PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF EFL TEACHERS WORKING
AT RURAL SCHOOLS IN TURKEY

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF EFL TEACHERS WORKING
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This study aimed to investigate the professional identity construction of EFL teachers working at rural school in Turkey. The participants of the study were five EFL teachers working in four different geographical regions of Turkey at middle school level. The main research foci of the study are: (1) understanding the professional identity construction experiences of EFL teachers working at rural schools, (2) examining the influence of teaching context on professional identity construction of rural EFL teachers and, (3) identifying the needs and expectations of EFL teachers working at rural schools. Designed as a qualitative case study, the data collection tools were field visits, a metaphor elicitation task and semi-structured interviews. After taking field notes and employing a metaphor elicitation task, semi-structured interviews were conducted twice with each participant. The data analysis involved transcribing the data, and coding and categorizing procedures. The results of the study revealed insights about professional identity construction experiences of rural EFL teachers, the challenges about teaching English in a rural school, training and preparation needs of rural EFL teachers, and the impact of teaching contexts on practices and expectations of rural teachers. The findings of the study can be used to

design preparation courses for pre-service EFL teachers and to plan professional development activities for rural EFL teachers.

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE'NİN KIRSAL BÖLGELERİNDE GÖREV YAPAN YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN MESLEKİ KİMLİK OLUŞUMU ÜZERİNE NİTEL BİR İNCELEME

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Bu çalışma, Türkiye' deki kırsal devlet okullarında görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik oluşum süreçlerini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmanın katılımcıları, Türkiye'nin dört coğrafi bölgesindeki beş farklı kırsal okulda ortaokul seviyesinde çalışan beş İngilizce öğretmenidir. Çalışmanın temel araştırma odakları şunlardır: (1) Kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin meslek kimliği oluşum deneyimlerini anlamak, (2) öğretim bağlamının kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin meslek kimliği oluşum sürecine olan etkisini incelemek ve (3) katılımcıların mesleki gelişimleri için ihtiyaç duydukları hizmet öncesi hazırlık derslerini ve hizmet içi eğitim programlarını belirlemek. Bu çalışma, nitel bir durum araştırması olarak tasarlanmıştır. Çalışmada, nitel veri toplama araçlarından yararlanılmıştır. Veri toplama araçları, saha gözlemleri, metafor çıkarım etkinliği ve yarı-yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşmelerden oluşmaktadır. Veri analizi prosedürleri, verinin kelimesi kelimesine çözümlenmesi, kodlama ve sınıflandırma aşamalarını içermektedir. Çalışmanın sonuçları, kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik gelişim süreçlerindeki deneyimleri ile ilgili bilgiler vermektedir. Ayrıca bu çalışma, kırsal okullarda İngilizce öğretimi ile ilgili zorluklara dair bilgiler

sağlayarak, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin kırsal okullarda mesleki gelişimlerini devam ettirebilmek için ihtiyaç duydukları hazırlık ve destek süreçlerine yönelik bulgular ortaya koymuştur. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin kırsal okullarda İngilizce öğretimi ve mesleki gelişim süreçleri için ihtiyaç duydukları hizmet öncesi hazırlık ve hizmet içi eğitimleri tasarlamak ve planlamak için kullanılabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kırsal öğretmen kimliği, kırsal İngilizce öğretmenleri, öğretmen meslek kimliği, mesleki gelişim

To all rural teachers

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of six sections. The first section provides a background to the study. While the second and third sections present a brief introduction to history and current issues of rural education and teaching English in rural schools, the fourth section provides a conceptual background for this study. The last two sections are on the need for the study, the purpose of the study and the research questions.

1.1. Background to the Study

With the emergence of new social and cultural roles attributed to teachers, especially in the last decade, teachers' professional identity has come into prominence for educational researchers in order to get in-depth insights about what teachers feel and experience in the course of becoming professionals (Bullough, 2005; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Flores & Day, 2006; Olsen, 2008b). According to Pennington (2015), there are two main orientations adopted by researchers focusing on teachers' identity formation: perspectives on teachers' social identity which is derived from social psychology, and perspectives on teachers' professional identity which is originated from the literature on teacher education. Teacher education literature provides various definitions of *professional identity*. For instance, it is defined as a useful 'research frame' and a 'pedagogical tool' for professional development (Olsen, 2008a) and a 'lived experience of participation' (Wenger, 1998). Professional identity is also seen as being 'a pedagogical and didactical expert' (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermut, 2000). Other researchers define it as 'multi-dimensional' (Cooper & Olson, 1996), dynamic' (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009) and 'shifting' (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). Since teachers are engaged in the process of constructing themselves as teachers during their career paths, teachers' professional identity is a 'continuing site of struggle' (Maguire,

2008). Sachs (2005) synthesizes various definitions about teachers' professional identity and proposes the following concise definition for the researchers:

> Teacher professional identity provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society. Importantly, teacher identity is not something that is fixed nor is imposed; rather it is negotiated through experience and the sense that is made of that experience (p.15).

Teacher education literature clearly puts forward that during professional identity construction, teachers might form different notions of *selves* influenced strongly by their prior experiences, the world around them, what is expected from them, their own future expectations, and their teaching environments (Lauriala & Kukkonen, 2005). To this end, as development of professional identity is under the influence of personal, social, contextual, and cognitive factors, it is an "ongoing and dynamic process which entails the making sense and reinterpretation of one's own values and experiences" (Flores & Day, 2006, p.220).

According to Mead (2009), teachers' *self-image,* which is a sub-concept of identity, certainly affect their attitudes toward the teaching profession, their perceptions about the context in which they teach, and the way they practice their teaching skills. Therefore, understanding teacher's *self-image* results in understanding the context in which the *self* teaches (Mead, 2009). According to Markus (1999), *self-image* is akin to personality construct of the possible self. She calls this process as "self-schema" and and defines it as follows: "Self-schemata are cognitive generalizations about the self, derived from past experience, that organize and guide the processing of self-related information contained in the individual's social experiences" (1999, p.124). Therefore, *self-schema* effectively determines how a person describes himself or herself, how s/he recalls and structures his/her experiences, how s/he reacts to new information, how s/he assigns values and makes choices, and the way concerning his/her future (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). Tickle (2000) suggests that teachers' prior experiences as both teachers and learners, their personal backgrounds, and their current world-views are the main determinants of how teachers formulate their professional identity, how they perceive the teaching profession, and therefore, how they construct their self-schemas. According to Sugrue (1997), every teacher

experiences a unique teacher identity construction process involving self-awareness, self-perceptions, and self-schemas about teaching and the teaching profession under the influence of their personal background, apprenticeship of observation, their teaching contexts, and cultural archetypes. People make preferences as a result of their *self-schema* which "effectively predict how people describe themselves, how they recall and structure their experiences, how they react to information, how they assign values and make choices" (Campbell & Yates, 2011, p.10).

Teacher identity construction is perceived as a personal and evolving experience that requires to be scrutinized, since "if we do not make an attempt to understand a life in its totality, we fail to understand the professional life of which it is part" (Hayes, 2010, p.80). All these definitions mention the professional aspects of teacher identity but also emphasize the need of revealing the nexus where professional identity and professional development meet (Palmer, 1998). A number of researchers (i.e., Borko, 2004; Freeman & Johnson, 2005; Gao, 2012; Tarone & Allwright, 2005) have asserted the importance of the investigation of teachers' professional selves as an integral part of their ongoing professional development. As Cummins (2003) proposes, teachers' ongoing professional identity development hinges on reflecting on what come to light in the classrooms, how transformations occur, and the way knowledge, pedagogy, and identity intersect. Similarly, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) argue that teacher identity development needs more attention by considering contextual and social factors in teaching, adding that it needs to be investigated in both pre-service and in-service teacher education. To this end, teachers' professional identity formation has been investigating in order to unearth teachers' pre-existing beliefs and what they find in the reality (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999). Qualitative research studies on teacher identity have been conducted mostly by utilizing interviews and narratives (Goldstein, 2005; Farrell, 2011), drawings (Brand & Dolloff, 2002; Beltman, Glass, Dinham, Chalk, & Nguyen, 2015), and metaphors (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011; Buchanan, 2015). Metaphors unearth images that integrated identity with teachers' emerging professional identities (Volkman & Anderson, 1998), so researchers use metaphors to learn from teachers' images about their language teaching processes. (Thornbury, 1991).

The literature suggests that teachers' job satisfaction and their perceptions about the teaching profession are influenced by the *context* in which teaching takes place. The literature also puts forward that *contexts* have an important impact upon teachers' professional identity formation as a result of their attitudes towards schools and the community they work in (Flores & Day, 2006). *Place* is identified as a pedagogical construct and implies the significance of teaching context as a central concern in teacher education (Gruenewald, 2003). To this end, *context* is posited as a complex and unsettled dimension by researchers who aim to understand its role in teacher education for rural areas (Reagan et al., 2019). *Context* is identified as a pedagogical construct and implies the significance of teaching place as a central concern in teacher education (Gruenewald, 2003). According to Eppley (2015), teacher education is *placed learning* which includes clinical experiences that intersect with *place identities* (Azano & Stewart, 2016). In a similar vein, Burton & Johnson (2010) define place as a *function of identity*. Pleasance (2016) suggests that *who* teachers work with and *where* they work have a significant influence on shaping their professional identities. Teachers come to the classroom with their own pre-existing set of values, attitudes and beliefs, and these can be either in harmony, or in tension, with those they work with or those manifest in their place to work. The culture of an instituiton may have an influence on the professional values teachers hold. It also affects the way teachers behave and changes their teacher roles. For instance, a supportive institutional culture builds motivation, whereas a culture that does not offer support may create an atmosphere of isolation. *Place* is identified as a pedagogical construct and implies the significance of teaching context as a central concern in teacher education (Gruenewald, 2003). To this end, *context* is posited as a complex and unsettled dimension by researchers who aim to understand its role in teacher education for rural areas (Reagan et al., 2019).

There is an intense focus on second and foreign language teacher identities over the past decade with the aim of uncovering the contextual, ideological and social aspects of *becoming* a language teacher (Tsui, 2007; Varghese, 2006). In second language teacher education, the relationship between professional development and teacher identity has been investigated through exploring teachers' personal experiences (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001), and the factors that influence teachers' decisions

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and attitudes in second language teaching (Williams, 2007). According to Bukor (2015), second language teacher identity reflects educational, professional and pedagogical aspects of being a teacher, and more importantly, "the imprints of the complex interconnectedness of one's cumulative life experiences as a human being" (p.323). Investigating language teacher identity is significant, since "in order to understand language teaching and learning we need to understand teachers; and in order to understand teachers, we need to have clearer sense of who they are" (Varghese et al., 2005, p.22). However, in the field of English Language Teaching, there has been the little awareess on how *rural* teachers deal with English curricula and only a few studies aim to explore foreign language teaching in rural teaching contexts (Cruz Arcila, 2018). In recent years, the ELT field has been started to investigate critical elements affected teaching and learning English in rural contexts including social needs, economic situation, and cultural and historical experiences (Bonilla & Cruz Arcila, 2014).

In the last decade, researchers have been interested in a *place-conscious* paradigm for rural teacher education. The new paradigm includes the analysis of rural-social space and how place dynamics affect rural teachers and rural students (Reagan et al., 2019). This paradigm suggests that "shifting teacher identities show the importance of *reflexivity i*n rural teaching and how cultivating teacher identities embedded in place challenges teacher education programs to continually increase specific rural knowledge and experience" (ibid., p.87). To this end, *context* is posited as a complex and unsettled dimension by researchers who aim to understand its role in teacher education for rural areas (Reagan et al., 2019). Considering this perspective, there has been a growing interest in research, policy, and practice of rural education in the last decade (Biddle & Azano, 2016). The increasing focus on the significance of *place* emerges as a "necessary condition in understanding and appreciating the circumstances and specificity of rural education" (Green & Reid, 2014, p.27). This perspective reflects *place-conscious* approaches to education that have increasingly become embedded within teacher education programs and practicum experiences (Greenwood, 2013).

Within the perspective of rural teacher identity, Eppley (2009) states, "successful teaching in a rural school is different than successful teaching in other settings" (p.1). Investigating rural teacher professional identity is of vital importance due to the fact that it indicates how rural teachers see themselves as professionals, how long they stay in the profession, and how they feel about themselves within their classroom and school environments (Mitchell & Weber, 1999). Every country has idiosyncratic educational problems; however, similar regional disparities in education are observed in many countries, both in developed and developing ones, thus, rural education is critical for all countries (UNESCO, 2015). Developed countries are engaged in policies and seek new techniques to increase the quality of rural education while developing and underdeveloped countries struggle to provide and continue equal educational opportunities for rural children (Aksoy, 2008). It is also stressed in the literature that teachers experience critical challenges in unpriviliged contexts (Cobbold, 2006) due to the fact that teaching in remote or rural areas is very critical for professional development of teachers. Anwaruddin and Pervin (2015) reveal an integrated point of view about rural teachers with the following statement:

> Teachers are not likely to learn from each other if they work in isolation. Furthermore, development initiatives may not be effective if they are imposed on teachers by outside forces. Examples of other *ecological* factors that may impede teacher development included shortage of planning time, lack of resources, poor teacher salary, misallocation of resources and authoritarian leadership (p.33).

Professional isolation, lack of familiarity with rural schools and communities, lack of resources, insufficient professional development opportunities, distance from family and friends, costs of travel to city centers are the main challenges of rural teachers (Barley, 2009). Building on this geographic isolation, rural teachers are often constructed as being professionally distant from resources, professional learning programs, and colleagues (Polidore, Edmonson, & Slate, 2010). Most of the teachers come from urban areas and it is very difficult for them to feel the cultural isolation as a result of lack of having stimulated academic interactions with their peers and colleagues (Mulkeen, 2005). Together, these challenges discourage teachers from planning to be recruited for rural schools and cause them to leave rural schools after teaching a couple of years. Geographical, cultural, and educational isolation of rural schools affect recruiting and retaining teachers in rural schools, especially when it is

coupled with negative anecdotal evidence that are associated with rural schools (Voke, 2002). Similarly, Bingham (1996) suggests that teachers' satisfaction and their perceptions of the rural area could potentially affect the commitment of rural teachers. To this end, rural teachers must maintain an acceptable level of job satisfaction in order to sustain their enthusiasm and commitment for the teaching profession and for their students (Cano & Miller, 1992).

Since the emergence of teachers' career plans starts before they enter the teaching profession and pre-service teachers are not well-informed about rural areas, attempts to prepare teachers for rural schools and support them after appointments have been considered as one of the prior concerns in many countries (Sharplin, 2002). To this end, "there is relatively little known about intentional efforts to prepare teachers specifically for rural classrooms" (Azano & Stewart, 2016, p.108). Grippin et al. (1985) indicate that faculties of education are not sensitive to needs of the teachers who work in rural areas. They suggest that faculty members do not conduct sufficient research in order to determine the needs and possible challenges of rural teacher. In a similar vein, Yarrow et al. (1999) assert that pre-service teacher education programs in many faculties of education are problematic in terms of preparing teacher candidates for rural placements. The literature put forward that teachers often accept rural positions without having received sufficient information about the job requirements and living conditions. Liu and Johnson (2006) explain this situation by saying:

> Many new teachers thus may be surprised by what they find in their schools and have professional expectations and needs that go unmet. Given that this likely contributes to new teachers' dissatisfaction, ineffectiveness, and turnover, it is cause for serious concern (p.352).

In that sense, pre-service teachers need to be informed about the conditions of teaching and living in rural areas. It is crucial that this is not only a responsibility of pre-service teacher education programs, but also a responsibility of in-service teacher training and support programs (Barley & Brigham, 2008). Lock et al. (2009) conducted a study and found that professional preparation in education faculties and field experience are insufficient for rural teacher education. Moreover, they handle rural teacher education within the perspective of preparing teachers to foster

development of rural social and cultural capital. This model supports teachers in developing a sense of rural places and people, their history and complexity, their problems and their potential, the activities and the existing industry in the area (Reid et al., 2010), since a rural social space is the "set of relationship, actions, and meanings that are produced in and through the daily practice of people in a particular place and time" (ibid., p.269). It is noteworthy that assertions related to rural teacher education could be applied to rural teacher education across the globe (White & Kline, 2012). Focusing on teacher education institutions, Yarrow et al. (1999) made an attempt to recognize specific preparation needs of rural teachers, provide suggestions to recruit and retain teachers, emphasize school-community partnerships, and support mentoring for novice teachers in rural schools. According to this study, the school, community and teacher education programs can create either positive effect or negative barriers for future rural teachers.

It is clearly seen from the recent literature that construction of the *self* as a rural teacher defines the process that one "fills in both the school and community in a particular context" and it is a "highly individual project" (Reagan et al., 2019, p. 87). In order to achieve this, the relevant literature about teacher identity suggests preparing teachers to get to know a place through becoming *community researchers* and understanding the dynamics of that place in a way that goes beyond geographic location (Corbett, 2010). In the last decade, new approaches on rural teacher education which Green et al. (2013) call "contemporary paradigms of rural teaching" (p.91) has been created. This approach implies the combination of increasing knowledge about rural places through place-conscious and locally-embedded experiences and shifting teacher identities as a result of becoming members of particular rural communities. Moreover, Green et al. (2013) put forth that this kind of an approach includes an awareness of both positive and negative aspects of rural teaching, and defines rural teaching context as more than a place for teaching, but also a site for shifting teacher identities. Rural teachers employing a place-conscious approach find themselves "simultaneously compelled and seduced" into shifting their pedagogies and teaching philosophies to fit the peculiarities of that place (Corbett, 2010, p.84). In sum, teacher educators and researchers aim to conceptualize rural places by means of the preparation, support, recruitment and retention of techers for

rural places. Even though the approaches for understanding and defining teaching contexts may differ, these conceptualizations shape the ways in which researchers and teacher educators operationalize and investigate questions related to rural teacher education. Research studies on rural education around the world put forth that the major challenges that impede quality of rural education include students' drop out rate, no sufficient budget allocation to support infrastructure, facilities and resources, distance to schools, curricula incompatibility with local conditions, poor school quality, parental indifference to education, unqualified teachers, unsuitable teaching methods to rural contexts, and professional isolation (White, 2008). In that sense, it is very crucial to concern these issues to set off a new process of rural development in order to regard rural schools and rural teachers as important tools for rural communities and their survival (Roberts & Downes, 2016).

In Turkish context, Çakıroğlu and Çakıroğlu (2003) put forward that socioeconomic and geographical disparity between urban and rural areas leads to a big gap in terms of socioeconomic development, access to infrastructure and welfare services. Therefore, providing quality education to children in rural areas and supporting rural teachers to pursue their professional development are prominent issues in learning and teaching field. Very little research focuses on educational problems in rural areas in Turkey. Their main focus is on insufficient teaching materials, accommodation and transportation, parents' indifference to education and poor physical conditions in rural contexts (Çiftçi & Cin, 2018). The limited research on rural teachers (Aksoy, 2008; Kızılaslan, 2012; Çiftçi & Cin) asserts that pre-service teacher education programs do not equip teacher candidates with the necessary personal and professional skills for rural schools. In light of these research studies and ideas, in this study, the main aim is to facilitate the emergence of *re-constructed* teacher identities in rural schools that can lead to teachers' personal and professional growth. In addition, this study aims to provide a holistic view of how social and professional issues affect teaching English, and therefore, shape teaching practices and professional identities in rural schools.

1.2. Defining Rurality and Being a Rural Teacher

Various ways of classification are presented in the literature in order to define rurality, including "the level of population density, the rate of population loss or gain, settlement size, local economic structure and landscape" (Gülümser, Baycan-Levent, & Nijkamp, 2011, p.134). It is clearly stated in the literature that *rurality* is both a demographic construction and a symbolic and imaginary one (Green, 2013). Therefore, the term *rural* can be defined in multiple ways. Kline and Walker-Gibbs (2015) determine a community to be rural if it both is a certain distance from the nearest urban center and it is also *culturally* constructed as rural. Additionally, they define rural as follows: "Rural areas are those where physical road distance results in pronounced restricted access to the full range of goods and services and social interaction" (p. 69). For instance, OECD (2011) geographically categorises the geographic communities from which schools and students derive as follows:

- villages, hamlets or rural areas with fewer than 3,000 people;
- small towns with 3,000 to 15,000 people;
- towns with 15,000 to 100,000 people;
- cities with 100,000 to one million people; and
- large cities with over a million people (p.56).

In sum, according to OECD (2011), rurality is mainly defined in conjunction with population concentrations where populations are constructed predominantly as those who live outside the mainstream of urban national cultures represented by big cities. Similarly, according to Rural Health Information Hub, *rural* is an inexact term that can have different meanings for different organizations, governments and disciplines. Therefore, trying to define what *rural* is can be a complicated task. However, for scholars, stakeholders, service providers and lawmakers who are concerned with rural issues, *rural* must be clearly defined. The attempt for a clear definition of *rural* to meet the needs of new policies has resulted in creating more detailed definitions that permit flexibility in their use in order to allow people concerned with rural issues to select from various definitions of rurality. Since there is not only one definition that fits all needs for policymaking, regulation, and program administration, each organization or agency selects the best definition that meets their needs for regulating their programs or agendas (RHIhub, 2019). In that sense, *rurality* is a concept used in policy circles and research studies without an unequivocal definition.

From an educational perspective, a very recent report written by Echazarra and Radinger (2019) and published by OECD in 2019 in order to examine learning and teaching in rural schools with the consideration of insights from Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), and the relevant literature. According to the report, rural areas and communities are associated with shaping the learning and teaching expeirences in rural contexts. This report puts forth the differences in learning outcomes and education expectations between rural and urban students via examining the data from the OECD (2019), PISA (2015) and TALIS (2013). The main aim of this report is revealing the extent to which challenges and opportunities in rural education are common across OECD member countries. Echazarra and Radinger (2019) suggest in their OECD (2019) report that an investigation of rural teaching requires a clear understanding and informative delineation of the context in which rural schools operate. The same report asserts that while no two rural areas are the same, certain characteristics can define rural communities across OECD countries, and the following items should be taken into consideration while designing policies for rural schools:

- **Geographical distance:** rural communities tend to be far from city centres. The remoteness and isolation affect rural communities in terms of their opportunities to communiate, socialize and work beyond their local community (OECD, 2019).

- **Small population size:** rural areas are thinly populated and rural communities deliver costly and inadequate services most of the time. For the case of education, rural schools are smaller than urban schools and student enrollment in secondary schools in rural areas is pretty low compared to urban schools (OECD, 2019).

- **Low socio-economic status:** rural communities tend to be poorer than urban areas, especially in developing countries (Lichter & Schafft, 2016). According to PISA (2015), only in six countries, namely Costa Rica, France, Germany, Israel, Switzerland, and the United States, there is no socio-economic gap among rural and urban families. In all other countries, particulary in Hungary, Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Tunisia and Turkey, socio-

economically disadvantaged students are more frequently found in rural areas than in urban areas. In addition, child labor rate is very high in rural areas in comparison with urban areas in most of the OECD countries. In PISA (2015) report, students were asked whether they worked for pay in the most recent day they attended school. The data shows that while child labor rate is 36% in urban schools in Turkey, the rate is 68% in rural schools.

In a similar vein, OECD (2017) puts forth that approximately 50% of students in urban schools expect to complete at least a university degree while only 30% of students in rural schools have opportunity to study at a university. The same report also shows that the rural gap in educational expectations is largest in Hungary, the Slovak Republic and Turkey across OECD countries and rural children often need to cover long distances or migrate to larger municipalities to pursue a further education that is not necessarily required to earn money in their home villages. According to Alpe (2012), geographical barriers and a lack of career role models in villages may also play a role in low academic achievement of rural students. OECD (2016) reports that rural schools have often fewer computers connected to the Internet. In Mexico, for instance, only 42% of computers in rural schools have Internet connection, compared to 90% of computers in urban schools. In the case of rural schools, technology may help overcome some of the challenges in isolated areas, such as providing rural schools online courses trainings, or facilitating opportunities for collaboration. In this respect, the design, delivery and support of ICT solutions is of vital importance to enable quality learning for students and professional development for teachers in rural areas (Sipple & Brent, 2015). Furthermore, the literature on rural education suggests that rural schools are of vital importance for student motivation and the community awareness. Witte and Sheridan (2011) write:

> Because of their centrality within the community, rural schools routinely connect with families in multiple capacities as part of typical daily routines. Rural schools provide opportunities for community communication and participation. In many rural communities, the local school building is a point of pride for the community and houses sporting and cultural events, civic activities. Teachers (…) have frequent and varied contact with students at multiple age and academic levels and with their families (p.153).

As rural schools struggle with many obstacles, some of them are contextual in nature, such as poverty, lack of social and educational opportunities, the difficulty in attracting and keeping qualified teachers in rural schools. Limited access to goods, transportation and social experiences, lower pay, geographic and social isolation, difficult working conditions, lack of resources and the discrepancy between personal and professional lives are the main challenges for rural teachers (Adams & Woods, 2015). Lunn (1997) identified *six major barriers in the attraction of teachers to rural areas*: a negative perception of teaching as an attractive and viable career; the employment prospects in urban schools in time of teacher shortages; the predominance of students from urban environments in teacher education programs and teacher preparation courses; the decline in the numbers of students from rural areas entering teacher preparation courses; the personal and professional consideration of experienced teachers; and the lack of personal and professional incentives to accept a teaching position in rural areas (p.17). The relevant literature put forth that researchers attempt to investigate school buildings, renovating classrooms, providing teaching materials and recruiting more teachers, but no concern for teacher training and professional development (McClure, 2014).

According to Reininger (2011), teaching in rural areas requires social and cultural sensitivity to the area. Therefore, teachers in rural schools should exhibit an impressively high concern for students' lives in and beyond the classroom as a result of accepting responsibility to support students' academic, social and behavioral needs in rural areas (Barley & Beesley, 2007). Therefore, according to Lemke (1994), the ideal rural teacher is able to teach students with a wide range of abilities in the same classroom, supervise extracurricular activities, and adjust the community at the same time. As rural schools struggle with many obstacles to improve student learning, some of these obstacles are contextual in nature, such as poverty, lack of social and educational opportunities, the difficulty in attracting and keeping qualified staff in places in which not everyone wants to live (Barter, 2008).

Staffing rural schools with qualified teachers is complicated in rural schools with more challenging working conditions (Goldhaber, Lavery & Theobald, 2015). The multiple challenges faced by teachers lead to a higher staff turnover in rural areas

(Echazarra & Radinger 2019). Garman and Alkire (1992) conducted a study and summarized the major reasons behind the fact that rural teachers are more likely to leave schools in rural communities with the following excerpt: "Many teachers who left were young, inexperienced and cited cultural and social isolation for moving to the first opening in non-rural settings" (p.16). Therefore, the location of a school is one of the key factors that affect the teacher shortages (TALIS, 2013). Researchers indicate that problems associated with the retention of teachers in rural areas clearly affect the quality of education available to rural students (i.e., Gibson, 1994; Higgins, 1995; Maxwell et al., 1997). Even when rural schools are staffed with qualified teachers and school principals, they may be unprepared for teaching and learning in rural contexts, since pre-service teacher preparation programmes are mostly focused on practices pertaining to larger urban schools (Ares-Abalde, 2014).

In a similar vein, TALIS (2013) report suggests that in several OECD countries, most of the rural teachers report that they do not receive formal education or training on the content, pedagogy or classroom practice for teaching in rural contexts. Rural teachers also feel themselves unprepared to adapt lessons to rural students' needs, knowledge, background and interests through "giving a rural *flavour* to the curriculum while preparing them for a globalised world and economy at the same time" (Echazarra & Radinger 2019, p. 39). Moreover, rural contexts present their own challenges in terms of professional isolation and limited access to professional learning (Hardwick-Franco, 2019). Therefore, rural areas have limited access to curriculum specialists, instructional coaches, workshops and professional trainings. According to OECD (2010) report, this limitation stems from the fact that training in more isolated areas is more costly to deliver. Similarly, Timar and Carter (2017) found that attending workshops or professional training programmes was reportedly often more difficult for rural teachers as a result of long driving distances, the necessity of staying overnight and finding substitute teachers. PISA (2015) suggests that rural areas have difficulties in organizing in-house professional development activities as a result of unwillingness of invited specialists and teacher trainers. It is very crucial to draw attention to the urgent need of retaining qualified teachers in rural schools and supporting their professional development.

In teacher education, professional development opportunities can be provided through different ways including courses, workshops, reading professional literature, conferences, seminars, collaborative or individual research, mentoring, field visits to other schools, and graduate programs (OECD, 2009). While urban teachers have wide range of opportunities for professional development, rural teachers have fewer opportunities because of many reasons (Rossi & Sirna, 2008). To this end, providing online professional development to teachers is a good way to "reach larger audiences; geographically dispersed groups of teachers with common needs and interests; and meet teachers' needs for flexible, self-paced learning experiences" (Goldenberg, Culp, Clements, Anderson, & Pasquale, 2014, p.289).

1.3 Rural Teaching in Turkey

In general sense, rural region is defined as "an area where agriculture and stockbreeding are implemented" in Turkish literature (Büyükşahin, Güler, & Mutlu, 2014, p.148). According to National Rural Development Strategy Report (2015) prepared by Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock in Turkey, the frequently used criteria for rurality are suggested and adopted by TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute):

- The criterion for the first definition is the *administrative status* of a region. According to this criterion, all regions except city centres and district centres are accepted as rural areas (i.e., villages and towns).
- The criterion for the second criterion is *population threshold.* In 1982, *Kent Eşiği Araştırması: Türkiye için Kent Tasarımı* (Research in Threshold of Urban: Urban Definition of Turkey) presented by Ministry of Development suggested that regions with more than 20.000 population are accepted as areas with minimum urban characteristics.

In sum, according to National Rural Development Strategy Report (2015), in Turkey, rural areas are:

1. *City centres and district centres with less than 20.000 population* and
2. *All villages and towns*.

Turkey is comprised of seven geographical regions, i.e. Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean, Blaksea, Central Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia and Southeast Anatolia. Each region has particular distinctive characteristics caused by socioeconomic differences, geographical features and historical background (Yılmaz, 2001). In the literature, studies on rural education tend to focus on the limitations of schools and lack of resources or quantitative aspects such as income, population, village size, and proximity to a river or productive cultivation areas (Yılmaz et al., 2010). In this respect, education is mostly ignored in terms of rural development (Çiftçi & Cin, 2018). From the west to the east of Turkey, the economic welfare is considerably decreasing which affects the quality of education, health and social care. While Marmara and Aegean regions are the most advantageous regions, the Southeastern and Eastern Anatolia are the least advantageous ones (Yılmaz, 2001). Urban-rural conflict is observed within regions in Turkey. Since there are considerable discrepancies in many aspects between different regions in Turkey, schooling and perceptions about education show different characteristics. For instance, the rate of rural population is higher than the urban population in Marmara, Black Sea and Southeast regions (Sahin & Gülmez, 2000). In 2006, Gülümser, Baycan-Levent and Njkamp wrote a report to compare the rurality of 25 EU member countries with Turkey's rurality in accordance with five factors: underdevelopment, demography, urbanization, higher education and industrialization. The report showed that among 26 countries Turkey has a higher score of rurality due to its high level of inequality of income distribution and the presence of less preferred rural areas to live. Since there are considerable discrepancies in many aspects between different regions in Turkey, schooling and perceptions about education show different characteristics.

Dülger (2004) conducted a study and revealed that 35% of the children were in hardest conditions to reach the school in Turkey. In terms of schooling of rural children, it was found that many school age rural children do not attend school due to economic and sociocultural reasons and girls' enrollment rate are much lower than boys. Dülger (2004) puts forward that parents are unwilling to send their children, especially their daughters, to schools outside the village. In areas where the population is small and scattered, children are bussed to nearby bigger villages or towns for schooling in Turkey. The provincial governors are responsible for the

supervision of bussing. It is also very striking that when the primary schools were closed down due to the transported education implementation, educational and social problems arose in villages (Dülger, 2004). In a similar vein, The Ministry of National Education (hereafter, MoNE) and Başkent University conducted a collaborative research in 2002 in order to evaluate primary education in Turkey. The research put forth that closing village schools to implement transported education in rural areas resulted in educational-cultural deficiencies in Turkey. The research explained this situation as follows:

> There are not any educational and multiactivity cultural institutions left in the village; no more educational-cultural programs oriented to village children, adolescent and adults; the teacher being a preeminent figure in a village has disappeared from the scene; the parents are isolated from the schools of their children and parent-school relationship has deteriorated; the closed-down school buildings are not being maintained; it will cost a lot to fix them (MoNE & Başkent University, 2002, p.158).

The same study also suggested that it would be better to find less costly solutions in order to provide quality in education in rural schools. The study explained this as follows:

> Some teachers are in the view that although a costly investment is being made in bussing, contrary to the expectations, it has dropped the quality in education. A better-quality education could be given in village schools from 1st to 5th grades with the same expenditure (p.158).

In developing and underdeveloped rural areas, teachers experience various problems including limited resources, unfamiliarity to the teaching context, lack of collaboration between teachers and the community, irrelevant curricula which are not related to the local needs (Koza Çiftçi & Cin, 2007). Thus, teacher shortage and professional development needs of teachers in these rural areas have been a critical issue to be considered in Turkey. According to TUIK (2013), 21% of population lives in rural areas in Turkey. Many of these areas are agricultural and located far away urban centres. They often lack of cultural and infrastructural facilities, such as hospitals, high schools, cultural centers, electricity and running water (Öğdül, 2010). Therefore, it is also emphasized that sociocultural and economic diversities in rural areas have revealed new definitions, so it is not easy to propound a concrete

definition for rurality in Turkey. For the purposes of this research study, *rural* should be defined both technically and conceptually. Thus, criteria suggested by OECD (2011) and National Rural Development Strategy Report (2015) were followed in order to describe an area as *rural* in Turkey. In this research study, a school is considered *rural* if it is located in an area which is not in the city centre or a district centre (NRDS, 2015) with 100.000 or fewer residents (OECD, 2011).

1.3.1 Rural Teacher Training Sytem in Turkey

Following the foundation of Turkish Republic in 1923, gaps between rural and urban parts of Turkey led to multiple approaches to teacher training programmes. In 1926, two types of teacher training schools were opened: Primary Teacher Schools for urban areas and Village Teacher Schools for rural areas (Gürimek, Kaptan, & Erkan, 1997). However, these schools were closed in 1932 due to the fact that they could not provide adequate education to train teachers (Dilek, 2016). Therefore, MoNE tried to find practical solutions to train teachers especially for rural areas. In the 1940s, the Village Institutes were opened to train teachers for rural contexts (Özkan, 2016). The curriculum of Village Institutes was compatible with needs and conditions of local contexts. The main aim of Village Instituties was meeting the practical needs of rural people and providing them real-life solutions (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003). After completing five-year education in Village Institutes, rural youth became teachers and taught in village schools for 20 years. Those who did not complete 20 years of compulsory service in village schools were no longer be public officers and paid compensation. (Kaplan, 2002).

In 1954, Village Institutes were closed due to political reasons (Tarman, 2010). After closing Village Institutes, there were two major adjustments in teacher education policies in the last fifty years. Firstly, The Basic Law of National Education was accepted in 1973 in order to educate teachers in higher education institutions. Secondly, teacher education was transferred to Higher Education Council from MoNE in 1981 (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003). In 1997, MoNE wrote a new program called The Basic Education Program and the issues of rural teacher preparation have been neglected in teacher education curriculum. Today, teachers are

centrally appointed to rural schools in order to complete their compulsory service. They are usually appointed to areas rural and economically less developed parts of Turkey. After completing the compulsory service, teachers request to be assigned to a more developed or urban area. The main reason behind this compulsory service is to provide enough teachers in underdeveloped areas and to close the geographical and social disparities between urban and rural areas.

The high teacher turnover in rural schools is indeed a very important problem for both rural children and policy-makers. However, teacher education programmes still do not recognize the need for preparing pre-service teachers for rural placements and providing them for continous support after starting to teach in rural contexts (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003). To this end, teacher training in Turkey has become one of the disputable issues because of the various changes made within a short period of time. In Turkey, teacher training is one of the main problems of the Turkish educational system, since teachers are not trained in the desired quality due to the economical, political and social reasons to (Aksoy, 2008). The major problems in teacher training system in Turkey are lack of professional, cultural and pedagogic knowledge, insufficient internship, the perception successful students hold towards that teaching is a low-status profession, lack of opportunities for teachers' professional development, and teachers' unwillingness to improve themselves professionally (Deniz & Sahin, 2006). In Turkey, one-third of the senior year pre-service teachers consider some regions unattractive with limited life standards, distance from families and professional isolation (Şahin, 2011).

In Turkey, English is a coumpulsory subject. English is taught for at least two hours a week depending on the school type and grade (MEB, 2014). However, since Turkey is a developing country and keeps its everchanging structure, there is still a difference in schooling among regions. In this vein, it is considered that there is a necessity of providing equal professional development opportunities for all teachers, especially rural teachers across the country. Teacher education in Turkey is consisted of three levels: undergraduate (BA), master's (MA) and doctoral (PhD) degrees in English language teaching. Pursuing MA or PhD programmes is not compulsory to become a teacher in Turkey. After entering to the university, teacher candidates are

taught theoretical courses in linguistics, language acquisition, methodologies, testing and classroom management. During the last year of the programme, they take practical courses in teaching language: school experience and practice teaching (CoHE, 2018). After completing BA programme, teachers take part in an examination system. First, they take the written national exam, which is followed by face-to-face interviews conducted with administrators and educators. After completing these two stages, teachers are ranked according to their exam scores. They appointed to different cities, towns or villages based on rankings. After teaching three years, teachers obtain the official right to request for changing their schools (MEB, 2015).

Foreign language education curricula focus on pedagogical content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge; however, courses such as philosophy of education, history of education and sociology of education were excluded from the curricula (CoHE, 2018). In fact, these courses were sufficient for understanding the issues of equality in education and educational challenges in our country, such as rural poverty, child labor, schooling of girls, transported education and so on. Therefore, the new type of curriculum design leads to teachers' lack of awareness about educational issues. Additionally, pre-service teacher education curriculum requires a rural practicum component, so that pre-service teacher can become familiar with the potential challenges and problems that they will experience in rural areas which are closely related to their teacher identity construction (Seban, 2015).

1.3.2 Teaching English in Rural Schools in Turkey

According to Tezcan (2018), low social classes with low incomes could not provide the necessary nourishment and educational materials for their children in Turkey. Tezcan (2018) found that uneasiness at home, educational levels of family members and parents' attitudes towards school play a key role in students' success in Turkey. In a similar vein, Sahin and Gülmez (2000) put forth that family size, working mothers, parents' relations with each other, their attitudes towards school, language, educational background, economic status of the family and occupations of parents are prominent factors that affect students' achievement in rural areas. *Qualitative*

Assessment of Rural Schools in Turkey report was prepared by Kuitunen (2004) and published as a common effort of World Bank and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States. The purpose of the study was to assess the quality of primary education in Turkey and find school characteristics that lead to higher performance compared with other schools. The schools were selected both from developed and developing regions and among them were rural, suburban and urban schools. There were urban and suburban schools both from wealthy areas and poor areas. The field work consisted of three field trips to Turkey. 19 schools were visited in Ankara, Antalya, Samsun, Ordu, and Erzurum. The researchers visited schools to conduct interviews with principals and teachers. They also observed and toured around the schools. In addition, photos were taken with the permission of people in order to better describe the schools in the report. The report puts forth that administrators and teachers need to have in-service training on rural living and working in rural areas. Besides, it is reported that the curriculum to train primary education teachers in Education Faculties should be reviewed by keeping the complaints and experiences of recently graduated rural teachers in mind. The report recommends that at least one semester in senior year should be allocated to practicum in rural schools.

The report also provides recommendations for the Bussing Basic Education Schools. First of all, book campaigns and funds should be provided to get books for students. Secondly, quality of the food should be examined by experts and all students in bussing school should have free lunch. Thirdly, communication between teachers and parents should be strengthened via meetings. In addition, integration and interaction between bussed and walking students should be enhanced through theater, chorus, quiz shows or sightseeing trips. Finally, successful administrators and teachers working in these schools should be rewarded, and teachers should exchange their experiences with their colleagues in discussion groups. During the visits, it is observed that teachers are positive; however, they are not able to concentrate on finding solutions due to the fact that the system does not encourage them for such an inquiry. Additionally, it was observed that there are a lot of incompetent and *contracted* teachers, especially in rural areas. On the other hand, it is also a big challenge to train teachers to a proper level of competence, since teachers change too often. In rural areas, teachers want to move close to their home areas or to more

wealthy areas. According to the report, the biggest problems in Eastern rural areas are accommodation of teachers, missing of the central heating, and bad roads. The report also proposes that teachers are mostly young and they are in their first or second occupation in rural schools. They stay in the school 1-3 years and move then to a school closer to city. On the other hand, teachers feel themselves devoted in rural schools, since they indicate that they use their own equipment, collect donations for poor students, bring novels to students to read and use their class times for extracurricular activities like theater, folklore, chess, or sports in order to improve their students' intellectual profundity.

From a different perspective, in urban schools, teachers are experienced and in order to get in schools with good reputation, they have had to show high performance in their previous occupations. The report also shows that teachers work more collaboratively in urban schools, since they have worked together for a long time in the same school. The report indicates that rural students had plans for their future; however, they worry whether they can enter secondary education at all because of their poor economic conditions. The report also recommends that in-service training should be provided for rural teachers in order to enhance their motivation and to intertwine theory and practice (Kolb, 1984). In addition, activities that help networking schools and teachers should be encouraged. Finally, the report recommends that some projects could be arranged with the rural teachers, since they are mostly young teachers who have potential to develop education and transform the community in which they work.

Doğançay-Aktuna and Kızıltepe (2005) mention the unequal spread of English in the various socioeconomic groups in Turkey. They assert that very limited access to English learning facilities in a lower socioeconomic group results in educational and professional obstacles. Since English language is taught in all public and private educational institutions from childhood education to higher education in Turkey, English language teachers play a key role in pursuing quality English education in all teaching contexts in Turkey. In 2013, The British Council and TEPAV (The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey) collaborated to conduct a large-scale survey across Turkey between February and July 2013. These two

organizations have pooled their areas of expertise to produce an important report as one of the largest and comprehensive pieces of research in Turkey. The report is on national needs assessment of state school English language teaching in Turkey. The report is produced by analyzing the data collected in 48 state schools in and around (within 100 km) different cities in Turkey (i.e., Ankara, İzmir, İstanbul, Balıkesir, Diyarbakır, Antalya, Erzurum, Gaziantep, Malatya, Samsun, Kayseri, and Trabzon) at Grades 4-12.

The relevant data for this study was collected via persistent observations, questionnaires prepared for students and parents, in-depth interviews conducted with teachers, and meetings arranged with stakeholders and students. They surveyed approximately 19.380 students, 1.394 parents, and 78 English language teachers. It also includes 80 classroom observations focusing on English language teachers' professional needs. As a result of an extensive data collection process, the report puts forth very considerable results for both teachers and teacher educators. Mainly, this report identifies the reasons behind the low level of success in English language teaching and learning in the state educational system in Turkey, and suggests the following major reality: Most of the English language teachers in Turkey have the qualifications and language skills to deliver effective language lesson; however, most of the students across Turkey was evidenced as beginner level even after taking more than 1000 hours of English till the end of Grade 12. One of the remarkable findings is the level of English proficiency of students at state schools. Their level of English is still at basic level after 1000 hours of instruction. Moreover, technological facilities are not sufficient and efficient in many English language classrooms. Most of the classrooms (even in major cities, such as Izmir) lacked internet connection and electrical sockets. In addition, although now in its tenth year, student and parent recognition of the *DynEd* programme is low.

Teachers told that lack of hardware prevents students and parents from using this programme effectively. Besides technological limitations, students' interest levels towards foreign language learning and their awareness about their level of English is decreasing over time. As a result of in-depth interviews conducted with English language teachers, it was found that teachers are not provided with efficient and

sustainable professional development training opportunities. Therefore, MoNE must apply well-designed and consistent policies with regard to professional development training for especially state school teachers. Classroom observations put forth that there is a dissonance between teaching theories and classroom practice. Therefore, in-service teacher training programs are inadequate and inconsequential. In addition, it was observed that English language teachers use Turkish language in English language classes most of the time. Some teachers used 100% Turkish with occasional English words. Other teachers used a mix of both languages, resorting to Turkish whenever perceived communication difficulties arose.

This survey also put forward a very remarkable finding related to schools in distressed circumstances. For this survey, a few schools were observed and they were noted as 'working among distressed social circumstances' and 'requiring special and specific attention'. The schools were identified with lower standards of health and safety. A lower quality of education within such schools was also observed. The survey reports that English language teachers need in-service training especially about how to *personalize* textbook content to adress students' interests and increase motivation of students at various age ranges and abilities. Thus, content of in-service teacher trainings should include materials appropriate to various Turkish contexts. In sum, English language teaching should be evaluated with an approach by considering all stakeholders, the impact of current educational practices, English teachers' professional lives as well as the welfare of the country (British Council & TEPAV, 2013).

According to this report, the teaching of English as a subject and not a language of communication is one of the main reasons behind students' fail to learn how to communicate and function independently in English. Secondly, almost all classrooms have a furnishing or layout where students sit together, in pairs on bench seats. The teachers indicated that they fail to use this seating arrangement to organize group works for communicative language practices in classroom contexts. Thirdly, official textbooks and curricula are not able to meet the needs of all students and teachers in different contexts. Repeating similar curriculum in each grade and teachers' obligation to follow the curricula is another crucial reason behind students' low level

of English. Apart from the problematic areas in curricula and materials, this report proposes that students' fail to learn English also derived from parents' low income which might have important implications for the students' success in school, and parents' low level of education and having average of at least two children. This report indicates that 59% of the parents have an income at a level of minimum wage per month and the income level has a direct effect on the students' success in learning English due to the fact that parents cannot afford English books, English language music and English TV channels. The report shows that parents with higher income are more likely to have these potential learning aids in the home, thereby the students benefitting from these aids are more likely to enjoy English classes. Besides income, having at least two children also limits parents' ability to help their child with English and other studies.

All schools visited for this report have the required infrastructure for education, such as buildings, classrooms, electricity, and administration. Nevertheless, most of the classrooms lacked Internet connection and even in major cities, such as Izmir, some schools lacked electric points. The report also shows that 81% of the parents have at least two children and 17% have four or more children. It is very noteworthy that 51% female parents have a primary school or no formal education degree, while this percentage is 36% for male parents. Only 15% of male parents and 10% of female parents have a university of higher degree. The report draws attention to the fact that the study was mostly applied in urban conurbations of cities and *not* in rural areas. This means that these results are even more striking in rural areas. However, this report also includes a few schools noted as 'distressed social circumstances' and 'requiring special/specific attention' schools. In these schools, lower standards of health and safety, and a lower quality of education were observed. It is inferentially found that parent's level of education has an effect on the quality of the help the parent is able to give his/her child with school studies. In conclusion, the parent's education background, income level, and the family size would have an important effect on child's success in school. In parallel with the information given so far, the main problems associate with rural teaching in Turkey can be listed as follows:

- Difficult climate conditions and transportation problems

- Insufficient teaching materials and poor physical conditions of schools

- Indifference of rural community and parents to education

- Lack of pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher training for rural teaching

Efforts for providing a more effective rural teacher preparation and continuous support for professional development have been too limited in Turkey (Tezcan, 2018). In Turkey, most of the teachers experience various challenges especially in rural parts of Turkey and it is summarized some of the challenges as follows:

> It is a well-known fact that teaching in the poorest regions in the east and southeast of the country, where the number of multigrade classes is extremely high, is seen by many teachers as a forced exile because of the political, economic, geographical, social and cultural structure of the regions. These parts of the country are also named as hardship areas and classified obligatory service regions. Therefore, teachers do not want to work and live in these regions for years (Aksoy, 2008, p.224).

In sum, the geographical and socioeconomic disparities between rural and urban areas in Turkey make it necessary for teacher educators to prepare and support teachers in order to deal with various challenges and needs of rural contexts.

1.4 Conceptual Background

This section primarily focuses on the concepts of the theoretical framework to better understand the interpretation of this research study. For Merriam (2009a), in qualitative studies, a theoretical framework is the lens through which the researcher views the world. Qualitative researchers use theories in their studies in order to provide a broad explanation for behavior and attitudes (Creswell, 2009). In addition, qualitative researchers increasingly use a theoretical lens or perspective, which "becomes advocacy perspective that shapes the types of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change" (ibid., p.62). Besides, theoretical lens guides the researcher in terms of choosing the important issues to examine and also indicates the researcher's position in the qualitative study (ibid.). Specifically, Yin (2003) draws attention to the role of theory in doing case studies by saying that theories help researchers in the following areas: selecting the cases to be studied, specifying what is being explored when you are

exploratory case studies, defining a complete and appropriate description when you are doing descriptive case studies, stipulating rival theories when you are doing explanatory case studies, and generalizing the results to other cases (p. 5). From his point of view, the term *theory* does not only cover causal theories, but also the policy issues and other substantive source that may help the researcher for the design of research steps. From this perspective, Schultz (1988) proposes that "the choice of a conceptual framework will guide the research process in terms of the identification of relevant concepts/constructs, definition of key variables, specific questions to be investigated, selection of a research design, choice of a sample, data collection strategies, data analysis techniques, and interpretation of findings" (p.34).

Creswell (2007) defines the role of a theoretical framework in a qualitative study with the following words: "The logic that the qualitative researcher follows is inductive, from the ground up, rather than handed down entirely from a theory or from the perspectives of the inquirer" (p. 22). Therefore, rather than dwelling on a single theory, various theories does inform the theoretical framework of this study in order to benefit from a wide range of perspectives. My purpose of this work is to begin to uncover obstacles that rural teachers feel as a result of isolation, lack of resources, professional development needs, lack of pre-service teacher education preparation and insufficient in-service training. Thus, as multiple theories are compatible with this aim, I tried to infuse all the above-mentioned theories into this research study. This study is informed by sociocultural view of L2 teaching which is based on the assumption that language teaching is occurred as a result of social interactions in a social context (Lantolf, 2006). In order to investigate the professional identity construction in the process of L2 teaching, I mainly use Turner's (1981) concept of social identity as well as the ideas from Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor. In order to better understand the dynamic relationship between the English language teaching and the teaching context, Halsey's (2006) spatial map is utilized.

1.4.1 Sociocultural Theory

Language teaching is a field that is influenced by educational, psychological and sociological theories. Among these theories, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (SCT)

has become prominent due to its impact on the field of language teaching. In general, sociocultural view proposes that language learning and teaching take place as a result of social interactions in a social context (Lantolf, 2006). This view suggests that the construction of knowledge is a socioculturally mediated process affected by physical and psychological tools, such as artifacts, parents, students, teachers, and the context. According to Lantolf (2006), this theory highlights the interaction between individual development and the context in which they live. According to this sociocultural view, human learning is a social process and it is comprised of mainly four principles: *internalization*, *mediation*, *zone of proximal development*, and *scaffolding*. Internalization is the process in which individuals appropriate the artifacts of their daily lives and turn them into psychological artifacts which provide them with a basis for organizing their mental images (Lantolf, 2006). Vygotsky (1978) expresses this process as follows:

> [The] cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later on, on the individual level; first, between people and then inside the [individual]. This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. When the internalization process of these is over, people gain them as developmental achievement (p.57).

Internalization is a process that enables people to negotiate with the physical environment they experience and to transform all the gains of this negotiation into psychological and mental facts. This process is very essential, since it serves as a bridge between individual's inner world and the outside that s/he lives in. They are interconnected and interacted. Winegar (1997) summarizes this process by highlighting its social constituents:

> Internalization occurs through interacting both inner and intra-personally. Through this process, people reconstruct their relationship with the environment, and some aspects of this contribute to the future of this construction. At least for humans, this process is always *socially mediated* whether or not other people are physically present. Some patterns of previous and later person-environment relationships we experience as continuity (p.91).

Internalization is a complicated and prolonged process of transformation, which does not occur independently or instantly, but it is a collaborative engagement in social interactions. This process underscores the importance of social situation in individual

development and the formation of new psychological systems. The context in which social practices and realities occur is the basis of constructing mental images. The second principle of sociocultural view is mediation. It is based on the fact that cognitive activities are mediated by the interaction of individuals with their environment (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). All artifacts around the individual mediate the internalization process interpersonally and intrapersonally. Individuals develop and organize their mental functions through the interaction with the environment by means of these artifacts.

The third principle of sociocultural view is zone of proximal development (ZPD) which is "the distance between the actual development and the level of potential development during a problem-solving process under adult guidance, or more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). According to this view, ZPD is a tool for understanding the internal processes of adults while learning and problem solving. Therefore, ZPD is an important construct for focusing on developmental processes of adult learning. ZPD is strongly linked to scaffolding, which is the fourth principle of sociocultural view. Scaffolding is the assistance provided by the more knowledgeable individual in order to develop cooperation between him/her and a less proficient one. According to Mercer (1995), scaffolding is not only used for classroom learning, but it is an umbrella term to define a systematic way of supporting each other. Sociocultural view is comprised of principles that have both theoretical and practical implications for teacher education and serves as a route map for better teaching practices. For instance, this view highlights that learning and teaching are collaborative activities, which are under the influence of interactions among individuals in social contexts to promote the intellectual development (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Apart from that, sociocultural view can be a considerable theoretical framework for research on language teacher cognition. Cross (2010) draws a framework for language teacher cognition by utilizing sociocultural view. He proposes that sociocultural view helps researchers unearth language teachers' historical, sociological, and cognitive constructs by defining them as agents in social contexts. He suggests that the way teachers know, think, and behave could be better understood via sociocultural framework. Cross (2010) makes the following summary

to draw attention to the relationship between sociocultural view and language teacher cognition:

> A sociocultural theoretical perspective on teacher practice provides the basis for a systematic, comprehensive, and theoretically robust framework that accounts for the social dimension of thought and knowledge (p.449).

In sum, teachers are under the influence of physical and symbolic artifacts created by the physical world around them and teachers mediate and regulate their relationships in various social contexts. In that sense, sociocultural view can be used to better understand how teacher's social and mental activities are organized through culturally and socially constructed relationships (Lantolf, 2001). In this perspective, the process of individual transformation occurs not individually, but cooperatively. Sociocultural view underscores the importance of social situations in individual development and the role of context in which social practices and activities ocur (Lantolf, 2006). As Kelly (1991) indicates, individuals make sense of events by means of their own theories. People interact with the physical world from their own perspectives, and the interaction between individuals and world is shaped by their past experiences and future expectations (Amory, 2011). To this end, sociocultural view propounds that pre-established teaching beliefs, attitudes, opinions, past experiences, expectations, and interpretations foreshadow teacher identities and teaching practices.

1.4.2 Social Identity Theory

The core concept of *self* "embodies personal history, relates the individual to social situations, shapes cognition, and anchors a range of goals, motives, and needs" (Turner & Onorato, 1999, p.15). *Self* is not stable and concrete entity but it is fluid allowing the individual to adapt to various social situations by adopting multiple roles and group identities. All these identities are one's *social identities*. Social identity view was developed by psychologists Tajfel and Turner to propose that a person's self-perception depends on the groups to which he or she belongs. Social identity view aims to understand how individuals make sense of themselves and other people in social contexts. Individuals derive multiple identities from their membership and interactions within and among groups (Hogg & Terry, 2000). The

basic hypothesis of Tajfel and Turner's (2004) theory is that individuals must have internalized their group membership as a part of their *self-concept*. Identities are based on social categories and social roles. A person may act differently in various contexts reflecting many possibilities of his or her multiple selves. The basis of social identity view is that individuals strive to maintain a positive social identity throughout their lives. Social identity proposes four main processes in an intergroup context: (a) social categorization, (b) the formation of an awareness of social identity, (c) social comparison, and (d) a search for psychological distinctiveness.

According to Tajfel (1981), a given social context provides categories through which individuals allocate others and themselves to category membership. *Self-categorization* in social identity view indicates that *self* is reflexive in that it can take itself as an object and can categorize or classify itself in specific ways in accordance with other social categories (Stets & Burke, 2000). Individuals form their *social identities* through a process of *self-categorization*. In other words, the identity is formed through the recurrent process of *self-categorization*. Jenkins (2004) puts forth that social identity is an ongoing process of interaction between the individual and the focal group (in-group), and between the individual and other groups (out-groups). In that sense, identity formation is not an entity but a dynamic, reciprocal, contextual, and evolving process. *Self-categorization* suggests that an individual becomes a member of a group in accordance with the group's function, readiness, as well as its' accessibility (Turner & Onorato, 1999). During the process of *self-categorization*, the individual constructs the meaning of his or her social identity, which serves as a social-cognitive schema including norms, values, and beliefs. As a result of adopting the social identity of the group, the individual identity recedes to the background and the group identity comes to the foreground. The transition from individual identity to group identity brings along a corresponding change in motives, expectations, affective connotations, background knowledge, beliefs, norms, and values (Turner & Onorato, 1999). However, under the influence of social identity, individuals may perform motives and behavior that conflict with their personal identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Therefore, the transition from individual identity to group identity is one of the significant insights of social identity theory in terms of understanding the difference between group identity and personal identity. When social identity is

unsatisfactory, individuals will strive either to leave their existing group or to make their existing group more positively distinct (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). The variety of reactions to negative or unsatisfactory social identity can be summarized with three principles. The first one is *individual mobility.* This principle indicates that individuals may try to leave or dissociate themselves from the group in order to pass from a lower- to a higher-status group. The second principle is *social creativity.* The members may seek positive features of the group by redefining or altering the elements of it. Finally, the third principle is *social competition*. The group members may seek positive distinctiveness of their group via direct competition with the other groups.

Social identity view assumes that individuals *categorize* themselves at three main levels: (1) as an individual person who compares him- or herself with other individuals, (2) as a member of a certain group which then is compared with relevant groups, and (3) as a human being. Individual use one of or multiple of these categorization levels depending upon the social context that an individual experience. In relation with the categorization process, according to Tajfel (1978), there are mainly three dimensions of *social identification*: a *cognitive* component of identification which makes the person considers him-or herself as a member of a certain category, an *evaluative* component which makes the person perceives a certain evaluation of the category from the outside, for example from society, and an *affective* component which makes the person attaches to the category and his or her membership in it. The person knows that he or she belongs to a social category or a social group (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). A social group is "a set of individuals who hold a common social identification or view themselves as members of the same social category" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225). Individuals categorize themselves as a result of a *social comparison process*. Individuals form their identities or sense of selves from the social categories to which they belong. Since each individual is "a member of a unique combination of social categories" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p.225), the sum of social categories makes that individual's *self-concept* is unique. People act in various contexts and recognize themselves as occupants of different positions or *roles*. The essence of identity is the categorization of the *self* as "an occupant of a role" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p.225).

Role identities are formed as a result of a *match* between the individual meanings of occupying a particular role and the behaviors that an individual experience that role while interacting with others (Burke, 1980). This match is "the negotiation of meanings for situations and identities" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p.227). Situations and identities fit together to "provide a situated context for interaction" (ibid.). Besides, the role identities influence the Other's and one's own behaviors, and form of expectations associated with that roles as well (Stryker, 1980). The expectations and behaviors vary in accordance with the set of roles activated in particular situations. Therefore*, role identities* influence individual's plans, expectations, and activities. Each *role identity* is related to individual's differential performances, relationships and interconnections of roles within a group in a particular context. Social identity view aims to understand how individuals make sense of themselves and other people in social contexts (Korte, 2007). People extract a portion of their identities from their memberships and interactions within and among social groups (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Tajfel (1981) summarizes this view with the following statement:

> The concept of social identity is explicitly formulated to theoretically incorporate individual cognitive processes as well as societal dynamics in its explanation of stereotyping… The actions and beliefs of different groups, and the stereotypes they hold of themselves and others is rooted in the dynamics of intergroup relations which form the basis of history… They are shaped by broader social representations, or ideologies (pp. 82-84).

As it is mentioned above, social identity view represents major theoretical attempts to clarify the social psychological processes associated with group membership and action. Tajfel (1978) defined social identity as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p.63). From this perspective, people see themselves within the framework group membership and identify themselves with the social group to which they belong. To this end, it is crystal clear that social identity view presents the contextual antecedents of identity and aims to provide a theoretical room for the conceptualization of the effects of normative social contexts. Social identities are the products of sociological and historical elements beyond human agency.

Social identification refers to "a relatively enduring state that reflects an individual's readiness to define him-or herself as a member of a particular social group" (Haslam, 2001, p.383). Recent reserch has shown that social identification is highly relevant to *working contexts* (van Dick & Wagner, 2001) since it is suggested that social identification salience is associated with imporovement in work motivation and work satisfaction. Research has demonstrated that individuals who feel emotionally attached to their working contexts and profession groups show more job satisfaction, motivation, and job performance (Matthieu & Zajac, 1990). In that sense, social identity view attempts to explain the relations between the individuals and groups within which individuals work and learn (Korte, 2007). The individual enters a workgroup and it becomes the salient element for his or her identity formation. *Workplace learning* in which social identity plays a crucial role directly contributes to the development of group identity in an individual (Korte, 2007). Internalizing the group values along with the tasks and *roles* of the job is the part of the construction of one's social identity in the workgroup (Korte, 2007). To this end, social identity is not only about learning and developing in a group via the acquisition of skills about the job *roles*, but also about the formation of a group identity within the context of the organization.

Workplace learning is the process in which the individuals construct their social identities that mediate the way they enact and learn their practice (Korte, 2007). The way of an individual's *workplace learning* is also under the influence of his or her own *personal identity* which encapsulates individual beliefs, norms, and values. Individuals experience identity-related constraints in their workplaces; thereby unearthing identity-related workplace experiences may contribute to continuous learning and adaptation of individuals in organizational settings. In that sense, social identity is a "lens through which individuals view their jobs, responsibilities, organizations, and even the dynamics of work" (Korte, 2007, p. 177). To this end, social identity provides a new insight for individuals to "perceive new information, attribute cause, make meaning, and choose to undertake new meaning" (ibid.). Examining *workplace learning* with the perception of social identity may make contributions to theory development and research in this area. Thus, the theory of

social identity offers the opportunity to understand the crucial influences on constructing professional identity in workplaces. The strength of social identity view comes from its in-depth meaning to examine individuals' experiences of living and working in groups within organizations, and also its focus on the issue that goes beyond the individual. When we consider organizational identification, the following four foci should be distinguished: (1) identification with one's own career, (2) identification with one's working group, (3) identification with the organization as a whole, and (4) identification with the profession (Snape, Redman, & Chan, 2000). As it is seen from these foci, career identification corresponds with the personal level of categorization, whereas the other three correspond to a group level of identification. It is also proposed that group performance is highly influenced by a person's own identification which means if a person's focus of identification is on his or her own career, one would expect this person to concentrate on actions that promote the individual career. On the other hand, if the person is identified wirh his or her working group, it would be predicted that this person will contribute in enhancing group benefits, such as showing high levels of extra-role behavior, low absenteeism, collaborative work (Ellemers et al., 1998). In sum, it is clearly demonstrated that the four proposed dimensions (cognitive, affective, evaluative, and behavioural) and the different foci (individual career, team, school, and occupation) should be kept in mind while examining the social identification of teachers in various working contexts.

Schools as teaching contexts and also "organizational contexts in which teachers work and students learn" (Kraft, Marinell, & Yee, 2016, p.1) are the core elements that form social identities of teachers (Hodgkinson, 2003). The notion of teacher identity is constructed within the tension that exists between the culture available wihin the teaching context and teachers' everyday practices, and his or her experiences related to colleagues and students (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The institutional context of schools and classrooms are places where such tensions mostly occur and provide significant insights for both teachers and students about their roles in learning and teaching contexts. In that sense, understanding the construction of professional identity within an educational context requires an understanding of the

"practices, beliefs, knowledge, and ideas" that people use to make sense of the context (Esteban- Guitart & Moll, 2014, p.31).

Halsey (2005) notes that the school is the largest organization in a town, thereby it is often "strategically positioned to be a rallying agency when the town feels under pressure, providing a sense of connection to the past, present, and the future" (p.6). In that sense, preparing teachers for different socio-economic and cultural settings is very noteworthy to build rich and diverse lives for rural and regional students. The assertion that *school lives in a symbiosis with its surrounding* is based on the analogy between an organization and a biological system (Kuitunen, 2004). In order to survive and grow, schools have to adapt themselves to their environment. This idea proposes that schools interact openly with their surroundings and can actively influence it. To this end, defining schools as *organic systems* is applicable for especially rural schools in Turkey. In these schools, teachers mostly work extra hours every day in order to adapt themselves to the context in which they work and live. It is very important that "only the school with organic approach can influence in rural area and make sustainable changes" (Kuitunen, 2004, p. 51). To ensure the organic system, *flexibility* and *adaptability* are the most important conditions for effectiveness. The well-being of the individuals within an organization is enhanced with motivation and professional development. Since the school is part of students' and teachers' life, schools may be the most crucial part of the community life. In unpriviliged teaching contexts, teachers become *parents* for the children. To this end, the school not only covers the curriculum in these contexts, but also adds something very crucial to both teachers' and students' lives. To this end, it is of vital importance to better understand the integrated vision of schools and communities. Biddle and Azano (2016) suggest that in teacher education field researchers should:

> (…) re-evaluate education's relationship to marginalized places and spaces in a holistic and inclusive way… The lived realities of students, teachers, administrators, and community members happen within the context of a school, situated in a place, and… much of the local economic and social realities of that place determine the opportunities and constraints of schooling (p.316).

Thus, teacher educators and researchers must support continued research in multicontextual teaching in order to develop a *place-conscious paradigm* for teacher

education that builds upon the complexities of particular places and makes connections across the continuum of teacher learning in schools. What can teacher educators and researchers gain from these theories and approaches is considering the important relations between social identification and job-related attitudes. Increasing teachers' social identification with their teaching contexts and profession groups would have positive implications for teachers as well as for the education system. When job satisfaction and physical well-being become desired outcomes for teachers, the school system profits from healthy and satisfied teachers directly. Techniques and strategies to enhance social identification and job commitment which seem to be applicable to the teaching profession should be investigated and considered. Especially, the social identity view proposes that there is an ongoing dynamic between self-identification and job-commitment, and an interplay that leads to mutual influences between teachers and education systems. Since the literature emphasizes the urgent need for a special preparation of teacher candidates for rural and remote schools, metro-centric models have been argued especially in the last two decades (Green & Reid, 2004). However, in many countries, teachers are appointed to rural schools as a first experience of living and teaching in a context without receiving enough preparation and support.

1.4.3 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Dickmeyer (1989) defined *metaphor* as "characterization of a phenomenon in familiar terms" (p.151). Metaphors are mostly used by people to *simplify* their experiences and perceptions. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) indicate, revealing metaphors is a process of self-understanding and it is "the continual development of new life stories for yourself" (p.233). In the general sense, metaphors are used to reveal the characteristics of a diffcult to conceptualize concept in terms of another concept which is more accessible and familiar in the adressee's existing knowledge (Thomas & McRobbie, 2007). Much of our social reality comes to light in metaphorical terms, therefore perception of the physcial world is partially metaphorical. Metaphors play a very crucial role in defining what is real for us, since "we act according to the way we conceive of things" (Lakoff &Johnson, 1980, p.5). Metaphors help human beings get a grasp on their own experiences, actions, and emotions by means of concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). They are our 'principal

vehicles' for understanding and constructing social realities (ibid., p.159). Metaphors help us for self-understanding in terms of developing awareness about we live and how we interpret them in our daily lives. Besides, metaphors are great value in education to assist in reflecting and organizing social thought and practice in schooling (Scheffler, 1960).

Conceptual Metaphor Theory was first presented by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980. In their well-known work, *Metaphors We Live By,* they propose that metaphors are not only concepts of language but of thinking and consequently of behaving. They define metaphor as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.5). They suggest that there exists a set of universal primary conceptual metaphors in human mind. Hence, what is today be considered as the contemporary theory of metaphor actually originated from the first reflections by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) on the conceptual nature of metaphor. Since then, metaphors have no longer seen as a property of language, but conceived as a mental structure and a question of conceptualization of how the mind structures and organizes concepts in order to express thoughts and beliefs linguistically. Then, their framework was elaborated by Lakoff and Turner (1989), Gibbs (1997), and Kövecses (2010) as Conceptual Metaphor Theory (hereafter, CMT). Generally, CMT asserts that there are correlations between individuals' sensorimotor experiences and their abstract ideas. According to CMT, there is a basic meaning of words and they belong to certain domains. However, words can also be used as references to new domains. New meaning is created when correspondences, known as *mappings* (Gentner, 1983), are highligted in the target domain so that the new meaning finds a voice in the adressee as if it were the source domain. Thus, there is a *mapping* from one domain to another. In that sense, metaphors are seen as *cross-domain mappings* from the source domain to the target domain. While the source domain is the concrete domain and supplies the language and imagery, the target domain is the abstract one and it provides the actual topic referred to. Metaphors, as conceptual entities, are reserved and served for the *mappings*. CMT is now gaining prominence in social sciences, especially in applied linguistics due to the fact that it deepens our understanding of the pervasiveness of metaphor in our language and cognitive system. The theory mainly focuses on explaining the underlying conceptual scenarios

involved in conventional metaphors and expands our understanding of the cognitive basis of our mental images.

A standard definition of conceptual metaphor is as following: "A conceptual metaphor is understanding one domain of experience (that is typically abstract) in terms of another (that is typically concrete) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). According to this theory, metaphors are not only ornamental devices in language, but also they serve as conceptual tools for structuring, restructuring and even creating reality, therefore; they are pervasive. CMT streseses that a conceptual metaphor is a systematic set of correspondences between two domains of experience, which means understanding one domain in terms of another. Moreover, According metaphors reside not only in our language but also in our thought. Thereby, we use metaphors not only to speak about certain aspects about the physical world, but also to think about them. Conceiving things in a metaphorical way, our conceptual system controls how we act and react in the physical world. In that sense, the main goal of CMT is to desribe the particular discursive, social, rheoterical behaviours through metaphors in real data. Metaphor is a "cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system" (Lakoff, 2006, p. 186), and there is a systematic mapping of entities and relations from a concrete source domain to an abstract target domain (Johnson, 2007). By means of mapping concrete domains of human experience onto abstracts domains of conceptual structure, human beings conceptualize their thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions in order to transform them into more readily accessible and experiential knowledge. For example, *love*, which is a complex emotional experience, is often represented through a simpler and physical experience like a *journey* by saying "love is a journey" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.45). Mapping the set of correspondences from the source domain, *journey*, to the surface domain, *love*, is as follows:

   THE LOVE-AS-JOURNEY Mapping:

   - The lovers correspond to travelers.

   - The love relationship corresponds to the vehicle.

   - The lovers' common goals correspond to their common destinations on the journey (Lakoff 2006, p. 190).

As the main aim of CMT is to understand the cognitive representations behind figurative language and how they construct target domains in from source domains, CMT has been viewed in most of the research fields as a matter of peripheral interest (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). However, studying metaphors should come into prominence for social sciences, since they unveil the "meaningfulness of our everyday experience" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.10). Therefore, metaphors are constructed "in correlations within our experiences (ibid., p.154). As "metaphors come out of our clearly delineated and concrete experiences and allow us to construct highly abstract and elaborate concepts" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.105), metaphors are shaped as a result of specific situations in social contexts. Metaphors create social realities for human beings, thus they guide human beings' future actions. In that sense, metaphors are "self-fulfilling prophencies" (ibid., p. 156). CMT asserts that human beings define their reality in terms of metaphors and then proceed to act on the basis of these metaphors. Human beings draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans by means of metaphors. They could create new meanings, similarities, and thereby define new realities. Metaphors tell us things about the world which we did not understand beforehand, and the learning process is extremely informative. People learn new things fom metaphors, see connections where previously they had not seen any. They bring things vividly "before the eyes" of listeners or readers, and make mental images more memorable (Mahon, 1999, p.75-76). The question of what kind of evidence are acceptable to ensure the validity of metaphors comes to light. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) propose four main items to ensure the validity of metaphors: the frequency of occurance of the same or very similar metaphors in the data, the number of speakers who give the same metaphor, the fact that verbal metaphors are accompanied by related actions/behaviours, and change in actions/behaviours through the metaphors (p.152).

According to Senge (1990), metaphors, or mental models, are what human beings carry in their minds "in the form of images, assumptions and stories …. and not only determine how we make sense of the world, but how we take action" (p.175). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), our self-understanding is the "search for appropriate personal metaphors that make sense of our lives... The process of self-understanding is the continual development of new life stories for yourself" (p.233).

The authors indicated that metaphors enable the connection between a familiar concept to another familiar concept, where these two familiar concepts are intertwined and act as generators for a new understanding. Likewise, Oxford et al. (1998) indicate that a metaphor is "an integral component of scientific thought, providing insight and direction to even the most technical and theoretical constructions... (metaphor) has the power to enhance the subject's understanding of educational problems and thus increase perspective-consciousness" (p.4). Thus, by using images, analogies and similes, abstract concepts become more concrete in metaphor elicitation process. Metaphors are very beneficial in our effort to understand the world, since they conceptualize what we conceive of certain things in the physical world. Metaphors serve as gap fillers to meet the need as a device for marking similarities and making comparisons (Cooper, 1986). Metaphors are *reflections* of our overarching understandings that undergird our discourse and social cognition, thereby organize individuals' existence (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Cooper (1986) underscores that people are more cohesive in their own social contexts by virtue of using and accepting common metaphorical understandings. In this sense, metaphors act as *barriers* to individuals' attempts for changing their behaviors and beliefs. As metaphors maintain a culture's cognition, language, beliefs and actions, studying metaphors means reflecting on that culture and its members (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Our conceptual system governs how we act in the world, since we often act metaphorically (Kövecses, 2010). Furthermore, it is highlighted by the researchers that *all* conceptual metaphors are culture- and context- specific (Yu, 1998, 2002; Musolff, 2004). In that sense, the contextual factors strongly influence the emergence of metaphors (Gibbs & Cameron, 2007). Hence, human mind creates metaphors ranging from universal primary metaphors to non-universal context-induced ones. The use of context-induced metaphors derives from the real-world situations.

It is also suggested that contextual factors may create novel metaphors referred to as context-induced ones, which are not only basic correlations in experience, but they also reflect the cultural specificities of a context (Kövecses, 2015). *Context* may consist of factors, such as the setting, audience, and artifacts, which can all influence metaphorical conceptualization. In a similar vein, Boers (1999) asserts that the

context may systematically shape the way we think metaphorically. However, which metaphor is used in a particular situation does not only depend on the context, but also on the setting and topic of the situation in which the metaphorical conceptualization takes place. The metaphors we use may also depend on who we are, including our personal history and our long-lasting concerns or interests. In general, metaphors are derived from mainly four types of experience: situational, discourse, cognitive, and bodily contexts (Kövecses, 2017). This multi-level view of metaphor is very noteworthy for social sciences; however, the context influences the most specific level of conceptualization, which is the level of mental spaces. Therefore, this dissertation approaches context-specific and situational metaphors that work best for the scope of this study.

In sum, CMT is utilized in social sciences to better assess the role that enduring metaphors of thought play in language, thought, and culture (Gibbs, 2011). The scope of CMT is collecting metaphorical expressions, setting up conceptual metaphors based on the expressions, laying out the mappings that constitute those conceptual metaphors, and investigating how the particular conceptual metaphors form larger systematic groups. The final mission of CMT is describing the particular social, pragmatic, rhetorical, and aesthetic conceptual metaphors that govern behaviors and actions. The context is another inevitable component in the use of metaphors. The local context may be a crucial tool in understanding the use of metaphors. Hence, CMT plays a key role in the development of culture- and context-specific conceptualizations of human mind as researchers keep discovering its extensive presence at all levels of body, language, and culture. Since metaphors are systematic by having a generative power, peoples' existing metaphors enable them to interpret these metaphors and generate new ones (Cooper, 1986). Therefore, a continuing use of metaphor may open up new possibilities in our understanding of contextual and cultural creativity within the framework of CMT.

1.4.4 Spatial Map Theory

Basically, Spatial Map theory focuses on three domains- personal, professional and public (Halsey, 2006). These three domains play a key role in teacher identity formation related to selection of the area, appointment, initial years of teaching and

the area that becomes their space of working and living for a couple of years. The first domain is the *personal* domain that refers to teachers as human beings who have their own histories and experiences of life. The first domain is related to teachers' family, friends and their personal values. The second domain is the *professional* domain. This domain is comprised of education, training and teaching skills. The role of a teacher and expectations from a teacher are associated with the second domain since professional domain has the most impact on how a teacher becomes a professional. Finally, the third domain is the *public* domain. This domain is associated with being in the rural community as a teacher. This domain is comprised of participating in social events, atttending to services, communicating with residents, shopping, and even walking in the town. The public domain indicates a real sense in which the teaching context plays an important role in constructing teacher's personal development in the rural community. In brief, the spatial map is a useful tool for investigating experiences and issues that have potential to be informative of how a teacher is being considered in a teaching context and how a teacher perceives himself/herself in a school. Each of the domains plays a key role in shaping a different position as a teacher in a community. It is also noteworthy that these three domains are dynamic, variable and intersect with each other. Blending of all three may present us a picture of the process in which a teacher forms his or her professional identity. It is very crucial that the teacher's mental map is needed to be examined to enable teachers to use their professional potentials and to maintain connections with the community.

According to Agnew (2005), *place* is significant in socio-spatial practices and it is not mere physical area. He suggests that our activities, practices, and experiences of spatiality are context-bound and context-specific. Hence, there is interdependence between contexts and human beings' identities. Places are associated with individuals' past, present, and future, which make them *nostalgic, regressive* and *reactionary.* Human beings' construct their identities through day-to-day practical affairs in cultural and historical contexts. Henri Lefebvre's (1991) *Space Theory* is on social spaces involving social relations, forms, and representations. He puts forth the notion of *lived space* –the realm of everyday life- which is a concrete context of social relations and the loci of passion, action, and the temporal dimension of life.

The realm of everyday life includes belongingness, community life, experiences of identity, sentimentality, nostalgia, and so on. Human beings experience places with the conceptualizations of values, identity, community, emotions, passions, desires and so on. According to Lefebvre's (1991) theory of spatiality, teacher idenity is constructed in three spaces- *perceived*, *conceived*, *lived*. According to him, *perceived (real)* space is what students, teachers and community members do as routines and practices in schools. On the other hand, *conceived (ideal)* space is a representation of power and surveilance. This type of space signifies how a school, a teacher and a student shoul be, and thus how they influence what happens in perceived space. Thus, it is noted that there is a continuous dialectic relationship between *real* and *imagined*. Finally, the *lived (heterotopia)* space is a space to resist and *re-imagine* the real and imagined spaces as a result of everyday realities and powerful ideologies. The *lived* space is a place where teacher educators can decide on *perceived* and *conceived* space realities which they might adopt in their own time and space.

In parallel, Entrikin (1991) indicates that places –specific contexts of actions- are sources of identities, since "we live in our lives in place and have a sense of being part of place" (p.7). To this end, places characterize an individual's attempts to theorize about their actions and events. According to Massey (1999), *places* are "open articulations of connections" that "identities of subjects and identities of places constructed through interrelations" which "not only challenge notions of the past authenticities but also hold open the possibility of change in the future" (p.288). *Places* are not static; rather they are very complex and ever-evolving spaces. Therefore, the researchers have adopted a more place-conscious paradigm for multicontextual teaching. Rather than focusing on the 'problems' in unpriviliged teaching contexts, researchers try to develop a new paradigm for multicontextual teaching through emphasizing the uniqueness and richness of these places (Eppley, 2015). To this end, researchers aim to highlight the uniqueness and assets of unpriviliged schools and move their research away from the vicious cycle of contextual deficits. According to Corbett (2010), teachers should become *community researchers* in schools where they teach. Corbett's (2010) aim of *anthropological thinking in education* conception is two-fold: understanding the nature and nuances

of the school community, and building sustainable and vibrant bridges with the community people. He explains:

> To know how to teach is to know a great deal about where you are teaching and the conditions experienced by people in that place. This involves immersion in the culture of the place, its history, the way power is exercised there, how resources are distributed, the racial, gender, and class dynamics that shape social life, the way school has been experienced historically in the community by different kinds of families, and things of this order. In other words, the beginning teacher needs to be an *anthropologist*, and moreover a good postmodern anthropologist who also possesses the capacity to look within at him or herself as a cultural construction (p.83).

In sum, the concept of spatial map can be utilized to understand teacher experience in rural contexts and to think about spatiality with a different perspective. The theory aims to support teachers to negotiate and navigate rural areas where they live complex and challenging years. The first step of developing a mental map as a source of supporting rural teachers is "to think differently about the meanings and significance of space and those related concepts that compose and comprise the inherent *spaciality of human life* (like) place, location, locality, landscape, environment, home, city, region, territory and geography" (Halsey, 2006, p.1). To this end, the spatial map is a conceptual tool for teacher educators in terms of creating a theoretical framework to locate, monitor and improve rural teachers personally and professionally. Therefore, this attempt may help rural teachers develop survival skills and improve their professional practice. In light of these ideas, the aim of investigating the "rural school problem" is to find creative approaches to rural pedagogy based on rural students' lives and rural teachers' experiences within the matrix of rural communities. In addition to researchers and teacher educators, rural teachers also play a significant role in developing a new rural pedagogy.

1.5 Need for the Study

Teachers are seen as the key actors of the success of rural schools (Applegate, 2008). Therefore, preparing teachers for various teaching contexts is crucial to provide best teachers for all students (Zeichner, 2003). However, there has been little research on preparing teachers for rural schools In that sense, this study aims to reveal how

novice and experienced EFL teachers' professional identity construction is influenced by the context in which they teach. Teacher educators have long been calling for preparation for teachers to teach and live in rural areas; however, there has been very limited research on preparing prospective teachers for rural schools (Corbett, 2016). Since the literature heavily focuses on the urban-oriented models of teacher education programs, it is seen that they fail to accommodate the professional and social differences associated with teaching in rural contexts (Yarrow et al., 1999). Therefore, it is suggested that social, geographical, cultural and service issues need to be explored in the field of teacher education (Boylan, 2004). In general, rural life is absent from pre-service teacher education programs and in-service teacher trainings which results in limiting the potential for success of pre-service teacher education preparation and in-service teacher support (Barley, 2009).

Similarly, Monk (2007) indicate that teacher preparation programs should include the following content to prepare and support teachers for rural placements: developing materials and adapting curriculum to the needs of rural students, creating self-directed professional development practices, using technology to reduce the barriers of professional and personal isolation, rural practice teaching experience. While problems associated with preparing, attracting and supporting teachers in rural schools, there has been little unified response given by teacher education faculties and policy-makers (Gregory, 2018). Although there is a large body of research that has addressed the need for specialized teacher education programs that prepare teachers for rural schools and support them after graduation, teacher education field still needs "better data-based studies on rural schooling dynamics", since there is an "existed urban bias to most educational research around the world" (De Young, 1987, p.128). Although there is much talk in the literature about recruitment and retention of teachers for rural schools, there is very little research on preparing pre-service teachers for rural schools, providing professional support for rural teachers and examining professional identity formation of teachers working in rural areas (Blanks et al., 2013). Bauch (2001) indicates that research on rural teachers and rural education is an urgent need to understand the teaching context within which schooling takes place. Sharing of education experiences among teachers and teacher

educators can be used to deal with challenges and to be vital to enhance teachers' professional growth.

There is a research gap in this issue that limits the comprehensive understanding of teaching English in rural districts and EFL teachers' professional identity formation experiences at rural schools in Turkey. Research on teaching English in rural schools is rare in Turkey and thus, this research may suggest ideas for policy that governments consider to ensure high quality teaching and learning in rural schools. From a rural teaching perspective, pedagogical practices and methods from one context may provide useful implications for another. Practices from rural settings, such as teaching methods, the organization of space and time, and the use of materials may be very informative for designing learning environments that respond to students' needs in wider contexts. Therefore, examining the conditions in diverse contexts may touch upon spatial differences in teaching and learning. The need for policy changes in designing and providing sustainable training programs for rural teachers emerges as a major issue in teacher education field. The lack of attention to conducting a comprehensive and detailed needs assesment across rural schools in Turkey led to an urgent need for research on classroom practice, teacher professional development, and learning opportunities in rural areas. Especially, in order to identify English language teachers' professional needs in rural schools, the current situation in rural areas should be investigated which may be utilized to inform any future language teaching and learning reform initiatives. Therefore, the main interest in investigating these issues is the need to bring to the fore the voices of rural teachers whose voices are hardly heard in the ELT field.

As teacher educators and mentor teachers, we are witness to identity formation of the new teachers and identity changes of experienced teachers who emerge from our programs. Therefore, it is crucial to step up and support pre-service and in-service teachers in terms of developing satisfying professional identities. Facilitating experiences that encourage the expression of teachers' professional identity via narratives and metaphors may result in an effective exploration of methodological, pedagogical and social realities about teaching in rural areas. Asking teachers to provide narrative and anecdotal evidence via interviews and metaphor tasks to

investigate their methodological and pedagogical decisions in rural schools may unearth teachers' long-held, but often unexamined, beliefs based on their experiences in rural areas. By this way, teachers become aware of their classroom decisions and perceptions about teaching in rural schools and can analyze whether these decisions and perceptions are pedagogically sound. Therefore, extracting teachers' narratives of real experiences and uncovering metaphors hidden in their mental worlds may encourage them to create either visual or oral metaphors that reconceptualize abstract ideas as concrete images.

The relevant literature shows that teacher education programs do not provide efficient skills and techniques in their curricula for teacher candidates to teach at rural schools in Turkey (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003). Thus, the significance of this study is also manifested from the perspective that little research has been presented on rural schools at large and little attention is given to rural school teachers in Turkey. This study is needed due to two main reasons. First of all, there is only a limited number of studies previously investigated professional identity construction of EFL teachers who work in rural areas in different geographical regions in Turkey. Secondly, only a few studies have attempted to explore how both novice and experienced English language teachers' professional identity construction are shaped within rural teaching contexts before. In addition, there is a research gap including pre-service EFL teacher preparation and in-service EFL teacher support for rural and remote teaching positions in Turkey due to the fact that the researcher could find no examples where the need for specialised training and support models for rural teachers were mentioned and suggested by researchers. Therefore, this study is of vital importance to identify the major issues attracting and retaining teachers in these schools, and propose a model for the future teacher education curricula designs and policy-making.

Since there is very litle research (Aksoy, 2008; Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003; Kızılaslan, 2012; Çiftçi & Cin, 2018) focuses on rural teachers in Turkey, English language teachers' experiences, needs, expectations and professional development limitations in rural areas are not well considered. To this end, it is very crucial to shift the focus toward understanding language teachers' personal and professional

challenges in rural schools in Turkey within the perspective of pursuing sustainable development in rural areas. Since teachers have the ability to make contributions to social justice beyond teaching a subject matter, it is important to give them a voice to identify their needs, expectations and challenges. Improving the quality of rural teachers in order to meet both teachers' and students' needs in rural schools was never sufficiently adressed in the literature (Kızılaslan, 2012). Thus, there is an urgent need to adress the challenges rural teachers face and to offer suggestions for teachers, teacher educators and policy-makers. Hopefully, this study will provide ideas and prompt action from rural teachers struggling for solutions to their challenging teaching lives.

1.6 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Since there has been very little research on rural teaching in Turkey, there is an urgent need for addressing this issue in order to prepare pre-service teachers for rural areas and provide continuous professional support after they start to teach in rural schools. Huysman (2008) suggested that pre-service and in-service teachers do not prefer teaching in rural areas due to their educational background and their mental images related to rural and its society. They have negative stereotypes that well-educated people are not expected to live and work in *undeveloped* areas (Howley, Harmon, & Leopold, 1996). In that sense, it is very crucial to investigate how teachers consider themselves as rural teachers and pursue their willingness to work at rural schools. Campbell and Yates (2011) indicate that rural teachers who are able to see more positive sides of rural teaching are also more willing to work and stay in rural areas. Thus, helping teachers change their perceptions about the teaching profession may be a crucial attempt to encourage them for teaching at rural schools, since "[rural life] much depends on how the individual perceives the context and situation" (Goodnough & Mulcahy, 2011, p.200). Therefore, this study aims to explore how novice and experienced EFL teachers' professional identity and their perceptions about the teaching profession are shaped at rural schools in Turkey. Offering a detailed and rich description of multiple real-life situations under investigation, this dissertation aims to show the similarities and discrepancies between different viewpoints of EFL teachers (Cohen et al., 2018). In this study, the design of a multiple case study was followed which allows for consideration of the

nested context during the exploration of professional identity development of EFL teachers working at rural schools in Turkey. This study aims to provide a holistic perspective into teachers' experiences and perceptions about their professional identities and the teaching profession in Turkey.

This study is designed to make contributions to the very limited understanding of EFL teachers' status quo at rural schools in Turkey. Besides, the researcher believed that conducting such a study might help unreveal the source of problems that *actors* face and indicate possible solutions. Furthermore, the findings of this study may provide a closer look at what happens at rural schools. In addition, the researcher also expects that this study may inform teacher educators about the issue who are responsible for training prospective teachers as professionals. This dissertation addresses the following inter-related research questions:

1. How do rural EFL teachers define their professional identities?
2. How do rural EFL teachers define their teaching contexts?
3. How do rural EFL teachers make a relation between their professional identities and their teaching contexts?
4. Who are the most influential parties in rural EFL teachers' professional identity construction process?
5. What are rural EFL teachers' professional expectations and needs in Turkey?

By trying to find answer to the aforementioned research questions, this study explores how novice and experienced EFL teachers shape their professional identities in rural schools and how these diverse contexts make an impact on their perceptions about the teaching profession. This study also aims to scrutinize the needs and expectations of teachers serving in rural areas in Turkey. It is expected that this study will shed light on teacher training policies and the current situation of in-service trainings in Turkey. Therefore, this dissertation may also provide ideas and prompt action from teacher education programs, teacher educators, and stake-holders struggling for solutions to challenging problems. In addition, the aim of this study is to initiate a dialogue between rural teachers, teacher educators and policy-makers

that leads to further conceptual understanding about rural teachers and rural education. Expanding knowledge and understanding on these issues can make a crucial contribution to future curriculum design, curriculum implementation, pre-service teacher education, in-service teacher training, teacher recruitment and retention.

Moreover, this study may help novice teachers gain a clear idea of what they are going to do and who they are going to be in their future teaching careers. The explanatory aspects of this study may raise in-service teachers' awareness of their professional identities and help them make conscious choices related to their professional development. This study can also be regarded as an attempt to inform teacher educators about the importance of unearthing teachers' hidden personal theories about foreign language learning and teaching via exploring the process that teachers go through in rural schools with metaphors. Additionally, this study may show the multi-facetness of the teaching profession in order to provide a reference point for teacher educators and curriculum designers to develop better teacher education programs and prepare efficient and context-rich teaching practicum contexts for future teachers. This study may provide theoretical paradigms and approaches for teacher educators and curriculum designers for redesign teacher education programs and curricula in accordance with rural students' and teachers' needs. There is no continuous pattern of professional support in the form of mentoring or coaching for especially novice teachers in Turkey. To this end, preparing teachers for rural positions is of vital importance in Turkey's education system and little has been reported regarding this issue. In response to this gap, the present study aims to provide views, expectations and needs of EFL rural teachers, the challenges of teaching in rural areas and also proposes some preliminary solutions for them. Furthermore, the outcomes of this study will help teacher education programmes identify effective and beneficial strategies to train rural teachers in Turkey.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature for this study is divided into five sections. In the first section, the concepts of identity, professional identity, teacher identity, professional development, and research studies investigating both teacher identity and specifically EFL teacher identity will be presented. The second section demonstrates the concept of metaphor, the pedagogical value of metaphor studies, and research studies investigating teacher metaphors will be provided. While the third section aims to reveal the relevant literature about teaching in rural schools, the fourth section displays research studies on being a rural teacher in Turkey. Finally, the last section will present research studies examining the issue of teaching English in rural schools.

2.1 Teachers' Professional Identity

Teacher professional identities can be defined "in terms of the influences on teachers, how individuals see themselves and how they enact their profession in their settings" (Varghese, 2006, p.212). In the literature, teacher identity studies mostly focus on the teacher as a *self*. In a similar vein, Kelchtermans (1993) defines teacher as a *professional self* who has five constituents: self -image, self-esteem, job-motivation, task perception, and future perspective. According to Kelchtermans (1993), *self-image* means how teachers portray themselves in their career paths, while *self-esteem* is the evolution of teaching self under the influence of significant others' appreciation of how well s/he is teaching or the experiences that teachers live in their teaching contexts. The third element of his conceptualization is *job-motivation*, which is related to what makes teachers choose teaching as a profession and stay in the job. The fourth element is *task perception* determining a teacher's perception of which tasks and duties he or she should complete in order to do the job well. The last element of his conceptualization is *future perspective*, which is teachers' expectation

about the future of their profession. It is crystal clear that all these elements imply the dynamic nature of teaching selves, since especially teachers' expectations reflect the changing nature of teachers' professional selves (Day, 2004).

In addition, recent studies propose that teacher professional identity development is closely related to teachers' own teaching philosophies and they define teachers' role as a decision-maker in the classroom (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons (2006) point out that teachers' professional identity is under the influence of their lives, prior experiences, beliefs, and teaching practices. Therefore, Hamman, Gosselin, Romano, and Bunuan (2010) suggest that the process of teacher's professional identity development needs more comprehensive investigation focusing on both personal and professional experiences together. In teacher education field, Ozga (1995) implies that "professionalism is best understood in teaching context" (p.22). Similarly, Troman (1996) sees professionalism as a context-related concept and defines professionalism as "a socially constructed, contextually variable concept" (p.476).

More recently, Gleeson et al. (2005) imply the contextual relevance in teaching, while Helsby (1999) draws attention to the fact that teacher professionalism is a socially constructed and constantly changing concept. In that sense, research on teacher identity highlights that language teaching cannot be separated from the repertoires of social practices, involving idiosyncratic social and institutional contexts (Miller, 2009). Furthermore, Helsby (1995) remarks the role of teachers in constructing teacher professionalism with the following statement: "If the notion of *professionalism* is socially constructed, then teachers are potentially key players in that construction, accepting or resisting external control and asserting or denying their autonomy" (p.320). Teachers' thinking, knowing, believing and doing are enacted in teaching contexts; thereby they cannot be separated from teachers' identity construction. As Borg (2003) indicates "the study of cognition and practice without an awareness of the contexts in which these occur will inevitably provide partial, if not flawed, characterizations of teachers and teaching" (p.106). Similarly, Singh & Richards (2006) stress that context plays a crucial role in professional identity formation of teachers. Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson (2005)

stress that teacher identity is an individual and social matter unfolding in various contexts. In addition, *context* is a fundamental variable in understanding teaching, since teacher cognitions and practices unfold in the *context* in which teachers work. The negotiation of teacher professional identities is influenced by contextual factors involving workplace conditions (Flores, 2001), curriculum policy (Cross & Gearon, 2007) and cultural differences (Johnson, 2003). Besides, social demographics of the school and students, institutional practices, and access to professional development opportunities are also important factors that influence teacher professional identities (Miller, 2009). Moreover, in the last decade, there has been a growing interest in investigating language teacher identity to theorize language teacher education and teacher development, since it is highlighted in various studies that "consciously we teach what we know; unconsciously we teach who we are" (Hamacheck, 1999, p. 209).

Teachers' identity construction is an ongoing process influenced by the interpretation and reinterpretation of their own experiences they live. Researchers suggest that focusing on the multi-faceted relationships rather than linear facts may provide a deeper understanding of the multiple selves of teachers' professional identity. As Cooper and Olson (1996) states "teacher identity is continually being informed, formed, and reformed as individuals develop over time and through interaction with others" (p.80). Teachers' personal and professional identities are intertwined due to the fact that the teaching profession requires *personal contributions* by its very nature. James-Wilson (2001) explains this fact with the following statement:

> The ways in which teachers form their professional identities are influenced by both how they feel about themselves and how they feel about their students. This professional identity helps them to position or situate themselves in relation to their students and to make appropriate and effective adjustments in their practice and their beliefs about, and engagement with, students (p.29).

In the literature, professional development is defined in several ways by different researchers. Broadly, it is suggested that educating teachers is not limited to undergraduate or certificate programs but rather a continuous professional support and process of education. Birman et al. (2000) indicate that professional development for teachers is only effective as long as it improves teaching practices and abilities of

teachers through creating a wider set of opportunities for training. Penuel et al. (2007) put forth that coaching, teacher study groups, mentoring and modelling are effective strategies for effective professional development. Cohen (1995) describes mentoring as a one to one relationship that evolves step by step between the mentor and the adult learner. This relationship is a very productive interpersonal process that helps teachers working in unusual surroundings. Cohen (1995) emphasizes that mentoring includes offering advice, establishing trust, motivating, and introducing alternatives. Thus, mentoring programs can be adapted in a number of ways to prepare and support teachers in rural schools. Furthermore, effective professional development requires flexibility in time and place that would be convenient for both teachers' workload and their professional development activities (Timperley, 2008). She says:

> Teachers need extended time in which to learn and chance. In such cases, it typically takes one or two years for teachers to understand how existing beliefs and practices are different from those being promoted, to build the required pedagogical content knowledge, and to change practice. Given that, teachers engaged in professional learning are simultaneously maintaining a teaching workload, and that many of their existing assumptions about effective practice are being challenged, it is not surprising that so much time is required. Time, however, is not a sufficient condition for change: teachers also need to have their current practice challenged and to be supported as they make changes (p.15).

The social, institutional, instructional, and physical settings often constrain what teachers can do (Borg, 2009). As a result of these constraints, teachers may not reflect their ideals and "mismatches between teacher beliefs and practices present exciting opportunities for deeper explorations of teachers, their cognitions, their teaching, and the contexts they work in" (p.167). According to Beijaard's (1995), teachers who have bitter experiences in their teaching contexts tend to see themselves as inefficient professionals. He also proposes that teaching context has an important effect on *professional selves* of teachers. Taking into account that teachers' experiences affect their job satisfaction, commitment and job motivation for teaching, Beijaard (1995) states that teachers remain in the teaching profession "when they have a good relationship with pupils and when they function well in the school organization" (p.292). To this end, teachers' commitment to teaching is highly associated with their professional identities influenced by their relationships with pupils and colleagues, the school organization, and the community.

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The first years of teaching are generally defined as a difficult process for novice teachers in terms of living the dissonances between theory and practice, learning how to teach, and dealing with classroom realities (Farrell, 2003). Novice language teachers face many challenges as they learn how to teach in their first year. Ruohotie-Lyhty (2013) conducted a study in order to understand the factors that shaped novice teacher professional identity. The researcher focused on two teachers' (i.e., Tania & Suvi) narratives in order to understand their induction period of the teaching profession. The relevant data were collected through reflective essays and interviews during their first year in the profession. It is very interesting that while Tania had a very difficult and painful beginning of her career, Suvi went through an easy career beginning. Tania indicated that she did not feel herself professionally confident as a result of the challenges she encountered in the school. It is also very noteworthy that at the end of the first year of her teaching career, she started to feel herself isolated and very alone, since she could not develop collaborative relationships with her colleagues, thereby she did not belong to any teacher community. On the other hand, Suvi had a very good interaction with her students and colleagues in her first year of teaching. She felt herself very satisfied and happy with her choices. She experienced job satisfaction that makes her desire to stay in the profession and continue her professional development as a member of a teacher community.

In sum, although both Tania and Suvi were in their very first year of their teaching career, their initial professional identities showed differences depending on their experiences in their own teaching contexts. In a similar vein, focusing on 182 novice teachers' identity formation, Pillen, Beijaard, and Den Brok (2013) examined their identity tensions occurred during their early years of teaching and also the strategies they adopted to deal with these tensions. The data was collected via a questionnaire asking about their professional identity tensions, accompanying feelings, and the coping strategies they used. The study demonstrated that tensions derived from conflicts between what novice teachers desire and what is possible in reality. Helplessness, anger and awareness of shortcomings are the main three feelings accompanied by teachers' professional identity tensions. In order to tackle with these tensions, they speak to their significant others or find a solution themselves.

In a similar vein, Flores and Day (2006) conducted a longitudinal research study examining novice teacher professional identity and the ways a novice teacher professional self was constructed in progress of time. The researchers identified three main factors influencing the formation of teacher identities: *Prior influences*, *initial teacher training and teaching practice*, and *teaching contexts.* Prior influences are teachers' past experiences as students and their relationships with their past teachers, which are the main contributors to their perceptions of the teaching profession. The initial teacher training and teaching practice were the extrinsic factors such as the influence of significant others and employment opportunities. It is also very important that novice teachers stated the pre-service teacher education program did not prepare them adequately for the challenges of different teaching contexts. Moreover, they pointed out that teaching profession had both rewarding and challenging aspects. In this study, novice teachers described the teaching profession as "*sudden, tiring and stressful*" and they emphasized the mismatch between their expectations and what they found in the reality. Finally, the study concluded that teachers' professional identities are under the influence of teachers' personal biographies and the context in which they teach.

As it was mentioned above, first years of teaching is usually defined as a tough process in which beginning and novice teachers face several challenges while they are dealing with both instructional and contextual challenges. They try to overcome the commonly known *practice shock*, which most novice teachers experience when moving from their training to their first job in the profession. This *shock* is often caused by inadequate preparation during the training phase, the difficult contextual factors of schools and the loneliness of novice teachers while they are first entering to the profession. The first years is identified as a very crucial process as novice teachers are learning to teach in real contexts and formulating their teacher identities. Moreover, the first years of teaching are a very critical stage in teacher's career path in terms of influencing their effectiveness, job satisfaction, commitment, and future plans about their career. In that vein, Farrell (2009) points out that novice teachers have to deal with many factors related to significant others that teachers interact with, such as administrators, colleagues, parents, and students. Thus, investigating

novice teacher identity in various contexts may provide valuable insights into the problems that they face with during their initial years of teaching.

A very recent study conducted by Brown and Heck (2018) investigated the construction of teacher identities in an alternative school setting by gathering the relevant data through in-depth teacher and administrator interviews, and school observations. The researcher used an observation schedule including categories related to teaching, community and justice. The participants are two teachers (i.e., Lisa & Grace) and one administator (i.e., David) in this research. Lisa is a special education teacher with ten years of experience, while Grace is a middle school teacher specialising in the social sciences with four years of experience. David, as a secondary English teacher with more than years of experience, is the co-founder and administrator of this school. Three interviews with educators from an alternative education context mainly formed the data and the results are presented as three stories of educator identities. The stories unveil perceptions of teachers about their work within an altenative education context in Australia. During the interviews, teachers talked about their present practices, beliefs, knowledge, and ideas as they go about their work. The education context in this study an area to support young people who are experiencing vulnerability and poverty due to the fact that they reside at the disadvantaged part of the community. Findings suggest that teachers construct multiple identities in this teaching context depending on their professional roles in the school. Lisa defines her teacher identity as a *shaper of social norms,* since the school is the first place in those students' lives that they feel safe, know the rules, know exactly who they are and think about what they are going to become, which are really important for them. Therefore, she views her teacher role in this school as a *shaper of social norms.*

The second participant, Grace sees herself as a *mirror* in this school by saying "We are a mirror that will help again and again, but we are a mirror of what you do and we will show it, with compassion, but we still show it, you can lump it or like it" (p.54). The school administrator, David, comes from a similar background to many of the students. He feels that he cares for his own children in this school. To this end, he thinks that their role is about supporting them to live their lives in how they're

going to to be respectful, to have respect, to be safe and to be honest. He also adds that they aim to train those students to provide them with a fruitful future and engagement in the wider community. These stories are evidence that experiences and perceptions of teachers about their teaching practices, beliefs, and ideas are related to their professional lives. For instance, while Lisa defined her professional identity as very teacher-centric based on rules and principles; Grace defines her professional identity as student-centric based on mirroring appropriate behaviours. Finally, David defined his identity in the school as *leadership centric* to facilitate a quality future and community engagement for the students. To sum up, the formats of various teacher identities provide teachers, researchers and teacher educators with a rich resource to design and investigate education contexts that are comprised of multi-construction of professional identities in different teaching contexts.

2.2 Teaching in Rural Schools

It is noted by Monk (2007) that rural schools share several characteristics, such as limited English skills, highly mobile students, students who do not go to university, and limited teaching resources. Herzog and Pittman (1995) conducted a research study to investigate perceptions and past experiences of university students about rural life and teaching. They collected data through a questionnaire including both multiple choice and open-ended questions. They gave the survey to 108 students from five different courses in the education department at Western Carolina University. Most of the participants were in the teacher education curriculum course and they were sophomores. The survey asked participants *'What do you think of when you hear the word rural?'* None of the participants used the term *nonmetropolitan* in his or her answers; nor did they use negative terms about rurality. In fact, they used positive terms about their rural life in the past, such as *close-knit people, good country folks talking, and people who care about each other instead of the amount of money they make.* For example, one of the participants associates rural places with the following words:

> (…) common people, good people, love of land, beautiful scenery, men without shirts, kids without shoes, women without makeup, may people without a care in the world, small churches, not much traffic on dusty, back roads (p.117).

Most of the participants described the importance of a sense of community with phrases such as, *involvement, peaceful community*, *a community that couldn't survive very long without help from neighbours.* They also described rural communities that *had small businesses, one post office, convenience stores, no factories or shopping areas, small stores where the owners know each of the customers and each person feels welcome.* As it is seen, participants intertwined their references to nature within their descriptions of people and communities. The next open-ended question asked participants *'What feelings does the word 'rural' bring out in you?'* Participants provided very positive and idealistic answers for this question like their answers to the previous question. They referred to *safety, peace, home, community,* and *the past.* One of the participants shared her thoughts as follows: "The feelings I get when I hear the word rural are security and a sense of togetherness because a lot of rural communities are tightly knit." Supporting this view, another participant implied the peaceful environment of rural areas with the following expression: "I love the word rural. This, to me, is the best place to bring up children and to live a happy, relaxed life. Nice people and friendly atmosphere. Rural brings out happiness in my mind." However, all participants described the physical conditions with a critical eye. They described poor school facilities and negative experiences regarding the socioeconomic status of the community. One of the participants, who was graduated from a rural school, shared her experiences as follows: "My high school was fairly small; it was considered to be one of the hick schools." On the other hand, it is a very interesting finding that 43% of the participants were planning to go rural areas after graduation for teaching.

As Reid et al. (2009) indicate in their study that working in rural or remote areas is that "the distances between towns and settlements is that the means teachers must live alongside or close to the children and families that they serve" (p.3). According to White and Kline (2012), rural communities perceive rural teachers as leaders, thus, teachers in rural areas must view themselves as leaders in the community since they may communicate with different stakeholders at the same time in the area. The relevant literature puts forth that the rural school is often seen as the *heart* of its community due to the fact that it operates at the focus point of external economic and social influences and the requirements for change and renewal as well. Therefore, the

rural school functions as the indicator of its community's well-being (Halsey, 2005). Furthermore, Halsey (2005) points out that the rural school is often the largest organization in the town, which is "strategically positioned to be a rallying agency when the town feels under pressure, providing a sense of connection to the past, present, and the future" (p.6) In addition, teachers tend to think that schools with a high poverty concentration are said to be filled with higher levels of student discipline problems (Shen, 1997). Thus, most teachers would not prefer to teach at rural schools. To this end, it leads to high teacher attiriton in rural schools (Shen, 1997). Phelan, Davidson, and Cao (1991) interviewed teachers and students, and observed classrooms to describe the relationships between students, parents and peers in rural schools. Moreover, they obtained demographic information about students and their families. The most remarkable result of the study is that the rural students are perceived as *low-achievers* by their teachers and teachers are not very aware of their students' problems outside the school. However, the study also shows that caring teachers play a very crucial role in rural students' academic development, since the students feel their teachers' interest and they prefer to concentrate on their school instead of dealing with family conflicts. In addition, Thompson (2002) draws attention to the fact that rural teachers need to teach in rural schools by looking at the benefits of the community rather than from a deficit viewpoint.

Hannaway et al. (2018) investigated the challenges and needs faced by teachers in rural areas in South Africa. 14 early childhood education teachers and five school principals were the participants of this qualitative study. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires consisting of open-ended questions. The study put forth that the need for resources, poor infratructure, lack of parental involvement and the need for in-service training were the main challenges and needs faced by rural teachers. The lack of resources, such as teaching materials, books, educational toys, stationery, classroom equipments and outdoor equipments seems to be a major concern. It was also striking that none of the schools have a library. The principal also indicated the problems related to running water and electricity. This study also found that lack of parental involvement is the most important reason of unmotivated children in their classes. They thought that parents neglect their children and do not provide love and care. One of the teachers said: "I

once went to house and found a learner without supervision. Only the granny was home sick in the bed and could not take care of the child" (p.10). The findings also showed that it is very problematic that the participants could not pursue their professional development in the area. Personal and professional isolation, lack of opportunities and the poor quality of in-service training facilities result in negative feelings, such as loneliness, confusion and frustration. Barter (2008) conducted a study to find out how graduate students perceived rural education and what they thought about supporting agencies such as policy-makers and universities needed to be doing to improve rural education. She conducted a qualitative research and collected the relevant data from 15 graduate students in a seminar-style course by using interviews and small group postings on an open forum. The seminar-style course was called Current Issues in Rural Education and it was a graduate course offered by the Education Department in one of the universities in Canada.

The main two aims of this course were to raise awareness of rural education through the use of literature review as well as teacher experiences and to provide opportunities to share knowledge on rural education in order to create a forum. The study put forth important results for the field. Firstly, there was an inability to attract and retain qualified teachers and administrators in rural schools. Secondly, there was a challenge of offering distance courses for rural teachers in order to help them continue their professional growth. Thirdly, it was found that insufficient budgets allocated for rural schools in terms of teaching materials and physical conditions led to negative perceptions held by teachers on rural placements. Finally, it was found as a result of written data gathered from group postings that the participants used words such as "isolation", "inequality", "problematic", "targeted for reform" while discussing rural education and desribed rural teaching as a sense of disconnection from the rest of the education system. All of the participants indicated that most of the teachers were unprepared for rural experience and there was an urgent need for research in rural schools in order to set a rural-based theoretical framework for teacher education.

Gregory (2018) conducted a very recent study to investigate experiences of novice teachers in rural schools in Montana. She collected the data from eighteen rural

teachers by using phone interviews. The participants indicated both the positive and negative sides of teaching in a rural area. Participants were positive about the rural school experience in terms of two things. Firstly, they thought that rural schools have the potential to bring teaching staff and students closer together. Secondly, they indicated that rural schools create more intimacy with the kids to get to know them better. They suggested that the connections they developed with families and the culture in a community facilitated those connections. One of the teachers said: "I like the sense of community. We know most of the parents. We know all the kids. We are able to spend more time with the kids" (p.1271). However, participants also experienced challenges of teaching in a rural school. The first challenge was lack of resources. One of the participants said: "I've had zero money zero budget. I've spent a ton of my own money on things, which is typical of teachers" (p.1272). In addition, teachers put forward that feeling of isolation and lack of another colleague in te same building were important challenges for rural teachers. They think that sharing the building with a teacher from same subject matter is an important professional support for rural teachers. One of the participants explained her feeling of loneliness as follows: "I felt like I was out on an isle. There was no other teacher that I could go to… It would be nice to have someone that could come on site just to brainstorm with" (p.1272).

In parallel witth this study, Starr and White (2008) conducted further research on beginning teachers in rural schools and found that they were dealing with *real* and *imagined* perceptions of professional and personal isolation. They were deprived of access to professional learning and teaching resources as well. The study shows that increased levels of visibility in the community, teaching 'out of area', and considerable personal and professional demands on them not as teachers, but also as 'leaders' in the community make beginning teachers feel unprepared and insufficient. Ralph (2003) conducted a study to investigate the ways for promoting teaching in rural schools. One of the findings she reported was disadvantages related to lack of services, personal privacy and feeling of isolation. One of the participants talked about the very limited service opportunities in the area. In addition, one of the participants defined her life in the village with the following words: "You really do

live in a fishbowl here" (p.31). One of the participants said: "I had little social life, because I am away from my family and friends for a month" (p.31).

In addition, cost-of-living and cost-of-education were reported as disadvantages of rural areas. The lack of avaliability of certain goods may cause high cost-of-living in rural areas. Jimerson (2003) put forth that while families in urban areas can meet their needs by using public transportation, a car becomes a neccessity to go to the city center in rural settings. Therefore, lack of avaliability of goods, services and basic necessities is an extra burden for teachers in rural areas. Similarly, Boylan et al. (1994) found in their survey that a healthier, quieter, safer lifestyle, a good place to raise children, more caring community, a plenitude of clean and open spaces are the advantages of rural areas indicated by the participants. On the other hand, the same survey put forward that the dearth of cultural activities, the problem of having to travel long distances, the relative lack of educational opportunities for children, the lack of employment opportunities for spouse and own children, the relative lack of health facilities and sports facilities are the disadvantages of rural areas that cause teacher shortages (Boylan et al., 1994). Ankrah-Dove (1982) reviewed the literature to find the reasons for teacher shortages in rural areas. She indicated that rural teachers are so tired from doing nothing productive, face with problems about children whose weight and complexions reflect improper habits of eating and sleeping, experience challenges related to school-buildings which are unsuited for teaching with bare classroom walls, heating problems, eroded school grounds and leaking roofs. Similar to Sharplin (2002), she drew attention to the non-professional influences on career decisions of rural teachers. She explained one of the realities as follows: "Young women, newly married, and lacking experience and professional confidence, migh welcome the chance to teach in their home-villages, while ambitious senior teachers might want to move to the town to further their careers" (p.8). To this end, personal, family, social and economic factors influence teachers' attitudes towards rural teaching. It was emphasized in the literature that housing, weather conditions, wide separation from family and friends, lack of cultural and social organizations are the main non-professional factors that affect teachers' career decisions about rural teaching. Ankrah-Dove (1982) also indicated that rural teachers who want their own children to have good education, particulary after primary level,

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have tendency to move to urban areas. It was also suggested in the rewiew that even where salaries are the same in urban and rural schools, teachers in rural areas find the cost of living considerably higher than urban areas.

In addition to non-professional factors, professional factors also play a critical role in teachers' career decisions about rural teaching. The literature put forth that teachers have concerns about the lack of classroom aids and the irrelevance of the official curriculum to the needs of rural children. They also emphasize the challenges that they could not ask advice of teacher trainers when they need, since inspectors and teacher trainers visit rural areas rarely. In addition, lack of parental support for rural children would be a challenge for rural teachers in terms of encouraging and supporting them for pursuing high school and higher education. Since there are very limited opportunities for professional contact with other teachers, teachers suffer from lack of in-service trainings and social gatherings in rural areas. To this end, they feel themselves "bypassed and forgotten by the profession" (p.10).

Further research on rural staffing shortages (i.e., Hudson & Hudson, 2008; McClure, Redfield & Hammer, 2003) puts forth similar results indicating the reasons for unwillingness to consider a future rural career, such as beliefs about geographical, social, cultural, and professional isolation; inadequate housing, and a lack of prearation for rural teaching. To this end, all the abovementioned studies conclude that teacher education curricula need to better equip graduates for diverse teaching contexts. From this perspective, Halsey (2005) urgently recommends teacher education programs to develop policies to give a place to rural practicum experience with the view that this might encourage pre-service teachers to consider a rural career. There is a growing consideration of the need to prepare more teachers to teach in remote or rural areas; however, there is little focus on preparing teachers for the diversity of teaching contexts in which teachers might find themselves placed (White & Kline, 2012). For instance, Bryant (2006) indicates that the solution is not preparing *more* teachers to recruit in rural areas, but re-conceptualizing teacher education curriculum and adopting a more integrated approach between course work and rural practicum.

The lack of effective preparation of teachers to teach in rural schools has been put forward by many scholars for the last three decades (i.e., Helge, 1982; Boomer, 1988; Lunn, 1997). According to Le Roux and Möller (2002), most of the teacher education programs prepare teacher candidates "to teach children like themselves and perpetuate practices which have historically benefited middle class children" (p.185). In that sense, the relevant literature put forward that teaching in unpriviliged contexts is mostly neglected by teacher education programs in many countries and teacher education programs continue to train teachers who believe that they will teach in "First World conditions" (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009, p.70).

Similarly, Burton and Johnson (2010) say: "Many teacher education programs place an emphasis on the unique needs of urban education" (p. 384). Barker and Beckner (1987) found that despite large numbers of teachers working in rural school, there were exceptionally few universities providing special training programs for prospective teachers. Similar results were suggested by Luft (1992) where he found that a lack of pre-service education hinders prospective teachers from preparing for the realities in rural schools. Therefore, the disparity between teacher education program curricula and practice indicates a need for the development of effective partnerships between universities and rural schools in order to prepare teachers to work in rural and remote areas. According to Boylan et al. (1994), effective partnerships involve partnerships in identifying and designing the content of rural teaching specialized programs. They noted that providing specialized pre-service courses is a very crucial strategy for teacher recruitment in rural schools. Boylan et al. (1994) also suggested the essential components of specialized pre-service courses, such as issues about rural lifestyles, community participation, and rural practice teaching. They pointed out that when pre-service teachers are provided with these components in their pre-service courses, "their preparadness to seek or accept a rural appointment is enhanced" (p.23). In parallel with these needs, at Charles Sturt University in Australia, a Rural Education and Teaching Unit had been set up within the Faculty of Education in order to develop a number of pre-service courses which encourage pre-service teachers to engage in theoretical and practical studies of school-community relationship, roles and expectations of teachers in rural areas, teaching strategies for rural schools, and practice teaching in rural schools.

In a similar vein, a very recent study was conducted by Botha and Baxen (2018) in order to investigate the need to prepare teachers for all school contexts in South Africa. The relevant data were gathered through focus group discussions with 73 student teachers. The study reveals two very important results for the literature. First of all, some of the student teachers were willing to work in rural areas after the graduation and they mentioned the urgent need to have rural practicum before starting to teach in unpriviliged contexts. Their motivation to teach in a rural area was to make a difference in rural students' lives and she was willing to be prepared for teaching in rural areas, even remote ones. She said: "I want to work in rural areas, even the most remote area… thus where you can make differences thus where you are needed…. So then they need to show us this is what you actually going to face" (p.452). Secondly, a number of student teachers expressed their feelings of fear, distress and even trauma when they were talking about being placed in unfamiliar teaching contexts. Thirdly, two of the participants mentioned the dichotomy between the practice and the 'fantasy world' of an ideal classroom presented in university lectures. One of the participants mentioned the discrepancy between teacher education courses and the real teaching environment with the following statement: "One of the challenges… in a way we are living in this fantasy world kinda thing at university. When they describe a classroom setup to you, they describe it in a huge room and whatever and… If you go to a disadvantaged school, it's a total opposite of that. The first two weeks of my teaching practice was a headless chicken… You have a classroom that's half size of what it's supposed to be. I contacted my lecturer and said: I'm lost and I don't know what is going on" (p.455). In line with the opinions of this participant, another participant thought that the learning environment was very limited in terms of physical conditions and did not conform to most of the activities that teacher educators suggest. To this end, these opinions show that there is a mismatch between teacher education programs and classroom realities in rural schools.

The way teacher education programs prepare and support pre-service teachers for rural positions also warrants examination. Staffing rural schools has been associated with negative perceptions of teaching in rural areas (Boylan & McSwan, 1998). They also point out that the negative stereotype defining rural schools as inferior teaching

contexts lead to unwillingness of pre-service teachers for rural positions. Concerning this issue, Sharplin (2002) conducted a study to report both the positive and negative perceptions held by pre-service teachers with an interest in rural education. She collected the data via a qualitative questionnaitre and open-ended questions. The 22 pre-service teahers from English, Science, Mathematics, Music and Psychology departments participated to the study. The study suggested four main findings for the field. Firstly, pre-service teachers had only vague perceptions and expectations about teaching and living in a rural area. One of the participants said that teaching in a rural school refers to "mostly vague expectations from videos" (p.53). Secondly, there was a strong concern about the avaliability of teaching resources and physical conditions in rural schools. Participants stated that rural schools would be neglected and very poor in terms of technical devices and teaching materials. One of the participants said that it would be very hard for a novice teacher while teaching with few resources. They indicated that lack of access to more experienced colleagues, the possibility of having no other subject matter teachers in your own subject to get advice. Thirdly, lack of professional development opportunities is also an important concern about rural areas. Finally, all participants indicated personal and social challenges in rural areas. Less immediate support from their families, not having friends around when they need them, lack of social life, the tough process for developing a sense of belonging, boredom, isolation, housing problems, lack of health facilities, and access to services were the main reasons emphasized by the participants to explain their concerns about personal and social challenges.

The study implied that rural field trip and short-term rural practicum strategies would be an advantage of providing an opportunity for pre-service teachers who may have plans to recruit in a rural school after the graduation. Placing prospective teachers in rural settings may "break down negative stereotypes about teaching in rural schools" (Monk, 2003, p.169). The study also suggested that partnerships involving visits of teacher educators to rural locations to support pre-service and in-service teachers, creating guest speaker programmes in rural schools, video conferencing or e-mail groups could be used as alternative tools to prepare pre-service teachers and support in-service teachers.

Roberts (2005) states in his detailed report that remote, rural and regional schools are staffed with young, newly graduated, inexperienced teachers who are mostly unprepared for this situation due to the fact that many teachers in rural schools have practicum experiences in urban schools and lack pre-service experience with the distinctive informal culture existing in many rural schools (McCracken & Miller, 1988). As a consequence, novice teachers are undergoing difficult and stressful transitions in rural areas and this process is of vital importance for their professional identity formation (Caires et al., 2010). Similarly, Sharplin (2002) examined expectations of teacher candidates about rural and remote teaching by focusing on both their professional and personal concerns. Findings indicated that student teachers had professional concerns about several issues about rural areas: a lack of teaching materials, a lack of access to experienced teachers, and a lack of familiarity with social structures of areas. In addition, the uncertainty about the experience of integration to the community and dislocation from family were striking results of the study. The study also revealed that pre-service teachers did not receive the necessary preparation for teaching in rural schools. The study also suggested that since pre-service teachers had negative and stereotypical images of rural life and rural teaching, teacher educaion programmes should provide pre-service teachers with a broad repsresentation of rural areas. Further research on rural education clearly portrays that rural teachers have to overcome obstacles of isolated rural life as a result of the lack of professional support and the need to make very long trips to the city centre to purchase supplies that are not available to teachers in rural areas (Burton & Johnson, 2010).

Azano and Stewart (2015) aimed to investigate the influence on preparing pre-service teachers for rural placements on success in rural education and collected data via questionnaires, a reflection paper and an essay written within the scope of Content Area Reading course in pre-service teacher education program. Both of the assignments were given to better understand personal background of participants, their conceptions of place, their feelings of preparedness for teaching in rural schools, and their perceptions of rural communities. This study reveals very important findings for teacher education field. As a first result, nonrural participants indicated that they felt more ready to teach in urban schools. On the other hand, rural

participants expressed confidence in teaching in rural contexts. One of the rural teacher candidates explained: "Place has played an important role in who I am. It has greatly influenced the way I speak, think and learn" (p.5). As a second result, the participants mentioned that community involvement was an important and beneficial aspect of better teaching in a rural area. Thirdly, all participants underlined that rural students were unmotivated and rural teachers often struggled to engage their students during the lessons. They indicated that rural students had no plans for education and career. In addition, teachers experienced instructional challenges, including not being able to assign homework, lack of access to educational technology, and missing school during hunting and harvesting seasons. They added that lack of parental support and poverty were big challenges for both students and teachers in rural schools. To this end, the study suggested that teacher candidates need explicit instruction and preparation on pedagogies for success in rural schools and to use their own potential to transform rural communities.

In a similar vein, novice teachers enter the profession in an isolated environment in rural schools due to the fact that they cannot find experienced colleagues to exchange ideas and to get advice. In that sense, combining university-based theory and teaching practices gained at schools in various contexts is very crucial for developing a *community-based* model in teacher education (Goodnough & Mulcahy, 2011). Similarly, Ralph (2003) focused on the neccesity of investigating current issues in rural education in the western Canadian context. He conducted a study to examine the views of five pre-service teachers who completed their extended practicum in rural schools. He found that pre-service teachers had positive views about rural placements at the end of the extended practicum. Ralph (2003) also suggested that there should be a university-rural school partnership in teacher education programs in order to sustain the positive views of teacher candidates. He also suggested that extended rural practicum experiences are good opportunities to attract teacher candidates to rural schools. In a similar vein, Munsch and Boylan (2008) indicated that there was an urgent need for specific pre-service preparation to address rural teaching challenges experienced in Alaska. They conducted a study to investigate the views of 14 pre-service teachers who participated to a one-week rural teaching experience. They found that this experience was very beneficial for rural schools,

rural communities, rural teachers and pre-service teachers. They suggested that rural practicum experience should be added to teacher education programmes since even spending a week in a rural context can make a positive difference in pre-service teacher perceptions about rural teaching.

Barley (2009) conducted a research to investigate the recruitment, retention, and preparation of high-quality teachers in rural schools. She surveyed nine teacher education programs in the United States and identified gaps in their curricula in terms of supporting the development of high-quality teachers for rural communities. Barley (2009) found that only one teacher education program offered a course specifically on rural teaching. Likewise, three studies (i.e., Azano & Stewart, 2016; Kline & Walker-Gibbs, 2015; O'Neal et al., 2008) examined a change (or lack thereof) in pre-service teachers' practice, perceptions, preparedness, or attitudes about rural communities and rural teaching. These researchers found that after completion of teacher education program, pre-service teachers did not feel adequately prepared to teach in rural schools (Azano & Stewart, 2016). According to Hudson and Hudson (2008), teacher education programs should organize rural school visits ranged from a few days to several weeks and if the experience is far from where the pre-service teachers live, they would often stay with host teachers or host families in these communities. This experience may provide pre-service teachers with positive learning experiences and enable them to consider teaching in rural schools as a result of participating in rural field visits. Trinidad et al. (2014) assert that rural visits raised awareness about the social and cultural demands of the area, benefits of teaching in a rural school, appreciating the diversity of students and diversity of rural contexts.

Rural teachers' professional development is another important concern in the teacher education field. Hudson and Hudson (2008) suggest that teacher education programs do not prepare teachers to adapt to the needs of rural teaching. Coleman (2006) explains the importance of training prospective teachers for the local needs of schools with the following statement:

> Pedagogies that ignore local exigencies and lived experiences will ultimately prove to be so disturbing for those affected by them, so threatening to their belief systems that hostility is aroused and learning becomes impossible (p.11).

A number of studies assert that the professional challenges in teaching in rural areas include isolation (Nias, 1996), teaching with limited resources (Kızılaslan, 2012), difficulties in implementing curriculum (Copland, Garton, & Burns, 2014), and inadequate professional development opportunities (Mann & Tang, 2012). Thus, in-service teachers express the urgent need for professional development activities, including practice opportunities and mentoring (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009).

In parallel with these findings, Maher and Prescott (2017) examined a project where mathematics and science teachers were provided with professional development opportunities via video conferencing to help them use syllabus documents in order to develop their teaching. The data were collected from ten mathematics and ten science high school teachers from seventeen rural secondary schools by using an online survey consisted of 15 questions. The study put forward that rural teachers found video conferencing very beneficial because of two reasons. Firstly, they thought that lack of professional development opportunities in rural areas and the problems related to time, distance and cost were the main reasons of advantages of video conferencing programs. Time and cost were important considerations for rural teachers while travelling to and from professional development venues. Therefore, in the questionnaire, the rural teachers mentioned that video conferencing was a big advantage for them in reducing the number of hours spent for travelling to and from professional development sessions. The participants mentioned that attending video conferences with other rural teachers helped them decrease their feeling of isolation. The participant said: "It was helpful to sit and talk with others in my own situation and to see what works for them and what doesn't" (p.529). However, providing effective professional development activities requires high interaction between teacher educators and teachers rather than simply lecturing or training teachers about predetermined aspects of teaching (Desimone, 2009). In that sense, coaching, modelling and learning communities are possible approaches for creating an interactive model for professional development (Brown, 2013). Distance from learning centers (e.g., universities, colleges, teacher education services) makes it difficult for rural teachers to access ongoing professional development (Collins,

Goforth, & Ambrose, 2016). To this end, it is suggested that teachers should be supported through Internet or web-based modalities, such as blogs and GoogleSites. Although the remoteness of rural schools from learning centers is a challenge of access, distance learning is a good opportunity to provide broader professional networks.

Investigating experiences and perceptions of in-service teachers in rural areas, a collaborative research project reported connections between education systems and young people's aspirations in remote rural areas of Lesotho, India and Laos (ESRC-DFID, 2018). In each of the three countries, ethnographic research was conducted in two rural communities and their local primary schools over a nine-month period in 2017. The report puts forth that many teachers in rural schools fail to demonstrate real enthusiasm for and commitment to the teaching profession. Rural teachers often spend excessive amount of time for travelling to meetings, in-service trainings or maintaining contact with their colleagues. The principal at one Lesotho primary school frequently travelled to city center for paperwork or on payday and returned several days later with the excuse that transportation was very infrequent. Similarly, in Laos, the rural schools typically started eah term a few weeks late because teachers had difficulties in travelling to the village. The report also found that rural teachers had little belief in the quality of schools they worked in, or the future of their students. The poor quality of rural schools brings along poor learning outcomes. The report suggested that teachers were less motivated to teach and less likely to offer career guidance. If teacher education programs are reframed to prepare prospective teachers for teaching in more diverse contexts, this might encourage rural teachers to help children develop meaningful aspirations, motivation and engagement among both teachers and students. In rural areas, teachers also serve as models of the *educated person.* The report proposed that several primary school children said they wanted to become teachers like their own teachers in India. Likewise, in Laos, a rural kid reported that her classroom teacher, who was a *homegrown teacher,* inspired her very much because she was the only person went to the college and achieved more than other people in her village. However, in both Lesotho and Laos, most of the teachers were outsiders to the rural communities. Thus, outsider teachers often had family commitments elsewhere and they were

unlikely to stay long in the rural area. In Lesotho, rural teachers asserted that they had no visit and support from experienced teachers, educational authorities or teacher trainers for over five years.

The report indicated that teachers should be motivated to become better facilitators of learning and models of the education people. As for recommendations, the report suggested that curricula should be reshaped in order to make them more relevant to rural context and teacher education programs should include contents to address roles of rural teachers, challenges of rural schools and expectations of rural kids in order to prepare teacher candidates for a future rural career. In addition, teacher mentoring is of vital importance to provide ongoing support. Mobile applications and other technological facilities might help teacher educators and teacher trainers for mentoring. According to Huysman (2008), teachers' job satisfaction plays a critical role in teachers' commitment to the teaching profession and their desire to stay in the profession. Teaching contexts are very critical for teachers' job satisfaction. He conducted a study to better understand the beliefs and attitudes of rural school teachers concerning job satisfaction and to identify the elements of their work and community environments that influenced their job satisfaction, performance, teacher retention, and work climate. The participants were 85 rural teachers and the data was collected via a survey. In addition, some of the participants were interviewed to gain in-depth insights about the issue. He conducted this study in a rural Florida school and grouped the teachers under two cohorts: teachers as "homegrown" or "transplanted." The definitions of these terms were based on the notion that a "homegrown" teacher is one who is employed by a school district who received his/her secondary education within the same school district or same school, while a "transplanted" teacher is one working within a school who did not attend secondary school in that school or district. Homegrown and transplanted teachers were separated, since "homegrown teachers arrive to rural schools with a connection to the school, an existing place in the community, and with the basic awareness of the rural community's prevailing values and idiosyncrasies" (p.32). The study shows that job satisfaction factors had a greater role in transplanted teachers' decisions to leave the district. During the study, 17 of 56 transplanted teachers left the district due to the extrinsic factors, but only 2 of 29 homegrown teachers left because of personal

relationships. The reason behind homegrown teachers' stay in rural areas may their commitment by investment which homegrown teachers used to explain as "being close to family, growing up and knowing people in the community, owing property, and being vested in the retirement system" (p.36). Proximity to hometown is a critical factor for teachers during the recruitment process because teachers seek teaching positions at home or at least in regions similar to their hometowns (Boyd et al., 2005). In an effort to decrease teacher shortage in rural areas, many schools have embraced the concept of *growing your own teacher* as suggested by Lemke (1994), Collins (1999), and Darling-Hammond (2003).

Lemke (1994) defines the ideal rural teacher as follows: "Someone who is comfortable with the rural life and capable of wearing many hats. Such an individual is certified to teach more than one subject or grade level, can teach students with a wide range of abilities in the same classroom, is prepared to supervise extracurricular activities, and can adjust to the community" (p.1). In a similar vein, Campbell & Yates (2011) assert that there is a clear relationship between desire to teach in rural areas and having experienced some level of education in the rural schools.

Barley and Brigham (2008) suggest grow-your-own strategy to recruit and retain teachers in rural areas. They indicate that using an alternative certification programme to address teacher shortages in rural schools is an appropriate way to overcome this problem. Their model including the following stages: Finding local people with the appropriate level of content knowledge, providing them required teacher training courses and practice teaching, organizing a sequence of online professional development sessions related to technology, extracurricular activities and guidance. They explain the practicality of this model with the following statement: "If you can find a local person with some content speciality and hire them… They are more likely to stay in their hometown. This may be more successful than trying to recruit and retain others who are not from the area" (p.8). The reason behind supporting this concept is the fact that a *homegrown teacher* arrives to rural school with a connection to the area, a presence in the community, and the basic awareness of the rural community's prevailing values and idiosyncrasies. In a similar vein, Boylan & McSwan (1998) conducted a study in Riverina, which is a

rural region in south-central New South Wales. They administrated a survey with 427 primary and secondary school teachers. The study shows that teachers' biographical background is a significant predictor for their long staying in the region. 72.3% of teachers who prefer working in rural areas more than 10 years had experienced rural lifestyle in their own upbringing. In addition, most of the participants had attended a rural teacher education institution before they started to work as rural teachers. In that sense, teachers' biographical background influence teachers' experiences and perceptions in rural areas.

Sargent and Hannum (2009) also state that the collaboration among colleagues is also very important for teachers' job satisfaction. It is also very interesting that some of the teachers become more satisfied with more workload as a result of being more engaged in work life. In a similar vein, Haughney and Murphy (1982) investigated teachers' job satisfaction in one of the rural districts in British Columbia via a questionnaire. They distributed the questionnaire to 528 rural teachers and only 22% of them indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs. They found rural teaching very compelling in terms of non-teaching duties, insufficient physical conditions, and lacking of opportunities for professional development. On the other hand, they appreciate a sense of achievement in tough contexts and making good relations with students and parents. Investigating 2569 teachers' job satisfaction in Norway by administrating a questionnaire, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) aimed to explore the relation between school context and teachers' job satisfaction. They put forward that the impact of teachers' perception of the school context on their job satisfaction was mediated through their feeling of *belonging to a community* and their *emotional exhaustion*. In sum, teachers' job satisfaction is influenced by many factors, such as school and its community, motivation in teaching, and future plans. However, there is no enough research study in the relevant literature to provide a deep understanding of job satisfaction of teachers who work in rural districts. Investigating teachers' job satisfaction in rural schools may contribute to understand their professional needs and their experiences while formulating their professional identities. Understanding how these teachers feel about teaching at rural schools and how their experiences shape their professional identities is of vital importance for the teacher education field. Besides, teachers' biographical background, past experiences and traits define

how they perceive and interpret their teaching contexts. Living and working in rural areas is a complex phenomenon that requires to be explored in order to understand the interplay between teachers' professional identities and their teaching contexts.

2.3 Teaching English in Rural Schools

Many studies have underlined that poor English performance of rural students is a consequence of problems related to recruit and retain qualified English teachers in rural teaching contexts (Kabilan, 2007). It is also highlighted that poor performance derives from the fact that rural students have very limited exposure to English language (Musa, Koo, & Hazita, 2012). Since rural students mostly do not use English outside the classroom, their academic performance depends almost solely on their English language teachers (Ien, Yunus, & Embi, 2017). According to Kabilan (2007), English teachers are the only source of English language in rural areas; therefore they play a crucial role in students' English level. In addition, researchers conducted studies to investigate the other factors affecting poor English performance of rural students and they found that teacher burnout (Mukundan & Khandehroo, 2010), high rates of teacher turnover (Musa et al., 2012), and lack of experienced teachers in rural schools (Marwan et al., 2012) are the main reasons. Curtin (2018) conducted a study in order to investigate teacher recruitment and retention in a rural school in the United States and collected data through semi-structured interviews held by school principals. It was found that English language teaching is a difficult subject for retention in rural schools, since universities recruit English language teachers for the introductory English courses on campus where English language teachers are paid more and hold higher prestige. All participants indicated the neccessity of a mentoring program to recruit and retain qualified ESL or EFL teachers in rural areas. One of the participants explained herself with the following statement: "They [new teachers] get to the school, and that first week, two, three, four weeks of school, of get into the routine. School starts happening and you kind of forget they're new. They might be struggling and you're not there for them. Since we've implemented the mentorship program, they don't fall through the cracks any longer" (p.67). In a similar vein, one of the participants stated: "I've seen teachers that felt so isolated, really, in some ways, because things were not going well for

them in their first year, but they were afraid to talk to anybody about it. Once you can build that relationship and open the door… that we're here really to help you succeed… it makes a difference I think" (p.67).

In a similar vein, a recent study was conducted by Rafique et al. (2018) to examine the current situation of English language teachers in public primary schools in Pakistan. The data were collected through questionnaires, surveys, interviews and classroom observations from twenty English language teachers and their students in various rural public schools. The study found that students show very poor performance in English lessons. The study identified two main reasons for this issue: Firstly, English language teachers did not feel themselves well-prepared and ready for teaching English in a rural school. Secondly, only 6% of the teachers indicated that the school atmosphere and resources are suitable for learning English. The World Bank (2010) provides a comprehensive review of the current situation of English, Mathematics and Science teachers in rural schools:

> A lack of resources is one reason for their [rural students] relatively poor performance, but other factors also come into play. For example, there is a high turnover of teachers in these schools as well as a shortage of teachers in English, mathematics and science. Due to the small size of these schools, many teachers in rural schools are expected to cover several grades at the same time (multi-grade teaching), which means that they are unable to impart each grade's curricula separately. The infrastructure of these schools is often inadequate. Some schools do not have electricity for 24 hours a day or an adequate source of water (p.92).

Fogle and Moser (2017) conducted a qualitative study to investigate personal and professional trajectories of rural teachers in K-12 schools in the state of Mississippi. Their main aim was to better understand how participants conceptualize their roles in rural schools. They collected data from nine ESL and FL teachers by using interviews. The study revealed very important results related to rural teacher identities constructed in narratives about teaching experiences arose from various sources, including past personal experiences and teacher training programs. The first result was having an inspirational FL or ESL teacher in the past that had an influence on participants' decision to choose teaching as a career. In addition, all participants indicated their interests in culture and language that mediated their career choices. One of the teachers said: "Well, for languages, that's just my love. That's my

passion. I love other cultures. I love other languages. I love learning about those things" (p. 69). Secondly, the participants saw themselves as agents in transforming the school to meet the needs of the English language-learner population and making personal change to meet those goals. They defined themselves mediators or facilitators in rural students' social worlds in terms of providing them different contexts of language use that the students would encounter outside of the classroom. The participants used two metaphors to define themselves as rural ESL/FL teachers: *mother* and *coach*. They used the metaphor of *mother* to emphasize that they took care of students with compassion. The participant said: "We are not just educational leaders, we become the counselor, and the momma and the provider other services, you know" (p. 72). The second metaphor, *coach* was used to define themselves as cultural and linguistic facilitators in the area.

According to the participants, they helped students become more aware of cultural differences and break their linguistic barriers. They also emphasized that their role in the area was being a motivator when the rural students felt lack of motivation to pursue their education. The participants thought that rural teachers are the most important part of changing schooling and transforming the community in rural areas. Finally, the participants drew attention to the importance of teacher education and professional development programmes for rural teachers, since they indicated that they had very little opportunity for in-service professional development and rarely mentioned rural teaching in pre-service teacher education programmes.

Mudra (2018) conducted a research to describe the obstacles experienced by pre-service EFL teachers during their teaching practicum in rural schools in Indonesia. The data were gathered from seventeen pre-service EFL teachers by using interviews and fieldnotes for this qualitative study. The results revealed important implications for the field. It was pointed out by the study that pre-service EFL teachers experienced the discrepancy between theory and practice during the rural practicum. One of the pre-service teachers indicated that microteachings could not help her overcome the obstacles in a real classroom. The participant said: "Microteaching held in the college was different from teaching practice in a school which is far from the city. They felt bored when I used English and they told me that they did not understand anything about English" (p.325). Another important result was pre-

service teachers' difficulties in finding teacher materials and resources. According to them, the only teaching material offered in rural schools was traditional and old-fashioned course books. The participant explained it as: "We know that present days are different from old days. Every learner needs to be informed with new and updated knowledge. English is not a national language; it is internationally used. The more updated the materials are, the cleverer the learners will be" (p.326). Internet problem was also a challenge for pre-service EFL teachers, since they planned to use digital materials during their lessons but they could not use them due to the limited or lack of internet connection. It was also noteworthy that one of the participants thought that rural students needed context-specific materials.

Rural students' English skills played an important role in pre-service teachers' perceptions about teaching English in rural schools. The study showed that rural kids were not motivated to learn and speak English, therefore using English as a classroom language was really challenging for pre-service EFL teachers. As a result, pre-service EFL teachers used both English and Indonesian to teach English. It was revealed by the results that the participants tried to motivate rural students to learn English by telling them the importance of English for their future lives. The participant said: "I usually begin the English lesson by motivating my learners. I said English is important. It is used in international communication. We can find a job easily if we have an English skill" (p.334). Finally, lack of parental support affected rural students' learning and motivation towards English language. The participants asserted that most of the parents did not care about their children's school life. It was explained by one of the participants with the following statement: "I never meet any parents who visit this school. That is a problem for them and for this school. Their parents don't have any control over their children at home" (p.336).

Aziz et al. (2019) explored the lived experiences of English teachers who decided to retain in rural schools in Malaysia. The data were gathered from ten English teachers via interviews and observations. In this study, rural teachers described their rural teaching experiences with negative words to indicate dissatisfaction and demotivation. They thought that rural areas were full of unavoidable disadvantages to teach and learn a foreign language. They mentioned that lack of teaching sources

and poor physical environment in rural schools were the main disadvantages of rural schools. Teachers explained the poor physical conditions by examples of deprived furnitures, damaged tables, chairs, poor air quality due to ventilation problems. They asserted that all these negative conditions had an impact on uneasiness of teachers and misbehaviour among students. It was also mentioned by teachers that learning English was not considered important in the area as a result of parents' socioeconomic status and educational background. Implementing the official curriculum was also a big challenge for English teachers in rural schools since materials and the content were unsuitable for rural schools. They indicated that both students' level of readiness to learn English topics and schools' infrastructure were not efficient to cover the same curriculum with urban schools.

Teachers believed that lack of ICT facilities was a result of insufficient funding allocated for rural schools. In this study, teachers mentioned four main stress factors in rural schools: dealing with limited English proficient students, students' disruptive behaviours, excessive workload, and lack of resources and social support. Firstly, struggling with *weak students* who had negative perceptions and demotivation towards English language was one of the stress factors for rural teachers. Secondly, due to the poor physical conditions, students often felt discomfort and lost their motivation, thus resulted in aggressive behaviours. Thirdly, teachers felt extra responsibilities towards their students in addition to teaching that caused excessive workload. Finally, they mentioned that they suffered from lack of teaching resources support, especially audiovisual materials. They needed social support from administrators and the community. The study also provided suggestions of rural teachers to cope with these stressful conditions. They suggested personal coping strategies including staying positive, avoiding thinking about stressful incidents, and spending more time with their families and friends. They also mentioned social coping strategies including professional support. They suggested that professional coping strategies including improving abilities to adapt to the rural life and using pedagogical skills such as developing enjoyable and creative activities for the lesson helped them ease the negative impacts of stressful conditions. Finally, they suggested an institutional coping strategy which is using subject-based classroom. They

claimed that making a separate classroom for English lessons provided motivation for both teachers and learners.

Milon (2016) investigated a study to find out the challenges of applying English curriculum in primary schools in rural areas of Bangladesh. The study was designed as a mixed study and data were collected through questionnaire, observation checklist and interviews. The participants were 20 rural teachers and 200 rural students from a rural area of Bangladesh. The study revealed very important results for English language teacher education. First of all, most of the rural students claimed that teacher did not make writing and listening exercises in the classroom. They added that they did grammar exercises and reading activities. Secondly, 45% of the teachers mentioned that they did not take any professional development training before. 78% of the teachers said that they have never taken any training to teach English. It was also very striking that 60% of teachers stated that they delivered English lessons in Bangla language, while 34% of teachers said that they used both Bangla and English language in the classroom. Only 6% of teachers indicated that they used only English language in English lessons. The study also put forward that 52% of teachers never used teaching materials in addition to course book in the lessons. In terms of the physical conditions of rural schools, the study indicated that 72% of rural schools had poor learning environments for teachers and students. According to the study, the poor physical conditions of rural schools were derived from small class size, insufficient teaching materials, lack of electricity and hygienic toilet, and lack of library. Teachers also stated that they did not get enough support from government, but only blackboard, chalk and duster. Finally, all teachers claimed that they could not follow the English curriculum as a result of high student-teacher ratio, small class size, lack of in-service teacher training and insufficient teaching materials.

In a similar vein, Salahuddin et al. (2013) examined challenges of implementing English curriculum at rural primary schools in Bangladesh. They collected data via questionnaires, observations and interviews from 300 primary school students and 30 English teachers in one of the rural areas of Bangladesh. According to the study, 86% of the students found English lesson very hard while 9% of them thought that

English teachers did not motivate them to learn English. In terms of productive skills, 52% of students asserted that English teachers rarely did speaking exercises in the classroom while 43% of them asserted that they seldomly did writing exercises during the lesson. It was found that English teachers preferred to do only reading exercises in the classroom. It is very striking that all students mentioned that they never did listening practices in English lessons. Researchers observed that 86% of students were not active during the lessons as a result of low English proficiency. From teachers' perspectives, teaching in a rural area was a big challenge to pursue professional development since 43% of them mentioned that they never took pre-service or in-service teacher training before.

By concerning speaking and listening skills of rural students, Hoque et al. (2018) investigated the current situation of communicative language teaching (CLT) in rural primary schools in Bangladesh. The aim of the study was to investigate the ongoing status of CLT by collecting data through survey, semi-structured interviews, and lesson observations. 100 rural primary teachers answered the survey while the researchers conducted interviews with ten of them. The researchers observed lessons of five of the teachers. According to the study, 84% of English language teachers used Bangla in their English lessons while %4 of the participants delivered their lessons by speaking only English. 100% of the participants stated that they need to improve their English skills, especially speaking. 75% of the teachers indicated that they did not prefer to use different Technologies such as projector or computer while delivering English lessons.

The study also found that 73% of teachers mentioned that they need to receive professional development trainings, particularly in CLT, along with improving speaking skills in English. In a similar vein, Mason and Payant (2019) conducted a qualitative case study to investigate experienced EFL teachers' beliefs and practices toward communicative language teaching in a rural Ukraine. In order to uncover the mediating factors that influence EFL teachers' communicative language teaching (CLT) practices, the data were collected through surveys, interviews and classroom observations from three EFL teachers in one of the rural areas in Ukraine. In the study, all teachers mentioned the benefits and importance of CLT; however, they

preferred to use traditional and teacher-centered teaching methods in classes. It was highligted that in rural contexts, limited teaching resources was the main reason of using traditional teaching methods. The participants asserted that they used only textbooks which were provided by the government.

In order to overcome the limitations of these textbooks, all participants desired the use of additional teaching materials from British publishers. However, they indicated that most of the parents could not afford to buy the cost of supplemental materials. The participants also highlighted that they could not do listening activities written on the course book due to the fact that they did not have audio materials. The participant explained this situation by expressing her frustration: "In our textbook, we have some audio-related exercises, but we do not have the audio materials. I can't find it anywhere to buy. I can't find it!" (p.9). In addition, lack of pre-service and in-service teacher training was a big gap in participants' pedagogical knowledge. The participant shared her experiences from university years as follows: "We had methodology lessons, although our teacher of this subject was not very good. She didn't give us a lot of useful things at the university" (p.9). They also suggested that ongoing professional training was critical for their teaching practices. It was also stated by the participants that location of the school affected the opportunities for professional teacher development, which in turn affected teachers' classroom practices. They asserted that school budget constraints limited their access to attending teacher training activities.

Yawman et al. (2019) conducted a study in order to investigate parental involvement and student performance in English in rural schools in Thailand. They collected data from 375 parents of students and 285 of their teachers by using questionnaires. The results found that the students whose parents were often involved in students' school lives showed higher achievement in English lessons than students whose parents were not involved in school. Teachers indicated that parental involvement was the main factor influencing rural students' English skills and continuous learning outside of the school. The study also showed that rural teachers tended to have higher expectations from their students while parents did not seem to have high expectations from their kids. Teachers asserted that higher expectations led to high motivation and

achievement. Therefore, they thought that parents' lack of expectation and motivation led to students' low academic achievement. Furthermore, parental involvement was perceived in different ways by parents and teachers in this study. While teachers defined parental involvement as helping children's work at home and reinforcing what they learn at school, parents defined parental involvement as buying school materials and providing food and housing for their kids. Finally, this study revealed a very important finding that parents were not able to help their kids for homework because of their low level of education.

In parallel with this study, Mosha (2014) investigated the factors affecting students' performance in English language lessons in Zanzibar. Additionally, the study examined teachers' methods of teaching and use of teaching materials in urban and rural schools. The data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, questionnaires and document review. The study was conducted in two urban and two rural schools. 40 students from urban schools, 40 students from rural schools and 13 English language teachers were the participants of this study. The study revealed six very important results for the literature. First of all, the study put forth that rural schools had novice English language teachers while urban schools had experienced and more trained teachers. Shortage of English language teachers was a big problem in rural schools. Secondly, this study indicated that lack of teaching materials was a difficulty for rural teachers. Results showed that 85% of rural teachers were not able to reach the teaching materials suggested in the curriculum. When the researcher asked rural teachers whether they could create their own teaching materials, 31% of teachers said that they developed their own teaching materials to follow the curriculum. On the other hand, 69% of teachers said that they did not develop teaching materials due to the fact that they did not have enough time and money and also most of the materials were not avaliable in the village. Thirdly, the study found that physical conditions of schools were very poor in villages. 73.5% of the students stated that they did not like their classrooms and they provided the following explanations to define their classrooms: "No windows and window shutters", "It leaks during the rainy season", "It is not painted", "It is not attractive", "No doors" (p.69).

In addition, the study put forward that family members and homes played a crucial role in students' academic achievement in rural areas. Findings indicated that urban students had better living conditions at their homes compared to rural students. Teachers stated that parents could not maintain the continuity of their children's education at home. 96% of rural kids stated that their parents could not help them while doing homework or studying for exams due to the fact that parents were not well-educated and conscious enough to help their kids. Students explained their ideas with the following statements: "My parents are not educated", "My father does not know English", "My parents have primary education", "My mother does not understand my homework and my father is not at home" (p.69). In terms of rural teachers, it was found that teachers were not trained in order to cope with challenges of rural areas and implement the recent techniques of teaching English language. Teachers also indicated that they could not develop a sense of belonging in the village due to the fact that they lived in urban areas and taught in rural schools.

Since digital technologies can play an important role in education, focusing on tehnological mediation of teacher education may put forward beneficial results especially for teachers working in rural or remote areas. However, there has been very little focus on the mediating role of technology in teacher growth in teaching contexts where there is a need but access is problematic due to several reasons (Anwaruddin & Pervin, 2015). With this perspective, Motteram (2019) investigated the creation of online materials and a set of online processes for English language teachers at a distance challenging contexts. In this study, the researcher aimed to discover if and how *Skype* would be a helpful tool for English language teacher development. The data were gathered from a group of teacher educators in Pakistan by using a number of sources including documents, reports, field notes kept by the author, questionnaires and interviews. One of the findings of this study was the need to upgrade large numbers of teachers who have little or no training on rural education. In addition, it was showed that a Skype-based training course can have advantages for teacher training. The main advantage of this digital course was to provide a novel way of working with teachers in challenging contexts. It also showed that how a readily avaliable tool can be used to support language teacher development in remote teaching contexts. The use of videoconferencing enabled

distance in-service training that helped English language teachers sustained their professional growth.

2.4 Being a Rural Teacher in Turkey

Concentrating on challenges and struggles of teachers in Turkish rural contexts is of vital importance for better teaching with a more realistic and effective perspective. Coping with challenges of rural teaching contexts and developing strategies to overcome contextual problems are difficult tasks for in-service and especially novice teachers (Nur, 2015).

Durdukoca (2018) conducted a research in order to examine the views of the teachers about teacher training system in Turkey. It was conducted as a case study and collected data from 55 teachers who were serving in towns of the Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey. Participants were comprised of both novice and experienced teachers. After collecting the data via interviews, it was found that teachers generally have negative opinions about the teacher training system in Turkey. The most striking results can be summarized as follows: there is not enough in-class activities during undergraduate education, teacher training programs are not preparatory to the profession, there is no national training policy of MoNE and current teacher training policies are far from educational problems in Turkey. The study also reveals very crucial findings about village schools. They proposed that courses about village life, village schools and living conditions in different regions must be added to undergraduate curriculum. One of the participants said: "Universities and internship places are located in city centers but we are appointed to villages. Living in the village is really difficult. Course about the difficulties in village schools and village life should be added to the program" (p.290). In addition, participants asserted that instructors are not sufficient to train teacher candidates in undergraduate programs since instructors do not have rural teaching experiences. In addition, participants put forth that in-service trainings are excellent on paper but they have serious problems while implementing them in real life. They said that their main difficulty was finding time and opportunity to attend these trainings. They thought that in-service trainings are necessary for professional development; however, they should be practical and

accessible for teachers. One of the participants said: "I think that in-service trainings do not provide a professionally meaningful contribution, as practices do not satisfy teachers sufficiently" (p.294). They thought that when the teacher educator is not an expert, in-service trainings are consisted of only reading slides from PowerPoint presentations. They also indicated that in-service trainings change depending on the region in Turkey. One of the participants said: "In-service trainings are successful and quite beneficial in cities of western regions; in eastern provinces in-service trainings do not have any purpose. Well-known educators in Turkey may be encouraged for training seminars in East" (p.294). Finally, it was stated by one of the participants that because of the transportation problems in villages, teachers could not attend in-service trainings.

Çiftçi and Cin (2018) conducted a study to unearth the educational challenges experienced by teachers and communities in rural Turkey. The relevant data were gathered from 20 teachers working in 16 different villages by using in-depth interviews. In addition, the researchers used focus group discussions among rural-dwelling women and men. This study found that there were mainly four significant challenges that impede community and educational progress: lack of resources; insufficient understanding of socio-cultural and economic factors that constrain educational development; lack of collaboration between teacher and communities; and irrelevant curricula. It was also found that these challenges interact with one another in casting out rural areas. The study put forth that almost all rural schools lacked teaching materials, equipment and facilities. Most teachers asserted that they did not have resources. It was also very striking that they showed no attempt to develop compatible teaching materials or using authentic materials for lessons. They also stated that they did not attempt to ask the nearest administrative unit for a supply of resources. Most of the teachers in this study took the hard situation for granted and they thought they could not teach without materials.

Moreover, the other teachers stated that they would want to improve their teaching skills and material development abilities, but they associated their problems with pre-service teacher education by emphasizing the gap between teacher education curriculum offered at universities and the realities they faced in rural areas.

Participants thought that schools were very important to prepare rural kids for future. The study also found that some of the teachers acknowledged that rural schools should have a different curriculum than urban schools. Likewise, another teacher said: "A skyscraper on the subject may not mean much to students here but if I talk about how we can measure a field… It may be more meaningful" (p.10). Furthermore, Çiftçi and Cin (2018) manifested that most of the rural teachers did not live in the village due to lack of infrastructure and poor conditions. Therefore, this situation led to very little time to engage with the community and observe their students outside the classroom. One of the participants said: "I do not even live in the village. I come early in the morning and leave right after the school. The villagers think we represent urban life. So there is a lack of communication between us" (p.11). One of the teachers indicated that they needed collaboration between teachers and the community to solve some of the problems, such as parental involvement in education, lack of resources, school time and so on. In a similar vein, Sağ (2009) investigated pre-service classroom teachers' views about teaching in multigrade classes in rural areas in Turkey. The data were collected from eight pre-service classroom teachers through semi-structured interviews. The results reveal both positive and negative opinions of pre-service teachers about rural teaching. According to one of the participants, rural teaching is hard because rural schools are in poor conditions with respect to teaching materials. However, participants also mentioned the advantages of being a rural teacher. One of the participants said: "They [rural kids] are really hungry for knowledge. There are students who will grow up to be much better if the teacher really makes the effort" (p.27).

Two of the participants indicated that small number of students and serenity in village life, knowing all students, working with parents to increase cooperation were prominent advantages of rural teaching. It was also striking that all participants stated the lack of pre-service teacher preparation for rural teaching in faculties of education in Turkey. They thought that pre-service teacher education programs do not provide teacher candidates with a training to ease the adaptation processes to village life and teaching with limited resources. In parallel with this, one of the participants indicated that rural practicum would be very beneficial to prepare teacher candidates for their future careers. She said: "More activities could be offered about the physical

structure, activities and life conditions… A village school could be presented as an organized event. How does a village school work, how does it function? These could be presented before going there" (p.31).

Özoğlu (2015) conducted a study in order to investigate the issue of mobility-related teacher turnover in Turkey. He collected the relevant data through both qualitative and quantitative methods from 18 school principals from six different urban and rural schools located in eastern provinces in Turkey. Findings of descriptive statistics suggest that there are higher rates of mobility-related teacher turnover in most of the eastern provinces. The study showed that after three or four years, teachers are transferred to the developed western cities and novice teachers are appointed to these less-developed and mostly rural provinces to fill the vacancies arising from transfers. This situation leaves rural students with novice teachers permanently. After getting this result, Özoğlu (2015) asked school principals the factors that influence teachers' decisions to leave eastern regions and several interrelated factors emerged as a result of semi-structured interviews. Firstly, teachers desire to work in provinces close to their own families or places where they grew up. Since geographic isolation restricts teachers' ability to visit their families, this causes feeling of loneliness. Secondly, participants indicated that lack of community amenities, very limited social activities and poor housing conditions were factors that influenced teacher decisions to leave the region. One of the school principals said: "There is no salary difference, the living conditions are poor, and they have to pay the same amount of rent compared to metropolitan provinces" (p.900). Because of the poor housing conditions and lack of amenities, it was found that most of the village teachers preferred to live in city centers or town centers and travel to their schools every day. However, they indicated that this situation leads to loss of money and transportation issues especially in winter because of the severe weather conditions. Since the Turkish government employs a uniform salary policy for all public-school teachers, all teachers in public teachers with the same level of experience get approximately the same amount of salary no matter where they teach. Therefore, the uniform salary policy was found to be another factor affected teachers' decisions to leave rural regions.

All participants complained about the lack of financial incentives to compensate teachers for teaching in disadvantaged regions. The school principals also mentioned about the negative impacts of teacher turnover in disadvantaged and rural areas. The first one is related to student achievement. According to the participants, low student performance on high school entrance exams was largely a result of excessive teacher turnover experienced in their schools. Secondly, the participants indicated that newly appointed teachers seemed as unmotivated and unhappy *guests* while waiting for their transfers to the developed areas. They asserted that this situation affects their teaching performance and students' learning processes. In addition, since teachers assigned to their schools are usually novice teachers, students in disadvantaged and rural areas do not encounter with experienced teachers throughout their school lives. Finally, the school participants provided three suggestions to recruit and retain teachers in disadvantaged or rural areas. Firstly, they indicated that current recruitment strategy is a compulsory service policy which causes to retain teachers in the area unwillingly. They suggest that financial incentives would be beneficial for encouraging teachers to remain in the area willingly. Secondly, housing alternatives should be provided for teachers like accommodation provisions offered for other occupation groups, such as judges, policemen or army officials. Therefore, provision of housing would be a key factor to retain teachers in the area. Lastly, it was suggested that MoNE should implement a local recruitment policy to attract candidates who already live in the region and willingly accept to teach in the area with high motivation.

Within a technological perspective, Alemdag and Erdem (2017) conducted a collaborative research to design an e-mentoring program for novice teachers in Turkey. They collected data from 14 mentees, 14 mentors, and 6 teacher educators through online messages and semi-structured interviews. All novice teachers were teaching in rural areas in different geographical regions in Turkey. The study found that e-mentoring program provided different types of benefits for the professional development of novice rural teachers and their mentors. Firstly, e-mentoring program was a beneficial tool to seek, provide and respond to support. The participants looked for solutions to problems they encountered in rural schools as novice teachers. Both the mentors and mentees provided three types of support in this program: cognitive,

affective, and instrumental support. Cognitive support included reading the problem, offering a solution to the problem, sharing own teaching experiences, and giving advice. Affective support was comprised of caring, empathetic and encouraging comments on mentees' problems. It was found that the e-mentoring model was a good start to ease novice teachers' professional isolation in rural areas. One of the participants wrote: "As a novice teacher, I saw that I am not alone. I saw that many people experience similar difficulties" (p.140).

In a similar vein, Baş (2010) aimed to evaluate one of the technological facilities in rural schools in Turkey and investigated DynEd courses used in English classes in elementary schools in Turkey from the views of teachers. The relevant data were collected from twelve English language teachers from six elementary schools. Six of the teachers were from rural schools and six of them were from urban elementary schools. This qualitative case study was conducted by collecting data through semi-structured interviews. Since DynEd, which stands for Dynamic Education, is used in many countries to assist English language teaching process at schools. It is a very useful computer software that helps students improve their listening and speaking skills. This study reveals very important results about using this software in English lessons, especially in rural schools in Turkey. First of all, all participants expressed positive opinions about DynEd in terms of improving students' language skills and attracting their attention to English lessons. However, the participants also mentioned difficulties they experienced during DynEd courses. One of the rural teachers indicated that they struggled with technical deficiencies while using DynEd. She said: "I work in a rural area of the city. We have a small school. We do not have a computer lab and that's interesting because it is compulsory for us to apply DynEd courses in our school. There is no Internet access in our school" (p.26). It was also noted by rural teachers that school principals did not pay attention to DynEd courses and also, they did not provide technical support to English language teachers. Therefore, teachers think that DynEd courses are very beneficial but there are problems for the implementation of DynEd courses in rural schools as a result of poor technological infrastructure and lack of support from school principals.

There is a general consensus among Turkish scholars that there is an urgent need for the revision in English language teaching departments' curricula to add courses or practices considering teaching in specific situated contexts and prepare prospective teachers for the idiosyncratic needs of local contexts (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011). From this perspective, Kızılaslan (2012) conducted a study to investigate needs to prepare English language teachers for remote areas in Turkey. The study aimed to provide views about the expectations of pre-service teachers in relation to rural teaching. The study was designed as a case study and the relevant data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire from 115 senior pre-service teachers. Focus group interviews were held with participants in order to collect in-depth data. 76 of the participants had never experienced rural life, while only 22 of them had stayed in a rural area for several days. Only 17 participants had experienced rural life as a child in different regions of Turkey. 80% of the participants expressed that they would accept to work in a rural area, if they are appointed after the graduation. The first striking result of the study was participants' vague notions of rural teaching often imposed by media or other people. According to the study, the main challenges that pre-service teachers thought they would experience in rural areas were: lack of familiarity with the students' cultural background, lack of own experience, limited access to resources, lack of interest and motivation about a foreign language, parents' attitudes, restrictions in a small community, dislocation from family, security issues, denial by the community and transportation/accommodation. One of the participants said: "The teacher and the students would have some differences in their culture and would have some conflicts because of living in different social conditions. This affects all the professional conditions such as classroom management" (p.248).

In a similar vein, one of the pre-service teachers considered the cultural differences as a big problem for teachers: "When a teacher who has grown up in a western city has no work in an eastern city, he will also experience some communication problems. This situation is harder for an inexperienced teacher because s/he has to learn not only how to teach but also how to get used to the language and culture of that community" (p.248). It is also very striking that participants emphasized the lack of materials in rural areas. They thought that it is hard for novice English language teachers to catch students' attention without materials. Participants thought that they

feel the anxiety about parents' negative perspective towards language learning. They stated that they expected to feel loneliness and boredom in rural areas as a result of being away from their families and friends. Additionally, transportation and accommodation problems were indicated. They indicated that severe weather conditions in the East will be a big problem for them. Apart from all negative perceptions, all participants had an idealistic attitude towards teaching in rural contexts. One of them said: "I have to show my students that someone takes care of them. I will prepare them for the life" (p.250). To this end, participants also defined teaching in a rural school as 'a different and exciting experience' and 'a personal challenge one should overcome'.

From pre-service English language teachers' perspectives, Ölçü-Dinçer and Seferoğlu (2020) investigated regional and institutional factors affecting their career plans in Turkey. The relevant data were collected through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews conducted with 88 participants. The study reveals important results. Firstly, pre-service English teachers were planning to work in the region where they were having their pre-service teacher education. For instance, pre-service teachers enrolled in universities in Central Anatolian region had a tendency to work in Central Anatolia region. Secondly, it was found that five major factors affect pre-service teachers' future plans; 1) familiarity with the local culture, 2) distance from hometown and climate, 3) social responsibility in ensuring equity in education and making a change in rural students' lives, 4) social facilities and professional development opportunities, and 5) stereotypes and beliefs derived from others' experiences.

The data also indicated that some of the participants were planning to work in rural areas as a result of altruistic motivations and they showed a positive attitude towards cultural differences. One of the participants was planning to work in Eastern and Southeastern areas. She explained her reasons with the following words: "There are people who have a thirst for learning. I mean the children living there are very different, more natural, how should I stay untouched… We shouldn't take the issue only as an English teacher, we can teach them many things, I am favoring this perspective" (p.11). Finally, stereotypes and beliefs derived from others' experiences

play a crucial role in pre-service teachers' future career plans. This study also showed that most of the participants do not prefer to teach in private institutions due to the fact that they would like to work under the government guarantee.

In a similar vein, Güngör et al. (2019) conducted a study in order to examine the challenges of 23 Turkish and 11 Polish novice EFL teachers and the way they develop their professional understanding in the early years of teaching. They collected data via critical incidents and online semi-structured interviews. One of the Turkish teachers indicated that she organized parent-teacher meetings as a rural teacher in order to inform the parents about their children. She asserted that it is very important to inform parents about the fact that their children devalued the importance of learning English which resulted in demotivation and low English proficiency level. Another participant shared her experiences as a rural teacher about students' low motivation of learn English, poor economic and social conditions in the neighborhood, and parents' negative attitudes towards learning English. According to her, students were not open to learn a foreign language and a new culture in rural areas. In a similar vein, one of the Turkish participants shared his experiences as a village teacher followed by the feelings such as shock, frustration and despair. He interpreted the reasons of his feelings as follows: "I understood that the social and cultural background of students affected students' behaviour with peers and teachers negatively" (p.296). Likewise, a Turkish participant drew attention to the fact that there is a gap between pre-service teacher education and the realities in rural schools. She thought that pre-service teacher education programmes should offer courses for teaching in diverse contexts. It is clear that novice rural teachers encounter challenges which they cannot cope alone.

Investigating in-service EFL teachers' perspective of continuous professional development in underprivileged districts of Turkey, Tunaz and Önem (2017) collected qualitative data from 20 EFL teachers who have been working at different state schools in the remote villages of southeast part of Turkey. All participants were experienced primary and middle school teachers. The relevant data was collected via semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. In the study, participants stated that making a contribution of professional development activities for teacher

quality increases student achievement. They thought that professional development activities make teachers well-equipped and knowledgeable about the profession which affects students positively. Secondly, they stated that rural teachers have very limited opportunities for continuous professional development. Likewise, three more participants indicated that they are not supported enough in terms of providing planned, accountable and sustainable professional development activities in remote areas. Therefore, they stated that teaching in a remote area had a direct effect on accessing to professional development opportunities. Thirdly, it was found that rural teachers need more time to attend professional development activities. One of the participants stated that they need time for meet, discuss, collaborate and agree on possible solutions. Another participant stated that they cannot go for a workshop or seminar to another city, since she is the only English language teacher in the school and there is no substitution for her. One of the participants put forth that he decided to attend a Master's program but he dropped the idea of pursuing postgraduate studies as a result of travel expenses and time pressure to go the university which is 100 km away from the town. It was also suggested that teachers preferred to spend time with their families after school or at the weekend. They expected to attend professional development activities during the school time. It is very striking that rural teachers expected to take place in the planning phase of professional development activities. According to them, there should be a committee for professional development and teachers should take part in to organize and plan activities. Finally, it was noted that participants are dissatisfied with unfair financial condition in rural areas. They thought that the government should provide more financial support for rural teachers in order to make them more willing to teach and stay in the area.

Başer and Karaman (2015) explored how experiences in a rural school shaped a novice English language teacher's professional identity and teaching practices. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews, an open-ended questionnaire and observations. It was found that the teacher encountered challenges while enacting the national curriculum in a rural school in Turkey. Firstly, it was found that parents did not give much importance to schooling. It was also revealed that parents did not collaborate with teachers in terms of providing support for their kids. The

participant said: "They [parents] love the school. They love teachers. Yet, they are insufficient because our parents are at best graduates of high school and they are not more than 1 or 2 people. The rest is graduate of 5-year elementary school. There are even illiterates." Moreover, students' free time activities were very limited in rural areas and they did not add anything to what their teachers taught when they came back home from school. Parents' indifference, poor economic conditions and lack of role models at home were prominent problems in rural areas. In addition, parents indicated that teacher turnover was one of the most important problems that affected rural kids' success in the school. The participant believed that English was a very important lesson for rural kids in terms of providing a new horizon for rural kids and preparing them for a better future. He said: "Education is their only chance to save themselves from this village, this environment. I mean, only a good job can save our female and male students from this village and life... I think English is one of the best ways for them to open up to other worlds." The participant stated that he liked teaching but he still wanted to pursue Master's degree and get a position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He also stated that he wanted to settle down in an urban area and work in a foreign language school. The reason behind his future plans was poor physical conditions and lack of resources in the village school. He said: "We cannot even find a tape. We find a tape, but this time we cannot find the casette of the book. I didn't have teacher's book. It would be better if each class had a projector. You cannot connect to the Internet. If you can, it doesn't play a video. Nothing."

2.5 Teacher Metaphors

Teacher Education literature suggests that investigating teacher identity via *metaphors* is considerable, since teachers often use metaphors while talking about the teaching profession, their beliefs, and their teaching practices (Tobin & LaMaster, 1995). Since storied metaphors have been personally and professionally used by teachers to convey their thoughts and lived experiences with metaphors, the significance of metaphors has been come into prominence in the field of teacher education (Craig, 2018). According to Connelly and Clandinin (1999), the professional identity conceptualization in the field of teacher education became synonymous with investigating teacher metaphors. Similarly, Elbaz (2001) asserts

that personal stories become a metaphorical passport to illuminate teachers' perceptions about teaching practices and the teaching profession. Tobin (1990a) summarized the role of metaphor studies in the field of teacher education as "the conceptualization of a role, and the metaphor used to make sense of it, is dependent on the context in which teaching and learning occurs" (p.126). Therefore, it is crucial to investigate teacher metaphors in order to become aware of the educational beliefs and practices (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000). To conclude, metaphor is a tool to increase self-reflection especially among EFL and ESL teachers (Antonek, McCormick & Donato, 1997). Considering this, a large number of studies have investigated metaphors generated by teachers to represent their perceptions, beliefs and experiences about the teaching profession and teaching practices (Massengill Shaw, & Mahlios, 2008). As Clandinin (1986) implies, metaphors are representations of the way teachers think about the teaching profession and the way they act in the classroom. Therefore, metaphors, as a reflective tool to underpin ways of thinking about teaching and learning, provide a window into teachers' personal and professional experiences by acting as 'translators' of what they live, think and feel (Miller, 1987). Eliciting teachers' metaphors is a fruitful process, since metaphors provide an understanding towards teachers' personal and professional identities owing to the widespread use of metaphor as a cognitive tool (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000). Thus, metaphor elicitation is one of the most effective methods to find out how language teachers conceptualize their roles in inside and outside classes.

From an educational perspective, investigating metaphors are also an important attemtp to understand teachers' personal practical knowledge that shapes their understanding of their roles as teachers (Farrell, 2018). For example, Pajak (1986) finds that metaphors are means for teachers "to verbalize their *professional identity*" (p.123). Similarly, Clandinin (1986) metaphors are tools for understanding the way teachers think about their own teaching practices and the teaching profession. Thus, when teachers decide to *unpack* their metaphors they hold, they begin to understand what they really think about teaching and what guide them as they teach. When teachers attempt to unpack and reflect on their use of metaphors, they may discover metaphors that may not be suitable for their teaching lives. This attempt may help

teachers revise their metaphors in accordance with their actual needs for teaching language, for their students' learning, for their classroom environment, and transform themselves as professionals. The use of metaphor as means of unveiling teachers' tacit referential systems and providing new referents for consideration is of vital importance, not only for teachers but also for teacher education field. The implications of studying teachers' metaphors come from its potential to provide a basis for understanding and interpreting teachers' mental images. Metaphors can be used to understand the salient characteristics of teachers and their environments when there are no direct observers of a situation. Using metaphors enable teachers for describing their beliefs and actions by reflecting upon them. Metaphors make tacit understandings explicit via bringing peoples' hidden conceptualizations to light. In educational studies, metaphors have a useful function in teaching by helping to raise teachers' awareness of key concepts, models, and issues. Teachers' awareness of their own metaphors may help them to reflect on their own teaching experiences and to develop professionally (Nias, 1989). Apart from that, studying teachers' metaphors is very fruitful due to the fact that they provide teachers' images related to their students, teaching contexts, teaching practices, and the teaching profession (Clandinin, 1985). Teachers use metaphors for several purposes. They use metaphors to identify for themselves what they actually experience (Provenzo, McCloskey, Kottkamp & Cohen, 1989), they use them to capture multiple meanings in their experiences (Ricoeur, 2003), or metaphors may help them to organize systematic concepts in their cultural-cognitive models of learning (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Therefore, investigating teachers' metaphors play a key role in understanding their personal and professional lives due to its potential to unearth teachers'images about what they experience and how they interpret them. Clandinin and Connelly (1988) directly adress both pre-service and in-service teachers metaphors as follows:

> We understand teachers' actions and practices as embodied expressions of their metaphors of teaching and living. It makes a great deal of difference to our practices, for example, if we think of teaching as gardening, coaching, or cooking… How can metaphors be identified? Perhaps the most direct way is to listen to speech. How do you talk about your teaching? We think it is more telling for you to examine your practices, interview material, stories and journals to capture your metaphorical concepts of teaching. To do this we suggest you need to contextualize your metaphors within your experiences and to see them played out in your practices. Our intent is not to have you see this way of understanding practice only as a way of talking about practice, but also as part of your practice (p.71).

A variety of other researchers have investigated beginning teachers' metaphors (e.g., Bullough, 1991; Knowles, 1994; Provenzo et al., 1989; Tobin, 1990b). All these researchers acknowledge the power of metaphors as research tools to understand teachers in particular social and teaching contexts. Fenwick (2000) conducted a research in Canada with in-service teachers and put forward four metaphor categories generated by the participants: Adventure Guide, in which the teacher's job is to lead the students in a hard journey; Outfitter, in which teacher equip the students with knowledge and skills; Fire starter, in which teacher's role is to increase students' motivation for learning; and Caregiver, in which teacher is responsible for students' personal development and acts like a parent for nourishing the educational environment to enhance students' learning. From a different perspective, Bullough and Stokes (1994) examined the personal teaching metaphors of secondary teacher education students enrolled in a year-long certification program in the United States. The researchers found that focusing on personal metaphors might have a huge impact on encouraging beginning teachers to think about their future professional selves and provide an opportunity to stretch their imaginations related to the teaching profession and teaching practices. In a similar fashion, Marchant's (1992) large-scale study conducted with pre-service teachers put forth eight metaphors generated by the participants: teacher as authority (judge, police officer, prison warden), caregiver (parent, doctor), director (movie director, orchestra conductor), captive (prisoner), person on trial (in a courtroom awaiting the verdict of a jury), agent of change (advocate of change), referee, and party host.

Nguyen (2016) conducted a study focusing on the identity of primary school non-native English language teachers in Vietnam. Participants were six teachers who were teaching in six different primary schools and they were all female. Their years of teaching experience ranged from 13 to 21 years. The researcher collected relevant data via individual semi-structured interviews at three types of primary schools in Vietnam (i.e., rural state, metropolitan state and metropolitan private). In this study, all the participants were TEYL teachers; therefore, they used metaphors of *caregiver, babysitter,* and *taking care of the kids* in order to define their identities in the classroom. They indicated that their work is more demanding than teaching at high

schools and universities. One of them said, "English teachers there just enter the classroom and teach. They are not bothered whether students are hungry or miss their parents". Another participant indicated that TEYL classes are needed to be handled with a mother's tender, loving care, since pupils need to feel parental care rather than a formal atmosphere. In addition, one of the participants, who teaches in a village school, approached the issue with a different perspective by saying, "I always put a comb and nail clippers in my bag to help untidy pupils" due to the fact that their parents are poor peasants and very busy working in the rice fields. They have no time to take care of their children in terms of personal care and hygiene. In addition, Nguyen (2016) showed in his study that metaphors of *singer, painter, songwriter, storyteller, dancer,* and *performing artist* were mentioned by the participants in order to define one of their professional role identities as TEYL teachers due to the fact that delivering the content of English to pupils by using arts and craft activities is more effective in TEYL courses. One of the participants expressed her thoughts as "I'm like a singer. The pupils and I sing in every class. While singing, we move our bodies and dance as though we are performing artists on the stage." Teacher as a knowledge provider is another umbrella metaphor generated by the participants in this study. Nguyen's (2016) participants defined their teacher role identity as an *intercultural promoter*, since they believed that an EFL teacher introduces his/her students to various cultures. They generated the following metaphors: *cultural ambassador, intercultural worker, cultural intermediary, bridging cultural gaps,* and *a journey that takes the kids across deserts and oceans to different cultures.* Participants feel themselves lucky because they think that an additional language serves as a 'window' into multiple cultures and they have opportunity to share their intercultural understanding with pupils. One of them, who works in a village school, said, "Some pupils don't know what a supermarket or museum is like". In this sense, their teacher identities as intercultural workers help them introduce pupils to various cultures but also to show empathy for rural pupils' limited opportunities for experiencing urban life.

With a different perspective, one of the participants indicated that cultural topics in English lessons help pupils to recognize weaknesses in their own country by explaining, "I think English teachers should teach students to look at bad habits in

Vietnam and replace them with better ones in other cultures." Besides, the study revealed that participants used the metaphor *judge* as an umbrella term for *lawmaker* and *settling pupils' disputes and conflicts.* One of the participants drew attention to the difficulty of being a TEYL teacher with the following statement: "They tell me all of their problems. They even tell me things that are none of their business. While I am still solving the problem of one student, other pupils tell me other problems. When I get out of the class, my head is still full of pupils' complaints and ideas." Nguyen's (2016) participants also defined their teacher roles as *democrat leaders* and defined their classroom atmosphere with the metaphors of 'stress-free', 'close teacher-student relationship', 'friends', and 'listens to pupils and understand them'. According to the participants, democracy should be a part of their teaching. One of them said, "If we teachers let pupils say what they think, I believe that many of their ideas can help us reassess our own behaviors." It is expected that the teachers' role as 'democrat' will educate pupils to become 'engaged citizens' who are able to think critically, be curious, and questioning, and evaluate knowledge.

Similarly, Erickson and Pinnegar (2017) conducted a qualitative study to explore how in-service teachers' self-constructed metaphors revealed their perceptions of their roles, obligations and assumptions about teaching and learning. They collected data by using a metaphor task, focus group discussions and classroom observations from four in-service teachers in the United States. While three of the participants were novice teachers, one of the participants was an experienced teacher. The novice teachers used three metaphors to define their teacher identities: gardener, the Queen of England, and traveler on a journey. Firstly, the metaphor of gardener was used to indicate that teachers shape the classroom environment to support the learning of each student. Just as the gardener, the teacher plants, waters, weeds, nurtures her students and spends her life working to create a productive environment for her students. Secondly, the metaphor of Queen of England was used to define her roles as defending the importance of education and preparing future citizens for the common good. In this metaphor, the teacher works hard to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and learning. Thirdly, the metaphor of traveler on a journey was mentioned to explain that teachers and learners are in the advanture of learning. Both the teacher and her students are continually moving forward gaining new knowledge

and skills. The participant said: "I believe that my learning never ends as a teacher. My students… embark on the same journey I do every year. As travelers together, we add new knowledge to our backpacks, and discard the practices that do not work. I travel with my students on a journey as we learn new things" (p.114). Finally, the experienced teacher used the metaphor of butterfly across its life cycle in order to explain her teacher identity with different stages of teacher development from novice through expert teachers. The participant explained her metaphor as follows: "Throughout the lifecycle of a butterfly each stage represents an evolution that ultimately culminates in the emergence of a beautiful butterfly. Evolution through each stage of my life as a teacher, has led to increased levels of understanding and purpose" (p.116).

Likewise, investigating professional identities of three female ESL college teachers, Farrell (2016) made use of Oxford et al.'s (1998) taxonomy in order to group metaphors generated by the participants. He collected data by utilizing group meetings and follow-up interviews in a self-initiated teacher reflection group in Canada. He found that being a teacher is like being *a mother* or *a parent.* One of the participants indicated that she is sometimes a *mother* to her students because she said that she "worries about all her students and their progress." Similarly, another participant thought that she is like a *parent* because she feels like she guides her own children and feels their pain when they felt pain with the struggles of growing up. Participants also generated the following metaphors related to the umbrella metaphor teacher as a *leader*: *facilitator, coach,* and *therapist*. Within this category, teacher as a *facilitator* is by far the most popular metaphor used by the participants.

One of the participants indicated that she is a *coach* because she said that she "sets the bar and encourages students to reach it." She added that in order to carry out her duty as a coach, she "looks out for weak and wayward students and pushes these students to go on as hard as they can" just like a coach would in a sports team. Another teacher used *therapist* to indicate that she tries to "build up" her students' attitudes and "opens their ideas to new ideas and new ways of thinking." The second category includes *guard dog, peacekeeper, king, army general, dictator, micromanaging boss,* and *judge*. *Guard dog* is used to indicate that the teacher has to

be "fierce and intimidate to protect what is valuable to her in her classroom." Another teacher used *peacekeeper* to indicate how she tries to keep her classroom and students close to her. *King* was used to indicate that she "sets the rules in class and then enforces them strictly." *Army general* is used because she "assigns tasks." *Dictator* is used because she dictates what happens in the class. *Micromanaging Boss* is used to describe that the teacher watches her students and "makes sure that they do all the small things." And finally, *Judge* is used to describe the situation that teachers judge students' actions and behaviors and tries to be fair.

Exploring teachers' perceptions about their professional roles as ESL teachers through metaphors, Guerrero and Villamil (2000) collected data from 22 (6 males & 16 females) ESL teachers in Puerto Rico via a workshop worksheet in a workshop titled *'Teachers' Beliefs about the Teaching of ESL: What their metaphors say?'* ESL teachers in Puerto Rico defined their teacher identities by using the following words: *bee, Mother Nature,* and *a gardener* who fosters the potential capabilities of students and facilitates growth. One of the teachers expressed her thoughts as follows: "Teacher is a gardener who gives his/her plants tender loving care: water, fertilizer, pruning, insecticide. Each plant develops at its own rate." Besides, they found that teaching is as an aesthetic experience requiring high degree of skills and creativity. One of the participants used the metaphor *artist* by saying: "Teacher is a *theater director* who just sits back at certain points after the scene has been prepared and then just let the actors act." The participants also defined their professional role as an agent of change by using the following metaphors: *snag in the river, gateway to the future, and shooting star, who serves as a transformative agent in students' learning process.* Guerrero and Villamil (2000) also elucidated *tool carrier*, who makes language available to students as a tool to construct meaning, *coach, trail guide, movie/theater director, symphony director,* and *instrument of God* as metaphors. One of the participants said, "As an instrument of God, I am invisible because I want my students to be the center of the learning process, not myself.

Exploring novice teachers' professional identities via metaphors is also very noteworthy to elicit their conceptualizations related to their teaching practices and the teaching profession. In this fashion, Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) aimed to

understand new teachers' professional identities through metaphor elicitation method. They examined 45 (4 male & 41 female) novice EFL teachers' metaphors for their professional identities. The data was collected via two semi-structured interviews in Canada. In this study, *nurturing* and *protecting students* to find their ways were the main concepts they used to define their role identities. One of the participants said, "I'm a guide and a mother. I will guide my students toward knowledge of science, plus the mothering part of teaching." Apart from that, the study found that being an agent of change is one of the professional role identities of EFL/ESL teachers. Participants in in this study generated metaphors indicating the notion of change, such as a *waterfall in the summer, magician having to adapt to different audiences, never ending road, coming out of a cocoon, kayak on a river.* One of the participants indicated that a teacher should always be ready for changes and transformations. She said, "It is in a river that gets bigger and bigger as we know more about the teaching profession, and it is like we end up going from the river to the sea where we are kind of lost." Investigating novice teachers' professional role identities through metaphor, Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) also put forward that helping students find their own ways is one of the essential parts of teaching profession. The participants mentioned the following metaphors to define their professional roles: *the captain of a boat*, who takes students somewhere and there are storms and high waves; *the offensive line in a football team,* who protects the classroom and the students; *a coat hanger* because everything hangs on the teacher and teacher supports everyone; if not, it falls; *soldier*, who has battles in the classroom, and *duck,* whose feet are paddling like crazy under the water although it looks calm and collected above the water.

In Turkish context, Yeşilbursa (2012) conducted a study to elicit a group of non-native English language instructors' metaphors related to their professional role identities. 35 instructors (23 female & 12 male), who were employed at the schools of foreign languages of two different state universities in Turkey, were the participants of this study. Their teaching experiences ranged from 1 to over 20 years. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews. English language preparatory school EFL instructors in this study defined their roles with the following words: *mother, parent,* and *babysitter*. Yeşilbursa (2012) also drew

attention to the entertainment part of foreign language classes by finding out the metaphors of *actress* and *pop singer*. In her study, Yeşilbursa (2012) put forth that one of the participants used *vegetable soup* as a metaphor to indicate the ability to combine different teaching skills and teach students coming from different socio-cultural and economic backgrounds and also they used *chameleon* to conceptualize the ability to adapt hard situations and changing teaching styles as necessary. In Yeşilbursa's (2012) study, seven metaphors generated by the participants were clustered into two categories to define teacher as a *leader*: *authority* and *guide*. Under the category of *authority*, one of the participants mentioned *craftsman* to define that he saw his students as apprentices in classroom. Another participant mentioned *queen bee*, which referred to the role of the instructor in designating tasks in the classroom. The metaphor of *chief commander* was used to define instructors' responsibilities for choosing the strategies to help students, while *orchestra conductor* was mentioned to define teachers' role identity as keeping harmony in the orchestra. Under the category of *guide*, the participants saw themselves as *overhead projector*, who illuminates students; *weathervane*, who directs students to become individuals; and *elevator*, whose job is to help students go up.

In a similar vein, a very recent study conducted by Asmalı and Çelik (2017) in a Turkish context that aimed identifying the metaphors that 24 (14 female & 10 male) EFL teachers teaching at different levels in different parts of Turkey use to define their professional role identities. The data were collected via a metaphor elicitation task in public and private schools in Turkey. All teachers had less than six years of teaching experience. They found in their studies that their participants put forth their professional identities by mentioning *mother, father, family member,* and *gardener,* since they were working as EFL teachers at pre-schools and primary schools. In addition, the participants defined EFL teacher as an actor/actress, and also with new two metaphors: *clown* and *magician*. In their study, pre-school and primary school EFL teachers also generated metaphors related to being as an agent of transformation, such as *person who breaks taboos,* and *person who is a bridge*. Teacher as a *leader* is one of the striking umbrella metaphors revealed in this study with the following metaphors: guide, *football coach, orchestra leader, facilitator,* and *organizer*. Asmalı and Çelik (2017) also found that EFL teachers were used to

the following metaphors to define their professional role identities: *explorers, convertible cars*, and *researchers*, who keep follow new methods and developments in the field and try to implement them in the classroom. Finally, the participants in Asmalı and Çelik (2017) generated metaphors to define their teacher role identity as a *knowledge provider*, such as *model, light to enlighten, candle, sun, star, computer, modem, Google, resource,* and *dictionary.*

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This dissertation is designed as a qualitative case study. This chapter firstly provides the methodology of this study including participants, data collection tools, and data analysis procedure. Secondly, the role of the researcher and trustworthiness of this study are provided. Finally, the ethical considerations are presented.

3.1 Case Study

Qualitative research design seeks to investigate and describe thinking patterns among a given group of participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Therefore, this type of methodology seems appropriate for unveiling the existence of metaphors, which are idiosyncratic, complex and latent reflective representations of teachers' role identities. As one of the methodologies in qualitative research, case study is concerned with a rich and vivid description of events relevant to a *case* (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

Case studies provide a chronological narrative of events being studied and they focus on individuals or groups of *actors* in order to understand their perceptions of events. Highlighting specific events, the researcher is involved in the case in order to portray the richness of the case. Providing a *thick description* of participants' lived experiences, feelings and thoughts, case study data are gathered systematically and rigorously to gain 'a fuller picture' of the case (ibid., p.183). Case study researcher makes colorful descriptions to help readers create a vivid picture of the case being studied (Merriam, 2009a). Specifically, there are various definitions of a case study in the literature. Researchers define it as a strategy of inquiry and a methodology (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 2009b; Yin, 2003). While Merriam (2009b) defines case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single

entity, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 16), Yin (2003) states that case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13) underlying the fact that a class, a part of a community or a single school may provide data enabling the researcher to provide a clear description of real situations. In a similar vein, Adelman and Jenkins (1980) propose that the case study is "the study of an instance in action" (p.141). As Ghauri (2004) indicates, case studies provide the investigation of a phenomenon from various standpoints obtained from different participants in real-life contexts. Creswell (2007) synthesizes different views and provides a comprehensive description of a case study:

> Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a *case*) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes. For example, several programs (a *multi-site* study) or a single program (a *within-site* study) may be selected for study (p. 73).

A case could be a person, a community, a class, a school, an activity, a program, or an institution. In case studies, practitioners could study schools or groups of schools, curricula, the effect of innovations, the implementation of materials, classrooms, teachers, and students. Therefore, a case study is conducted in temporal, spatial, geographical, organizational and/or institutional contexts that draw boundaries around the case in order to unearth the perceptions of an individual or "a group of *actors- the people being studied"* (Stake, 1995, p.4). A case study researcher tries hard to understand how the *actors* see things while preserving the *multiple realities*, the common, and the different and even contradictory views of what is happening. While conducting a case study, the researcher has no or a small role in controlling the events occurred in the setting (Yin, 2011). Therefore, the researcher only reveals a picture of a real situation by collecting detailed information through a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995). According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), the characteristics of a case study are having rich and vivid descriptions of events relevant to the case, providing a chronological narrative of events relevant to the case, focusing on individual *actors* or group of *actors* who share their perceptions of events, and highlighting specific events that are

relevant to the case. In addition, a case study benefits from the prior development of theoretical considerations to guide data collection and data analysis procedures (Yin, 2003).

As Wellington (2000) indicates, due to differences in many elements, generalization from one case to the other is very difficult. According to Gillham (2000), what is true for one case may not be true for another. For Stake (1995), case studies are not conducted to understand other cases, but to understand the one case *thoroughly.* As the real aim of a case study is particularization, the researcher puts emphasis on uniqueness of case that implies the prominence of understanding the case itself. In that sense, the aim of conducting a case study is to deal with opinions and interpretations and to develop insights rather than making generalizations (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). Stake (1995) labels these interpretations as *petite generalizations* (p.7). Hence, it enables readers to see a specific group of *actors* in their own idiosyncratic complexity and draw lessons from it for similar cases (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). However, there are many types of case studies (Yin, 2003). Case studies can involve either single or multiple cases, and either holistic (single unit of analysis) or embedded (multiple units of analysis) design. Yin (2003) suggests that whether the case is single or multiple, the researcher should decide on whether the study is holistic or embedded. However, in multiple case studies, the embedded design is more preferable because it examines the subunits and allows for the detailed perspective (Creswell, 2007). Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) proposed that a qualitative case study is a good choice in order to deal with the complexity of rural education. In a similar vein, Stake (1995) implies that urban teachers mostly find a commonality of process and situation after they read case studies conducted at rural schools, since they find their 'own *perplexities* in the lives of other' (p. 7). In that sense, as a qulitative case study, this dissertation aims to provide readers with a holistic overview of different standpoints of English language teachers who work at rural schools in Turkey.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) opt for a multiple case study research because of its potential of generalizability. However, since the contexts of cases differ, inquirers are cautious about making generalizations from one case to another. A multiple case

study is still crucial in terms of providing inquirer different perspectives on the issue (Creswell, 2007). In a multiple case study, one issue is selected and the inquirer selects multiple cases to display this issue. Issues are not simple and explicit, but "wired to political, social, historical, and especially personal contexts" (Stake, 1995, p. 17). Creswell (2007) suggests that there is no an exact number of cases in multiple case studies. Hoewever, typically, researchers choose no more than four or five cases (ibid.). Yin (2003) suggests that a multiple case study is conducted by using the logic of *replication*, in which the inquirer *replicates* the same procedure for each case. Multiple case studies involve collecting and analyzing data from several cases and it is distinguished from the single case study that may have subcases embedded within (Merriam, 2009a). In multiple case studies, individual cases, *portraits*, (Merriam, 2009a, p. 49) are firstly presented, and then a cross-case analysis is presented in order to suggest generalizations about the issue. There are mainly two stages of data analysis: the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis. In within-case analysis, each case is treated as a comprehensive single case. The researcher gathers data for each case in order to learn as much about the contextual variables as possible. After finishing the within-case analysis for each case, cross-case analysis begins. The researcher aims to build relations across cases. In spite of the particular details of each case, the researcher attempts to provide a general explanation that also fits the individual cases (Yin, 2003). Finally, Savin-Baden and Howell- Major (2013) state that a case study typically involves the "nature of the case, the historical background, the physical setting, other important contexts, such as economic, political and legal ones, other cases and the informants" (p. 153).

It is important for a case study researcher to have contextual material available to describe the setting for the case (Creswell, 2007). The contextual material provides an in-depth picture of the case that constructs a holistic view of incidents and actions. A case study researcher seeks to appreciate the uniqueness and complexity of the case, and its interaction with its context (Stake, 1995). Highlighting the importance of context, Yin (2003) states that a researcher uses case method because s/he would like to "cover contextual conditions-believing that they might be highly pertinent to (the) phenomenon of study" (p.13). As each context is unique with its own dynamics, case studies investigate a complex system of incidents, human relations, and

psychological and sociological realities in a unique instance. In light of this information, every teacher is a case, and every teacher's professional identity development experiences inside and outside the classroom also can be considered as cases for this study. The reason behind this design is the idea that a case study research is not a methodology but a choice of what it to be studied (Stake, 1995). In light of these, the current research is designed as a case study.

3.2 Research Setting

In a case study, researcher aims to provide a detailed coverage of the contextual conditions which are believed to display relevance to the case, since it is critical to take into consideration the context within which the case occurs (Yin, 2009). This study was conducted with five English language teachers working in five different rural schools in Turkey. The schools are located in four different geographical regions in Turkey and the necessary information about the territories of these schools are provided in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1
Research settings

Research Settings	Characteristics
Research Setting 1	The research setting is a village located in the Central Anatolia Region. The village is 48 km away from city center and 9 km away from district center. The village is located in a district which has been recorded as a *town* until 2004. With the Metropolitan Municipality Law No. 5216 in 2014, the town was admitted as a first-tier municipality which is instituted within the boundaries of a metropolitan municipality without a district being established. In 2008, the town became a *district* with the Metropolitan Municipality Law No. 5747. In 2012, the village became a *neighborhood* with the Law No. 6360 which was enacted to eliminate towns and villages along with their legal personality within the boundaries of metropolitan areas and convert all villages into neighborhoods. The current population of the district is 91.742 and the current population of the neighborhood is 3.222 as of January 2020.

Table 3.1 (cont'd)

Research Setting 2	The research setting is a village located in the Aegean Region. The village is 40 km away from city center and 7 km away from district center. The village has been converted into a *neighborhood* with the enactment of Law No. 6360 in 2012. The current population of the district is 106.298 and the current population of the neighborhood is 3.904 as of January 2020.
Research Setting 3	The research setting is a town located in the Aegean Region. The town has been exposed to intensive migration from Eastern Anatolia and Southeastern Anatolia regions for the last twenty years. The town has been admitted as a first-tier municipality until 2007. In 2008, all towns having population under 2.000 residents or being located outside the metropolitan municipalities in the Aegean Region were converted into *neighborhood* and added to the nearest district with the General Assembly Resolutions of TBMM (Grand National Assembly of Turkey). The town is 39 km away from city center and 2 km away from district center. The current population of the district is 174.564 and the current population of the neighborhood is 18.045 as of January 2020.
Research Setting 4	The research setting is a town located in the Eastern Anatolia Region. The town is 31 km away from the city center and 2 km away from the district center. The town has been admitted as a village until 1987 and converted into a *town* with the enactment of Law No. 3392. The current population of the town is 14.390 as of January 2020.
Research Setting 5	The research setting is a *remote-village* located in Southeastern Anatolia region. The village is 53 km away from the nearest district and 150 km away from the city center. Residents are exposed to hour-long continuous electricity cut and water cut. The village is the center of *transported education system* welcoming students from nearby small villages everyday. The current population of this village is 2.058 as of January 2020.

3.3 Participants

For a case study research, it is not recommended to include more than four or five cases to conduct cross-case theme analysis (Creswell, 2007). Even for multiple case studies, sampling should not be the highest priority, but the *balance* and *variety* are important because the opportunity to *learn* is of primary importance (Stake, 1995).

For this study, in the selection of participants to be interviewed, purposeful sampling strategy was implemented. Purposeful sampling is "selecting information-rich cases (who) are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry" (Patton, 2015, p. 264). Studying information-rich cases provides the inquirer in-depth insights and detailed understanding. According to Stake (1995), the researcher should have a "connoisseur's appetite" (p. 56) in order to select the best participants and the best occasions that best help him or her to understand the case. For Patton (2015), purposeful sampling is "a specifically qualitative approach to *case* selection" (p. 265).

As Creswell (2007) indicates, reporting of "multiple perspectives that range over the entire spectrum of perspectives" (p.122) is a distinctive feature of a good case study research. However, it is required to provide a rationale for the sampling strategy to select the cases. According to Creswell (2012), there are two types of nonprobability sampling. The first one is convenience sampling and the second one is snowball sampling. Snowball sampling creates a chain (Cohen et al., 2018), so that it is very practical where "access" is very difficult (p.220). In the present study, snowball sampling was utilized since the researcher asked the participants to invite other teachers who meet the criteria for this study. The participant selection criteria for snowball sampling were: subject matter, level of experience, and context of teaching. In this study, participants were selected from four different geographical regions in Turkey (i.e., Eastern Anatolia, Southeast Anatolia, Central Anatolia, and Aegean). The cities were selected to ensure a geographical spread across Turkey.

This study aims to give both the novice and experienced teachers a voice. Thus, both novice and experienced teachers' experiences were investigated in order to capture a wide range of perspectives relating to the issue. The principle behind snowball sampling is to gain various insights into a phenomenon by investigating it from different angles in order to understand how a phenomenon is seen and understand among different people in different settings (Cohen et al., 2018). Therefore, this sampling strategy helps researcher identify common patterns that are evident across different cases. In this study, there are five participants who are currently working at

rural schools. Freeman (2001) suggests that novice teachers have been defined as the ones who have been working for less than three years and experienced teachers have been defined as those working for five or more years. Thus, in this study, one of the participants is a novice teacher while the rest of them are experienced teachers. All participants are female. The profiles of the participants are shown in Table 3.2 below:

Table 3.2
Profile of the participants (as of October 2018)

Participants	Age	Year of graduation	Years of teaching experience	Previous teaching contexts	Current teaching context
T1	32	2009	9	-Private language courses and a private primary school in the Marmara region (5 years) -A village primary school in the Central Anatolia region (2.5 years) -A middle school in a rural district in the Central Anatolia region (1.5 years)	-A middle school in a rural district in the Central Anatolia region (6 months)
T2	37	2003	12	-Middle schools in suburban areas in the Central Anatolia and Marmara regions (7 years)	-A village middle school in the Aegean region (5 years)
T3	28	2013	6	-A primary school in a rural district in the Southeastern Anatolia region (4 years)	-A middle School in a rural district in the Aegean region (2 years)
T4	24	2015	3	- A middle school in the Eastern Anatolia region (1.5 years)	-A middle school in a rural district in the Eastern Anatolia region (1.5 years)

Table 3.2 (cont'd)

T5	23	2017	7 months	-School of Foreign Languages in one of the private universities in the Central Anatolia region (5 months)	-A village school in Southeastern Anatolia region (3 months)

At the time of this study, there were five EFL teachers working at different rural schools. They were located in five different schools of four different regions of the country. Profiles of participants were diverse in terms of their teaching contexts, years of experience in the teaching profession, and their own personal histories and backgrounds. Participants will be called T1 (teacher 1), T2 (teacher 2), T3 (teacher 3), T4 (teacher 4), and T5 (teacher 5) for the sake of anonymity. The following is a detailed profile of each of the five teachers:

T1 is 32 years old. At the time of this study, she had been working at a rural school for six months. She has a B.A. degree in English Language and Literature. At the time of this study, she had nine years of teaching experience. After her graduation, she had worked in private language schools for two years. Then, she received the certificate of pedagogical formation and had become English language teacher in one of the private primary schools. She had worked there for three years. After working in private institutions, she decided to work in state schools. Her first experience was in a remote village school. She had worked there for two and a half years and lived in a very small town. Afterwards, she had been appointed to a relatively bigger rural school in the same city and worked there for a year and a half. After her rural experiences in rural schools, she had been appointed to a rural school in the Central Anatolia region which was her current teaching context at the time of this study.

T2 is 37 years old. She has a B.A. degree in English Language Teaching. After her graduation, she worked two different middle schools in a suburban area in Central Anatolia region for three years. Afterwards, she had been appointed to a suburban middle school in Marmara region and worked thhere for four years. After working there, she decided to move to Aegean region and appointed to work in a village

school in this region. At the time of this study, she had twelve years of teaching experience.

T3 is 28 years old. She has a B.A. degree in English Language Teaching. At the time of this study, she had six years of teaching experience. After her graduation, she had started to work in one of the rural schools in Southeastern Anatolia region and worked there for four years. After her first teaching experience, she had been appointed to one of the town schools in Aegean region. She has been working in this school for two years.

T4 is 24 years old. She has a B.A. degree in English Language Teaching. At the time of this study, she had three years of teaching experience. After her graduation, she had been appointed to one of the middle schools in the Eastern Anatolia region. After working there for a year and a half, she decided to work in one of the rural areas in the same region, where her own family members were currently living. In that sense, she is a *homegrown* rural teacher. She has been working in this rural school for a year and a half.

T5 is the only novice teacher in this study. She is 23 years old. She has a B.A. degree in English Language Teaching and she pursues a master's degree in Educational Sciences. After her graduation, she had started to work in one of the School of Foreign Languages of a private university in the Central Anatolia region. Her first teaching experience lasted for five months. After experiencing a private institution, she had decided to work in a state school and she had been appointed to a village school in the Southeastern Anatolia region. At the time of this study, she has been working in this school for three months.

3.4 Data Collection

Creswell (2007) proposes that case study data collection involves a wide range of tools that help researcher builds an in-depth picture of the case. Specifically, Yin (2003) refers to six forms of data collection tools for case studies: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical

artifacts. Actually, due to the qualitative nature of case studies, "there is no particular moment when data gathering begins" (Stake, 1995, p.49). In case studies, data collection starts with backgrounding, acquaintance with other cases, and first impressions. Later on, the researcher refines and replaces his or her impressions with the pool of data. In addition, methodological triangulation, which is "using the same method on different occasions or different methods on the same object of study" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p.113), is of vital importance for qualitative studies in order to deepen the understanding of an issue through different data collection tools. In order to achieve this goal, the data were obtained by means of multiple data collection tools including field observations, semi-structured interviews, and document review for this study. By utilizing multiple data collection tools, this study may contribute to a better understanding of professional identity construction experiences of novice and experienced teachers in rural areas in Turkey.

In this study, the relevant data were collected through semi-structured interviews, document reviews and field observations. Firstly, field observations were done in order to gather a vivid and detailed picture of teaching contexts being studied. Secondly, a metaphor elicitation task was implemented in order to unearth hidden thoughts, emotions and experiences of participants. Then, the first interviews were conducted by focusing on personal histories, academic and professional backgrounds of teachers, their perceptions and experiences related to their own teaching selves, teaching contexts and the teaching profession. Finally, the second interviews were conducted to further probe details teachers have made in the first interviews. In addition, the second interviews focused on teacher strategies to overcome personal and professional challenges in rural schools, their needs, future plans, and their recommendations for teacher educators, policy-makers and teacher candidates. The procedure for data collection is illustrated in Figure 3.1:

```
Piloting
(December, 2018)

   Field Observation in each context
   (December, 2018- January, 2019)

      Teacher Metaphor Elicitation Task
      (December, 2018- January, 2019)

         1st Interview with each participant
         (December, 2018- January, 2019)

            2nd Interview with each participant
            (March-April, 2019)
```
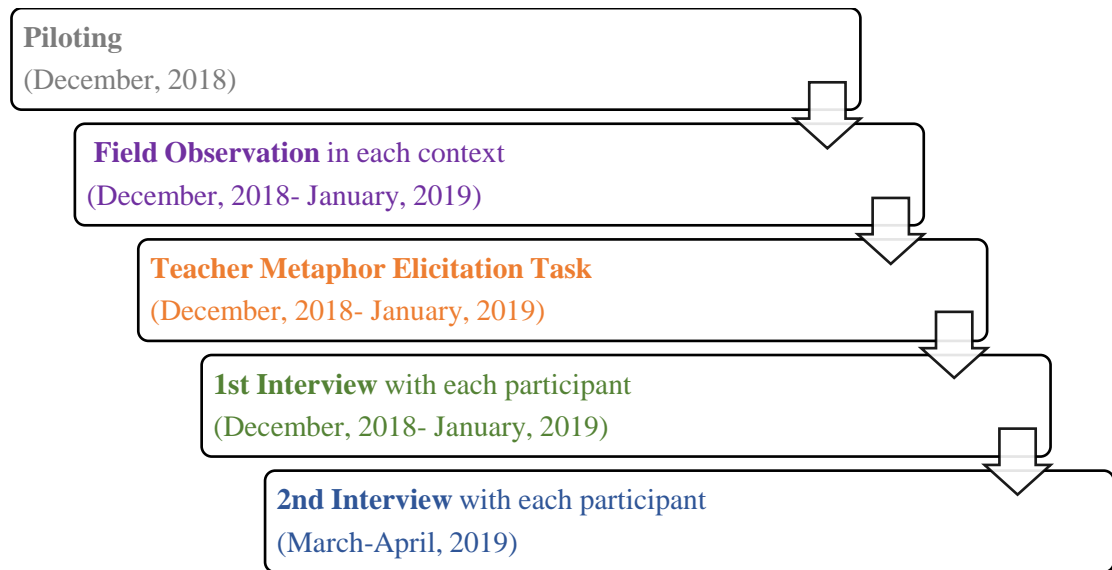
Figure 3.1. Procedure of data collection.

3.4.1 Field Observation

On the basis of observations, researchers draw their own conclusions. Stake (1995) calls them *assertions,* which are researcher's interpretations and claims. He portrays the logical path to assertions as follows: "For assertions, we draw from understandings deep within us, understandings whose derivation may be some hidden mix of personal experience, scholarship, assertions of other researchers" (ibid., p.12). He adds that in order to draw conclusions from observations, the researcher deals with both *emic* and *etic* standpoints. *Etic* issues are researcher's issues or the issues of a larger research community, which can be defined as issues from the outside. On the other hand, *emic* issues are the issues of the *actors,* the people who are being studied. This type issue can be defined as the issue from the inside. For Pike (1954), the relationship between *emic* and *etic* is dynamic, and neither is more important than the other, since both of the standpoints provide a holistic view of the study of cultural phenomena. The researcher restates the issues as *assertions* as a result of combining *etic* issues with *emic* issues, which are drawn from field observations (Stake, 1995). In that sense, visiting the field in order to unveil the *emic* issues is of vital importance for case studies.

During field observations, the researcher lets the field tells its story, which provides him or her real-life data from natural situations and enables him or her to see what really takes place in the field. In case studies, field observations are done in order to describe the context thoroughly. Field notes are kept to develop *vicarious experiences* (Stake, 1995, p. 63) for the reader that provides them a sense of 'being there'. A story, a chronological presentation, and description of the field provide rich details for *vicarious experience*. Visiting the case study site is creating opportunities for direct observations. According to Yin (2003), direct observations might be done as field visits in order to unveil occasions or conditions, which cannot be drawn from interviews or document reviews. Field visit is often useful in providing additional information about the issue being studied because, "for instance, the condition of buildings or work spaces will indicate something about the climate or impoverishment of an organization" (ibid., p.92).

What to observe is determined by various factors. However, the theoretical framework, the research problem, and the research questions mainly determine what is to be observed. According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993) what to observe depends on "the data that begin to emerge as the observer interacts in the daily flow of events and activities, and the intuitive reactions and hunches that observer experience as all these factors come together" (p.200). Actually, no one can observe everything, and what to be observed mostly depends on the topic and he theoretical framework. Taking sketchy notes as *field notes* are the written account of the research site. In addition, writing memos in the margins of field notes helps researcher to highlight the points that look significant for the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Field notes should be rewritten as soon after the observation as possible (Merriam, 2009a). Actually, rewriting field notes takes longer than time spent in observation. In that sense, looking for key words, key interactions and activities may help researcher to concentrate on the important remarks of the observation. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) recommend doing fieldwork one site at a time rather than visiting several sites simultaneously. According to them, visiting more than one site at a time can get confusing in terms of managing too much diverse data. To this end, they recommend that the relevant data should be collected from several sites at different times.

Depending on the aim of the study, types of observation may differ. For this case study, it is not possible to define categories before visiting the field, as it is not easy to describe research sites just by speculation without focusing on the reality. Therefore, observations conducted in this study were unstructured relying heavily on detailed field notes. Field notes are "the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p.118). The success of the observation depends on the quality of the field notes. If field notes are detailed and extensive, they are sufficient enough to make a "thick description". In that sense, what is being addressed here is not the duration of the observation, but the 'reliability' and 'deepness' of it (Cohen et al., 2018, p.314). For this study, five field visits were conducted. Each school was visited once in order to gain in-depth understanding about the schools and their surroundings. The researcher observed the town, the village, and the physical conditions of schools. The aim of field visit was to provide readers with a colorful and detailed picture of different contexts being studied. Field visits were conducted before the first interviews in order to become acquainted with research settings and to have a chance to review the questions before the interview. Field visits entailed the collection of data and each visit added a new perspective to the study.

3.4.2 Document Review

In case studies, documents mostly provide specific details to corroborate data coming from other sources in data collection process (Yin, 2003). Documents substitute for data that the researcher could not observe directly or draw from the interviews. As interviewing and observing are the main data collection strategies in case studies, documents are usually produced for elaborating the research findings extracted from the main sources (Yin, 2003). There are three types of documents in qualitative research (O'Leary, 2014): public records, personal documents, physical evidence. In this study, metaphor elicitation tasks were used which are first-person accounts of reflections of participants.

In this study, a *researcher-generated document* (Merriam, 2009a) was used to gather data. Researcher-generated documents are documents prepared by the researcher before the study or for the researcher by participants after the study has begun. The main aim of using documents in case studies is to learn more about the situation, person, or event being studied. The data extracted from the documents may "furnish descriptive information, verify emerging hypotheses, advance new categories, offer historical understanding, track change, and development, and so on" (Merriam, 2009a, p.155). In this study, a metaphor elicitation task (Please see Appendix A) was used to identify participants' thoughts, emotions, and experiences in-depth. The main aim of this task is to focus on exploring how participants make sense of the phenomena and to elaborate the findings extracted from interviews and field visits by more meaningful and credible insights. The task provided raw and true data before conducting the interviews.

In second language teacher education field, studying metaphors is very crucial (Oxford et. al., 1998). Metaphors play a crucial role in teachers' conceptualizations and reflections upon the teaching profession and teaching practices, since it is a cognitive tool to unearth how teachers and teacher candidates perceive schools, the teaching profession and the teaching practice (Wallace, 2001), and how they make connections between their personal beliefs and education systems (Leavy et al., 2007). Likewise, Burns (1999) suggests that the metaphors that teachers hold can be utilized as "an introspective and reflective tool" in research studies in order to make language teachers become more aware of the impact of metaphors on their classroom practices. From this perspective, according to the relevant literature, the purpose of using metaphors to explore teachers' professional identity is two-fold: "The study of teachers' metaphors has proven productive as researchers seek to understand the complex processes of teaching and working in classrooms" (Knowles, 1994, p.37) and "metaphors reveal our educational values, beliefs, and principles, and they contain information essential to our growth as professionals" (Gillis & Johnson, 2002, p.37).

This is important because when teacher educators know more about teachers' metaphors, the more they help them decide if these metaphors still hold true for their

present context and conditions for teaching. In other words, teachers can become more aware of the origin of their own teaching beliefs and then decide whether these metaphors remain valid and useful for their particular contexts. To this end, this study benefits from teachers' metaphors to reveal their teaching philosophies and their perceptions about the teaching profession. The metaphor elicitation task was created by the researcher and validated with the help of three experts from the field. The task was implemented before conducting the first interview. The reason behind this is that the researcher aims to provide guidance for the participants in order to unveil their hidden mental images about the teaching profession in Turkey, which may have not been emerged during the interviews. The participants were also asked to elaborate on their own metaphors through explaining briefly why they chose these metaphors. The reason for asking participants to elaborate on their own metaphors is to have more reliable and detailed data for the study. Metaphor studies provide evidence that teacher metaphors unfold the individual identity and the plotlines of teachers' intentions and decisions, and the obligations, responsibilities, and duties of teachers as well as the role of the teacher and others in the teacher's practice (Erickson & Pinnegar, 2017). In sum, metaphor elicitation is a significant tool in teacher education, since it provides in-depth insights into complex and abstract concepts of teaching and learning, thereby provide a window into the comprehension of teachers' professional role identities (Wallace, 2001). During metaphor elicitation process, "to step back out of everyday language and into the poetic language of metaphor" allow teachers "to be descriptive about their developing identities in alternate, sometimes simplistic, but often highly descriptive ways" (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011, p. 764). Therefore, it is of vital importance to investigate which metaphors are chosen by in-service English language teachers to understand and define themselves and their work.

3.4.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews are one of the important sources of case study information (Yin, 2003), since each interviewee has his or her own unique experiences and special stories to tell (Stake, 1995). Semi-structured interviews allow for greater flexibility in changing the order of questions and for more extensive follow-up responses (McDonough & McDonough, 1997). This type of interview is regarded as "being

closer to the qualitative paradigm because it allows for richer interactions and more personalized responses than the quasi-automaton interviewer armed with entirely pre-coded questions" (ibid., p.184). Case study interviews are conducted to "ask key respondents about the facts of a matter as well as their opinions about events" (Yin, 2003, p.90). Interviews are essential sources of case study evidence, if the interviewees are well-informed respondents and provide in-depth insights into the issue. In-depth interviews help researchers to "understand their interviewees' views of processes, norms, decision making, belief systems, mental models, interpretations, motivations, expectations, hopes, and fears" (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013, p.116). According to Tuckman (1972), interviews make it possible to unearth what an interviewee knows, likes or dislikes, and thinks by providing access to what is inside his or her head. The semi-structured interview technique was used in this study because it allows the researcher an in-depth understanding of the viewpoints of participants.

The interview questions (Please see Appendix B) were prepared by the researcher and examined by three experts to make necessary changes. The researcher conducted the interviews twice during the 2018- 2019 school year. The first interview was conducted on December 2018 and the participants were asked questions from various aspects of their backgrounds, academic lives, future plans, and perceptions on the teaching profession in order to understand and describe the process of constructing their professional teacher identities. After transcribing and reading the first interviews and re-reading the field notes written during the field visits in order to immerse myself in the first data, the second interview was conducted on March 2019. In the second interview, the participants were asked to share their experiences in-depth as teachers who are currently working at rural schools. They were asked about the school, the students, the parents, the surrounding, and their own experiences as EFL teachers. The main aim of the second interview is to gain insights into the process the participants experienced starting from their first days at rural schools to their current experiences as EFL teachers. After preparing the interview questions, they were examined by three experts and necessary changes were done. All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the interviewees and transcribed by the researcher. As Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest, use of

participants' native language during interviews provide an opportunity for researcher to show her "willingness to enter into the world of the interviewees" (p.173). Therefore, the interviews were conducted in Turkish in order to make the participants more comfortable during the data collection process. The vignettes extracted from the interviews were all translated into English by the researcher since she is a graduate of Translation and Interpreting Studies. As the relevant data were obtained by using three different data collection tools, the data sources of research questions are demonstrated in Table 3.3 below:

Table 3.3
Data collection tools for each research question

Research Questions	Data Collection Tools
1. How do rural EFL teachers define their professional identities?	Second Interview Metaphor Elicitation Task
2. How do rural EFL teachers define their teaching contexts?	First Interview Field Observation
3. How do rural EFL teachers make a relation between their professional identities and their teaching contexts?	First & Second Interviews Metaphor Elicitation Task Field Observation
4. Who are the most influential parties in rural EFL teachers' professional identity construction process?	First & Second Interviews
5. What are rural EFL teachers' professional expectations and needs in Turkey?	First & Second Interviews

3.5 Data Analysis

In qualitative studies, "data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity. Analysis begins with the first interview, the first observation, the first document read… It is an interactive process throughout that allows the investigator to produce

believable and trustworthy results" (Merriam, 2009b, p.151). Therefore, the data collection and analysis stages went hand in hand in this study. Since qualitative data analysis requires a mix of creativity and systematic searching, "sitting down to make sense out of pages of interviews and whole files of field notes can be overwhelming" (Patton, 1980, p. 297). Miles and Huberman (1994) provide a detailed and systematic framework for qualitative data analysis. Their analysis is comprised of mainly three steps: coding the data (reducing the data into meaningful segments and assigning names for them), grouping codes into broader themes, and displaying and making comparisons via graphs, tables, and charts. Miles and Huberman (1994) elaborate this systematic approach with more detailed steps. According to them, writing margin notes in field notes, taking reflective notes, drafting a summary sheet on field notes, writing memos, taking notes about patterns and codes are also crucial parts of a systematic data analysis. Yin (2003) suggests *cross-case analysis* to show the relationship between categories in multiple case studies. He advances creating a table to display the data from individual cases. By means of this table, the researcher can look for similarities and differences among cases.

Specifically, for a multiple case study analysis, Yin (2003) proposes discussing each case separately, and then conducting a cross-case analysis. The reason behind cross-case analysis is emphasizing the common relationships across cases. Yin (2003) suggests that identifying issues within each case to gain understanding of that particular entity and then looking for common themes that transcend the cases would be an analytic strategy for the analysis of a multiple case study. However, cross-case analysis is conducted to find what is common across the cases, not what is unique to each (Stake, 2006). For the analysis of a multiple case study, a typical procedure begins with a detailed description of each case and themes within the case, which is called a *within-case analysis*. Then, thematic analysis across the cases would be implemented, which is called a *cross-case analysis*. At the end of this procedure, *assertions*, which are interpretations of the meaning of the case, are provided. As a final step, the meaning of the case is reported by the researcher, which is also called "*lessons learned*" from the case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.362).

In this study, data analysis steps suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) were followed. According to this data analysis framework, there are mainly three parts to the interpretation of qualitative data: data management, data analysis, and data display. Data management is comprised of three important steps: organizing the collection process, designing storage to save the data, and developing a system for retrieving codes and themes from the raw data. The second phase is the data analysis stage including data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions from the data. Data reduction is identified as the most crucial stage of data analysis, since it involves selecting and marking the most salient themes emerged from data. In qualitative studies, marking the important statements helps researchers to eliminate the mass of unconnected data. The final stage is data display. In qualitative studies, tables, charts, matrices, flow diagrams, and other models help both researchers and readers cognitively and conceptually grasp the hints of the findings. "Think display" encourages researchers to think visually while data are collecting and analyzing (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

After completing the above-mentioned steps, the researcher draws conclusions, which enables the researcher to make interpretations of the data. This stage is implemented for explaining what the data mean and its relation to purpose of the study. For this study, steps suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) were implemented in within-case analysis. After completing within-case analyses, the cross-case analysis was implemented to provide the sum of the within-case analyses in order to convey the most salient findings from each (Stake, 2006). These findings are combined as *assertions*, which are 'not required to be persuasive to critical friends' (ibid., p.41), but they have to provide the reasons behind the researchers' interpretations of the data. For this study, the researcher collected data by making use of face-to-face semi-structured interviews, field observations, and document reviews. Since the data were gathered from three different data collection tools, the data analysis of this study is comprised of several steps. First of all, the audio-recorded semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim and all transcripts were printed and put in a file, since "valid analysis is immensely aided by data displays that are focused enough to permit viewing of a full data set in one location" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.432). Before the analysis of interviews, the researcher should

"read the transcripts in their entirety several times (to) immerse (himself / herself) in the details, trying to get a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it into parts" (Agar, 1980, p.103). Besides, while reading the transcripts, the researcher wrote down short phrases and key concepts in memos (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), since writing notes or memos in the margins of field notes or transcripts or under photographs helps in the initial process of exploring a database (Creswell, 2013, p.183).

After reading the transcripts several times and employing the data reduction strategy, participants' responses were grouped according to the interview questions and research questions respectively. After identifying the most salient statements by highlighting and marking, the researcher reached the descriptive codes, which were the early labels of data including little inferences and interpretations of the researcher. Then, the researcher focused on pattern codes indicating how many times the same codes are used repeatedly throughout to form the categories. As a final step, the researcher grouped categories to reach the broader themes for detecting both commonalities and differences of participants' views. Creswell (2007) suggests the optimal number of categories and themes for qualitative studies as follows: "I do not develop more than 25-30 categories of information, and I find myself working to reduce and combine them into five or six themes that I will use in the end to write my narrative." Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994) propose that researchers should determine how frequently codes appear in the database. According to them, this step is very crucial for grouping codes into broader categories. However, Creswell (2007) highlights the importance of giving equal emphasis on both similar and contradictory views in order to preserve the objectivity of a qualitative study.

For the analysis of field notes, the researcher did not aim to generate new codes. For analyzing the field notes, according to Stake (1995), a researcher may code field notes or s/he may only use his/her *direct interpretations*. In *direct interpretations*, the case study researcher looks at a single instance and draws meaning from it. It is a process of extracting the data, drawing conclusion from them, and putting them back together in meaningful ways. In that sense, in the present study, the researcher read field notes thoroughly and marked the significant parts in order to report them easily.

After that, the researcher reported what she had observed in each research site separately.

For the analysis of metaphor elicitation task, documents were read, coded, grouped to create themes, and then interpreted by the researcher to give a voice, since analyzing documents in qualitative studies includes coding and creating themes which is similar to analyzing interview transcripts (Bowen, 2009). The researcher presented the umbrella metaphor of each case during the within-case analyses. After reading and re-reading the findings of each case gathered from three data collection tools, the researcher began the cross-case analysis procedure (Stake, 2006). First, the researcher represented the findings of each case after implementing within-case analyses. Then, the significant findings were presented separately in a different section after conducting the cross-case analysis, since multiple case studies are not for comparing cases, but for better understanding of the similarities and differences among cases on a relatively issue. This section aims to show how the case is newly conceptualized as a result of the study (Stake, 2006). The last step of the analysis was developing *naturalistic generalizations* from the data, which are the *lessons learned* from the cases. In harmony with the reader's own experience, case studies come up with 'natural' basis of generalizations (Cohen et al., 2018, p.184). The components of data analysis and the process of data analysis are shown in Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3 below:
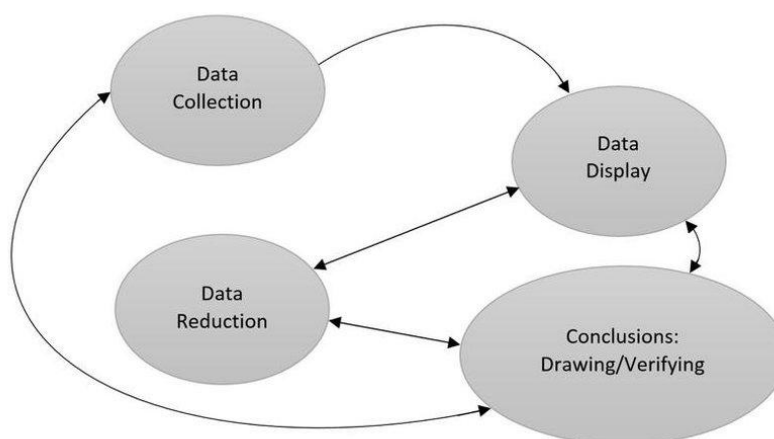
Figure 3.2. The components of the data analysis.
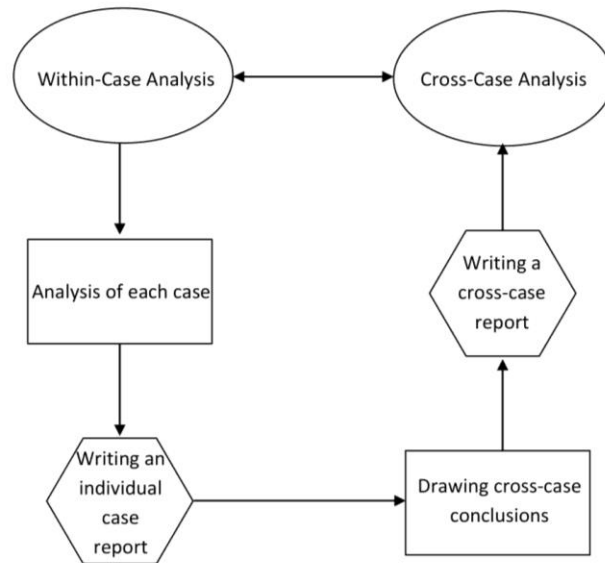
Figure 3.3. Process of data analysis.

3.6 Establishment of Trustworthiness

For qualitative studies, it is recommended that multiple strategies of validation be implemented in order to ensure that the account is "accurate and insightful" (Creswell, 2007, p.122). Therefore, a qualitative researcher needs to construct "trustworthiness" of his/her study by ensuring the *credibility*, *confirmability*, *dependability* and *transferability* of the study through various strategies (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this study, strategies suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for qualitative inquiry are used. One of the strategies used in this study to ensure the *credibility* is triangulation. According to Patton (1999), triangulation can be ensured via different techniques. In this study, triangulation was provided through using multiple data collection tools. The relevant data was collected via three different data collection tools at different times. The other strategy to ensure credibility is member checking. In qualitative studies, participants are requested to examine rough drafts of findings; especially the interview transcripts. The participants are asked to review researcher's findings for accuracy. In order to ensure the credibility of the study, the cumulative rough draft of findings was checked by the participants for accuracy and possible misinterpretations. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that it is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility.

The second strategy used in this study to ensure the trustworthiness is *transferability*. Thick description is a technique to ensure the transferability. It means describing a phenomenon in sufficient detail so that an interested reader can transfer the conclusions of this study to other contexts, situations, and people (Holloway, 1997). Therefore, in this study, thick description was provided by giving detailed account of research setting, participants and data collection procedure so that the results drawn from this study can be transferred to other contexts. The third strategy used to ensure trustworthiness is *dependability*. In order to establish dependability of the study, an external audit, who is not involved in the research process, examines both the process and product of the study. Thus, for this study, an external audit checked the study in order to assess the adequacy of raw data and preliminary results. The external audit is a doctoral student with teaching and research experience in English language teaching. The researcher and the external audit read and coded the data individually. Then, the codes that the researcher and the external audit agreed on were accepted while the codes that they did not agree on were re-read and changed until provide a consensus.

The final strategy for trustworthiness is *confirmability*. Audit trail is one of the techniques to ensure confirmability of qualitative studies. It is a transparent description of the steps taken from the very start of the research to reporting of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is important to provide a clear description of the research path including research design, sampling, data collection procedure, and the steps taken to manage, analyze and report the data. In that sense, in order to ensure confirmability for this study, the researcher took process notes about the research steps regarding what had been done in the investigation and reported them throughout the research as much as possible.

3.7 The Role of the Researcher

As for the selection of the case, the motivation is intrinsic (Wellington, 2000). Indeed, Vickers (2002) claims that "it is rare to find a productive scholar whose work is unconnected to his or her personal history" (p.619). Clarifying the role of the researcher is of vital importance at the beginning of a qualitative study since the

researcher involves in the research process directly when s/he is in the research context (Creswell, 2007). I worked as a research and teaching assistant at Middle East Technical University (METU) Foreign Language Education department for four years and I regularly assisted Practice Teaching courses each semester to mentor many student teachers during their internships. Three years ago, I was a teaching assistant of the practice teaching course and it was a *very* interesting year for me because we visited different private primary and secondary schools filled with children coming from high-socioeconomic pupolation and the schools were very well-equipped with their hygienic corridors, beautiful playgrounds, technological facilities, small class sizes, colorful walls, and well-dressed teachers. After several weeks, I realized that my position as a teaching assistant in practice teaching courses allowed me to visit and observe wide range of schools for four years but *none* of them were rural. I also started to realize that my unconscious assumptions about rural schools and teaching in rural areas were vague. I often observed most of these student teachers knowing nothing about rural teaching. In order to learn how to better prepare them for the challenges of rural areas and support them after they begin to teach in rural schools, I decided to conduct a research study exploring what teacher educators and policy makers might do to assist pre-service and in-service teachers' transitions into their professional lives in rural areas.

The transformation I experienced as a result of visiting schools as a teaching assistant as well as my interactions with pre-service and in-service EFL teachers might have had an influence on this study. I had thought I was prepared for training prospective teachers to teach in all kinds of teaching contexts, so the realization that they were not as ready as I predicted came as quite a *shock*. I realized that our students know content, and they are very knowledgeable about many creative teaching materials and methodological strategies, but they cannot figure out how to place themselves as teachers in a *rural* area. They know how to be a teacher, but they do not know how to be a *rural teacher*. Before I decided to conduct this study, I was already interested in rural teaching and rural schools, but had never explored the depths of it. This study provided me an opportunity to go beyond my limited understanding of this issue and allowed me to develop a more critical lens towards teacher education curricula and in-service training programs for EFL teachers in Turkey.

While studying on this dissertation, I quited my job as a research assistant and started to work as an English Language Teacher in one of the long-established and prestigious private schools in Izmir. Therefore, I am privileged to have the opportunity to see different institutions on multiple levels, from the hallways to the lunchroom, from the garden to the classroom.

As I learnt about equality of opportunity in education, multicultural education, sociocultural variations in different teaching contexts and changing teacher roles in different schools, I have become very committed to preparing pre-service teachers for rural teaching and supporting in-service rural teachers for their professional needs. I knew we had graduates who were teaching in rural schools because I still had a connection with some of them. By learning about their concerns, perceptions, and experiences, I sought to understand their preparation for and dispositions concerning challenges in rural schools. I aimed to focus on pre-service teachers' needs for a batter preparation and also explore professional support mechanisms for rural teachers wish they had had. I am not the first researcher to recognize the importance of preparing and supporting EFL teachers for a better teaching in rural schools; however, I believe that my interest in this issue may make an important contribution to our field because when approaching my research on this issue I first asked the question, *What does it mean to be an EFL teacher in a rural school?* I know that teaching is demanding work. Teachers have to teach more than six hours per day, they have to spend weekends and evenings grading papers and planning lessons, and they have to negotiate the demands of various administrators, colleagues, parents and students. In addition to them, a rural teacher is also responsible for multiple roles as an *individual* who should go beyond teaching for the benefit of rural kids with no expectation of extra reward. I believe that teacher educators and policy-makers should support teachers for developing a rich and strong teacher identity that makes them feel more dedicated, professional, effective and satisfied. I believe that successful teachers teach successful students.

To learn more, I have undertaken this research to investigate how schools that are geographically distributed across Turkey's rural communities vary in terms of school

resources and learning environments and how they affect the development of professional identities of rural teachers. Gathering knowledge in the way school communities across Turkey vary by school characteristics is of vital importance as it will lead me to better understand the role of teacher education programs, teacher educators and policy-makers in terms of preparing and supporting EFL teachers for teaching at rural schools. In the present study, my role is a non-participant observer (Cohen et al., 2018). My aim is to provide reader with the necessary information about the research settings. In addition, my goal as a researcher is to understand the significance, impact and inter-connectedness of these facts on teacher experiences of developing a professional identity in a rural school. As a researcher, I have already known all of the participants. Therefore, my roles as a researcher and a *friend* made it convenient to interact with them. When I asked teachers for interviews, it was inevitable that they saw me as a *friend* rather than a researcher. All of them stated that they wanted to participate in this study and they looked happy to talk to me about their experiences about rural teaching and their perceptions about the teaching profession in general. They also told me that they hoped their contributions to this study would create a positive change in teacher education programs, in-service trainings and educational policy reforms. While conducting this study, I also encountered some challenges, such as role duality (friend - researcher) and making pre-assumptions about participants' perceptions and reactions beforehand. When I noticed that, I tried to maintain a neutral stance on my participants' sharings in order to ensure my objectivity in the research study.

As a researcher, I wanted to understand the experience of rural teachers. Thus, my research is centered on their voices. I believe that a personal connection to an experience can bring richness in the form of a researcher, since "rather than bias data, acknowledging the researchers' own experience explicitly including their perspectives in the research process may serve to further ground (Yost & Chmielewski, 2013, p. 249). Therefore, my personal connection to this topic as a former research assistant and an English language teacher is highly relevant to this research study. As a researcher, it was my intent that would help me to value *place*, particularly rural schools, and work towards change with regards to professional identity construction issues.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

One of the main issues in conducting qualitative inquiry is ensuring the protection of participants' rights while trying to unveil their experiences and share them with a large audience. In order to address the ethical implications, the proposal of this research study has been sent to the Human Subject Ethics Committee of the University. After getting permission (Please see Appendix C), the researcher gave informed consent forms to the participants in order to provide necessary information about the research study. Once a participant consented to be a part of the study, pseudonyms for the participants were given and the school names were hidden in order to ensure the anonymity of the study. Additionally, all data were kept secure in a password-protected laptop. During this research, I was very careful to consider the amount of burden and whether the research benefitted my participants (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). I travelled to places that were convenient for them and I tried to do my best to show them that I valued their effort and was grateful for their participation.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This dissertation study exploring how novice and experienced EFL teachers' professional identity and their perceptions about the teaching profession are shaped at rural schools in Turkey used field observations, metaphor elicitation task and semi-structured interviews as data collection tools. This chapter aims to present findings of the study. In this chapter, the findings obtained from each data collection tool will be reported in three main parts, which are; (i) Findings of Field Observations, (ii) Findings of Metaphor Elicitation Task, and (iii) Findings of Interviews. The way of presenting results is designed in accordance with the sequence of data collection process.

4.1 Findings of Field Observations

This part is divided into three sections in order to make it easier for the reader to follow. While the first section focuses on the school context notes taken during the field visits, the second and the third sections provide answers to the following reseach questions respectively:

> *RQ-2: How do EFL teachers define their teaching contexts?*
> *RQ-3: How do EFL teachers make a relation between their professional identities and their teaching contexts?*

For this study, five field visits were conducted. Each rural area and the school were visited once in order to gain in-depth understanding about the surrounding and the teaching context. The researcher observed the village, the physical conditions of the schools, and the students out of the classrooms. The aim of field visits was to provide readers with a colorful and detailed picture of different rural areas and teaching

contexts being studied. Field visits were conducted just before the first interviews in order to become acquainted with the research site and have a chance to review the interview questions by adding new questions related to the context of the study. Before reporting the findings, a few post-observation telephone calls with the participants were done in terms of providing the clarity of data gathered during the observations. To prevent revealing the identities of teachers and names of the schools, each school will be given a number in this study. Each school will be referred to with the initials of *Rural School* and a number: RS1, RS2, RS3, RS4 and RS5, while teachers will be called T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5 respectively.

During the field visits, observations were noted down as unstructured field notes. For the analysis of observations, first field notes were read and the significant points were underlined. In the second reading, the field notes for each research site were read closely and common patterns in different rural schools were identified. After that, a general common point of these rural schools was written. In the third reading, the field notes were reread in order to check whether all important points were identified. In order to give a thick description of the research sites, detailed information about villages and rural schools will be provided in this section. This section is divided into three parts in order to make it easier for the reader to follow. While the first part focuses on school contexts, the last two sections aim to find answers to RQ-2 and RQ-3.

4.1.1 School Contexts

Before focusing on the answers to research questions, brief information about schools and their neighbourhoods are presented in order to provide readers with a more concrete overview about observations. School contexts are provided separately in accordance with observation dates.

Rural School 1 (hereafter RS1) is a middle school, which is located in one of the rural areas in the Central Anatolia region. The school is a four-storey building with 14 classrooms and a small playgarden. RS1 is not a neglected school but equipped with limited facilities. The school is located near the motorway. Therefore, the neighborhood is very isolated and quiet. As public primary and middle schools in

Turkey are organized into types, i.e. full-day education and dual education, RS1 provides education with a dual education system that is split into a morning shift and afternoon shift. As of 2019, the school has approximately 480 students and 27 subject matter teachers in total of morning and afternoon shifts. Classrooms are consisted of approximately 35 students. The school has laptops which are ready for teachers and there are speakers in classrooms. In this respect, RS1 is the largest school in terms of building capacity, number of students and teacher density among all the rural schools observed for this study.

The observation notes taken during the field visit, anecdotes shared by the participant and conversations between teachers in staffroom show that most of the students come from poor families in this school. Physical appearance of students and the neighborhood of the school support the inference that students are children of low-income parents in RS1. Since that city is attractive to many people living in small villages of the Central Anatolia Region, the town has become a migration area and most of the parents are factory laborers or building workers in this school. The researcher asked the school principal for permission to spend time in the school but not to talk to students or observe them in classes. Therefore, students were observed out of the classroom and the participant was observed in the staffroom. The staffroom was big and equipped with useful furnitures such as two sofas, fifteen chairs, a fairly large oval table, three bookcases and a small but practical kitchen to prepare tea and coffee. Both the staffroom and school were clean. During the observation, some teachers reported that reaching to school is really difficult especially in winter since the school is located in an isolated hill. Finally, teachers reported that they do not have any problems related to electiricity, heating and water supply in RS1.

Rural School 2 (hereafter RS2) is a middle school, which is located in one of the rural areas in the Aegean region. The school is a three-storey building with 10 classrooms and a small playgarden. The school is not new but good-looking. RS2 is a village school surrounded by chickens, cows, sheep and single-storey small village houses. The school is far from the city centre. The neighborhood was very quiet. RS2 provides education with a dual education system. As of 2019, the school has

approximately 290 students and and 19 subject matter teachers in total of morning and afternoon shifts. Classrooms are consisted of approximately 30 students. In addition, the school is a center of transported education which means children who live in least populated villages are transported to RS2 on a daily basis. Therefore, the school has a small kitchen where the charlady cooks everyday for transported children to eat their lunch before going to classrooms. The staffroom was big and equipped with useful furnitures such as two sofas, ten chairs, a fairly large oval table and four bookcases. There was a teapot for teachers in the kitchen. Both the school and the staffroom were clean.

During the observation, teachers reported that they did not have problems related to electricity and water supply but heating. The schools, especially the classrooms, were very cold. The researcher asked the school principal for permission to spend time in the school but not to talk to students or observe them in classes. Therefore, students were observed out of the classroom and the participant was observed in the staffroom. Conversations between teachers in the staffroom and physical appearance of students showed that students are children of low-income parents in RS2. Teachers indicated that most of the parents are agricultural laborers in RS2. Some of them are factory laborers who work at organized industrial site in this city. In terms of parental profile in RS2, fathers are agricultural laborers or factory workers while mothers are mostly housewives. The school has a very colorful and big multi-purpose hall which is also used as a library. Finally, it should be reported that the school does not have any technological facilities such as laptops or speakers.

Rural School 3 (hereafter RS3) is a middle school, which is located in one of the rural areas in the Aegean region. The area tends to have high crime rate as a result of irregular migration, poverty and unemployement. The area is filled with shanty-like houses made of mud-bricks and corrugated metals. The area is far from city center and residents have to take two different public transportation vehicles to reach the nearest town center to the area. RS3 provides education with a dual education system and has 12 classrooms. As of 2019, the school has approximately 450 students and 27 subject matter teachers in total of morning and afternoon shifts. Classrooms are consisted of approximately 35 students. The teacher asked the school principal on

behalf of the researcher for permission to spend time in the school but not to talk to students or observe them in classes. Therefore, students were observed out of the classroom and the participant was observed in the staffroom. Trying to go to RS3 on the rough roads is difficult. The school is a two-storey building with a small playgarden. Both the primary school and the middle school share the same playgarden. The playgarden was neglected and a little bir dangerous for especially primary school kids since there were broken desks and a pile of rusty iron pipes in the corner of the playgarden. The small kids were playing right beside them. It was observed that sharing the same playgarden causes peer bullying in that school. While waiting the teacher in the playgarden, it was observed that older students were hitting and swearing at small kids. The teacher confirmed this by sharing some peer bullying incidents she witnessed in RS3. According to her, peer bullying in RS3 occurs as a result of apathetic parents. The parents of these students do not really care about education and school.

After entering the building, hygiene problems were observed. Classrooms, restrooms, corridors, canteen and even the small kitchen for staff were not clean. Students were very hyperactive and the school was extremely noisy. RS3 does not have a designated library space and a storeroom for sports equipment. While sitting in the staffroom, it was observed that staffroom is used as a place for keeping books in a very small bookcase with two shelves and a storage area for sports equipment. Students were entering to the staffroom, shouting "I'll take a book!" or "Ball is here!" without knocking on the door. It was impossible for teachers to study on a lesson plan, read a book or rest their minds in the break. There was a chaos in the staffroom. After observing the staffroom, the researcher took a glance at classrooms in the break. Classrooms were not clean. The teacher indicated that they do not have problems in water supply and electricity but heating. Some classrooms were very cold and exposed to wind owing to cheap materials and low-quality windows. It was also observed that some classes are equipped with smartboards within the scope of FATIH Project; however, none of them work as a result of lack of electrical wiring. In addition, it was observed that classrooms do not have technological equipment for language classes such as a laptop, a speaker or a music player.

Rural School 4 (hereafter RS4) is a middle school, which is located in one of the rural areas in Eastern Anatolia region. The school is a single-storey building with 8 classrooms and a very small playgarden. It is a typical village school surrounded by small village houses, trees, cats and chickens. The neighborhood was very quiet. RS4 is not new but good-looking and clean. It is far from the city centre. RS4 provides education with a dual education system. As of 2019, the school has approximately 90 students and 10 subject matter teachers in total of morning and afternoon shifts. Classrooms are consisted of approximately 15 students. RS4 is the smallest school in terms of building capacity, number of students and teacher density among all the rural schools observed for this study. The researcher asked the school principal for permission to spend time in the school but not to talk to students or observe them in classes. Therefore, students were observed out of the classroom and the participant was observed in the staffroom. The school has a very small canteen inside the building where students can only buy toast and water.

The researcher spent an hour at the staffroom with the participant and other three teachers. The staffroom was very clean and there was a teapot for teachers. All teachers were very hospitable, communicative and kind. It was observed that teachers have successfully established a positive and respectful atmosphere in the staffroom. The participant is the only English Language teacher in this school. Teachers indicated that the school does not have any problems relating to electricity, water supply and heating. After observing the staffroom, the researcher took a glance at classrooms in the break. There was a laptop and a speaker in one classroom. The teacher told that they use that classroom for English classes when they need. It was observed that the teacher was very interested in her students and their educational progress. She knows all the students very well and pretends to be their *life coach*. She follows her students by asking, "Why didn't you come yesterday?", "Did you do your homework?", "Do you have questions about your homework?", "What book are you reading now?" and so on. Since the teacher was born and raised in this area, she knows her students' families and their lifestyles. Therefore, students see her as a close friend of their families. Lastly, farming and animal husbandry are the main means of livelihood in this area.

Rural School 5 (hereafter RS5) is a middle school, which is located in one of the rural areas in the Southeastern Anatolia region. The school is a two-storey building with 10 classrooms and a playgarden. The school is surrounded by very small village houses. The houses are spread out over a wide area. Because of this dispersed settlement, the school is located in a very isolated area. RS5 is extremely far from the city center. Animal husbandry and seasonal agricultural services are the main means of livelihood in this area. All teachers live in the nearest town to village and go to school by a teacher bus everyday. Since even the basic facilities (such as post office, community clinic and supermarket) are missing in this village, teachers prefer to live in the nearest town which is 60 km away from the village. The town is 105 km away from the city center and it takes two and a half hours to reach the school from the city center. Teachers told that it takes more than one hour to arrive the school because of the broken and narrow road. The road is dangerous especially in winter because of heavy snowfall and icing.

The researcher asked the school principal for permission to spend time in the school but not to talk to students or observe them in classes. The school is neither good-looking nor clean. The staffroom was big but not clean. The furniture was worn out. RS5 is a center of transported education which means children who live in least populated villages are transported to this school on a daily basis. In addition, RS5 provides a dual education system. As of 2019, the school has approximately 500 students and 22 subject matter teachers in total of morning and afternoon shifts. Classrooms are planned to be consisted of 30 students; however, each classroom has maximum ten students in fact due to several reasons, such as road closures because of blizzard and snowstorm, village kids working as seasonal agricultural workers in other regions, and the high female student dropout rate in basic education as a result of parental irresponsibility. After entering the school, the first situation observed in RS5 was all teachers and students were wearing their coats, gloves and scarves because it was freezing cold. The teacher told that the school goes without heat, causing students and teachers bundle up in coats and gloves inside the school. The school principal reported problems with inadequate radiator heaters and loss of sheathing that cause failure to heat. It was also reported that the roof is already in poor condition and heavy rains cause leaks especially in classrooms. It was also

observed that both students and teachers suffer from poor hygiene especially in restrooms. In addition, the school canteen was closed permanently, so there is no place for students and teachers to have lunch. Teachers prepare their lunch at home and carry them to eat at school. There is a very small kitchen near the staffroom which includes a teapot and a camp cylinder for heating lunch.

According to teachers and the school principal, the most important problem in this school is repeated power outages. Teachers indicated that the village has power cuts range from 4-10 hours. They also told that there is a power cut nearly every day for some amount of time in the school. Therefore, it is impossible for teachers to use electrical devices (such as laptop, music player or speaker) in their lessons. Indeed, the school does not provide such devices for teachers. There was a power cut lasting more than five hours on the day of observation. It was very cold and teachers could not use the electric heater in staffroom because of the power cut. It was also reported that maintenance support services cannot be provided by district national education directorate immediately. Thus, teachers and the school principal try to fix some of the structural problems as much as possible.

4.1.2 Teaching Contexts

Five rural schools in Turkey were observed. To prevent revealing the identities of schools and teachers, each teacher will be given a code name in this study: RS1, RS2, RS3, RS4 and RS5 for schools, and T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5 for teachers. For the analysis of observations, first field notes were read and the significant points were underlined. In the second reading, the field notes for each course were read closely and common patterns in different rural schools were noted. After that, a basic general description of rural schools was written. Finally, the field notes were re-read to check if the description made sense. In the findings below, field notes of each school will be analyzed for the common patterns so as to reach an overview of rural schools in Turkey. Even though observations were conducted throughout the day, only selected incidents and dialogues related to the aim of this dissertation work are presented instead of reporting all field notes.

This part aims to provide answers to the following research question:

RQ-2: How do EFL teachers define their teaching contexts?

Since rural areas often lack the services and leisure activities that cities have, teachers suffer from lack of adequate supplies of good teaching, extra-curricular activities for students, and cultural activites for teachers' personal and professional development. Teachers in this study implied that teaching in rural contexts directly adresses persistent and pressing problems such as technology deficiencies, defects in school building, and financial challenges relevant to rural communities. Except T5, the other four participants live in the area where they also teach English. For instance, T1 explains her teaching context with the following statement:

> You have seen the main street while coming to the school. No cinema or theatre, no major shopping facilities other than very small grocery stores. No bookstores or libraries. Apartments do not make any sense if you have to go to another town for emergency service when you are ill. All these problems are related to my teaching context because I experience the reflections of these problems in my school every day (Observation 1; December 12, 2018).

In this study, teachers identified schools with the neighbourhood they live. For instance, T3 indicated that the routes from and to school and the school neighbourhood perceived unsafe that can be seen in the school and students' behaviours as well. She shares her experiences by saying:

> I chose to live close to school because the city center is too far from here; however, it is too difficult for me to reach books, cultural events and leisure activities. It is not very safe to go to school by walking especially when it gets dark earlier in winter. You have to walk downhill for ten minutes to take a bus. Therefore, I use my car to come to the school. When you enter the school building, you can easily feel the poorness and apathy to education prevailing in the neighbourhood. You can easily observe how middle school students use violence on primary school kids. They perform in the school what they witness to at home. It is too sad. All these incidents are parts of my teaching context (Observation 3; December 21, 2018).

T2 chose to live in the village due to the fact that the village is very far from the city center. She indicated that she is happy to live close to the school; however, it is challenging for her to go to city center for shopping. She says:

> I come to the school by my car. I am happy to live in the village in terms of its tranquility, peace and safety; however, I have to go to city center to attend to cultural

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activities. There is no branch bank, post office, cinema, bookstore and restaurant in the village. You have to go the nearest town for banking services, for instance. I think that it is not a big problem for me because I have a car and good financial condition to go to the city center but my students and their families do not. I always try to keep in my mind that I have many students who have very limited opportunities (Observation 2; December 20, 2018).

Different from T1, T2 and T3, the only homegrown teacher in this study stated her positive opinions about living in a town without mentioning any disadvantages. According to T4, living in the town is an advantage for her in terms of spending time with her parents, seeing her old friends and having opportunity to contact with students' families easily. She mentions her happiness with the following words:

Teaching in this school gives me the precious chance to live with my family and spend time with my childhood friends. According to me, living in a town is peaceful. Breathing fresh air, eating more organic foods, sparing time for yourself, no traffic jams… I have to go to city center for shopping but it is not a problem for me. I love reading and I order books online. It takes longer time to get the cargo because the deliverer comes to our town once a week. I have to go to city center for watching a movie, for example. As I said before, these are not big problems for me. I was born and raised here. I know the town, family life of my students, the school and all people living here. I have already been familiar with my teaching context because my teaching context was my own learning context in the past (Observation 4; January 3, 2019).

After entering the school, the teachers drew attention to insufficient physical conditions by showing concrete examples from the school and the classrooms. They tended to speak of challenges related to lack of basic facilities and other support sytems in these schools. They emphasized the need to improve their teaching contexts so that they can design more beneficial lessons and rural kids have the better access to more qualified education system. It is recognized that current situation by itself does not represent supportive teaching and learning conditions in rural schools. T3 was eager to show the classrooms and the physical situation of the building by saying with her own words "I hope someone hear our voice." She would like to show me one of the classrooms on the second floor. She describes the unsuitable classroom conditions:

The school building is too small for that number of students, and the result is poor air qulity especially in corridors. Too many students come to this school from smaller towns. Can you see the whitewashed walls and ceiling? The janitor of our school did the whitewash. He is not an expert. The result is so-so. He did this because the directorate did not allocate fund from the budget for our school's maintenance. Most

of the doors are distorted. Look at this, please. This window has been broken by one of our students months ago. We immediately informed the directorate and asked for a new window. As you see, we close the broken part with a cardboard. It is very dangerous for us. The classroom is very cold. None of the classrooms have curtains and blackboards shake. One of them dropped on one of my student's foot. Of course, we do not have any technological facilities and I try to accept all these problems. I try to make a change by myself. I bring my personal laptop and speakers to the school to do listening activities in the classroom; however, half of the electrical circuits do not work. You have asked about my teaching context… You see for yourself… I would love to talk about positive things, but I can't (Observation 3; December 21, 2018).

RS4 is the biggest school among all rural schools visited for this study; neverthless the teacher indicated that the school does not have enough classrooms for that number of students. In addition, she told about students with behaviour disorders, uninterested parents, and nutrition problems in families. According to T1, all these problematic points affect her teaching context in a negative way. She shares her thoughts as follows:

> It makes me really sad to see our students damage doors, desks and the posters we hung on the wall after doing activities. Sometimes I think by myself that these kids were born to harm good things. I always try to be positive and stay calm but it is too hard when you do not work in a peaceful place. I think the root of all harmful activities and actions against the school come from parental apathy and lack of motivation for learning. As a rural school, we do not have problems such as electricity, water supply or hygiene, but there has been a deterioration of student behaviour (Observation 1; December 12, 2018).

It is reported by T5 that classrooms are lack of technological resources. According to her, they cannot even watch a video or play a song during English lessons. She defined her teaching context as "teaching with very limited resources for teachers" and elaborated her thoughts with the following words:

> I would like to teach in a better equipped classroom. I think educational technology is a useful tool in our century because using these tools makes it easier to teach students of all learning backgrounds and also helps teachers bring different worlds to the classroom. I found my teaching context limiting for me. I cannot use audiovisual materials. Rural kids may find English language unnecessary or even unapproachable but when they see or hear the language in its natural context, they begin to make a relation between the language and the real world. Technological tools also boost student interest and make a remarkable change in learning outcomes. However, most of the classrooms are lack of even electrical circuits. Therefore, we have difficulties while performing listening and speaking activities in English lessons (Observation 5; January 15, 2019).

In line with T5, it is stated by T2 that one of the most important challenges faced by rural teachers are limited infrastructures for extra-curricular activities and incapability to use technological tools in classrooms:

> Both my students and I live in this village and we are far from the city center. It is very hard to organize field trips or activities outside the school. I know it is not impossible but it requires motivation. I think family-school partnership is very crucial in rural schools in terms of increasing teacher motivation because teacher motivation has an impact student motivation. However, parents are not active in this school. As you see, we do not have technological tools in the classrooms and I bring my own laptop to the classroom for doing some listening activities. If the parents were more active and interested when the problems first stated showing up in this school, I think a lot of positive developments would be done for improving school condition, increasing teacher motivation and boosting learning (Observation 2; December 20, 2018).

Different from other teachers, only T4 did not mention any negative aspects about her teaching context during the observation. She reported that she tries to find "*Plan B*" in order to eliminate some school deficiencies. She emphasized that she has already been familiar with the challenges of being a student in a rural school so she understands her students and their parents:

> I have already known what it means to be a rural kid growing up in a small area. I have already known my teaching context before I came to here as a teacher. I try not to complain about the conditions of our school. Yes, our school is small and we need more educational facilities but I went to primary and middle school in this area and I graduated from one of the most prestigious universities in our country. Therefore, I try to be a role model for my students. When my Plan A does not work in my teaching context, I go into Plan B. My students can see my effort. This is very important for me (Observation 4; January 3, 2019).

4.1.3 The Relation Between Professional Identities and Teaching Contexts

In the findings below, field notes taken during each school visit will be analyzed for the common patterns so as to reach an overview of rural schools in Turkey. The observations were conducted throughtout the day; however, only selected incidents and dialogues are presented in order to provide answers to the following research question:

> *RQ-3: How do EFL teachers make a relation between their professional identities and their teaching contexts?*

The teachers participated in this study indicated that they take different roles that supposedly fit their teaching situations. They expect that their teacher identities would be shaped differently in different teaching contexts. Therefore, teacher roles may change when the teaching context changes. As a concrete example, it was observed that there was a nutrition schedule on the classroom wall in RS5. T5 explained the aim of this schedule by emphasizing her new role in addition to teaching English:

> I recognized my students' malnutrition problems. Because of economic and social problems in this village, students come to classes hungry and it causes lack of concentration during lessons. I decided to encourage my students to eat healthy in the school. Personally, I am inserested in healthy nutrition and wellness. Therefore, my students' poor nutrition drew my attention. I asked them what they have in their homes as food. They said they mostly eat bread, butter and vegetables. After that, I bought a colorful cardboard and prepared this nutrition schedule. It includes my students' names, date, today's healthy food, and a column for putting a tick. For example, they have to bring two apples or an apple and a cucumber next Monday. Before the lesson, I ask them to show today's healthy food and I put a tick on this schedule. As you see, I try to be supportive about my students' healthy nutrition. I am their nutritionist in addition to teaching in this school. If I worked in a state school in city center or in a private school, I would not need to wonder about my students' nutrition or create such a schedule. Therefore, I believe that being a rural teacher automatically brings along extra responsibilities in addition to teaching (Observation 5; January 15, 2019).

Similar to T5, it is also stated by T4 that rural teachers often take full responsibility of their students for their academic and personal growth. As T4 explained:

> I never think that my only responsibility is teaching English in this school. When I observed that my students have problems in developing reading habit, I planned to organize a book club. My primary aim was getting them adopt a reading habbit via enjoyable Turkish novels. I found shelves and hung them on the wall in our corridor. I bought some books proper to their age and asked them bring some books for our little library. As you see, I created a library in our school without having an extra space and budget. I love reading, actually reading is my best hobby. I try to be a role model for them. I decided to spare an hour from my lessons for reading Turkish books. We determined a day to read together. As I said before, I cannot define my teacher identity with only teaching and assessing but also being responsible for my students' personal growth (Observation 4; January 3, 2019).

During the field visit in RS4, it was observed that two parents visited T4 outside of regularly scheduled parent-teacher meeting. They came to school to talk about their children's academic and social progress. After talking to parents outside the staffroom, T4 came back and explained the importance of parent-teacher collaboration in rural schools:

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Most of the parents are very instered in their children's academic and social progress. They come to school twice a month to talk about their children. I find parent-teacher collaboration very crucial especially in rural schools because we have already some problems related to resources, technological equipments, and the social and economic potential of this area. Therefore, a good collaboration between teachers and parents minimizes the negative aspects of teaching contexts. I also believe that parents' attitudes towards their children affect teacher's approach to his or her job (Observation 4; January 3, 2019).

In line with thoughts of T4 and T5, T3 attributes multiple roles to teachers in rural schools. According to her, physical and social conditions of schools, students' academic performance and extra-curricular funding have a considerable impact on teachers' roles in the classroom. She gave a concrete example by showing an English portfolio prepared by her students:

When I began to teach in this school, I realized that I have to do extra things in addition to teaching. If the physical conditions of this school and my students' social welfare were adequate to do extra-curricular activities and more effective English lessons, I would have different roles as a teacher. I mean, I would be an organizer, a guide or a facilitator. However, I have to be a lesson-oriented teacher in this school in order to make them focused and disciplined. I try to teach them as much as possible. I wish I could watch movies with them in the classroom and discuss it, but it is impossible. I try to include basic but enjoyable activities to my lesson plan in order to make my lessons appealing. For example, I asked them to do an English portfolio and submit it to me at the end of the semester. They will put drawings and pictures related to weekly topics and activities they create, such as basic crossword puzzles, and the exercises I give them to do at home. Some of them are very interested in doing portfolio while some of them are completely uninterested. I think this is the maximum thing that could be done in this school. I have great ideas and projects in my mind as a language teacher but the context I am teaching in ties my hand (Observation 3; December 21, 2018).

T2 draws attention to the importance of planning expectations as a teacher by taking into consideration the context s/he is teaching:

In the beginning, I aimed to prepare my students for the nationwide high school entrance examination; however, I realized that this kind of aim cannot be achieved only with my effort. This is a village school and most of the parents are not interested in their children's academic development. None of our students go to science high school up to the present time. Most of our students go to neighbourhood high school located in the nearest town. Some of them do not pursue high school education. If I taught in a qualified high school, I would design my lessons in accordance with my students' level and needs; however, it is not meaningful for me to design challenging lessons in this school. Of course, I fulfill my responsibilities as a teacher but I do not expect marvellous things from my students. Being a rural teacher teaches you to take into consideration your context while setting objectives for your lessons (Observation 2; December 20, 2018).

During the field visits, it was frequently observed that teachers become *material-creators* in order to make their lessons appealing and comprehensible. It was also observed that teachers particularly use bulletin boards in classrooms and school hallways in rural schools. They indicate that bulletin boards are low-cost but beneficial materials to make lessons enjoyable. For instance, T1 emphasizes that she is very interested in material design and loves doing research about innovative teaching materials and learning projects for young learners; however, she cannot put them into practice in her own classroom:

> Actually, I am a very idealist and innovative English language teacher. I do research about new materials, language teaching methods and technological tools in my spare time. I take notes and try to integrate them into my lessons. However, it is not easy to practice them in this school because we do not have enough resources. I become a solution-oriented teacher in this school. I especially use the bulletin board for doing visual activities. It is cheap and achievable. I never throw away cardboards, colorful things, magazines and plays. I keep them in my cupboard to modify and re-use them as teaching materials for my lessons. I have showed you some of my teaching materials. Most of them were found and modified by me. As you see, I try to find solutions to minimize disadvantages of this school. If I taught in a qualified and successful school, I would be more idealist while desgining my lessons and prefer different materials, of course (Observation 1; December 12, 2018).

It was also observed that English lessons are taught by only one or two teachers in rural areas visited for this study. In RS2, RS3 and RS5, there are two English language teachers and they do not see each other most of the time as a result of teaching in morning or afternoon shifts in a dual education system. In RS4, she is the only English language teacher in the school and even in the town. During the field visit, it was observed that T4 has a close relationship with other subject-matter teachers and she explains this situation with the following statement:

> I am the only English language teacher in this town. I also teach in the primary school as a part-time teacher. I have no opportunity to exchange ideas and instructional resources with other English language teachers. Therefore, I share my ideas with other experienced subject-matter teachers and consult them time to time. Sometimes it makes me feel lonely. I am influenced by my colleagues' views and advice. Colleague relationships are critical for rural teachers, as they protect them from isolation. It would affect my teacher role and my teaching practices in a positive way if we have more English language teachers in this town (Observation 4; January 3, 2019).

In a similar vein, T3 suggests that her relationships with her colleagues play a role in the process of her professional development in this area. According to her, she would

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feel herself more competent and stronger if she had a good relationship with the other English language teacher in this school:

> We are two English language teachers in this school. The other teacher works in the morning shift. Most of the time, we do not see each other. Sometimes we come across in the staffroom. We just greet each other. That's all. Honestly, I do not prefer to talk to her because she is far removed from language and teaching. I tried to exchange ideas about teaching with her and share my opinions for collaboration; however, it did not make any sense for her. I have accepted that I am lonely in this school as an English language teacher and I try to make good things on my own. If she was interested in my ideas and suggestions, we would participate in professional development workshops and do collaborative lesson plans. I feel lonely and this feeling affects my personal satisfaction and professional growth. Teaching in a collaborative context may affect the way one performs in the classroom in a positive way (Observation 3; December 21, 2018).

In short, it was observed that rural teachers define their teaching contexts by mostly implying the disadvantages of the rural area where they also live. During the observations, they define their teaching contexts with the following words: technology deficiencies, defects in school building, teaching with limited resources, financial challenges prevailing in communities, lack of social and cultural activities in rural areas, and area remoteness from the city center. In addition, teachers prefer to live in the village or town where they also teach. The reason behind this preference was stem from the fact that teachers are not able to travel to and from rural areas. Even though teachers want to live in city centers, constraints on mobility including sporadic buses (some only running once a week) and expensive road fee (particularly for those travelling everyday) oblige them to live close to school. On the other hand, one of the teachers, who is the only homegrown teacher in this study, regularly expressed her pleasure about living in the town. She indicates that she has already been familiar with her teaching context and the community before returning to the area as a teacher.

The findings also show that rural teachers take different roles in addition to teaching English, such as a life coach, a counselor, a low-cost teaching material creator and even a nutritionist. It was observed that their teacher identities are shaped in accordance with their teaching contexts and students' needs. Moreover, it is also remarked by teachers that a good collaboration between teachers and parents may minimize disadvantages of rural schools. Finally, it was observed that English

lessons are taught by only one or two teachers in rural areas which cause professional isolation and lack of opportunity to exchange ideas and instructional resources with colleagues.

4.2 Findings of Metaphor Elicitation Task

The metaphors constructed by the participants and their explanations of them constituted the relevant data for this part. Using a metaphor elicitation task (Please see Appendix A) as a guide, the participants created metaphors that represented their perception of themselves as teachers and teaching English in rural areas. In addition, from these metaphor elicitations, each participant constructed a holistic visual representation of what they think about being a rural teacher, professional development in rural schools and the characteristics of a professional English language teacher.

This part is divided into two sections in order to make it easier for the reader to follow. Each section adresses one of the research questions provided below:

RQ-1: How do rural EFL teachers define their professional identities?

RQ-3: How do rural EFL teachers make a relation between their professional identities and their teaching contexts?

The data were analyzed in three stages with the help of data analysis method proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994). First, the researcher displays each teacher's metaphors separately in the form of tables. Then, she analyzes data and draws conclusions to put forth the meanings of emerging data. Finally, she uses metaphor explanations of each participant to verify the analysis. In analyzing the metaphors, the researcher begins by considering each metaphor in isolation one at a time. After presenting written interpretations of each metaphor, the researcher puts forward the interconnectedness between these metaphors to provide a more holistic examination.

4.2.1 Metaphors Revealing Rural EFL Teachers' Definitions of Professional English Language Teacher and Their Own Professional Identities

This part aims to provide answers to the following research question:

RQ-1: How do rural EFL teachers define their professional identities?

The participants created five different metaphors to define an English language teacher. The following table displays the metaphors created by rural teachers about an English language teacher in general:

Table 4.1
List of metaphors created by rural EFL teachers to define an English language teacher

	An English language teacher is like…
T1	a candle
T2	a singer, actress, comedian
T3	a door
T4	an orchestra conductor
T5	a cultural transmitter

It is clear from Table 4.1 that rural EFL teachers used five different metaphors to define an English language teacher. The participants developed these metaphors by implying various responsibilies of an English language teacher in addition to teaching. It can be concluded that rural teachers perceive an English language teacher as an intellectual person who knows about different cultures, presents a new language by using his or her own talents, and broadens students' perspectives of the world. T1 defines an English language teacher as a *candle* and explains her metaphor with the following statement:

> An English language teacher not only enlightens her students' path like a candle, but also empowers and transforms communities. When you teach a rural student, you take a step to transform the community. English lessons are comprised of very different topics, such as art, literature, science and geography. Our lessons have a potential to make students to become curious and interested in outer world. Therefore, English language teachers are of vital importance especially in rural areas

in terms of having a responsibility of shaping the lives of rural kids. I see myself as a candle that helps rural kids have a brighter future (T1, Metaphor Explanation).

In a similar vein, T3 defines an English language teacher as a *door* who helps students enter new worlds to explore. She elaborates on this metaphor with the following words:

> English language teacher is a door of opportunity. As a teacher, it is in your hands to open or close that door. If you choose to open the door, your students will meet a new world filled with good opportunities. If you choose to keep it closed, your students may lose lots of opportunities (T3, Metaphor Explanation).

T5 draws attention to the fact that language teaching is not only teaching a language but also providing information about cultural diversity in the world. According to her, English language teachers bridge the gap between students' own culture and the other cultures prevailing in the world. Therefore, she defines an English language teacher as a *cultural transmitter*: "An English language teacher knows a foreign language and she sort of represents the culture of that language, so she is the transmitter of that foreign language and its culture" (T5, Metaphor Explanation).

According to T2, an English language teacher is a stage-actor who can sing, act and make students enjoy learning English. She compiles the following metaphors to define an English language teacher: *singer*, *actress,* and *comedian*. She indicates that an English language teacher should have theatrical skills in order to be attractive in the classroom:

> I love using visual aids in the classroom. I also think that a good English language teacher should sing songs and use her voice and acting skills in order to make her lessons attractive and effective especially while teaching English to young learners. It is amazing to see them learn a new language via having fun (T2, Metaphor Explanation).

T4 uses the metaphor of an *orchestra conductor* for an English language teacher. She thinks that an English language teacher has various responsibilities during the lessons and each responsibility has its own characteristics. As orchestras contain various instruments, classrooms are comprised of various students. Thus, an English language teacher is expected to manage all these instruments in harmony and create an effective learning atmosphere. She elaborates on this metaphor as follows:

The conductor is responsible for the sound that the orchestra produces. She should prepare the musicians for the concert. She should consider the harmony. Each instrument should be coordinated well. In my opinion, an English language teacher is an orchestra conductor in the classroom because each student has his or her own world and the teacher is responsible for creating a harmony between them while managing their learning processes at the same time. In addition, she has to have enough technical knowledge related to English language just as an orchestra conductor is competent in music (T4, Metaphor Explanation).

Table 4.2
List of metaphors created by rural EFL teachers to describe the role of an English language teacher

	The role of an English language teacher is like…
T1	a change maker
T2	an attention grabber
T3	a guide
T4	a guide
T5	a book widens the horizon of students

Table 4.2 shows that the participants attribute different roles to English language teachers in addition to teaching English. According to T1, an English language teacher is a *change maker* who "changes the way students perceive the world and makes students more conscious while growing" (T1, Metaphor Explanation). Likewise, T2 indicates that an English language teacher is an *attention grabber* who draws students' attention to language learning and she explains this metaphor with the following statement:

> I think an English language teacher should draw students' attention to the existence of different cultures in the world and the importance of learning foreign languages for a better career and future (T2, Metaphor Explanation).

T5 remarks the importance of an English language teacher's intellectual profoundity especially for rural kids. According to her, an English language teacher is a *book widens the horizon of students*:

> In my opinion, an English language teacher has a very important role especially for rural kids. Mathematics and science teachers are also very important for students, but English language teachers play a critical role for rural kids. People generally think

that English language teachers have knowledge about different topics such as cinema, history, literature, art or sports. Therefore, they are seen as books that you can read about many things (T5, Metaphor Explanation).

Both T3 and T4 state that an English language teacher is a *guide* for students. While T4 states that the role of an English language teacher is "applying strategies to guide the learning English and raising cultural awareness processes" (T4, Metaphor Explanation), T3 indicates that an English language teacher is a guide who "leads the way to a better future for rural kids through teaching a language and improving their communication skills (T3, Metaphor Explanation).

Table 4.3
List of metaphors created by rural EFL teachers to describe a professional English language teacher

	A professional English language teacher is like…
T1	a guide
T2	an entertainer
T3	a cultural awareness promoter
T4	an intellectual
T5	a native speaker

It is clear from Table 4.1 and Table 4.3 that the metaphors created by participants for a professional English language teacher are parallel with the metaphors they created for an English language teacher. For instance, T2 creates the metaphor of an *entertainer* for a professional English language teacher while she uses the metaphors of singer, actress and comedian for an English language teacher. Likewise, T1 uses the metaphor of candle for an English language teacher while she uses the metaphor of a *guide* for a professional English language teacher. She makes a relation between the two metaphors that she created as follows:

> A professional English language teacher is a guide for both students and parents in terms of teaching English language properly and also raising parents' awareness of the importance of pursuing a higher education especially for rural kids. A professional English language teacher is a person who enlightens students about different topics, teaches a foreign language to help students have a better education in the future and also makes parents aware of the importance of education in rural areas (T1, Metaphor Explanation).

T3 uses the metaphor of a *cultural awareness promoter* for a professional English language teacher. She indicates that professionalism is not only teaching a foreign language but also promoting cultural awareness of rural kids: "A professional English language teacher should teach English and also makes her students being aware of their own culture and other cultures in the world" (T3, Metaphor Explanation). According to T4, professionalism is linked to the idea of educating students about different topics in a meaningful way:

> I think that a professional English language teacher should be an *intellectual* because teachers are role models especially in rural areas. We provide various information about science, art, literature or health via different topics written in our lesson plans (T4, Metaphor Explanation).

Finally, T5 draws attention to the importance of being competent in English language while creating a metaphor for a professional English language teacher:

> I think that a professional English language teacher should be *native-like*. She should be fluent in English and have an extensive vocabulary. I cannot define a foreign language teacher as a professional if she makes pronunciation mistakes and has limited vocabulary knowledge that negatively affect her authority in the classroom (T5, Metaphor Explanation).

Table 4.4
List of metaphors created by rural EFL teachers to describe their own teacher identities

	I can describe my teacher identity with the following word: …
T1	researcher
T2	mother
T3	guide
T4	mother
T5	having talent

In Table 4.4, participants unpack the metaphors they created about their own teacher identities by implying obligations, roles, and assumptions about teachers and the teaching profession. The metaphor of *researcher* created by T1 indicates that the teaching atmosphere she attempts to provide in her classroom is one where she supports research and information literacy. In addition, she tries to support

the learning of each student through developing and adapting different materials to her lessons:

> Definitely, I am a researcher. If I come up with new information or details about a topic that we go through in the classroom, I note it down and investigate after the lesson. After I get enough information about them, I tell them to my students in the next lesson. I always tell my students that we are in an internet age and they can reach information by using the internet usefully. I try to show them my researcher character in order to be a role model. I always seek new information that I can use to improve myself both personally and professionally (T1, Metaphor Explanation).

Both T2 and T4 use the metaphor of *mother* to reveal their concern about the vulnerable nature of their students in rural areas. T2 defines her teacher identity as a mother and explains it as "My job is trying to create a warm, loving and secure environment in which students can learn and develop" (T2, Metaphor Explanation). Likewise, T4 uses the metaphor of mother to indicate her aim to create a school environment where her students feel themselves secure and special. She emphasizes her homegrown teacher identity and articulates what she does to create such an environment as follows:

> My teacher identity resembles of a mother identity. I see myself as a nurturer, loving and enjoyable mother. As a homegrown teacher, I know this community and my students very well and I also know their needs and expectations. Therefore, I see myself as a pillar of this rural community just as a mother in a family. That's why I do my job without complaining (T4, Metaphor Explanation).

T3 articulates her teacher identity with the metaphor of *guide*. She highlights the official and non-official duties of a teacher in order to let students navigate their own learning and prepare them for a real life:

> I see myself as a guide who forms the students. I try to offer them a good education and introduce some ways of improving themselves. It is my job to introduce children effective learning opportunities so they are inspired to learn more about a person who they can be in the future (T3, Metaphor Explanation).

T5 creates a metaphor of *having talent* which implies her own skills and achievements. She remarks that she is a talent as an English language teacher and has a charisma in the classroom:

> I think that a good English language teacher is a talent. Your fluency, vocabulary knowledge and the teaching methods you use in the classroom show your talent.

Talent is linked to charisma. I think that teacher charisma is influenced by the subject you teach. English language teaching is different from teaching other subjects. You should be a talent to be a good language teacher (T5, Metaphor Explanation).

In sum, metaphor analysis reveals variability concerning participants' assumptions about their own teacher identities. This is clear in the contrast between the metaphors created for their own teacher identities. The participants created different metaphors to define their teacher identities. The metaphor of teacher as *researcher* assumes that teacher should always be open to new materials, methods and techniques in order to improve both themselves as teachers and their students. On the other hand, the metaphor of *having talent* stands for the innate skills and abilities of a language teacher. Apart from these, the metaphor of teacher as *mother* is created by two of the participants in order to indicate teacher's nurturing and caring role. In addition, one of the participants assumes that a teacher is a *guide* for students to help them follow effective strategies for learning English and also assists them in accessing good opportunities for their future lives. There is also variability in the metaphors defining teachers' professional selves. In the *guide* metaphor, the participant is conceptualized herself as a professional who is not an authority but an advisor enlightening student about different topics and making parents aware of the importance of education. Likewise, one of the participants defines herself as a professional who is a *cultural awareness promoter* to make her students being aware of their own culture and other cultures in the world while teaching English. In similar vein, teacher professionalism is linked to being an *intellectual* by one of the participants in terms of being capable of teaching different kinds of topics such as science, art or literature. One of the participants associates professional teaching with being an *entertainer* in the classroom in terms of creating an attractive and enjoyable learning atmosphere via drawing, singing and acting. Finally, the participant who defines her own teacher identity as a *talent* creates the metaphor of *native speaker* for a professional English language teacher. This metaphor shows that teacher identity and teacher professionalism can be associated with the innate skills of a teacher and fluency in English.

Finally, it is also revealed by teachers' metaphors that teachers agree on the fact that they have multiple roles in rural schools in addition to teaching English. All

participants think that the role of a rural teacher is highly dependent on the context s/he teaches in. Rural teachers' responsibilities for changing rural kids' perceptions about the world and their future lives are revealed within the metaphors of *change-maker* and *guide*. The metaphor of *attention grabber* is used to define a rural teacher's role of drawing rural kids' attention to the existence of different cultures and possibilities in the world.

In addition, providing wide range of knowledge to rural kids is indicated as one of the roles of a rural teacher by one of the participants with the metaphor of *a book widens the horizon of students*. Besides, participants created different metaphors for define an English language teacher in general. The fact that rural teachers have various responsibilities in addition to teaching is again emphasized by one of the participants with the metaphor of *orchestra conductor*. While analyzing the metaphors created for defining an English language teacher, it is again seen that all metaphors are highly related to the context the participants teach in. While the metaphor of *candle* represents a teacher, who enlightens her students' path for learning new information and tranforms communities, the metaphor of *actress* stands for a teacher who makes classrooms and learning process more enjoyable and atteactive. One of the participants states that an English language teacher is a *cultural transmitter* who introduces rural children different cultures and traditions and also, she is a *door* of new opportunities to rural kids.

4.2.2 Metaphors Revealing Rural EFL Teachers' Thoughts about the Relation between Professional Identities and Teaching Contexts

This part aims to provide answers to the following research question:

> *RQ-3: How do rural EFL teachers make a relation between their professional identities and their teaching contexts?*

The participants created four different metaphors to define being a rural English language teacher. The following table displays the metaphors created by rural teachers:

Table 4.5

List of metaphors created by rural EFL teachers to define being a rural English language teacher

	Being a rural English language teacher is like…
T1	Jane Eyre
T2	a proud family member
T3	a compassionate friend
T4	a proud family member
T5	a rainbow

It is seen from Table 4.5 that the participants used four different metaphors to define being a rural English language teacher. The participants developed these metaphors by indicating various duties of rural teachers. For instance, T1 uses the metaphor of *Jane Eyre* for being a rural teacher. She provides the following statement to explain the metaphor she creates:

> Being a rural English language teacher is like being a Jane Eyre because most of the time I experience her feelings such as despair and being stuck. My students come to the classroom but they do not try to learn the language. They just want to have some fun and learn one or two words to use while playing video games. The current situation does not motivate me to stay in this area (T1, Metaphor Explanation).

Both T2 and T4 state that being a rural English language teacher is like *a proud family member*. They acknowledge that their role is beyond teaching English in rural areas. T2 remarks that she is proud of her students' every small increment they make. She says:

> When I see my students' even very little improvements, I feel myself as a proud sister. I see them as my little brothers or sisters and sometimes my kids. I think rural kids need to be looked after more than urban kids. I feel myself more than a teacher in a rural school (T2, Metaphor Explanation).

Likewise, T4 indicates that being a rural English language teacher means being a second parent at the same time:

> I spend long hours with my students. Teachers are very important in rural areas because they become role models for both students and parents. My students' brothers and sisters were my classmates or play friends in the past, so I see my students as my little brothers and sisters. When my students have a good score on an

exam or when they read more than before, I feel myself as a proud sister. I know that this feeling is related to being a rural teacher (T4, Metaphor Explanation).

According to T5, a rural English language teacher is *a rainbow* who has different colors. She thinks that the colors of a rainbow symbolize different roles of a rural teacher. Through a metaphor of rainbow, she makes a comparison between teaching English in rural schools and urban schools:

> As you know, rainbows have different colors. Being a rural teacher is like being a rainbow because rural teachers have multiple roles in rural schools. A rural teacher is a role model, sometimes a sister, and most of the time a guide. Urban kids have more conscious parents, different role models and opportunitites. They do not expect incredible things from their teachers. When you teach in an urban school, you do not need to do more than teaching English (T5, Metaphor Explanation).

Finally, T3 uses a metaphor of *compassionate friend* for being a rural English language teacher. She remarks that she tries to approach her students with compassion. She sees herself as a friend who listens to her students' problems and concerns. She says:

> I feel myself as a teacher and a friend of my students. They tell me about their problems and I try to console them and cheer them up. I do this because I feel compassion towards them. They are different from urban kids. Rural kids need your compassion and care (T3, Metaphor Explanation).

Table 4.6
List of metaphors created by rural EFL teachers to define their roles in a rural school

	I can define my role in this school with the following three words: ...
T1	an observer, an actress, a worker
T2	a counselor, a sister, a psychologist
T3	a guide, a friend, a psychologist
T4	a counselor, a team member, an older friend
T5	a counselor, a facilitator, the only source of knowledge

In Table 4.6, the participants created 11 different metaphors to define their roles in rural schools: *observer, actress, worker, counselor, sister, psychologist, guide, friend, team member, facilitator,* and *the only source of knowledge.* T2, T4 and T5

use the metaphor of *counselor* to imply their roles as a teacher who gives guidance and advice to students for their academic and personal growth. T2 says: "I am a teacher and also a counselor in this school because I try to provide suggestions to help my students when they face a problem" (T2, Metaphor Explanation).

Likewise, T5 defines her role as a counselor in her school by also implying her role as a *facilitator*: "I am a counselor more than an English language teacher in this school. They [rural kids] need my care and advice. I am also a facilitator in terms of making a positive change in their lives" (T5, Metaphor Explanation). Likewise, T4 remarks that her main aim is providing opportunities for her students to create a better quality of living. She says:

> My first role in this school is teaching English to my students, of course. However, I also aim to mentor their academic developments. I try to encourage them for pursuing their education in a high school and tell them the importance of having good education for better life standards. I show my care and concern towards my students when they need me (T4, Metaphor Explanation).

In parallel with the aforementioned metaphors, T3 uses the metaphor of *guide* for her role in a rural school. She mentions: "My role in a rural school is introduce my students the possibility of living a better life after having a good education and guide them in this road" (T3, Metaphor Explanation). T3 also uses the metaphor of *psychologist* for define her role in this school. It is obvious that the metaphor of psychologist is closely associated with the previously mentioned metaphors of counselor and guide. T3 indicates:

> I am always ready to listen to my students without criticizing as a psychologist. I was not a rural kid and I grew up in a big city, but I try to understand the social dimensions of this area. I try to understand how my students feel as a part of this community (T3, Metaphor Explanation).

Similar to T3, the metaphor of psychologist is also used by T2 to define her role in a rural school. She says: "My role in this school is also listening to my students' problems or dreams as a reliable and sensitive psychologist" (T2, Metaphor Explanation). She also puts forth her role by using the metaphor of *sister*: "If you are a rural teacher, you become a family member, like a sister or a brother because you teach in a small area. Your students do not see you as a foreigner" (T2, Metaphor

Explanation). In the same vein, T1 defines her role in a rural school with the metaphor of *observer* who aims to observe students and understand their learning habits. She says:

> I think a rural teacher should observe her students well because rural students have different problems related to their unprivileged life conditions. These problems affect their learning negatively and they need your advice (T1, Metaphor Explanation).

T1 defines her role in the school with the metaphors of *worker* and *actress*. She indicates that she works really hard like an actress in order to perform a good lesson in front of her students: "I am a worker who works a lot for a good performance like an actress. I work even in my spare times to make my lessons more enjoyable and beneficial" (T1, Metaphor Explanation). T4 uses two interconnected metaphors to define her role as an English language teacher in the school: *a team member* and *an older friend.* She sees herself and her students as different parts of a team and she guides the team as a more experienced member:

> I see myself and my students as a team and I am one of the members of it. We have a common purpose which is creating a good future for all children in our community. We move together to reach a common goal. I do not make them to see me as a leader in this team but an older friend who is experienced and knowledgable (T4, Metaphor Explanation).

In parallel with T4, the metaphor of *friend* is used by T3. She defines her role in the school as "being not an authority but a friend whom all students respect and love" (T3, Metaphor Explanation). Finally, T5 uses the metaphor of *the only source of knowledge* to define her role in the rural school: "Teachers are the only sources of knowledge in rural schools because students do not have enough role models and resources to reach new knowledge" (T5, Metaphor Explanation).

Table 4.7
List of metaphors created by rural EFL teachers to define teachers' professional development in rural schools

	Teacher's professional development in this school is like…
T1	a convenient treatment
T2	a tailor-made item
T3	a life-long job

Table 4.7 (cont'd)

T4	a never-ending school
T5	gardening

It is seen from Table 4.7 that the participants created five different metaphors for teachers' professional development in rural schools. Firstly, T5 uses the metaphor of *gardening* to define her professional development experiences as a rural teacher: "Pursuing professional development needs too much effort in rural areas like caring a garden. It is up to your willingness to spare time and effort" (T5, Metaphor Explanation). From a different perspective, T1 indicates that teachers' professional development depends on the quality and content of the trainings they attend to. She uses the metaphor of *convenient treatment* and remarks that professional development efforts serve the purpose only if they are convenient to teachers' needs and teaching contexts: "Teachers' professional development should be supported with trainings in rural areas. They should be convenient to our needs and teaching context. We need treatments for our problems" (T1, Metaphor Explanation). According to T2, professional development is a necessity for rural teachers and should be encouraged by official training programs in rural areas. She uses the metaphor of *tailor-made item* and suggests that rural teachers need in-service trainings which are contextualized for the uniqueness of rural schools:

> Pursuing teacher development is really difficult in rural areas because we do not have enough resources to do it. We need trainings specifically designed for rural teachers. Our context is different from urban schools. They [in-service trainings] are not accessible for us because we live far away from the city centre (T2, Metaphor Explanation).

Both T3 and T4 imply that teacher's professional development is a continous process that starts with the graduation and continues during the career. T3 uses the metaphor of *life-long job* for teachers' professional development and says: "Rural teachers should read and learn a lot to understand rural kids' circumstances and needs. Our job does not end when the ring bells" (T3, Metaphor Explanation). Likewise, T4 uses the metaphor of *never-ending school* and remarks that teaching rural kids is a big responsibility that needs a continous professional development effort:

Being a rural teacher is like a never-ending school. You should develop yourself professionally to address your students' each and every need. They ask you various things. For example, a learning method or a capital city of a country or the name of an interesting food. You are the guide; you are the consultant (T4, Metaphor Explanation).

In brief, the participants all shared the common experience of being rural school teachers in small areas. The common discourses they used in metaphor elicitation processes represent the relation between their professional identities and the context they teach in. According to the participants, they have multiple responsibilities in addition to teaching English, such as nurturing, caring and being role models to their students. One of the participants created the metaphor of *Jane Eyre* to define her despair and sense of being stuck as a rural teacher against students' apathy in learning English language and doing assignments. She indicates that this situation affects her teacher identity negatively in terms of not motivating her to stay as a rural teacher. Two of the participants use the metaphor of *proud family member* to define their role in a rural school. They emphasize that rural teachers are not seen as foreigners in the village that make them a member of students' families. Since the participants define themselves as a guide and a role model for rural kids, they feel very proud when students achieve even small increments of success. In a similar vein, one of the participants defines her role in a rural school with the metaphor of *compassionate friend* in order to emphasize the difference between teaching in rural and urban schools. According to her, rural kids need more care and attention from their teachers than urban kids.

Finally, one of the participants defines her role in the school with the metaphor of *rainbow* in order to remark the various roles she holds in the rural school. The participants created the following metaphors to define their roles in rural schools: *observer, actress, worker, counselor, sister, psychologist, guide, friend, team member, facilitator,* and *the only source of knowledge.* Firstly, the metaphor of *counselor* is the most frequently used metaphor to define teachers' role in rural schools. The participants put forward that rural kids need their advice and guidance to create themselves a better quality of living. They indicate that they have to spend too much time to motivate their students in order to make them more hopeful and more determined about their future. Therefore, rural teachers associate their role with

the context they teach in. Likewise, participants use metaphors of *observer*, *guide* and *facilitator* to indicate that they observe the rural kids and provide the necessary guidance to them in order to reduce the effect of unpriviliged conditions of rural life. The metaphor of *psychologist* is the second frequently used metaphor that indicates their role of listening to rural kids without critisizing them and understanding their social conditions to help them create a better learning atmosphere. The metaphors of *actress* and *worker* imply teachers' role of working a lot to struggle with limited resources in rural schools, and their aim to create an enjoyable and attractive learning atmosphere to make rural kids more motivated about pursuing education after middle school. Participants also use the metaphors of *sister*, *friend* and *team member* to remark their aim to build close relations with the students not as an authority but as an understanding companion. Finally, one of the participants define her role with the metaphor of *the only source of knowledge* since she sees herself as the only source of knowledge in the area due to the fact that rural kids do not have even very basic resources to reach the information.

It is crystal clear that rural teachers make an important relation between their roles as teacher and the context they teach in. Finally, the participants created different metaphors to define professional development in rural areas. Firstly, the metaphor of *gardening* is generated to imply the necessity of too much effort to pursue professional development in rural areas. The metaphor also implies that professional development depends on teachers' willingness and motivation in rural areas. Secondly, the metaphors of *convenient treatment* and *tailor-made item* are used to suggest that rural teachers should be supported by trainings and workshops specifically designed for solving rural teachers' problems. In addition, it is implied that these trainings should be organized in rural areas because most of the rural teachers are not willing to participate in trainings organized in city centre. In addition, professional development in rural areas is defined with the metaphors of *life-long job* and *never-ending school* due to the fact that rural teachers should improve themselves continuosly in order to better create a learning atmosphere for rural kids, make them motivated for the future, and provide adequate support to transform both students and the community. It is obvious from the metaphors generated by rural teachers that their perceptions and experiences about professional

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development are under the influence of the current conditions of their teaching contexts and the consequences of avaliable trainings for in-service teachers.

4.3 Findings of Interviews

Having presented the field notes taken during visits to five different rural areas and having analyzed metaphors created by the participants and having thus provided answers of the first, the second, and the third research questions of the study, it is now necessary to investigate the participant views about their professional identity construction processes including their opinions about rural teaching contexts, the most influential parties in their professional practices, and their expectations and needs at rural schools. This chapter will present the findings gathered from in-depth interviews with rural teachers and will give an answer to the following research questions of the study:

> *RQ-1: How do rural EFL teachers define their professional identities?*
>
> *RQ-2: How do rural EFL teachers define their teaching contexts?*
>
> *RQ-3: How do rural EFL teachers make a relation between their professional identities and their teaching contexts?*
>
> *RQ-4: Who are the most influential parties in rural EFL teachers' professional identity construction process?*
>
> *RQ-5: What are rural EFL teachers' professional expectations and needs in Turkey?*

In this chapter, the data gathered from both the first and the second interviews will be provided so as to allow the reader to grasp different viewpoints of participants. A synthesis of the responses provided by five rural teachers from five different rural schools will be provided in a thematic order in order to find answers to the research questions of this study.

4.3.1 Rural EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Their Professional Identities

This part consists of findings gathered from the second interviews and aims to find an answer to the following research question of the study:

RQ-1: How do rural EFL teachers define their professional identities?

From five verbatim transcripts gathered as a result of the second interview sessions with five rural EFL teachers, significant statements from each participant were extracted into meaning units and associated with similar statements made by other participants. After reading the meaning units and employing the coding process, emergent codes were used to create categories. The following three categories describing rural EFL teachers' definitions of their professional identities were emerged: *Daring the Challenges: Not only Teaching but Educating*, *Struggles on the Way of Finding Themselves as Rural Teachers*, and *The Influence of Personality Traits on Teaching Selves.*

4.3.1.1 Daring the Challenges: Not only Teaching but Educating

All of the participants imply that their role in rural schools is not only teaching English but also preparing rural kids for a better future. They indicate that they are responsible of making a change in students' intellectual and social development. Working in a rural area where she was born and raised, T4 defined her teacher identity with the following vignette:

> All teachers, no matter the subject matter, should be a guide. I am a guide. I try to encourage and promote my students. [My aim is] being a role model for my students, not only as a teacher but also as a human being. I aim to teach them treating someone with kindness, for example… Being a guide… It is very important to guide [your students'] learning processes. I try to teach my students *how to learn*. I try to teach them how they can reach new information when they need. I try to teach them how to investigate new things. I define myself as a guide who attaches importance to having general knowledge. I can define myself as a teacher who is cheerful, positive, open to improvement, and creative in terms of material development (Interview II; March 2, 2019).

Similar to T4, the importance of educating rural kids is also emphasized by T3 with the following words:

> Actually, I am not a type of teacher who teaches English word-by-word. I try to teach them ways for self-discovery. It is not easy for me but I make an effort. I feel myself not as a teacher but a guide. I am a good communicator. I try to build a decent relationship with my students. Since I am an English language teacher, my aim is making my students learn English but my ultimate aim is guiding them for improving themselves in different areas before graduating from this school. If I see

that my students use information that I taught them, I feel myself very happy. Professional satisfaction is the deliberate part of our teacher identity (Interview II; March 4; 2019).

In parallel with T3 and T4, it is suggested by T2 that her aim is educating her students through effective information that they can use in their future lives and careers:

I am a professional teacher with a special sense of responsibility towards my students. I am a kind teacher. My first aim is educating my students for their future lives. Therefore, I define myself not as only a teacher, but an educator. I want my students use what I teach in English classes. English language teachers teach topics exist in the real world. I know that most of the rural kids do not pursue their education after middle-school but all of them will be parents in the future, so I make an effort to teach them etiquette, the ways of building healthy relationships with other people, and some general knowledge about the world (Interview II; March 5, 2019).

In a similar vein, T1 puts forward that rural teachers have multiple responsibilities outside of the classroom which lead to experience a complex professional identity construction process. She explains this process as follows:

I try to improve my students' general knowledge. When they see that I know something about London or the United States, they become impressed. At that moment, they see you as an explorer who travels around the world. Actually, we are cultural ambassadors in the eyes of your students. Besides, I am a very motivated, hardworking and responsible teacher. I am an English language teacher who tries to improve herself. However, the level of education is really low in this area. After realizing this fact, I changed my teaching philosophy unintentioanally and perhaps inevitably. Now I see myself as a guide in this school and my aim is educating rural kids, preparing them for life and for future. In this area, kids need guidance more than learning English (Interview II; March 13, 2019).

Concerning the disadvantaged circumstances faced by rural kids, T5 states that she learned to become a more tolerant and adaptable teacher. According to her, teaching at a rural school has an impact on her perceptions about herself as a teacher. She thinks that teaching English in a rural area brings about multiple roles and changes the way teachers construct their professional identities. She puts forth that teaching in a rural area makes her more open to new experiences and says "I love my job. Even though I work in a rural school, I still love teaching English because I know that I broaden horizon of rural kids by educating them on various topics. I have such a mission" (Interview II; March 8, 2019) and she explains this saying:

I learned to be tolerant and adaptable in this school. I try to understand the circumstances of this area and apart from this… Yes, I am well adjusted, which makes me more helpful for my students. I try to motivate my students about pursuing their education after graduating from middle-school. I try to explain the benefits of pursuing their education in high school. I want them to save their own future. I know that I have very smart students but they are not conscious about education and they do not have family support. Therefore, they need my guidance. I see myself as a guide rather than a teacher. (Interview II; March 8, 2019).

T2 indicates that the process of constructing her professional identity created new teacher roles in order to provide her ways to cope with the challenges of this area and to help her students. She thinks that her teacher identity is under the influence of her students' need of protection against parents' apathy and the despair prevailing in the area:

If you are a rural teacher, you feel yourself as a mother hen. When you see a student, who is neglected at home or has family problems, you want to protect him or her. I feel the need to touch my students' lives with hope and compassion. I know that urban kids have such problems as well, but rural kids need teachers' care and support more than urban kids. For example, If I had taught at a prestigious middle-school or at an Anatolian High School, I would not have thought about my students' needs except teaching English. What I mean is teachers' only responsiblity is teaching English in good schools. They only think about teaching English well with the help of new techniques and materials. However, you have to spare time to educate your students, solve their problems and give them hope in village schools (Interview II; March 5, 2019).

T4, who is the only homegrown teacher participated in this study, defined herself as a second mother for the students. She shares the same feelings with T2 in terms of being a protector and a guide for rural kids. She states that she is a mother hen teacher guiding her little chicks and says:

Sometimes problems occur because of things we cannot control. For example, students may have family problems or financial problems that affect his or her school performance. Teachers cannot solve all these problems but they can handle problems differently. You can make them hold on to life. I know that a teacher should not expect her student learns perfect English when the student has serious problems. At that moment, the duty of a teacher is to lend her student a hand to make the student hopeful and calm. Sometimes a simple problem may indicate a very serious one. For example, one of my students did not comb her hair because she hasn't got a mother. I combed her hair many times and tied her hair up in a ponytail. I taught her how to comb her hair (Interview II; March 2, 2019).

4.3.1.2 Struggles on the Way of Finding Themselves as Rural Teachers

After T4 graduated from the department of English Language Teaching, she returned back to her hometown and became a teacher in a rural school. She indicates that the very first year of her teaching career is the turning point of her professional life. She tells that she had difficulties in accepting her students' failures and became unmotivated early on her career. She expressed her feelings as:

> In the very first year of my teaching, I became depressed and unmotivated when I saw my students' mistakes in the classroom. I was blaming myself when I saw their failures. Then I realized that failures and mistakes may be derived from various reasons. I began to accept that my role is not blaming myself but finding solutions to help them overcome their disadvantaged situations. I no longer complain about challenges. I do not allow myself take the challenges personally. I accept that being a rural teacher may bring along various challenges. Now, I am struggling to focus on solutions, not to problems (Interview II; March 2, 2019).

After starting to work in a rural school, T2 started to internalize the struggles and benefits of rural teaching that made her more mature and tolerant as a teacher. She explains it as follows:

> I do not know if it is related to being a rural teacher, but I feel myself more mature as a teacher. I became more understanding in this school as a result of being a witness to parents' apathy in their children's education and children's life conditions. I became tolerant. I worked in one of the urban schools in *[name of the city]* before working here. I was not an understanding teacher when I taught in an urban school. I became a compassionate teacher here. (Interview II; March 5, 2019).

T5 thought about the turning points of her teaching career in order to define her professional identity. She indicated that her teacher identity develops gradually as a result of transformation of teaching practices and ways of acting. According to her, she had some struggles about adjusting herself to the surrounding and conditions of a rural area:

> It was definitely a turning point in my professional life when I started to work in this school. I have really different experiences in this school. I went through the mill last year. I experience a lot of difficulties and problems. No electricity… No water… Classrooms are as cold as ice. Kids are under very hard conditions. I look at the course book… There are too much things to teach but rural kids' readiness for school is not sufficient. I began to say myself that I do not have to teach all the units and grammar subjects but I have to teach them very basic things that they can use in their future life as adults. As you see, teaching English became of secondary

importance in this school. Therefore, I changed my perception about my own teacher-self after coming to this school. Previously, I defined myself as a teacher who has to teach English perfectly, but now I am a teacher whose role is handling difficult conditions of the area she teaches in and supporting kids to save their future. (Interview II; March 8, 2019).

In a similar vein, T1 indicates that her own journey to find herself as a rural teacher was hard, but joyous. She puts forward that her past experiences through the lens of the present make her a patient and dedicated teacher. She states:

> I have been working as a teacher for ten years. Of course, I am more experienced and knowledgable compared to the past. Of course, it was not easy for me to get used to tough conditions of rural areas; however, being a rural teacher made me more patient, solution-oriented and dedicated. I worked at three different rural schools in Turkey and I experienced very different issues, including parental problems, financial problems, and even worse, people who lost their motivation and hope for future. My way to find my own philosophy as a teacher was not easy but now, I know that I have the power to make little changes in my students' lives (Interview II; March 13, 2019).

Different from other participants, T3 draws attention to her teaching practicum experiences while speaking about the way of constructing her teaching self. She indicates that her sense of meaning and significance as a teacher and the way she perceives the teaching profession have been changed after starting to work as a rural teacher. She tells about the unstable and changing nature of teacher identity:

> During my teaching practicum year, my perceptions about the teaching profession and my perceptions about my own teaching self were really different. I was a trainee teacher in one of the urban schools and I was very idealist. I thought that I have to use all techniques and methods that I learnt in the department of ELT. I am still idealist, though. But my idealism was reshaped. The first school that I was appointed to was in a rural district in *[name of the city]*. I was a primary school teacher in *[name of the city]* and I became a *teacher-mother*. I blew their noses and I tied shoelaces many times. After leaving *[name of the city]* and starting to teach in a middle school, my teacher role was reshaped again. Now, I do not feel myself like a mother, but a guide. My teacher self is reshaped and gained a new meaning in different schools (Interview II; March 4, 2019).

4.3.1.3 The Influence of Personality Traits on Teaching Selves

Regarding her character traits, T1 states that she is a person who is happy with little things in life and therefore in the classroom. She indicates that her way of handling any obstacles in the classroom is to focus on positive improvements and the interested students during the lesson:

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Most of the students do not understand the importance of English classes in this school. They think that they do not need learning English language. They do not set goals for their future. It is impossible to reach these students as a teacher. Actually, I know how to be happy with little things in my private life and I apply it to my teaching life. For example, I have a very smart and interested student in one of my classes. She takes notes and listens to me carefully. I try to be happy with her success and improvements. If I focus on negative things in this school, I cannot teach anything. I focus on positive things and interested students that make me feel significant (Interview II; March 13, 2019).

In parallel, it was mentioned by T2 that her own personality traits affect her actions in the classroom. Since she is a very cautious about the way she treats her son, she is also a very respectful and patient teacher towards her students. She states:

I try to approach my students as I approach my own son. I am a very patient and respectful mother in my private life. Similarly, I never insult my students. I never break their hearts. I am a very controlled and cautious teacher. I can frankly say that your attitudes and actions in your private life considerably indicate your manner as a teacher (Interview II; March 5, 2019).

Similar to T1 and T2, it was suggested by T5 that her teaching self was reshaped in accordance with her personality and her perspective on life. Since she is currently pursuing Master's degree in Educational Sciences, she is accustomed to discussions in classes and colloquia. Therefore, she aims to promote discussions and brainstorming in her classes. She gives examples from her own academic and private life to define her teacher self in the classroom:

Students should share their own thoughts freely. Children should be encouraged to participate in discussions to share their own ideas by using their imagination. Teachers should give students place to share their ideas freely and openly. I like participating in discussions and listening to my classmates' ideas in Master's courses; that's why, I try to create such an atmosphere in my own lessons in the school. I say to my students "I think in that way but if you think differently, please share your ideas with me." Of course, my attitude towards my students is a mixture of my attitudes I adopt in my private and academic life (Interview II; March 8, 2019).

T4 is the only homegrown teacher in this study. According to her, the way she perceives the teaching profession and her teacher self is under the influence of her past experiences as a rural kid. She explains the relationship between her personality and her teacher self as follows:

When I was a rural kid in this area, I experienced the challenges that my students are currently facing. I can understand what they live and what they think. Now, I attach

importance to equality of educational opportunity as a result of experiencing disadvantaged social conditions in a rural area when I was a kid. Thus, I shaped my teacher role to create equality of educational opportunity in this school as much as possible. As a simple example, I try to give chance to all students to speak in the classroom (Interview II; March 2, 2019).

Finally, T3 implies that she is a very self-sacrificing and careful person in her private life that affects her professional life in the school. She suggests that her motivation to pursue teaching career in a rural school mainly derives from gaining students' love and trust. She explains:

I am good at gaining my students' love and trust. I see it from their eyes. I love caring my students when they need me as a teacher. Sometimes I sacrifice all my breaks during the school time in order to solve their problems and help them learn more. I think that I am a self-sacrificing teacher. I try to find different materials and games to draw my students' attention to English lessons. I spend time after school time for my students. Your view of life, the things you care about and the meaningful things for you determine your role as a teacher (Interview II; March 4, 2019).

In summary, the vignettes of participants show that the role of a rural teacher is not only teaching the subject matter but also preparing rural kids for a better future. They are responsible of supporting rural kids to overcome disadvantaged conditions of rural areas. In addition, rural teachers also feel responsibility to educate rural kids about etiquette and general knowledge. It is also obvious that participants' first years of teaching in rural schools are turning points in terms of having difficulties in accepting the tough conditions of rural areas and students' English lessons. However, participants also indicate that the struggles on the way to constructing professional identities in rural areas create solution-oriented and determined teachers. Besides, it is clear that participants' personality traits have an influence on teaching selves of rural teachers. The participants suggest that teachers' personality, private life and view of life affect their perceptions about the teaching profession and their teaching practices in the classroom. It is also a very important finding that a homegrown teacher constructs her teacher identity under the influence of her own past experiences as a rural kid. A homegrown teacher also feels a high responsibility in being a role model for kids as a member of the community. Finally, creating a hopeful and inspirational atmosphere for rural kids is the main aim of a homegrown teacher since homegrown teachers experience the same challenges as rural kids in their childhood.

4.3.2 Rural EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Their Teaching Contexts

This part consists of findings gathered from the first interviews and aims to find an answer to the following research question of the study:

RQ-2: How do rural EFL teachers define their teaching contexts?

From five verbatim transcripts gathered as a result of the first interview sessions with five rural EFL teachers, significant statements from each participant were extracted into meaning units and associated with similar statements made by other participants. After reading the meaning units and employing the coding process, emergent codes were used to create categories. The following two categories describing rural EFL teachers' definitions of their teaching contexts were emerged: *Interrelationships Among Rural Teachers, Community and Nature*, and *The Personal and Professional Considerations of Teachers Residing in Rural Areas.*

4.3.2.1 Interrelationships Among Rural Teachers, the Community and Nature

According to findings derived from the first interviews, villages are good places for parent-teachers to raise children. T2 is the only parent-teacher in this study and she indicates that being a mother in a small and more caring community makes her work easier as a parent. She explains her opinions about residing in a village as a parent-teacher as:

> I live in this village and I am only ten minutes walking distance from the school. I know that living in a village has some drawbacks; however, it is easier to raise a kid in a small area. Since I have a primary-school-aged kid, it is an advantage for me to spend time with my own kid in the same school. The village is safe and clean for a little kid. On the other hand, I know that I have to move to city center before my kid will start high school. There is no high school in the village and students usually leave at age 15 if they want to go to high school. I will probably change my school and move to city center within five years (Interview I; December 20, 2018).

Vignettes of four participants show that teachers prefer to work in a rural school as a result of the desire to return *home*. Families of three participants live in the city centers and the participants work in the rural districts of those cities. T5 puts forth that she preferred to work in a state school after working in one of the private

universities for five months. After experiencing some financial and administrative challenges in a private institution, she decided to work as a teacher in a state school. T5 explains her teaching context with the following excerpt:

> I worked as a part-time instructor in one of the private universities. The university was nice but we had personnel cadre problems. I did not feel myself financially secure, so I decided to work in a state school. I preferred to work in this school because I was born and raised in this city, but I have never been in this village before. My family lives in the city center. I live in one of the districts which is equally far from both the city center and the village. None of the teachers prefer to live in the village. We all live in this district which is 60 km away from the village. A minibus takes all teachers at 5:30 a.m. in the morning. We reach school at 7 a.m. The same minibus picks us back to the district at 12:30 p.m. I know that we have a tough routine. Travelling totally three hours each day is very difficult but the village is too isolated and limited for teachers to live (Interview I; January 15, 2019).

In a similar vein, T2 states that she prefers to work in one of the villages of that city due to the fact that her family lives in the same city. She tells about the process that she experienced before starting to work in this village school as follows:

> I spent my childhood and youth years in this city but I have never been in this village before because we were living in the city center. I was not familiar with villages or village schools. After graduating from department of English language teaching, I started to work in a middle school in an urban school located in a different city. However, the school was problematic in terms of student profile. It was a ghetto school. I taught there for four years, and then decided to return to my hometown in order to spend more time with my family. There was a list of schools that I could choose to teach in accordance with my length of service. This school was the best option among all schools in this city because I could not choose qualified schools located in the city center. I chose a village school. The school where I am currently teaching is a village school, but it is safer and more peaceful than other ghetto schools (Interview I; December 20, 2018).

Similar to T2, after deciding to return to hometown where her family lives, T3 left the rural school that she taught at for four years in a different city. In parallel with T2 and T5, she made this decision by considering family issues and also, she had a desire to live in a more developed city. T3 explains her decision process with the following words:

> It was a hard decision to leave the previous school because it was the first school that I worked at after my graduation. I had ties of affection with my previous students. However, we [me and my husband] had to return back to this area because of our parents' needs and our need to live in a big city (Interview I; December 21, 2018).

T4 is the only homegrown teacher in this study. She is living in the rural area where she was born and raised. According to her, living with her family and spending time with her childhood friends are good opportunities for her to work in a familiar environment. She conveys that she is very pleased about being a teacher in her hometown and living with her family. She says: "I live with my family in a very peaceful town. I know that living in a rural area has some drawbacks but I am happy. This area is safe because everybody knows everybody in this town" (Interview I; January 3, 2019). T4 also indicates that she prefers to live a healthier and quieter lifestyle while working as a teacher. She conducts that her hometown offers a plenitude of clean and open spaces. She adds that living in a town offers better quality of life than big cities and says:

> There is no traffic in this town. Actually, the town has very low number of vehicles. I really love the quiet and peaceful atmosphere of my hometown. There is no noise pollution on the streets. No vehicle honks. I was born and raised here. I do not like concrete-like cities. I love the beauty of nature and landscapes. I know that most of the urban kids never touch a soil in their lifetime. Yes, living in a town has some disadvantages. The only two disadvantages that I can say about living in a small town are travelling an hour to go to the city center and waiting long time for shipping delivery. That's all. Regardless all disadvantages of living in a small town, I really love being here and teaching those kids (Interview I; January 3, 2019).

4.3.2.2 Social and Professional Dislocation of Teachers in Rural Areas

Four of the participants suggest that they have experienced and still experiencing difficulties in adapting to rural areas. Only T4, who is the homegrown teacher in this study, puts forth that she is working in a school that aligns with her cultural values and social expectations. She says: "I live in my own hometown with my family and I teach the students whom I have already knew. Honestly, I have never experienced any kind of cultural or social difficulty after returning back to this town." (Interview I; January 3, 2019). On the other hand, she states that she feels the deficiency of personal career development opportunities in the town. She tells about her future plans as follows:

> I do not prefer to teach in a single school for a long time. I would like to teach in that school in that school someday. The reason behind my plan to teach in a more central school is to pursue my professional development. I love teaching rural kids in my hometown and living with my parents; however, I know that teaching in a rural school for a lifetime may cause stability in professional development. There will be no progress if you remain in the comfort zone. I would like to teach in an urban

school in order to pursue my professional development by working in a more challenging school and attending to trainings. I love my hometown and the school but I would like to work in a good urban school because I have concerns about my professional development (Interview I; January 3, 2019).

After telling about the implementation of transported education in the village, T5 indicates that the village is the center of transported education system in the area although the village is backward and isolated. She suggests that transported education causes deficiency in developing a reciprocal sense of belonging between the school and the community. She explains this situation as follows:

> Since this school is the center school of transported education in this area, rural kids come from more than five different small villages. The school is a place where the learning takes place, but also it is a place for socio-cultural activities in remote areas. If the community and the village school can create a synergy between each other, both the school and the community draw advantage from this collaboration. Most of my students come from different villages to this school and I do not see most of their parents during the school year. We cannot meet and make collaboration. I cannot develop a professional sense of belonging in this school. I think that closing village schools may lead to lack of educational and cultural places for both rural kids and the community. When the village schools were closed and transported education system was started to implement, teachers were no longer to assume the role of information source in the village (Interview I; January 15, 2019).

According to T5, apart from transported education system, lack of technological devices in the classrooms and not having opportunities to pursue professional development in the area are the main reasons for her to have a desire for working in an urban school. She says:

> During my senior year in department of English Language Teaching, I completed my school experience in one of the best private schools in the first semester. In the second semester, I completed my practice teaching again in a very good private school. I did not see a state school or a rural school during my university education. Our teaching materials and technological devices were perfect. My current experiences do not match with my past experiences. We do not have even electricity in this school. I brought my own laptop to the school a couple of times to show my students video clips and photos; however, there was no electricity. I really suffer from deprivation of a clean teaching atmosphere, basic teaching materials and human needs, such as electricity and heat. There is a ceiling leak in all of the classrooms. Last semester, we were trying to do English lessons and the rain was pouring from the ceiling at the same time. One of my students said "We are in a flood but you are still talking English." I knew that he was right because I felt the same way. The school building is very old and repair does not work. Please put yourself in my place and think of how impossible for a rural teacher to pursue her professional development in such a school. (Interview I; January 15, 2019).

It is also implied by T5 that she experienced difficulties in adapting to socio-cultural circumstances of the village. She adds that she is still experiencing difficulties in continuing social and cultural activities in the town. She explains her need of attending to social and cultural activities as follows:

> Sometimes I go to the center of the town after returning back from the village. I walk around… There is no cinema or theatre in the town. I have to go to the city center to watch a movie. The town is 105 km away from the city center and it takes approximately two hours to reach the city center. It is not easy for me to attend to a cultural activity. I feel the deprivation of such activities. During my university years, it was a habit for me to follow cultural activities and enjoy the social life of the campus. It is not easy for me to get used to the situation of rural life (Interview I; January 15, 2019).

Similar to previous statement, T1 accounts that she experienced social disharmony after she started to work in a backward and isolated rural area. She shares her first rural teaching experiences and links them to her current teacher-self working in the context of another rural area. She says:

> My first teaching experience in a state school was in a very isolated and remote area surronded by little village houses and fields. The village is 18 km far from the town and 150 km far from the city center. It was a stone-house that was very old and neglected. It was also very hard to reach the village school in winter. The minibus got stuck in the snow many times. I remember that we walked to the school more than 20 minutes during the heavy snow and freezing cold many times. I remember that I sank in snow up to the waist many times. I experienced hard and challenging years in rural areas. I experienced cultural shocks as a person who was born and raised in Istanbul. It was very hard for me to adapt to rural life. It cannot be described, but only experienced (Interview I; December 12, 2018).

After working in two different rural schools in a different city, T1 married and appointed to a school in one of the rural areas in the Central Anatolia region. She states that working in a developed city does not make a difference in terms of working in a more developed teaching context. She suggests that she is currently experiencing the same challenges she experienced when she was a teacher in her first teaching context. She says:

> I do not see differences between the previous school and the current school because I live in one of the towns in *[name of the city]* and it is really hard to go to the city center if you do not have a car. It takes approximately two hours to go to the city center by bus. If you have a car, you can go to city center after driving an hour, but it is still not easy because it is a financial burden on your budget. I cannot attend to social and cultural activities. I really miss going to the cinema, seeing a theatre play

or watching a concert. We do not have even a shopping mall. There is no even a *M.* [a worldwide fastfood restaurant] or a *L.* [a countrywide clothing brand] in this town. There are only few local patisseries and clothing stores in the town. There is no bookstore in the town. Deprivation is the hardest part of living in a remote area (Interview I; December 12, 2018).

Apart from lack of social and cultural activities, lack of opportunity for professional development and inadequate resources at schools are reasons for desire to work in an urban school. According to T1, a rural teacher should work in an urban school someday in order to pursue her professional development and teach in a more challenging context. She states that she aims to work in an urban school and attend to professional trainings in a couple of years. She tells about her professional concerns as follows:

I feel that I need professional trainings and workshops. I know that I have to do projects, attend to trainings and participate to academic conferences in order to pursue my professional development, but I do not have such opportunities in this town, unfortunately. My plan is to work in a good urban school and live in the city center. I know that rural kids need my guidance but I have to care about my own professional development. I would like to teach in a school where students are eager to learn and parents are conscious about the importance of English lessons. If your students are motivated, you become motivated, automatically. If parents are educated and conscious about students' improvement, you become motivated about creating different materials and designing challenging lessons to develop students' thinking skills. I always give of myself in this school and I need to work with more successful and conscious students in order to improve myself as a teacher (Interview I; December 12, 2018).

Similar to T1, it is suggested by T2 that poor transportation and the lack of cultural events are the main reasons of her desire to work in an urban school in the near future. She says:

I cannot say that it is impossible to live in a village in this city, but it is a fact that teachers have poor transportation problems in this area. If you do not have your own car, it is not easy to reach the city center for shopping or attending to cultural events. For example, there is no cinema, theatre or a bookstore in this village. We have to go to the nearest town to watch a movie or buy clothes. We have our own car and it is not very difficult for us to go the town. It would be hard if we did not have our own car (Interview I; December 20, 2018).

In addition to social problems, T2 indicates that weakness in professional development opportunities leads to rural teachers' demand for urban placement. She says:

I think that professional development depends on teacher's willingness and effort. I do not agree that working in an urban school makes you a better teacher automatically. However, I know that teaching in a rural school does not make a contribution to my professional development. My current abilities and knowledge are enough to teach in a village school. I do not feel the necessity to improve myself in order to teach in this school. I think that if I work in a good urban school, I probably feel the necessity to improve myself professionally (Interview I; December 20, 2018).

After her graduation, T3 started to teach in a rural school in Southeastern Anatolia region. Since she was born and raised in one of the big cities, it was the first time that she started to live in a remote area. As she completed her teaching practicum in one of the Anatolian high schools located in a big city, adapting to a rural school was a challenging process for her. She expresses the discrepancy between her practicum and first-year teaching experiences as follows:

I was shocked when I first entered the classroom in a remote school located in *[name of the city]*. It was my first year as a teacher. After experiencing a practicum in a high school equipped with good classroom facilities, it made me puzzled to try to teach in a school with limited facilities. Disorganised and crowded classrooms caused troubles during the lessons. I prepared incredible lesson plans and materials by using these facilities during my practice teaching. Then, I started to work as an English language teacher in a remote area in *[name of the city]*. The area was 'a place of impossibilities' for me. We [me and my husband] stayed there for four years. It was a primary school and each classroom was consisted of approximately 55 students. At that time, I understood that realities were very different from the practicum. I made a serious effort to teach them English and make them love the lessons (Interview I; December 21, 2018).

T3 also implies that lack of basic amenities and poor living conditions are the main factors of unwillingness to work in rural settings. According to her, the lack of health facilities, the difficulty of having to travel long distances to go to the city center and the dearth of cultural activities are the main reasons for her feeling of being stuck. In addition, she puts forth that there are safety problems in the area that stem from the social structure of the area. She says:

There is no a place for attending to cultural activities in this area. There is no cinema or theatre in this town. I can go to the city center by my own car to see a theatre play, but my students do not have such a chance. It takes approximately an hour to reach the city center if you have your own car. You have to go to the city center for health facilities. In addition, I observe that there are some safety problems in this area, especially for women. It is about the social structure, I mean, the community. I feel uneasy while walking alone in the evenings. This area does not have a good reputation about safety and peace. I was born and raised in a big city. We did not have safety problems. Then, I studied in a big city and I was very peaceful during

my university years. I am not familiar with such negative feelings about the place I live (Interview I; December 21, 2018).

In summary, it is found that the participants define their teaching contexts with the words of safety, good nature and tranquility. The parent-teacher indicates that villages are safe places to raise children; however, she is planning to move to city center and teach in an urban school as a result of the need for educational and social opportunities for her child. In addition, the participants indicate that they prefer to work in a rural school as a result of the desire to return home and spend more time with their families. The homegrown teacher puts forward that she returned to her hometown after the graduation because she prefers to live a healthier and quieter life style. On the other hand, all of the participants suggest that the lack of professional growth and recognition opportunities for those teaching in rural schools are one of the main reasons for teachers' desire to work in an urban school in the near future.

It is found that rural teachers show interest in urban placement since they want to use technological devices for their lessons and attend to trainings in order to pursue professional development. Poor living conditions, poor transportation and poor working conditions are the main sources of willingness to work in an urban area. These factors affect teachers' decision-making on whether they work in a rural school or not. Only the homegrown teacher regards the town as *home* as a result of her own personal bonds and social networks. She feels the commitment and responsibility to give rural kids a better life, since she was born and raised in the same town. However, even the homegrown teacher feels the deficiency of professional development opportunities in a small area and she has some plans to work in a good urban school in the near future. Only one of the teachers suggests that there is a safety problem for women as a result of the social structure of the town. One of the teachers reports that the implementation of transported education causes deficiency in creating a reciprocal sense of belonging between the rural school and the community members. It is stated by the participant that it is impossible to meet all parents and make collaboration during the semester while implementing transported education system. Finally, it can be extracted from participants' vignettes that weakness in providing professional and personal support leads to shortage of teachers and high absenteeism in rural schools.

4.3.3 The Relation Between Rural EFL Teachers' Professional Identities and Their Teaching Contexts

This part consists of findings gathered from the first interviews and the second interviews. This part aims to find an answer to the following research question of the study:

RQ-3: How do rural EFL teachers make a relation between their professional identities and their teaching contexts?

After analyzing ten verbatim transcripts gathered as a result of the first and the second interview sessions with five rural EFL teachers, significant statements from each participant were extracted into meaning units and associated with similar statements made by other participants. After reading the meaning units and employing the coding process, emergent codes were used to create categories. The following two categories describing the relationship between rural EFL teachers' professional identities and their teaching contexts were emerged: *Challenges Related to Instructional Practices* and *Challenges Related to Students' Neighborhood Characteristics.*

4.3.3.1 Challenges Related to Instructional Practices

The challenges related to classroom practices in rural schools are mentioned by the participants during the interviews. Teachers' instructional strategies are emerged through stories and experiences lived in the classroom. Bringing her own laptop and speakers to the classroom, T5 tries to compensate the deficiency in technological devices in the school. She mentions that she needs a music player and speakers in order to do listening activities written in the course book; however, she says that the school does not even have electricity most of the time. She also adds that the deficiencies in technological devices and resources limit her creativity and instructional design. She explains her strategies to overcome this and her feelings as follows:

> We do not have any technological infrastructure in this school, unfortunately. I want my students do listening activities and watch some video clips in English, so I try to

bring my own computer to the classroom. However, these are useless efforts when the school does not have electricity. The course book has many listening activities, but there are lots of schools that do not have music players or even electricity in this country. That is the dilemma. What I do to overcome this problem is downloading some videos at home and bring my computer to the classroom to show them. Students come together in front of the laptop screen and watch the video clips. However, I cannot do this for all listening activities or films. I have limits. I mean, I have limits in this school. How can I think lots of extra things while concentrating on today's lesson? Am I an English language teacher or a technician? (Interview II; March 8, 2019).

In a similar vein, T2 shares that the school has technological deficiencies that affect English lessons in a negative way. She mentions that English lessons should be productive and visual, especially in the twenty-first century. She says:

> The school is very cold. The central heating is not sufficient. We bought electric heaters. However, after we started to use the electric heaters, we recevied a warning because of the high amount in electricity bill. We cannot use it now. As you see, we cannot take our coats off in the school. I never take my coat and scarf off in the classroom during the whole semester. It makes me really uncomfartable as a teacher. We do not have technological devices and internet connection. You know that we a re in the 21st century and lessons are designed in a more productive and creative way; however, you need some support to keep pace with these trends. Sometimes I bring my own laptop and speakers to the classroom to show some photos, video clips and to make some listening activities. But I bring my own laptop to the classroom everyday because I cannot use my own computer for my lessons all the time. That's why I want to work in an urban school in the future. Sometimes I feel tired of struggling with these problems (Interview II; March 5, 2019).

In parallel with the previous statement, T3 draws attention to the discrepancy between practicum experiences and rural teaching. She says that she has difficulty in designing her lessons in a productive and visual way as a result of experiencing technological deficiencies in the school. She draws attention to the difference between practice teaching schools and rural schools, and also shares her strategies to solve this problem with the following statement:

> You need visuals, photos, PowerPoint presentations to teach vocabulary because your students expect such things in that age. Your students should see new vocabulary items in their contexts and do practices. I completed my practicum in a good Anatolian high school. Then, I came here and saw the realities. This is my second school after graduation and I never saw a smart board or even a simple music player or a speaker after completing my practicum. Before starting my career as a teacher, I was very idealist and I had lots of dreams. Then, I saw the realities. Now, I try to find solutions in order to overcome the problems. What I do is preparing vocabulary lists related to each unit for my students. I photocopy them to hand out to my students. I prepare lots of worksheets. Most of the time I spend my own money to prepare flashcards or worksheets. I buy lots of extra books to make photocopies

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for my students. Everybody says we are in a technology age and technology makes life easier. Can we benefit from them? No. I feel that I still live in 80's (Interview II; March 4, 2019).

In a similar vein, T1 mentions about the challenges that hinder her instructional practices in the classroom and also her strategies to overcome these problems. She says that a rural teacher has to make lots of sacrifices to create an effective learning atmosphere for the kids living in a disadvantage area. She shares her experiences as follows:

> My strategy to struggle with the deficiencies in this school is to design appealing materials and create a warm learning environment for my students. I use magazines, newspapers, CDs, PowerPoint presentations and games in my lessons. We have a projector, so I can use photos or video clips. Most of the time, I spend too much money from my own budget for materials. My husband says "Don't spend your money for those who don't recognize the value of your time and effort. Just teach what they expect from you." I don't know. Maybe he is right. Maybe my efforts are useless. But I cannot ignore my students and my responsibilities. I collect lots of things, such as magazines, balls, news, cartoons, photos, worksheets in order to use them as teaching materials. I cut, I stick, I paint, I draw… My instructional strategy to overcome the problems is designing vivid and active lessons to make my students love English lessons. I have to stress it again that all these things depend on my own effort and desire (Interview I; December 12, 2018).

In parallel with the previous participants' statements, T3 puts forth that she needs technological devices, especially for listening activities. She says:

> We do not have smart boards or laptops in this school. I can understand this to some extent. This is a rural school and a smart board maybe considered as a luxury device. Of course, I do not agree on this, but I can understand. But please tell me, is it meaningful to include listening activities on a course book and not provide even a simple music player or a speaker for schools? How can I do listening activities? Most of the time I bring my own laptop and speaker to the classroom, but I do not have to. Well, finding solutions on my own is my strategy in this school, but I am tired. For example, we have DynEd system, but we cannot use it because there is no computer in this school. DynEd system is not meaningful for us. I planned to tell my students use this system at home, but most of our students do not have internet connection, a laptop or a smartphone (Interview I; December 21, 2018).

According to T4, the lack of exposure to English language out of the classroom is one of the main reasons for instructional challenges in rural schools. She uses extra English materials to increase her students' exposure to the English language and also uses some applications to make her students familiar with the technology. She says:

Think about a student in an urban school in Antalya. She or he sees tourists, signboards in foreign language, English words in computer games and listens to English songs in different places. She or he most probably has parents who know at least little English. Now, think about a kid living in this town. Can you see the difference? No exposure to English out of the classroom. After realizing that, I began to open an English song or a very short video clip in my lessons. My aim is to make them hear the English language as much as possible. Apart from that, I decided to use DynEd programme for the coming winter break. I registered all my students and gave them a password to sign in. Most of my students do not have an internet connection. I learnt that they are able to use this programme offline for 15 days. Maybe using this application makes them familiar with the technology (Interview I; January 3, 2019).

T4 also indicates that classrooms are not proper to do kinesthetic activities. She says: "I would like to design kinesthetic activites to make my lessons more appealing and more active, but our school is very small, because of that classrooms are narrow. English drama would be great, but we do not have a place to present it" (Interview II; March 2, 2019). Likewise, T3 shares her opinions about the space requirements both in the classroom and in the school. She tells about her past experiences that she lived in the first rural school and she adds that nothing changes after moving from a deprived educational context to a more *developed* rural district:

I would like to teach in one of the schools in *[name of the city]* because of our [me and my husband] parents. I knew that I could not teach in an urban school because the amount of my service years is not enough. I expected a more developed rural school in *[name of the city]*. Anyway, I came here and saw that nothing changed because rurality is same in all cities. When I was in my previous teaching context, I found an old laptop and a second-hand projector as donations. I spoke with thousands of people and administrators from different institutions in the area in order to find second-hand technological devices. Then, I spoke with the school principal to turn a small room into an English classroom with my own effort. He gave the permission and I worked really hard to make a colorful and clean subject classroom. My students were really happy. We created beautiful boards, we drew, we sang, we played educational games. I bought lots of flashcards, materials, cartoons, books from my own budget. I spent too much money and time to make rural kids happy. Then, what happened? The school principal told me that they needed a room for storage. He closed my English classroom. I broke down… I was very angry and dissapointed. (Interview II; March 4; 2019).

T4 suggests that she does not experience any challenges related to her colleagues or school principal. She says: "I am very fortunate here because I am the only English language teacher in this school even in the town. I can plan my lessons on my own depending on my students' needs. We have few students in this school, so I can follow their improvements and needs easily" (Interview II; March 2, 2019). Since T4 is the only homegrown teacher in this study, she is able to take into consideration her

students' backgrounds and needs while designing her lessons. She tells that she is pleased with her students and adds:

> I think that my students are good. I think it is related to teacher's attitudes and the atmosphere in the school. I was born and raised in this town. I can understand that teachers should put extra effort into her students' improvement in rural areas because I needed the same care when I was a little kid in this school. As I am the only English language teacher in this town, I can arrange and make adaptations on my lessons on my own. We have few students. I can follow them. Of course, they are not perfect and I need some strategies. For example, the lack of technology and extra spaces to do kinesthetic activities are deficiencies, but I try to prepare visuals, vivid materials, enjoyable lessons to close the gap. I used *Ice Age* animation to teach comparatives & superlatives, for example. I used *Inside Out* animation to teach emotions, for example. I know that they have no chance to watch *Ice Age* or any other animation at home, so I try to introduce them these things (Interview I; January 3, 2019).

Different from T4, all participants indicate that students' low linguistic proficiency is one of the considerable reasons for the instructional challenges in rural schools. For instance, T3 asserts that students' low achievement in the subject of English leads to unmotivated teachers in rural schools. She says that she is a motivated English language teacher; however, she needs to be supported by her students' improvements and achievements in order to pursue her motivated behaviours. She says:

> My students are not good at English lessons, unfortunately. I spend too much time to design my lessons, find activities, create materials and minimize the deficiencies of this area in order to make my students motivated. I do not expect them to speak perfect English, but I want to see that they understand the importance of learning a foreign language and being respectful to different cultures. I understand that their background and the education they receive during their primary school years are not efficient enough to follow the middle school curriculum, but I try to do so much things to close the gap. When I do not see improvements of my students, I become unmotivated and sad (Interview I; December 21, 2018).

In a similar vein, T5 indicates that she changes nearly all of the activities and exercises written on the course book in order to adapt the lesson to her students' linguistic level. According to her, students' readiness is not sufficient to improve their English at middle school level in a rural area. She explains her thoughts as follows:

> I cannot follow our curriculum. I change all of the activities written on the course book. I adapt course book, I adapt activities, I adapt topics, I adapt exams… And I try to adapt myself to this school. It is very sad that my students' cognitive abilities did not come to a certain level to learn the present perfect tense or to do listening

activities. What I mean is our students are still in 'concrete operational' stage. Do you know that I have students who are illiterate in their native language at age 11? For example, there was a paragraph about a brother and sister, called Jack and Joy. I asked my students to read the paragraph silently. They asked me the meaning of 'you', 'he', and 'she'. They are 13. Can you believe this? Then, I asked them to look at the photos and tell me what they see. They could not even say 'a girl', 'a boy'. I wrote their name on the board and tried to explain them what the paragraph was about. The paragraph was about comparatives, by the way. It was impossible for me to explain them the comparatives because they asked me what 'he / she' means. We looked at the photos, I told them that they are brother and sister, and one of them is tall and one of them is short. That's all. We skipped the writing activity; we just tried to do the True/False activity. (Interview I; January 15, 2019).

According to T1, doing productive activities is the hardest part of her lessons due to the fact that students do not have the sufficient background on producing in English. She says:

It is very difficult for me to do speaking and writing activities in the classroom. They can read, but they cannot explain what they read in English. I think that they can only understand some of the words by looking at the dictionary. They cannot form a sentence in English. I feel limited while designing my lessons (Interview II; March 13, 2019).

Similar to T1, T2 suggests that her students have some problems in doing productive activities. She thinks that it is related to her students' education that they received during their primary school years. She also adds that focusing on promising students and motivating them to build a better future are main motivation sources for her to teach in a rural school. She says:

It is about their readiness, I think. They do not come to the middle school ready to learn complex topics. When I insist on doing speaking or writing activities, they resist and do not participate to the lesson. I try to focus on a few students who are ready to take new information. That is my strategy. If I focus on uninterested students, I may lose the promising students. Most of my students do not plan to go to a high school. I try to motivate the promising students to pursue their education in a good high school. When they listen to me and participate to my lessons, it motivates me. If I always focus on uninterested students, I will lose my own motivation completely (Interview II; March 5, 2019).

It is mentioned by all of the participants that rural students do not know even very basic information that are necessary for English lessons. They put forward that rural students are unable to understand or grasp even very basic concepts and instructions that teachers provide during the lessons. According to T2, the lack of students' readiness for learning new conceptions and practices result in instructional

challenges for teachers in rural educational contexts. She also suggests that she has responsibilities in providing rural kids cultural information and etiquette as a teacher. She says:

> Parents expect nothing from their children in this village. They come to the school because it is compulsory. They have never done an activity book including coloring, matching drawing, counting or alphabet. They are not ready to grasp concepts and information written in our course book. Their background hinders our flow of lesson because I spend too much time to explain even very basic things. For example, we have common words, such as 'zebra' and 'rock music'. Can you believe that I have students among 8th graders who have never heard the word 'zebra' and have not seen a photo of zebra throughout their lives? They have never visited a zoo. When a paragraph includes the word 'rock music', first I have to explain what rock music is. They know only pop and arabesque. I believe that rural teachers have a big responsibility in terms of teaching both a foreign language and cultural information to rural kids. If the unit is about food, I also teach them what 'sushi' is. If a paragraph includes the city of London, I also teach them 'Paris' and 'Eiffel Tower'. I always give them extra information, because I am the only person who teaches them such things. I think that rural teachers' missions are teaching etiquette, basic cultural information and also the ways of developing themselves personally for the future (Interview I; December 20, 2018).

T5 states that teaching in a very remote area changed her way of designing lessons. She created a new way of designing her lessons in order to promote cultural awareness and increase cultural knowledge of rural kids. She also puts forth that trying to engage rural kids to the curriculum offered by MoNE is a challenging part for English language teachers. She says:

> We have illiterate students among 7th graders. I realized this when I asked them to read something in English. Then, I asked them to read something in Turkish in order to be sure that they are illiterate. I do not want them to read or write in order not to offend them. They cannot write but try to imitate when I ask them to note down what I write on the board. There is nothing I can do for these students because I cannot teach them literacy as an English language teacher. For example, we had a unit which was about outdoor activities and there was a phrase 'sitting with a friend in a café'. I asked my students 'Have you ever been in a café?' They were silent. Then, I asked 'Do you know what café is?' They said, 'No'. They are 14 and they do not know what café is. Then, I decided to explain them what a café looks like instead of teaching the grammar subject. Because I know that they will not use grammar rules, but they need to know what a café or a cinema looks like. As you understand, I have to explain each word from A to Z in order to teach a unit. When I first came to this school as a teacher, I designed my lessons as it should be. Then, I changed my mind and stopped worrying about teaching grammar. My strategy is teaching them cultural knowledge as much as possible. I try to teach them what 'extreme sports' means or what 'sushi' looks like. I want them to know that there are different cultures in the world (Interview II; March 8, 2019).

In a similar vein, T3 indicates that students' readiness is not sufficient for the English curriculum offered by MoNE due to the fact that the rural teacher has to explain nearly all concepts before going through the unit. According to her, it is very challenging her in terms of spending too much time for explaining everything from scratch. She gives an example from one of the units she taught last semester:

> My students told me that they did not know the difference between movies and TV series because they have not seen a movie in their lives. I explained them what a movie looks like and what a cinema hall looks like. I cannot expect from my students to concentrate on learning a foreign language. They are just kids and they need to play games, be happy, eat well, and learn more but they are struggling with hard living conditions. I always think about extra things while designing my lessons, such as technological deficiencies, my students' background, their readiness, parents, etc. I have an extra burden on my shoulders in addition to teaching English in this school (Interview I; December 21, 2018).

Likewise, T1 suggests that she experiences the same challenges that she experienced in her previous workplace. According to her, remote areas in different parts of the country offer the same living conditions for kids. She tells about her experiences in two different remote areas as follows:

> I taught in one of the villages in *[name of the city]* after starting to work within MoNE. My students have not ever seen a traffic light in their lives. 90% of my students have not ever gone to the town throughout their lives. Going to the town was a luxurious thing for them. I can understand their condition to some extent because the village is very far from the city center. Then, I came here to teach again in a rural school. Honestly, I expected a better life condition before coming here because this is *[name of the city]*. However, I understood that all remote areas more or less have the same characteristics. I am experiencing almost the same instructional challenges that I lived in my previous workplace. I cannot say that this area is more 'developed' than the previous one and also, I cannot say that my current students are more ready to learn English than my previous students (Interview I; December 12, 2018).

T4 is the homegrown teacher who experienced the same challenges that her students live today. Therefore, she indicates that her adaptation process was relatively easy for her to become emotionally and mentally close to the community. She mentions that she could understand the reasons and outcomes of the limitations and deficiencies prevailing in this area. Thus, she quickly collected herself and started to find solutions to overcome the challenges. She says:

There is no bookstore in this town. Sometimes I buy some books and put them in our little library. I ask them to choose a book to read monthly. I established a book club. They choose a book, read them throughout the month, and write a summary about the book and then share this summary with me and their friends. They really like it. I ask them very basic questions about the book that they read. I ask my students to write the unknown vocabulary of each unit and we put them in our word jar, and then choose a vocabulary item from this jar everyday. I try to do my best through accessible methods. I know that my students have limitations. For example, while I was trying to teach them how to use DynEd program I realized that they have never heard the words 'username', 'password' and 'application'. We have a unit called 'Technology'. I decided to teach basic concepts. I understand the limitations and try to find solutions. For example, in of the units there was a word 'muffin'. My students told me that they have never seen a muffin. That evening I baked muffins for them and we ate them the next day. They were very happy. In short, I think it is about not complaining, but trying to do something special for your students (Interview I; January 3, 2019).

4.3.3.2 Challenges Related to Students' Neighborhood Characteristics

According to T1, students' underlying prejudices towards English lessons cause challenges for both English language teachers and students. She contends that students' prejudices towards English language and their speakers derive from the neighborhood they live in. She also puts forth that students' prejudices towards English lessons leave teachers unmotivated from time to time, and consequently teachers do less than they can. She shares a couple of her experiences as follows:

One day, I came to the classroom with well-prepared visual materials. I was very motivated. I opened the video clip and suddenly a voice rose from the last bench of the classroom: "What is it? Very nonsense. Why do we always watch them?" One of them said "Is it London? Who cares English people?" Then, another voice rose: "Are we supposed to learn about them? Do they learn Turkish? Do they know us?" At that moment, I lost all my motivation. I felt very dissapointed. It is not easy for me to break the prejudices. I found Oxford's English Video Channel Book. I found all videos and spent too much time to download them. I prepared a lesson by using these videos. They did not participate in the lesson. I think that all these problems are results of their neighborhood and the way they are raised. They see English lessons unnecessary. I decided to make them read a part of well-known Children's literature in order to increase their cultural knowledge. I found a simple version of Oliver Twist. I made photocopies. I also found the movie of Oliver Twist. However, they did not participate in the lesson and they did not even watch the movie. I really cannot find a way to make them interested. I understand that teaching context is of vital importance to do my job effectively. Teaching context is very important for a teacher to accomplish her teaching goals. I cannot teach here. My students and my teaching context do not allow me to feel myself satisfied as a teacher (Interview II; March 13, 2019).

According to T2, rural kids consider English lessons unnecessary compared to other subjects. She indicates that teachers should inform rural kids about how important

learning English is for becoming equipped and more successful. She tells that rural teachers should provide learners cultural knowledge and help them create goals for their future. Additionally, she suggests that students' prejudices to English language cause apathy to English lessons. She explains the reasons and consequences of students' prejudices to English language with the following statement:

Half of my students cannot count one to ten in English. Their parents say that learning English is necessary for rural people. I decided to explain the importance of learning a foreign language in the very first lesson of the year. I ask them what they know about English language and what they think about learning a foreign language. My aim is raising awareness about my lesson. Most of the time, they tell me that they will not pursue their education in a high school and they do not need learning English language. Some of my girl students say that they come to school because of compulsory schooling and they plan to marry at age 18. I try to convince them about its importance of school and my lesson, but if I understand that my effort does not work, I say 'You can help your kids while doing their homeworks in the future.' I know that only two or three students will study at a university among 25 students in our classroom. The neighborhood is not eligible to improve rural kids academically, socially and culturally. Thus, I feel the responsibility of improving my students. I try to teach them different music genres, actors, singers, cities, tourist attractions, cuisines, movies, etc. I share my own general culture knowledge with them. I try to make them aware of the existence of other cultures and the outer world. That is my strategy to struggle with the challenges of rural neighborhood (Interview I; December 20, 2018).

Likewise, T3 mentions that rural kids regard learning English language unnessary. According to T3, the reason behind rural kids' prejudices to learning English derive from their neighborhood and living conditions. She thinks that rural teachers should consider the hierarchy of needs of rural students while designing their lessons and creating a learning environment. She says:

I remember Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. As you know, the basic needs must be satisfied before individuals can attend to the higher needs. My students cannot achieve physiological, safety and caring needs. They cannot continue to the needs of schooling, creativity or career. My students cannot be nurtured well, they do not have a warm house and they do not receive care from their parents. My students try to improve their own survival skills before improving themselves socially and academically. One of my students said "Kids do outdoor activities in this book but I cannot find bread to eat. I cannot do these activities. I do not care them." Think that you are a teacher and your student say this while you are teaching the unit, what would you do? I know that he was right; I was at a loss of words. Therefore, I can understand their hard-living conditions. What I do to overcome their prejudices is making my lessons enjoyable as much as possible and being very nice while treating my students. It is also very hard for me to live and teach in this negative environment. Sometimes I lose my motivation and question myself, but I know my responsibilities as a teacher. I spend all my break times with my students. I ask them

if they have problems with their homes or the school. I encourage them to ask their questions about our lessons to me anytime (Interview I; December 21, 2018).

Similar to T3, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is mentioned by T1 within the framework of students' difficult life conditions and unhealthy community. She indicates that all these disadvantages induce students' failures in the school. She also puts forth that students perceive English unnessary as a result of lack of achievement in the first three levels of Hierarchy of Needs. She makes a relation between students' life conditions and their current situation in the school with the following statement:

> It is very sad that I have lots of problematic students. For example, I have a student whose mother is ill and they do not eat home-made meals at home. She comes to school hungry most of the time. In the same classroom, the father of one of my students is unemployed and they live on the breadline. One of my students has a very problematic parents and she has no peace at home. I can raise the examples. What I think about this situation is the fact that we cannot expect success from these students because they do not have enough food, they are not safe in their homes, and they do not receive   enough love and care from their parents. It is about Maslow's Hierarchy. Learning English and studying hard come after achieving the basic needs. If a teacher wants to understand her students, she should investigate their life conditions (Interview I; December 12, 2018).

T5 suggests that English language lessons are of vital importance for teaching rural kids international and intercultural issues; however, she contends that students' prejudices to learning English language impede creating an effective learning environment. She also thinks that living in a very remote area and lack of family support lead to students' apathy in English language. She says:

> My students constantly say the following sentences: 'Why do we learn this language?', 'Who cares this language?', 'Their culture is very nonsense', 'How do they eat this? This is disguisting' and so on… Most of the parents say 'It is not a problem if s/he does not want to study, because s/he will marry within five years.' Yes, this is the fact of villages. One day I was teaching a unit called Biographies; one of the students stood up and said 'Are they Muslims? Why are we learning about them?' I was very dissapointed, but I was not angry. I tried to explain them the importance of their life stories. I said 'I do not know whether they are Muslims or not, and this is not important for us. We are interested in their inventions and their contributions to humanity'. There is no life here. No role model, no motivation and support from parents (Interview I; January 15, 2019).

Different from other participants, T4 suggests that she does not encounter any challenges related to the neighborhood. She is the only homegrown teacher in this

study and works in the area where she was born and raised. Thus, she states that she has already known the atmosphere of the neighborhood and she feels the responsibility to minimize the challenges. In addition, she tells that being a homegrown teacher has a positive effect on creating healthy relationships with students and their parents. She explains how she perceives the neighborhood and the strategies she develops in this school as follows:

> Communication is very important. I feel that we have a good communication in this town. I am a child of this town. My family, my friends, some of my teachers still live here. I think that being a homegrown teacher has a positive effect on creating a healthy communication climate. Actually, I am a role model in this town, because I was born here and graduated from one of the most prestigious universities in Turkey. The parents hold me up as an example of what can be achieved through studying hard and having a university diploma. I am a good example for their kids. They see me as a part of their neighborhood, because they know my family. The neighborhood is not challenging for me, but the challenging thing is the fact that a rural kid's world is small. Last year, I realized that they have never seen a movie hall and watched a movie. We [all teachers in the school] organized a movie day and took our students to the city center. We went to a shopping center to watch a children's film. We try to detect the deficiencies and find solutions as much as possible. I know that we are not perfect and we are not eligible to eliminate all deficiencies, but we try to find some ways to minimize them. I also try to explain the existence of different cultures to my students. My aim is to teach my students being respectful to cultural differences. Sometimes they cannot perceive its importance completely, but I am a very lucky rural teacher that my students do not have any prejudices to English language and other cultures. (Interview I; January 3, 2019).

Four of the participants assert that parental problems are one of the main reasons of the challenging nature of teaching English in rural schools. They propound that parental problems are the root of the children's considerable apathy in education and prejudices to learning English language. T3 mentions about the low-income problem prevailing in the area, based on the high rate of unemployed people who are unqualified and undereducated. According to her, socio-cultural and economic problems derive from this low-income problem and she explains:

> Sometimes I want my students to buy a very cheap and accessible material for our lesson; however, I know that most of them cannot buy or find it due to several reasons. Firstly, they cannot find it in our town because we do not have a proper stationery seller here. If they want to buy it from city center, it takes approximately two hours to go there. If they want to buy it online, it takes at least three weeks to get the package. Above all, most of them do not have two pennies to rub together. Most of the time my students come to school completely broke. Only four or five students' parents in a classroom of forty have regular income. What I mean is only one-tenth of my students come from middle income families. The rest of them have serious

financial problems. It is very sad that one third of students live on the breadline in this town. I am very cautious while requesting for a material, giving homework or teaching a subject. Of course, all these problems affect me negatively. However, I try to be strong and solution-oriented with the help of my determination and love of children (Interview I; December 21, 2018).

T5 teaches in a village where people earn money through animal husbandry and seasonal working. Therefore, most of the parents do not have regular income. T5 also indicates that the village is an isolated area where students cannot find even very basic school supplies. She also mentions that rural students are not able to reach source books. She says:

> There is nothing in this village. There is even no post office here. The villagers have to travel approximaly two hours to go to the post office. I asked my students to bring an English-Turkish dictionary to the classroom. They said that they have to go to a stationery shop to buy it, but there is no vehicle to take them to the town in winter. I began to adjust myself and my lessons in accordance with their capabilities. I would like to share one of my memories about this school. In one of our lessons, I wanted to give an example about the tourist attractions. We are in *[name of the city]*, so I said "It is like *[name of the place]*. As you know, many tourists come here to see *[name of the place]*". They looked at me with empty eyes. I realized that none of them visited *[name of the place]* before and at least half of them have never heard about *[name of the place]*. This made me very sad and desperate. At that moment, I asked myself 'What should I teach those kids? Should I teach them English by knowing that it is useless for them or should I teach them etiquette and general knowledge by making English lesson as a tool?' Most of the time, I feel this dilemma. (Interview II; March 8, 2019).

Likewise, T2 suggests that parents earn money by working in factories located in the nearest industrial site and also doing animal husbandry. They are not capable of supporting their children's school life financially. She says, "I do not expect extra things from the parents. They earn money just for covering their basic expenses. I do not request extra things from my students. They cannot afford them" (Interview II; March 5, 2019). In parallel with T2, it is mentioned by T1 that low-income is the major problem of parents. According to her, financial difficulties lead to parental mistreatment of children. She says:

> In this area, people work in the factories located in the nearest industrial zone. I know that they have tough working conditions. They are exhausted and earn little money. They have no energy and money to take care of their children. They think that only teachers have to educate their kids. They do not want extra responsibilities. Parents are not interested in education. This situation affects me negatively because I cannot find an addressee when my students have a problem. I cannot organize a field trip, an event or a project because I know that parents will not support us. What I

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mean is not only related to financial problems but also related to an emotional support (Interview I; December 12, 2018).

T4 states that her students do not have serious financial problems. Their parents are the owners of little shops in the town or they do farming in their own croplands. They can allocate some money from their budget for their children's education. However, she contends that the most challenging part of being a rural kid is having a small world. According to her, their parents are not able to broaden their children's perspective by supporting them through travelling, cultural activities or social events. She observes that parents show their children care and love, but children need more support in terms of guidance in their school lives. She says:

> Parents are not very educated, but they are aware of the importance of education, so they listen to advice of teachers. This area is small and everybody knows each other. The only challenging thing for me in this school is the fact that my students have small worlds. They give love and care to their children, but not guidance on their future lives. My responsibility is preparing my students for future. I tell them about the prestigious universities of our country, different countries, or life stories and success of important scientists, such as Marie Curie. Of course, I teach them the compulsory curriculum, but I also teach them general knowledge. I try to motivate them for their future. My mission is not only teaching a language in this town. I was born and raised here. I am a part of this community, so I feel that my responsibility is educating my little sisters/brothers. I am a guide in this town for both students and parents. I love guiding them for a better future (Interview II; March 2, 2019).

Moreover, parents' attitudes towards their children are also associated with rural students' future aims and expectations. It is mentioned by four of the participants that parent-teacher meetings are of vital importance in terms of raising the awareness of parents to enhance the peace and quality of their children's lives. They also claimed that parent-teacher meetings should be considered as components of an existing dialogue between parents and teachers, and they should be held as more regular and effective events. For instance, T2 explains the need of effective parent-teacher meetings as follows:

> Parents are respectful in this village. I have never seen disrespectful behaviours from parents towards teachers in this school. They greet us when they see us outside. However, they do not care about their children's school progress. When I come across the parents on the street, I ask them why they do not come to parent-teacher meetings. They always say that they work hard, they are very tired and they do not have time to attend those meetings. On second thoughts, I do not think that we put enough effort into drawing parents' attention to the school. For example, up until a few years ago teachers were organizing year-end activities and inviting parents.

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However, a problem came up during the latest one; so, this year-end activity tradition was cancelled. I think that such activities are important because they are the bridges between parents and school. I think that we should find ways to draw parents to the school because it is the best way to create an ongoing dialogue between parents and teachers (Interview I; December 20, 2018).

T3 suggests that schools should establish a commission for organizing events and activities to draw parents to the school. She explains her ideas as follows:

I think that we cannot build a bridge between parents and teachers in this school. We should have a comission including teachers, school counselors and administrators to make a program in order to draw parents to the school. Parents' apathy to education is a big struggle for us as rural teachers. We have to join hands with parents to create a better learning atmosphere (Interview I; December 21, 2018).

Likewise, T5 puts forward that parent-teacher collaboration is of vital importance in rural areas. She indicates that reaching parents and informing them about the importance of education are very crucial for her students in terms of pursuing education after middle school. She says:

I called all parents at the beginning of the semester in order to get information about the physical conditions of homes, parents' jobs, their financial situation, health problems etc. I took notes about them. My reason to do this is developing strategies to reach the parents when I need in the future. Half of the parents do not come to parent-teacher meetings. I always think that we should do more things to draw parents to the school. Meeting with parents is very important for both teachers and students. Let me give you an example. One day one of my girl students came to me and said 'I want to take the exam [Transition to High School Examination] to go to high school, but my father does not give the permission. Can you talk to him?' Of course, I talked to her father to convince him. I put too much effort into this issue and I convinced him. As you see, rural teachers play a very important role in children's future (Interview I; January 15, 2019).

In parallel with the previous statements, T1 indicates that parental absence in meetings is a big struggle for her in terms of having no collaboration with parents. She says: "Last month we had a parent-teacher meeting and only 11 students' parents came to the meeting in the class of 30. I could not share my expectations and plans with them" (Interview I; December 12, 2018). It is also clear that the homegrown teacher does not have a problem about making collaboration with parents. T4 explains the reason as follows: "I can reach all parents when I need. They can call me when they need. They definitely come to parent-teacher meetings. They listen to me because they see me as a part of this community" (Interview I; January 3, 2019).

It is also mentioned by participants that school education is not supported systematically by the parents at homes. According to participants, rural kids show no desired progress in language learning as a result of unsupportive parents. For instance, T1 states that she aims to educate her students about etiquette and general knowledge in addition to teaching English language; however, parents' attitudes towards interculturality affect children's interest in English lessons negatively. She says:

> Unfortunately, I get no support from parents. I observe that parents cannot support their children in terms of continuing their education at home. After realizing that, I decided to be a guide for my students to teach them how they can continue to improve themselves after school. I try to teach them the richness of interculturality. I know that I have an important role in teaching different cultures and traditions. I am respectful to interculturality. For example, I teach my students 'Christmas'. I teach this concept by saying: 'Christmas is an important occasion for Christians. You do not have to celebrate this, but you should be respectful to this annual celebration. Each culture should respect the traditions and values of all the others.' This is my way to teach Christmas, for example. One day, one of my students said, 'Celebrating Christmas is a sin. Don't teach this.' When I heard this, I stayed calm and tried to explain him the importance of respecting all cultures and human beings in the world. In the same classroom, one of my students said that they do not care about different countries and cultures while I was teaching the biography of Nikola Tesla. At that moment, I realized that they have no role models in their family to support them for their future life journey. I know that I try to do my best to teach them humanity, interculturality and etiquette, but none of these concepts are supported at home (Interview II; March 13, 2019).

Likewise, T2 defines unsupportive parents as a big challenge for rural teachers with the following words: "Rural kids do not get enough support and care from their parents. Parents cannot support their children to reinforce what they learn at school. Teachers always begin from scratch. This is tiring" (Interview II; March 5, 2019). T3 asserts that most of the students do not pursue education after middle school in rural areas as a result of lack of enough support from parents. She adds that all these students start to work at district bazaar or become a panel beater after completing middle school. According to her, most of the teachers know this fact and cannot motivate their students to pursue their education and have a better life in the future. She also says that education does not continue at home as a result of parents' apathy into their children's personal and academic improvements. She says:

> Sometimes I go to the bazaar and see my students selling vegetables. I heard that some of my students are currently working as a helper of a panel beater. We have

lots of students who are raised in problematic families. Their parents are dead or their fathers are in jail or their mothers are ill. Most of them have at least five brothers/sisters. Parents do not have enough time, money and energy to take care of their children. When I tell parents something about our English lessons, they look at me with empty eyes. According to them, learning English is a luxury thing and it should be taught to rich people. My students are struggling with difficulties and knowing this fact makes me very upset. They are imprisoned here because of their neighborhood. We are in a town of *[name of the city]*, right? But I have lots of students who have never seen a sea. It is very sad that education does not continue at home in this town. Parents do not care about their children's exam results, homeworks or future careers. Above all, they do not care about children's social development. I try to help my students; I try to be beneficial for them. This is my teaching philosophy (Interview I; December 21, 2018).

In a similar vein, T5 draws attention to the fact that her students are currently working as seasonal workers with their families. According to her, this situation hinders the continuity of their school life. She puts forth that she aims to teach her students gender equality in order to prepare them for being powerful adults in the future. She says:

Actually, it is not possible for me to follow the whole curriculum because most of my students are seasonal workers and they come to school on November. They cannot turn back to the village until November because they have to wait for the harvest season. Our semester begins on November and ends on April. Of course, I try to follow the curriculum and cover the topics, but there are only four or five students in the classroom most of the time. I have responsibilities in this village in addition to teaching. Since they do not have a role model, they cannot imagine about their future. The only life style they see is men go to farming or herding sheep, and women cook and clean. Thus, my aim is introducing them the existence of different life styles. For example, while teaching the cooking unit, I tell my students that men can cook and there are lots of award-winning men chefs in the world. I also tell them that men should help their wives in the kitchen. I know that their parents tell them the opposite. My students tell me that they have never seen a person reading a book at home. I try to make them aware of different possibilities and opportunities. I know that most of my girl students will marry at an earlier age. My first aim is not teaching them present perfect tense, but teaching them humanity, gender equality and love. My students spend seven months with their families and they spend only three or four months with me. I have a very limited time to educate my students. My responsibility is heavy (Interview I; January 15, 2019).

In summary, according to rural EFL teachers, their perceptions and practices related to English language teaching are under the influence of mainly two challenges: challenges related to instructional practices and challenges related to students' neighborhood. Firstly, challenges related to instructional practices are derived from various disadvantages including deficiencies of technological infrastructure, students' lack of exposure to English language, insufficient background of the

language, students' low linguistic proficiency and spatial problems to do kinesthetic activities. Rural teachers indicate that they develop their own strategies to overcome these problems, such as bringing their own computers and speakers to the classroom, using no electricity-needed materials in the classroom and making adaptations to exercises and activities in accordance with the level of readiness of rural students in English and the current situation of rural schools. They also assert that they have to teach rural kids etiquette, general knowledge and the ways to improve themselves personally for a better life. It is clear that rural teachers think that there is a discrepancy between their practicum experiences and rural teaching. Thus, it is very hard for them to adapt to rural life and teaching in a rural context. Only the homegrown teacher mentions about her past experiences as a rural kid in the same town. She indicates that her adaptation process is relatively easy for her since she is already part of the community.

Implying the second challenge for both students and teachers in rural areas, teachers indicate that leaving in a remote area and lack of family support lead to apathy into learning English. Children's prejudices to English language and their apathy into language learning derive from their neighborhood and hard living conditions. In addition, it is mentioned that rural students' underlying prejudices towards English language and its speakers leave rural teachers unmotivated. According to teachers, parental problems is one of the main reasons of the challenging nature of teaching English in rural areas. Low-income, high rate of unemployed people, uneducated families and socio-cultural issues are the major facets of parental problems. Parents cannot afford children's basic school supplies, books and social activities that support their kids academically and socially. They do not have enough energy, time and money to take care of their children's school life. Rural teachers indicate that children's basic needs must be satisfied before they start to learn a foreign language. They also mention that if physiological, safety and love needs are not satisfied, rural kids cannot continue to meet the need of schooling and career aspirations. Furthermore, rural kids consider English lessons unnecessary compared to other subjects. This situation creates a negative atmosphere in the school that hinders teachers' enthusiasm and students' motivation to learning. Therefore, rural kids should be informed about the importance of learning a foreign language for

becoming equipped and more successful in the future. Different from other teachers, the homegrown teacher suggests that parents do not have serious financial problems since they earn money through farming and doing little business in the town. Parents can allocate money and time for their children. She also indicates that parents are interested in their children's school life and they consider English lessons very important for their children's academic improvement. However, the teacher mentions that parents are not able to broaden their children's perspective by supporting them via social and cultural events. At that point, she becomes a guide and a role model for her students via providing them general knowledge and supporting them to build an education path for their future.

Rural teachers put forward that English lessons are of vital importance for teaching rural kids international and intercultural issues. All teachers assert that rural schools should establish a commission for organizing events and activities to draw parents to the school. They emphasize the importance of parent-teacher collaboration in rural areas in order to create an effective environment for rural kids. According to them, parent-teacher collaboration is of vital importance to make rural kids pursue their education after middle school. Teachers indicate that unsupportive parents and uninterested students are big challenges for rural teachers in terms of struggling with children's apathy into English lessons and parents' unconsciousness about how to handle their children's education life. Finally, children's lack of perseverance in practicing English and seeking more opportunities to create a better life result in children's lack of confidence in using language for communication and teachers' motivation to remain teaching in rural schools.

4.3.4 The Most Influential Parties in Rural EFL Teachers' Professional Identity Construction Process

This part consists of findings gathered from the first interviews and the second interviews. This part aims to find an answer to the following research question of the study:

> *RQ-4: Who are the most influential parties in rural EFL teachers' professional identity construction process?*

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After analyzing ten verbatim transcripts gathered as a result of the first and the second interview sessions with five rural EFL teachers, significant statements from each participant were extracted into meaning units and associated with similar statements made by other participants. After reading the meaning units and employing the coding process, emergent codes were used to create categories. The following two categories describing the most influential parties in rural EFL teachers' professional identity construction process: *Rural Teachers' Memories of Previous Teachers and Practicum Experiences* and *The Importance of Activating a Collaborative Attitude with Colleagues*.

4.3.4.1 Rural Teachers' Memories of Previous Teachers and Practicum Experiences

According to participants, memories about their previous teachers and practicum experiences have an influence upon their views of teaching and of themselves as rural teachers. Since they observed their own teachers teaching during school years and mentor teachers teaching during practicum, the impact of school years and initial teacher training program are some of the major agents affecting rural teachers' professional identity construction process. In that sense, prior experiences of teachers play an important role in shaping teachers' story lines of becoming a rural teacher. For instance, T3 mentions that her own middle school English language teacher and her mentor teacher in practicum are influential in shaping her perceptions about the teaching profession. She says:

> I decided to be an English language teacher after seeing my own English language teacher during my middle school years. She was a perfect teacher who was very qualified and kind. After graduating from middle school, I realized that I chose her as my role model. I chose Foreign Languages division in high school. I am a graduate of department of English language teaching. My university years made important contributions to my professional development and also shaped my perceptions about the teaching profession. My instructors were very devoted, especially my mentor teacher. However, after starting to work in a rural area, I realized that all the things I learnt from them were designed to teach in an average urban school. Before being a rural teacher, I could not imagine the reality of these schools. What I mean is my perceptions about the teaching profession changed again after teaching in a rural context (Interview I; December 21, 2018).

Likewise, T2 indicates that her previous English language teacher during middle school years and her mentor teacher in practice teaching school play a crucial role in her path to teaching English in rural contexts. She puts forth the relationship between her past experiences and her current teaching self as follows:

> My own parents were teachers. Some of my close relatives were teachers too. I was raised among teachers. I was impressed by my middle school English language teacher. She was my role model. I loved her personality and teaching style. I decided to be an English language teacher during my middle school years. In my senior year in department of English language teaching, I completed my practice teaching in one of the state schools. My mentor teacher trusted me and she was letting me teach alone in the classroom. My mentor teacher and my practice teaching experiences increased my self-confidence. I already felt myself as a real teacher before graduating from the department. Those years were very influential on my first years as a novice teacher in rural contexts (Interview I; December 20, 2018).

In parallel with T2, it is stated by T1 that her high shool English language teacher played a significant role for her while choosing teaching as a career. In addition, her practice teaching school was a right place to be prepared to teach in a restricted area. She says:

> My English language teacher was a caring teacher and helped many students to set their future goals. My English language teacher was decisive for me to choose teaching as a profession. My practice teaching experiences also played an important role in my career. My practice teaching school located in an area where disadvantaged people live. Classrooms were very crowded and resources were very limited. It was really hard to teach English in that school. It was an example for me to teach in a restricted area. Teaching in that school prepared me to struggle with challenges to some extent. However, I have to admit that teaching in a rural school is completely different from teaching in a disadvantaged urban school (Interview I; December 12, 2018).

Since T5 is a graduate of Anatolian teacher high school, she decided to choose teaching as a career after graduating from middle school. She mentions that her practicum experiences were very beneficial for her; however, completing teaching practicum in prestigious private schools led to discrepancy between her practice teaching and rural teaching experiences. She says:

> I decided to be a teacher after middle school, so I chose department of English language teaching. In my senior year, I was a trainee teacher in prestigious private schools. There is no similarity between my practicum context and the context I am currently teaching in. I experienced personal and professional culture shock after starting to teach in this school. (Interview I; January 15, 2019).

Different from other participants, the homegrown teacher shares a different story about her previous teachers and her university years. T4 summarizes her childhood and school years as follows:

> As a rural kid, I was born and raised in this town. I went to primary school and middle school in this town. I was a successful student, so I continued to a good high school in city center. My parents are not educated, but they were aware of the importance of education and they always supported me to concentrate on my school work. They always supported me to pursue university education. After deciding to choose teaching as a career, they advised me to study at Anatolian teacher high school. During my high school years, I had an English language teacher who is a graduate of one of the most prestigious universities in Turkey. She was my role model (Interview I; January 3, 2019).

She thinks that her personal life and teaching life matches very well, since she was a rural kid and returned to her hometown to teach rural kids after having a good education. She mentions her previous teachers while sharing her own experiences as a rural kid. She asserts that her own previous teachers play a crucial role in the way of shaping her teaching philosophy. She says:

> I am a part of this community. I work in my own hometown. I feel that this is my responsibility. I had very supportive teachers when I was a student in this town. They always encouraged us to study hard and go to a university. Just like my own previous teachers played a role in my career, I try to encourage my students to study hard at school and to be ambitious. Since my students and their parents see me as a role model in this town, my responsibility is teaching my students the way to build a good future for themselves. I say to myself everyday 'It is your turn to guide those kids'. What I mean is my previous teachers had an influence on my teaching life. This is my choice to stay here and teach those kids (Interview I; January 3, 2019).

It is clear that T4 makes use of her previous life experiences in her own teaching. In addition, she suggests that she became more sensitive to the needs of rural children through participating to volunteer social responsibility projects during university years. She states that her previous experiences as a volunteer in different projects and her current teaching life are intertwined:

> I participated to projects to support disabled students in the university. I also participated to projects to prepare disabled high school students for the university entrance exam. I was a vounteer in these projects. After realizing that my efforts were useful for those people, I understood that I can use my effort to change children's life positively. I also prepared poor kids for their exams voluntarily within a scope of a project organized in my university. At that time, I said to myself the following words: 'I will be a teacher and most probably I will have students who live

in disadvantaged areas, so I cannot escape from the reality.' I think that participating to these projects raised my awareness of the value of my job and changed my perceptions about the teaching profession (Interview I; January 3, 2019).

4.3.4.2 The Importance of Activating a Collaborative Attitude with Colleagues

T4 is hired to be the only English language teacher in the town's school. She mentions that connecting with colleagues improves the quality of teaching and enhances collaboration in the school. She suggests that being the only English language teacher in the town results in the feeling of solitude time to time; however, her healthy relationship with the other subject matter teachers in the school helps her overcome this feeling. She says:

> So being the only English language teacher in this town makes me feel lonely time to time. On the other hand, it makes me more self-conscious because the responsibility is on my shoulder and I have to think carefully to do the best for my students. However, most of the time I say to myself that it would be wonderful if there were two English language teachers in this town in order to make collaboration and plan together. Above all, I feel myself very lucky because I have great teacher friends in this school. We talk about education, books, movies or problems of our students and we exchange our ideas. We also have a good relationship with our school principal. I feel the lack of another English language teacher in this school time to time, but I also feel myself very lucky to have such a peaceful working environment (Interview II; March 2, 2019).

It is said by T5 that there are two English language teachers in the village school. She mentions about the need for having more collaboration between teachers and the school principal in order to increase teachers' effectiveness and parents' involvement in schools. According to her, connecting with colleagues to find solutions to overcome pedagogical issues is of vital importance in rural contexts. She explains her own experiences with her colleagues as follows:

> Unfortunately, I cannot say that I have a perfect relationship with my colleagues in the school. Especially, I cannot receive enough support from the school principal in order to make our students and their parents aware of the importance of English lessons. We are two English language teachers in this school, but we teach at different levels. She teaches 5th and 6th graders and I teach 7th and 8th graders. We cannot exchange ideas to plan our lessons together. Most of the time, I need an experienced colleague to consult about the issues I face. I know that exchanging ideas and receiving more support from a colleague definitely increase our motivation and I also believe that our motivation is important to make collaboration with parents. Unfortunately, village teachers struggle with sense of professional loneliness (Interview II; March 8, 2019).

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In line with T5, it is stated by T1 that she attaches importance to the collaboration between colleagues in order to increase teacher's motivation in rural contexts. She states her ideas with the following words: "I think that my motivation would increase if I had a supportive and dedicated colleague in this school. Unfortunately, there is no collaboration here" (Interview II; March 13, 2019). In a similar vein, T3 reports that there are communication problems among teachers in her school. According to her, communication problems result in lack of collaboration between teachers. She says: "Actually, I do not spend too much time in the staffroom because we could not create a collaborative atmosphere in this school. We cannot share materials, make projects or exchange ideas, unfortunately. I prefer to spend my break times with my students" (Interview II; March 4, 2019). Different from T3, it is stated by T2 that there is no collaboration problem among teachers in the school. She says: "We have no communication problems among teachers in this school. We are two English language teachers here. We exchange ideas and try to support each other" (Interview II; March 5, 2019).

In summary, participants indicate that the improvement of education in rural areas can be achieved not only through the usage of technology, different materials, support from parents but also through the impact of initial teacher training program and the influence of former teachers. They also add that building a healthy collaboration between teachers strengthen the motivation of them. Finally, the impact of each of these agents varies according to teacher's own personal and professional path and to her workplace conditions.

4.3.5 Rural EFL Teachers' Professional Expectations and Needs at Rural Schools in Turkey

This part consists of findings gathered from the first and second interviews. This part aims to find an answer to the following research question of the study:

RQ-5: What are rural EFL teachers' professional expectations and needs in Turkey?

From ten verbatim transcripts gathered as a result of the first and second interview sessions with five rural EFL teachers, significant statements from each participant were extracted into meaning units. After reading the meaning units and employing the coding process, emergent codes were used to create categories. The following three categories describing rural EFL teachers' professional expectations and needs at rural schools were emerged: *The Need of Specialized Pre-service Training Courses for Preparing Teachers for Rural Schools*, *Teachers' Expectations for Professional Development Opportunities in Rural Contexts*, and *Teachers' Suggestions for Prospective Rural Teachers.*

4.3.5.1 The Need of Specialized Pre-service Teacher Training Courses for Preparing Teachers for Rural Schools

All participants suggest that pre-service courses specialized on rural schools and multi-contextual teaching practices should be included to pre-service English language teacher education curricula. According to them, these specialized courses and teaching trainings allow teacher candidates to experience contextually relevant transformative practices. For instance, T2 thinks that the courses she took during her university years and the practicum she completed before graduation were designed by taking into consideration the predominance of students from urban environments. She says:

> Rural teaching is completely different from teaching in an urban school. You need to develop different strategies to teach here. We have to be prepared for this reality before graduation. We thought that our future students will aware of the importance of English lessons, they will be very motivated to learn a foreign language and we will have technological facilities to use while teaching; however, we saw that realities are different. Teacher candidates definitely need a course to be prepared for teaching in disadvantaged contexts. If teacher educators cannot design a single course for rural teaching, Methodology, Teaching Techniques and Practice Teaching courses are good opportunities for them to include rural teaching content. They can spare two or three weeks to make teacher candidates familiar with different teaching contexts apart from urban contexts (Interview I; December 20, 2018).

In a similar vein, T3 draws attention to the need of including a special content to English language teacher education curriculum in order to prepare teacher candidates for multi-contextual teaching environments. According to her, the initial year of her rural teaching caused a sense of both personal and professional shock and sadness. She shares her experiences as follows:

I completed my practice teaching in one of the good urban schools. Before starting to teach in a rural school, I had no single idea about rural areas. I think that teacher educators definitely include contents in order to make their students familiar with the realities. The content should include deficiencies in rural contexts, adaptation problems and their possible solutions, instructional challenges and suggestions. A rural teacher may face with parental problems, contextual problems, instructional problems, personal problems. I cannot find a word to define my shock and despair when I first saw the rural school I was hired to teach at. It took a year for me to begin to adapt to the area. At that time, I said to myself 'None of my instructors told me about those schools.' One day, I opened the course book and saw a part called *common words*. 'Broccoli' and 'Kimono' were written in this part. They did not put any photos of them. I smiled and thought that the course book was written by a person who knows nothing about rurality. There are listening activities in our course book, but we do not have music player in our school. Some of the village schools do not have even electricity. What I mean is teacher education curriculum should be revised to prepare teachers for teaching in disadvantaged schools. Discussions, simulations, guest teachers, field trips, memories of rural teachers, and so on… All of them can be added to the curriculum (Interview I; December 21, 2018).

In a similar vein, T1 propounds the same assertions extracted by T2 and T3. She indicates that English language teaching curriculum is designed for preparing teacher candidates to teach middle-class urban students. She also mentions that teacher candidates need special trainings to learn how to struggle with possible challenges of rural teaching. She says:

One of our course books has a unit called 'Seasons'. The unit provides examples from Minnesota, Indianapolis etc. I know that some of urban kids may not know the name of the states; however, they probably know the United States and some of the well-known cities, such as New York or Texas. After reading the name of these cities, I realized that my students have never heard about the United States. This may give you a clue about our students' readiness. At that time, I also realized that none of our instructors told us about those kids. Our teacher education programs include courses and practicum to prepare teachers for teaching *mainstream* students. But we know that there are village schools, town schools, and disadvantaged areas in this country. The policy can be summarized as follows: 'If a teacher is hired to teach in a village school, she has to learn how to adapt to this area by herself.' But teachers are human beings and they need prior knowledge to develop strategies. Teacher educators should include content to their courses in order to inform teacher candidates about rural schools and also about different teaching contexts (Interview I; December 12, 2018).

Similar to T3, it is mentioned by T5 that she experienced a culture shock as a novice teacher in the first year of teaching. She asserts that it is an urgent need to revise teacher education programs in order to prepare teacher candidates for teaching in multiple contexts and situations. She says:

> I experienced a culture shock when I first came here. I have never visited a village before starting to work as a teacher. No water, no electricity, no hygiene, no teaching material… It was a shock for me because no one told me about these realities before my graduation. I think that teacher education programs should include special courses in order to prepare teachers for rural contexts. However, it is a critical point that we need teacher educators who experienced rural teaching or visited rural areas to do research. Let me tell about the ELT department I was graduated from. Most of our instructors have MA or PhD degree from foreign countries. I really appreciate their successful academic career. However, their experiences cannot meet the need of teacher candidates who will teach in rural areas. I remember my practice teaching schools. They are the best private schools in the city. I heard that half of the village schools do not have even restrooms. In private schools or urban schools, parents take care of their children to fulfill their needs such as nutrition, heating, socialization and hygiene. Parents in this village have problems to fulfill children's basic needs. I cannot go a step further to teach a foreign language in this school. No one told me about these realities before. Our instructors definitely need to develop a social perspective in teacher education (Interview I; January 15, 2019).

T4 draws attention to the fact that pre-service teachers need a special training in order to be prepared for teaching in remote areas. According to her, English language teaching curriculum includes courses addressing to experiences and needs of foreign teachers. She puts forth that teacher education programs should include special courses or tranings to prepare teacher candidates for the possible challenges of teaching in remote and disadvantaged areas in Turkey. Similar to T5, it is mentioned by T4 that teacher education programs need instructors who have rural teaching experiences or conduct comprehensive research studies about rural contexts. She explains her thoughts with the hope that it will help teacher educators take into consideration multi-contextual teaching environments:

> During my university years, I observed that teacher candidates had prejudices to teach in rural schools. They were not eager to teach rural kids. I think that including courses about rural teaching to teacher education curriculum may break down the prejudices. For example, in practicum courses we read and discussed journals written by foreign teachers working in the United States. We also read articles about challenges and strategies of teaching English in European countries. What I mean is all articles and journals were written by foreign scholars and teachers. I do not remember that we read about an article or a journal written by a Turkish scholar or teacher in order to explain Turkish teaching contexts and their possible challenges. Reading rural teachers' experiences and discussing about realities of Turkish educational contexts may make important contributions to our perceptions about the teaching profession. Of course, you can learn lots of things from written by a French or a German teacher educator, but they cannot reflect the realities of your own country. I learnt lots of things from them but I could not internalize what I read. The thing that I would like to add that none of my instructors had rural experiences, as far as I know. It is not easy for them to design a course for rural teaching. I know that they are very valuable academicians, but they always taught us how to teach in a classroom *in an ideal world* (Interview I; January 3, 2019).

4.3.5.2 Teachers' Expectations for Professional Development Opportunities in Rural Contexts

During the interview, T4 expresses that teachers expect to be provided continuous support via workshops and trainings. On the other hand, she mentions that professional development depends on teacher's eagerness to improve herself and her preferred style of teaching. She says:

> If you do not care about your professional development, no one can help you. For example, I participated to a voluntary workshop on language teaching last summer because I am open to learn new things about my job. I read about experiences and discussions of rural teachers from social media groups. They give me motivation. I have to know my weaknesses if I want to improve myself as a teacher. I am planning to ask my students to evaluate my teaching at the end of the semester anonymously. I will see what I do right and wrong. As I mentioned before, most of the village teachers work alone. I am the only English language teacher in this town, for example. The lack of interaction makes you feel isolated. If we are continuously supported by workshops and trainings organized by MoNE, we will definitely feel ourselves stronger and motivated. I have to emphasize that in-service trainings should not be designed as lectures but as workshops. Because we need an interactive environment and practice opportunities. Above all, I think that we need support but everything is in our hands (Interview II; March 2, 2019).

Likewise, T5 asserts that rural teachers should be supported by trainings and workshops regularly in order to make teachers bring out their weaknesses and suggest solutions for them as well. She states that MoNE should provide trainings to stay rural teachers motivated towards their work. She shares her expectations as follows:

> I would like to make projects, portfolios, bulletin boards with my students; however, it is very difficult in this school. I need professional support to learn how to design materials and projects in accordance with this teaching contexts and background of my students. Instructors always told us that we have to be creative and we have to use technology. I agree all these suggestions should be implemented; however, realities are different. I understand that our instructors design their lessons in accordance with the needs of urban students, so it is not useful for us. We need trainings and professional support from MoNE after we start to teach in rural contexts. Only some procedures and regulations are offered in seminars. Nothing is provided about teaching techniques, material design or classroom management specifically designed for teaching English in seminars. My middle school students are complete beginners in English. I cannot do listening activities because we do not have music players and even electricity in this school. I expect professional support from MoNE and teacher educators about these issues (Interview II; March 8, 2019).

According to T1, working conditions of rural teachers and how they perceive themselves within their teachig contexts play a crucial role in identity formation of rural teachers. She contends that rural teachers need a professional support during this process in order to motivate themselves to stay in teaching profession. She also thinks that creating professional development opportunities for rural teachers is a key factor to make them motivated and strong. She summarizes her expectations as follows:

> Continuous professional development is very important for me to feel myself motivated and effective. I try to create professional development opportunities for myself with my own efforts. I expect conferences, workshops and seminars organized by MoNE. Sometimes I come across seminars in our town but they are not specifically designed for English language teachers. I also come across conferences and workshops designed for foreign language teachers but they are mostly offered by the universities in city center. They are fee-paying organizations. I cannot participate in these professional trainings due to the fact that they are expensive and far from this town. It takes approximately three hours to go there. Professional development depends on time and money. I expect unpaid professional trainings organized in this area for English language teachers. In addition, your teaching context plays an important role in the way how you perceive yourself as a teacher and the teaching profession. What I mean is you need to go beyond yourself when you teach in a good school. As a I try so many things to draw my students' attention to English lessons; however, it does not work. I feel that my students' unwillingness to learn English decreases my motivation. I expect to receive advice from professionals to overcome the following two problems: my students' unwillingness to participate in my lessons and my demotivation (Interview II; March 13, 2019).

According to T3, one way to enhance learning in rural schools and increase teacher's motivation in remote contexts can be achieved through transforming rural school functioning both on professional and pedagogical aspects. She expects that MoNE should make collaborations with external partners such as the community, local institutions MoNE, and national organizations. She also adds that the effectiveness of teacher's professional development depends on how carefully those partnerships plan and implement the trainings or projects for rural teaching contexts. She explains her expectations as follows:

> We need help from experts. For instance teacher educators from the university, authorities from district national education directorate, and successful people from the community and so on. If we can organize projects, workshops, trainings together, I definitely believe that it will create a good learning atmosphere for rural kids and increase rural teachers' motivation. I expect assistance from the community and authorities. Increasing teacher's motivation also helps her pursue her professional development. They should create trainings including teaching methodologies,

instructional technology and material design. Can you believe that half of teachers in this school cannot write and send an e-mail? I try to watch movies and tv series with English subtitles, I downloaded New York Times and The Guardian applications on my phone to read news in English. These are very basic things to prevent regression on my English proficiency. I always teach beginner and elementary levels in this school. I cannot participate in trainings organized by British Council or other international associations in city center because it takes approximately two hours to go there and most of them are paid trainings. We need support for both our students' learning environment and our professional development. And this cannot be accomplished through only a few dedicated rural teachers' motivation and effort (Interview II; March 4, 2019).

Finally, T2 asserts that professional development depends on availability of time and location for rural teachers. She suggests that trainings are very beneficial for teachers after having identified their weaknesses and needs; however, these trainings should be designed and implemented properly in order to encourage rural teachers to attend and benefit from them. She summarizes her expectations as follows:

> Unfortunately, I can spare very little time for my professional development. I used to prepare different materials and search classroom activities to use in my lessons during the initial years of my teaching; however, I gave up doing this after some time. I feel uneasy about this. I think that I need motivation and reasons to return to my old habits. In-service trainings or projects with experienced educators could be very beneficial for us to increase our motivation. I have to mention that existing trainings offered by MoNE are designed by taking into consideration urban teachers and their needs. I expect that the existing trainings should be improved by adding new topics and activities in order to transform them beneficial for both urban and rural teachers. Needs and weaknesses of urban teachers and rural teachers are very different. In addition, I expect from the authorities to organize those trainings by considering the areas where rural teachers live. Most of the rural teachers prefer to live in village or town where the school locates. We live in areas at least two hours far from the city center. If they organize trainings by considering this situation, it will be more beneficial for us. For instance, I attended a compulsory in-service training which was organized in the place that 100 km away from this village. It was extremely hard for me to go there and also return back to village in the evening. It got dark and I had to use more than two vehicles to go to village. I constantly thought to myself, 'How can I return to village? Can I find a vehicle?' (Interview II; March 5, 2019).

It is also implied by all participants that they expect university-school partnerships since they think that these partnerships have the potential to provide rural teachers with professional development opportunities and help them overcome rural teaching challenges. They also put forth that university-school partnerships are very crucial to develop dynamic and mutually beneficial learning opportunities for both rural teachers and teacher educators. T4 thinks that university-school partnerships should have two dimensions: the partnership created for preparation of pre-service teachers

and the partnership created for professional development of in-service teachers. She explains her expectations from universities with the following words:

> I was born and raised here and returned back to my hometown after being a teacher. I believe that teacher educators may learn different things about our profession by making collaborations with rural teachers but university-school partnerships are not sufficient. I think these partnerships should begin pre-service teacher education and continue to support teachers after their graduation. English language teaching departments should organize field trips to the nearest towns or villages in order to make senior year students familiar with rural schools. We used smart boards and projections in all micro-teachings when I was a pre-service teacher. It is not the reality. Micro-teachings should be done with limitations. For example, the instructor should say 'Design a lesson for a class by using no electricity.' We can invite rural teachers as guest speakers to ELT departments or have Skype meetings with them. I definitely believe that visiting rural schools will make very important contributions to teacher educators' academic development. Communicating with rural teachers will provide teacher educators with a different perspective on the teaching profession. University-school partnerships can also be done through online communities (Interview II; March 2, 2019).

Likewise, T5 mentions that university-school partnerships are of vital importance to motivate teachers and students in rural areas. She expects collaborations between English language teaching departments and rural schools. She summarizes her expectations as follows:

> If rural teachers and teacher educators can make collaborative projects, it will be very beneficial for both sides. It can be accomplished via field trips or workshops. If we can do this, rural teachers will be motivated and they will not feel themselves isolated, rural kids will see new role models and teacher educators will see a different dimension of the teaching profession (Interview II; March 8, 2019).

T1 approaches university-school partnerships with the idea of receiving feedback from experienced teacher educators and improve themselves professionally with the help of their suggestions and solutions. She says:

> I think that the connection between teacher education programs and rural schools is very weak. I wish teacher educators observe my lessons, provide me feedback and make suggestions on my weaknesses. We are in despair, we need motivation. We also need workshops including role plays, cases from real rural schools, discussions on experiences of rural teachers and practical ways of creating visual materials on a tight budget (Interview II; March 13, 2019).

In a similar vein, T2 indicates that it would be very beneficial to organize collaborations between faculty members and rural schools. She says: "Teacher educators can come here to organize seminars for teachers and students. They can

support us about our professional development and inform rural children about university education (Interview II; March 5, 2019). In parallel with other participants, T3 asserts that it is very urgent that rural teachers should be supported by experienced teachers or teacher educators in terms of continuing their professional development and dealing with the challenges of rural contexts. She says:

> I am not a novice teacher and I have never heard about collaboration between universities and rural schools. Trainings and workshops should be organized. We should go to universities to attend those trainings and teacher educators should come here to see our realities. Both of them will be very beneficial. We can discuss the challenges and limitations of rural areas. They can provide us suggestions and we can do collaborative projects. We can share our experiences and challenges with them and they can do research to propose suggestions. It may be very beneficial for teacher educators to gain a different perspective on their area. However, I am talking about the need of realistic trainings and suggestions. What I mean is MoNE says 'You can give homeworks or projects to your students from DynEd.' This is a perfect suggestion! But, is it realistic? Ninety percent of my students do not have a computer and internet connection. We do not have technological facilities in our school. Please tell me how can I use DynEd? It is very easy to make recommendations. Please come here, see our context, listen to our limitations and provide us realistic solutions (Interview II; March 4, 2019).

4.3.5.3 Teachers' Suggestions for Prospective Rural Teachers

In the interviews, the participants provide suggestions for prospective rural teachers based upon their own experiences. For instance, T3 underlines that rural teachers should firstly aim to explain her students the importance of learning a foreign language and find ways to create a peaceful school environment. She says:

> Basically, a novice rural teacher should keep in her mind that rural schools are different from the urban school they did their practicum. They also keep in their mind that their responsibility is not only teaching English, but also motivating rural kids to pursue education after middle school, teaching them general knowledge, taking care of them when their parents cannot do and so on (Interview II; March 4, 2019).

T1 draws attention to the fact that rural techers should be good observers since children mostly have parental and social problems in rural areas. According to her, those problems inhibit rural teachers to create an effective learning environment. Rural teachers should take responsibility of guide their students to solve their actual problems and motivate them for their future life. She says:

You have to understand the dynamics of the town where you will live and teach. For example, if you work in a poor remote area, your students will probably come to school hungry. When you enter the classroom, you cannot expect them to show full performance during the lesson. If you know their problems, you may find applicable solutions. You have to prepare yourself for the realities. As for your own professional development, you have to keep in your mind that you are alone, unfortunately. For example, I listen to webinars for my own professional development. Last week, I listened to a webinar presented by an instructor from Oxford University, for instance. It was about integrating different skills in a single English lesson. As a rural teacher, you have to keep in your mind that online sources and online trainings will be your best friend if you are eager to improve yourself professionally (March 13, 2019).

T5 states that a rural teacher should be understanding and dedicated if she wants to be happy in the town. She says: "You should break down your own prejudices about rurality as a first step. If you constantly choose to see the limitations of the area, you cannot be happy. Try to concentrate on positive sides and focus on solutions" (Interview II; March 8, 2019). Similar to T5, it is suggested by T4 that rural teachers should prepare themselves for the possible limitations of rural areas before starting to teach. She says:

You should identify the limitations and also positive sides of the context where you will teach. It is better if you have your own laptop and speaker because you will probably do not have technological facilities in the school. You need to create visuals by yourself because you may have electricity problems. You should always remember that rural kids do not have enough general knowledge to know all words or terminologies written in English course books. Near-to-Far principle will be very effective on your students' learning (Interview II; March 2, 2019).

Finally, T2 thinks that prospective teachers should prepare themselves for making appropriate adaptations and modifications to activities and exercises written on the course book. She suggests that rural teachers should prepare themselves for extra work that leads to spend more time and energy. She explains: "You have to do adaptations in order to make activities and exercises proper to your students' level. Of course, you have to remain faithful to the curriculum but making adaptations will make your students more comfortable and motivated" (Interview II; March 5, 2019).

In summary, the participants suggest that pre-service teacher education programs should include specialized courses or content to make teacher candidates familiar with rural teaching contexts. They also indicate that continuous support via workshops, field trips and trainings should be provided by MoNE in order to

encourage rural teachers to pursue their professional development. They assert that receiving professional support plays a crucial role in identity formation of rural teachers. Participants think that trainings should be designed and implemented by considering rural teachers' needs. Trainings should be available for rural teachers in terms of time and location. They also draw attention to the lack of university-school partnerships. They put forth that university-school partnerships are very crucial to create a space for mutually beneficial learning opportunities for both teacher educators and rural teachers. Finally, they provide suggestions for prospective rural teachers based on their own experiences. They indicate that prospective rural teachers should be solution-oriented, identify the dynamics of rural areas and take the responsibility of creating a better future for rural children. They suggest that rural teachers should keep in their minds that rural teaching requires extra effort and time for teachers.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter is comprised of three sections. Firstly, overview of findings is presented in accordance with the research questions. Secondly, the findings are discussed in relation to relevant literature for comparing and contrasting the findings. After discussing the findings of this study, rural EFL teacher identity is conceptualized in relation to the relevant literature and findings of the present study.

5.1 Overview of Findings

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, there are five research questions in this study. an overview of findings is presented in accordance with the relevant research question.

5.1.1 How do rural EFL teachers define their professional identities?

In order to answer the first research question, data gathered from the metaphor elicitation task and semi-structured interviews were analyzed. In the current study, the participants created five different metaphors to define English language teacher identities. According to EFL rural teachers, an English language teacher is a *candle* to enlighten rural children and transform rural communities. An EFL rural teacher is a *singer/actress* who can sing and act to make rural children enjoy learning English despite all the limitations. In addition, an EFL rural teacher is a *door* that provides rural children new worlds to explore. Additionally, according to rural EFL teachers, a teacher is an *orchestra conductor* who struggles with various responsibilities at the same time. Lastly, an EFL rural teacher is a *cultural transmitter* who bridges the gap between rural children's own culture and the other cultures prevailing in the world. It is crystal clear that an EFL rural teacher perceives himself/herself as an intellectual person who knows about different cultures, teaches a new language by using his/her

talents such as singing and acting, provides rural children different opportunities for their future, and widens rural children's perspectives of the world and other cultures.

In relation to the metaphors defining rural EFL teacher identities, the participants created four different metaphors to describe the role of a rural English language teacher. Firstly, it is emphasized that a rural teacher is a *change maker* who changes the way rural children perceive the world and helps them grow healthfully while changing. In addition, a rural teacher is an *attention grabber* who is able to draw rural students' attention to the existence of different cultures and the importance of learning a foreign language for a better future. According to the participants, a rural teacher is a *guide* who leads the way to a better future for rural children by means of teaching a foreign language. Moreover, a rural teacher is a *book widens the horizon of students* by providing neccessary knowledge about different topics, such as cinema, history, art or literature. In order to define a professional English language teacher, rural teachers combine the metaphors that they used to define rural English language teacher identity and the role of a rural English language teacher. According to them, a professional rural EFL teacher is a person who is a *guide* to enlighten rural children about different topics in addition to teaching English*,* an *entertainer*, a *cultural awareness promoter*, an *intellectual,* and a *native speaker* who is fluent in English and has an extensive vocabulary. After creating these metaphors, participants are asked to define their own teacher identities and they created the following ones: a *researcher*, a *mother*, a *guide*, and *having talent*. It is crystal clear that all metaphors created by participants are intertwined and they constitute four umbrella metaphors at the end to define rural EFL teacher identity.

In addition to metaphors, five verbatim transcripts gathered as a result of second interview sessions with the participants provide crucial answers for the first research question. First of all, it is found that the role of a rural EFL teacher is not only teaching English, but also preparing rural children for a better future. They feel themselves responsible of making a change in rural children's intellectual, academic and social development. They emphasize that their first aim is educating rural children for their future lives. They define themselves not a teacher but an *educator* who tries to teach rural children etiquette, the ways of having healthy relationships in

the community and general knowledge about the world. It is also clear that rural teachers have a tendency to change their teaching philosophies after starting to teach in a rural school. In this study, rural teachers are eager to take up the challenges as a result of being more tolerant and adaptable. They accept performing multiple roles that makes them more open to new experiences. It is found that rural teachers take into consideration the need and progression of rural children not only in academic level but also in social level. They see themselves as protectors against parents' apathy about rural children's education and personal development. The participants mention their positive feelings and perceptions about being a rural EFL teacher; however, they also indicate the struggles on the way of constructing their professional identities as rural teachers. Infrastructure problems, insufficiency of rural children's readiness to learn English, and indifference of parents are mentioned recurringly by the participants. As a result of struggling with these problems, they define themselves as *solution-oriented*, *mature*, *strong* and *determined* teachers. The participants also suggest that personality traits, world views and private life affect their perceptions about the teaching profession and their teaching selves. According to them, being able to motivate themselves with small increments of success of rural children, being always kind and patient, and dedication are the key elements for rural teachers to experience a healthy professional identity construction process in rural areas.

Lastly, there is only one homegrown teacher in the current study. It is crystal clear that the homegrown teacher constructs her professional identity under the influence of her own past experiences as a rural child. She shows the high responsibility for being a role model for rural children as a result of being a part of the community. She defines herself as a second mother for the students. Since she experienced the same challenges that her students are currently living with, she mentions her dedication to create an equality of educational opportunity in the rural school as much as possible.

5.1.2 How do rural EFL teachers define their teaching contexts?

After analyzing the field notes and semi-structured interviews to answer the second research question, it is found that rural teachers identify their teaching contexts with the neighbourhood they live. They suffer from lack of the services and leisure

activities. In addition, lack of teaching materials and extra-curricular activities for students, and lack of social and cultural activities for rural teachers are mentioned several times by the participants while defining their teaching contexts. They think that being a rural teacher directly brings along persistent and pressing problems, such as technology deficiencies, defects in school buildings, and financial limitations. Teachers draw attention to the insufficient physical conditions. They emphasize the need to improve rural teaching contexts so that they are able to design more beneficial lessons for rural children. They also share their experiences about students with behaviour disorders, apathy of parents, and nutrition problems of children. All participants agree that parental, financial and contextual problems affect teaching and learning in a negative way. It is emphasized by all teachers that they would like to teach in a better equipped classroom, since it is inevitable to use technology while teaching a language. They also mention the urgent need to improve parent-teacher relationships in rural schools in order to increase both the teacher and student motivation. According to them, especially organizing extra-curricular activities require support from parents and school administrators. There is only one *homegrown* teacher in the current study. The homegrown teacher states her positive opinions about living in a small town. She expresses that it is very advantegous for her to teach in this rural area since she lives with her parents and has an opportunity to spend time with her old friends and relatives. Despite all deficiencies and limitations, all participants indicate that they appreciate the village life in terms of its tranquility and peace.

After analyzing the first interviews, it is found that villages are peaceful pleaces for parent-teachers to raise their own children. There is only one parent-teacher in the current study and she indicates that being a mother and a teacher in a small village at the same time provides her more time to spend with her own child. She thinks that it is a good opportunity for her not to spend too much time in traffic jam and raising her child in a clean and small area. On the other hand, she is planning to move to the city center before her child starts high school since there is no high school in the village. Four of the participants mention that they prefer to work in a rural school as a result of the desire to return *home* due to the fact that their families live in the city centers or the town centers where the participants work in the rural schools located in

that cities or towns; however, poor living conditions and insufficient transportation opportunities, low-quality working conditions are the main reasons of unwillingness to work in a rural teaching context.

Teaching in a rural school is seen as a first step to work as a state school teacher for the participants as a result of experiencing some financial and administrative challenges in private institutions. Two of the participants indicated that they taught in private institutions before teaching in rural areas. According to them, experiencing difficult conditions in private educational institutions is the main reason to prefer being a rural teacher. In addition, rural schools are the first working places after their graduation for two of the participants in this study. Both of these participants defined their first teaching years as surviving hard times and teaching with limitations. As mentioned before, there is only one *homegrown* teacher in the current study. According to her, regardless all disadvantages of living in a small town, she is satisfied with her teaching context and the town where she was born and raised. While the homegrown teacher states that her teaching context aligns with her cultural values and social expectations, the rest of the participants indicate that they have experienced and still experiencing cultural and social difficulties in their teaching contexts. The implementation of transported education in some of the villages in Turkey is one of the major challenges facing parents, teachers and students. They think that the school is not a center for only learning but also a center for socio-cultural activities in rural areas. It is mentioned by the participants that creating collaboration between the school and the community is of vital importance for child education and community service in rural areas. On the other hand, participants express that their students come from different villages to the school and it is almost impossible for teachers to make collaboration with the parents. They mention that they feel themselves alone, left out, and isolated during the teaching process as a result of receiving no support from students, their parents, and the community. They conclude that they cannot develop a professional sense of belonging towards the rural school they teach in.

Limitations in teaching materials and technological devices in rural schools are mentioned by the participants in the current study in order to define their teaching

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contexts. The participants reflect upon their past experiences that they lived as student teachers in order to explain the clash between practice teaching schools and rural schools. They mention that they completed their practice teaching in good state or private schools where they could find sufficient teaching materials and technological devices. Therefore, their current experiences do not match with their past experiences. It is found that rural teachers have to struggle with deprivation of a clean teaching atmosphere, limitations in teaching materials, lack of electricity and running water in their teaching contexts. Lastly, all participants mention the lack of professional development opportunities for rural teachers. Three of the participants clearly express that they desire to work in an urban school in order to pursue their professional development. They conclude that there is a strong association with teaching in a rural school and being fallen behind professionally.

5.1.3 How do rural EFL teachers make a relation between their professional identities and their teaching contexts?

In order to answer the third research question, field notes, interviews, and metaphor elicitation tasks were analyzed. As a result of analyzing the field notes, it is found that rural teachers often take full responsbility of their students in terms of their schooling and personal growth. To this end, teachers in the current study define their teacher roles by implying various responsbilities. In this study, rural teachers indicate that their responsibility is not only teaching, but also getting students adopt a reading habbit, solving their malnutrition problems, guiding them to pursue their education after middle school, and so on. Therefore, teaching in a rural school gives multiple roles to teachers. During the field visits, it is observed that teachers define themselves as organizers, guides, and facilitators. It is also mentioned by the participants that teaching English becomes of secondary importance in rural schools due to the fact that they take various roles in addition to teaching English, such as being a life-coach, a mother, a counselor, and even a nutritionist. Teachers participated in this study also mention that their teacher roles may change when their teaching contexts will change in the future. In addition, it is seen during the field visits that the participants are idealist and innovative teachers; however, rural teacher identities have been reshaped and still reshaping in accordance with their teaching contexts and needs of their students. Additionally, it is observed that English lessons

are taught by one or two teachers in rural schools, therefore rural teacher identities are under the influence of professional isolation and lack of collaboration.

Analysis of metaphor elicitation task puts forth that the participants create metaphors that reveal their thoughts about the relation between their own professional identities and their teaching contexts. The participants use four different metaphors to define being a rural English language teacher: *Jane Eyre,* a *proud family member*, a *compassionate friend*, a *rainbow*. According to the participants, there is an association between their teacher identities and their teaching contexts. The metaphors that participants createfor being a rural English language teacher define both positive and negative feelings of them. While *Jane Eyre* defines the feeling of despair and being stuck as a teacher in the remote area, *rainbow* symbolizes having multiple roles and trying to be vivid every time as a rural teacher. Rural teachers see themselves as a *compassionate friend* as a result of caring about them and feeling compassion towards them. In addition, they see themselves as a *proud family member* since they feel themselves very proud and happy when they see even very little improvements in their learning. All participants mention that their teacher roles play a crucial role in their professional identities as rural English language teachers. They use the following metaphors to define their teacher roles: an *observer*, an *actress*, a *worker*, a *counselor,* a *sister*, a *psychologist*, a *guide*, a *friend*, a *team member*, an *older friend*, a *facilitator*, and *the only source of knowledge*. It is clearly seen that the metaphors they use to define their teacher roles are sub-metaphors of the metaphors they use to define their teacher identities.

Since professional development is an integral part of developing a professional identity, it was asked participants to define their professional development experiences as rural teachers. According to them, professional development depends on two factors: willingness of teachers to improve themselves and professional training opportunities provided by MoNE. Firstly, they indicate that professional development is *gardening* in rural areas since it needs too much effort and willingness. Similar to the first metaphor, they define professional development by using the metaphors of a *never-ending school* and a *life-long job* to emphasize the need of willingness of teachers and the importance of sustainability in professional

development. Secondly, the participants use the metaphors of a *tailor-made item* and a *convenient treatment* to emphasize that they need in-service trainings which are convenient to their needs and also suitable for their teaching contexts. Thus, it is clear that they need trainings specifically designed for rural EFL teachers.

After analyzing verbatim transcripts gathered as a result of interviews, it is found that the participants experience challenges related to instructional practices and rural children's neighbourhood characteristics. It is clearly extracted from the data that these contextual challenges play a critical role in rural EFL teacher identities. According to the participants, the challenges related to classroom practices in rural schools have an influence on shaping rural teacher identity. It is found in the current study that the participants develop their own instructional strategies in order to compensate the deficiency in technological devices and improve limited teaching materials. They indicate that they are not provided with any audio-visual materials which are very crucial to teach a foreign language, especially for teaching speaking and listening. All participants suggest that teaching writing is challenging for rural teachers because of unreadiness of rural children to perform productive skills. Since performing productive skills requires the necessary knowledge that students get through receptive language activities, i.e. listening and reading, rural teachers have to either skip teaching productive skills parts or make some adaptations in those parts during the lessons.

The participants indicate that they feel too much burden on their shoulders due to the fact that they are responsible for both preparing teaching materials under hard conditions and teaching English at the same time. In addition, they mention the discrepancy between practice teaching and rural teaching in terms of instructional practices and procedures. In that sense, the participants express that a rural EFL teacher has to devote herself to her students while shaping her own professional identity. According to the participants, rural children's lack of exposure to English language is one of the main reasons for instructional challenges. It is mentioned by all participants that they have to make adaptations in curriculum, prepare and use extra materials to increase their exposure and to make them familiar with technology. Lastly, it is mentioned by all participants that rural children are not eligible to grasp

even very basic concepts or instructions in English language, such as wild animals, music styles, well-known capital cities in the world, matching activities or true/false exercises. To this end, rural EFL teachers feel themselves responsible of teaching rural children cultural information, intercultural awereness, etiquette and the practical ways to understand instructions.

In addition to instructional challenges, challenges related to rural children's neighbourhood characteristics are mentioned by all participants. They indicate that rural children's underlying prejudices towards English language cause challenges for both teachers and students. The participants assert that their prejudices derive from the neighbourhood they live in. It is found in the study that rural children's prejudices towards English language and apathy to learning about new cultures make rural EFL teachers unmotivated. According to the participants, rural children's prejudices towards English lessons make them fall behind in their school work. The participants mention that they have to take into account the needs and conditions of rural children while designing their lessons. It is also mentioned by the participants that their teaching context is not suitable for reaching even basic teaching and learning supplies. Lastly, it is found that lack of parent-teacher collaboration results in demotivation of students and teachers in rural areas. This situation makes it difficult to reinforce at home what is learnt at school. It should be also taken into account that a considerable number of rural children work as seasonal workers with their families that hinders the continuity of their school life. All the above-mentioned factors have a negative influence on teacher's enthusiasm and motivation during the process of professional identity formation.

5.1.4 Who are the most influential parties in rural EFL teachers' professional identity construction process?

In this study, the relevant data to answer the fourth research question were gathered through semi-structured interviews. After analyzing verbatim transcripts of interview sessions, crucial results have emerged. According to the participants, memories about their previous teachers and practicum experiences have an influence on their professional identity construction. To this end, it is obvious that their apprenticeship of observation, practicum experiences and previous teachers play a critical role in

their teacher identities. They indicate that they chose teaching as a career as a result of the positive impact of their previous teachers. Especially, the homegrown teacher of the current study clearly mentions that she has still a very strong bound with her own middle school teacher who makes her a more dedicated and sensitive rural teacher. It is clearly mentioned by all participants that their own English language teachers became role models for them during their middle school and high school years. In addition, all participants assert that having collaboration between teachers in rural areas is key to the success of rural schooling and professional development of rural teachers. Therefore, the participants mention the urgent need to enhance collaboration in rural schools in order to decrease the solitude in education. To this end, they indicate that the improvement of rural schooling and professional development of rural teachers can be succeeded not only by using technology, but also by a well-designed teacher training program, positive impact of previous teachers, and a strong collaboration between teachers in the area.

5.1.5 What are rural EFL teachers' professional expectations and needs in Turkey?

After analyzing verbatin transcripts gathered as a result of semi-structured interviews, it is found that multi-contextual teahing practices should be included to pre-service English language teacher education in order to prepare teacher candidates for rural placements. According to the participants, the undergraduate courses they took and the practice teaching experience they had during their senior year result in a discrepancy between their initial teaching experiences as teacher candidates and their experiences as rural teachers. They share that teacher educators should definitely include courses to the curriculum in order to make teacher candidates familiar with the realities of rural and disadvantaged teaching contexts. According to the participants, the current teacher education programs are consisted of courses and practicum to prepare teachers for teaching urban mainstream students. It is also mentioned by the participants that teacher education programs need teacher educators who have teaching experiences in rural schools or have a special interest in rural teaching. They indicate that there is an urgent need to develop a social perspective in English language teacher education.

The participants expect to teach in clean, well-equipped and comfortable rural schools. It is also found that rural teachers expect to be provided continuous professional support through workshops and in-service teacher trainings. According to them, professional development trainings should be designed and implemented in an interactive environment rather than lecture sessions. It is extracted from the relevant data that rural teachers need professional support to learn how to design and implement materials in accordance with limited teaching contexts. It is mentioned by the participants that most of the in-service trainings are offered by MoNE in city centers and universities organize effective workshops for teachers which are very expensive. Therefore, the participants expect in-service teacher trainings which are organized in the village or in the nearest town and free of charge. In addition, it is stated by the participants that they expect collaboration between rural teachers and the community in order to enhance new ways of teaching and learning, such as projects, extra-curricular activities, and trainings. University-school partnerships are also seen very crucial to provide rural teachers with professional development opportunities and help them overcome instructional challenges. Finally, the participants in the current study make some suggestions for future rural teachers. They suggest that a rural teacher should start her work with the aim of explaining her students the importance of learning a foreign language and having intercultural competence. According to them, a rural teacher should observe and understand the dynamics of the village or town in order to perform an effective and transformative teaching in the school. They add that being patient, dedicated, and understanding are also key characteristics to become a good rural teacher.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

In this section, the results of the study are discussed in relation to relevant literature for comparing and contrasting the findings.

5.2.1 Rural Teacher Identity

In the present study, there were five rural EFL teachers. All participants mentioned that their previous teachers played a key role in their decision making about being an English language teacher. Especially, the homegrown teacher clearly expressed that her previous teachers in the town were her role models in the way of being a

dedicated and devoted rural teacher. In a similar vein, Flores and Day (2006) found in their study that previous teachers and past learning experiences of teachers are the main contributors to their teacher professional identity. In addition to them, the initial teacher training experiences, current teaching practices and teaching contexts are crucial contributors to the process of teacher identity formation. In a similar vein, the current study found that all participants mentioned their experiences about pre-service teacher education programs, in-service trainings, current instructional situations, and teaching contexts while unearthing their perceptions about their teaching selves and the teaching profession. In the present study, it was found that all participants have experienced and still experiencing tensions derived from the discrepancy between what they desired and what was possible in reality. In a similar vein, Pillen Beijaard and Den Brok (2013) suggested that teacher identity tensions occur as a result of the conflicts between theory and practice, thus teachers adopt strategies to deal with them. The current study found that despair, helplessness, and disapointment were the main feelings accompanied by rural teacher identity.

The findings of the current study showed that personal isolation, poor housing conditions, lack of resources, such as heating problems, lack of running water and leaking roofs, and distance from cultural events were the negative sides of rural areas mentioned by the participants. Özoğlu (2015) found the same result in his study that rural teachers defined rural areas with very limited social activities, poor housing conditions and lack of resources. In addition, the participants of the current study indicated that professional isolation, distance from professional development opportunities, lack of teaching materials, and instructional challenges related to students and their parents were the negative aspects of being a rural teacher. Similarly, other studies in the literature found that teachers felt professional and personal challenges in rural areas as a result of having limited leisure activities and professional interactions in rural areas (Monk, 2007; Barley, 2009; Polidore, Edmonson & Slate, 2010). Furthermore, lack of infrastructural facilities, such as hospitals and high schools, was mentioned by the participants of the current study and Öğdül (2010) found the same results in her study. On the other hand, the participants of the present study emphasized that they defined rural areas as clean, calm and warm places. Likewise, Herzog and Pittman (1995) found in their study

that teachers used positive terms about rural life after experiencing rural teaching. According to them, rural areas were quiet, clean and good places to raise children. However, the participants of the same study also mentioned that rural schools were not attractive for teachers owing to poor school facilities and lack of teaching materials. In the present study, it was mentioned by two of the participants that lack of library caused instructional challenges in rural schools. Similarly, Milon (2016) found that lack of library caused a poor learning environment for rural students which made rural teachers unmotivated. In a similar vein, Mosha (2014) found that almost all rural children did not like schools as a result of having classrooms which were not painted and not attractive with bare walls.

The participants of the current study mentioned that cost of travelling to city centers was a substantial disadvantage of living in a rural area. In parallel with this result, Jimerson (2003) put forward that families in urban areas can met their needs by using public transportation while buying a car was a necessity for rural teachers as a result of limited transportation services provided in the area. Similarly, Özoğlu (2015) stated in his study that living in rural areas led to loss of money for rural teachers in order to travel to urban areas especially in winter. In present study, one of the participants indicated that she had plans to work in an urban school since there was no high school in the village for her son. In a similar vein, Boylan et al. (1994) and Ankrah-Dove (1982) found the same result in their studies by suggesting that rural teachers wanted to move to urban areas in order to make their own children pursue their education. In addition to personal challenges and poor physical conditions, all participants in the current study stated that they were trying to deal with professional isolation in rural schools. In a similar vein, Ruohotie-Lyhty (2013) stated in her study that rural teahers felt themselves isolated and very alone as a result of having no collaborative relationships with colleagues. Similarly, investigating experiences of novice teachers in rural schools, Gregory (2018) found that rural teachers suffered from the feeling of isolation and lack of having a colleague to brainstorm with in the school. Similarly, Ankrah-Dove (1982) found in her study the same result that rural rural teachers had challenges related to the feeling of isolation in rural schools as a result of having very limited opportunities for professional contact with other teachers and social gatherings. In parallel with the previous studies, Goodnough and

Mulcahy (2011) found in their study that rural schools were isolated environments for teachers due to the fact that they could not find experienced colleagues to exchange ideas and to get advice for creating a better learning and teaching atmosphere.

As Pillen, Beijaard and Den Brok (2013) found in their study that rural teachers need to make a collaboration to tackle with tensions and find solutions. In a similar vein, the current study put forth that collaboration between colleagues is an integral part of teacher identity due to the fact that it helps problem solving, applying creativity, and improving self-development in rural areas. Similarly, Sargent and Hannum (2009) stated in their study that the collaboration among colleagues is of vital importance for teacher's job satisfaction. In the present study, it was stated by three participants that feeling of isolation affected their job satisfaction and professional growth in a negative way as a result of the school context and emotional exhaustion. Investigating job satisfaction of rural teachers, Haughney and Murphy (1982) and Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) found very similar results in their studies. According to them, participants found rural teaching very challenging in terms of insufficient teaching materials and poor physical conditions in rural areas. They mentioned that their job satisfaction was affected in a negative way. Since the relevant literature suggests that teacher's job satisfaction is under the influence of the context in which teaching takes place, it is clear that job satisfaction of a rural teacher is affected by teacher's perceptions and lived experiences about rural teaching (Bingham, 1996). To this end, it was found by Cano and Miller (1982) that job satisfaction is crucial for rural teachers in order to sustain their enthusiasm and commitment for rural teaching. In align with this, all participants in the present study expressed that they were planning to work in an urban school in the near future in consequence of the desire of pursuing personal and professional development.

The report issued by British Council and TEPAV (2013) put forward the national assessment of state school English language teaching in Turkey. The report proposed that classrooms have a furnishing and teaching material problems that make teachers fail to use classrooms to organize group works for communicative language practices. Additionally, the report suggested that most of the schools lacked Internet

connection that made it impossible to connect to educational websites or applications. In addition, the same report suggested that official course books do not meet the needs of both urban and rural teaching contexts. Moreover, the report indicated that most of the parents have an income at a level of minimum wage per month that causes parents not able to afford extra materials for English lessons. Similarly, OECD (2016) found that rural schools have often fewer computers connected to the Internet. The current study found exactly the same results. First, lack of teaching materials, especially technological devices, and layout problems have resulted in challenges to do speaking and listening activities in rural schools. In the present study, all participants clearly mentioned that they could not use Internet connection to connect to the official online teaching resources, such as DynEd as a result of lack of Internet connection and tehcnological devices in the school. Since most of the students could not reach Internet connection at their houses, DynEd application could not be used by rural teachers and students. In align with this, Baş (2010) conducted a study to investigate DynEd courses used in English classes in Turkey and he found that rural teachers could not use DynEd as a result of having no computer lab and Internet access in their schools. In that sense, DynEd courses cannot be utilized in rural schools as a result of poor tecnhological infrastructure and lack of support from school administrators. The findings about DynEd were also supported by the report issued by British Council and TEPAV (2013). In the present study, all participants indicated that English course books prepared and provided by MoNE were not suitable for rural students due to the fact that the level of readiness among rural children was very low to internalize the curricula and turn them into useable information.

In the current study, all participants indicated that they made adaptations in the course book in order to make activities and the presentation of topics proper to rural children. In addition, they expressed that they were using their own computers and speakers in order to do listening activities since they were not provided any technological devices or classroom layout to do speaking and listening activities. Moreover, all participants indicated that there was a need to design context-specific teaching materials for rural schools. In a similar vein, Mason and Payant (2019) investigated the communicative language teaching practices in rural schools and they

put forth that rural teachers found course books provided by the government unsuitable for rural children. Thus, they made adaptations in the course books by spending a lot of time at the school. In addition, all participants mentioned that the school administrator did not provide a music player to do listening activities, so they were using their own computers to do listening activities in the classroom. It was found that parents in rural areas could not provide extra teaching materials as a result of low income. In parallel with these studies, Mudra (2018) conducted a study to unearth the obstacles experienced by rural EFL teachers and he found that the only teaching material was an old-fashioned course book for rural EFL teachers. All participants mentioned that old-fashioned course books and lack of Internet connection were the major instructional challenges for rural teachers. They also mentioned that rural schools need context-specific materials especially for foreign language teaching. Similarly, Çiftçi and Cin (2018) conducted a study to investigate the educational challenges experienced by rural teachers in Turkey. They found that some of the participants mentioned the need to have context-specific materials and curricula for rural schools due to the fact that rural children have different realities and conditions.

All previously mentioned findings about instructional challenges are in line with the findings of the present study. On the contrary, Milon (2016) found in his study that rural teachers preferred to skip writing and listening activities in English lessons as a result of lack of teaching materials. They did not prefer to use their own technological devices to meet the deficiency of teaching materials. They did only grammar and reading activities in English lessons. They also added that neither they made any adaptations in the course book nor they asked parents to buy extra materials for English classes. In a similar vein, Salahuddin et al. (2013) found in his study that rural teachers preferred to do only reading activities in English lessons. Likewise, Mosha (2014) found that most of the rural teachers were not able to reach teaching resources suggested in the official curriculum and most of the participants indicated that they did not prefer to develop their own teaching materials or find solutions to the deficiencies related to instructional challenges because of time limitations and deprivation in the village. While rural teachers in the present study were trying to find practical solutions to do listening and speaking activities in

English lessons, participants of studies conducted by Salahuddin et al. (2013), Milon (2016), and Mosha (2014) did not prefer to find solutions themselves to challenges but they were waiting desperately for the administrators to find solutions to their problems.

Absenteeism among rural children during husbandry and harvesting seasons was one of the instructional challenges mentioned by one of the participants in the present study. According to the participant, most of the parents were seasonal workers and her students could not turn back to the village almost until end of the first semester. After returning to the village, it was really difficult for both rural teachers and students to adapt to the curriculum. In parallel with this finding, Azano & Stewart (2015) found in their study that rural teachers were not able to assign homework and finish the course book as a result of lack of access to educational resources and absenteeism of rural students during hunting and harvesting seasons. In the present study, four of the participants mentioned that rural children had prejudices towards other cultures and they were resistant to learn new things. In a similar vein, Güngör et al. (2019) found in their study that rural students were not open to learn new topics, such as cultures, festivals or tourism in English lessons. The study indicated that rural children's prejudices derived from their neighborhood and parents. In a similar vein, the present study found that all these problems were the consequences of parents' attitudes towards foreign cultures and communities. Similarly, Kızılaslan (2012) investigated the needs to prepare EFL teachers for rural areas and she found in her study that rural teachers struggled with the anxiety and uneasiness of parents towards language learning and intercultural communication.

The relevant literature put forward that parents play a crucial role in children's school life and personal development. According to Hannaway et al. (2018), parent's apathy to education was the major reason of an unmotivated rural student, and therefore, dissatisfied rural teachers. These findings were also supported by the findings of the study conducted by Ankrah-Dove (1982). She found that lack of parental support for rural children was a big challenge for rural teachers to encourage and motivate their students. This finding was also supported by Azano & Stewart (2015) and Mudra (2018). They mentioned in their studies that parents did not visit

the school and did not have any control over their children at home. Similarly, Yawman et al. (2019) found that parental support was of vital importance for rural children to improve their English skills and to continue their learning at home. In a similar vein, Mosha (2014) found that parents could not maintain the neccessary support to their children while doing homework or studying for exams due to the fact that parents were not conscious enough to help their children continue their learning at home. In parallel with these studies, the present study found that all participants mentioned that parents were not educated enough to help their children for the continuity of education and learning outside the school. Four participants of the present study stated that parents did not attend parent-teacher meetings or communicate with their children's teachers that resulted in lack of solution, dissatisfaction, and low academic achievement. This finding was supported by the results of the study conducted by Güngör et al. (2019). Furthermore, the current study showed that rural teachers were struggling with the challenges related to poor nutrition of rural children, which led to worse education outcomes. This finding was supported by the study conducted by Tezcan (2018). The homegrown teacher in the current study indicated that she devoted herself to the rural school and supported rural children with extra-curricular activities including drama, reading, and film activities. This result is in line with the finding mentioned by Kuitunen (2004).

Two of the participants in the present study indicated that rural schools suffering from poverty and social exclusion were filled with student discipline problems. Especially, one of the participants clearly mentioned that very limited conditions of rural and remote areas caused anger and aggression among rural children. The other participant mentioned that uninterested students and low-achievers caused demotivation among rural teachers. Both of the participants expressed that rural teachers desire to leave the schools not only because of the restrictive situations of rural areas, but also because of uninterested and undisciplined students. Shen (1997) found the same results while investigating the reasons of teacher attrition in rural schools. In a similar vein, Phelan, Davidson and Cao (1991) found in their study that rural children were seen as low-achievers by rural teachers and they desired to leave the school instead of dealing with problems. In parallel with the previous studies, a report issued by ESRC-DFID (2018) put forth that rural teachers had little belief in

rural children which resulted in unmotivated teachers to teach and guide rural children, and therefore, poor learning outcomes. Similarly, Özoğlu (2015) put forward that there is an interrelation between motivation of teachers and learning outcomes in rural schools. According to him, demotivation of teachers causes excessive teacher turnover in rural areas and excessive teacher turnover in rural areas causes low student performance. Likewise, Başer and Karaman (2015) found in their study that teacher turnover in rural schools was one of the most important problems that affected rural children's academic achievement. In a similar vein, it was found in the present study that all participants were planning to work in an urban school in the near future. Four of them mentioned that they desired to have a more attractive career in urban areas, their positive perceptions about urban students, the desire to have collaboration with experienced teachers, and aspiration to live in a developed area.

The other participant expressed that her plans to work in an urban school derived from her desire to have more opportunities for personal and professional development. It is clearly seen that the results of the current study found the same results with Lunn (1997). Six major reasons were identified by Lunn (1997) for teacher attrition and shortages in rural areas: a negative perception of being a rural teacher, positive perceptions about urban areas, the predominance of urban students in teacher education programs, the decline in the numbers of students from rural areas entering teacher training courses, desire to be with experienced teachers, and the lack of professional incentives to accept rural teaching. It is crystal clear that reasons identified by Lunn (1997) are in line with the barriers found in the current study for retention of teachers in rural schools. Similarly, Aksoy (2008) indicated that rural teaching is seen as a forced exile and named as hardship areas because of economic, geographical, social and cultural reasons; that's why, rural teachers do not want to work or stay in rural areas for years. In a similar vein, Hudson & Hudson (2008) and McClure, Redfield and Hammer (2003) found the reasons for unwillingness to work in a rural school and summarized them as follows: social, cultural, and professional isolation. As it is mentioned before, the current study found that the participants needed the companionship of experienced teachers since rural schools are staffed with newly graduated, young, and unhappy *guests* who are

unprepared for rural teaching. This result was supported by Roberts (2005) and McCracken and Miller (1988).

In the present study, three of the participants clearly mentioned their desire to work at a university as an instructor of English due to the fact that English language teachers have a right to apply to universities after completing M.A. degree in a relevant field such as, English Language Teaching, English Literature, or Translation Studies. To this end, working as an instructor remains an attractive option for all English language teachers in Turkey. In parallel with this result, Curtin (2018) found that English language teaching is a difficult subject for retention in rural schools due to the fact that universities recruit English language teachers for their introductory English courses and offer higher prestige. Similarly, Mosha (2014) found that rural schools were dealing with the highest teacher shortage rate in English subject. In the relevant literature, researchers were aiming to develop strategies to overcome teacher shortage and teacher retention problems in rural areas. Barley and Brigham (2008) and Boylan and McSwan (1998) proposed in their studies that *homegrown* teachers work in rural schools with a connection to the area, a presence in the community, and prior knowledge and experiences about the values of the community. They found that teacher's biographical background is a significant predictor for his or her length of stay in a rural area. They also found in their study that teachers who preferred to work in rural schools more than ten years had experienced rural life in their own childhood and youth. In parallel with this study, the present study put forward that a homegrown teacher was more eager to stay in the rural area and worked with high motivation and enthusiasm in spite of the limitations of rural teaching. That's why, the homegrown teacher of the current study mentioned that she did not experience social or cultural isolation, but only professional isolation. Moreover, three of the participants in the current study expressed that their families were living in the city centers and the participants were working in the rural schools located in that cities. They expressed that they preferred to teach in areas close to their parents and friends. Similarly, Özoğlu (2015) and Ölçü-Dinçer and Seferoğlu (2020) found in their studies that rural teachers preferred to work in provinces close to their own families or places where they grew up.

According to OECD (2019), the isolation of rural areas affects rural communities in a negative way in terms of communication, socialization, and reaching to services. From educational perspective, rural schools are smaller than urban schools and student enrollment after primary school is very low in rural areas. Lichter and Schafft (2016) put forward that rural communites are pooreer than urban communites, especially in developing countries. According to PISA (2015), socio-economically disadvantaged students are more frequently found in rural areas than in urban areas in Turkey. Child labor rate in rural areas is 68% in Turkey (PISA, 2015). In the light of these considerations, the current study found the same result that rural children spent nearly half of the year outside the village with their families as seasonal workers.

The current study found that this situation hindered rural children's progress and the continuity of their school life. This situation affected the rural teacher in a negative way since she was not able to follow the official curriculum as a result of high absenteeism of rural students. Moreover, the present study found that rural students do not pursue their education after middle school due to the fact that there are no high schools in the village or town which means they have to cover long distances every day to go to a high school. In a similar vein, OECD (2017) found that rural students have to travel every day or migrate to larger municipalities to pursue a further education. The present study found that teachers are the only role model for rural children. All participants mentioned that parents and the community members are not well-educated to be a role model for rural children; that's why, teachers play a significant role in shaping the future of rural students.

In a similar vein, Alpe (2012) found that teachers were the only role models in villages in order to improve academic achievement of rural students. Moreover, the current study found that most of the rural children could not complete their compulsory education as a result of the implementation of transported education in Turkey. Two of the schools were the center schools of transported education in the present study. Both of the teachers clearly mentioned that transported education was a barrier to attract rural children to the school. One of the participants expressed that due to the severe weather conditions and long distances, parents were not eager to

send their children to the school. These results were in line with the results suggested by Dülger (2004). It was also suggested by Dülger (2004) that educational and social problems arose in villages after closing down the village schools in Turkey. In parallel with the previous studies, it was found in the present study that rural schools are the heart of rural communities and the center of the social infrastructure in rural areas. The participants of the current study indicated that losing a rural school means losing the social and cultural amenities in rural areas. According to one of the participants, schools are of vital importance to create a synergy between the community and teachers. Thus, she thought that implementation of transported education has resulted in having no more educational or cultural programs for children and adults in rural areas. In addition, it was found in the current study that teachers have dissappeared from the village and the parents have been isolated from their children's school life as a result of closing village schools. In a similar vein, Witte & Sheridan (2011) and Reid et al. (2009) found in their studies that rural schools are places for change and renewal by providing opportunities for community communication and participation. In a similar vein, it was asserted by a report issued by MoNE and Başkent University (2002) that transported education resulted in educational and cultural deficiencies in rural areas in Turkey.

The report issued by British Council and TEPAV (2013) indicated that most of the classrooms lacked Internet connection and electrical sockets that prevent students and teachers to do listening activities in English lessons. In addition, the report asserted that rural children's interest towards English lesson is considerably low. Musa, Koo, and Hazita (2012) investigated the reasons of poor English performance of rural students and they found that having very limited exposure to English language and teacher shortages in rural schools were the main factors. In a similar vein, Kabilan (2007) underlined that poor English performance of rural students is a consequence of teacher shortages and teacher retention problems in rural areas. Ien, Yunus,and Embi (2017) and Rafique et al. (2018) conducted studies to examine the current situation of English language teachers in rural schools. They found that English language teachers were the only source of English language in remote areas; however, teachers did not feel themselves well-prepared and ready for teaching English in rural schools.

In addition, Rafique et al. (2018) found that nearly none of English language teachers thought that they were provided sufficient materials to teach English in rural schools. Aziz et al. (2019) found in their study that lack of teaching materials and poor physical environment in rural schools were the main factors that hinder learning a foreign language and teacher enthusiasm. In parallel with the previously mentioned results, the current study found that deprived classroom equipments, lack of electricity, layout problems, and lack of technological equipments were the main disadvantages in rural schools while teaching English language. All participants clearly mentioned that lack of exposure to English language has resulted in very limited vocabulary, chronic grammar errors, low self-confidence, embarrasment, and pronunciation difficulties among rural students. According to Aziz et al. (2019), English language teachers have experienced challenges while implementing the curriculum in rural schools. They asserted that rural children's level of readiness and teaching materials were not sufficient to cover the English curriculum. They also mentioned that teachers were struggling with weak students who had negative perceptions towards foreign languages. In a similar vein, the present study found that poor technological facilities, rural children's demotivation towards language learning, and the low level of readiness of rural children to learn new concepts and skills in English language were the main stress factors for rural English language teachers.

In the relevant literature, teacher educators utilize metaphor elicitation studies to find out how language teachers conceptualize their teaching selves and the teaching profession (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000). It was found by Fenwick (2000) and Merchant (1992) that in-service teachers used various metaphors to define their roles in schools, including adventure guide, caregiver, authority, director, and agent of change. In line with these studies, the present study found that rural EFL teachers used guide, orchestra conductor, mother, and change maker as metaphors to define their roles in rural schools. Nguyen (2016) found that rural EFL teachers defined their roles by using caregiver, performing artist, singer, intercultural promoter, friend, and window as metaphors. In a similar vein, the current study found that rural EFL teachers used cultural transmitter, compassionate friend, and having talent to define their teaching selves. Erickson and Pinnegar (2017) found in their study that

teachers define their teacher identities by using the metaphors of gardener and traveler on a journey. In a similar vein, the current study put forward that being a teacher is gardening, life-long job, and never-ending school for rural EFL teachers since they implied that they have learnt and still learning new things about teaching and the teaching profession in rural areas. Farrell (2016) found that being a teacher is being a mother or a parent, and being a therapist at the same time. The findings are in line with the findings proposed by Thomas & Beauchamp (2011). In the present study, rural EFL teachers thought that they are guide, counselor, psychologist, proud family member, and mother. Likewise, De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) found that EFL teachers define themselves as a gateway to the future. Similarly, in the present study, one of the participants defined herself as a door that serves for rural children to explore new worlds.

Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) and Yeşilbursa (2012) found in their studies that teachers defined their versatile roles in schools by using the metaphors of coat hanger and vegetable soup. They used these metaphors to explain that teachers support everyone and responsible of teaching the subject and various skills at the same time. In line with the previous studies, the present study put forth that a rural EFL teacher defined her teacher identity with the metaphor of rainbow to express that she has different roles in addition to teaching in the school. Asmalı and Çelik (2017) indicated that the participants defined their professional identities by using the metaphors of family member, gardener, mother, bridge, orchestra leader, and clown as an entertainer. Moreover, the study found that they used researcher, explorer, knowledge provider, and dictionary as metaphors to explain that they are source of information for their students. Likewise, in the present study, the participants used a book widens the horizon of students, intellectual, researcher, and the only source of knowledge as metaphors to express that they are role modela and resources to reach new information in the rural area. Lastly, it was found in the current study that one of the participants used a metaphor that cannot be found in the relevant literature but is identified as necessary to unreveal the professional identites of rural EFL teachers: Jane Eyre. This metaphor reveals an important aspect of being a rural teacher in terms of struggling with the feelings of despair and being stuck as a result of

professional isolation, limited teaching materials, resultless instructional strategies, and uninterested students.

Lemke (1994) indicated that a rural teacher should be able to teach students with a wide range of abilities, provide extra-curricular activities, and educate the community at the same time. In a similar vein, Brown and Heck (2018) found in their study that rural teachers have multiple roles depending on the needs of students and the situation of the school. They found in their study that rural teachers felt the responsibility of caring for rural children to make them more respectful to other cultures, safe, and dedicated to be engaged in the wider community in the future. In a similar vein, the report issued by ESRC-DFID (2018) indicated that a rural teacher, especially a homegrown teacher, is a role model who plays a crucial role in rural children's future. Likewise, in the present study, the homegrown teacher mentioned that she was inspired as a rural child by her own teacher in the past. As a homegrown teacher, she expressed that she was a role model as an educated person in the town and she could wear many hats to teach English and wide range of abilities at the same time. In addition, all participants in the current study clearly expressed that they have multiple roles as rural teachers, including transforming the rural community and providing rural children with the necessary knowledge and skills to prepare them for the world that they will encounter outside the classroom. Similarly, Fogle and Moser (2017) found in their study that rural ESL teachers saw themselves as people who were responsible of making transformations in the community and acted as mediators in rural children's school life. In the present study, all participants mentioned that their first role is motivating rural children to learn English language and explaining the importance of learning a foreign language to have a more fruitful future. Similarly, Mudra (2018) found that rural EFL teachers tried to motivate rural students to learn English in order to find a better job in the future. In the present study, all participants mentioned that rural children are not aware of the importance of intercultural communication and life-long learning; that's why, they thought that their first responsibility is making rural children conscious about the existence of other cultures and various possibilities in the world. Likewise, Kızılaslan (2012) found in her study that rural EFL teachers felt the responsibility of explaining rural students the importance of language learning and making them aware of other

cultures. Similarly, Başer and Karaman (2015) stated in their study that a rural teacher is a person who can use English lessons as mediators to open up new worlds and opportunities for rural children. In line with this, Ölçü-Dinçer and Seferoğlu (2020) found in their study that an English language teacher is not only a teacher in a rural school, but also a facilitator of learning about new worlds and building a future outside the village.

5.2.2 The Need to Prepare Pre-Service Teachers for Rural Teaching

In the literature, it was suggested that novice teachers experience the discrepancy between theory and practice during their initial years of teaching. Flores and Day (2006) found that pre-service teachers did not feel themselves prepared for dealing with the challenges of different teaching contexts. In the current study, there were two novice English language teachers. Both of them underscored the mismatch between their expectations and the reality in rural schools. They clearly mentioned that the professional identity that they have been starting to construct during their practicum was changed after being a rural teacher. They mentioned that they were reshaping their teacher identity while overcoming the practice shock which was caused by insufficient preparation and training that they received in pre-service English language teacher education programs. This finding is in parallel with the results revealed by Flores and Day (2006), since they emphasized that novice teachers reformulate their teacher identities in their first year of teaching. In a similar vein, Curtin (2018) found in her study that novice English language teachers felt themselves isolated and lonely since they were afraid to talk to anybody about their struggles. In the relevant literature, it was asserted by the researchers that most of the pre-service teacher education programs do not currently provide teacher candidates with the necessary skills, competencies, and practicum experiences to prepare them to work in rural areas in their future profession (Sharplin, 2002).

Investigating the attempts to prepare prospective teachers for rural placements in pre-service teacher education programs, Grippin et al. (1985) and Yarrow et al. (1999) found that pre-service teacher education programs were problematic in terms of preparing teacher candidates for the possible challenges that they may experience in rural schools in the future. Similarly, the report issued by British Council & TEPAV

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(2013) put forth that in-service English language teachers struggle with the dissonance between the theory and practice, especially during their initial years of teaching. According to Botha and Baxen (2018), student teachers mentioned the dichotomy between the practice in real classrooms and the fantasy world of an ideal classroom presented in pre-service teacher education programs. The study found that student teachers experienced undefinable challenges of teaching in a rural school because of very limited physical conditions, lack of materials, unsuitable classroom size to meet the needs of doing activities, and rural children's unreadiness. In a similar vein, two of the participants in the current study stated that they did not have enough space in classrooms to allow learners to do kinesthetic activities like singing, moving, and interacting with their classmates by doing group works. Both of the participants mentioned that they completed their practicum in well-equipped and big classrooms in practice teaching schools; that's why, they did not experience such problems when they were student teachers. They stated that they were feeling themselves stressful and insufficient since the classrooms in rural schools were not suitable for most of the activities and instruction strategies that teacher educators suggested.

In a similar vein, Botha and Baxen (2018) found that there was a mismatch between the instructional principles presented in teacher education programs and classroom realities in rural schools. In the present study, four of the participants mentioned that they were skipping most of the activities in the course book since they observed that students felt bored and disconnected when teachers used English language throughout the lesson and spent too much time for productive skills. The participants indicated that rural children were struggling to do especially writing activities because their vocabulary and grammar levels were below from expected. In a similar vein, Mudra (2018) found in his study that rural English teachers preferred to play simple English games instead of delivering the official curriculum due to the fact that rural children felt themsleves incapable of follow the lessons in English. Similarly, Mason and Payant (2019) found in their study that university instructors did not provide EFL teacher candidates with the necessary strategies and techniques to deal with disadvantaged classrooms. In parallel with the previous studies, Çiftçi and Cin (2018) put forward that rural teachers associated their instructional and professional

challenges with pre-service teacher education. They thought that pre-service teachers are trained in pre-service teacher education programs as if they will teach in well-equipped urban schools with all of the latest technology, including smartboards and auido-visual materials.

In the present study, four of the participants have never experienced a rural life before starting to work as a rural teacher. The participants mentioned during the study that they had vague perceptions about rural areas and rural teaching when they were pre-service teachers. Only the homegrown teacher has experienced and still experiencing the rural life. She seemed to reflect deeply on rurality and rural teaching thanks to her own experiences gained through the years of being a rural child in the same town. In a similar vein, Kızılaslan (2012) found in her study that almost 70% of pre-service EFL teachers had never experienced rural life while only 10% of pre-service EFL teachers had experienced rural life as a child in the past. Interestingly, 80% of the participants expressed that they would accept to teach in a rural school in spite of their vague perceptions of rural teaching. Both the present study and a previous one conducted by Kızılaslan (2012) found that pre-service EFL teachers did not experience a rural practicum, which might lead to have uncertain and fanciful perceptions of rural schools. In a similar vein, Botha and Baxen (2018) and Ralph (2003) found in their studies that pre-service teachers mentioned an urgent need to create a university-rural school partnership and they suggested that extended rural practicum is a best way to accomplish this. Similarly, Munsch and Boylan (2008) found in their study that providing a one-week rural practicum was very beneficial for rural students, rural teachers and pre-service teachers in terms of sustaining positive views of teacher candidates about rural teaching and providing an opportunity for rural teachers and students to communicate with universities.

In the relevant literature, it was mentioned that pre-service teachers are not trained for rural placements (Sharplin, 2002). A report issued by TALIS put forth that rural teachers do not receive a formal education or training on the content, pedagogy, and classroom practice for rural teaching in most of the OECD countries. Most of the teachers indicated that pre-service teacher education programs were designed to prepare teacher candidates for urban schools (Echazarra & Radinger, 2019). In a

similar vein, Seban (2015) found that sociology of education and philosophy of education courses were excluded from foreign language teacher education curricula in Turkey. She indicated that these courses are of vital importance for teacher candidates to comprehend the issues of equality in education, rural education, schooling of girls, teaching in disadvantaged areas, and transported education. In parallel with the previous studies, the participants in the current study mentioned that there is an urgent need to develop a social perspective in pre-service English language teacher education. One of the participants mentioned that teacher educators offered journals and articles written by foreign teachers working in the United States or in European countries during her pre-service teacher education. She thought that educational courses related sociology of Turkish schools should be included in foreign language teacher education curricula and instructors should provide articles and journals written by Turkish scholars.

In the present study, all participants clearly mentioned the requirement that pre-service teachers engage in a rural practice teaching experience. They also expressed that a course about current issues in rural education should be included in pre-service teacher education programs. The findings of the current study are in line with the findings suggested by Barter (2008) and Yarrow et al. (1999). Similarly, Seban (2015) found in her study that pre-service teacher education curricula require a rural practicum component. Likewise, Kline and Walker-Gibbs (2015), O'Neal et al. (2008), and Hudson and Hudson (2008) found that pre-service teacher education programs should include a component related to teaching in disadvataged schools and organize rural school visits where pre-service teachers can experience the atmosphere of teaching. In the present study, three of the participants suggested that pre-service English language teaching curricula were designed for teaching middle-class urban students. They thought that they had never provided with the necessary information and skills to teach in disadvantaged contexts. Likewise, Ares-Abalde (2014) and Le Roux and Möller (2002) found in their studies that most of the teacher education programs prepare pre-service teachers to teach historically benefited middle class students. To this end, both the present study and the previous studies (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009; Burton & Johnson, 2010; Barker & Beckner, 1987) put forth that teaching in unpriviliged contexts has been neglected by teacher education

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programs. Examining the views of rural teachers about teacher training system in Turkey, Durdukoca (2018) found that practicum schools are chosen from urban areas although more than half of the pre-service teachers are appointed to village schools or disadvantaged areas. They thought that courses related to issues in teaching disadvantaged contexts and villages should be included in pre-service teacher education curricula. In addition to this, the participants thought that teacher educators do not have rural teaching experiences to train teacher candidates for rural placements. In a similar vein, Sağ (2009) put forward that pre-service teachers mentioned the urgent need to have a course about rural teaching; however, they thought that course instructors were not competent enough to train teacher candidates for rural placements since they did not experience rural teaching or do research on teaching in disadvantaged contexts. In a similar vein, Güngör et al. (2019) found that EFL teachers need courses or contents about rural teaching conditions and rural practicum in Turkey. The findings of the current study are in line with the findings presented in previous studies. In the present study, all participants expressed that teacher education programs should include specific courses in their curricula in order to prepare pre-service teachers for rural teaching. Furthermore, two of the participants mentioned that most of the teacher educators cannot train teacher candidates for rural schools since they have never experienced such a practice or are interested in this issue.

Grippin et al. (1985) suggested that pre-service teacher education programs are not sensitive to teaching in disadvantaged areas since faculties of education do not conduct sufficient research to meet the needs of rural schools and solve possible challenges of rural teachers. Barley and Brigham (2008) noted in their study that the responsibility of education faculties is not only training teachers for urban placements but also preparing them for rural placements and supporting them after graduation. To this end, rural teachers need preparation during their pre-service years and in-service support while struggling with professional isolation. In a similar vein, Halsey (2005) recommended that teacher education programs should re-design their curricula in order to give a place to rural practicum and make teacher candidates become aware of the diversity of teaching contexts (White & Kline, 2012). Likewise, in the present study, all participants mentioned that micro-teaching sessions should

be revised by taking into consideration teaching with limitations. They also thought that pr-service teacher education programs need collaborations with rural schools, such as inviting rural teachers as guest speakers to education faculties and visiting rural schools within the scope of community service.

5.2.3 The Need to Support Rural EFL Teachers

The report issued by ESRC-DFID (2018) showed that rural teachers did not receive any support from experienced teachers or teacher trainers during their initial years of teaching. The report mentioned that rural teachers need to be motivated by teacher trainers to become better teachers and role models in rural areas. In the literature, it was found by Özoğlu (2015) that rural teachers need financial incentives and housing alternatives to retain in rural areas. In addition, a local recruitment policy was suggested by the participants to attract teacher candidates who are already familiar with the region and ready to accept to teach in remote areas. In a similar vein, it was found by Ölçü-Dinçer and Seferoğlu (2020) that familiarity with the local culture and regional closeness to family members were the main factors that affect teachers' decisions to teach in a rural school and to continue in the profession as a rural teacher. In the present study, not poor housing conditions, but lack of social amenities, poor health facilities, and transportation problems were mentioned by the participants as factors that pose a problem to their health, personal development, and their general livelihood. The reason behind this finding might be that one of the participants were living with her parents in her hometown, while one of the participants did not prefer to live in the village but in the nearest town. The other three participants were teaching in villages and towns of big cities; that's why, they never mentioned about the housing problems during the study.

Timar and Carter (2017) found in their study that rural teachers struggle with attending professional development programs as a result of long travel distances with high travel cost, the necessity of staying overnight, and problems in finding substitute teachers. Although organizing in-service training programs in rural areas can be an alternative for professional development of rural teachers, it is not accomplished as a result of unwillingness of invited experts and teacher trainers (PISA, 2015). In a similar vein, the report issued by British Council and TEPAV

(2013) put forth that most of the rural English language teachers have never provided with in-service teacher training. Likewise, Mann and Tang (2012) asserted in their study that inadequate in-service training was the main challenge in rural areas. In a similar vein, Maher and Prescott (2017), Durdukoca (2018), and Collins, Goforth and Ambrose (2016) found in their studies that lack of transportation opportunities, long distance, and high travel cost were the main problems related to inadequate professional development opportunities for rural teachers. In parallel with the previous studies, the current study found that high travel cost, long distances to universities and teacher training centers, transportation problems, no financial support for paid trainings and certifications, and the problem to find a substitute teacher, especially for a teacher who is the only English language teacher in the village. The participants of the current study clearly expressed that difficulties in accessing to in-service trainings and maintaining contact with colleagues resulted in low enthusiasm for teaching in rural areas. All participants in the current study mentioned that they were struggling with the feeling that, as rural teachers, they were passing off the opportunities for personal and professional development.

In the present study, all participants expressed that the content of in-service trainings were not very suitable for providing rural teachers with necessary support and mentorship. They indicated that in-service trainings should be specifically organized to support and mentor rural teachers. They suggested that case studies, role plays, workshop sessions, and material development strategies for disadvantaged schools should be included to in-service teacher training programs. In a similar vein, Durdukoca (2018) put forth that teachers found in-service trainings waste of time when the teacher trainer read his or her notes throughtout the training. Similarly, Salahuddin et al. (2013) found in his study that almost half of EFL rural teachers never took an in-service training before. Likewise, Tunaz and Önem (2017) investigated professional development needs of EFL teachers in unpriviliged areas in Turkey. They found that rural teachers attached importance to in-service trainings to increase teacher quality and student achievement. However, they indicated that teachers have very limited opportunities in rural areas to pursue their professional development. It was found that teachers felt themselves handicapped since teachers in urban schools located in the west part of Turkey attend professional development

activities periodically. In a similar vein, the current study found that rural teachers felt themselves insufficient in terms of teaching techniques, material development, and counselling rural children; that's why, they need to be supported with planned, sustainable, and accountable professional development programs in unpriviliged areas.

## 5.3 Rural Teaching Beyond Rural-Urban Interface: Conceptualizing Rural EFL Teacher Identity

Lauriala and Kukkonen (2005) suggested that teachers construct multiple selves influenced by the world around them, their own prior experiences, what is expected from them, their teaching contexts, and their own expectations for the future. Under the influence of current world-views, self-awareness, self-perceptions, personal background, apprenticeship of observation experiences, the teaching context, and socio-cultural archetypes, teachers construct their self-schemas that predict how they describe themselves, how they recall the experiences, and how they make choices (Campbell & Yates, 2011). To this end, both the relevant literature and the current study put forth that development of rural EFL teacher identity is under the influence of personal, contextual, social, emotional, and cognitive constituents. It is seen in the present study that rural EFL teacher identity reveals the nexus where the personal life and the professional identity meet. The *context* in which teaching takes place plays a crucial role in professional identity construction process (Reagan et al., 2019). Since teaching is *placed learning* that construct *place identites*, place is defined as a *function of identity* (Azano & Stewart, 2016; Burton & Johnson, 2010). Thus, *where* teachers work has a significant influence on shaping their professional identities. In terms of rural teacher identity, teaching context and the *spatial* factors create an environment that is reflected in the patterns of choices, the way concerning the future, structuring experiences, describing persona, and the way of perceiving the teaching profession. To this end, understanding the dynamics of teaching in a rural school should and must go beyond geographic location, in other words rural-urban interface. The information given in the relevant literature so far and the data obtained for the current study showed that insufficient teaching materials, poor physical conditions of schools, transportation problems, indifference of children and their parents to education, prejudices towards English language and intercultural

communication, lack of pre-service preparation, professional isolation, and inadequate in-service training and support are the main challenges associated with teaching English in rural schools in Turkey.

Since rural teaching is influenced by educational, social and psychological aspects, learning and teaching in a rural school are mediated by interactions in a specific context (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf, 2006). During teaching in a rural school, EFL teachers go through a process comprised of four main stages: *internalization* stage in which teachers adjust the artifacts of their daily lives to organize new mental images as a rural EFL teacher as a result of the presence of absence of collaboration and social interactions, *mediation* stage in which rural teachers start to construct their selves in accordance with the situation of their environment, so that they are able to modify themselves to survice or gain benefits, *zone of proximal development* is the third stage and it refers to the process in which rural teachers start to aware of the distance between their potential selves and the actual selves; therefore, they begin to struggle with the challenges and focus on problem-solving, and finally *scaffolding* stage in which rural EFL teachers need the assistance provided by a more experienced and knowledgable person. It is clearly seen that teaching selves are comprised of cognitive, social, affective, and personal components (Turner & Onorato, 1999). Rural teacher identity is contructed as a result of an intersection of individual meanings of a particular role and the individual experiences while interacting with others in a situated context (Stets & Burke, 2000).

As a result of going through the stages provided above, newly-emerged and still-emerging rural teacher professional identity can be decomposed into the following constituents: personal history, self-perceptions, social identification, teaching practices, and future perspective. Both the relevant literature and the current study put forward that teaching context is a fundamental factor in understanding rural teacher identity since teaching selves and teaching practices unfold in the context in which they teach. Rural EFL teacher identity is influenced by personal history and expectations, school conditions, curriculum, cultural differences, in-service training activities, rural children and their parents, and pre-service preparation to teach in unpriviliged contexts. For rural EFL teachers, context plays an important role in who

they are, how they narrate their stories, how they perceive the teaching profession, and how they teach English. To this end, professional identity, persona, and external factors are intertwined in rural EFL teacher identity. An overview of the conceptualization of rural EFL teacher identity can be found in Figure 5.1 below:
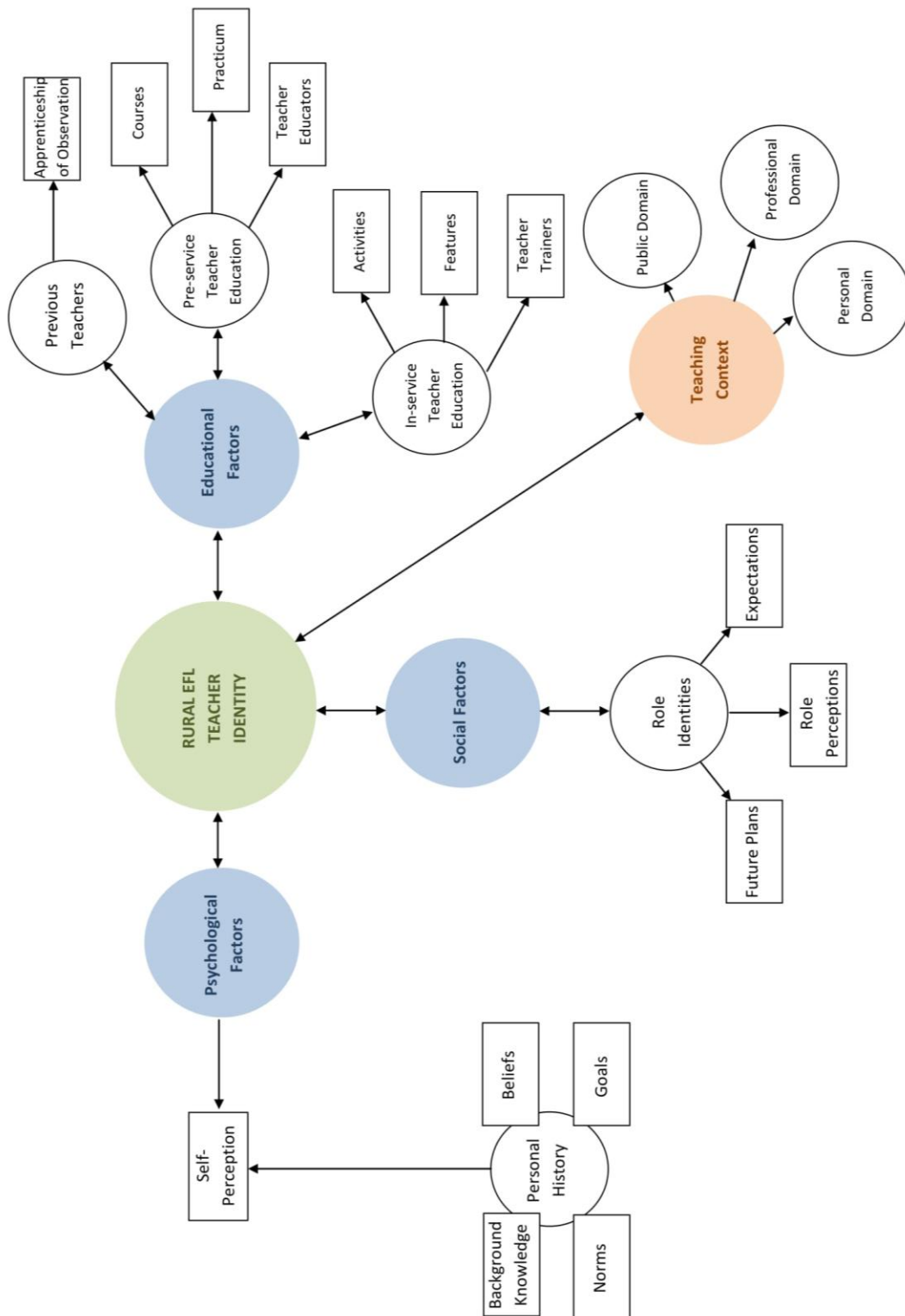
Figure 5.1 An overview of the conceptualization of rural EFL teacher identity.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an overall summary of the entire study, followed with the implications for teaching, teacher education, and policy-makers. Thereafter, this chapter presents the limitations of the study with suggestions for further research.

6.1 Summary of the Study

There has been a growing interest in research and practice in rural teacher identity development with the emergence of place-based paradigms in teacher education (Biddle & Azano, 2016). The gap between foreign language teacher education curriculum offered at universities and the realities teachers face in rural areas, and the social and contextual dynamics affecting rural teacher identity are of vital importance to understand rural teacher roles and their needs (Eppley, 2009). Rural education is critical for all countries in both developed and developing countries (UNESCO, 2015). Because of the professional and contextual challenges of rural areas, teacher shortages and retention problems occur chronically in rural schools (Reagan et al., 2019) and, thus, it affects quality rural education (TALIS, 2013). In rural schools, most of the classrooms do not have sufficient materials and resources for English language teaching (British Council & TEPAV, 2013). Rural children's interest towards English lesson is considerably low that is dervived from having very limited exposure to English language and teacher shortages in rural schools (Musa, Koo & Hazita, 2012). English language teachers do not feel themselves well-prepared for rural teaching as a result of having no preparatory courses during pre-service years and lack of specialized in-service teacher training for teaching in underprivileged areas (Rafique et al., 2018; & British Council & TEPAV 2013; Ien & Yunus, 2017). Turkey's current situation of rural education (PISA, 2015; OCED,

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2016), and the needs of EFL teachers to improve teaching and learning in rural schools (British Council & TEPAV, 2013) clearly revealed that a needs-based, communicative, interactive and practice-driven model should be followed to provide in-service EFL teachers with solution-oriented recommendations and practices to support teaching in rural schools and also prepare pre-service EFL teachers for rural placements. To this end, investigating professional identity formation experiences of rural EFL teachers is important since it provides a basis for needs-analysis and policy planning.

The present study aims to shed light on professional identity formation experiences of rural EFL teachers in Turkey. Since the overarching aim of this study is to uncover the physical and symbolic factors that affect the professional identity formation processes of rural EFL teachers, Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, Turner's (2004) Social Identity Theory, Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and Halsey's (2006) Spatial Map Theory were utilized. The second aim of the present study is to conceptualize the rural EFL teacher identity in order to determine the challenges and needs of rural teachers and to make suggestions for in-service rural teacher training programs. With these aims, the current study adopted a qualitative research design (Creswell, 2007). This research is designed as a case study (Yin, 2009) and conducted by using semi-structured interviews, metaphor elicitation tasks, and field observations. After utilizing snowball sampling (Creswell, 2012), five rural EFL teachers were invited to the study. After collecting the data, all data collected were analyzed in three stages with the help of data analysis method suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994).

The results of the current study revealed that rural EFL teachers construct their professional identites with the combination of multiple selves. It was found that the development of rural EFL teacher identity was under the influence of their background knowledge, beliefs, expectations, role perceptions, pre-service years, practicum experiences, and in-service teaching. It was a striking finding that the teaching context played a key role in how teachers described themselves, how they made choices, and how they interpreted their experiences. The participants indicated that lack of audio-visual teaching materials, poor physical conditions of schools,

transportation problems, apathetic children and their parents, prejudices towards English language and intercultural communication of communities, lack of pre-service preparation, insufficient in-service training and support and, thus, personal and professional isolation are the major challenges associated with teaching English in rural schools in Turkey. The participants believed that they had more responsibilities than urban teachers since parents were not very interested in their children's school lives and, therefore, rural teachers played a crucial role in rural children's personal and academic developments. In the present study, the participants exhibited a considerably high concern for rural children's lives beyond the classroom. To this end, they needed to be well-prepared and supported to pursue their enthusiasm and improve teaching practices as rural teachers.

As for the professional development, rural EFL teachers favored both pre-service teacher preparation and in-service teacher training. They mentioned that short-term practicum experiences in rural areas would be highly beneficial to make teacher candidates familiar with rural teaching. They stated that courses including content related to teaching and learning in undeprivileged areas would be very helpful for pre-service teachers. They also stated that pre-service teacher education programs should adopt the social approach instead of preparing teachers to teach urban middle-class students. Therefore, they clearly mentioned that teacher educators should study on teaching English in remote contexts and construct school-university partnerships to have a mutual benefit. When it comes to in-service teacher training programs, rural EFL teachers preferred interactive, context-specific and solution-oriented activities. They also favored teacher trainers who are experienced rural teachers or academicians interested in rural education. Furthermore, they believed that professional development activities could ease their isolation in rural schools. Moreover, all participants believed that schools are the centers of the community to engage, learn, and grow. Therefore, they suggested that every village or town should have a school with good physical conditions instead of implementing transported education. Based on these findings, the present study suggests a preparation and support model for rural EFL teachers. The model can be used as a framework for designing pre-service teacher education courses to prepare teacher candidates for

rural placements and for planning professional development activities for in-service rural teachers.

6.2 Implications of the Study

The present study aims to contribute to the literature on preparing teacher candidates for rural placements and supporting EFL in rural areas. Considering the findings of the study and the relevant literature, implications for pre-service teacher education, rural teaching practice and in-service teacher training are listed below.

6.2.1 Implications for Pre-service EFL Teacher Education

- Lack of pre-service teacher training to prepare teacher candidates for rural placements is a considerable issue for rural education (Sharplin, 2002). Thus, undergraduate courses can be enriched with case studies from rural schools, guest teachers, discussions on rural education literature, micro-teachings with limited sources, and online meetings with rural schools.

- The present study revealed that there is a considerable need for professional support in rural areas. To this end, professional preparation teams with idealistic teacher candidates can be created. With the help of professional preparation teams, pre-service teachers who are interested in rural teaching or teaching in disadvantaged areas may help teacher educators make collaboration with rural teachers. Five to ten pre-service EFL teachers, a teacher educator, and one or two rural EFL teachers can build a group to create a mutual benefit between pre-service teachers and rural teachers. In addition, geographically isolated students may benefit from pre-service teachers and also rural teachers may improve their teaching practices with the counseling of teacher educators. Carefully designed partnership models may support rural teaching, pre-service preparation, and provide teacher educators with an understanding of multi-contextual teaching and being a teacher in an underprivileged area.

- Including coursework for pre-service teachers to prepare materials, design lessons, and develop strategies to adapt to the challenges of a rural area may prepare teacher candidates for multi-contextual teaching. In addition, offering pre-service teachers two-week long immersive clinical practice may provide an authentic teaching experience before graduation. With the help of rural teaching experience, pre-service teachers can implement new understandings into effective practice.

- In addition, integrating supplementary rural content and rural practicum components in pre-service teacher education programs may promote an interest in rural placements and prepare teacher candidates for rural teaching. The rural practicum component can include in-school and in-class observations, on-site teaching practices, and extra-curricular school activities. The practicum can be designed with two cycles of training: two week-long field visits and four-week long online collaborative lessons with rural schools and discussion-based sessions where rural teachers, pre-service teachers and teacher educators meet to discuss challenges, ideas and possible solutions.

- In addition to pre-service teacher education curriculum, educational issues related to underprivileged schools can be added to MA and PhD curricula in order to foster interaction, debate, and mutual understanding of multi-contextual teaching. Each week graduate students can be presented with a specific issue focusing on teaching in underprivileged areas. Graduate students and teacher educators can discuss the issues, critically reflect upon them, and propound solutions in order to offer policy changes and recovery plans for teaching and teacher education.

- Additionally, the participants stated that they would have preferred to have preparatory courses for teaching in diverse contexts during their pre-service years. Thus, practice-based and interactive activities for multi-contextual teaching can be included into pre-service teacher education curriculum. Pre-service EFL teachers need a preparation where they can learn about the current practices in diverse teaching contexts. They want to have first-hand

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experience in more than one teaching context during pre-service years so that they can be encouraged for rural placements. Pre-service EFL teachers can be asked to observe classrooms from diverse contexts and jot down notes for reflective practice. After that, they can write reflection papers and share their observations. Similar activity can also be employed for in-service teacher trainings. Rural EFL teachers can observe their colleague's lessons to provide peer feedback.

- Considering that online tools are very useful for rural teachers and, thus, pre-service and in-service EFL teachers can be invited to synchronous or asynchronous teaching sessions from different parts of the country. For instance, pre-service EFL teachers can attend real-time English lessons in a rural school through some sort of video tool, such as *Skype* in order to create social engagement between universities and rural schools. Synchronous English lessons may create a platform for social support among universities and rural schools, allow pre-service teachers to see a real classroom from diverse teaching contexts, and rural EFL teachers may receive immediate feedback from teacher educators and pre-service teachers. On the other hand, asynchronous teaching sessions may provide pre-service and in-service teachers with flexible opportunities for interaction. Rural EFL teachers can be asked to videotape some of their lessons and share them with teacher educators. Pre-service teachers can watch the videos and write a report on them in terms of strategies to cope with instructional challenges and offering suggestions and examples. And along with all that the participants favored teacher educators who have teaching experiences in unprivileged contexts or conduct studies about this issue and, thus, adopt the social approach in teacher education.

- It is crystal clear that small steps taken by teacher education programs have a potential to bring transformative changes in rural education. Joint efforts between pre-service teacher education programs and MoNE may help pre-service teachers develop realistic expectations about teaching in underprivileged areas.

6.2.2 Implications for Rural Teaching Practice and In-service EFL Teacher Training

- Professional development practices for teachers may include courses, workshops, professional literature, conferences, seminars, collaborative research, mentoring, graduate programs, and field visits; however, rural teachers have fewer opportunities in comparison to urban teachers (OECD, 2009). As for in-service teachers, geographical barriers cause absence of in-service training of teachers in rural areas that retards professional development and learning of teachers (Alpe, 2012). Both the relevant literature and the current study put forth that technology may help overcome geographical challenges in rural areas. Therefore, designing online professional development activities is a best way to meet the needs of larger audiences, especially geographically dispersed group of teachers. Providing rural teachers with professional development opportunities to enhance their teaching skills can be accomplished with the use of particular technologies. Designing online trainings with the support of ICT solutions and creating collaborations between rural communities and universities for mutual learning can be good ways to help rural teachers pursue their professional development (Sipple & Brent, 2015).

- In Turkey, a considerable number of novice teachers enter the teaching profession in rural areas. Therefore, they start to construct their teacher identities in an isolated environment due to the fact that they do not have a connection with experienced teachers and teacher educators to exchange ideas and take advice from each other. The main professional challenges in rural areas are teaching with limited sources, difficulties in implementing curriculum, and insufficient professional development activities. Distance, time, and cost are major considerations for rural teachers to attend professional development activities. At this point, rural teachers can be provided with professional development opportunities by making use of technological facilities including video-conferencing, teleconferencing, online practices, mailing lists, and online learning such as webinars.

- Both the relevant literature and the current study suggest that online communities with other teachers help rural teachers decrease their professional isolation and feeling of loneliness. Providing digital courses for rural teachers is a good way to help teachers pursue their professional development in challenging contexts. Case studies, simulations, and scenarios help rural teachers intertwine theory and practice. Additionally, rural teachers need to exchange their experiences and ideas with their colleagues in discussion groups. It should also be noted that rural teachers should be open-minded, adaptable to change, and willing to self-reflect in order to better take advantage of in-service teacher trainings.

- Apart from professional development activities, personal coping strategies help rural teachers adapt to rural life and teaching in a disadvantaged area. Creating enjoyable and creative activities, making adaptations on course books in order to make teaching materials more accessible and understandable for rural children, using subject-based classrooms, organizing meetings and activities to strenghten communication between teachers and parents in rural areas can be beneficial attempts to improve rural education. Both the relevant literature and the present study found that using a separate classroom for English lessons provides motivation for teachers and improve student-centered learning. With the implemetation of subject-based classrooms, rural students can learn English in a specialized place and it also encourages all students to communicate with each other thanks to classroom arrangement and appropriate seating. Additionally, subject-based classrooms enable teachers to use the classroom thoroughly and increase their motivation by providing autonomy and feeling of relevance.

- Mentoring programs provide in-service teachers with supportive communication opportunities with teacher educators and teacher trainers. For rural teachers, e-mentoring programs can be very useful to organize meetings and discussions. Additionally, e-mentoring provides rural teachers with caring, encouraging and empathetic advice to overcome the challenges of

their teaching contexts. It is mentioned in the literature and by the participants of the current study that readily avaliable tools such as *Skype* and *Microsoft Teams* can be used for online trainings and meetings to support English language teacher development in rural areas. It is mentioned both in the relevant literature and in the present study that mentoring can be very supportive for rural teachers even if arranged by telephone when distances are great. Since there is an exchange of support, guidance and wisdom between mentors and mentees, mentoring helps novice teachers devleop and choose the best teaching practices, materials, and instructional techniques for rural schools. For rural teachers, mentoring can be implemented in an online environment because of time and geographical limitations. The e-mentoring model can be done by using computer-mediated tools, such as e-mails, video conferences, and forums to provide feedback, specific suggestions, and encouragement. Mentors and mentees can start a discussion, reply to posts, and share images, videos, teaching materials, and other types of files. They can discuss authentic cases and write comments about them. Furthermore, online induction programs for novice rural teachers can enhance retention in rural schools. In sum, mentoring, induction programs, and professional preparation teams are parts of a collaborative approach to enhance sustainable teacher professional development in rural areas.

- For rural EFL teachers, an online platform can be set up in order to support both their personal and professional lives. This online platform can be called as *Rural Teacher Access Program* which includes audio-visual resources, tips and suggestions for rural teachers, pre-recorded sample teaching videos, alternative instructional formats, extra-curricular activities designed for rural areas, and an online forum section where teachers continue to discuss and share feelings, thoughts, and materials. To this end, the online platform provides rural teachers with an opportunity to keep in touch with each other and find information whenever they need. Online platforms may facilitate interactions between rural teachers and create an area for them to exchange ideas and experiences. This model can be very beneficial since it provides rural teachers with quality lessons and materials to be used and emotional

support as well. In this model, all videos and content should be reviewed for quality and relevance by a unit of MoNE.

- Apart from an online platform, partnership programs can be built by universities and supported by teachers, parents, administrators, and community members. Both the relevant literature and the current study revealed that rural EFL teachers cannot attend professional development activities due to financial problems. Therefore, sparing budget for supporting professional development of rural teachers can be a good way to motivate teachers and improve rural teaching. Online coursework and trainings can be provided for rural teachers in accordance with the current trends in the field, such as *Technology in ELT*, *Blended Learning*, *Suggestopedia*, *Learning Management Platforms (LMSs)*, *CLIL*, and so on. Upon the completion of in-service teacher training activities, rural teachers can be awarded with certifications to better motivate them. It should be clearly noted that rural teachers must be provided with the Internet connection, necessary technological devices and a day-long seminar about the usage of online platforms.

- It should be noted that sustainable and accessible professional development activities should be organized for rural teachers by MoNE. Rural teacher training centers can be opened in town centers where teachers from villages and towns meet teacher trainers for trainings, workshops and seminars regularly. Lastly, grow-your-own strategy is discussed and suggested in the literature to recruit and retain quality teachers in rural areas; however, this strategy may not be feasible in the long-run in Turkey. Since the socio-economic challenges of rural areas have caused depopulation in rural areas, especially the abandonment of young people (Yılmaz et al., 2010), it may not be sustainable to follow grow-your-own strategy in rural Turkey. On the other hand, it is crystal clear that teachers with rural backgrounds and experiences have more realistic expectations about the area, develop collaboration with the community, and become more solution-oriented professionals.

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- Considering that in-service EFL teachers prefer professional development activities in which they learn more collaboratively and effectively. They also prefer trainings that they can dynamically engaged in and provide them with opportunities to intertwine theory and practice. To this end, the content of a support model should be designated in accordance with needs of rural EFL teachers. Both the relevant literature and the current study reveal that in-service teachers need professional development activities related to English language teaching. Therefore, the content of in-service teacher trainings should be comprised of technology in ELT, materials development and adaptation, teaching techniques, and so on. In addition, in-service EFL teachers opt for interactive professional development activities rather than lecturing. To this end, case studies, workshops, scenarios, interactive videos, and role plays can be used for in-service teacher trainings. It is also suggested by the participants of the current study that they need techniques and materials which are applicable to their own teaching contexts; that's why, teachers favored trainings specifically designed for rural teachers. They also asserted that they need peer-feedback and teacher educator feedback which may complement each other, and so facilitate the improvement of teachers.

- It is also mentioned both in the relevant literature and in the current study that rural EFL teachers need accessible, sustainable, and comprehensive in-service trainings. They favored teacher trainings held in or near to their teaching contexts because of transportation and accommodation restrictions. Furthermore, rural teachers also need financial incentives to attend professional development activities held in universities or in-service teacher training centers. They believe that attending teacher training programs may provide them networking and resources sharing among teachers. Since an in-service teacher training program is a good platform for knowledge and resources sharing, it should be accessible and sustainable for rural EFL teachers. The activities in the training program should be designed as pair work or group work activities in order to ease the professional isolation of rural teachers. In the training program, activities chosen by the teacher trainer

should be applicable, in other words, the activities should be very similar to the ones that they can employ in their own teaching contexts.

- The sustainability of an in-service teacher training program is of vital importance for rural teachers because of its effectiveness and efficiency. Both the relevant literature and the present study put forth that if the program is not sustainable, teachers do not feel motivated towards professional development activities. The present study revealed that rural teachers preferred trainings which do not interfere with their personal lives and class hours. Additionally, they mentioned that if the trainings are not organized online, they favored one-day-long trainings due to the transportation and accommodation problems. Considering the findings of the current study and the relevant literature, trainings for rural teachers should be organized on a daily basis in weekdays. Moreover, trainings can be videotaped and uploaded to *Rural Teacher Access Program* so that rural teachers can view the training at a different time. In addition, the participants of the current study clearly stated that teacher trainers should have rural teaching experiences or be knowledgable about teaching in unprivileged contexts to conduct the training. Moreover, the participants favored teacher trainers who are knowledgable about English language teaching.

- Moreover, teachers play a crucial role in rural areas in order to create collaboration between the community and the school. Since teachers and the school play a crucial role in rural development, extra-curricular activities can be very beneficial to gather the community and make contributions to them. In that sense, rural teachers should be provided with affordable, interactive, and useful extra-curricular activities that help teachers, students and parents recognize the richness of collaboration and persistent relationship in the area. Extra-curricular activities can be used to build rapport with the community and hence may improve schooling in rural areas. Teachers can organize sociocultural events in rural areas to increase the collaboration and solidarity among the community. Movie days, concerts, theatre days, reading days,

family days, and cultural tours can be listed as examples of sociocultural events.

- In addition, policy-makers should provide rural EFL teachers with well-designed and accessible professional development opportunities. Equipping rural schools with the necessary technological devices is of vital importance for improvement of teaching and learning in rural areas. It is very valuable to evaluate the effectiveness of pre-service teacher education programs and in-service teacher trainings for the future practice. Additionally, the current study and the relevant literature reveal that teachers prefer to follow a different curriculum in rural schools. However, it is not very suitable to design a different curriculum for rural children due to the fact that it may increase the level of inequality in education. Instead of designing a different curriculum, policy-makers should take an attempt to provide rural teachers with supplementary materials in order to make topics more comprehensible for rural students. The present study and the relevant literature reveal similar professional development needs regardless of teaching context, educational background, and years of experience of EFL teachers. Therefore, it can be suggested that a support model can be designed for in-service EFL teachers working at different rural schools. An overview of practices for an effective rural EFL teacher support model is illustrated in Figure 6.1 below:

Figure 6.1 An overview of practices for an effective rural EFL teacher support model.

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6.3 Limitations of the Study

This study made use of snowball sampling in the data collection process. Even though using this strategy allowed the researcher to reach participants from different teaching contexts, it should be noted that not all EFL teachers in the rural areas of Turkey had participated in the present study. It should be acknowledged that a small group of EFL teachers who met certain set of criteria participated in this study. The findings, therefore, represent limited instances of rural teaching and teacher education.

The second limitation of the study was the lack of classroom observation. Since no permission was taken from MoNE to observe students and teachers during the lessons, English lessons were not observed by the researcher. However, before entering the school building and classrooms during the break between classes, the necessary permission was taken from school principals and teachers. Lastly, taking opinions of other parties, such as policy-makers, teacher educators, and program designers could be very beneficial to enrich the findings of present study. Nevertheless, it is still hoped that the present study will contribute to the relevant literature by virtue of identifying EFL teachers' perceptions and needs from diverse rural teaching contexts.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Further research can shed light on the classroom practices in rural schools. By conducting classroom observations, the challenges of teaching English language in rural schools can be revealed thoroughly and some suggestions can be provided to create a better teaching and learning atmosphere. Conducting classroom observations may identify the relationship between the classroom practices and needs of rural teachers. In addition, future research studies can focus on the implementation of a support model for rural EFL teachers. Researchers can investigate the pros and cons of the model. Additionally, providing pre-service teachers with a rural teaching content for several weeks and investigating their perceptions about the course content may provide valuable implications for the field.

To gain an in-depth understanding of teaching and learning English in rural schools, further research can explore perceptions of parents, school administrators, teacher trainers, and students. In addition, the present study was designed with a qualitative method. Thus, this study may provide a valuable basis for further quantitative or mixed-method studies with larger samples. All participants were female teachers in the present study. Therefore, including male participants to the study may provide researchers with an opportunity to compare the perceptions and experiences of female and male rural teachers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. METAPHOR ELICITATION TASK

1. Please complete the following sentences in your own words.
   a. *An English language teacher is like…*
   b. *The role of an English language teacher is like…*
   c. *A professional English language teacher is like…*
   d. *I can describe my teacher identity with the following word: …*

2. Please complete the following sentences in your own words.
   a. *Being a rural English language teacher is like…*
   b. *I can define my role in this school with the following three words: …*
   c. *Teacher's professional development in this school is like…*

APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

First Interview Questions

1. Where were you born and raised? In a city or a country? Could you please tell me about the place you grew up?
2. Could you please give me information about your educational background
    a) your elementary, secondary, high school?
    b) your university years?
3. How did you decide to be an English language teacher?
4. Could you please tell me about your teaching experiences?
    a) your school experience and practice teaching experiences?
    b) your previous teaching experiences as an in-service teacher?
5. How did you decide to work at this school?
6. How long have you been here?
7. Where do you stay? Is it far from the school? How do you come to school every day?
8. What are the major challenges of living in this area?
9. How do you feel about your relationship with your colleagues?
10. What are the difficulties of teaching English in this area? How do you deal with them?
    a) Are you happy with teaching in this school? Why/ Why not?
    b) Are you planning to transfer to another school? Why/ Why not?
11. What are the positive sides of living and teaching English in this area?
12. How is your relationship with the students and their parents?
    a) How do you feel about your relationship with the community here?
    b) How is their attitude towards you?
    c) What is your suggestion to develop a positive relationship with students and parents in this school?

13. How do you feel about your students' success in English classes?

    a) What do you think about the general profile of your students in terms of their personal development and academic future?

    b) How do you find their general attitude towards the school?

    c) How do you think being a rural kid affect your students' current and future school lives?

    d) What is the L1 of your students?

    e) How do you feel about your students' perceptions about the target culture?

14. How do you think that the parents and family life make an influence on your students' academic and personal development?

    a) What do parents think about learning English as a foreign language?

    b) Can parents follow their kids' progress in their lessons? Why/ Why not?

15. How do you think being recruited to a rural school affects an English language teacher's

    a) professional development?

    b) motivation for teaching?

    c) perceptions about the teaching profession?

16. Where in your undergraduate education do you believe a course including rural teaching should be embedded? Why?

    a) What do you think about the benefits of preparing a pre-service teacher for a rural teaching career?

    b) What would you see as key or essential content to learn about if you knew you were to take a rural teaching position?

17. What kind of an in-service training do rural teachers need to pursue their professional development and to better meet the needs of rural students, their families and the community?

18. What are your suggestions for teachers working at rural schools in terms of

    a) lesson planning?

    b) instructional strategies?

    c) material development?

Second Interview Questions

1. How do you see yourself as an English language teacher?
   a) What have you learnt about yourself as an English language teacher in this school?
   b) What have you learnt about the teaching profession in this school?
   c) What does it mean for you being an English language teacher in this school?
   d) Do you think that being a teacher in this school makes a difference in terms of personal and professional development? Why/ Why not? How?
2. Do you think your perceptions about your own 'self' affect your teaching in this context?
   a) in terms of your beliefs about the teaching profession?
   b) in terms of your personal and professional skills?
   c) in terms of your world-view?
3. What qualities make someone as a 'professional English language teacher'?
4. In what ways do you think the rural school teacher differs from the urban school teacher?
5. Which qualities and attitudes do you think are essential for a rural school teacher?
6. What methodological challenges do you, as a rural teacher, come across in the classroom? Can you give specific examples?
7. What teaching skills do you have and what do you need to develop as a rural English language teacher?
8. Can you give an example of planning your teaching activities in the school?
9. How do you assess the work and development of your students?
10. Which traits of your personality are most important for your teaching career?
11. What do you like most about being a teacher?
12. How can you maintain a balance in complex situations in a rural school?
13. Do you need any special skills to teach in a rural school?
14. What is the effect of being a rural teacher on your perceptions about 'good teaching'?

15. What are your strengths and weaknesses as an EFL teacher?

16. How do you think rural experiences influence your views about teaching and learning?

17. What are the turning points for you in your teaching career?

18. What are your 'best' and 'worst' teaching experiences? In what way were they good or bad?

19. What was the 'best' lesson / activity that you taught at this school? What was the challenging lesson/ activity that you taught? What factors played a role in success of lack of success in these lessons / activities?

20. What makes language teaching efficient and successful in your opinion? How do you think these factors affected your professional development?

21. Can you summarize your teaching philosophy?

22. What connections can you notice between your life experiences (personal and professional) and who you are as a rural teacher? How are your beliefs, assumptions, and perceptions of yourself reflected in your teaching practice?

23. How do you think your experiences in this school contribute to your professional development?
    a) What is the biggest challenge for you as an English language teacher in this school?
    b) What things impressed you most in this school both personally and professionally?

24. When you compare the very first day of your teaching and today, what would you say about yourself as a teacher?
    a) What changes did you observe in your own teaching self?
    b) What changes did you observe in your teaching strategies?

25. Which courses that you took during your undergraduate years prepare you for this teaching context? How?

26. Are there any teaching methods, strategies and skills you specifically develop for this school? Please give specific examples.

27. What is your future plan about your teaching career?
    a) Do you believe that teaching in this school will be useful to you when you start teaching at a different school? Why / Why not?
    b) In what ways?

c) Did your teaching philosophy change after you started teaching in a rural school?

d) How should English be taught in rural schools? What are your suggestions?

28. How do you design your lessons for your teaching context?

    a) What kind of activities do you design for your students?

    b) How do you follow their progress?

29. What are your expectations from your students and their parents?

    a) What is the place of English in this school?

    b) How important is learning English in this school?

30. How are the attitudes of your colleagues and school administrators towards the place of English in this school?

    a) Do they encourage you and your students to improve English classes? How?

    b) Are they willing to collaborate with you? Why/ Why not?

31. How do you evaluate your own teaching?

    a) What are the weak and strong points of your teaching?

    b) Do you reflect on your own teaching? Why/ Why not? How?

32. How do you improve your teaching?

    a) How do you pursue your professional development in this school?

    b) Do you find sufficient in-service teacher training for the professional development of teachers working at rural schools? Why/ Why not?

    c) What kind of a special support and in-service training do you need?

    d) Could you please give suggestions for an efficient in-service training for rural teachers?

33. How do you think that the school provides necessary equipment and materials for teaching and learning English?

    a) What kind of extra facilities and materials do you need to improve your teaching and your students' learning in this school?

    b) How do you find the course book provided by MoNE?

    c) Can you make enough classroom activities?

34. How do you think about the university-school partnership in terms of rural schools?

    a) What kind of projects/training do you need to improve teaching in rural schools?

b) What kind of collaboration do you need between different rural schools in order to create effective study groups among English language teachers in rural schools for exchanging ideas and supporting each other?

35. What were your pre-existing beliefs and thoughts about this school and the realities you experienced after teaching English in this school?
   a) Were they changed? Why/ Why not? How?
   b) Were your perceptions about the teaching profession changed after coming this school? Why/ Why not? How?

36. Do you think that you made any contributions to this context (i.e. school and the community) while you are teaching here? In what ways?

37. What are your suggestions for pre-service teachers who are planning to teach in rural schools?

38. What kind of an in-service training do you need in terms of
   a) teaching methodologies?
   b) lesson-planning?
   c) classroom management?
   d) material development?

39. When you compare English language course with the other subject matters (i.e. Mathematics, Science, etc.), do you think that English language courses and English language teaching have different advantages or disadvantages in this school?

40. How do you define your future career and your professional identity as an English language teacher?

41. Where do you see yourself as an English language teacher in the future?

APPENDIX C. APPROVAL OF METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

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11 ARALIK 2018

Konu:　　Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen:　ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi:　　　İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç.Dr. Perihan SAVAŞ

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Melike BEKERECİ'nin **"Türkiye'nin Kırsal Bölgelerinde Görev Yapan Yabancı Dil İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Mesleki Kimlik Oluşumu Üzerine Nitel Bir Çalışma"** başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay **2018-EGT-183** protokol numarası ile araştırma yapması onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımla bilgilerinize sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Tülin GENÇÖZ

Başkan

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

Üye

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR

Üye

Prof.Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI (4.)

Üye

Ali Emre TURGUT

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Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

Üye

Doç.Dr. Üyesi Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

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APPENDIX D. CURRICULUM VITAE

Surname, Name: Bekereci-Şahin, Melike
Nationality: Turkish
Place of Birth: Zurich / Switzerland
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Education

Degree	Institution	Year
Ph.D.	Middle East Technical University *English Language Teaching*	2021
M.A.	Middle East Technical University *English Language Teaching*	2016
B.A.	Yeditepe University *Translation and Interpreting* (with scholarship)	2013

Work Experience

2013-2018 Middle East Technical University, Research Assistant
2018- 2019 Adana Science and Technology University, Research Assistant
2020-2021 Özel Ege Lisesi, English Language Teacher

Foreign Languages

English (C2), German (A2)

Publications

Articles:

Bekereci, M. (2017). DDP EFL Student Teachers' Perceptions about the Qualities of a Professional Teacher. *European Journal of Language and Literature*, *3*(3), 101-108.

Aslan, R., Şahin, M. (2020). 'I Feel Like I Go Blank': Identifying the factors affecting classroom participation in an oral communication course. *TEFLIN Journal*, *31*(1), 19- 43.

Bekereci-Şahin, M., Şallı-Çopur, D. (2020). Pre-service EFL Teachers' Professional Identity Construction Experiences in a Dual Diploma Program. *YILDIZ Journal of Educational Research*, *5*(1), 27-54.

Conference Proceedings:

Başaran, B. Ç., Gümüşok, F., Bekereci, M. (2015). Pre-service EFL Teachers' Beliefs on Learner Autonomy based on Practicum Experiences. Proceedings from 12th ODTÜ ELT Convention, May 2015, Ankara, Turkey.

Bekereci, M., Şallı-Çopur, D. (2017). EFL Student Teachers' Professional Identity Construction in a Dual Diploma Program. Proceedings from 10th MAC, May 2017, Prague, Czech Republic.

Bekereci, M., Aslan, R. (2017). Becoming Cultural Insiders: A Case Study of a Dual Diploma Program in Turkey. Proceedings from 3rd Cukurova International ELT Teacher Conference (CUELT), April 2017, Adana, Turkey.

Certificates

Goethe-Zertifikat A2 (Goethe-Institut Istanbul, May 2013)
Pedagogical Formation Certificate (Ege University, December 2019)

Awards

The second top scoring student among the entire graduates of Yeditepe University Department of Translation and Interpreting in 2013

TUBITAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) 2211- National Postgraduate Scholarship, 2013-2021

APPENDIX E. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Giriş

Öğretmenlerin mesleki kimlik gelişiminin incelenmesi, öğretmenlerin öğretim bağlamlarında verdikleri kararların ve öğretmenlik felsefelerinin anlaşılabilmesi için oldukça önem arz etmektedir (Beijaard, Meijer ve Verloop, 2004). Öğretmenlerin mesleki kimlik gelişim süreçleri, öğretmenlerin geçmiş okul yıllarının, hizmet-öncesi dönemde almış oldukları okul deneyimi ve öğretmenlik uygulaması derslerinin, hayat felsefelerinin, sınıf pratiklerinin ve meslekten beklentilerinin etkisi altındadır (Day, Kington, Stobart ve Sammons, 2006). Buna ek olarak, öğretmenlerin mesleki kimlik gelişim süreçlerinin, öğretmenlerin öğretim bağlamlarından bağımsız düşünülemeyeceği alan yazında açıkça belirtilmiştir (Ozga, 1995). Benzer şekilde, Troman (1996) tarafından yürütülen çalışmanın sonucunda, öğretmenlerin mesleki kimlik gelişimlerinin, öğretim bağlamları ile doğrudan ilişkili olduğu ve öğretmenin öğretmenlik yaptığı sosyal çevrenin, öğretmenin sınıf pratiklerini etkilediği bulunmuştur. Bunlar göz önüne alındığında, öğretmenlerin mesleki kimlik gelişimlerinin değişken ve öğretim bağlamı ile ilişkili olduğu söylenebilir (Helsby, 1999). Yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik gelişim süreçlerinin, öğretmenlerin kendi kişilik özellikleriyle doğrudan ilgili olduğu ve öğretmenlik mesleğine dair görüşlerinin, mesleki tatminlerini ve meslekte kalma sürelerini etkilediği ortaya konmuştur (Hamacheck, 1999). Buradan hareketle, bir yabancı dil öğretmeninin öğrencileri ile iyi ilişkiler kurduğunda ve öğretim bağlamındaki kişilerin yabancı dil öğrenme motivasyonu yüksek olduğunda, öğretmenlik mesleğini coşkunluk ile sürdürdüğü görülmüştür (Beijaard, 1995). Sonuç olarak, yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin öğretim bağlamlarının, meslekte kalma sürelerini, motivasyonlarını ve coşkunluklarını etkilediği açıktır.

Öğretmen kimliğinin gelişmesinde rol oynayan bağlamsal, ideolojik ve sosyolojik etkilerin araştırılması son yıllarda hız kazanmıştır (Tsui, 2007). İngilizce öğretmen eğitimi alanında, öğretmen kimliği ve mesleki gelişim arasındaki ilişki, öğretmen

deneyimlerinin araştırılması (Bailey, Curtis ve Nunan, 2001) ve öğretmenlerin İngilizce öğretimine karşı tavırlarını etkileyen faktörlerin incelenmesi (Williams, 2007) yoluyla kavramsallaştırılmaktadır. Öte yandan, kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin, müfredat uygulama ve dil öğretimi sırasında yaşadığı zorluklar ile ilgili az sayıda araştırma yapılmıştır (Cruz Arcila, 2018). Buradan hareketle, sosyal ihtiyaçlar, ekonomik durum, kültürel ve tarihsel deneyimleri de içine alan etmenler, kırsal bölgede eğitim ve öğretimde oynadıkları rol bakımından araştırılmaktadır (Bonilla ve Cruz Arcila, 2014).

Kırsal öğretmenlerin kendilerini öğretmen olarak nasıl gördükleri, ne kadar süre ile mesleklerine devam ettikleri ve kendilerini sınıf ortamında nasıl hissettikleri, kırsal öğretmen mesleki kimliği araştırmalarının başlıca sorularıdır (Mitchell ve Weber, 1999). Her ülkenin kendine özgü eğitim sorunları vardır; ancak, gelişmiş ve gelişmekte olan ülkelerde eğitim eşitsizlikleri bakımından benzerlikler gözlenmiştir (UNESCO, 2015). Gelişmiş ülkeler kırsal bölgelerdeki eğitim kalitesini iyileştirmek için yeni stratejiler üzerinde çalışırken, az gelişmiş ve gelişmekte olan ülkeler, kırsal bölgelerdeki öğrencilere eşit ve sürekli eğitim sağlama konusunda güçlükler yaşamaktadır (Aksoy, 2008). Buradan hareketle, kırsal öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimleri açısından birçok sorunla karşılaştıkları görülmüştür (Cobbold, 2006). Mesleki yalnızlık duygusu, kırsal alana ve kırsal topluma olan yabancılık hissi, kaynak kısıtlılığı, yetersiz mesleki gelişim olanakları, aile fertlerine ve arkadaşlara olan fiziksel uzaklık ve şehir merkezine ulaşma bedeli kırsal öğretmenlerin başlıca sorunlarıdır (Barley, 2009). Kırsal öğretmenler için kişisel gelişim araçlarına, mesleki gelişim programlarına ve meslektaşlara olan uzaklık, temel olarak coğrafi soyutlanmadan kaynaklanmaktadır (Polidore, Edmonson ve Slate, 2010). Bu zorluklar, öğretmen adaylarının kırsal okullarda çalışma isteğini azaltırken, kırsal öğretmenlerin de birkaç yıl içerisinde şehir ya da ilçe merkezindeki okullara tayin istemelerine neden olmaktadır. Bu nedenle, coğrafi, kültürel ve mesleki soyutlanmaya eşlik eden olumsuz öğretmen deneyimlerinin sonucunda, kırsal bölgelerde öğretmen istihdamı zorlaşmaktadır (Voke, 2002). Benzer şekilde, kırsal öğretmenlerin mesleki tatmin duygularının ve kırsal bölgelere dair algılarının, öğretmenlik mesleğine olan bağlılıklarını etkilediği ortaya konmuştur (Bingham, 1996). Sonuç olarak, kırsal öğretmenlerin öğretmenlik mesleğine devam edebilmeleri

için, en az asgari düzeyde mesleki heves ve tatmin yaşamaları gerekmektedir (Cano ve Miller, 1992).

Ülkemizde öğretmenler mecburi hizmetlerini tamamlamak için çoğunlukla kırsal okullara atanmaktadır. Bu okullar genel olarak ekonomik açıdan Türkiye'nin az gelişmiş bölgelerinde yer alır. Mecburi hizmetlerini tamamlayan öğretmenler, ekonomik açıdan daha gelişmiş şehirlerdeki ya da şehir merkezine daha yakın ilçelerdeki okullarda çalışmak için tayin talep ederler. Kırsal okullardaki öğretmen devir hızının yüksek olması, kırsal okullardaki öğrenciler ve okul yöneticileri için sorun oluşturmaktadır. Buna karşın, Türkiye'deki eğitim fakültelerinin ve öğretmen eğitimi programlarının bu sorunu tam anlamıyla ele almadığı ve kırsal bölgelerdeki öğretmenlere gereken mesleki desteği sağlayamadığı tespit edilmiştir (Çakıroğlu ve Çakıroğlu, 2003). Hizmet-içi öğretmen eğitimi programlarının, öğretmenleri mesleğe başlamalarının akabinde mesleki gelişimlerini devam ettirebilmeleri için gerektiği şekilde destekleyemediği de görülmüştür (Aksoy, 2008). Ayrıca, hizmet-öncesi öğretmenlere yeterli okul deneyimi ve öğretmenlik uygulaması sağlanamaması ve okulda başarılı olan öğrencilerin öğretmenlik mesleğini tercih etme konusunda isteksiz olması da ülkemizde öğretmenlik mesleğinin sorunları arasındadır (Deniz ve Sahin, 2006). Şahin (2011) tarafından yapılan araştırmaya göre, sosyal yaşam kısıtlılığı, aile bireylerine olan uzaklık ve mesleki yalnızlık, hizmet- öncesi öğretmenlerin kırsal okullarda görev almak istememesinin başlıca nedenleridir. Aynı çalışmaya göre, kırsal yaşam deneyimi olmayan hizmet-öncesi öğretmenlerin kırsal okullar konusunda önyargılara sahip olduğu da görülmüştür. Bu sebeple, eğitim fakültelerinin müfredatına, kırsal okullar ve dezavantajlı bölgelerde öğretmenlik yapmak konusunda dersler ya da ders içerikleri eklenmelidir (Tezcan, 2018).

Hizmet-öncesi öğretmenlerin kırsal bölgelerde sınıf gözlemi yapması ve öğretmenlik uygulaması deneyimi kazanması, öğretmen adaylarının kırsal okullardaki kısıtlılıklar ve zorluklar konusunda önceden bilgi sahibi olmasını ve bu doğrultuda hazırlıklar yapmasını sağlayacaktır (Seban, 2015). Doğançay-Aktuna ve Kızıltepe (2005) tarafından yürütülen çalışma sonucunda, Türkiye'de İngilizce öğrenimi konusunda öğrencilerin dahil olduğu sosyoekonomik gruplar bakımından farklılıklar olduğu ve

İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının bu konuda bilgilendirilmesi gerektiği görülmüştür. Buna benzer şekilde, 2013 yılında British Council ve TEPAV tarafından birlikte yürütülen uzun ölçekli bir çalışma, oldukça önemli sonuçlar ortaya koymuştur. Bu çalışmanın raporuna göre, devlet okullarında çalışan İngilizce öğretmenleri, özellikle imkanları kısıtlı olan bölgelerdeki okullarda görev yapanlar, kişisel ve mesleki anlamda oldukça büyük zorluklarla mücadele ettiklerini dile getirmiştir. MEB tarafından kaleme alınan ve derslerde kullanılması için okullara dağıtılan kitapların içinde yer alan dinleme ve konuşma aktivitelerinin sınıf ortamında yapılması için gerekli olan teçhizatların, çoğu devlet okulunda sağlanamadığı görülmüştür. Buna ek olarak, İngilizce öğretmenleri ile yüz yüze gerçekleştirilen görüşmeler sonucunda, kısıtlı imkanları olan bölgelerdeki öğrencilerin, yabancı dil öğreniminin önemi konusunda farkındalıklarının ve motivasyonlarının oldukça düşük olduğu görülmüştür. Bunların sonucu olarak, özellikle kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin gerekli motivasyona sahip olmadığı ve çoğu zaman mesleki tatminsizlikler yaşadıkları saptanmıştır. Bu çalışmalara paralel olarak Sahin (2003), Aksoy (2008), Sağ (2009) ve Tezcan (2018) tarafından yapılan çalışmalarda, Türkiye'deki kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin başlıca sorunları şu şekilde sıralanmıştır:

- Zorlu iklim koşulları ve ulaşım sorunları
- Yetersiz öğretim materyalleri ve okulların zayıf fiziki koşulları
- Öğrencilerin, bölge halkının ve öğrenci velilerinin eğitime karşı ilgisizliği
- Kırsal bölgelerde öğretmenlik konusunda yetersiz hizmet-öncesi hazırlık ve hizmet-içi destek

Öğretmenlerin, kırsal bölgelerin gelişimi açısından kilit bir rol oynadığı açıktır (Applegate, 2008); fakat, alan yazında, öğretmenlerin bu bölgelerde görev yapmak için gerekli hizmet-öncesi hazırlığı ve eğitimi alıp almadıkları ve göreve başladıktan sonra ihtiyaç duydukları hizmet-içi desteğe ulaşıp ulaşamadıkları konularında oldukça az çalışma yer almaktadır (Corbett, 2016). Buradan hareketle, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin kırsal bölgelerde öğretmenliğe başladıklarında mesleki anlamda yeterli hazırlığa sahip olmaları için yapılması gerekenler ve mesleğe başladıktan

sonra ihtiyaç duydukları hizmet-içi destek araştırılması gereken konulardır (Kızılaslan, 2012).

Çalışmanın Amacı

Hizmet-öncesi öğretmenlerin kırsal okullar hakkındaki önyargılarının kırılması ve imkanları kısıtlı olan bölgelerde öğretmenlik yapma konusunda öğretmen adaylarının bilgilendirilmesi konularında öğretmen eğitimcileri ve eğitim fakültelerindeki akademisyenler önemli bir rol oynamaktadır (Goodnough ve Mulcahy, 2011; Huysman, 2008). Bununla beraber, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin kırsal okullarda görev yapmaya başladıktan kısa bir süre sonra şehir merkezindeki ya da daha gelişmiş başka bir kırsal bölgedeki okullarda çalışabilmek için talepte bulunmaları, o bölgedeki öğrencilerin eğitim sürekliliğine olumsuz etkide bulunmakta ve öğretmenlerin kırsal bölgeler hakkında önyargılara sahip olmalarına neden olmaktadır (Campbell ve Yates, 2011). Kırsal okullardaki İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ise kişisel ve mesleki açıdan yaşadıkları zorluklar nedeniyle kırsal okullarda çalışmayı tercih etmedikleri alan yazında görülmüştür (Howley, Harmon ve Leopold, 1996; Çiftçi ve Cin, 2018). Bunlar göz önüne alınarak, bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik gelişim süreçlerini araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Kırsal bölgelerdeki İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleğe başlamalarından itibaren yaşadıkları zorluklar, bu zorluklara karşı geliştirdikleri çözümler ve mesleki açıdan kendilerini geliştirebilmeleri için ihtiyaç duydukları destek ve eğitimlerin gün yüzüne çıkarılması da bu çalışmanın amaçları arasındadır. Araştırma soruları aşağıdaki gibidir:

1. Kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenleri, mesleki kimliklerini nasıl tanımlamaktadır?
2. Kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenleri, öğretim bağlamlarını nasıl tanımlamaktadır?
3. Kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenleri, mesleki kimlikleri ve öğretim bağlamları arasında nasıl bir ilişki kurmaktadır?
4. Kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik gelişim süreçlerinde kimler etkili olmuştur?

5. Kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki beklentileri ve ihtiyaçları nelerdir?

Çalışmanın Önemi

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin kırsal okullarında görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik gelişim süreçleri ile ilgili deneyimlerini ve öğretmenlik mesleğine dair görüşlerini incelemektedir. Türkiye'nin dört farklı coğrafi bölgesindeki beş farklı okulda görev yapan deneyimli ve deneyimsiz öğretmenlerden oluşan katılımcı grubu ile bu çalışma, farklı öğretim bağlamlarındaki İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik gelişimini incelemesiyle alan yazına katkı sunması açısından önem arz etmektedir. Ayrıca bu çalışma, kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin yaşadığı mesleki problemleri, bu problemlere yönelik çözüm önerilerini, mesleki gelişim süreçlerini ve kırsal öğretmenlerin ihtiyaçlarını incelemesiyle, öğretmenler, öğretmen eğitimcileri, karar vericiler ve araştırmacılar için önemli sonuçlar ortaya koymaktadır. Bunların ışığında, bu çalışmanın sonuçlarının, kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan öğretmenler ile öğretmen eğitimcileri arasında iş birliğini kuvvetlendireceği ve eğitim fakültelerinin müfredatlarında yeniden düzenlemeler yapılması için kılavuzluk edeceği düşünülmektedir. Son olarak, yeni öğretmenlerin kırsal okullarda görev yapmaya başladıklarında karşılaşacakları muhtemel sorunlar ile ilgili bilgilendirilmesi ve bu sorunlara çözüm önerileri sunulması ihtiyacını ortaya koyması bakımından da bu çalışma önem arz etmektedir.

Yöntem

Bu çalışma, nitel durum incelemesi olarak tasarlanmıştır (Yin, 2003). Durum çalışmalarında, durumun içinde bulunduğu bağlam ve koşulların araştırılması amaçlanmaktadır (Yin, 2009). Durum çalışmalarında, en fazla beş durumun incelenmesi önerilmektedir (Creswell, 2007). Buradan hareketle, mevcut çalışma, Türkiye'deki dört farklı coğrafi bölgenin kırsal kesimlerinde görev yapan beş İngilizce öğretmeninin mesleki kimlik gelişimlerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Kartopu örnekleme yöntemi (Creswell, 2012) ile ulaşılan katılımcılar, Ege, İç Anadolu, Doğu Anadolu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu bölgelerinde görev yapmaktadır. Bu çalışma, kırsal bölgelerdeki deneyimli ve deneyimsiz İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik gelişimlerini incelemesi amacıyla, katılımcıların ortak ve farklı görüşlerini göstermektedir. Bu çalışmadaki beş katılımcıdan biri deneyimsiz, diğerleri deneyimli İngilizce öğretmenleridir. Katılımcıların yaş aralığı 23-37 olup, tamamı kadındır. Katılımcıların gizliliğini korumak amacıyla, katılımcılara numara verilmiştir (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5).

Creswell'e göre (2007), durum çalışmalarında veri toplamak için birden fazla veri toplama aracı kullanılmalıdır. Benzer şekilde, Yin (2003), durum çalışmaları için öne çıkan altı farklı veri toplama aracından bahsetmiştir. Bu veri toplama araçları şöyle sıralanabilir: arşiv kayıtları, belgeler, yüz yüze görüşmeler, gözlem, katılımcı gözlem ve fiziksel eserler. Bunların ışığında, bu çalışmanın verileri, gözlemler, yarı-yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşmeler ve dokümanlar ile elde edilmiştir. Veri toplama sürecine başlamadan önce, veri toplamak için kullanılacak olan metafor çıkarım tekniği soruları ve yarı-yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşme soruları, jüri üyelerinin görüşleri doğrultusunda yeniden düzenlenmiş ve pilot çalışmada kullanılmak üzere hazırlanmıştır. Pilot çalışma, Marmara Bölgesi'ndeki kırsal bir okulda görev yapan bir İngilizce öğretmenine uygulanmıştır. Pilot çalışma sırasında elde edilen verilere dayanarak, veri toplama araçlarının son hali oluşturulmuştur.

Veri toplama sürecine ilk olarak gözlemler ile başlanmıştır. Gözlemlerin amacı, öğretmenlerin öğretim bağlamlarının detaylı bir portresini sunmaktır (Yin, 2003). Durum çalışmalarında nelerin gözlemleneceği, araştırma sorularına ve araştırma problemine bağlıdır (LeCompte ve Preissle, 1993). Dolayısıyla, araştırmanın amacına göre gözlem araçları da değişmektedir (Stake, 1995). Bu çalışmada gözlemler, alan notları yoluyla kaydedilmiştir (Bogdan ve Biklen, 2007). Bu çalışmada, her okul bir kez ziyaret edilmiş olup, veriler alan notları olarak aktarılmıştır. Alan notları, gözlemden hemen sonra detaylı şekilde tekrar yazılmıştır (Merriam, 2009a). Ziyaretler sırasında, belde, köy ve okulların fiziki koşulları gözlemlenmiştir. Gözlemlerin bir diğer amacı da yarı-yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşmeleri gerçekleştirmeden önce, araştırma bölgeleri hakkında bilgi sahibi

olabilmek ve soruları gözden geçirmektir. Gözlemlerin ardından, katılımcılara metafor çıkarım tekniği uygulanmış, katılımcıların kırsal okullarda İngilizce öğretmeni olmak ve öğretmenlik mesleği ile ilgili yaklaşımları ile ilgili sorular sorulmuştur. Durum çalışmalarında doküman incelemeleri, destekleyici veri toplama aracı olarak kullanılmaktadır (Yin, 2003). Nitel araştırmalarda üç tip doküman kullanılabilir: kamu arşivi, kişisel dokümanlar ve fiziksel kanıtlar (O'Leary, 2014). Bu çalışmada, araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan bir doküman (Merriam, 2009a) kullanılmıştır. Metafor çıkarım tekniği, ikinci dil öğretmen eğitimi alanındaki çalışmalarda sıkça kullanılmaktadır (Oxford et. al., 1998). Metafor çıkarım tekniği, iç gözlemsel ve yansıtıcı bir araç olması nedeniyle, öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen adaylarının mesleki kimliklerine ve öğretmenlik mesleğine dair yaklaşımlarını ortaya koymaları açısından oldukça faydalıdır (Burns, 1999). Bunların ışığında, gözlemlerin akabinde, yarı-yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşmeler sırasında elde edilecek olan verilerin desteklenmesi amacıyla kullanılmak üzere katılımcılara metafor çıkarım tekniği uygulanmıştır. Metafor çıkarım tekniğinin uygulanmasından hemen sonra katılımcılardan, ürettikleri metaforlar ile ilgili kısa açıklamalarda bulunmaları istenmiştir.

Son olarak, yarı-yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Yarı-yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşmeler, araştırma soruları için zengin veri sağlaması açısından nitel durum çalışmalarında birincil veri toplama aracı olarak kullanılmaktadır (Yin, 2003). İlk yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmelerde katılımcılara, kişisel tarihleri, akademik ve mesleki geçmişleri, kendi öğretmen kimlikleri ve öğretmenlik bağlamları hakkındaki görüşleri ile ilgili sorular sorulmuştur. İkinci yarı-yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşmelerde katılımcılara, kırsal okullarda yaşadıkları kişisel ve mesleki deneyimler, -varsa- karşılaştıkları problemler, problemlere dair kendi çözümleri, ihtiyaçları, gelecek planları, beklentileri ve kırsal okullardaki öğretmenlerin mevcut durumlarının iyileştirilmesi için verecekleri öneriler ile ilgili sorular sorulmuştur. Yarı- yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşmeler, Türkçe dilinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bunun nedeni, nitel çalışmalarda, katılımcıların ana dillerinde kendilerini daha rahat ifade ettiklerini belirtmeleridir (Rubin ve Rubin, 1995). Görüşmelerin tamamlanmasının ardından, katılımcıların yanıtları, Mütercim-

Tercümanlık Bölümü mezunu olan araştırmacı tarafından İngilizce diline çevrilmiştir.

Veri toplama sürecinin tamamlanmasının ardından, veri analizi aşamasına geçilmiştir. Nitel araştırmalarda, "veri toplama süreci ve veri analizi eş zamanlı ilerlemektedir, çünkü veri analizi, ilk gözlem sırasında, ilk doküman okunduğunda, ilk görüşmeler yapıldığında başlamış olur" (Merriam, 2009b, syf. 151). Bu sebeple, bu çalışmada veri analizi, veri toplama süreci ile başlamıştır. Bu çalışmada, Miles ve Huberman (1994) tarafından önerilen nitel veri analizi aşamaları kullanılmıştır. Veri analizi, üç aşamadan oluşmaktadır: verinin kodlanması, kodların temalar haline getirilmesi, temaların tablolar ve şekiller ile sunulması. Durum çalışmalarında, her bir durum için durum-içi analizler yapıldıktan sonra, çapraz durum analizleri yapılıp, araştırmacının veri yorumları ile birlikte sonuçlar aktarılır (Yin, 2003). Bu çalışmada da aynı adımlar izlenerek, temalara ve sonuçlara ulaşılmıştır. Bu çalışmada veri analizi, her bir veri toplama aracı için ayrı ayrı yapılmıştır. Öncelikle, ses kayıt cihazı ile kayıt altına alınan yarı-yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşmeler kelimesi kelimesine çözümlenmiş ve birden fazla kez okunmuştur. Analiz sürecinden önce, anahtar ifadeler ve işaretlenmiş ve gereken notlar alınmıştır. Araştırma sorulara yanıt olmayan ifadeler elendikten sonra, geriye kalan ifadeler gruplanmış ve birincil kodlara ulaşılmıştır. Daha sonra, tekrar eden kodlar belirlenmiştir. Son olarak, benzer kodlar gruplanarak, temalara ulaşılmıştır. Saha notları ve metafor çıkarım tekniği verilerinin analizi ise, yarı-yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşmeler sonucunda elde edilen verileri destekleyici nitelikte kullanılmak üzere yapılmıştır. Araştırmacı, doküman analizlerinde, kodlama yapmadan "doğrudan yorumlar"ını kullanabilir (Stake, 1995). Buradan hareketle, saha notları ve metafor çıkarım tekniği verileri, kodlama yapılmadan, araştırma sorularına cevap olacak şekilde, araştırmacının doğrudan yorumları ile analiz edilmiştir.

Nitel araştırmalarda, veri analizlerinin geçerlik ve güvenirliğinin sağlanması önem arz etmektedir (Creswell, 2007). Bunun sağlanabilmesi için izlenebilecek adımlar vardır. Bu çalışmada, Lincoln ve Guba (1985) tarafından önerilen adımlar izlenmiştir. İlk olarak, birden fazla veri toplama aracı kullanılarak, üçgenleme tekniğinden faydalanılmıştır. İkinci olarak, yapılan veri analizinin ardından çıkarılan

anlamların bir raporu katılımcılara gönderilerek, katılımcı teyidi istenmiştir. Ayrıca, okuyucunun verilerin elde edildiği ortamı zihninde canlandırabilmesi ve bu çalışmanın sonuçlarını sonraki çalışmalara aktarabilmesi için çalışmanın içeriği hakkında detaylı bilgiler verilmiştir. Son olarak, bu çalışmanın veri toplama ve analiz süreçleri, araştırma sürecine dahil olmayan farklı bir araştırmacı tarafından denetlenmiştir.

Son olarak, araştırma etiğinin sağlanabilmesi için katılımcıların kimliği gizlenmiş, katılımcılara birden beşe kadar numaralar verilmiştir. Veri toplama sürecine başlamadan önce, ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'ndan gerekli izinler alınmıştır. Daha sonra, tüm katılımcılardan, bilgilendirilmiş onam formu imzası alınmıştır. İmzalı kopyalardan biri, katılımcıya teslim edilmiştir.

Bulgular ve Tartışma

Bu çalışmada yer alan tüm katılımcılar, meslek seçimlerinde kendi İngilizce öğretmenlerinin olumlu bir etkisi olduğunu dile getirmiştir. Özellikle, kırsal bölgede yetişmiş İngilizce öğretmeninin, üniversite eğitimini tamamladıktan sonra, yetiştiği kırsal bölgeye dönüp, öğretmenlik yapma konusunda istekli olması, kendi öğretmenlerinin üzerinde bıraktığı olumlu etkiden kaynaklanmaktadır. Buna paralel olarak, Flores ve Day (2006) tarafından yürütülen çalışmada, öğretmenlerin mesleki kimlik oluşumunda kendi öğretmenlerinin doğrudan etkili olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu çalışma, öğretmenlik uygulaması deneyiminin, öğretmenlik mesleğine başladıktan sonra edinilen deneyimlerin ve öğretim bağlamlarının da öğretmenlerin meslek kimliği üzerinde etkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Kırsal okullarda görev yapan tüm katılımcıların, birer İngilizce öğretmeni olarak temenni ettiği ve gerçekte yaşadığı öğretmenlik deneyimleri arasındaki farklılıklar katılımcılarda hayal kırıklığı yaratmaktadır. Benzer şekilde, Pillen, Beijaard ve Den Brok (2013) tarafından yürütülen bir çalışma, öğretmenlerin meslek kimliği oluştururken yaşadıkları gerilimlerin, hizmet öncesi dönemde öğrendikleri kuramlar ile hizmet-içi dönemdeki uygulamaların farklılıklarından kaynaklandığını göstermiştir.

Mevcut çalışma, kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerine meslek kimliklerini oluştururken çoğu zaman, umutsuzluk, çaresizlik ve hayal kırıklığı hislerinin eşlik ettiğini ortaya koymuştur. Mesleki yalnızlaşma, yetersiz barınma koşulları, materyal ve kaynak eksiklikleri, ısınma, su ve elektrik problemleri ve sosyo-kültürel etkinliklere erişimin zorluğu, kırsal bölgelerde öğretmenlik yapma konusunda katılımcıların dile getirdiği olumsuz faktörler arasındadır. Benzer şekilde, Özoğlu (2015) tarafından yürütülen çalışmada, kırsal okullarda görev yapan öğretmenlerin, kırsal bölgelerdeki sosyo-kültürel kısıtlılıklar nedeniyle kentsel okullarda çalışmayı arzu ettikleri bulunmuştur. Benzer sonuçlar, Monk (2007) ve Barley (2009) tarafından yürütülen çalışmalarda da ortaya konmuştur. Mevcut çalışmadaki katılımcıların yaşadığı mesleki yalnızlığın en büyük sebeplerinden birinin de görev yaptıkları kırsal bölgedeki tek İngilizce öğretmeni olmalarından kaynaklandığı söylenebilir. Ruohotie-Lyhty (2013) ve Ankrah-Dove (1982) tarafından yürütülen çalışmalar da aynı sonucu ortaya koymuştur. Kırsal bölgelerdeki İngilizce öğretmenlerinin meslektaşları ile fikir ve materyal alışverişi yapma konusunda zorluk yaşamaları hem mevcut çalışma hem de Goodnough ve Mulcahy (2011) tarafından yürütülen çalışmada bulunan sonuçlar arasındadır. Buradan hareketle, kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik gelişimlerinde, yaşadıkları mesleki yalnızlık duygusunun etkili olduğu söylenebilir.

Kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik gelişiminde, öğretmenlik yaptıkları öğretim bağlamının doğrudan etkili olduğu hem mevcut çalışmada hem de Bingham (1996) tarafından yürütülen çalışmada bulunan sonuçlar arasındadır. British Council ve TEPAV (2013) işbirliği ile Türkiye'deki devlet okullarında İngilizce öğretimi ile ilgili yapılan çalışma, oldukça önemli sonuçlar ortaya koymuştur. Öncelikle, Türkiye'nin farklı şehirlerindeki kırsal okullarda yapılan gözlemler ve okullarda görev yapan öğretmenler ve okul müdürleri yapılan görüşmeler sonucunda, kimi sınıflarda sıra ve tahta gibi temel ihtiyaçların olmadığı, okulların neredeyse tamamında dinleme aktivitelerinin yapılması için gerekli olan hoparlör ve bilgisayar gibi teknik araçların eksik olduğu, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB) tarafından okullara gönderilen ders kitaplarının, kırsal okullar gözetilerek hazırlanmadığı, başta MEB tarafından geliştirilen ve kullanılması zorunlu olan DynEd uygulaması olmak üzere, çevrimiçi uygulamaları kullanmak için gerekli olan teknik alt yapının okullarda sağlanmadığı görülmüştür.

Mevcut çalışma, British Council ve TEPAV (2013) tarafından hazırlanan raporun sonuçlarıyla benzer sonuçlar ortaya koymaktadır. Baş (2010) tarafından yürütülen bir çalışma da DynEd uygulamasının kırsal ve dezavantajlı okullardaki kullanım zorluğu bakımından aynı sonuçları içermektedir. Buna ek olarak, mevcut çalışma, kırsal okullardaki bu eksikliklerin, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik gelişim süreçlerinde olumsuz etkiler yarattığını, öğretmenlerin mecburi hizmet sürelerinin dolmasının ardından, kırsal okulları terk ederek kent merkezlerindeki okullarda görev yapmak için başvurularda bulunduklarını göstermiştir. Katılımcılar, hizmet öncesi dönemde, özellikle öğretmenlik uygulaması ile oluşturmaya başladıkları meslek kimliklerinin, hizmet içi dönemde kırsal okullarda görev yapmaya başlamaları ile yeniden şekillendiğini ve kendilerinde öğretmenlik mesleğine dair olumsuz algılar oluşturduğunu dile getirmişlerdir.

Mevcut çalışmadaki katılımcıların tamamı, ders planlarını uygulama konusunda güçlük çektiklerini dile getirmişlerdir. Bu durumun başlıca nedenleri şöyle sıralanabilir: kırsal bölgelerdeki öğrencilerin çoğunlukla mevsim işçiliği olmak üzere küçük yaşlardan itibaren çalışmaya başlaması, kırsal bölgelerdeki öğrencilerin eğitim hayatları konusunda ailelerin ilgisiz davranışları ve öğrencilerin İngilizce diline ve yabancı dil öğrenmeye dair önyargıları. Güngör ve diğerleri (2019) ve Kızılaslan (2012) tarafından yürütülen çalışmalar da benzer sonuçlar ortaya koymuştur. Katılımcılar ve veliler arasındaki iletişimsizliğin hem öğretmenler hem de öğrenciler için olumsuz sonuçlar doğurduğu mevcut çalışmada yer almaktadır. Bunu destekler şekilde, Hannaway ve diğerleri (2018), Azano ve Stewart (2015), Mudra (2018) ve Yawman ve diğerleri (2019) tarafından yürütülen çalışmalara göre, kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan öğretmenlerin meslek kimlik gelişimlerinde ve öğrencilerin okul başarılarında öğretmen-veli işbirliğinin önemi büyüktür. Meslek kimliği oluşturma sürecini kırsal okullarda deneyimleyen öğretmenlerin, mecburi hizmetlerinin bitmesinin akabinde kırsal okullarda görev yapmak istememesi ve buna bağlı olarak kırsal okullardaki öğretmen eksiği, eğitim sisteminin en büyük sorunlarından biri haline gelmiştir (Aksoy, 2008). Bu açıdan, kırsal okullarda görev yapan öğretmenlerin, hizmet öncesi dönemde bu okullarda öğretmenlik yapmak için

hazırlanması ve hizmet içi dönemde de desteklenmeye devam edilmesi oldukça önemlidir.

Mevcut çalışmanın en önemli sonuçlarından biri de kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin, İngilizce dilini öğretmeye ek olarak birden fazla rolü olduğudur. Katılımcılar, görev yaptıkları köyde ya da beldede rol model olduklarını ve bu durumun kendilerine öğretmenliğe ek olarak önemli bir sorumluluk yüklediğini belirtmişlerdir. Alpe (2012) ve Brown ve Heck (2018), kırsal bölge öğretmenleri ile yürüttükleri çalışmalarda benzer sonuçlar bulmuşlardır. Mevcut çalışmadaki katılımcılar, kendi mesleki kimliklerini en sık şu metaforlar ile tanımlamaktadırlar: psikolog, rehber, anne, aile üyesi, fark yaratan. Öğretmenlerin, meslek kimliklerini tanımlamak için kullandıkları metaforların, öğretim bağlamları ile ilişkili olduğu alan yazında yer almaktadır (De Guerrero ve Villamil, 2000). Bunun ışığında, mevcut çalışmadaki İngilizce öğretmenlerinin kullanmış olduğu metaforların, kırsal okulların koşulları ve öğrenci gereksinimlerine göre edindikleri roller ile bağdaştığı görülmektedir. Asmalı ve Çelik (2017) tarafından yürütülen çalışma da devlet okullarındaki öğretmenlerin meslek kimliklerini tanımlarken öğretim bağlamlarının etkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Mevcut çalışmadaki tüm katılımcılar, kırsal bölgelerdeki öğrencilerin yabancı dil öğrenmek için gerekli olan hazırbulunuşluğa sahip olmadığını ve öğrencilerin kültürlerarası iletişim konusunda önyargılı olduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bu sebeple katılımcılar, İngilizce derslerini yürütmekte güçlük çektiklerini, bu durumun kendileri açısından motivasyon düşüklüğüne neden olduğunu ve bunun, öğretmen meslek kimliği oluşturma süreçlerini olumsuz etkilediğini paylaşmışlardır. Mevcut çalışma, Mudra (2018) tarafından yürütülen çalışma ile benzer sonuçlar ortaya koymaktadır.

Kızılaslan (2012), Başer ve Karaman (2015), Ölçü-Dinçer ve Seferoğlu (2020) tarafından yapılan araştırmalar, kırsal okullardaki İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öncelikli görevlerinin, öğrencileri kültürel farklılıklar konusunda bilinçlendirmek ve yeni bilgiler öğrenme konusunda motive etmek olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Buna paralel olarak, mevcut çalışma da katılımcılardan aynı sonuçları elde etmiştir.

Bu çalışmada, özellikle kırsal okullarda görev yapan deneyimsiz İngilizce öğretmenlerinin, hizmet öncesi dönemde öğrendikleri kuramlar ile hizmet içi dönemdeki öğretmenlik pratiklerinin arasındaki uyuşmazlığı deneyimlemeleri ile öğretmen adaylarının kırsal bölgelerde öğretmenlik konusunda hizmet öncesi dönemde gerekli hazırlığa sahip olmalarının önemi görülmüştür. Benzer şekilde, Sharplin (2002) tarafından yürütülen çalışma, hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerin kendilerini dezavantajlı okullarda çalışmak konusunda yetersiz hissettiğini göstermiştir. Deneyimsiz öğretmenlerin kırsal okullardaki ilk dönemlerinde yaşadıkları deneyimleri inceleyen Flores ve Day (2006) ve Curtin (2018), öğretmenlerin hizmet öncesi dönemde oluşturmaya başladıkları öğretmen kimliklerinin tamamen yeniden şekillendiğini ve mesleki yalnızlıktan kaynaklanan nedenlerle öğretmenlik mesleğine dair algılarının olumsuz etkilendiğini belirtmişlerdir. Aynı sonuçlar, mevcut çalışmada da desteklenmektedir.

Hizmet öncesi dönemdeki hazırlığın yanı sıra, kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin hizmet içi dönemde de desteklenmesi gerekmektedir. ESRC-DFID (2018) tarafından kaleme alınan rapora göre, kırsal okullarda görev yapan öğretmenler, ihtiyaç duydukları mesleki gelişim imkanlarını ve desteği bulamamaktadır. Timar ve Carter (2017) tarafından yapılan bir araştırma, kırsal okullarda görev yapan öğretmenlerin, ulaşım ve konaklama kısıtlılıkları nedeniyle mesleki gelişim etkinliklere katılma konusunda güçlük çektiklerini ortaya koymuştur. Buna bağlı olarak, mevcut çalışmadaki tüm katılımcılar, kırsal okullarda görev yapan öğretmenlerin ihtiyaç duydukları hizmet içi eğitimler ile ilgili önerilerde bulunmuşlardır. Öncelikle tüm katılımcılar, hizmet içi eğitim etkinliklerinin içeriği konusunda önemli önerilerde bulunmuşlardır. Katılımcılar, hizmet içi eğitimlerdeki konuların, etkinliklerin ve uygulamaların, kırsal okullarda görev yapan öğretmenlere uygun olarak tasarlanması gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir. İkinci olarak, tüm katılımcılar, içeriği İngilizce öğretmenleri için özel olarak tasarlanmış ve kırsal okullarda görev yapmış İngilizce öğretmenleri ya da dezavantajlı okullarda eğitim konusunda çalışmalar yapmış akademisyenler tarafından yürütülen hizmet içi etkinliklere ihtiyaç duyduklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Son olarak, tüm katılımcılar, etkileşimli, sonuç odaklı ve sürdürülebilir hizmet içi etkinliklere ihtiyaç duymaktadır. Bu sonuçlar, Durdukoca

(2018) ve Tunaz ve Önem (2017) tarafından yürütülen çalışmaların sonuçları ile benzerdir.

Sonuçlar ve Öneriler

Kırsal okullarda çalışan öğretmenlerin mesleki kimlik gelişim süreçlerinin araştırılması, öğretmen eğitimi alanında öne çıkan konulardan biridir (Biddle ve Azano, 2016). Ancak, yabancı dil eğitimi lisans programlarının müfredat içeriği ile öğretmenlerin kırsal okullarda yaşadığı deneyimler arasındaki farklılıklar, öğretmenlerin mesleki kimlik gelişim süreçlerinde olumsuz etkiler yaratmaktadır (Eppley, 2009). Kırsal okullardaki eğitim, tüm ülkeler için önem arz etmektedir (UNESCO, 2015). Fakat, kırsal bölgelerdeki mesleki ve bağlamsal zorluklar nedeniyle, kırsal okullar çoğu zaman öğretmen eksikliği ile mücadele etmek durumunda kalmaktadır (Reagan ve arkadaşları, 2019). Bu sebeple, kırsal okulları tercih edilebilir hale getirmek ve öğretmenleri kırsal bölgelerde uzun süre görev yapmaları için desteklemek oldukça önemlidir (TALIS, 2013). İngilizce öğretmenleri, lisans programlarının öğretmen adaylarını dezavantajlı okullarda çalışmak için yeterince hazırlamadığını düşünmektedir (Rafique ve arkadaşları, 2018; British Council ve TEPAV, 2013; Ien ve Yunus, 2017). Türkiye'deki kırsal okulların ve bu okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mevcut durumu da bu konuda ihtiyaç analizine dayalı ve çözüm odaklı araştırmalar yapılmasını gerekli kılıyor (PISA, 2015; OECD, 2016). Bunların ışığında, Türkiye'deki kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik gelişimlerini incelemek önemli bir adımdır.

Bu araştırmadan elde edilen bulgulara dayanarak, şu öneriler verilebilir:

- İngilizce öğretmenliği lisans program içeriğinin, kırsal okullarda eğitim konusunda zenginleştirilmesi gerekmektedir. Bunun için, kırsal okullardan konuk öğretmenler ile etkinlikler düzenlenebilir, derslerde kırsal okullarla ile ilgili alan yazın taranabilir, mikro öğretim etkinliklerinde olası kısıtlılıklar gözetilerek ders planları hazırlanabilir ve kırsal okullar ile çevrimiçi buluşmalar düzenlenebilir.

- Dezavantajlı okullarda çalışmak isteyen öğretmen adayları ile mesleki hazırlık grupları kurulabilir ve bu öğretmen adayları ile kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin akademisyenlerin rehberliğinde bir araya

gelmesi için etkinlikler düzenlenerek, öğretmen adaylarının bu okullar hakkında bilgi sahibi olması, öğretmenlerin ise mesleki destek alması sağlanabilir.

- İngilizce öğretmenliği lisans programlarına kırsal okullarda gerçekleşecek kısa süreli öğretmenlik uygulaması eklenerek, öğretmen adaylarının bu okullar ile ilgili deneyim sahibi olması sağlanabilir. Bu öğretmenlik uygulamasında, sınıf-içi gözlemler, okul-içi gözlemler, ders planı hazırlama, materyal hazırlama, öğretmenlik ve müfredat dışı eğitsel etkinliklerde yer alma gibi bileşenler olabilir.

- Lisans programlarına ek olarak, lisansüstü programlardaki ilgili derslere de dezavantajlı okullarda öğretmenlik, kırsal okullarda eğitim, eğitimde fırsat eşitliği, dezavantajlı bölgelerdeki öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim süreçleri ile ilgili içerikler eklenebilir. Bu derslerde, saha çalışmaları, alan yazın taramaları, okullar ile mesleki gelişim etkinlikleri düzenlenebilir. Bu dersler sayesinde, kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki yalnızlık hissi azalacak, mesleki kimlik gelişimleri olumlu etkilenecektir.

- Mevcut çalışma ve alan yazındaki diğer çalışmalar gösteriyor ki kırsal okullardaki öğretmenlerin meslek kimliği gelişim süreçlerinde, mesleki gelişim etkinliklerinin etkisi büyüktür. Buradan hareketle, kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerine ihtiyaç duydukları mesleki gelişim etkinlikleri sağlanmalıdır. Bunun sağlanabilmesi için, çevrimiçi uygulamaların kullanılmasının önemi de görülmüştür. Öğretmen adayları ve kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenleri eşzamanlı ya da eşzamanlı olmayan öğretim oturumları düzenlenebilir. Eşzamanlı öğretim oturumlarında *Skype* ya da *Microsoft Teams* gibi halihazırda kullanımda olan çevrimiçi iletişim araçlarından yararlanılarak, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin akademisyenlerden doğrudan geri bildirim alması ve öneriler alması sağlanabilir. Eşzamanlı olmayan öğretim oturumlarında ise kırsal okullarda görev yapan öğretmenler derslerinin tamamını ya da bir kısmını kamera ile kayıt altına alarak, videoyu akademisyenler ile paylaşabilir ve onlardan yazılı dönüt alabilir. Öğretmen adayları ise bu videoları izleyerek, videodaki dersler üzerine rapor yazabilir ve sınıf içi problemlere karşı çözüm önerilerinde bulunabilir.

- Hizmet içi eğitimler, etkileşimli olarak tasarlanmalıdır. Atölye çalışmaları, konferanslar, seminerler, işbirlikli araştırmalar, mentorluk, saha çalışmaları, durum çalışmaları ve rol yapma etkinlikleri, etkileşimli etkinliklere örnek oluşturabilir. Bu açıdan, mesleki gelişim etkinliklerinin düzenlemesi sırasında, içeriğinin, etkinliğe katılacak eğitimcilerin ve etkinliğin kırsal okullarda görev yapan öğretmenler için ulaşılabilir olmasının önemi büyüktür.

- Ülkemizde, lisans programlarından mezun olan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin hatırı sayılır bir kısmının ilk görev yeri, kırsal okullardır. Dolayısıyla, deneyimsiz öğretmenlerin öğretmenliğe başladıkları ilk dönemlerde mesleki yalnızlık hissi yaşamaları, meslek kimliklerini oluşturma süreçlerinde olumsuz bir etki yaratmaktadır. Videokonferans, telekonferans, çevrimiçi etkinlikler, e-posta grupları ve web tabanlı seminer gibi çevrimiçi öğrenme etkinlikleri, özellikle mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenleri desteklemek açısından faydalı olacaktır.

- Kırsal okullarda görev yapan öğretmenlere, dijital kaynaklar sunulması oldukça faydalıdır. Özellikle, içeriği durum çalışmaları, simulasyonlar ve senaryolar ile zenginleştirilmiş dijital kaynaklar, öğretmenlerin kuram ve öğretim pratiklerini aynı potada eritebilmeleri açısından faydalı olacaktır. Kırsal okullarda görev yapan öğretmenlerin, meslektaşları ile fikir alışverişinde bulunmalarını ve materyal alışverişi yapabilmelerini kolaylaştırabilmek adına tartışma grupları oluşturulabilir.

- Kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mentorluk uygulamasına ihtiyaç duydukları görülmüştür. Ulaşım ve konaklama kısıtlılıklarından dolayı, e-mentorluk uygulaması kırsal okullarda kullanılabilir. Bilgisayar destekli bir şekilde uygulanabilecek e-mentorluk programında, mentor ve danışan arasında işbirliği olanakları yaratılıp, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin kırsal okullarda mesleki gelişimlerine devam etmeleri sağlanabilir.

- Kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenleri için çevrimiçi bir platform kurulabilir. Bu program sayesinde öğretmenler, işitsel-görsel kaynaklara, sınıf-içi uygulamalar için ipuçlarına ve önerilere ulaşıp,

deneyimli öğretmenler ya da öğretmen eğiticimleri tarafından önceden kaydedilmiş sınıf-içi uygulama videoları izleyerek, bunları kendi öğretim bağlamlarına adapte edebilir. Kırsal bölgelerdeki öğretmenler ve öğrenci velileri arasındaki işbirliğini artırmak için, müfredat dışı eğitsel etkinlik örnekleri sağlanabilir.

- Kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenleri için çevrimiçi dersler planlanabilir. Bu sayede öğretmenler, alanlarındaki güncel yaklaşım ve uygulamaları takip edebilir ve kendi öğretim bağlamlarına uygulayabilir. Çevrimiçi dersler de olmak üzere, yukarıda bahsedilen tüm uygulamaların hayata geçirilebilmesi için, kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan öğretmenlere ve okullara gerekli teknik altyapı sağlanmalı ve bu uygulamaların kullanımı ile ilgili kısa süreli eğitimler verilmelidir.

- Ulaşım ve barınma kısıtlılığı nedeniyle şehir merkezlerinde düzenlenen mesleki gelişim etkinliklerine katılamayan öğretmenler için, görev yaptıkları köy ya da beldede, kırsal bölge öğretmen eğitim merkezleri açılmalıdır. Bu merkezler sayesinde, benzer öğretim bağlamlarında görev yapan öğretmenler bir araya gelerek işbirliğinde bulunacak ve mesleki yalnızlık hissi yaşamayacaklardır.

- Kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimleri için düzenlenen etkinliklerin sürdürülebilir olması da önem taşımaktadır. Sürdürülebilirlik, öğretmenleri motive ederek, mesleki gelişimlerinin artarak devam etmesini sağlayacaktır.

- Yukarıda bahsi geçen tüm uygulamalarda, karar vericilerin rolü oldukça büyüktür. Bu nedenle, kırsal okulların altyapılarının iyileştirilmesi, lisans ve lisansüstü programlara yeni ders içeriklerinin eklenmesi ve öğretmenlere gereken mesleki desteğin sağlanması konularında karar vericiler gerekli adımları atmalıdır.

- Mevcut çalışma gösteriyor ki kırsal okullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenleri, görev yaptıkları şehir, okul ve deneyim sürelerinden bağımsız olarak, kırsal okullar gözetilerek tasarlanmış, etkileşimli, çözüm odaklı, İngilizce öğretimi konusunda çözüm odaklı, materyal kısıtlılığı olan sınıflara adapte edilebilecek mesleki gelişim etkinliklerine ihtiyaç duymaktadır.

Mesleki gelişim etkinlikleri, öğretmenlerin mesleki kimlik gelişimlerine olumlu katkılar yapacaktır.

Sonuç olarak, kırsal bölgelerdeki okulların gerekli altyapı ve kaynağa sahip olmaması nedeniyle, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ders planlarını takip etme konusunda güçlük yaşadıkları görülmüştür. Buna ek olarak, özellikle deneyimsiz öğretmenlerin yaşadığı mesleki yalnızlık hissinin azaltılabilmesi için, kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan öğretmenlerin etkileşimli, sürdürülebilir ve çözüm odaklı etkinlikler ile desteklenmesi gerekmektedir. Ayrıca, lisans programlarına eklenecek ders içerikleri sayesinde, öğretmen adayları dezavantajlı bölgelerde öğretmenlik yapmak için gerekli hazırlık sürecini tamamlamış olacaklardır. Sınıf-içi uygulamalara dayanan, iletişimsel, kırsal okullara adapte edebilecek ve öğretmenlerin ihtiyaçlarına göre tasarlanan mesleki gelişim etkinlikleri sayesinde, öğretmenler kendi meslek kimliklerine ve öğretmenlik mesleğine dair olumlu algılar geliştirip, sınıf-içi uygulamalardaki etkiliklerini artırmış olacaklardır.

Mevcut çalışmanın iki temel sınırlılığı vardır. Bunlardan birincisi, çalışmada kartopu örnekleme yöntemi kullanılması nedeniyle, Türkiye'deki tüm kırsal bölgelerde görev alan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin çalışmaya dahil olmamasıdır. Bu sebeple, mevcut çalışmanın sonuçlarının, bu sınırlılık göz önüne alınarak genellenmesi gerekmektedir. İkinci kısıtlılık ise, mevcut çalışmanın veri toplama sürecinde sınıf-içi gözlem yapılmamasıdır. Gözlemler, köy, belde ve okul içinde yapılmıştır. Dolayısıyla, katılımcıların sınıf-içi uygulamalar ile ilgili paylaştıkları deneyimleri, yalnızca yarı-yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşmelere ve metafor çıkarım etkinliğine dayanmaktadır. Gelecekteki araştırma çalışmaları, bu çalışmada önerilen mesleki gelişim etkinliklerinin uygulanmasına ve bunların etkilerine odaklanabilir. Ayrıca, kırsal okullardaki İngilizce derslerinde sınıf-içi gözlemler yapılarak, öğretmenlerle sınıf-içi uygulamalar hakkında görüş alışverişi yapılabilir ve öğretim ortamının iyileştirilmesi için çözüm önerileri sunulabilir. Buna ek olarak, lisans programlarındaki ilgili derslerden birine kırsal okullarda eğitim ile ilgili içerikler eklenerek, öğretmen adaylarının görüşleri alınabilir.

Kırsal okullarda İngilizce öğretimi konusunda daha iyi bilgi sahibi olabilmek için, gelecekteki araştırma çalışmaları birden fazla tarafı araştırmaya dahil ederek, mevcut araştırmayı genişletebilir. Bu açıdan, velilerin, okul yöneticilerinin, öğretmen eğitimcilerinin, kırsal okullardaki öğrencilerin, öğretmen adaylarının ve akademisyenlerin görüşleri alınabilir. Ayrıca, mevcut çalışmadaki katılımcılarının tamamının kadın olması nedeniyle, gelecekteki araştırma çalışmaları, kırsal bölgelerde görev yapan erkek İngilizce öğretmenlerini de katılımcı olarak dahil ederek, kadın ve erkek öğretmenlerin kırsal okullarda İngilizce öğretimi ve mesleki kimlik gelişim süreçleri konusunda görüşleri alınabilir. Son olarak, gelecekteki araştırma çalışmaları, nicel ve karışık araştırma yöntemlerini kullanarak, mevcut çalışmanın örneklemini genişletebilir.

APPENDIX F. THESIS PERMISSON FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU