. variety and pacing. Teachers observe a class, and fill in an observation task sheet or feedback sheet about ideas generated, and any possible further action for their own development. A workshop / discussion is then held where everyone discusses the topic. All teachers observed should be anonymous, unless, with their agreement, the observer wishes them to demonstrate or explain some example of good practice.

Model 2: Each teacher observes a class on an area particularly relevant to his / her own concerns and area of teaching. A simple feedback sheet is used for the observer to record what he or she has learnt from the observation. The role of the feedback sheet is both to clarify ideas, and to make suggestions for future staff development in the area of workshops, seminars or demonstrations. The anonymity of the observed should be respected (p. 26).

Cosh (1999) further explains that a coordinator is needed to provide the transmission of ideas among teachers, to be sure that the process is conducted as it should be and to find out whether the process needs some changes in the future. Furthermore, by focusing on the importance of reflective practice, Cosh (1999) concludes his study by offering “Teaching is an art and not a science, and this art can best be developed by a ‘reflective’ view.” (p. 26). In this study, it is obviously seen that POT includes three basic phases such as pre-observation stage (as observers and observee come together and select a problematic area to be observed), Observation itself and Post-observation stage (as feedback sheet is used to generate ideas and future developments. The study by Cosh (1999) gives a reflective approach to POT by proposing and explaining the basic phases and elements of it.

What is more, another study in the literature in Turkey has a different perspective from others as it relates POT to teacher cognition. In her action research study about PO and teacher cognition in Turkey, Yeşilbursa (2009) describes the participants of her study as English Language Teachers teaching basic language skills at a higher education institute. In her study, she firstly identified the participants’ belief systems. Then, she compiled information about participants’ positive and negative ideas and thoughts about their teaching. Later, she had an initial conference with the participants and wanted them to decide on a problem area that can be observed in the peer observation process. She had an observation cycle which includes three participants who are observing each other. In this cycle, Teacher A observes Teacher B, and Teacher B observes Teacher C, and Teacher C observes Teacher A. As the second process, participants recorded their lesson for one hour and gave these

recordings to the observers who watched them and observed the problematic area that they had determined on before. Then, in a post-observation meeting the observee and the observer come together to discuss the predetermined problematic area in the observation. Afterwards, the students were also asked about this problematic area and their perceptions are also gathered. Finally, in the last conference the participants came together to discuss the process and convey their feelings and ideas about the observation cycle. Then findings of this study showed that both observees and the observers gained a lot from the peer observation process. Also, the study illustrated that teachers' cognition about their teaching and practices in teaching environment are not always compatible with each other. Therefore, it can be said that there can be a discrepancy between what teachers believe they do in class and what they actually implement in that context. Therefore, Yeşilbursa (2009) supports the idea that POT provides a different perspective for the teachers on their teaching performances.

The literature in ELT indicates that POT has an important role in improving professionally and growing personally. Moreover, if POT is conducted properly, it helps teachers to develop collegiality and have cooperation with each other in teaching practices. In other words, it is apparent that POT broadens the views of the teachers on their experiences and aids them in thinking and behaving in a professional way.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Presentation

In the literature, a great number of studies have been conducted on this issue. These studies have mostly focus on the aims and objectives, procedure of POT as well as training and confidentiality in this process. Moreover, they have also emphasized teachers' perceptions of its process, benefits and possible difficulties that can be faced during this operation. However, no other study in the literature has investigated the issue from the perspective of just observees. Furthermore, the studies ELT on this issue are very limited. Moreover, there are too few studies in Turkey on this issue. Finally, in Turkey, very few institutions adopt POT process as a PD opportunity for their teachers. As mentioned earlier, this study is conducted to find out the observees' perceptions of the process of POT and relate their ideas to the procedure that is implemented, identify possible problems during the process and present possible solutions to these problems.

This chapter explains the methodology employed in this study. First of all, research setting is displayed. Secondly, participants of the study are described. Lastly, data collection procedure is presented.

3.1 Research Setting: A state University in Central Turkey

The research takes place at a state university in central Turkey. This university is mainly situated in the city center, but it also has nine campus sites in other parts of the city. With over 77 thousand students and 4 thousand instructors, this university is the only university which has the highest number of faculties in Turkey. It is also one of the most successful universities in Turkey. This research study is specifically conducted in the Department of Basic Foreign Languages at this university. The education in the Department of Basic Foreign Languages is conducted by 59 English, 4 German, 3 Arabic and 4 French language instructors, and 8 administrative staff. The participants of this study are selected from just instructors of English. In this department, English language instructors observe each other's teaching for the purpose of professional development. This process is new to this department as it has been conducted for 2 years until now. There is no information about the procedure of this process on the website of the university and any other place; therefore, this study firstly has the aim of exploring the procedure of POT conducted in this department.

3.2 Participants

Participants of this study include ten English language instructors, a coordinator from the department, the head of Professional Development Unit (hereafter PDU) and two Teaching Unit Heads. Therefore, this study was conducted with 14 participants in total.

3.2.1 English Language Instructors

The sampling procedure used in this study is random sampling as it is aimed to prevent biased results and provide valid information which represents the ideas of larger populations. In this study, 10 participants are selected randomly from English Language Instructors who graduated from different universities, which means that they have different educational background and possibly different teaching philosophies and teaching strategies. All of the participants are Turkish and they are all non-native English language instructors. Eight of the participants have two to four years of teaching experience while two of them have four to seven years of experience. Moreover, three of the participants have a master's degree and two of them are about to finish their master's program. All of the participants are females as there is a very limited number of males who could not be reached by the researcher during the study. Their ages are between 24 and 32. They all offer English courses in preparatory school which include students from all departments. In the beginning of the study, the level of the students was pre-intermediate. Afterwards, they finished *pre-intermediate* and they became *intermediate*. All participants teach for 25 hour a week. The participants in this study were assigned pseudonyms for anonymity reasons.

3.2.2 The head of the PDU

The head of the PDU is also an instructor in the same department and has had special education about personal development in education for a year. She has been teaching English for 12 years and she is the head of the PDU for two years. She did her master's degree in the field of ELT. She prepares seminars and conferences to inform teachers about the activities to provide PD for them. She is one of the initiators of POT Process in the Department of Basic Foreign Languages.

3.2.3 Coordinator

The coordinator is also an instructor. He has started his first teaching at Gazi University and has been teaching for 14 years. He works as a coordinator for 6 years. He arranges the schedules, and programs for instructors and has an essential part in *peer observation* process. He tries to arrange substitute teachers for observers in order to maintain education during the observation process. He is informed by unit heads to arrange the schedules of substitute teachers in order to conduct POT process.

3.2.4 Teaching Unit Heads

In this department, in ELT section, there are four teaching units and each of them includes one head. The heads are also instructors and they all undergo the same procedure, which means they also participate in the observation process. The mission of the heads is to have meetings with teachers in their teaching unit and explain them the weekly program as well as informing them about the important announcements about that week. In other words, heads of teaching units have the role of connecting the management to the instructors. The heads also decide on the peer cycles which refer to “who observes who?” in peer observation process. In this study, there are two heads of teaching units. One of them has 7 years of experience while the other has been teaching for 3 years. One of them is female and the other is male.

3.3 Data Collection

In this study, qualitative data was collected as also implemented in the literature in order to gather detailed data about the process of POT at a university in central Turkey. Qualitative research is defined as a scientific research that seeks detailed information, it consists of textual data and describes the experiences and perceptions of the participants as well as making connections between the ideas (Berg, 2000; Creswell (n.d); Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namey, 2000). Creswell (n.d) identifies three approaches to research including quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches. He describes qualitative approach as follows:

A qualitative approach is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e., the multiple meanings of individual experiences meanings socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e., political, issue-oriented, collaborative, or change oriented) or both. It also uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies. The researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data.

Berg (2000) also considers qualitative research as “research that properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings” (p.6). Furthermore, qualitative research has a variety of benefits for research studies in mainly the social sciences. Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namey (2000) explain the strengths of qualitative research as follows:

The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It provides information about the “human” side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals. Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms,

socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent (p.1).

This study, therefore, is a case study which is regarded as a type of qualitative research. Case studies are described by Berg (2000) as : “Case study methods involve systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how it operates or functions” (p.225).

Because of aforementioned advantages of qualitative research, this study is conducted as a qualitative research. In the study, all positive aspects of qualitative study have been taken into account and applied in a careful and elaborative way. The data collection tools were all qualitative and they included pre-observation reflection diaries, post-observation reflection diaries and interviews. The data were collected within a school term which lasted for four months. It was not easy to collect data as the teachers were very busy and it was an extra workload for them. Pre-observation and post-observation reflection diaries were just conducted with the observees in the process. Interviews were conducted with all participants.

3.3.1 Pre-observation Reflection Diaries

Pre-observation reflection diaries were used so as to gather information about the perceptions of the observees just a night before the observation. They consisted of seven items. These items asked questions about the feelings of observees, their positive and negative thoughts about the process, the observer, whether they thought that they would have any gain from the process, whether they would use the materials that they employed regularly such as the coursebook or the given materials, or whether they would prepare extra materials, whether there were differences between the normal process of teaching and observation of teaching and what they thought about how their students would act in class. The observees filled these pre-observation reflection diaries the night before the observation. This pre-observation reflection diary also included the confidentiality confirmation for the teachers. They were informed that the information they provided would in any condition be seen or used by any other individual other than the researcher and they were assured that their identity would be kept secret. Therefore, in order to keep their identity secret, they were requested to assign themselves pseudonyms which would be Turkish and different from their names and their colleagues' names. The pre-observation reflection diary was prepared in Turkish with the aim of receiving the “actual words” of the participants as they were non-native English speakers and their native language was Turkish. By doing this, it was aimed not to destroy the nature and originality of the process as teachers think in Turkish and express their feelings in Turkish about the process among themselves.

3.3.2 Post-observation Reflection Diaries

Post-observation reflection diaries were conducted with observees after the observation. They also started with a confidentiality confirmation by the researcher and the pseudonym that the participants used in pre-observation reflection diary in order to identify the participants and compare their information. The Post-observation reflection diaries included ten items. Some of the items from this diary are as follows:

The observation process of your lesson has just ended.

- (a) Can you write three adjectives that describe your feelings and thoughts now?
- (b) How did you feel during the observation?
- (c) How do you feel about the observation now?
- (d) Can you compare YOU during the observation and YOU at the moment?

By using these ten items, it was aimed to find out the perceptions of the observees both during the process and after the process and compare these ideas with the ones they have written the night before the observation. This Post-observation diary was also in Turkish because of the aforementioned reasons for pre-observation diary.

3.3.3 Interviews

In this study, there were four different interviews for four different categories of the participants including the observees, the head of the PDU, the coordinator and the teaching unit heads. The interviews with the head of the PDU, the coordinator and the teaching unit heads were carried out during the term. However, the interviews with the observees were conducted after all cycles finished.

3.3.3.1 Interviews with the observees

After the whole process, the observees were asked to participate in interviews prepared by the researcher. The interviews asked about the whole practice, perceptions of the instructors after the whole procedure, whether they had enough training before the operation, what benefits they gained from the process, whether they had any difficulties during the system and what solutions they could propose if they had difficulties in this technique. The interviews were audio- recorded by the researcher with the consent of the participants. The observees used the same pseudonyms as the ones they have used in pre-observation and post-observation reflection diaries. The interview questions were also in Turkish because of the same reasons as in pre-observation and post-observation reflection diaries.

3.3.3.1 Interview with the Head of Professional Development Unit

The interview questions for the head of the PDU aimed to gather information about the reasons for implementing POT at this state university and see the process of POT through their eyes. The interview schedule included eight items. The first item asked the definition of POT. The other items investigated the aims of PDU for implementing POT, their expectations about the process, their actions to inform the teachers about the operation and their views on what teachers think about POT. This interview with the head of PDU could not be recorded because of the time limitations. Interview questions were sent to the head of the PDU, s/he answered the questions electronically and sent them to the researcher. S/ he was very willing to attend the procedure as she believed that they would gain new perspectives from this research.

3.3.3.2 Interview with the Coordinator

The interview questions for the coordinator had the objective of identifying the procedure in preparing observers to observe classes. As observers had their own lessons at the same time with the observation hour, the coordinators were to arrange substitute teachers for their classes while they were observing. Therefore, the coordinator had a crucial role in this process. The interview schedule for the coordinator had the following 5 items:

1. What do you think about the peer observation process?
2. How do you arrange people to be observed or to be observers?
3. How do you regulate classes during the observation?
4. Do you run into any problems during this procedure?
5. Anything you wish to add?

These questions were included in the interview with the coordinator with the aim of gathering information about the procedure of POT and the problems the teachers and the management have, if any, in this operation. The interview with the coordinator was audio-recorded and kept confidential.

3.3.3.1 Interviews with the Teaching Unit Heads

The last interviews were done with the unit heads that arranged the peer cycles and follow the actual process. The unit heads were the teachers who have units and each unit has a certain number of teachers in them. The heads had the duty of organizing peer cycles, arranging the times for the peer cycles and inform the coordinator about the times of peer cycles. They had the role of being a bridge between the teachers and the coordinator. The questions in these interviews with the unit heads tried to explore the choice of peer cycles,

the procedure and the problems that were faced in this continuum. All the interviews were audio-recorded and kept confidential.

3.4 Data Analysis

This study is a case study which is a method of qualitative research. In this study, the data were collected with the help of reflection diaries and interviews. As outlined above, the reflection diaries consisted of pre-observation and post-observation diaries. Pre-observation reflection diaries were sent via e-mail to the participants the night before the observation while post-observation reflection diaries were filled by the participants just after the observation. All interviews except the one with the head of professional development unit were audio-recorded. In this study, content analysis was used as a data analysis technique. Content analysis is a method of data analysis which enables researchers to analyze both qualitative and quantitative data collected in their study and it strengthens reliability and validity factors in analysis of data collected (Berg, 2000). Berg (2000) mentions “criteria of selection” in analyzing data and he supports the idea that “criteria of selection must be formally established before the actual analysis of data” (p.240). He goes on explaining as follows:

The criteria of selection used in any given content analysis must be sufficiently exhaustive to account for each variation of message content and must be rigidly and consistently applied so that other researchers or readers, looking at the same messages, would obtain the same or comparable results (p.240).

Holsti (1968, p.598) also identifies the content analysis procedure as “The inclusion or exclusion of content is done according to consistently applied criteria of selection; this requirement eliminates analysis in which only material supporting the investigator's hypotheses are examined (as cited in Berg, 2000, p. 241).

Content analysis requires all data written. Therefore, in content analysis, the first rule is to transcribe the audio-recorded messages consisting of “words or terms, themes, characters, paragraphs, items, concepts, and semantics” (Berelson, 1952; Berg, 1983; Merton, 1968; Selltiz, Jahoda, Deutsch & Cook, 1959; as cited in Berg, 2000, pp. 246-248). Berg (2000) points out that in content analysis these elements are sometimes separately used to analyze data and at other times they can also be used as a combination if it is necessary. He suggests that the use of these elements and the rule for coding data in a research can change according to the aim of the study. He also argues about how to determine the codes and categories in a research data by proposing open coding which includes five guidelines suggested by Strauss (1987): (1) ask the data a specific and constant set of questions; (2) analyze the data minutely; (3) frequently interrupt the coding to write a theoretical note; (4) never assume the analytic relevance of any traditional; (5) variable such as age, sex, social class, and so forth until the data show it to be relevant (as cited in Berg, 2000, pp. 251- 253):

It is also advocated by Berg (2000) that content analysis is an advantageous method of data analysis in exploratory and descriptive studies (p. 259). Similarly, Creswell (n.d) suggests six steps in content analysis of data:

- (1) Organize and prepare the data for analysis,
- (2) Read through all the data,
- (3) Begin detailed analysis with a coding process,
- (4) Use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis,
- (5) Advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative,
- (6) A final step in data analysis involves making an interpretation or meaning of the data (p. 218- 222).

In data analysis process of this study, Strauss' guidelines, Creswell's data analysis steps and Berg's suggestions to data analysis were mainly followed. Accordingly, all data collected by interviews were transcribed. Afterwards, the data collected via pre-observation and post-observation reflection diaries as well as interviews were brought together, categorized and prepared for analysis. Then, all data were examined by the researcher and the notes in the form of memos were written-up during this process. Next, the data were coded according to the aims and objectives of the study with the help of the axial, open-coding technique suggested by Strauss (1987) (as cited in Berg, 2000, p. 251- 253). Finally, the coded data were interpreted to answer the research questions of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.0 Presentation

In this chapter, the results of the study will be displayed. The results are presented around the research questions. The research questions in this study are: (i) *How is peer observation planned and carried out in the institution?*, (ii) *What are the perceptions of observees about the observation process?*, (iii) *What are the possible problems of implementing peer observation of teaching process?*, and (iv) *What could be a suggested model for POT for future implementation in educational institutions?*

4.1 *How is peer observation planned and carried out in the institution?*

The first question of this study aims at discovering the planning and implementation of the POT in the mentioned institution mainly because there is no documentation for POT in the website of the institution or in any other places. In this process, there are some handouts for the teachers to be aware of the process. No other documentation is available. Therefore, this study has the objective of exploring the procedure adopted by the institution. The second reason why this study aims at answering how POT planned and carried out in the institution is to identify the implementation of the process from the perspectives of all stakeholders and see the differences among them.

Considering the first research question and following the coding procedure proposed by Berg and Creswell, the major themes identified are *the procedure of Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) in the institution*, *the training in POT in the institution* and *the expectations from the POT process in the institution*.

4.1.1 The procedure of Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) in the institution

POT in the institution is designed as an ongoing PD tool for the instructors in order to give them an opportunity to enhance their teaching practices by observing each other's teaching and to reflect on their teaching so as to see their own weaknesses and strengths. The POT process is new to this institution as it has been conducted for only two years until now. First of all, the process of PO is obligatory in this institution, which is regarded as a drawback by the majority of the instructors. Moreover, the head of professional development unit explained the problem as follows:

Peer Observation of teaching was obligatory when we first started; however, the following year, most of the instructors did not observe each other as they pointed out some reasons which were mainly time limitations for conducting Peer Observation. There were no pressure and punishment for those who did not undergo this process, however.

This explanation by the head of PDU indicates that even if the procedure is obligatory, it cannot assure that all instructors have implemented the process as there are some other problems such as time limitations which affect the practice of POT negatively. Moreover, it is obvious that there are some problems in implementation of the POT in that even if the teachers want to participate in POT, they cannot because of time constraints, which is a drawback for both the institution and the teachers. In other words, even if the POT becomes a voluntary operation for the teachers, it cannot be beneficial unless the teachers have enough time to practice it.

In order to implement POT, the instructors are divided into teaching units including 15 instructors on average. The procedure last year was different from the one conducted this year. Last year, the teaching units were selected and the observation included observation cycles including three or four instructors, the instructors observed each other respectively, they filled the observation forms and handed them to the administration. In each observation process, there were three stages: pre-observation meeting, observation itself and post-observation meeting. Pre-observation meeting was conducted between the observer and the observee. In this pre-observation meeting, the observer and the observee came together and the observee explained his/her lesson plan to the observer. If the observee wanted, he/she could ask the observer to observe an aspect of her lesson such as classroom management strategies, first language usage in class and the questioning techniques during the lesson and so on. If the observee prepared a lesson plan, s/he could send it to the observer the day before the observation, but this was not obligatory. In the observation stage, the observer observed the class, took notes about the lesson and filled out the observation sheet. After the observation stage, the observee and the observer came together again to talk about the lesson. This stage is called post-observation meeting. Before coming to post-observation meeting, the observee could write a self-reflection in which s/he identifies her/his strengths and weaknesses in the observed lesson. When the observee and the observer came together, the observee talked about her/his reflection and the observer gave feedback, which is mostly positive, to the observee. This feedback generally included positive sides of the observed lesson. Nevertheless, most instructors criticized this process mainly because of the observation forms, their being very detailed and the fact that they were given to the administration after the observation. The majority of instructors proposed that handing the observation forms to the management created an atmosphere in which they thought they were supervised by the management and they regarded this process as an obligatory and managerial procedure instead of seeing it as a professional development opportunity. Hacer reported that they were not pleased with the process because of the observation forms last year:

We were filling out observation forms last year in this observation process. There were an observation form which requires to be filled with ticks and crosses that indicate which practices exist and which do not in the lesson being observed. We were filling out this form putting ticks. I think this was too irritating for us. OK, observers may take notes during the lesson and they may hand them to the observee; however, it should not be a form like that, need not be. This form even was to be given to the management. There is no need to do such a thing. We do not need observation forms and they should not be given to the management.

Because of such negative feedback as also expressed by Hacer, the institution has changed their policy to the POT and they did not have a rule for the observers to hand in the observation forms to the management in the first term this year. The observation forms were still given to the instructors; however, they were not required to fill in them and hand them to the management. They were just asked to fill in them if they want to do so and give them to the observee. The observers were free then to fill in the forms. Therefore, they had the opportunity to just give oral feedback to the observees, which made them more pleased with the procedure. The head of the PDU also expressed that PO checklists are not necessary for the process:

There are some example checklists provided for teachers to give some idea about what to focus on during observation; however, it isn't obligatory to use them. Teachers are frequently reminded to feel free about the checklist. They don't have to use a checklist or form if they don't want. I personally find checklists too detailed. There are too many questions to observe in a single class hour in most of the checklists. Checklists are also in a way limiting the observer. I can't completely express what I mean through checklists because there are generally yes or no questions.

As mentioned by most of the participants and the head of the PDU, the checklists are not desirable in this institution. The checklists are found to be unnecessary by most of the stakeholders as they believe that they become an extra task for them to complete.

Due to the aforementioned issues, the procedure POT this term in which the researcher has conducted this research was different from the one in the first term. POT process was still obligatory, but still the instructors who did not observe each other did not get any pressure or punishment from the management. Observation cycles still included three or four instructors in each cycle. The instructors in each cycle observe each other respectively. For instance, Observer A is observed by Observer B and C, Observer B is observed by Observer A and C, Observer C is observed by Observer A and B as in Figure 1. These cycles are displayed in Figure 1 and Figure 2 as follows:

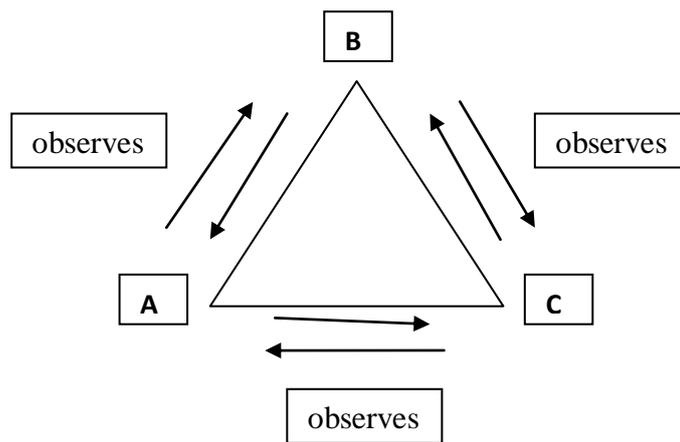


Figure 1: Observation Cycle with Three Instructors

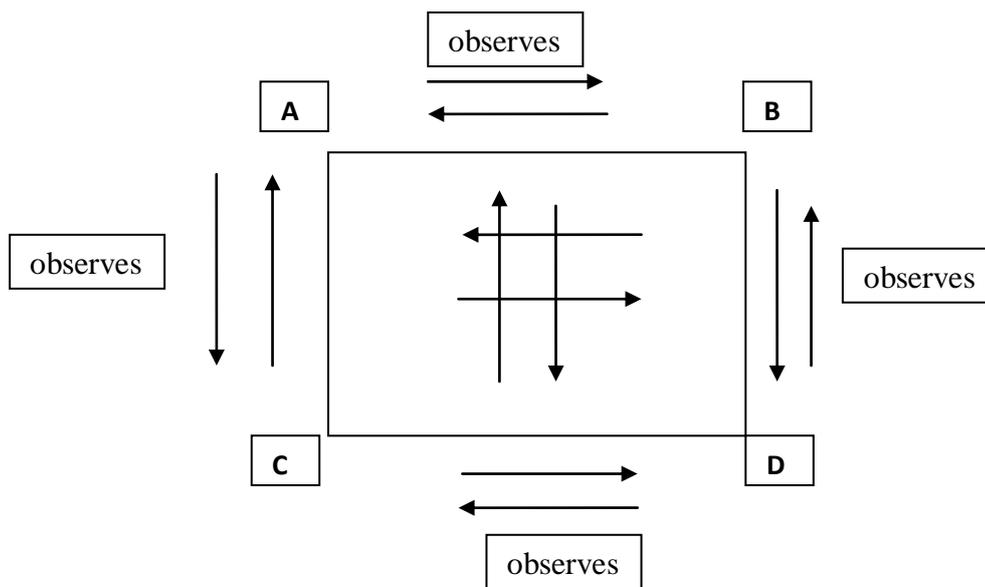


Figure 2: Observation Cycle with Four Instructors

The cycles were formed by the heads of teaching units who arranged the schedules for the instructors to observe each other by examining in programs and tried to find the most appropriate slots for them because some instructors had been doing their master's degree and they are not available all the time. Moreover, at this university, other than Preparatory classes, there were some other classes which consist of students that were assistants at other universities and were specifically preparing for the exams such as TOEFL, IELTS and YDS. These programs were held during the year; therefore, the schedules of these programs overlapped with the schedule of Preparatory Classes and the process of the POT were to be

arranged according to these instructors' time available as they taught in these programs. To put it another way, it was not an easy task to arrange the program for POT for all instructors. The Head of Teaching Unit (hereafter HTU) I explained the process with the following words:

Our Peer Observation of Teaching includes cycles formed by three or four teachers (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The teachers in these cycles observe each other interchangeably. One instructor is responsible for observing other members of his / her group and s/he is to be observed by those members in his / her group. It is a very long and exhaustive process for us to arrange the times for observations.

Another issue in designing POT in this department was the criteria according to which the "peer cycles" are organized. As teaching unit heads were to arrange the groups, they were asked how they selected the teachers via the question "Who observes who and why?". HTU I described the process as follows:

We already have teaching units in our school and the most important thing we take into account is experience. We have highly experienced, experienced and novice teachers. We try to have one highly experienced instructor, one with five or six years of experience and one novice teacher in a cycle. Our highly experienced teachers benefit from new ideas and practices while novice teachers make use of others' experience in teaching. We strongly try to choose teachers as experienced and novice together in a cycle.

HTU II explained this process as well. He asserted that there were some other criteria in choosing peer cycles. First of all, he highlighted that the most important criterion to choose the peer cycle is the communication among the peers. The communication among them should be so well that they could communicate with each other without being shy or without hesitation. Secondly, he pointed out the importance of timing. He further underscored that if the cycles' schedule were not compatible with each other, it was not a good cycle. Lastly, he emphasized the importance of arranging groups in to peer cycles according to their years of experience as they learn from each other in many aspects. He explained that experienced refresh their practices with the help of novice teachers while novice teachers gain from their experience. He continued his explanation:

I try to consider their friendship. But I ask them, get their opinions and generally give them the chance to choose their cycle members and then I tell them "You, A, B, C will observe each other" and they organize themselves. They all observe each other in a cycle. I do not want to intervene in the process.

The explanation of the two HTUs indicated that there were differences between the two HTUs in forming peer cycles, which created discrepancy in the implementation of POT and affected the teachers' perspectives in a variety of ways in the process. For example, the instructors who were in the teaching unit of the HTU II mostly felt pleased with the process as they were observed by their friends or close friends while the ones in teaching unit of the HTU I considered it as stressful because of being observed by the teachers who were more

experienced than themselves or by the ones who are less experienced. Moreover, it was also apparent that there was no consistency in the implementation of POT in choosing peer cycles, which became a drawback in referring to the benefits of it.

After the organization of peer cycles, another issue came into existence. The teachers in this institution taught 25 hours a week, which meant that they did not have extra time for Peer Observation of Teaching. Therefore, they had to undergo POT process while they were teaching at the same time. As this was impossible, the management made use of substitute teachers, who were the teachers having contract with the institution with the aim of having lessons with the classes instead of the actual teachers when the actual teachers of the classes had health problems or some other problems and could not come and teach their classes. Substitute teachers, in POT process, had a crucial role as when one observer went to observe one observee's class, substitute teacher went to the observer's class and teaches that class in order to keep up with the schedule and so as not to disrupt the program of the day in that class. Moreover, as there were just a certain number of substitute teachers and 59 English Language Instructors, it was very significant to organize the process elaborately. In this POT operation, the unit heads informed the coordinator about the schedule of observation cycles and the coordinator arranged the times for substitute teachers to keep up with the program at the same time. The coordinator stated that he organized the schedule part of the program. However, sometimes he had difficulty in programming POT as substitute teachers would not be available all the time because the actual teachers of the classes would have medical reports or permissions for different reasons and the number of substitute teachers would be just sufficient for the classes whose teachers were absent that day. Therefore, he had to cancel the observations that day and postpone them to another day. It could be concluded from the utterances of the coordinator that if they did not have any substitute teachers available at the time of the observation of one cycle, which was determined before, they rearrange the observation for another day. However, the observees were not happy with this postponement as they thought that it was a very stressful situation for them. They expressed that they prepared themselves for the observation for the second time, which caused them to lose their enthusiasm for the observation.

When the peer cycles were arranged and the substitute teacher was required to teach in observer's class at a specific hour in a specific day, a pre-observation meeting was conducted between the observee and the observer. However, if the observee wanted, he/she could send a lesson plan to the observer via email the day before the observation. However, it was not a rule. The observee and the observer were to talk about the lesson before the observation. The observee might explain the objectives of the lesson, the materials that he/she would make use of during the lesson and the rationale behind the materials that he/she will use. Moreover, the observee might ask the observer to observe a specific facet of his/her

lesson. For instance, s/he might request from the observer to observe his/her classroom management and give feedback on this issue. After Pre-observation meeting ended, the observer went to the class and observed the class and the observee. The observer generally sat at the back of the class, did not get involved in the lesson in any case and he/she just observed and if she wanted, she might take some notes or fill in the observation form provided by the PDU. However, this form was not given to the management. If the observer desired, he/she might give the form to the observee. The observation took one hour at one time. After that hour, the observer and the observee tried to come together again as soon as possible to have the Post-observation meeting. In this post-observation meeting, firstly, the observee talked about herself, the lesson, the things that she had planned but could not implement in the lesson or what went well and what went wrong and so on. After the self-reflection of the observee, the most important part of POT was applied: *Feedback*. The observer gave feedback to the observee in a suitable language and manner. S/he mainly talked about the positive sides of the lesson, the benefits s/he gained from the lesson and the suggestions on the lesson to the observee. In this process, feedback was regarded as crucial in that it may affect the relationship between the observer and the observee. HTU I enlightened the operation as follows:

The teachers have meetings before and after the observations. If they can prepare a lesson plan, but it is not compulsory, they can send it to the observer via e-mail or share it with her in Pre-observation meeting. This is not obligatory. There is an observation form or checklist which helps the observer to present her comments on the lesson they observed. And these comments are generally positive.

The meetings before and after the observations were very useful; however, because of the time limitations, some teachers could not have the chance of conducting these meetings. Therefore, they had some concerns about the meetings. First of all, they mentioned that the post-observation meeting became useless as they all received positive feedback and therefore could not have an idea about their weaknesses in class, which, they thought, did not help them at all. Secondly, the teachers believed that if all teachers could know how to give effective feedback, it would have helped them more. In this way, they would have gained more insights about their teaching and tried to improve themselves professionally.

When asked about how to follow POT process, HTU II explained that they assumed that the teachers were informed and conscious enough to conduct this operation without being followed or controlled. He asserted that they were, as unit heads, did not want to get involved in the process or intervene with it, they just organized the cycles and arranged the times and the following operation was conducted by the teachers. HTU II points out:

Professional Development Unit informed teachers about the procedure, the aims of the POT and how to give feedback to each other in POT. The unit also provided some handouts explaining POT. Therefore, the teachers are informed and they are aware of the POT, its procedure, aims and benefits. Management also does not get

involved in the process. Observation forms or checklists are not gathered from the observers. They gave them to each other if they want.

Monitoring the process of POT is significant as without following the operation, the management or the PDU cannot have any ideas about what actually happened and whether they have achieved the aims. Therefore, if the POT process is not conducted just for the sake of being implemented, it is important that it be monitored by the management or the PDU. If the first and the most important aim of the POT is to provide teachers professional development as well personal growth, following it becomes significant.

Aforementioned ideas identified the process of POT at this university. The procedure can be explained as including five phases: (1) The teachers are provided seminars and workshops on POT and giving feedback; (2) The teaching unit heads organize peer cycles with three or four colleagues; (3) The first step of POT initiates with a pre-observation meeting and focus topic are decided by the observee and the observer; (4) Observation starts and lasts for one class hour; (5) Post-observation conference begins and observee talks about their reflection while observer gives feedback. The procedure seems flawless; however, it has some problems in terms of time allocation, feedback and monitoring it.

4.1.2 Training for POT in the institution

As mentioned before, POT is new to this institution. Therefore, there is a need for PDU to provide training for the instructors about how to implement POT, why implement POT, the benefits of POT and the importance of feedback in POT. In this institution, PDU consists of six instructors and they prepare and provide in-service training for the instructors. Therefore, in introducing the POT process to the department and the instructors, they have prepared seminars and workshops in order to inform the teachers about POT. They mainly arranged seminars for teachers about the procedure of POT, its aims, feedback in POT and the benefits of POT. During the process, they also provide handouts that explain POT. They also informed Teaching Unit Heads about POT and requested them to explain POT to the teachers when they gather in order to remind the components and the application. In the training, the teachers had questions in their minds as the operation was new to them. The coordinator underscores the importance of training:

We especially pointed out in the meetings that this was not a project to find out the weaknesses of anyone or a project of management to control its personnel; this was a project to peers' observing each other and sharing ideas for the sake of enhancing the quality of teaching. We tried to make teachers be aware of these aims of implementing POT.

To put it in a nutshell, first of all, meetings are held to increase awareness about POT. Secondly, PDU organized seminars and workshops for teachers to inform them. Thirdly, teaching unit heads explained POT in the unit head meetings. Finally, handouts are handed to the instructors about POT.

4.1.3 The expectations from Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) in this institution

In the literature, POT is seen as an opportunity to provide a wide range of benefits; therefore, it is accepted as a desirable process to be implemented in schools (Norbury, 2001; Donnelly, 2007; Cosh, 2009; Yeşilbursa, 2009; Hirsch, 2011; Hamilton, 2013). Also, this department has expectations from POT and they aim to achieve all these expectations during POT. The head of PDU emphasizes that they expect “professional development through sharing experience and self-reflection”. Moreover, the coordinator supports the idea that they have the aim of enhancing teaching quality and encouraging teachers to share their ideas and experiences in an organized way thanks to POT. He also points out that the process enhanced collegiality and trust among teachers. Furthermore, HTU I also asserted that POT was used for developmental purposes, which meant that it provided PD for the teachers. Similarly, HTU II highlighted the expectations from POT as following utterances:

POT has the objective of providing teachers with being more alert about what they do. They become more organized and they improve their self-reflection skills. Moreover, they learn how to give feedback to their peer, which also strengthens their trust to each other. They become aware of learning from each other. This process does not only enable professional development, but at the same time, it provides teachers personal growth.

To sum up, management, the PDU and the teaching unit heads expected many benefits from POT. What they mostly desired was to provide professional development with the help of colleague observations and feedback. Next, they had the objective of increasing teaching quality. After that, they aimed at enhancing collegiality. Moreover, they had the purpose of strengthening trust among teachers. Finally, they target at improving teachers’ self-reflection skills.

4.1.4 The difficulties that are faced during the POT process from the perspectives of the coordinator, the head of PDU and teaching unit heads

The coordinator, the head of PDU and teaching unit heads were asked to explain the difficulties, if any, they faced during POT. They explained that they had some difficulties in conducting the process due to several reasons. First of all, the coordinator stated that the only problem might be the timing of the observations. He exemplified that when teaching unit heads informed him about the arrangement of the observation, they might not have available substitute teachers because of some teachers’ having medical reports or other permissions. In this case, as he reported, they had to cancel the observation at that hour or on that day, which meant that the schedule could not be followed, which caused some difficulties in POT program. Secondly, the head of PDU had the idea that some of the teachers did not find peer observation useful, which would cause its aims not to be achieved. She also pointed out that if the teachers were reluctant and not honest enough, POT might not mean anything to them.

Thirdly, HTU I described the problems in conducting POT by highlighting that canceling the observations lead to the process lasting longer and the schedule for the observations became more problematic. She also emphasized that canceling the observations because of not having substitute teachers available would create reluctance in conducting POT. Finally, HTU II explained that they had problems as both the students and the teachers could not behave normally during the observations. Also, he had the idea that POT's being obligatory was a disadvantage as unwilling teachers affected the process negatively. Another problem defined by HTU II was feedback itself as he asserted that some teachers did not know how to give feedback. Moreover, he pointed out the monitoring of the process by the PDU as PDU neither followed the implementation of POT nor got feedback from the teachers. Lastly, he mentioned his concern about the practice of POT in terms of substituting as following words:

In this process, you, as an observer, go to observe another class and a substitute teacher comes to your own class to teach. What if there was a very important topic on the schedule that they? What will happen to your class? Will they adapt to the new teacher at that hour or try to learn the important topic? While we regard this process as personal and professional development, we ignore our class.

To summarize, in this institution, there are several problems in conducting POT which are mentioned by the coordinator, the head of the PDU and teaching unit heads. The first problem is about canceling and delaying the peer cycles because of not being able to provide substitute teachers at pre-determined time, which is also about time allocation for POT. As teachers teach for 25 hours a week, the problems are likely to appear during POT, which disrupts the nature and flow of POT. The second problem is reluctance of the teachers to participate in POT. The third problem is that the teachers and the students cannot behave normally and they act out during the observations, which creates a fake atmosphere for teaching and learning. The fourth problem is about giving feedback. As some teachers do not know how to give feedback in post-conference, they create problems among teachers rather than enhancing collegiality. The fifth problem is that POT is obligatory. As it is obligatory, even though most teachers are not willing, they have to join the procedure, which results in chaos. The sixth problem is about substitute teachers. Some teachers do not want to leave their classes to observe another class while a substitute teacher teaches his/her class. They want to have extra time to conduct POT rather than letting somebody else to teach their class. The seventh problem is that the PDU does not monitor the process. The last problem is that the PDU provides these seminars and workshops at the beginning of the term and they do not provide seminars or workshops at other times in that term. Therefore, the training is not constant.

4.2 What are the perceptions of observees about the observation process?

The observees' perceptions of POT process are important in that they experience the process and it is the observee that is mainly affected by it psychologically. As the class is a place which is special to one teacher at a time and his / her students, an outsider may have an effect on their psychology and the flow of the lesson. Therefore, it is significant that observees' perceptions be considered. In order to collect and identify the observees' perceptions of POT process, pre-observation and post-observation reflection diaries were conducted. Moreover, interviews were done with the observees to get their ideas in a detailed way. The following major themes were identified referring to the perceptions of the observees and the issues raised in both reflection diaries and the interviews: *The feelings and ideas of the observees on the procedure of POT, The feelings and ideas of the observees before, during and after the observations.*

4.2.1 The feelings and ideas of the observees about the procedure of POT

In interviews, 10 instructors were asked about their feelings and ideas about the procedure of POT. It was seen that all of them had positive ideas about POT although the process reminded of most of them of negative feelings. Çiçek explained that no matter they shared the same occupation with other teachers, they had different applications of methods or techniques while they were teaching. She clarified that when her friends came to her class, they brought their ideas and experience, so POT meant that friends observed each other and they learned from each other with collaboration. However, she underscored that no matter who came to her class, it created anxiety and shyness for her.

Similarly, Hülya believed that even though she had positive ideas about POT, it created some problems for her. She illustrated her ideas as "POT is a concept that when I hear it, I try to feel positively. I don't know, maybe because of my personality or maybe its being so theoretical rather than practical. The benefits, for me, are just a theory."

Likewise, Hacer believed that POT should be conducted as it proposed a wide variety of development opportunities. However, she thought that the process was a little bit nerve-racking for the observees, but not for the observers. She also pointed out that she mainly worried about the behaviors of the students during the observation. She further explained that whether her students would behave as they behaved in a usual lesson or not is a source of stress for her before the observation. Hazal, Oya and Ada also shared very similar ideas about the procedure of POT. They believed that POT was a beneficial process for their teaching. Thanks to POT, they had the opportunity to see each others' teaching practices and they learned from each other in this way. They also believed that POT form a relationship among them, which was a positive social gain from POT. Nevertheless, they

suggested that despite the benefits they gained, they felt nervous, shy and stressed before and during it.

On the other hand, Naz, Belgin, Ece and Arzu thought that POT process was a process that they were very pleased with. They underlined the contributions of POT to their teaching and they emphasized that they felt very happy when they had observation. Naz supported her ideas with the following words:

I consider the process as a positive one. I believe that being observed by a peer is a very nice thing. It is very useful for development. We cannot control ourselves or we cannot monitor ourselves all the time. Therefore, being observed by another eye is a great opportunity for us.

Considering the ideas and feelings of the observees when they heard POT, it was apparent that they mostly had positive feelings, but most of them had some concerns with regard to their personality traits, the implementation style of POT and their beliefs about it. Just Naz, Belgin and Ece shared good feelings about the process and they thought that they had a great opportunity to develop themselves professionally thanks to POT. However, the other participants had worries about being shy, nervous and stressed while being observed by their colleagues, which was mainly because HTUs followed different criteria to form the peer cycles. For instance, while HTU I chose the peers in cycles according to the experienced and inexperienced criteria, HTU II established cycles regarding their friendship. Therefore, the observees who were in the cycle formed by HTU II, Naz, Belgin, Ece and Arzu were pleased with the POT and they did not feel anxious, nervous or shy as they had their friends or close friends as observers. Conversely, the observees who are in the cycles formed by HTU I felt more nervous as they did not have their close friends. Ada stated as “If I had known the observer better, I would have behaved more comfortably”, which showed that there would be a criterion to choose the peer cycles and all HTUs are to abide by that criterion.

4.2.2 The feelings and ideas of observees before, during and after the observations

In this study, the reflection diaries and interviews were used to gather participants' feelings and ideas about POT before, during and after the observations. The first question of both pre-observation and post-observation reflection diaries asked participants to write three adjectives that describe their feelings the night before the observation and just after the observations, respectively. Moreover, the observation diaries and the interviews had specific questions to identify the feelings of observees about the observer and the behaviors of students before, during and after the observation, and the feedback received by the observer.

4.2.2.1 The adjectives that describe the feelings of observees before the observation

The night before the observation, the observees were sent a Pre-observation diary that asks about their feelings and ideas before the observation. In the first question of the diary, the observees wrote three adjectives that describe their feelings the night before their observation. The participants wrote 30 adjectives in total. Some of the adjectives were used more frequently than the others. The distribution of adjectives per participants is indicated in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1: The adjectives used to describe the feelings of the observees the night before the observation

Participants	Adjective 1	Adjective 2	Adjective 3
Hacer	Nervous	Curious	preoccupied
Hülya	Tired	Nervous	reluctant
Ada	Nervous	Curious	stressed
Oya	Neutral	Calm	preoccupied
Çiçek	Happy	Comfortable	preoccupied
Ece	Ordinary	Nervous	satisfied
Hazal	Calm	Ordinary	indifferent
Naz	Happy	Positive	cheerful
Arzu	comfortable	Energetic	organized
Belgin	comfortable	Peaceful	untroubled

- adjectives that expressed negative feelings about POT
- the adjective that showed no difference in feelings
- adjectives that described positive feelings about POT

The adjectives uttered by the participants the night before the observations were divided into three categories: (1) adjectives that described positive feelings about POT, (2) adjectives that expressed negative feelings about POT, and (3) adjectives that showed no difference in feelings. Some adjectives were not clear about whether they are positive or negative. These were made clear in the interview conducted with the participants. The adjectives that illustrated positive feelings were *comfortable*, *calm*, *peaceful*, *untroubled*, *satisfied*, *happy*, *positive*, *cheerful*, *energetic* and *organized*. The ones that represented negative feelings were *nervous*, *curious*, *preoccupied*, *tired*, *reluctant*, *stressed*, *ordinary* and

indifferent. The adjective that shows no difference in feelings was *neutral*. The use of adjectives was discovered to have different frequency to be uttered. In total 30 adjectives, 14 (46,6 %) adjectives were used to describe positive feelings while 15 (50%) adjectives were uttered to represent negative feelings and just 1 (3%) adjective was used to indicate no difference in feelings (see Table 1). The adjectives that were mainly used to describe positive feelings are *comfortable*, *happy* and *calm*. The adjectives that were used to reveal negative feelings were specifically *nervous* and *preoccupied*. 40% of the participants just mentioned negative feelings (with three negative adjectives) about POT the night before the observation. Ece mentioned two negative adjectives while Oya described her feelings about POT with one adjective that showed no difference in feelings (*neutral*), one negative (*preoccupied*) and one positive adjective (*calm*). On the other hand, three participants had all three adjectives demonstrate positive feelings about POT and one participant had one negative two positive adjectives to describe her feelings.

In the interviews, the participants explained the adjectives they had used in this pre-observation reflection diary. They pointed out that they felt *nervous* and *curious* because they did not know how the lesson would pass, how the students would behave during the observation and whether they would achieve the lesson plan that they had prepared. They also highlighted that they felt *preoccupied* because they thought about the observation all day and they could not adapt to the lessons before the observation that day. The teacher who felt *tired* said proposed that she had more workload because of the observation and became reluctant in conducting the POT. Hazal felt *ordinary* and *indifferent* due to the fact that she believed that nothing would change at the end of the observation and she would not gain anything from the process. For this reason, she did not take the procedure seriously. The observees who had all positive feelings about POT emphasized that there was no reason to get nervous or anxious because they were just observed by their close friends and they would gain professional development as well as having the opportunity to enhance collegiality.

These feelings of the observees indicated that there were some problems about the procedure of POT implemented in this institution. It was obvious that the criteria for forming peer cycles were not applied along the same line with each other. In other words, the HTUs had different applications in forming peer cycles, causing negative feelings for the observees as most of them did not feel comfortable with the criteria required to form peer cycles according to experienced and inexperienced criteria. Therefore, being consistent with the criteria of selection became very important and HTUs were to have training on this issue in order to eliminate negative factors in the formation of peer cycles.

4.2.2.2 The feelings and ideas of observees before the observation

The participants were asked to describe both their positive and negative feelings, and their ideas about the observation the night before in their Pre-observation reflection diary, and they were asked the same question in the interview after all observations finished. The ideas and feelings showed variety as the participants had different perspectives. When asked the night before the observation, Hülya uttered that she did not feel much because they frequently conducted observations and she did not expect much as she thought the feedback she would receive would be very similar to the one she had received before. She asserted that they all tried to give positive feedback, which would not be useful and would not contribute them. Similarly, Hazal wrote her ideas about the observation that she would have the following day. She wrote in her diary:

I don't believe that it will contribute to me. It will not provide me anything new, because the observers cannot conduct the process professionally and they all give positive feedback. The same things all the time. Always positive comments. Not chance to see negative sides of the lesson and no chance to improve yourself.

Hazal also had similar ideas after all interviews finished. She believed that she could not gain so much because of the nature of the feedback she received. She mentioned the importance of giving objective feedback and the tendency to be remote from the objective feedback in the institution because the teachers do not have enough experience both to give and receive objective feedback. Therefore, she underscored that if the feedback would be more realistic about the observed lesson, she would think that she could gain from the process and develop professionally.

Taken aforementioned ideas into account, it was noticeable that the teachers were not pleased with the feedback they received in post-observation conference. The feedback was always about the positive sides of the lesson, which lead instructors to the thinking that they had “fake feedback” which was always positive and provided no contribution to their teaching practices or professional development. Regarding this, it can be asserted that in this institution, training about giving feedback is not sufficient and there is a gap about this issue, which destroys the process of POT and hinder it from achieving its goals.

With a different viewpoint, Ada, Naz and Oya believed that they would have contributions from the process, which was a pleasant sharing with colleagues in their workplace. They also proposed that they were happy to have this opportunity, which enabled them to observe each other and refresh their knowledge and change some of their practices which are not useful. However, they also had the idea that as it was the end of the second term, managing the class and motivating the students during the observation would not be easy, which could cause them some problems in class. Therefore, they predicted before the observation that the students could behave differently, which would affect their mood during

the observation. Furthermore, they highlighted their concerns about whether there would be any problems like this during the observation or not.

Moreover, Arzu wrote about her desire to add an activity to her lesson plan that the observer could implement in his / her class the night before the observation. When asked after all observations finished, she proposed that the process was pleasant before the observation and it was not difficult to find extra activities. Moreover, Hacer dictated in her reflection diary that she expected to learn new practices from her colleague and wanted the observer to make her realize the things that she could not notice during the observation. In the interview, she explained that she did not prepare an extra material, but she never went to the class without revising the material that she would use. She also underlined that when she thought someone would come to the class the following day, she would feel anxious and nervous. What is more, she was concerned about the behaviors of the students as well. Finally, Belgin had the idea that she felt comfortable before the observation, but the fact that she would be observed made her remind that she should be more careful and impeccable. She continued to assert that the observation the following day would lead her to self-criticism, which would improve her reflection skills.

7 (70%) of the teachers indicated that they would not use extra material for the lesson. Hacer uttered that she would use a PowerPoint presentation for the observation, but she also highlighted that she always used PPTs in class and it was not tiring for her to do this. Moreover, Arzu emphasized that she would not use an extra material, but she would adapt the coursebook rather than using all activities as they were in the coursebook. Furthermore, Hazal suggested that she would have a lesson as usual, but she would use an extra PPT and add a warm-up to the lesson as she always did in observations.

When the participants were asked whether there were any differences between the process on the days without observation and on the days with observation, Hacer, Arzu, Ece and Naz dictated that there was no difference. Hazal expressed that she brought her coursebook to the school for observation, which was the only difference for her. Hülya explained that she spent more time to get prepared for the lesson as she thought that no matter the observer was her friend, he / she was a “stranger” to her class and she got prepared more. She suggested that if she did not get prepared more than the other days, she would feel uncomfortable. Furthermore, she expressed that even if the observer were her friend, a “stranger” would come to her class and owing to this reality, she felt uncomfortable that day. Similarly, Oya, Ada and Belgin emphasized that they spent more time for preparation and studied for the lesson more carefully.

The participants were asked what they thought about how the students would behave during the observation. 2 (20%) of the participants asserted that the students would not behave differently and they would be natural during the observation as they would forget

about the observer after five or six minutes while 8 (80%) of them predicted that their students would behave in a way that is different from other lesson hours. Arzu noted that some of the students, who were problematic, would insist on speaking Turkish, which was their mother tongue, during the observation. She further explained that those students would be affected by a *stranger* in this way and they would get spoilt, which she noticed during the observations she experienced before. On the other hand, Hazal, Ada and Belgin remarked that the students would be more active and attendant in class and they would be less problematic as they thought they were being observed by the observer, not their teacher. With a different perspective, Hülya, Ece and Naz believed that their students would feel nervous at the beginning of the lesson and they would become relax after five or ten minutes. Moreover, the behaviors of students might change from student to student as some of them would listen more carefully whereas others would talk among themselves during the observation. Furthermore, they also noted that some of the students would try to talk English more than the other lessons.

Finally, the ideas of the participants about the general process were also investigated. It was seen that they all had different ideas about the process of POT. Four of the participants did not answer this question. Ece clarified that she loved the POT process especially because of the feedback she received. She further indicated that she thought the process would be beneficial for all teachers if the feedback were objective and the language were constructive. Similarly, Hacer pointed out that she became nervous and she would prefer not to be nervous before the observations. However, she added that she was pleased with the process this year as there had been observation forms / checklists the previous year and they had been handed to the management, which had been unpleasant. With a different perspective, Hülya emphasized that she had attended a variety of workshops and seminars about the benefits of peer observations. However, she had questions in mind whether the observations were useful or not. Moreover, she explained that most of the time she believed that POT seemed unnecessary to her.

Ada had a different viewpoint about the general process. She suggested that in the observation process, the teachers should choose the person to observe and to be observed by and the time themselves. If the process would be like this, they would gain more benefits. However, she also underlined that they could not have this opportunity due to some conditions. Moreover, Arzu had the idea that the peer observations should be *pop-observations* to provide naturality in class. She stated that if the observation were not pop-observations, it would be illogical to conduct them as the teachers and the students would not behave natural during the observation. Furthermore, Hazal believed that POT would not be conducted. She admitted that Professional Development Unit is qualified, but she claimed

that PDU is not completely successful to achieve the aims of POT. Therefore, she proposed that POT not be implemented.

4.2.2.3 The feelings of observees during the observation

In post-observation reflection diaries, the ideas of the teachers were asked about POT during the observation with the help of the second question *How did you feel during the observation?* and the fourth question *Can you describe you during the observation and after the observation?*

Six of the participants expressed that they felt nervous for the first several minutes and tried to do their best during the lesson, mainly because there was another eye in class and that eye was following all their behaviors such as classroom management, interaction with the students and their competence. Two of these participants asserted that they were curious about the behaviors of their students, so they felt nervous. In addition, one of the participants stated that she had technical problems, which made her unhappy and more nervous. She also complained about her students' behaviors as they did not behave as usual and they did not attend the lesson. Considering these ideas, it can be understood that the teachers need more training on POT because if they had more training and internalized the aims and objectives of POT, they would not have become nervous or anxious because of the students behavior or other factors as one aim of the POT is to observe the ordinary class and share experiences with colleagues in order to enhance teaching practices.

When the participants were asked the fourth question which was *Can you describe YOU during the observation and after the observation?*, they described themselves as in Table 2.

Table 2: The feelings of the observee during and after POT

Participants	YOU (During POT)	YOU (After POT)
Hacer	no difference	no difference
Hülya	nervous	more comfortable
Oya	no difference	no difference
Ada	more nervous	comfortable
Belgin	more careful and elaborative	relaxed
Ece	no difference	no difference
Çiçek	comfortable	more comfortable
Naz	comfortable	happy and more comfortable
Arzu	more self-confident	safer
Hazal	energetic	tired

- adjectives that indicated that the feelings of participants have changed just after POT
- adjectives that indicated that the feelings of participants stayed the same just after POT

As can be seen in Table 2, three of the participants noted that they did not have any different feelings both during and after the observation. The rest of the participants explained that they felt more comfortable, comfortable, relaxed, more comfortable, happy and more comfortable, safer and tired, respectively. As illustrated in Table 2, two of the participants were nervous and one of them was more careful and elaborative during the observation while two of them were comfortable, one was more self-confident and the other was energetic. These results show that the observees felt comfortable after the observation, which means that they thought that the lessons with observations were different from the ones without observations. Therefore, it can be inferred that the teachers could not behave as usual during observations. In other words, even though teachers regarded POT as PD tool to enhance their teaching practices through sharing, they could not illustrate an ordinary class, which created a threatening atmosphere for them and lead them to feeling more comfortable, safer and relax. For instance, in their normal lessons, the teachers did not feel more comfortable or safer after the lesson, they just finish their lesson and that is all.

4.2.2.4 The adjectives that describe the feelings of observees after the observation

After the observation, the participants filled their Post-observation reflection diary. In this diary, they also described their feelings just after the observation and they wrote three adjectives about how they feel just after the observation. 30 adjectives were written. As seen in Table 3, the adjectives were generally positive. 23 (76,6 %) adjectives were used to describe positive feelings after the observation whereas 7 (23,3 %) represented negative feelings. When asked in the interviews, the participant explained that they all feel relaxed and the negative feelings arose from the issue that they had not received feedback yet. Not receiving feedback resulted in feeling curious, and the belief that they would not receive objective feedback, but just positive feedback caused the feelings of being tired and ordinary.

Table 3: The adjectives used to describe feelings of observees after the observation

Participants	Adjective 1	Adjective 2	Adjective 3
Hacer	satisfied	comfortable	peaceful
Hülya	ordinary	relaxed	tired
Oya	relaxed	calm	peaceful
Ada	comfortable	calm	tired
Belgin	lighter	comfortable	peaceful
Ece	Calm	comfortable	tired
Çiçek	satisfied	positive	happy
Naz	comfortable	happy	excited
Arzu	comfortable	curious	happy
Hazal	Calm	ordinary	tired

The positive and negative ideas of the observees about POT were asked just after the observation. The participants designated that POT became advantageous for them in three aspects. Firstly, they specified that POT enabled them to self-monitor themselves, it increased their self-confidence and the students behaved more carefully as they thought that they were being observed. Especially the teachers who were in the cycle comprised of close friends were happy about the positive feedback they received. Some of the ideas of the teachers are as follows:

- (1) It increased my self-confidence. (Belgin)

- (2) I realized that I used L1 too much. Normally, if I hadn't been observed, I would not realize this. (Ada)
- (3) I got positive feedback and I can see the process more objectively. (Naz)

On the other hand, most of the participants expressed that if the observer had provided objective feedback instead of all positive feedback, they would have gained from the process. As can be seen, giving feedback is a problem in POT in this institution as the teachers are not sure how to give feedback. They avoid talking about the negative sides of the observed lesson due to the fact that they do not want to disturb their colleagues with an aim to preventing misunderstandings among them. However, one of the aims of the POT is to provide “constructive” feedback, not positive feedback, it is apparent that the trainings are not effective enough to convince teachers about the importance of giving proper feedback to share experiences and develop themselves professionally. One of the participants pointed out her concerns about feedback session as following words:

The feedback was superficial, which was not beneficial. The feedback was all positive, I would have expected to hear such feedback that I could learn about some negative sides of my lesson to correct them, or there would have been some alternatives that would be suggested by the observer. (Hacer)

Another issue raised by the observees was that the POT was perceived as more workload and therefore, it is seen useless. The participants believed that POT caused them work more because they taught 25 hours a week and they also had to allocate time for pre-observation and post-observation meetings and this time was either their ten-minute break time or lunch time, which made them think that POT could not be beneficial for them and made them more tired. Hazal indicates this as stating: “It is just a waste of time that is aimless or that cannot achieve its aims. It creates more workload, nothing else happens.” Naz also has the same concern: “It was difficult to arrange the schedule as we did not have extra time”. These ideas demonstrate that time allocation for POT is a serious problem, which inhibit the benefits of POT for teachers.

Another problem posed is the postponement of the observations. The observees supported the idea that they already became nervous for the observations but when they learnt that their observation cancelled for some reasons, they became more nervous and tired. They thought that when they became psychologically ready for the observation, the postponements made them feel reluctant, which eliminated the positive ideas of people about POT and destructed the benefits of it. Ece, who was very positive about the POT at the beginning, specified as “The observation was a sudden one. I rushed all day. There were changes in the schedule. Therefore, it made me nervous.”

The last problem expressed by the observees was about the behaviors of the students. The observees believed that their students did not behave naturally in class while the observer was observing the class. The teachers reported that their students believed that

they themselves were being observed and they tried to show themselves and attract the attention of the observer, which destructs the concentration of the teacher. Some of the observees proposed that their students talked among each other so much as they did not understand why another teacher was in class observing them. However, Oya dictated that her students did not even realize the observer. Taking all the ideas into account in terms of student behaviors, it is obvious that the students are not aware of the POT and they are curious during the observation. To prevent these, the students would also be informed about the POT in order to provide a natural environment for POT and so as to achieve its aims.

To sum up, the results indicated that POT process in this institution was desirable; however, there were some obstacles to be eliminated from the process. It could be understood from the teachers' ideas that there should be some changes in the procedure of POT in order for it to become more effective. Most of the teachers were positive about the process; nevertheless, they had specific concerns that should be taken into consideration. The institution tries to provide professional development for their teachers with the help of POT; however, there are many problems that block POT from providing professional development, personal growth and from enhancing collegiality among teachers as well as increasing the quality of teaching practices. Nevertheless, these problems can be compensated with a variety of changes in POT procedure and implementation.

CHAPTER 5

5.0 Presentation

The present study explored how POT was planned and carried out in an institution and the observees' the perceptions of POT in that institution in Central Turkey. With this aim, a qualitative case study was conducted in the institution. The data were gathered through reflection diaries with the instructors and interviews with the head of PDU, the coordinator, teaching unit heads and instructors. The reflection diaries were collected from the instructors and the data were divided into categories and prepared for the analysis. In addition, the interviews were all audio-recorded, except the one with the head of PDU, and transcribed verbatim. The data collected through interviews were also categorized. All data were coded and major themes were identified and analyzed in Chapter 4. In this chapter, first of all, the discussion of the results will be presented. Besides, the limitations of the study will be mentioned. Moreover, the recommendations for further research will be highlighted, and the conclusions will be drawn.

5.1 DISCUSSION

In this part, the discussion of findings in Chapter 4 is presented. To present the discussion, six subtitles are identified; (a)voluntariness, (b) forming peer cycles, (b) timing, (c) training and feedback, (d) feelings of the observees, (e) behaviors of students during POT and (f) following the practice of POT and confidentiality.

5.1.1 Voluntariness

The study revealed that the POT process is obligatory in this institution, which is regarded as a problem not only by the majority of instructors, but also by the head of PDU and the teaching unit head II. In the institution, the POT process is conducted with the purposes of providing professional development for the instructors, increasing collegiality among them and enhancing teaching practices. However, some of the teachers are reluctant about the process as they do not want to be observed by their colleague. As explained by the head of PDU, some of the teachers did not participate in this obligatory process because they do not think that it is useful. Moreover, she underlined that the teachers who did not attend POT were not punished. Nevertheless, there are also some teachers who think that they do not gain anything from the process, but they continue to practise it because it is obligatory. Thus, the results of the present study also corroborates Sandt (2012) and Bell and Cooper

(2013) as they also propose that voluntariness has a significant role in implementing POT and the success of the POT process depend upon the level of participants' willingness.

5.1.2 Forming Peer Cycles

As mentioned in chapter 4, choosing peers is an important part of POT as POT is a process that has the aim of enhancing collegiality among teachers and enabling them to learn from their peers. If the teachers have the chance of choosing their own observers, the process will be effective and reach its aims. First of all, in this study, Teaching Unit Head 1 explained that she mostly chooses peer cycles according to experienced / inexperienced criteria and the schedule of the teachers and sometimes ask the teachers' opinions in forming peer cycles. However, Teaching Unit Head 2 asserted that the first thing he does is to explore the communication among the peers and friendship among them. Moreover, he mentions that he generally gets the consent of peers while forming the groups. Therefore, it is obvious that there is no standard application of forming peers as a group of teachers have the chance of choosing their peers, others do not have that opportunity, which raises questions in minds. Moreover, it seems that the teachers who cannot select their observers are not content with the situation as proposed by Participant Ada as she suggested that if she had known the observer better, she would have behaved more comfortably.

5.1.3 Timing

In the literature, timing POT is regarded as one of the main difficulties by Sandt (2012). He suggested that time allocation is a significant component of this process by highlighting that if the time allocation is not appropriate, the process may lead to *deterioration of teachers' working conditions* instead of improving their teaching practices, which is also an issue that touch upon in this study. In the institution in which the research is conducted, the teachers work 25 hours a week and they do not have extra time for POT. They try to have their Pre-observation and Post-observation meeting at recess in which they are expected to have rest and refresh for the next hour. Because of this, they have to sacrifice their break time to conduct POT, which burdens them with more workload. When teachers' feelings are asked just after the observation, four of them pointed that they felt tired, which is a sign that shows that allocating time for POT is not appropriate in this institution. The teachers also reported that POT is a workload for them as they do not have extra time to have Pre-observation and Post-observation meetings. They emphasized that if they had extra time for these activities, they would have felt more relaxed and comfortable and the process would be more meaningful for them. Therefore, time allocation of POT in this institution creates problems for the teachers, the teaching unit heads and the coordinator. First of all, it leads to burnout for teachers. Secondly, it creates problems for the teaching unit heads to

form the cycles as they had to consider the availability of teachers due to lack of time in conducting three phases of POT such as Pre- Observation and Post-Observation meetings and even sometimes the observation itself completely.

5.1.4 Training and Feedback

As suggested in the literature, if the training stage of POT is not done carefully and successfully, it is possible to have problems in its implementation (Hirsch, 2011; Chamberlain, D'artrey and Rowe, 2011; and Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond, 2004). They underscored that lack of training may cause misunderstanding of the process, reluctance as well as anxiety and fear. Besides, Munson (1998) specified that training is a crucial part of POT by pointing out the feedback provided by the observers in POT process. She had the idea of training teachers about how to give constructive feedback, gave the opportunity to POT to be more beneficial and effective, and this way it was easier to achieve the aims of POT. This study reveals that more training is needed to enhance the efficiency of POT in the institution. Teaching Unit Head 2 recommended that PDU provides the training at the very beginning of the term and it does not provide any more training. He believed that PDU should provide more training and this training should be done within certain intervals. Moreover, Hacer, Hülya and Hazal stated that the feedback they received after the observation is not qualified as it was just positive and did not show the negative sides of their lesson. They also clarified that the feedback was so superficial that they could not gain anything from it as they heard the things that they had heard in the previous observations. Due to this limitation, they perceived POT as a useless tool for professional development. Especially Hazal uttered that POT is a time-consuming process in that she cannot have the opportunity to enhance her teaching practices and develop professionally because of the style of giving feedback. She also underlined that the teachers misunderstood the concept of “constructive feedback” and they regard it as “a tool for just telling positive ideas about the lesson superficially”. Consequently, training and feedback as suggested in the literature is an inseparable component of POT and it is important that they be improved in this institution.

5.1.5 Feelings of the Observees during the process of POT

The feelings of the participants before the POT are different from those during and after the observation. In Chapter 4, it is seen that most of the participants were nervous before the observation whereas they felt more comfortable and relaxed after the observation. Especially the participants who believe that the process is beneficial for their development felt more comfortable than the others before, during and after the observation. However, those who are not sure about the usefulness of the POT felt more nervous before the

operation. Then, they also felt comfortable after the process. The positive feelings of the observees indicate that POT is effective in the institution; however, the negative feelings of the participants show that it should come a long way to be more effective and efficient for professional development and personal growth of the teachers.

5.1.6 Behaviors of the students during POT

The behaviors of the students are also identified in the study. It was asserted by the instructors that most of the students exhibited better behavior during the observation. They were more active and attentive to the lesson as some of them believed that they were being observed and the others believed that their teachers will get some points from the observation and they wanted to help their teachers. Students' being affected by the observation positively is nice; however, it is significant that they be informed the process as well. If they become aware of the process, they would become more conscious and behave more naturally in class. Therefore, they may be provided with a brief presentation before the observation because Oya remarked that her students did not even realize the observer, which is not nice for an educational atmosphere. The students should be aware of the process in order not to misunderstand it because some students may have problems with their teacher and they may think that the observer is the person who gives points to their teachers and they may behave in an undesirable way to create problem for their teacher or the students may think that they were being observed and they would be so nervous and anxious that they would not participate in the lesson as they do on normal days.

5.1.7 Following the Practice of POT and Confidentiality

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the instructors do not want to be controlled by the administration during POT. However, the rationale behind this is that they do not want to share their ideas with the administration or a third party. They just desire to share their observations and notes with the observee that they observe and with the observer that they are observed by, which means that they have the desire to maintain the confidentiality of POT. This is also suggested by Mento and Giampetro-Meyer (2000). They explained that there is need for POT to be confidential in order to develop trust among the peers and so as not to create anxiety for them. They also expressed that confidentiality should be kept so that the process should not be seen as threatening by the teachers. In this institution, unlike the year before, this year confidentiality was provided as the teachers did not give the observation sheet to the administration and the feedback was just between the observer and the observee. Confidentiality has a significant part in POT to enhance collegiality among colleagues and its useful. It is true that confidentiality should be kept; however, this does not

mean that the process should not be followed by the administration or PDU. As can be seen in Chapter 4, Teaching Unit Head 2 stated that they did not follow the process as they thought that all teachers are conscious about it and it is not necessary to control it. However, this is debatable and contradictory. Firstly, if there is not any mechanism to control the process, the cycles may not implement it. For instance, there may be a person who wants to have observation, but two people who do not in one cycle. In this situation, the person who has the desire to participate in the process may not attend it and because of others, he /she may miss the opportunity. Therefore, the process should be monitored. Secondly, there may be some problems during POT and as the teachers are so busy with the lessons, they may not have time to discuss their ideas altogether. Hence, they should be provided with a meeting with PDU or administrators to talk about POT and give feedback about POT. If they do not have this chance, they may have problems among themselves and PDU or administrators may believe that there are no problems and everything goes well, which would worsen the teaching practices rather than improve them. To put it another way, POT would not achieve its aims and give harm to the educational environment, which is an undesired case for both the teachers and administrators. Finally, POT should be monitored because it is a way of sharing ideas. The PDU should follow the process in order to make sure whether its application is accurate. If some teachers apply the whole process in a correct way and the others do not, some problems would arise such as hostility. If take the case of selecting peer cycles by Teaching Unit Head 1 and Teaching Unit Head 2, we can see that there are different applications. While Teaching Unit Head 1 firstly regards the experience / inexperience aspect of the teachers when forming cycles, Teaching Unit Head 2 considers the friendship and communication among the teachers at first sight. The teachers in those groups may conflict with each other because of these different implementations. Therefore, as suggested by Teaching Unit Head 2, “PDU should get feedback during and after the process within three or six months intervals.” Moreover, following the process of POT is a good idea, but this should not destroy confidentiality.

5.2 WHAT COULD BE A SUGGESTED MODEL FOR POT FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATIONS?

The results of this study displayed how POT was implemented in the institution, the perceptions of the observees, and the problems that arose during the process. Additionally, a model for POT is suggested for future implementations in educational settings. The suggested model for POT (as seen in Table 4) includes seven steps. The first step includes an introduction to POT. In this stage, firstly the principals and the PDU meet to embody POT and its aims in their mission statement on their website as one of their missions is to provide their teachers with professional development by creating opportunities for them. Secondly, at

the beginning of the first term the principals have contract with teachers to implement POT and they also state their contract in the job description. Thus, the teachers who are newly recruited become aware of the fact that they are going to practice POT in order to develop themselves professionally. Then, the principals have contract with the newly-recruited teacher in the orientation program that is designed to inform new teachers about the school mission, vision and the functioning. The other teachers who are not newly-recruited also sign the contract in the meeting which is designed in the first week of the beginning of the first term. The POT process is obligatory in this model although the results of this study show that the instructors want the process to be voluntary. The reason for POT to be obligatory in this model is to have a standard and be consistent and determined in professional development as it is also described in the mission statement of the institution. In the second step of this model, PDU selects the HTUs who construct bridges among instructors, PDU and the principals. Therefore, this stage is important and needs to be done carefully. The HTUs are selected in the first week of the first term. The HTUs are chosen according to four criteria: (1) They have master's degree in teacher training or education; (2) They have interest in professional development; (3) They have good communication skills; and (4) They have good relationship with their colleagues. In the third step, the instructors have initial training for POT. They attend seminars and workshops. They are also distributed comprehensive handouts involving guidelines about the procedure and practice of POT. This training lasts two weeks and it includes practical examples of POT. At the same time, HTUs have training about forming peer cycles, monitoring the process and guiding the instructors during the process. This training also lasts two weeks. In the fourth step, the observation forms for observers (see appendix H) and self-reflection forms (see appendix G) are distributed by the PDU to the teachers explaining that they do not have to write their names on them in order to keep the process confidential. The PDU collects the observation and self-reflection forms after each cycle to monitor the process. The observation form for the observers are designed to see what the observer gain the process and it includes sentences and blanks in these sentences to be filled with the observers' ideas. The self-reflection forms are prepared in the same format as the observation forms, but they involve items that show the ideas and feelings of the observees on their teaching. In the fifth stage, HTUs, PDU and principals receive feedback from the instructors to evaluate the POT process and see what happens during it and whether it achieves its aims. These feedback sessions are done twice a month. The last stage refers to institutional archiving for POT, which includes observation forms, instant communications with teachers and HTUs. HTUs have communications with the teachers and report these to the PDU without explaining the names of the teachers and PDU also have talks with the teachers and have notes and keep these notes without the names of the instructors on these notes. Thus, the experiences of the teachers with POT are

archived for the institution. Moreover, there is a platform in which all teachers share their experiences and gains from POT at the end of the year, which provides them with more opportunity to have new perspectives about teaching practices.

Table 4: A Suggested Model for POT for Future Implementations

What	How	Who	When
1. Introduction to POT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ embody POT and its aims in the mission declaration of the institution ➤ have contract with teachers ➤ state POT in job description 	Principals PDU ▲ ▲	For newly-recruited teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ in orientation For other teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ At the beginning of the year (the first week of the first term)
2. Selecting Heads of Teaching Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ master's degree in Teacher Training or education ○ interest in professional development ○ good communication skills ○ good relationship with colleagues 	PDU ▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The first week of the first term
3. Initial Training for POT (for instructors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ seminars ➤ workshops ➤ handouts 	PDU Teacher Trainers Principals ▲ ▲ ▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The second and third week of the first term
4. POT cycles Pre-observation Observation Post-observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Training for Heads of Teaching Units 	PDU Teacher Trainers ▲ ▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The first and second week of the first term
5. POT Instructor Performance Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ observation forms without names 	PDU ▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ after each cycle
6. POT process evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ feedback about the process from the teachers 	HTUs PDU Principals ▲ ▲ ▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ twice a month
7. Institutional Archiving for POT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ observation forms ➤ monitoring the process by instant communication with teachers and HTUs 	HTUs PDU ▲ ▲	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ at the end of each term

In this model, each cycle includes five instructors as it creates more opportunities to observe more people and gain a broad range of new ideas from different people and their practices. In other words, each people in each cycles have four lessons to observe and four observers to be observed by.

This model also identifies the roles of all stakeholders (principals, PDU, HTUs, instructors) in detail.

5.2.1 Principals

The principals in this model have continuous communication with PDU, HTUs and the instructors. They help all stakeholders of the program and make the process easier to conduct for them. They enable teachers extra time for pre-observation and post-observation meetings. In other words, as teachers participate in this continuous job-embedded professional development process, they need time to implement it seriously and carefully to gain from it. Therefore, the principals are aware of this fact and they prepare the necessary regulations for it. Moreover, the seminars and workshops are initiated by the principals and they are carried out carefully.

5.2.2 Professional Development Unit (PDU)

PDU has an important role in the implementation of POT. PDU arranges seminars and workshops for the teachers. These seminars and workshops are presented on the aims of POT, the guidelines of giving constructive feedback and the roles of the observees and the observers in the process. In the workshops, the PDU role plays an observation cycle with all its stages including pre-observation, observation itself and the post-observation. PDU communicates with the instructors during the year. The PDU also prepare and conduct open-ended questionnaires with teachers and the HTUs to monitor the process.

5.2.3 Heads of the Teaching Units

Heads of the teaching units has the role of bridging all stakeholders. After the two-week training, they have a meeting with their teaching units. They again inform the teachers about the POT and ask about their ideas in forming peer cycles. They form the cycles according to two criteria: (1) ask teachers for the cycle members; (2) if the teachers cannot make decision, identify and match experienced and inexperienced teachers as well as regarding their friendship. The teaching unit heads use these rules to form peer cycles. They also identify the needs of the teachers in this process and report them to the principals in addition to PDU.

5.2.4 Instructors

The most important stakeholders of this process are the instructors in this model. They have the role of both observers and observees. They observe each other and both have self-reflection as observees and give feedback as observers. The observees do not have extra

preparation for the observation and they continue their program as usual. They know that this process is conducted contribute to their professional development and it does not aim to evaluate their teaching practices. Instead, it provides them new perspectives on their teaching with the help of sharing ideas and practices with their colleagues. After the cycles are designed by the HTUs, the observer and the observee meet to have a mini talk on the lesson and its objectives. The observee informs the class about POT before the observation day so that the students can become aware of POT, its aims and objectives as well as the observer. The observer comes to the class with his /her observation form and sits the place that is made ready for him/her before. S/he fills in the form and after the lesson, the observer and the observee meet again to talk about the lesson. The observee reflects on her/his practice while the observer gives constructive feedback to her. The observee also fills the self-reflection form and they give these forms to HTUs that day.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

This qualitative case study was administered in a higher education institution in Central Turkey on peer observation of teaching as a *job-embedded* professional tool. Reflection diaries and interviews were made use of in order to collect data and the data were analyzed through coding, identifying and interpreting themes. All interviews, except the one with the head of Professional Development Unit (PDU), were transcribed verbatim. The study lasted for four months. Although the data were collected and analyzed carefully with the aims of strengthening the study and providing reliable and valid results, there were also some limitations. First of all, the study could have included more participants; however, due to time constraints and availability of the teachers, this was not possible. Secondly, a focus group interview was planned to be conducted in order to get the ideas of a group together and collect their ideas altogether so as to have more comprehensible data. Unfortunately, this was not possible, because of the time constraints as the teachers were not available at that time and they could not come together.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. The scope of this study should be broadened by observers and observees as participants as well as the students. In this way, POT process would be seen from the perspectives of observees, observers as well as students. The viewpoints of the observers would also provide more information about the process. Moreover, the perceptions of the students and their feelings should be explored in order to analyze the effect of POT on the teaching during the observation.
2. Similar studies should also be done at other universities where POT is conducted.

3. Another study should be conducted at Private and State universities and the results should be compared in order to find out whether there are any differences between the implications, ideas and perspectives.
4. Another study may be done in terms of self-efficacy beliefs of the teachers and their relation to the perceptions of the teachers in POT process at the same university and other universities.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This qualitative case study explored how POT is conducted in a higher education institution in Central Turkey, the perceptions of the observees, problems that may arise during POT. The collected data indicated the procedure of POT from the views of the head of PDU, the coordinator and teaching unit heads. Besides, the observees' perceptions on the procedure, its benefits and the difficulties were identified through reflection diaries as well as interviews. The results of the study displayed significant themes related to the aforementioned issues and six conclusions were drawn.

First of all, this study discovered that the teachers wanted the process to be voluntary. Nevertheless, it is obvious that if the process was voluntary, teachers would not participate in it at all as there were many problems for them during the operation. Secondly, it is crucial that peer cycles be formed in accordance with the ideas and requests of the observees and the observers. That is, not the teaching unit heads, but the teachers should organize the cycles as some of the teachers may have personal problems with each other and the teaching head may not be aware of this, which would create hostility rather than collegiality. Therefore, the teachers should have responsibility for forming the cycles. Thirdly, training and feedback are of great importance for POT to be effective. It can be suggested that training should be qualified and also frequent. This means that there should be more seminars and workshops to explain the procedure of POT, its components, the importance of feedback in POT, the role of observees and the observers in POT, possible benefits and possible difficulties related to it. Furthermore, the website of the institution should also provide information about the process. A social networking site should be created for the purposes of informing teachers about POT and the teachers should be informed to join that page to gather information about it. Fourthly, it is vital that the process be followed by PDU. PDU should prepare questionnaires to gather information about how the process went, to explore the problems and find solutions to those problems. The PDU also should gather the ideas and perceptions of the instructors at least three or four times in a year by discussing their ideas one by one and by having meetings altogether. In other words, PDU should always be communication with the instructors during the process. Fifthly, informing students is also another important way of improving the process of POT in this

institution. The aims and the objectives of POT should also be explained to the students in order to resolve the problems created by their behaviors. Lastly but the most importantly, the teachers should be provided time to conduct POT. They should have extra time for Pre-observation and Post-observation meetings. They should not spare their resting time for these meetings so as not to affect the flow of teaching negatively. If the teachers dedicate their breaktime for those meetings, their lessons may get affected, which is not a desirable outcome of POT. To put it another way, POT should not affect the education negatively, it should provide teachers with improving their both professional and personal skills in teaching, developing collegiality and enhancing teaching practices. Therefore, POT is an important process and it should be taken seriously. All of these conclusions are related to each other, so if one of them is not implemented as it should be, POT will not achieve its goals and will become a workload or burnout for teachers instead of being a professional development opportunity.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PRE-OBSERVATION REFLECTION DIARY

Burada yazılı olan bilgilerin herhangi bir şekilde üçüncü şahısların ellerine geçmeyeceğini ve verdiğiniz bilgilerde kimliğinizin asla açıklanmayacağını temin ederim.

Okt. Elif ÇAĞLAR

Kimlikleriniz kesinlikle açıklanmayacaktır. Ancak bu çalışmadaki diğer verilerin karşılaştırılması yapılacağından kendinize çalışma arkadaşlarınızın isimleri olmamak kaydıyla Türkçe ve cinsiyetinize uygun bir isim yazar mısınız? _____

Örneğin, benim adım Elif ve kendime cinsiyetime uygun ve çalışma arkadaşlarım arasında bulunmayan bir isim olan Zeynep adını verebilirim.

Şu anda dersinizin gözlemlenmesine yaklaşık 24 saat var. Yarınki gözlemlenme süreciyle ilgili duygu ve düşüncelerinizi olumlu veya olumsuz her yönüyle aktarabilir misiniz?

1. Yarınki gözlem hakkında neler hissediyorsunuz?

a) Şu anki duygu ve düşüncelerinizi açıklayan **üç sıfat** yazabilir misiniz?

b) Yarınki gözlem hakkındaki olumlu veya olumsuz duygu ve düşünceleriniz nelerdir?

c) Size gözlemleyecek olan kişi hakkında neler düşünüyorsunuz?

2. Sizce yarınki gözlemde kazanımlarımız olacak mı?

a) Hayırsa, neden?

b) Evetse, ne gibi kazanımlarınız olacağını düşünüyorsunuz?

3. Kitabı ve verilen kaynakları mı kullanacaksınız yoksa ekstra materyaller hazırlayacak mısınız?

4. Ekstra materyaller hazırlayacaksanız, bunları hazırlamanın ne kadar zaman alacağını düşünüyorsunuz?

5. Gözlem olmayan günlerdeki derse hazırlanma sürecinizle ya da sürenizle observation olan günlerdeki hazırlanma süreciniz ya da süreniz arasında farklar var mı? Varsa nelerdir?

6. Sizce yarın öğrencileriniz gözlem süresince nasıl davranacak?

7. Genel süreç ve kendinizle ilgili eklemek istedikleriniz.

Teşekkürler

APPENDIX B

POST-OBSERVATION REFLECTION DIARY

Burada yazılı olan bilgilerin herhangi bir şekilde üçüncü şahısların ellerine geçmeyeceğini ve verdiğiniz bilgilerde kimliğinizin asla açıklanmayacağını temin ederim.

Okt. Elif ÇAĞLAR

Lütfen daha önceden kararlaştırdığımız Türkçe adınızı buraya yazınız: _____

Dersinizin gözlemlenme süreci kısa bir süre önce sona erdi.

1. Şu anki duygu ve düşünceleri anlatan **üç sıfat** belirtebilir misiniz?

2. Gözlem esnasında neler hissettiniz?

3. Şu anda gözlem hakkında olumlu veya olumsuz neler hissediyorsunuz?

4. Gözlem anındaki SİZ i ve şu anki SİZ 'i karşılaştırabilir misiniz?

5. Bu gözlemin sizce size olumlu katkıları nelerdir?

6. Sizce bu gözlemin olumsuz yönleri nelerdir?

7. Dersiniz istediğiniz gibi gitti mi?

8. Öğrencileriniz gözlem süresince nasıl davrandı?

9. Gözlemleyen kiři hakkında neler düşünöyorsunuz?

10. Genel süreç ve kendinizle ilgili eklemek istedikleriniz.

Teřekkürler

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT

1. Can you define peer observation?
2. Can you tell me about the procedure of peer observation in your institute?
3. What are your expectations about this process?
4. Do you have any seminars or workshops to inform the instructors about peer observation?
5. Are there any checklists used in this procedure?
6. What do you think about the checklists if there are any?
7. What do you think teachers think about peer observation?
8. Anything you wish to add?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR COORDINATOR

1. What do you think about peer observation process?
2. How do you arrange people to be observed or to be observers?
3. How do you regulate classes during the observation?
4. Do you have any problems in this procedure?
5. Anything you wish to add?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHING UNIT HEADS

1. How do you choose the observation cycle?
2. How many people are there in a cycle?
3. How do you decide on the people in cycle?
4. “Who observes who” and why?
5. What are the problems that you face with in this continuum?
6. Anything you wish to add?

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

1. Can you define POT? What does this term mean to you?
2. How do you feel when you hear the concept of POT?
3. What do you do the night before POT? Do you do anything special?
4. How do you feel the night before the observation?
5. How do you feel during the observation?
6. How do you feel after the observation?
7. How do your students behave during POT?
8. How were your observation sessions this term? Was the process as it was expected to be?
9. Did you have any difficulties during observations? If yes, can you tell me about them?
10. What do you think about the advantages and disadvantages of POT, if any?

APPENDIX G

Peer Observation of Teaching – Self-reflection Form

1. I liked the way I (1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
2. The lesson plan I have made _____

3. If I taught this lesson again, I would change _____

4. If I taught this lesson again, I would NOT change _____

5. My students _____

6. This observation helped me _____

7. What I most liked about my lesson _____

8. This observation has provided me a new insight into _____

APPENDIX H

Peer Observation of Teaching - Observation Form

1. I liked the way s/he (1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
2. I liked the material that _____

3. In my lessons, I would also like to use the technique that _____

4. _____
_____ that s/he has done or used was nice.
5. What I have gained from this observation is _____

6. If I had taught this lesson, I would have _____

7. This observation helped me _____

8. The students _____
_____ during the observation.
9. What I liked most about this observation is _____

10. This observation has provided me a new insight into _____

APPENDIX I

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enformatik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Çağlar
Adı : Elif
Bölümü : İngiliz Dili Öğretimi

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : A Qualitative Study of Peer Observation of Teaching as A Job-embedded Professional Development Tool

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınmaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: