

LANGUAGE TEACHER COGNITION AND PROFESSIONAL TEACHER  
IDENTITY FORMATION OF TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL  
IMPAIRMENTS: A CASE STUDY

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IMPAIRMENTS: A CASE STUDY**

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## ABSTRACT

### LANGUAGE TEACHER COGNITION AND PROFESSIONAL TEACHER IDENTITY FORMATION OF TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS: A CASE STUDY

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International and national initiatives encourage celebrating diversity in the field of education, yet available literature shows the experiences of teachers of students with disabilities are often overlooked, if not marginalized. Thus, this study aimed to explore language teacher identity and cognition of teachers of students with visual impairment in the context of a School for the Blind.

The setting of this case study is a public School for the Blind in Ankara. Interviews, observations, field notes, and legal documents were data collection tools for this case study. Obtained data were analyzed by MAXQDA software. Also, complexity theory was used as the theoretical framework to address the participants' language teacher identity and cognition.

The findings showed that language teacher identity is dependent on personal, social, cultural, and educational background, and it is subject to changes throughout

the participants' careers in the field of language teaching. On the other hand, the development of language teacher cognition was the result of the interactions between the participants' undergraduate education, instructional practices, and teacher identities. In the context of the School for the Blind, the interactions between participants' language teacher identity and cognition created different system configurations and behaviors to cater to the needs of the students with visual impairments.

Lastly, this study implicates practical and theoretical suggestions for language teacher identity and cognition in the context of special education schools. Additionally, the results can inform policymakers in addressing the needs of teachers for students with visual impairments.

**Keywords:** Teacher identity, teacher cognition, students with visual impairments, complexity theory

## ÖZ

Görme Engelli Öğrencilerin Dil Öğretmenlerinin Bilişselliği ve Profesyonel Mesleki  
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Uluslararası ve ulusal girişimler eğitim alanındaki farklılıkları teşvik etse de mevcut araştırmalar engel gruplarıyla çalışan öğretmenlerin deneyimlerinin çoğunlukla göz ardı edildiğini veya marjinalleştirildiğini göstermiştir. Bu nedenle, bu tez çalışmasında görme engelli öğrencilerin öğretmenlerinin dil öğretmeni kimliği ve bilişselliği deneyimlerini araştırmıştır.

Vaka çalışması metodu kullanılarak katılımcı öğretmenlerin deneyimleri incelenmiştir. Bu çalışma Ankara'da bulunan bir görme engelliler okulunda gerçekleştirilmiştir. Mülakat, gözlem, saha notları ve yasal belgeler yoluyla araştırma verisi toplanmıştır. Elde edilen veriler MAXQDA programı yardımıyla analiz edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, karmaşıklık teorisi bu çalışmanın teorik çerçevesi olarak belirlenmiştir.

Bulgular öğretmen mesleki kimlik ediniminin kişisel, sosyal, kültürel ve eğitimsel geçmişe bağlı olduğunu ve katılımcıların kariyerleri boyunca değişimlere



uğradığını göstermiştir. Öte yandan, öğretmen bilişselliği katılımcıların lisans eğitimi, öğretim pratikleri ve mesleki kimliklerinin arasındaki iletişimler sonucunda ortaya çıktığı saptanmıştır. Görme Engelliler Okulu bağlamında ise, katılımcıların mesleki kimlikleri ve öğretmen bilişselliği arasındaki etkileşimler sonucunda görme engelli öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarının karşılanması için kendi karmaşık sistemlerinde farklı sistem yapılandırmaları ve davranışları sergiledikleri gözlemlenmiştir.

Son olarak, bu çalışmanın bulguları engel grubu öğrencileriyle çalışan öğretmenlerin mesleki kimlik ve öğretmen bilişselliği konularında teorik ve pratik öneriler sunmaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra, dil öğretmenlerinin bilişselliği ve mesleki kimlik edinim süreçleri politika yapıcılarını görme engelli öğrencilerin öğretmenlerinin ihtiyaçları konusunda bilgilendirmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** öğretmen kimliği, öğretmen bilişselliği, görme engelli öğrenciler, karmaşıklık teorisi

*To my beloved family*

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It was almost 5 a.m., and my eyes were itching. I lost the sense time and place. I was not sure what to feel. Yet, I started to write the very last sentences of my dissertation. There was a song called “All Alone” by Sertap Erener playing in the background. I leaned back, closed my eyes, and began to think about my Ph. D. journey. I have had ups and downs, made many mistakes, and learned lots of things. Then, I realized it is unfair to think I have come so far all alone.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM .....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
ÖZ.....	vi
DEDICATION .....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	x
LIST OF TABLES .....	xv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xvi
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Background of the Study .....	1
1.2. Demographics and Statistics on Schools for the Blind .....	2
1.3. Statement of the Problem .....	3
2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	7
2.1. Teacher Cognition .....	7
2.2. Language Teacher Identity .....	18
2.3. Teachers of Students with Visual Impairment .....	28
2.4. Theoretical Framework .....	34
3. METHODOLOGY .....	39
3.1. Qualitative Research Method: The Rationale .....	39

3.2. Case Study Methodology .....	41
3.3. Research Setting.....	43
3.4. Sampling and Sampling Procedures .....	45
3.5 Participants.....	46
3.6. Data Collection Methods and Data Sources.....	47
3.6.1. Observations, Field Notes and Memos .....	47
3.6.2. Individual Interviews .....	49
3.6.3. Stimulated Recall Sessions .....	50
3.7. Data Analysis .....	51
3.8. Utilization of the Theoretical Framework.....	52
3.9. Ethical Considerations .....	53
3.10. Quality Criteria .....	54
4. FINDINGS .....	56
4.1. Case 1: Merve’s Teacher Identity .....	56
4.1.1 Merve’s Personal History.....	57
4.1.2. Merve’s Initial Teacher Identity Formation.....	59
4.1.3. Merve’s In-Service Experiences .....	63
4.1.4. Merve’s Transition to the School for the Blind .....	70
4.1.5. Merve’s Language Teacher Cognition.....	83
4.1.6. Merve’s Subject Matter Knowledge .....	84
4.1.7. Merve’s Pedagogical Knowledge .....	87
4.1.8. Merve’s Knowledge about Learning.....	90
4.1.9. Merve’s Lesson Planning and Curricular Adjustment.....	92
4.1.10. Merve’s Classroom Management and Organization.....	95
4.1.11. Merve’s Knowledge about Students .....	98
4.1.12. Merve’s Pedagogic Content Knowledge.....	103
4.1.13. Merve’s Medium of Instruction .....	104
4.1.14. Merve’s Assessment and Evaluation .....	106
4.1.15. Merve’s English Language Teaching Practices .....	108

4.1.16. Merve’s Use of Educational Technologies .....	120
4.1.17. Merve’s English Language Teaching Materials.....	128
4.2. Case 2: Mustafa’s Teacher Identity .....	133
4.2.1. Mustafa’s Personal History .....	133
4.2.2. Mustafa’s Initial Teacher Identity Formation .....	140
4.2.3. Mustafa’s In-service Experiences .....	143
4.2.4. Mustafa’s Language Teacher Cognition .....	154
4.2.5 Mustafa’s Subject Matter Knowledge.....	154
4.2.6. Mustafa’s Pedagogic Knowledge.....	155
4.2.7. Mustafa’s Lesson Planning and Curricular Adaptations.....	157
4.2.8. Mustafa’s Classroom Management and Organization .....	160
4.2.9. Mustafa’s Knowledge about Students.....	162
4.2.10. Mustafa’s Pedagogic Content Knowledge .....	165
4.2.11. Mustafa’s Medium of Instruction.....	166
4.2.12. Mustafa’s Assessment and Evaluation Practices .....	167
4.2.13. Mustafa’s English Language Teaching Practices.....	170
4.2.14. Mustafa’s Use of Educational Technologies.....	181
4.2.15. Mustafa’s Use of English Language Teaching Materials .....	187
4.3. Case 3: Rosalinda’s Language Teacher Identity and Cognition .....	190
4.3.1. Rosalinda’s Personal History .....	191
4.3.2. Rosalinda’s Language Teacher Identity and Cognition .....	195
4.3.3. Rosalinda’s Initial English Language Teacher Identity and Cognition .	196
4.3.4. Rosalinda’s In-service Experiences .....	200
4.3.5. Rosalinda’s Experiences in the School for the Blind.....	206
5. DISCUSSION .....	220
5.1. Discussion: Merve’s Language Teacher Identity and Cognition .....	220
5.1.1. Discussion: Complex System of Merve’s Teacher Identity and Cognition.....	230
5.1.2. Contextual Considerations on Merve’s Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition.....	230

5.1.3. Micro-Structure and Macro-System Considerations on Merve’s Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition.....	235
5.2. Discussion: Mustafa’s Language Teacher Identity and Cognition .....	250
5.2.1 Complex System of Mustafa’s Language Teacher Identity and Cognition.....	260
5.2.2. Contextual Considerations on Mustafa’s Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition.....	262
5.2.3. Micro-Structure and Macro-System Considerations on Mustafa’s Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition.....	267
5.3. Discussion: Rosalinda’s Language Teacher Identity and Cognition .....	273
5.3.1 Discussion: The Complex System of Rosalinda’s Language Teacher Identity and Cognition .....	278
5.3.2. Contextual Considerations in Rosalinda’s Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition.....	279
5.3.3. Micro-Structure and Macro-System Considerations in Rosalinda’s Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition .....	283
6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS .....	289
6.1. Conclusion: Teacher Identity and Cognition .....	289
6.2. Conclusion: School for the Blind.....	292
6.3. Conclusion: Complexity Theory .....	295
6.4. Implications.....	298
6.5. Suggestions for Further Research .....	300
REFERENCES.....	301
APPENDICES	
A. TABLE OF INTERVIEWS .....	341
B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	344
C. TABLE OF OBSERVATIONS.....	352
D. OBSERVATION PROTOCOL .....	354

E. TIMELINE OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS.....	355
F. TIMELINE OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS .....	356
G. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE.	357
H. CURRICULUM VITAE .....	358
I. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET .....	362
J. THESIS PERMISSION FORM/ TEZ İZİN FORMU .....	382



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Statistical Information on School for the Blind .....	3
Table 2: Summary of Pedagogic Knowledge Base .....	9
Table 3: Merve's Medium of Instruction .....	104
Table 4: Summary of Merve's English Language Practices .....	110
Table 5: Mustafa's Summary of English Language Teaching Practices .....	174
Table 6: Summary of Merve's Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition .....	231
Table 7: Summary of Mustafa's Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition .....	261

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Reviewed Research Areas of Language Teacher Cognition .....	13
Figure 2: Research Areas of Professional Teacher Identity .....	27
Figure 3: Overlapping Themes in Reviewed Language Teacher Cognition and Professional Teacher Identity Research .....	35
Figure 4: Merve's Teacher Language Identity Formation .....	57
Figure 5: Merve's Timeline of Career Path .....	58
Figure 6: Merve's Teacher Identity Formation During In-service Experiences .....	70
Figure 7: Braille Alphabet.....	76
Figure 8: Examples of the Braille Contractions .....	77
Figure 9: The Faces of Feelings .....	78
Figure 10: The Parts of the House.....	78
Figure 11: The Animals.....	78
Figure 12: Merve's Language Teacher Identity Formation in the School for the Blind .....	83
Figure 13: Merve's Pedagogic Knowledge .....	89
Figure 14: Merve's Routinized Lesson Plan .....	94
Figure 15: Typical Classroom Arrangement in the School for the Blind .....	98
Figure 16: Merve's Pedagogic Content Knowledge .....	103
Figure 17: Merve's Teaching Main and Sub- Language Skills .....	115
Figure 18: Braille Typewriter.....	125
Figure 19: Orbit Device.....	126
Figure 20: Mustafa's Language Teacher Identity .....	134
Figure 21: Mustafa's Timeline of Career Path.....	138
Figure 22: Seasons .....	150
Figure 23: Mustafa's Pedagogic Knowledge .....	156
Figure 24: Mustafa's Routinized Lesson Plan .....	159

Figure 25: Mustafa's MP3 Player.....	183
Figure 26: Rosalinda's Language Teacher Identity and Cognition .....	191
Figure 27: Rosalinda's Teaching Routine .....	216
Figure 28: Components of Merve's Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition .....	236
Figure 29: Merve's English Language Proficiency .....	239
Figure 30: Contextual Considerations in Mustafa's Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition.....	266
Figure 31: Complex System's Possible Behaviors .....	297

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes three sections. In the first section, the background of the study is provided. Then, demographic and statistical information about teachers of students with visual impairments in Turkey is provided. In the last section, the significance of the study and the need to conduct this doctoral study are explained. Additionally, the research questions that guided this doctoral study are presented in the last section.

#### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Recent developments in the field of English language teaching encourage scholars and practitioners to challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions about who teaches English, who are the learners, why they are learning English, and the socio-political and socio-economic settings English is taught (Johnson, 2006). Such improvements in general education and the field of English language teaching require both an international and national focus to celebrate the diversity of the teaching profession (Canagarajah, 2016; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Santoro & Allard, 2005) because “we live in an age when metanarratives or grand theories that attempt to provide unifying and totalizing explanations for social and intellectual developments are viewed with suspicion” (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 9). Hence, the rationale for recognizing and encouraging diversity in education emphasizes “the importance of ensuring *all* teachers work successfully with *all* students” (Keane et al., 2018, p. 819).

In a similar vein, the mainstream attitudes towards individuals with disabilities are questioned and challenged by the recent works of international organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United

Nations (UN), and the World Health Organization (WHO). These international organizations purport to minimize problems and barriers people with disabilities experience while they try to access education, employment, and other facilities. In addition to international support for people with disabilities, educational research consistently recognizes the lack of diversity in education, that is, the bulk of the teacher and student population is formed by dominating socio-economic and ethnic groups (Schleicher, 2014). The dominance of main socio-economic and ethnic groups decreases the opportunities for the minority group teachers and students to be in the field of education.

There are groups of students and teachers who are underrepresented in available research. These groups consist of students and teachers with disabilities, and teachers of students with disabilities. In this case study, language teacher identity and cognition of teachers of students with visual impairments in Turkey are explored.

## **1.2. Demographics and Statistics on Schools for the Blind**

The Ministry of National Education's yearly report shows that there are 18 million students in the Turkish education system (MoNE, 2021). The report also provides that the number of special education schools is 1.517 and there are 425.816 students with disabilities and 16.671 teachers of students with disabilities in Turkey. The Schools for the Blind constitute approximately 2.5% of the special education schools in Turkey. Also, the students with visual impairments form 4% of the population of students with disabilities in primary, secondary, and high special education schools. Lastly, teachers of students with visual impairments account for 3% of the teacher population in special education schools. However, it should be noted that the available statistics provided by the Ministry of National Education lack essential information such as students' demographics about their visual impairments, age range, and the number of students with multiple disabilities in the Schools for the Blind.

In addition to the lack of information on students' demographics, the report does not show the number of English language teachers of students with visual impairments in the Schools for the Blind. Based on the statistical deduction, 40 English language teachers of students with visual impairments are estimated to work in the Schools for the Blind in Turkey.

*Table 1: Statistical Information on School for the Blind*

	The Number of Schools for the Blind	The Number of Students	The Number of Teachers
<b>Primary School for the Blind</b>	18	469 students with visual impairments	186 teachers of students with visual impairments
<b>Secondary School for the Blind</b>	18	585 students with visual impairments	306 teachers of students with visual impairments
<b>Vocational High School for the Blind</b>	2	27 students with visual impairments	16 teachers of students with visual impairments
<b>Total</b>	38 Schools for the Blind	1081 students with visual impairments	508 teachers of students with visual impairments

Regardless, the student with visual impairments and their teachers constitute a unique and significant group in the Turkish education system. Exploring experiences of teachers of students with visual impairments can potentially contribute to catering to the needs of these students, which, in return, reflect on the educational betterment of students with visual impairments.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

Recent developments in the field of English language teaching encourage researchers and practitioners to explore diversity in the field. This diversification requires challenging taken-for-granted approaches. In this vein, “how teachers come to know what they know, how certain concepts in teachers’ consciousness develop over time, and how their learning processes transform them and the activities of L2 teaching” (Johnson, 2009, p.17) are emergent research areas that require further attention. Similarly, Li (2020) asserts that language teacher cognition is an important research area because it “not only sheds light on the issues in developing effectiveness pedagogy and improving student learning but also promotes understandings of classroom instruction at a micro-level, as well as contributing to teacher learning” (p. 7).

In addition to language teacher cognition, language teachers are active agents who explicitly and implicitly influence students’ academic learning and growth (Jennings &

Greenberg, 2009). Although research over the past few decades has been focusing on teachers' professional identity development and its impact on their instructional decision (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), "researchers are still in the early stages of understanding how teacher identities are formed, the factors that influence changes of identities, and the role these identities play in students' and teachers' motivation and learning" (Schutz et al., 2018, p. 3). Thus, there is a need to explore language teacher cognition with its relation to language teacher identity because the complexity of language teacher identity formation informs scholars and practitioners about "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2012, p. 45). Uncovering how language teacher identity and cognition influence one's practices can help practitioners and scholars to understand how these two constructs, which reflect on language teachers' instructional practices influence each other.

In addition to language teacher identity and cognition, recent studies in the field of English language teaching encourage explicitly focusing on the intersectionality of the practical and theoretical issues (Preece, 2016). Although there is a growing body of research that fosters intersectionality in English language teaching field by including social, psychological, political, and cultural issues into their research agenda, disability issues in the field remain surprisingly scarce.

To support the intersectionality of English language teaching and disability issues, a systematic review is conducted in the Turkish Thesis and Dissertation database for the purposes of this doctoral study. Four Boolean search operators are used: visual impairment, language teachers, disability, and special education. The findings of this systematic review show that although there is extensive literature on the disability issues such as architectural accommodations, software development, psychological wellbeing of students with disabilities, and teaching students with visual impairments in primary and secondary schools (Açıkgöz, 2006; Bayram, 2014; Boydak, 2015; Karakoc, 2016) as well as in teacher education programs (Cinarbas, 2016), there is no study conducted to explore experiences of teachers of students with disabilities in mainstream public or private schools. Thus, it can be concluded that both international and national research shows that disability issues in English language teaching are under-researched areas.



Teacher cognition studies mainly focus on the impact of prior learning experiences on different domains of language teaching practices. Language teachers' experiences during pre- and in-service are also popular research areas in teacher cognition studies. With the call of Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) to redraw the boundaries of language teacher cognition studies, more detailed studies in terms of the theoretical and methodological construct of language teacher cognition are encouraged. Informing that language teachers' professional identities can (re)shape their teacher cognition, professional teacher identity is a relevant area, which can be uncovered with teacher cognition studies. However, the empirical and theoretical studies on teacher cognition and professional teacher identity demonstrate that there is a limited number of studies that uncover language teacher cognition and professional teacher identity of marginalized and underrepresented groups in the field of language teaching. Teachers of students with visual impairments are one of the subgroups of teachers with disabilities in the field of English language teaching who are unrepresented and marginalized.

In order to fill this gap in the literature, this case study purposed to shed light on the language teacher cognitions and professional identities of teachers of students with visual impairments. This case study also aimed to uncover what it means to be an English language teacher in the School for the Blind by focusing on professional identity development and change of the participants. In addition, it sought to analyze how teachers of students with visual impairments teach English to students with visual impairments in the context of School for the Blind. Lastly, this case study specifically aimed to explore how professional teacher identities of English language teachers of students with visual impairments influence their teacher cognitions. In order to achieve these purposes, the following research questions guided this study.

- What are the teacher cognitions of disabled and non-disabled teachers of students with visual impairment?
  - In what ways do prior learning experiences of teachers of students with visual impairment influence their teacher cognition?
  - In what ways do teachers' stated belief, attitudes and knowledge differ from the observed ones?

- Does having visual impairment influence one's teacher cognition? If yes, how?
- How do disabled and non-disabled teachers of students with visual impairment construct their professional teacher identities?
  - In what ways do these professional identity construction processes differ between the two groups?
  - By what factors are professional teacher identities of teachers of students with visual impairment influenced?
  - What are the possible roles of School for the Blind in (re)shaping these teachers' professional identities?

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In this case study, the experiences of language teachers of students with disabilities are explored regarding language teacher cognition and professional identity formation. To coherently review the literature and demonstrate methodological and theoretical shifts in the relevant literature, this section of the dissertation is divided into three subsections. In these subsections, language teacher cognition, professional teacher identity, and studies that explore the experiences of teachers of students with disabilities are presented, respectively.

#### **2.1. Teacher Cognition**

Teacher cognition has received growing attention with the seminal work of Clark and Peterson (1986). The rationale for this interest stems from the idea that there is a link between language teachers' classroom practices and their mental lives (Burns et al., 2015; Johnson, 2018) and "developing one's teaching is enhanced by developing one's thinking" (Tiilikainen et al., 2019, p. 124). Although termed in different ways such as Conceptions of Practice (Freeman, 1993), Beliefs, Attitudes, and Knowledge (Woods, 1996), and Personal Practical Knowledge (Golombek, 1998), exploring language teachers' mental lives and their relation to language teaching "has been at the forefront of the subdiscipline of applied linguistics that has become known as language teacher cognition" (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015, p. 435). Language teacher cognition, thus, focuses on two main objectives: (1) to reveal the extent of teacher cognition, that is,

teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge, their previous experiences (Kissau et al., 2012; Mullock, 2006), and (2) to spot on the similarities and differences between teachers' cognitions and their language teaching practices (Barnard & Burns, 2012; Basturkmen, 2012). In a similar vein, it is also recommended that there is a desirable match between a language teacher's beliefs and his/her teaching practices. Such a match should be promoted through dialogic mediation, reflection, and scaffolded learning (Farrell & Ives, 2015). Hence, language teacher cognition studies purport to shed light on the possible causes of mismatches between a teacher's beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and language teaching practices (Li & Walsh, 2011; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

To uncover language teachers' cognitions, it is important to frame what counts as language teacher cognition. In this regard, empirical and theoretical studies show that teachers' professional knowledge consists of three main knowledge bases: pedagogic knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge, and content (subject) knowledge (Evens et al., 2018). Shulman states that pedagogic knowledge consists of "broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter (Shulman, 1987, p.8). Others believe that pedagogic knowledge covers a wide range of skills and strategies that help teachers to have pedagogically informed practices and they add the domains of structure, motivation, classroom management, adaptivity, assessment, teaching methods, and students' heterogeneity in these pedagogic skills and strategies (König et al., 2011; Voss et al., 2011). The domains of pedagogic knowledge are summarized in Table 3 below.

It can be inferred that pedagogic knowledge is dynamic and context-dependent because teachers use their pedagogic knowledge to deal with the general organization of the learning processes. After all, pedagogic knowledge is considered to be generic teaching skills, strategies, beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge that shape teachers' teaching. Specifically, what teachers think, believe, and perceive could strongly influence how they plan their lessons, the activities and tasks they design, the evaluation of learning, and all kinds of decisions they make in the teaching process (Li, 2012).

On the other hand, pedagogic content knowledge is defined as the "special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own

special form of professional understanding” (Shulman, 1987, p.8). Hence, pedagogic content knowledge allows a teacher to understand the content s/he teaches from a specialist perspective because pedagogic content knowledge equips teachers to teach the content based on the methods, strategies, and techniques that are unique and distinctive to their fields. Similarly, Borg (2006) stated that pedagogic content knowledge enables practitioners to “transform their knowledge of the subject matter into a form which makes it amenable for teaching and learning (p.19).” The term pedagogic content knowledge, thus, refers to “a wide range of aspects of subject matter knowledge and the teaching of subject matter” (Ball et al., 2008, p. 389).

Table 2: Summary of Pedagogic Knowledge Base

Classroom Management and Organization	It covers skills and strategies for managing and organizing a classroom to create a suitable, welcoming, and non-threatening learning environment.
Structure	It covers skills and strategies of how to prepare lessons.
Motivation	It includes understanding the affective factors that can influence students’ willingness to learn the content.
Adaptivity & Students’ Heterogeneity	It means planning learning processes to meet the diverse needs of heterogeneous student groups. Also, it means understanding the individual differences of students in the classroom.
Assessment	It covers a wide range of formative and summative assessment and evaluation skills.
Teaching methods	It includes selecting and utilizing teaching methods that can foster students’ learning processes.

To transform one's subject matter knowledge into a pedagogically suitable format, teachers need to be able to blend the content they teach with their pedagogic repertoire. In doing so, they can explain "how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction" (Schulman, 1987, p. 8). Teachers' pedagogic content beliefs can (re)shape their pedagogical practices (Farrell, 2015; Mangubhai et al., 2004), instructional decisions, as well as their willingness to develop professionally (Donaghue, 2003; Li, 2014). It can be concluded that teachers' pedagogic content backgrounds, theories, and/or principles influence their present and future instructional practices.

It should also be noted that these beliefs are context-specific and context-dependent (Li, 2020) because teachers in different educational settings interpret and implement the same pedagogical principles differently. Given the fact that pedagogic content knowledge is dependent on the educational settings, it is formed through one's own learning experiences, pre-service education, in-service professional development as well as social, cultural, and political concerns, where the educational setting is located (Borg, 2003a; Johnson & Golombek, 2020).

Lastly, it is asserted that "teachers cannot teach that which they do not know" (Loewen, 1995, p. 287). This understanding is known as content or subject matter knowledge. Shulman (1987) stated that teachers should know the content they are teaching at an advanced level. Thus, teachers should be able to demonstrate their content knowledge because it is considered to be a fundamental component of teachers' knowledge (Sullivan, 2011). Subject matter knowledge is positioned between empirical and academic evidence and everyday knowledge taught through instructional practices in schools (Krauss et al., 2008). Although subject matter knowledge is grounded in a distinguished position, it influences teachers' representation of other professional knowledge bases (Chan & Yung, 2015).

Available theoretical studies show that language teacher cognition has three knowledge bases: pedagogic knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge, and subject matter knowledge. With these knowledge bases, teachers formulate their beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge about English language teaching and implement instructional

practices based on their beliefs. However, there is no consensus on when and how pre-service teachers and in-service teachers should develop their professional knowledge bases. On the one hand, it is claimed that when pre-service teachers are explicitly presented with all the bases mentioned above, they start to form their language teacher cognition. However, Gess-Newsome (1999) believed that pre-service teachers need one of the knowledge bases because when they are explicitly presented one of the bases, the others are automatically developed within the teacher education program.

Alternatively, integrative models of teachers' professional knowledge assert that if pre-service teachers receive pedagogic knowledge and content knowledge courses, their pedagogic content knowledge will automatically develop. Thus, offering courses that target pedagogic content knowledge is not essential for teacher education programs. For this reason, teacher cognition research should focus on raising teachers' awareness to create/develop relevant pedagogical practices for their contexts since language learning and teaching are not linear and similar instructional practices can yield different student outcomes (Freeman & Cameron, 2008). Thus, Nuthall (2004) suggests that

The professional knowledge base that is most needed to improve the quality of teaching and teacher education is knowledge about the ways in which classroom activities, including teaching, affect the changes taking place in the minds of students ... At the heart of the problem teachers face in the classroom is knowing what is going on in the minds of the students ... This is not all that teachers need to know, but it is at the core of what they need to know and what should be included in teacher education and professional development programs (p. 295).

Although the emphasis on the specific knowledge base can vary, the consensus exists that pedagogic, pedagogic content, and subject matter knowledge form language teacher cognition.

Empirical studies on language teacher cognition, as illustrated in Figure 1 below, cover a wide range of topics. These topics include language teacher identity formation, language teaching practices, the role of teaching experience in language teacher cognition, and teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge. With the recent call for redrawing the boundaries of teacher cognition research, the field of language teacher cognition challenges the taken-for-granted ideas about teachers' mental lives and their relation to language teaching. This challenge encourages researchers to learn

about the inner lives of language teachers who teach linguistically, socio-politically, and socioeconomically marginalized backgrounds.

In early studies of personal practical knowledge, which provided the foundations of language teacher cognition research, Clandinin (1985) and Connelly, Clandinin, and He (1997) explored teachers' mental lives in general education and they concluded that the individual, social, and educational factors inform teachers' classroom practices. They also implicated that "it is necessary to work directly with teachers in all aspects of the lives in classrooms, outside classrooms and in their personal lives" (Connelly et al., 1997, p. 666). In a similar study, Golombek (1998) captured the inner lives of two speaking teachers in the USA. She concluded that L2 teachers' personal practical knowledge is socially constructed, and it is subjected to changes due to concerns about contextual, educational, and personal factors. In their theoretical paper, Verloop, Van Driel, and Meijer (2001) suggested that teachers' personal knowledge acts as a filter to interpret conscious and unconscious teaching practices. Regarding teachers' professional knowledge, they inferred that it is the basis of teachers' classroom practices and an essential component of teachers' professional development.

In recent studies, Levin and He (2008) uncovered teacher education and its influences on teacher candidates' personal practical knowledge. They found that teacher education programs can influence teacher candidates' beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge about language instruction and the field experiences component of teacher education programs appear to provide opportunities for teacher candidates to assess the dynamic nature of personal practical knowledge.

Similarly, Morton and Gray (2010) investigate student-teachers' personal practical knowledge development through lesson planning conferences during their pre-service education and they indicated that student-teachers' personal practical knowledge development emerges out of reflective and dialogic interaction as the student-teachers involve in lesson planning activities with their peers and their advisors.

On the other hand, López Pedrana (2009) examined teacher candidates' personal practical knowledge in a Latino ESL program and revealed that the identities of teacher candidates and their learners enforce teacher candidates in this study



develop an ability to find a personal and professional balance when they teach Latino ESL learners. In a recent study, Wei and Lu (2022) explored pre-service teachers' practical knowledge orientations throughout a six-week practicum. By using concept maps, the study uncovered that pre-service teachers' practical knowledge is dependent on their previous learning experiences, feedback and mentoring they receive during the practicum, and teacher education program.

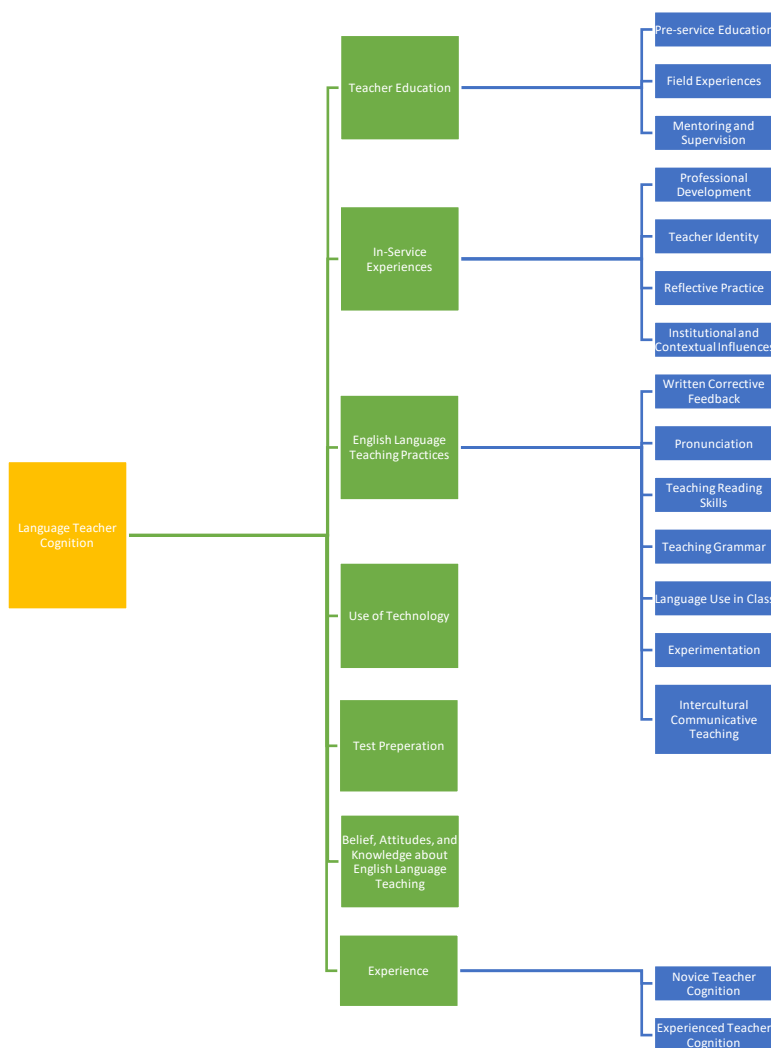


Figure 1: Reviewed Research Areas of Language Teacher Cognition

In addition to the focus on pre-service language teachers' personal practical knowledge, several studies explore in-service teachers' personal practical knowledge. In Chou (2008), in-service language teachers' personal practical knowledge about English language teaching in Taiwan was explored. The study showed that these teachers' practical knowledge is formulated through a series of processes. In these processes, the teachers reshape their repertoire of English language teaching and learning methods, strategies, and techniques through attending professional development training. In addition, reflecting on teaching practices with the collaboration of students help these teachers blend recent trends of English language teaching into the necessities of their context. In another study, Aspbury-Miyaniishi (2022) developed the skilled teacher approach to study teachers' practical knowledge. The study pointed out that what teachers practice in the classroom is largely a result of the educational environment they are in because what teachers can and should do is socially constructed. Thus, the study concluded that practical knowledge or individual teacher cognition may not be enough to explain language teacher cognition as personal practical knowledge is constructed and reshaped by individual, social, and environmental factors. Lastly, Sun (2012) worked with a Chinese immigrant teacher to reveal the teacher's personal practical knowledge and professional identity issues. She concluded that "teachers' personal practical knowledge is layered and goal-oriented, guided by the dominant image" (p.766) and it is intertwined with professional identity formation.

When closely analyzed, the studies of personal practical knowledge deal with teachers' personal and practical knowledge. It also focuses on change in teachers' practical concerns. Thus, the studies of personal practical knowledge establish the grounds for language teacher cognition studies. With the emergence of the sociocultural turn in the field of English language teaching (Johnson, 2006, 2009), more recent studies have begun to include teachers' mental lives, pre-service and in-service teacher education, and identity formation in personal practical knowledge development.

In the domain of language teacher cognition, Borg (2003) reviewed studies in grammar teaching, which use language teacher cognition as a theoretical framework. In his review, Borg explained the theoretical rationale of terminological diversity in

teacher cognition research and suggested complementary data collection tools to show that language teachers' prior experiences can be the source of grammar teaching practices. In his other review, Borg (2003b) argued that teachers are active agents whose teaching practices are grounded in "complex, practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs" (p. 91). It is possible that teachers' cognitions are emerging as a strong influence on their teaching practices. It is also cautioned that teachers' practices do not always match with their beliefs, attitudes, and prior individual and educational experiences (Hos et al., 2019).

In their study, Baleghizadeh and Yassami (2010) studied Iranian EFL teachers' teacher cognitions regarding English language use in class. Drawing from Lortie's (1975) "apprenticeship of observation", they indicated that teachers' pedagogical choices and attitudes are derived from their prior experiences as language learners. They also suggested that teacher cognition studies can inform policymaking processes in teacher education to foster professional development and teacher change. Similarly, in his qualitative longitudinal study, Borg (2011) explored teachers' belief in short-term in-service teacher education and suggested that teachers should be encouraged to express their beliefs and opportunities should be provided for teachers to reflect on their beliefs to make connections between teachers' beliefs and theoretical information from the in-service teacher education program.

Another study explored an EFL novice teacher's teacher cognition development and her language teaching practices (Kang & Cheng, 2014). The study showed that the EFL novice teacher in this study develops her teacher cognition as a result of continuous engagement and reflection on her teaching practices and her beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge (Freeman, 1993). It was also highlighted that experimentation in language teaching should be encouraged to innovate existing thoughts in language teachers' cognitions.

Early studies of language teacher cognition focused on determining what constitutes language teacher cognition, how it changes, and what factors influence it. However, the *Modern Language Journal's* special issue on language teacher cognition shows us that the area of language teacher cognition research has been (re)shaped by collective research with the critical contributions of many researchers (Crookes, 2015;

Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). Yet, studies on language teacher cognition are still struggling to answer several important questions and there is a need for redrawing the boundaries of language teacher cognition research (England, 2017). This redrawing is meant to include different dimensions of language teaching and learning practices, and their relations with language teacher cognition.

To contribute to the language teacher cognition research agenda, Moodie and Feryok (2015) worked with four EFL teachers in the South Korean context to explore possible relationships between these teachers' commitment and language teacher cognition. The findings emphasized that commitments to language learning can be transferred to language teaching and teachers' continuous commitment to the field of language teaching can prevent teacher attrition. In other studies in the special issue of the *Modern Language Journal*, Golombek (2015) worked on language teacher cognition and emotions. Using the self-inquiry method, she reflected on her teacher student's and her own emotions by analyzing reflective journals. She found that questioning the teacher student's emotional dissonance influences Golombek's process of learning to teach. It was also mentioned that reflective journals are an important tool to question one's language teacher cognition. In Feryok and Oranje (2015), a German language teacher's language teacher cognition and intercultural communicative language teaching through a project were explored. The findings pointed out that the teacher focuses on the practical concerns of intercultural communicative language teaching rather than the culture and its teaching. The teacher prioritizes assessment and evaluation of the project and cultural teaching, and as a result, she uses other domains of her language teacher cognition. The study implicated that if teachers are expected to change their instructional practices, they must first change their beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge (Sercu, 2006).

Upon the call to redraw the boundaries of language teacher cognition, several studies have been conducted with various theoretical and methodological choices in other academic endeavors. In their study, Farrell and Ives (2015) explored a second language reading teacher's beliefs and his instructional practices in the classroom. It was found that there is a certain degree of match between the teacher's stated beliefs and his classroom practices. It was also added that by questioning and reflecting on his beliefs, the teacher in this study becomes more aware of his practices and their

theoretical implications. On the other hand, Burri (2015) worked with 15 student teachers in terms of their cognition of pronunciation teaching. Findings indicated that by taking a postgraduate course on pronunciation teaching, the participants in this study change their instructional practices. While the participants focus on teaching segmental sounds before participating in this study, they start to include suprasegmental pronunciation teaching in their practices. It should also be noted that non-native teachers in the study improve their own pronunciation as well as their pronunciation teaching strategies because they benefit from native/non-native collaboration (Wright, 2010).

In more recent studies, Öztürk and Gürbüz (2017) examined the impact of institutional context on three EFL teachers' cognitions. They found that the institutional factors, which cover the organizational atmosphere, assessment and evaluation policies, curricular choices as well as the participants' personal and educational histories, are the main sources of these participants' language teacher cognition. Similarly, Wei and Cao (2020) investigated 254 university English lecturers' cognitions when they provide written corrective feedback to show the sources of language teacher cognition. The findings illustrated that teachers utilize different strategies when giving feedback to their students' writings. It is noteworthy that teachers who implement the high-demand feedback strategies (students' response required), learn to use such a strategy either in pre-service teacher education and/or in-service professional training (Guénette & Lyster, 2013). On the other hand, low demand feedback strategy (correcting all errors) is utilized due to the teachers' prior language learning experiences.

On the other hand, Sun, Wei, and Young (2022), using the implicit association test (IAT), explored 24 Chinese EFL teachers' implicit attitudes to a communication language teaching curriculum. They also compared these teachers' attitudes with the traditional language teaching approaches. The results indicated that there is a mismatch between what teachers say and what they think. Thus, language teachers' cognitions should be taken into consideration when implementing curriculum reform (Liu et al., 2021).

Lastly, the use of social media tools and language teacher cognition in a refugee camp was explored (Motteram et al., 2020). It was shown that social media

tools create a mediating tool for teachers to improve their language proficiency and knowledge, and foster professional development (Shohel & Power, 2010). The participants in this study are able to create and share teaching materials and started to address instructional challenges in a meaningful way. The study concluded that social media tools create a community of practice, which fosters language teacher cognition change (Baran & Cagiltay, 2010).

To summarize, the theoretical foundations of language teacher cognition include determining what constitutes teacher cognition. Grounded on Shulman's work, language teacher cognition is considered to have pedagogic, pedagogic content, and subject matter knowledge bases. In this regard, language teacher cognition research agenda focuses on pinpointing the similarities and differences between teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge, and their classroom practices. With the *Modern Language Journal's* class to redraw the boundaries of language teacher cognition, empirical and theoretical studies have begun to explore language teacher cognition and its relationship with the other domains of language teaching and learning, such as emotions, commitment, professional development, and technology use (Çınarbaş & Hos, 2018; Taşdemir & Karaman, 2022).

## **2.2. Language Teacher Identity**

Language teacher cognition studies show that teachers' mental lives inform their teaching practices. Teachers learn to teach through their individual experiences based on their prior experiences, educational background, personality traits, etc. These individual differences can shape their professional identities (Çınarbaş, 2018; Karaman & Edling, 2021). Hence, learning to teach a language is closely intertwined with language teachers' identity, and language teachers' identity formation is a vital component of learning to teach (Dang, 2013; Kanno & Stuart, 2011) because learning to teach is considered to be "learning to think like a teacher, learning to know like a teacher, learning to feel like a teacher and learning to act like a teacher" (Feiman-Nemser, 2008, p. 698).

Being and becoming a language teacher is achieved through an active reconstruction of professional teacher identity. To show how teachers develop their

professional identities, this section presents the theoretical and empirical issues of professional teacher identity.

Identity has received tempting attention from researchers in the field of language teaching because identity studies bridge the gap between the individual and the macro level of the social order (Block, 2007). On the one hand, identity is defined from an essentialist perspective, which assumes that identity consists of stable and unitary characteristics. These characteristics can be referenced to cultural and biological inheritance (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 400). On the other hand, Norton (2013) defines identity from the non-essentialist perspective as “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (45). Thus, it can be inferred that identity is not stable or unitary, instead, it is plural and dynamic, and it is a process of becoming rather than being (Cummins, 2011). Some of the characteristics are given at birth, while others can develop over time. In conclusion, identity is a complex concept, and it is “dynamic rather than stable, a constantly evolving phenomenon” (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009, p. 177).

Based on the non-essentialist theoretical approach, teacher identity can be defined as a specific construct that explains what being and becoming a teacher means because teachers’ identities are associated with their instructional practices in the classroom. To understand a teacher’s identity, it is essential to explore individual histories, educational backgrounds, teaching experiences, and institutional and curricular demands. Thus, teacher identity also deals with what teachers need to know to be able to carry out their duties. Lastly, teacher identity focuses on how teachers negotiate interactions and collaborations with their students, colleagues, and their field of expertise (Danielewicz, 2001).

There are at least four views of professional teacher identity. These views are psychological, discursive, narrative, and dialogic. While the psychological view sees that a teacher develops his/her professional identity along with the cognitive and psychological growth of the teacher himself/herself, the discursive view perceives that professional teacher identity is controlled by the teacher’s past experiences, present practices, and future aspirations. Teachers' identities are subject to cultural forces, institutional demands, or discursive practices within a given context (Baxter et al.,

2016). Due to the influence of discursive practices, a teacher can take on different identities to carry out his/her responsibilities to meet the needs of his/her students (Doecke, Locke, & Petrosky, 2004). Lastly, the dialogic view shows how teacher identity is defined, co-constructed, and shaped by various interactional situations. It also shows that teachers' narratives can depict the social, cultural, and historical influences on teachers' identity formation process (Norton & Early, 2011).

Available literature indicates that professional teacher identity is defined and conceptualized in various (Alsup, 2006; Block, 2012; Clarke, 2008; Czerniawski, 2011; Lamote & Engels, 2010; Mockler, 2011; Schutz et al., 2018; Trent, 2011). A consensus exists, though, on the fact that professional identity construction involves two simultaneous processes. On the one hand, professional identity is considered to be the act of amalgamating individually held beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, norms, and values. On the other hand, the processes of professional identity formation are informed by professional requirements, educational backgrounds, and stated values and standards of the teaching profession in the given setting (Assaf, 2008; Beijaard et al., 2004). Integrating one's beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge with the educational background, professional requirements, and standards is a dynamic, active, continually evolving, and ongoing process (Pillen et al., 2013; Varghese et al., 2005). It is also agreed that professional teacher identity is not only shaped by teacher characteristics, prior learning, and teaching experiences, but also by the institutional demands, professional context as well as their engagement with collegial communities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Flores & Day, 2006; Hong, 2010; Schepens et al., 2009).

Available studies on professional teacher identity formation can be organized into three main groups: pre-service teacher identity, in-service teacher identity, and other issues related to teacher identity.

Research that explores pre-service teachers' professional identity focuses on teacher identity formation, the effect of pre-service teacher education, reflective teaching, practicum, and emotions (Taner & Karaman, 2013). In early studies of pre-service teacher identity, Walkington (2005) worked with 240 primary and secondary school pre-service teachers to uncover supervision, mentoring, and pre-service teachers' identity construction in the practicum period, and he implicated that



supervision and mentoring relationships with the pre-service teachers should facilitate pre-service teachers' professional activities. Similarly, Hastings and Squires (2002) studied pre-service teachers and their mentors to explore opportunities for mentors' professional development. The findings showed that mentors' roles are defined by the pre-service teachers' questions and concerns because the pre-service teachers form their identities based on the feedback and support they receive from their mentors (Karataş & Karaman, 2013). In a recent study, Pita-Castro and Castiblanco-Rincón (2021) worked with pre-service English language teachers during the practicum period to uncover the relationship between these pre-service teachers' level of reflectivity and their professional identity construction. Findings revealed that although the participants in this study possessed a level of reflectivity, their reflectivity was not obvious and seen as there was no space for them to think about their practicum experiences. However, towards the end of the practicum period, the participants started to reflect on their experiences and teaching practices. As a result, the professional identities the participants constructed are dependent on the context and the people around them because the context and people can help pre-service teachers to reflect on their identities and practices (Karaman et al., 2019).

Complementarily, Lamote and Engels (2010) showed that pre-service teachers assume various identities during their practicum period and these identities are shaped by the contextual factors of the classrooms they completed their practicum (Karaman et al., 2019). It was also noted that the pre-service teachers with practicum experience reflect on their teaching experiences more when compared to the groups without the practicum experience. Lastly, Cattley (2007) illustrated that pre-service teachers assume multifaced roles that are broad and complex during the practicum and reflecting on the roles pre-service teachers assumed is important to understand these teachers' professional identities (Richards, 2021). The deeper pre-service teachers reflect on their experiences during the practicum, the more they interpret their experiences professionally because the lower levels of reflection cause a more technician interpretation of their teaching experiences (Zhou et al., 2013).

In addition to the practicum and reflection on pre-service teacher identity, pre-service teachers' identities are shaped by the affective factors they experience (Barcelos, 2015; Song, 2016). In this regard, Newman (2000) studied the affective side

of pre-service education. The study uncovered pre-service teachers' goals and dreams and how these goals and dreams changed during the program. Findings implicated that the more pre-service teachers expressed their goals and dreams about the profession, the more they embraced their emerging professional identities. As the pre-service teachers' professional identities changed over time during their teacher education, it was observed that the goals and dreams they expressed began to change, as well. It can be concluded that professional identity change can occur when pre-service teachers reach an emotional salience and it is important for teacher education programs to respond to the affective needs of pre-service teachers (Zembylas, 2003). Drawing on activity theory (Johnson, 2009), Dang (2013) explored the emergence of the professional identities of two pre-service teachers in paired-placement teacher practicum in Vietnam. The study concluded that pair-placement creates an environment where pre-service teacher identity is formed and the tensions, conflicts, and struggles between emerging identities and established identities are resolved. In a recent study, Li & Rawal (2018) revealed that teachers' affective approach to their profession determined their investment in teaching. They also added that mutual understanding and support between teachers and their students foster positive emotions for teachers. As opposed to this, teachers' passion could be worn out because of the institutional demands and working environment.

To conclude, the consensus on the pre-service teachers' professional identity construction and change is that pre-service teachers experience a reality shock in their early teaching practices, and they start to question their professional roles (Oruç, 2013). If collegial support is provided with reflective practices, pre-service teachers can overcome the reality shock they experience and initiate the development of their professional identity (Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014). Thus, professional teacher identity development in the pre-service stage should be considered as two complementary processes, that is, teacher learning informs identity formation, and identity formation shapes teacher learning (Uzum, 2013; Yazan, 2016, 2017). It is also suggested that during professional identity formation, teacher candidates are continuously seeking recognition, legitimate peripheral participation and access, yet teacher candidates have "the space to choose not to participate in certain activities they do not value" (Yazan,

2018, p. 221) because their choice consists of reflection on their practices and negotiation of their emerging teacher identities (Yazan et al., 2018).

Along with pre-service teacher identity, professional teacher identity studies focused on in-service teachers' identity formation (Özbilgin et al., 2016). It is implicated that novice teachers experience difficulties in transitioning to be professionals in the field because they develop an imagined identity during their teacher education (Taşdemir, 2021). When they start teaching, they enact their practiced identities, which are rule-governed and schema-based (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016; Xu, 2013) because becoming a teacher is a process of learning to teach through legitimate peripheral participation in teaching practices (Kanno & Stuart, 2011). It is noteworthy that transforming imagined identities into practiced identities is a dynamic process driven by beliefs about language learning and teaching experiences as well as institutional culture (Jiang et al., 2021). Teachers' initial beliefs about language teaching are shaped by their personal histories and these beliefs are subject to change when teachers encountered the realities of classroom practices (Başer & Karaman, 2015). Thus, the classroom realities and instructional practices reshape teachers' identities (Huang et al., 2021). Similarly, Li (2022) illustrated that when teachers encountered the realities of English language teaching, their core beliefs and emotions dynamically reshaped their professional teacher identities. On the other hand, Tsui (2007) proposes that language teachers' professional identities are considered to be a vital component of the classroom practices and teachers' professional development. To encourage language teachers to develop professionally, "recognition of competence valued by a community and legitimacy of access to practice are mutually constitutive" (Tsui, 2007, p. 675) in their early experiences of language teaching. In this regard, Abednia (2012) explored the influence of a graduate course as a way of professional development on language teacher identity. The study showed that the graduate course changed the participants' beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge about English language teaching. With such changes, the participants began to think critically, be more autonomous teachers, and alter their teaching practices. The graduate course helped the participants develop professionally, and professional development fostered the participants' professional identity reformation. However, it should be noted that the degree of identity change was not linear across

the participants, which meant that professional identity alterations were dependent on teachers' personal histories, their position in the field, and institutional requirements (Pinho & Andrade, 2015). Lastly, McGriff (2015) found that if teachers were not included in professional development activities, they projected alternative ways to develop their professional identity. In such a case, the importance of the institutional and discursive resources of professional development for teacher identity change emerges (Battey & Franke, 2008).

In other studies, the pressure of test preparation and language teacher identity were explored. Rex and Nelson (2004) showed that when language teachers were expected to prepare their students for high-stakes examinations, they assumed their teacher identities accordingly. Assaf (2008), on the other hand, found that although language teachers understood the responsibility of preparing their students for high-stakes exams, they experienced identity tensions because they did not want to orient their language teaching practices according to the exams, yet they compromised their professional identities to meet the institutional demands of achieving high scores in the standardized exam. When language teachers are resistant to altering their practices to prepare their students for high-stakes exams, they often undergo an unresolved identity conflict. In the contexts, where high-stake examinations are accompanied by educational reforms, teachers try to negotiate their identities to create professional spaces for their practices (Buchanan, 2015). By negotiating their identities, teachers question their roles as teachers, reflect on their practices, and become more attentive to the needs of their students (Brown et al., 2015).

Another issue that received attention in the field of language teacher identity research is language teacher agency. Language teacher agency aims to explore teachers' decision-making processes along with their actions (Feryok, 2012; Kayi-Aydar, 2015, 2019) as they (re)form their multiple teacher identities based on the decisions they made (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016). Thus, language teacher agency can be defined as teachers' deliberate efforts to eliminate powerlessness and negativity in their contexts (Ollerhead, 2010), their capacity to reflect on their practices and contexts, and act with purposes (Rogers & Wetzel, 2013), lastly make active choices and conscious actions that create spaces for positive and significant difference (Toom et al., 2015). Empirical studies on language teacher identity and teacher agency

showed that language teachers assume different levels of agency although they share similar contextual conditions, which inform the decision they made (Tao & Gao, 2017). Scotland (2014) uncovered how professional identities of experienced English language teachers were influenced by the institutional demands and culture. It was found that those experienced teachers developed a capacity to adopt and adapt new identities in a new institutional environment, yet this capacity was open to failures and tensions (Nielsen, 2011). In a comparative study, teacher agency of novice and experienced teachers were examined (Pillen et al., 2013). It was found that while novice teachers can experience difficulties, tensions, and conflicts if they cannot connect their personal subjectivities and professional selves, experienced teachers have the capacity to adapt to new situations and solve the tensions caused by their subjectivities and professional requirements. In another study, Lasky (2005) showed the possible reasons for the tensions and failures of teacher agency. The study revealed that pre-service teacher education together with the political, social, and educational context shapes teachers' active decision-making processes. In addition to this, teachers' agentic positioning is likely to increase if teachers are in their early careers. In a recent study, Wallen and Tormey (2019) presented that teacher agency is dependent on the collective experiences of language teachers in the given context. Given the relational nature of teacher agency (Edwards, 2005, 2011), teachers perceived their teacher agency in relation to ecological and contextual considerations (Hargreaves, 2000). Lastly, creating school environments that value diverse instructional practices and support teacher agency is considered to improve teachers' professional selves and open room for professional development (Lai et al., 2016; Vähäsantanen, 2015). On the one hand, in their narrative study, Liu and Xu (2011) examined an EFL teacher's identity negotiation in an era of educational reform in China and they suggested that their participant's narratives indicated teacher identity is subject to fundamental changes due to its fluid and dynamic nature. The changes in teacher identity are the result of negotiation and meaning co-construction in open-ended power-laden enactments (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005). Also, Trent's (2014) multiple case study in China yielded similar results to Liu and Xu (2011) and added that experimenting is a vital component of teacher learning and teacher identity formation during the educational reform (Bakkenes et al., 2010).

In addition to teacher agency, professional development, educational reforms, professional teacher identity, and intercultural practices were explored. Sercu (2006) reported that the average teacher profile does not concur with the assumed profile of foreign language teaching and intercultural competence. In a recent study on intercultural competence and teacher identity, it was found that teachers' narration of their identities and the context they teach provide opportunities (de)construct their teaching identities (Pinho & Andrade, 2015). It was concluded that contextual influences to include intercultural and plurilingual approaches to teaching languages depend on intentional decision-making (Rodgers & Scott, 2008) because teachers' professional identities are the result of the reciprocity between their self-knowledge and the contexts in which teachers learn to teach (Craig, 2011).

In discourse-driven studies, Cohen (2008, 2010) showed that teachers explicitly and/or implicitly talk about their beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge as well as their teaching practices in non-classroom environments, which discursively construct their teacher identities. In another study, the effect of literature discussion on teachers' professional identity was explored and it was concluded that "the language we use signals the meanings we construct; the quality of our discourse determines the quality of our knowledge and how situated identities are shaped" (Crafton & Kaiser, 2011, p. 114). In addition to Cohen (2008, 2010) and Crafton and Kaiser, (2011), Arvaja (2016) demonstrated through her case study that personal histories and I-positioning play a significant role in negotiating one's professional teacher identity. Also, recognizing teachers' multiple I-positions can provide reasons behind the tensions in constructing teacher identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Lastly, Yesilbursa (2012) examined the metaphorical expressions of language teachers' professional identities at a university and found that personal views of language learning and teaching are determinant in one's expression of professional identities.

Lastly, available literature on language teacher identity shows that teacher professional identity formation and identity change were explored in terms of disability, community-based heritage language teaching, and motivation. Burns and Bell (2011) worked with teachers with dyslexia in Finland and England. Their findings illustrated that teachers' own experiences of their disability in the field of education

and the disclosure of their disabilities play an essential role in negotiating their identities as teachers.

In a Chinese Heritage Language Program in the USA, Wu, Palmer, and Field (2011) examined three heritage language teachers' professional identity formation. It was implicated that language teachers in heritage language programs are motivated to teach Chinese but the lack of economic and educational support leads them to think that assuming a heritage language teacher identity is not a professional purpose (Wu et al., 2011) because teachers' professional identity is linked to their self-image and having the space to value teachers' self-images increase their motivation and their willingness to teach language (Zadjali et al., 2016).

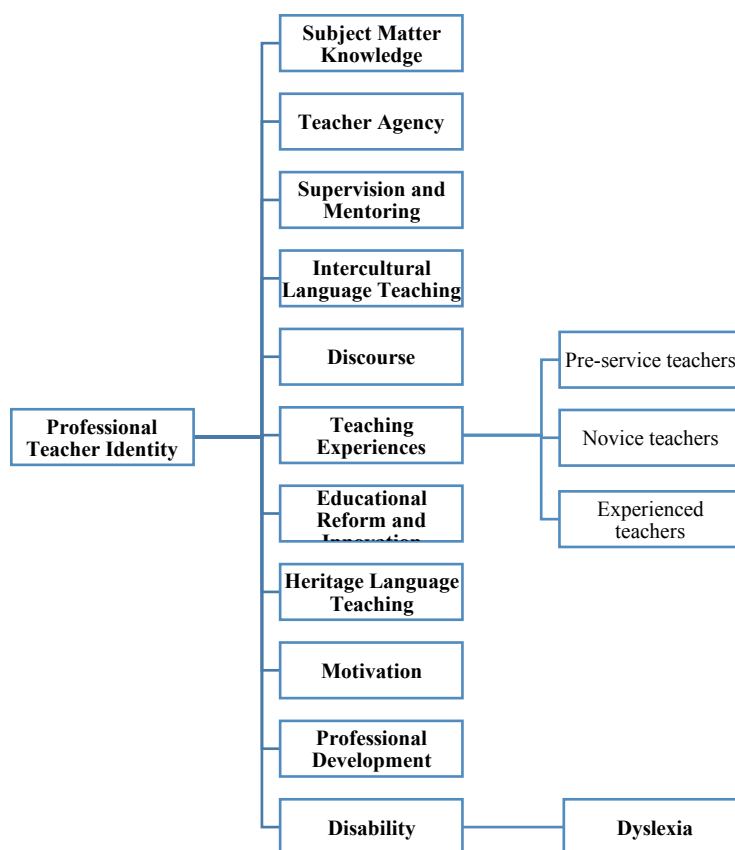


Figure 2: Research Areas of Professional Teacher Identity

To conclude, the sociocultural turn in the field of language teaching encourages more research to explore “the complexities of teachers’ mental lives and the various dimensions of teachers’ professional worlds” (Johnson, 2006, p. 236). This call for

more research in teachers' professional worlds paves the way for researchers and practitioners to uncover the complexities of teacher professional identity and its theoretical underpinnings (Sian Preece, 2016). Teacher identity is explored with various theoretical constructs in different educational settings as depicted in Figure 2 above. It can be inferred from the available literature that teacher identity is linked to subject matter knowledge, teaching experiences, educational reform, disability, etc. These linkages corroborate with the existing consensus on teacher professional identity and add further dimensions to the teacher professional identity.

### **2.3. Teachers of Students with Visual Impairment**

International research and policies consistently aim to diversify the teaching profession because both disabled and non-disabled teachers can contribute to the profession by bringing their teaching skills and prior experiences (Forlin, 2010). The possible increase in the participation of teachers with disabilities in the teaching profession can enhance inclusive education policies (OECD, 2003), which promote equal access to education, employment, and social life (Menter et al., 2006). In addition, the past decade has witnessed researchers' and teacher educators' emphasis and effort to reconceptualize teacher education programs for inclusive practices and enactments by adding new courses on teaching students with disabilities and by improving existing courses with the integration of the technological and methodological innovations (Florian, 2012; Florian & Linklater, 2010; Florian & Rouse, 2009; Hardman, 2009; Merri & Monties-Cabot, 2005; Symeonidou, 2017; Zorluel Özer & Cabaroğlu, 2018). The rationale for improving inclusive practices is grounded on the idea that students with visual impairments need more than the core curriculum, which all students with and/or without disabilities are expected to follow. The students with visual impairments need compensatory skills and an expanded core curriculum to overcome disabling effects of their visual impairment in their academic and social pursuits (Kizilaslan et al., 2020) because MasCuspie (1992) showed that %85 of the academic, social, and functional skills that all students need to learn are learned through the sense of vision. Thus, students with visual impairments need to master compensatory skills, which include accessing the core curriculum by using available tools to reach the objectives of the core curriculum. The expanded



curriculum, on the other hand, covers additional skills that students with visual impairments need to acquire to be independent learners (Andjelkovic, 2017a). It is the responsibility of the teachers of students with disabilities to create inclusive practices, in which students with visual impairments can master the core curriculum and learn compensatory skills as well as attain the learning objectives of the expanded core curriculum (Brown & Beamish, 2012; Wolffe et al., 2002).

In order to help students with visual impairments to master the core curriculum, teachers of students with visual impairments need to implement individualized education programs (IEP). These programs are planned to provide personalized instructional practices to address the unique needs of students with disabilities (Kurth et al., 2021). Addressing the needs of students with disabilities in a personalized manner creates opportunities for these students to master the core curriculum in a way that they can decide on the pace and intensity of their studies. In doing so, teachers of students with disabilities act as a catalyst to allow students with disabilities to use their skills to master the core curriculum (Nannemann, 2021). It is also important to note that the willingness to participate in an IEP may depend on affective factors because some students prefer to avoid unwanted extra attention from their peers and teachers (Rule et al., 2011). In other cases, students with visual impairment are willing to benefit from an individualized education program, yet they can question the effectiveness of instructional accommodations they received due to their lack of knowledge of IEP (Erin et al., 2006). Thus, it is the responsibility of teachers of students with visual impairments to explain the objectives of the individualized education program in progress as well as teach these students how they can make use of available additional accommodations for their academic pursuits (Martínez-Hernández & Bellés-Fortuño, 2021; Zebehazy & Wilton, 2014a).

In addition to the curricular issues mentioned above, the language learning experiences of students with visual impairments need to be taken into consideration. Available research indicates that there is no consensus on how the role of vision influences the language learning process and how students with visual impairments should be taught English. On one hand, language learning is considered to be a dynamic and flexible process and the lack of vision can be compensated through other means of language learning and teaching materials (Fayzi, 2022) because Brambring

(2007) states that there is a minor quantitative difference between language acquisition of sighted and visually impaired students. On the other hand, studies on language acquisition indicate that language learners need sensory stimuli to form concepts. Given that students with visual impairments cannot use their vision, they have a different sensory experience, which means that their language learning experiences do not coincide with their sighted peers (Krisi et al., 2022) and they have difficulty in forming and learning daily and scientific concepts. It is valid to accept that language teaching practices that are successful for students do not necessarily mean that these practices would lead to the same degree of achievement for students with visual impairments (Kamei-Hannan et al., 2012). However, it is found that teachers of students with visual impairments still use instructional strategies designed and planned for “normal” students to teach English to students with visual impairments (Schultz & Savaiano, 2022).

Due to the fact that visuality plays an important role in English language learning, exposure to the target language through language learning and teaching materials is crucial for students with visual impairments. To compensate for visuality with other means of language learning materials, practitioners rely on aural and tactile materials. Studies on tactile materials show that students with visual impairments need tactile materials, which are considered to be visual materials for the students with visual impairments to learn vocabulary items and their related concepts (Leavitt et al., 2018). These materials are also essential to enrich and diversify learning opportunities for students with visual impairments (Zebehazy & Wilton, 2014). However, it is noted that creating and adapting tactile materials are laborious, and if tactile materials are not designed to focus on a limited number of topics, it is difficult to make them meaningful for students with visual impairments (Sheppard & Aldrich, 2001).

In addition to tactile materials, audio materials play an important role in the language learning processes of students with visual impairments because the verbal descriptions of the materials and concepts strengthen the neural network of the grammatical structures and vocabulary items (Phutane et al., 2022). In this regard, teachers of students with visual impairments prefer to use a coursebook with multimedia support to expose students with visual impairments to aural materials. Johnson (2013) found that the teachers’ knowledge about commercially produced

educational multimedia for students with visual impairment is a strong indication of its use in the classroom. It is also noteworthy that the teachers working in School for the Blind tend to use and recommend more commercially produced educational multimedia when compared to their colleagues working in regular schools. Similarly, available studies show that the use of tactile materials along with audio materials and aural practices supports the language learning processes of students with visual impairments (Leavitt et al., 2018). In other cases, it is observed that the language learning processes of students with visual impairments are supported by verbal descriptions provided by language teachers. The verbal descriptions can include physical and/or conceptual information about the materials being used in the lesson and the students with visual impairments can create mental images of the topic being covered. It is important not to assume that all students with visual impairment benefit from verbal descriptions in the same way (Cox & Dykes, 2001).

The last dimension of teaching English to students with visual impairment is teacher education and professional development. Although the international focus is on including marginalized groups in the teaching profession, that is, teachers with disabilities, the studies exploring language teaching experiences of teachers of students with VI are in scarcity (Pritchard, 2010). Available studies vary in their theoretical and methodological scope and explore the experiences of visually impaired individuals in teaching and other related professions. To begin with, the number of students with disabilities in K-12 as well as higher education settings is increasing. To cater to the needs of students with disabilities, teacher education programs should include courses that train teacher candidates to teach students with disabilities (Antilla-Garza, 2015; Pino, 2022; Sladewski et al., 2022) because Sharma and Sokal (2015) point out that there is a positive relationship between receiving pre-service special education courses and successful inclusive practices. It is also important for teacher education programs to provide necessary accommodations for prospective teachers with disabilities to diversify the field of teacher education and promote equity (Bargerhuff et al., 2012). However, some teacher education programs fail to address disability-specific issues in education due to the lack of expert teacher educators (O'Dwyer & Thorpe, 2013).

Empirical studies show that the experiences of teachers of students with visual impairments are dependent on personal, educational, attitudinal, and professional factors. Duquette's (2000) exploratory study with four pre-service teachers with disabilities indicates that these pre-service teachers' classroom practices are influenced by their prior schooling experiences, and they tend to innovate their teaching practices based on negative prior schooling experiences. The findings of this exploratory study point to the fact that "teachers with disabilities offer knowledge through their bodies and experiences that isn't usually part of the curriculum" (Anderson, 2006, p. 368). In another study, the researchers designed and developed a problem-based learning environment through online teaching resources for teachers of students with visual impairment and evaluated the impact of these materials. They found out that providing online materials as well as training opportunities contributed professional development of teachers of students with visual impairments (McLinden et al., 2006). Similarly, Cooc (2019) reported that teachers of students with disabilities need professional development sessions because these sessions offered instructional practices that are grounded on empirical evidence (Chitiyo et al., 2017; Yang & Rusli, 2012). When teachers of students with visual impairment are equipped with practices based on empirical evidence, they have the opportunity to make instructional arrangements to meet the needs of their students, which results in activating the senses other than sight. Activating the other senses helps students with visual impairments to learn concepts easily and increases their chance of success (Karakoç et al., 2022).

Available studies on teachers with visual impairments also focus on assistive technologies because teachers of students with visual impairments need to be competent in the use of assistive technologies to enrich their instructional practices (Blue, 2017; Merri & Monties-Cabot, 2005; Wolffe et al., 2002) because students with visual impairments can access academic, social, and cultural information in educational settings through the use of assistive technologies. However, these teachers are concerned about the lack of adequate resources when they try to meet the needs of their students (Ajuwon et al., 2016). In this vein, practitioners need to possess the necessary skill set to use assistive technologies as well as create resources to increase educational outcomes for the students with visual impairments. Additionally, there is a need for the systemic and on-going professional training for teachers of students with

visual impairments to maximize the effective use of assistive technologies (Zhou et al., 2012). When the use of assistive technologies is maximized to provide enhanced educational resources, it is probable for the students with visual impairments to close the gap in their academic and social skills, which are mastered through the sense of sight by the sighted students (Zhou et al., 2011). Nevertheless, other studies show that the use of assistive technologies in instructional practices is dependent on personal interest and initiative (Chanana et al., 2022) and the request of accessing to educational materials in different formats is sometimes ignored due to the lack of knowledge in assistive technologies (Adetoro, 2012). Such overlook can be present in high-stakes exams, as well. For example, Nisbet (2020) mentions that students with visual impairments can be disadvantaged in high-stake standardized exams as the structure of the exams does not allow students with visual impairments to use assistive technologies to access the exams.

In addition to international studies, there are some national studies conducted to explore the experiences of teachers of students with visual impairments (Karaman, 2014). In his case study, Başaran (2012) investigates how students with visual impairments are taught English as a foreign language at two universities. The findings indicate that teachers of students with visual impairments employ the same teaching methods and materials, which are used to teach the sighted students. The inability of differentiation in teaching students with visual impairments stems from the lack of formal training during teacher education and/or in-service professional development programs. In a study conducted in School for the Blind, Kocyigit and Artar (2015) picture the conditions of visually impaired learners in their learning environment and find that teachers in this study come up with their own teaching practices through a series of trial and error because of the insufficient prior education and pedagogic guidance (Kamalı-Arslantaş, 2017). It is also mentioned that the assessment and evaluation procedures for students with visual impairments pose several challenges for teachers. In a recent study that explores vocabulary teaching to young learners with visual impairments, it is found that curricular adaptations are required to meet the needs of the students with visual impairments because available resources do not address these learners' learning styles (Zorluel Özer & Cabaroğlu, 2018). Lastly, the attitudes of non-disabled teachers toward the inclusion of students with visual

impairments in mainstream education are investigated. Although previous empirical studies in the last decade portray negative attitudes of non-disabled teachers toward students with disabilities (Rakap & Kaczmarek, 2010), Ravenscroft, Davis, Bilgin, and Wazni (2019) Ravenscroft, Davis, Bilgin, and Wazni (2019) find an increasing positive attitude toward inclusion of students with visual impairment in education due to the teachers' enhanced practical knowledge over the years.

In conclusion, teachers of students with disabilities are unrepresented in the available literature (Anderson, 2006; Neca et al., 2020; Peters & Reid, 2009). Available empirical and theoretical studies demonstrate that both disabled and non-disabled teachers of students with visual impairment experience several difficulties and advantages. The difficulties they experience include attitudinal and cultural issues, lack of accessibility, pedagogical training and guidance, curricular and resource limitations. On the other hand, especially teachers with disabilities can innovate teaching and learning processes, and become culturally relevant role models for students with visual impairments. The findings of available literature are descriptive in nature and far from being conclusive. Thus, more in-depth and long-term studies are vital to explore language teaching practices of disabled and non-disabled teachers of students with VI.

#### **2.4. Theoretical Framework**

Available literature on language teacher cognition shows that the construct of teacher cognition is emergent, dynamic, and interrelated to other domains of language teachers' personal histories. Also, language teacher cognition studies cover a wide range of topics and challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions about teachers' mental lives and their relation to language teaching. In a similar vein, professional teacher identity studies highlight the dynamic and fluid nature of teacher identity, which includes language teachers' experiences during pre-service and in-service years, and teaching practices. It can be inferred that the constructs of professional teacher identity and language teacher cognition have their roots in language teachers' personal and professional histories, which are dynamic, emergent, and open to changes. Although both constructs have their roots in language teachers' personal and professional lives, the possible changes in teacher identity and cognition are difficult

to predict due to their non-linear nature. Despite being non-linear, the changes that take place in a teacher’s identity and cognition bear their own systematicity.

To track down the systematicity of the changes in language teacher cognition and professional identity, complexity theory is used as a theoretical framework in this dissertation because complexity theory is defined as “how the interacting parts of a complex system give rise to the system's collective behavior and how such a system simultaneously interacts with its environment” (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 1). To exemplify, a teacher can establish a basis of his/her teaching practices through the apprenticeship of observation during pre-service teacher education, which is related to language teacher cognition. The same pre-service teacher education program can be very influential for the teacher’s identity formation. In such a case, it can be said that the apprenticeship of observation and pre-service teacher education are the elements of the teacher’s identity and cognition system, and the teacher himself/herself is the agent of the pre-service teacher education program.

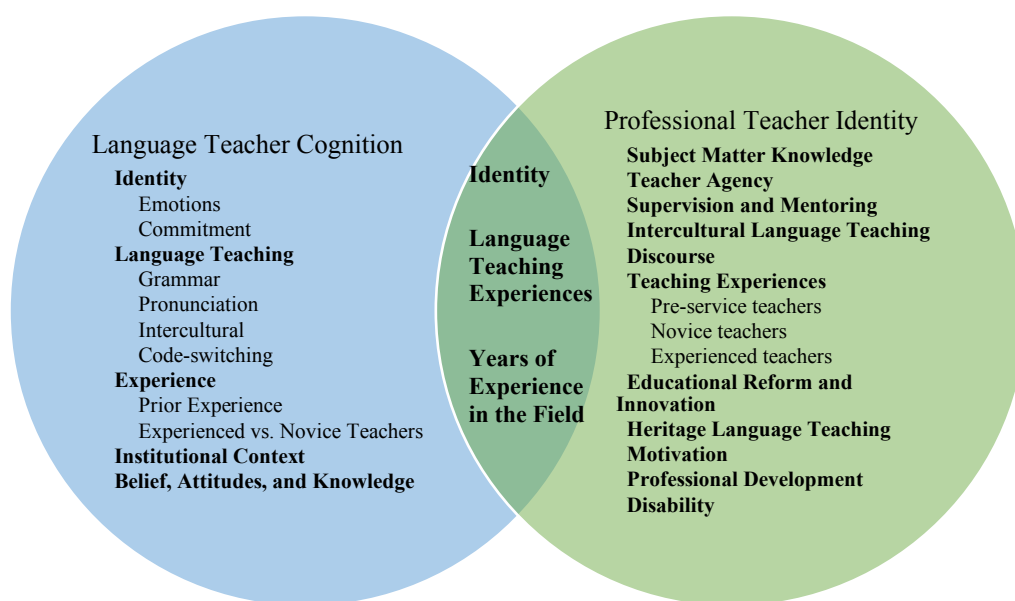


Figure 3: Overlapping Themes in Reviewed Language Teacher Cognition and Professional Teacher Identity Research

Given these, the interactions between elements and agents of the complex system can create new configurations, which can emerge at different levels and

timescales (Cameron & Larsen-Freeman, 2007) and these new patterns are nested within each other (Larsen-Freeman, 2012). In the example above, it can be said that the teacher has the ability to (re)organize his/her teaching practices with his/her cognition changes, which, in turn, shapes his/her professional identity by equipping the teacher with certain teaching practices. The process can be vice versa meaning that one's professional teacher identity formation is influential on the teacher's cognition. Thus, researching language teachers' identity formation and cognition in this study through a complex systems perspective allows the researcher to explore interactions of the two constructs "from individual minds up to the socio-political context of language learning – and interconnected timescales – from the minute-by-minute of classroom activity to teaching and learning lifetimes" (Cameron & Larsen-Freeman, 2007, p. 236).

In addition to this, a complex system is considered to be emergent, and the emergent nature of the complex system is the result of its continuous flux through the system's states (Kramsch, 2012). While some of these states can be highly stable, such as a teacher's classroom routines, others may be quite unsettled as in the case of a teacher who is trying new ways of increasing the learners' willingness to communicate. The continuous flux of the system's states is expected to reach a stable condition, which is characterized as an "attractor" state (Kostoulas et al., 2018). Reaching the attractor state is achieved through a process of co-adaptation, which is described as "a kind of mutual causality, in which change in one system leads to change in another system connected to it, and this mutual influencing continues over time" (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 202). The process of co-adaptation creates a room in which how the changes in professional teacher identity and cognition influence each other can be explored because the states of a complex system, as in the case of language teachers of visually impaired students, originate from its components, which are interdependent and in continuous interaction with each other in various ways (Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2016). Although it is assumed that professional teacher identity and cognition influence each other, it is difficult to pinpoint the direction of the influence because "the strength of the interactions changes over time. Therefore, multiple routes are often possible between components, mediated in different ways" (Larsen-Freeman, 2012, p. 205). By using complexity theory in this study, it is possible



to determine the possible directions of influence between professional teacher identity and language teacher cognition.

Lastly, Larsen-Freeman (2012) states that “complex systems iterate – they revisit the same territory again and again, which means that the present level of development is critically dependent on what preceded it” (p. 206). In the context of this study, available research suggests that professional teacher identity and cognition are dependent upon personal biographies and histories of the language teachers, which means language teachers shape their professional selves and individual minds based on their pre-service and in-service experiences. Exploring identity formation and teacher cognition of the teachers of visually impaired students through complexity theory framework permits the researcher to look for the possible links and relationships between the participants’ current identity formation process, teacher cognition, and previous experiences they have.

Acknowledging that “complexity theory account[s] for how the interacting parts of a complex system give rise to the system’s collective behavior and how such a system simultaneously interacts with its environment” (Larsen-Freeman, 2012, p. 206), the present study aims to uncover three language teachers’ professional teacher identity formation and cognition in the School for the Blind in Turkey by using the complexity theory as a theoretical framework. Complexity theory is suitable for the purposes of the present study in the following ways:

1. Professional teacher identity and language teacher cognition are nested within each other, and complexity theory allows the researcher to uncover such complicated links in teacher identity and cognition.
2. Professional teacher identity and language teacher cognition are dependent on previous experiences and personal histories. The complexity theory can deal with the system’s interactions retrospectively and prospectively as it seeks to understand the states of the system in different timescales.
3. The interactions the participants have between their identity formation and cognition in this study can create certain patterns and links. Thus, complexity theory permits the researcher to investigate these patterns and links to understand the teachers’ identity and cognition systems’ collective behaviors.

To conclude, the complexity theory is used as a theoretical framework in this doctoral study to explore the dynamic interplay of language teacher identity and cognition because it allows the researchers to work on the system's interactions retrospectively and prospectively. While the participants' histories, educational backgrounds, and previous learning and teaching experiences can help researcher to understand the system's retrospective interactions, the system's current configurations can guide the researcher to uncover the system's prospective interactions.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This section thoroughly explains the research methodology that guides this dissertation. First, the rationale of using qualitative research method in this study is presented. In subsequent subsections, this section demonstrates utilization of the case study approach regarding the overall design of this study, elaborates on participant sampling processes, introduces the context, and present the procedures of data collection and analysis. Finally, the ethical considerations and quality criteria in this study are explained and clarified.

#### **3.1. Qualitative Research Method: The Rationale**

This study explored language teacher cognition and identity formation of teachers of students with visual impairments in the School for the Blind. To do so, this study accepts and acknowledges that there are multiple and individually-constructed realities and meanings that depend on the historical, cultural, social, and contextual influences (Creswell, 2013). In this regard, Creswell (2008) defines qualitative research as

an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (p.15).

By using a qualitative research method in this study, the researcher intended to understand, interpret, make connections with, and illuminate the realities the participants have experienced and the meanings they have created (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Flick, 2007) because qualitative research methods can be considered as an ideal

form of inquiry that seeks to explore the nature of people's experiences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Patton (1990) further adds that

qualitative methods permit [the researcher] to study selected issues in depth and detail, and approach fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis that contribute to the depth, opened and detail of the qualitative inquiry (p. 13).

As this study purposed to uncover language teacher identity and cognition of teachers of students with visual impairments, it is necessary to study the phenomenon in its natural setting. Also, it is essential to interpret the participants' meaning-making processes without any predetermined categories because these meanings can yield complex, multiple, and dynamic realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Given these considerations, qualitative research methodology fits well for the purposes of this study because it can provide holistic, detailed, and experience-oriented accounts of language teacher cognition and professional teacher identity (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

More specifically, qualitative research method is employed for two main reasons in this dissertation study. First, exploring language teacher cognition and professional identity formation of the teachers of students with visual impairments requires the researcher to deal with socially, interactionally, and educationally constructed issues of disability. Thus, this study employs 'an approach that aspires to achieve empathic understanding and representation of the subjective perceptions and everyday lived experiences of the people being studied' (Berger & Lorenz, 2015, p. 5). Employing such an approach positions this dissertation to be emancipatory research about individuals with disabilities because Berger and Lorenz (2015) assert that emancipatory studies

aim to "give voice" to those who have been marginalized by society, making their experiences more visible and accessible to mainstream groups and helping to facilitate the incorporation of social differences as valued elements of a civil moral community devoted to social justice (p. 6).

The second rationale for utilizing a qualitative research method in this study is the methodological trends and developments in the fields of language teacher cognition and professional teacher identity formation because the reviews of literature in these

fields reveal that language teacher cognition and professional teacher identity studies are conducted mainly by using qualitative methods. While case studies and narrative inquiries are the most used ones in language teacher cognition studies, phenomenological and exploratory approaches are widely used in professional teacher identity research. Hence, it can be noted that the choice of methodology in exploring language teacher cognition and professional teacher identity tends to be qualitative because these constructs are dynamic, changing, evolving, culturally dependent, and socially situated (Borg, 2003b; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015).

Lastly, Marshall and Rossman (2014) state that “qualitative research methodologies have become increasingly important modes of inquiry for social sciences and applied fields” (p.1) and they are used to capture, understand, and explain the meanings made by participants in an activity or context (Wolcott, 2009). To achieve his end, this study utilizes a qualitative research method because uncovering language teacher cognition and professional identity formation of the teachers of students with visual impairment bears social, cultural and educational importance. Following the methodological directions in professional teacher identity and language teacher cognition studies as well as the widespread use of qualitative approaches to explore social and educational issues, this study adapts the case study approach to open up spaces for participants to voice their experiences of teaching English to students with visual impairments through in-depth and prolonged engagement with the participants and research site.

### **3.2. Case Study Methodology**

Although looked at with suspicion, qualitative research methods in the field of Applied Linguistics help the researchers to uncover, understand and interpret language teachers’ and learners’ various experiences through systematic, ongoing, inductive, and comparative data collection and analysis procedures (Bryant, 2017; Hadley, 2017; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this regard, Borg (2004) criticizes taken-for-granted assumptions about what counts as research in the field of language teaching and learning by stating

It seems unhelpful that, within a professional teaching organization such as TESOL, the notion of research which is often asserted (e.g., hypothesis-testing, objective inquiry) is one which excludes the kinds of inquiries which are most relevant, feasible and accessible to a majority of members. An insistence on hypotheses and objectivity becomes even more problematic when the phenomena being researched – language teaching and learning – are dynamic, process-oriented, unpredictable, and indelibly shaped by human interactions and values. In such contexts, broader views of what counts as research are required (p.6).

In line with Borg's statement, this study adapts a qualitative case study approach because "case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context)" (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). Also, case study research explores a present-day phenomenon in its real-life setting with intensive and prolonged engagement with the research setting and the participants (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Intensive and prolonged engagement with the research setting and participants helps the researcher maintain the originality of the evidence (Seale, Gobo, Gubrium, & Silverman, 2007), that is, "the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin, 2009, p. 2) as well as allows the researcher to create a comprehensive portrayal of the phenomena to "get the story down for the possible benefit of policymakers, scholars, and other citizens" (Odell, 2001, p. 162).

In addition to the ways of engaging the research setting and the participants, a case study is characterized as particularistic because it "concentrate[s] attention on the way particular groups of people confront specific problems, taking a holistic view of the situation" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 2). As Bennett and Elman (2006) argue that

the social world is complex, characterized by path dependence, tipping points, interaction effects, strategic interaction, two-directional causality or feedback loops, and equifinality (many different paths to the same outcome) or multifinality (many different outcomes from the same value of an independent variable, depending on context) (p. 457).

In addition to the particularistic nature of case studies, the case study approach is also delineated as descriptive and heuristic. As case study approach is "dealing with things that are both real and constructed, that are fuzzy realities with complex properties, that have a holistic element whilst being constituted from complex

configurations, that are intersected with their environment with boundaries being not the things that cut off but rather the domain of intercommunication” (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 155)the product of a case study needs to be comprehensive and detailed portrait of the phenomenon under study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Crowe et al., 2011; Flick, 2007). In addition to this, the complexity of the meaning-making processes in case studies calls for a heuristic perspective, which is the ability to bring about the discovery of new meanings, extend the reader’s experience, or confirm what is known (Saldana, 2011; Yin, 2016).

Hence, this study explores the teachers of students with visual impairments in the School for the Blind in the 2019-2020 education year, which means that the researcher has the chance to capture the experiences of the participants with the relations to research setting with consistent and prolonged engagement that achieves descriptive nature of case study approach. In addition to this, the constructs of the language teacher cognition and professional teacher identity require the researchers to go back and forth in the data to capture complexities of language teaching practices and identity formation. Going back and forth, that is, approaching the research heuristically, yields how the participants in this study have formed their professional teacher identities as well as chosen their instructional practices. In this vein, the case study methodology is suitable for exploring issues of the language teacher cognition and professional teacher identity because data collection and analysis go hand in hand, in which each informs and streamlines the other (Charmaz, 2014). Moving back and forth between the emerging analysis and the data makes the findings more particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic.

### **3.3. Research Setting**

The research setting in this case study is a public School for the Blind, which is specifically designed and organized for students with visual impairments. The School for the Blind is located in a large building at a university campus in central Ankara. The school accepts students, who received a medical documentation of their visual impairments. As visual impairment is considered to be low incident disability according to the rules and regulations of the Ministry of National Education, those

students who have additional disabilities along with visual impairments are also accepted to the School for the Blind.

The demographics of the School for the Blind show that there are 20 teachers from different fields working in this school, 3 of whom are English language teachers. In addition to the teachers, there are five administrators in the School for the Blind. Each administrator is responsible for certain tasks. For example, while an assistant principal deals with the dormitory and kitchen, others work with student affairs, extra-curricular activities, and/or teachers.

The classrooms have 6 students on average and the total number of students in School for the Blind is 78. While some of the students with visual impairments are transported to the School for the Blind, others stay at the dormitory, which is positioned at the upper floors of the school. The School for the Blind offers eight hours of teaching in a day.

There are several facilities that students with visual impairments can use. The School for the Blind has a big garden and playground. The students with visual impairments can enjoy their breaktime in the garden and/or playground. The school also has an indoor sports hall, where the students with visual impairments receive their physical education courses. In addition to these, there are a music room and a hyper-technology room for the students with visual impairments. If students with visual impairments want to practice their musical abilities, they can use music room, which includes many musical instruments that students can play such as piano, guitar, and violin. In the hyper-technology room, students with visual impairments can use various technological tools such as text-to-speech, voiceover, or tablets.

There are other services that students with visual impairments can make use of. In the School for the Blind, there is a large lunchroom, where students with visual impairment eat their lunch in the School for the Blind. The lunch is provided to the students with visual impairments free of charge. The School for the Blind provides medical support, as well. There is a full-time nurse in the School for the Blind. The nurse carries out regular inspections to help students with visual impairments to have body weight within health standards. Also, the nurse is responsible for giving and reminding medications and pills to those who have chronic illnesses.



Lastly, the School for the Blind also offers facilities and services for teachers, as well. Teachers in the School for the Blind can use Braille printer free of charge. They can also use internet services provided by the Ministry of National Education. In addition to these, there are a smartboard and a computer in each class. Teachers can use smartboards and computers for professional and personal needs.

### **3.4. Sampling and Sampling Procedures**

Qualitative research methods necessitate informed and grounded decisions on the unit of analysis, which includes sampling, sample size, and participants (Crowe et al., 2011; Small, 2009; Tracy, 2020). This dissertation, which is designed as a case study, utilizes purposeful sampling (Denzin, 2009; Flick et al., 2004; John, 2007; Woodside, 2010; Yin, 2016) because the researcher seeks to ‘obtain the broadest range of information and perspectives on the subject of the study’ (Kuzel, 1992, p.37). Patton (2015) further adds that purposeful sampling is ‘selecting information-rich cases to study, cases that by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated’ (p. 265). In this regard, the researcher in this study employs the following principle for purposeful sampling:

The decision on how to select the case(s) to study is a very important one that merits some reflection. In an intrinsic case study, the case is selected on its own merits. The case is selected not because it is representative of other cases, but because of its uniqueness, which is of genuine interest to the researchers (Crowe et al., 2011, p. 5).

The sampling, thus, was decided on the participants’ working as an English language teacher in the School for the Blind since the participants represented unique cases allowing for in-depth, detailed, and vigorous data collection processes to explore language teacher identity and cognition of teachers of students with visual impairments.

In addition to the sampling procedures, the context of the study bears importance. Following Crowe et al. (2011), the context of a case study is important because

(1) the context of the case study is 'the selected case study site(s) should allow the research team access to the group of individuals, the organisation, the processes or

whatever else constitutes the chosen unit of analysis for the study” (p. 6) and (2) “access is therefore a central consideration; the researcher needs to come to know the case study site(s) well and to work cooperatively with them. Selected cases need to be not only interesting but also hospitable to the inquiry if they are to be informative and answer the research question(s) (p. 6).

Therefore, the context of this case study was selected to be the School for the Blind because the research site allowed the researcher to access to the teachers of students with visual impairments. Also, the context was suitable for working cooperatively with the participants in this study as the participants agreed to participate in this study to voice their experiences in the School for the Blind.

### **3.5 Participants**

Three English language teachers of students with visual impairments participate in this case study. The participants are full-time teachers in a School for the Blind in Ankara, Turkey and each participant has approximately 15-hours weekly teaching load on average. The participants are obliged to follow rules and regulations of the Ministry of National Education in Turkey regarding the curricula, accessibility, professional development, and other extracurricular activities.

Merve (pseudonym) is in her early 40s and she does not have any disability. She is a graduate of English Language and Literature department. Along with her undergraduate studies, in order to be an English teacher in public and private schools in Turkey, she took the teaching certificate courses (pedagogic formation), which are required by Ministry of National Education. Prior to the School for the Blind, she worked in rural and urban public mainstream schools for 13 years and she has been an English language teacher in the School for the Blind for three years at the time of this study was conducted. In the School for the Blind, she teaches secondary school students from 5<sup>th</sup> grade to 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Mustafa (pseudonym) is in his late 50s and he is an English language teacher with visual impairment. Although he did not possess his visual impairment until he was 6 years old, he lost his sight when he was attending primary school. He received primary and secondary school education in the School for the Blind that this case study was conducted. Upon completing his secondary school education, he was accepted to a mainstream high school. Although he faced many obstacles and barriers during his

high school education, he managed to enter a reputable university, where the medium of instruction is English. He completed his undergraduate studies in the department of International Relations. Upon graduation, he was assigned to work in Ministry of Treasury. However, he left his position to be an English teacher in the School for the Blind, which is also the school he received his primary and secondary school education. When he was assigned to be an English language teacher in the School for the Blind, he received intensive pedagogic formation courses and completed two-semester practicum. He has been working in the School for the Blind for more than 20 years. He teaches English language to primary and secondary school students.

Rosalinda (pseudonym) is in her mid 50s and she does not have any disability. She is a graduate of English Language Teaching department. Throughout her career, she worked as an English language teacher, a head of English department and a school principal. In addition to her career in the field of English language teaching, she worked in Ministry of National Education and participated in Erasmus projects. She received Jean Monnet scholarship to enroll a graduate program, and she spent two years in the UK. However, the department she was working for was abolished in 2008 and she was assigned to the School for the Blind. She has been teaching English to secondary school students for more than 10 years in the School for the Blind.

### **3.6. Data Collection Methods and Data Sources**

The data sources for the study will be observations, field notes, individual interviews, stimulated recall sessions, and collection of documents and artifacts (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2016, 2018). Here I describe these procedures.

#### **3.6.1. Observations, Field Notes and Memos**

In case studies, observations are considered to be primary instruments in which field notes are constructed (Heath & Street, 2008). Merriam (1998) notes the importance of observation within qualitative research, stating that it offers “a firsthand account of the situation under study” (p. 111). Similarly, Saldana (2011) states that “the goal is to capture people’s naturalistic actions, reactions, and interactions, and to infer their ways of thinking and feeling. (p. 47)”. In this regard, the researcher was able to gain an

understanding of the participants' language teaching practices through observations. The observation sessions in this study also served to examine the possible mismatches between participants' statements during the individual interviews and their actual practices in the classroom.

To conduct classroom observations, the researcher utilized the participant-observation technique because the participant observation provided additional opportunities for data collection. Also, the researcher assumed a peripheral participant-observer role because it "provides the investigator with a wide angle to assess the small details as well as the bigger picture, while documenting in written form the participants' actions as they occur" (Saldana, 2011, p. 48).

The researcher initially created an observation protocol (see Appendix D) and timeline (see Appendices C and E). Then the researcher determined the focus of the classroom observation. At the day of classroom observation, the researcher notified the participants about the classroom observation before accessing to the classroom where the data collection took place. In order not to interfere the participants' instructional practices, the researcher sat at the back of the classroom and conducted the observation. While observing the participants, the researcher took minute-by-minute notes.

In addition to the classroom observations, the researcher created field notes during the data collection processes because they can serve as an "analysis-in-description" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 8). As Emerson *et al.* (2011) point out, "writing field note descriptions is not so much a matter of passively copying down 'facts' about 'what happened.' Rather, such writing involves active processes of interpretation and sense-making" (p. 8). In this regard, field notes and memos can be descriptive, reflective, and analytical at the same time (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Emerson *et al.*, 2011) which were used to uncover the participants' language teacher cognition and professional identities. For example, the researcher took note of possible (mis)matches between the participants' statements and their instructional practices. While noting down the (mismatches), the researcher tried to link these incidents with the participants' personal histories and/or the relevant literature to complement data collection and analysis.

### **3.6.2. Individual Interviews**

Interviewing is a common method used in qualitative studies to learn how people feel and think. Individual interviews facilitate such understanding by providing a format for researchers to ask questions about individuals' experiences and the meanings they make about those experiences. As a data collection tool, interviews are "a resource for investigating truths, facts, experience, beliefs, attitudes, and/or feelings of respondents" (Talmy, 2010, 131).

Interviews can yield rich insights into people's lives, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes, and feelings. Interviews are useful for getting the story behind participants' experiences. Therefore, interviewing consists not only of asking questions and getting answers but also of exchanging information collaboratively (Brinkmann, 2013; Josselson, 2013; Mears, 2009). Interviews seek to elicit participants' descriptions of the meanings of their worlds and to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Kvale, 1996).

In this case study, interviews provided insights into the participants' beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge as well as tensions, conflicts, and difficulties when they taught English to students with visual impairment. Additionally, professional teacher identity formation is a dynamic process, in which narratives are vital to explore and understand it. Thus, individual interviews are employed as a data collection tool because the researchers are interested in "understanding of the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 2013, p. 9). For the purposes of this doctoral study, three participants will individually be interviewed on the weekly basis throughout 2019-2020 education year (see Appendices A, B, and F).

To elaborate, structured interviews were conducted in this doctoral study. Firstly, the researcher reviewed the relevant literature on language teacher identity and cognition. Then, the researcher decided on the issues of language teacher identity and cognition that emerged from the literature review. Based on these issues, the interview timeline and questions were prepared because the researcher aimed to list every question to be asked. Also, listing the interview questions allowed the researcher to "adopt the same consistent behavior and demeanor when interviewing different participants" (Yin, 2016, p. 141). In addition to the structured interviews, the

researcher opened spaces for the participants to express their concerns, understandings, and thoughts about the issues discussed during the interviews. To achieve this, the researcher benefitted from the advantages of semi-structured interviews. In this regard, Tracy (2020) states that semi-structured interviews

allow for more emic, emergent understandings to blossom, and for the interviewees' complex viewpoints to be heard without the constraints of scripted questions. Furthermore, less structured interviews are likely to tap both content and emotional levels. Researchers can learn what participants believe is most interesting and important, and the interview can flex to focus on these meaningful topics (p. 158).

Thirdly, the researcher conducted individual interviews on a weekly basis. The Researchers asked the same list of questions to all participants and took note of emerging issues that resulted from the semi-structured interviews. After the interview, the researcher transcribed the interview data and utilized memo-writing. The memos served as the starting point to revisit the relevant literature and conduct member-checking.

To conclude, the researcher prepared a set of interview questions and structured the individual interviews accordingly because the scripted interview questions allowed the researcher to establish consistency of the topics and issues discussed during the interviews across the participants. Additionally, the researcher benefitted from the semi-structured interview technique to delve into the possible concerns, understandings, and thoughts that participants intended to express.

### **3.6.3. Stimulated Recall Sessions**

Stimulated recall sessions are conducted to retrospectively analyze the participants' actions, thoughts and/or behaviors. The main aim of recording the participants' actions, thoughts and/ behaviors is to present the selected stimulus from the video to the participants. In doing so, the researcher asks specific questions to capture the rationale of the selected stimulus under analysis. Retrieving the actions, thoughts and/or behaviors helps the participants verbalize and elicit their responses in specific circumstances (Bartels, 2005).

Stimulated recall sessions are important in this study due to the fact that teacher cognition and professional identity formation necessitates the researcher to move back

and forth while data collection processes in order to uncover the rationale of language teaching practices and professional identity formation processes. As the aim of this study to theorize the patterns of language teacher cognition and professional teacher identity formation, stimulated recall sessions can provide in-depth data about in what circumstances the observed behaviors take place, why and when. Lastly, the stimulated recall sessions can complement the data retrieved from observation protocols by having concrete recordings of the participants' language teaching practices.

It important to note that although stimulated recall sessions were originally planned as a data collection strategy, the researcher could not conduct stimulated recall sessions because the Ministry of National Education did not grant permission to video-record in the School for the Blind. Thus, this doctoral study had to exclude stimulated recall sessions from the data collection processes.

### **3.7. Data Analysis**

Creswell (2013) argues that data analysis process involves “a preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of them” (p. 195). Using this framework, a cyclical, dynamic, and continuous analysis process was used in this doctoral study. As the reading of the data, memo writing and coding simultaneously stimulate each other, and coding is the method of connecting data, issues, and interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) so interview transcriptions, classroom recording, observations, and field notes were used for data analysis. Obtained data was continuously coded and analyzed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). According to the coding strategies outlined by Saldaña (2013). The coding procedures included descriptive coding, analytic coding, in-vivo coding, line-by-line coding, and other necessary coding strategies.

To conduct data analysis, Miles et al.'s (2014) iterative model was utilized. Firstly, I conducted individual interviews and inserted my comments and notes into the interview file. Then, all the individual interviews were verbatim transcribed. All the interview data was verbatim transcribed by the researcher to engage in data reading (Creswell, 2007). During the initial data reading and analysis, the researcher wrote memos and combined the notes with the interview transcriptions because “coding and analytic memo writing are concurrent qualitative data analytic activities (Saldaña,

2013, p. 41), and there is “a reciprocal relationship between the development of a coding system and the evolution of understanding a phenomenon” (Weston et al., 2001, p. 397).

In the first-cycle coding, the researcher focused on holistic and deductive analysis as well as literature-based initial coding. While the researcher conducted inductive data analysis in the second-cycle coding, the focus was on analytic memo writing in the third cycle of data analysis. In addition, the researcher utilized values coding to uncover the participants’ beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge about students with visual impairments.

Lastly, during the data collection and analysis processes, several technological hardware tools and software programs were utilized. All the interview recordings were conducted with a voice recording machine. In addition, observations, field notes, and memo writing were done using Microsoft Word software. Lastly, data analysis and coding procedures were conducted by utilizing MAXQDA Plus 2022 software (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019).

### **3.8. Utilization of the Theoretical Framework**

Language teacher identity and cognition created a complex system, which was the result of the changes, alterations, and adaptations throughout the participants’ English language teaching career and the participants’ complex systems still bear their dynamicity because the participants experience constant revisions, reorganization, and alterations in their complex system of language teacher identity and cognition.

Using Hiver and Al-Hoorie's (2016) dynamic ensemble framework during the data collection and data analysis processes, capturing the participants’ complex systems of language teacher identity and cognition was organized around four main considerations. These considerations were “operational considerations”, “contextual considerations”, “micro-structure considerations”, and “macro-system considerations”.

To address the operational considerations, the researcher focused on the determination of the participants’ complex systems and levels of granularity. As mentioned above, the participants’ language teacher identity and cognition created a unique complex system because these constructs were continuously interacting with



each other. These interactions determined the configurations of the participants' complex systems. On the other hand, the level of granularity indicated the duration, procedures, and tools of the data collection.

Contextual considerations focused on exploring the possible influences of the contexts the participants were surrounded throughout their careers. Additionally, the researcher especially delved into the contextual factors of the School for the Blind on the participants' complex system of language teacher identity and cognition because these factors showed how the participants' complex systems adapted, shaped, altered, and stagnated within the context of School for the Blind.

Lastly, while micro-structure considerations dealt with the components, interactions, and parameters of the complex system, macro-structure considerations addressed dynamic processes of the complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. These dynamic processes incorporated the system's immunity, bypass, resistance, (un)stability, attractor states, and other behaviors (Dörnyei, 2014).

### **3.9. Ethical Considerations**

This case study may have several ethical issues. All of the ethical guidelines of the Middle East Technical University (METU) were followed to clarify ethical considerations and eliminate possible ethical issues. The researcher applied to the Human Subjects Ethics Committee of Middle East Technical University; submitted the required documents. Upon receiving all the permissions from Middle East Technical University's Human Subjects Ethics Committee (see Appendix G), the researcher carried out the study in accordance with the codes of ethics after all the necessary approvals were granted.

In addition, the research setting in this case study is a public school, which is governed by and under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education in Turkey. The researcher also applied to the Ministry of National Education in Turkey to get permission to access the research setting and participants.

Upon granted permission, all the participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the stages of data collection and analysis, and the findings of the study. The participants who are willing to take part in this study were asked to give their

consent. While Merve and Mustafa accepted to be interviewed and observed, Rosalinda only consented to be interviewed.

To protect the participants' privacy, and ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, pseudonyms were used to refer to the participants.

Lastly, the researcher explained to the participants that if they might feel uncomfortable talking about their personal and professional lives, they had the opportunity to decline to answer any questions and/or withdraw from the study at any time.

### **3.10. Quality Criteria**

To ensure rigor for qualitative inquiry, researchers use various approaches and strategies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) because qualitative research is different in its ontological, epistemological, and methodological terms (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this regard, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) state that "like other qualitative methods, narrative relies on criteria other than validity, reliability, and generalizability" (p.7). Grounding on the framework Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed, this doctoral study focused on (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, and (4) confirmability.

The validity of the findings in light of the data collected needs to match with the realities of the phenomenon under study (Seale et al, 2007). To ensure credibility in qualitative inquiry, several strategies are recommended: triangulation, member checks, and adequate and prolonged engagement in the data collection (Morse, 2018). To ensure the credibility of this doctoral study, the researcher utilized member-checks, adequate and prolonged engagement, and peer and external audits.

Firstly, researchers utilize member checks to avoid any possible misunderstanding during the data collection processes because member checks are "the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 126) were utilized. In this doctoral dissertation, the researcher utilized member checks by following the steps below.

1. Interview questions were checked to avoid any possible ambiguity.
2. Individual interviews were conducted.
3. Individual interviews were transcribed.

4. Descriptive and interpretive notes were created to share with the participants.
5. Prior to the next individual interview, the descriptive and interpretive notes were shared with the participants to rule out any misunderstanding and/or misinterpreting.

Secondly, the researcher continued to interview the participants, observe their classes, and take field notes until the data reached saturation. The researcher ensured data saturation by asking newly framed interview questions that targeted the topics from previous interviews. When the participants provided the same and/or similar responses, the researcher decided that the data reached saturation and stopped individual interviews. Lastly, the researcher utilized peer and external audits. The committee members gathered three times before the defense meeting to evaluate this doctoral study and provided their feedback and comments on every aspect of the dissertation. Thus, it can be concluded that the committee members reviewed the research process from the beginning to the end.

In terms of dependability, which deals with the consistency of the data collection and analysis, the researcher utilized the audit trail because it describes “how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.252). In this regard, the researcher kept a research log, in which the researcher noted down how the decision of data collection and analysis processes evolved starting from the proposal phase to the defense meeting.

For transferability, rich and thick descriptions of the research setting, the process of the study, and the participants. Quotations from the participants and excerpts from the field notes were provided to serve transferability. Lastly, the researcher relied on an extensive literature review for the purposes of confirmability of this study. Also, the researcher corroborated the research design by the theoretically and methodologically informed decision.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

In this chapter, I present the findings of the study that emerged from the data analysis of individual interviews and in-class observations and field notes. First, the participants with their personal histories prior to striving for a career in English language teaching profession are introduced. Later, based on each participant's perspectives, the participants' language identity and cognition are presented respectively.

#### **4.1. Case 1: Merve's Teacher Identity**

Based on the individual interviews and in-class observations I conducted with Merve, "personal history", "initial identity formation", "in-service experiences prior to the School for the Blind", and "transition to the School for the Blind", are emerged as being the influential factors on her teacher identity formation. Figure 4 illustrates emerged categories and themes on Merve's language teacher identity.

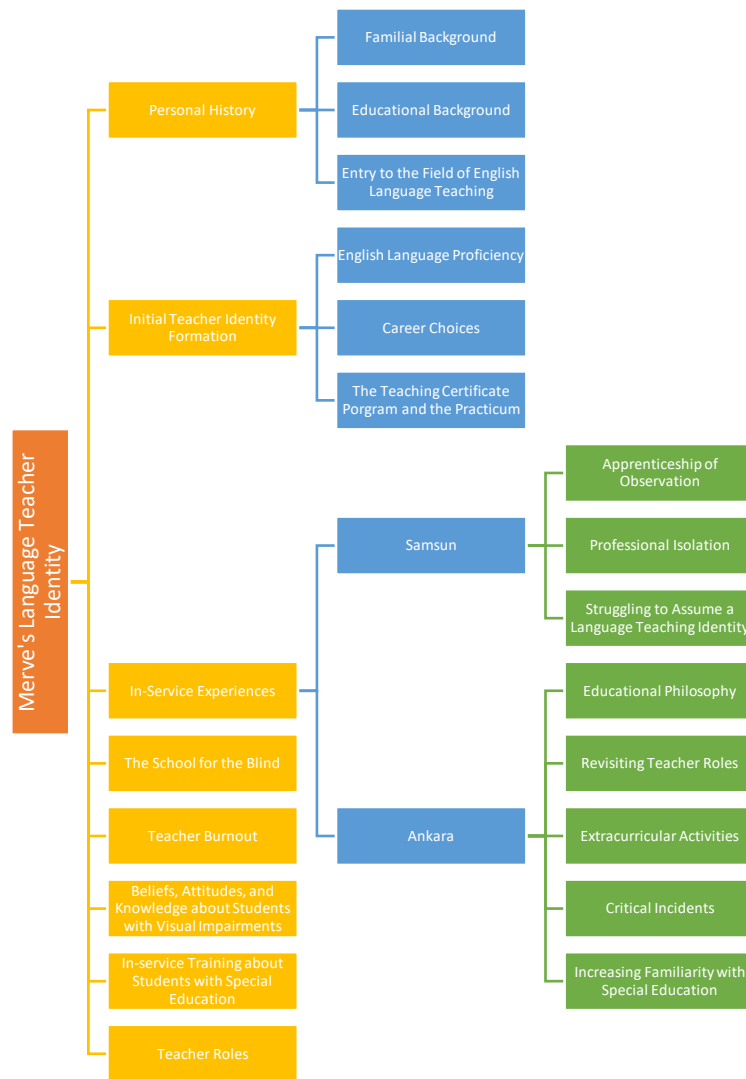


Figure 4: Merve's Teacher Language Identity Formation

In the following sub-sections, Merve's teacher identity formation processes are presented with the emerged themes from the data analysis.

#### 4.1.1 Merve's Personal History

Merve was born in 1981 in Ankara. Her mother is a teacher in a rehabilitation center and her father is a draftsman. Her extended family members are also in the teaching profession. Her childhood passed by with her family members' stories about their school environment and teaching experiences.

There were many teachers around me. My aunts are teachers, I mean my family members are teachers in general, mostly my mother's side. I grew up with their memories about the things happened in the class (Merve Individual Interview, November 6, 2019).

She received her primary, secondary, and high school education in Ankara. She started her undergraduate education in 1998 and her major was English Language and Literature. Prior to her undergraduate studies, she attended the university's language preparatory school for a year.

Upon successful completion of language preparatory school, she took lessons related to English Language and Literature. In her second year at the university, in addition to her undergraduate courses, she began to take "teaching certificate" courses, which were related to general pedagogy, language teaching, assessment and evaluation. The teaching certificate courses required her to fulfill a two-semester long practicum in her junior year at the university. While in the first semester of the practicum, she attended primary school English classes in a private school and observed teaching practices of the cooperating teacher, in the second semester of the practicum she taught English classes and carried out other responsibilities such as preparing language teaching materials and evaluating exam papers under the supervision of the cooperating teacher in a public school. In 2003, she successfully completed her undergraduate studies as well as the teaching certificate courses and became eligible to be an English language teacher in public and private schools.

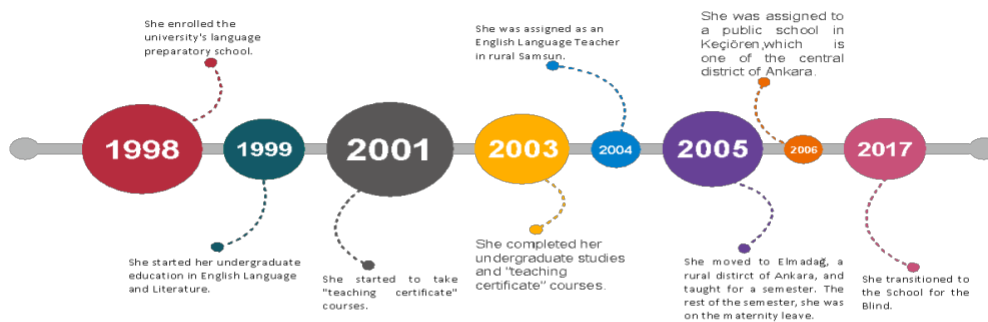


Figure 5: Merve's Timeline of Career Path

Upon graduation, she took the Public Personnel Selection Examination and became an English language teacher in a public school in Samsun in 2004. Although she did not consider the teaching profession as her priority in her career pursuit, she wanted to try and decide.

I had many different options such as international companies, working abroad, etc. Yet, I took the Public Personnel Selection Examination without a serious expectation. I was assigned to a public school in Samsun. The environment in Samsun was beautiful. I said, “why should not I try it? If I do not like it, I can leave whenever I want”. Then, I continued to teach (Merve Individual Interview, November 6, 2019).

The public school she was assigned to was in a rural area and the students were transported to the school from nearby villages. She worked there for a year and moved to Elmadağ, which is a rural district of Ankara. There she worked for a semester, and she was on the maternity leave for the rest of the year. When she returned from the maternity leave, she transitioned to a public school in Ankara, a central district of Ankara, and there she worked for 11 years. In 2017, she transitioned to the School for the Blind and she has been working as an English language teacher in the School for the Blind for three years.

Throughout her teaching career, she has taught secondary school students from 5<sup>th</sup> grade to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and there were approximately 35 students in each of her classes. In addition to the high number of students in her classes, she had “inclusive” students in some of her classes. These students had intellectual disabilities and emotional-behavioral disorders. This was not the only occasion she interacted with the students with disabilities. Due to her mother’s job in a rehabilitation center, she saw many students with disabilities. Although she has become familiar with the students with disabilities, she did not possess any teaching experience with the students with visual impairment prior to the School for the Blind.

#### **4.1.2. Merve’s Initial Teacher Identity Formation**

During the interviews, Merve mentioned several factors that led her to the teaching profession. She was a graduate of the credit system that was used in secondary schools in Turkey in the 90s. Due to being a graduate of the credit system, she did not receive any mathematics and science lessons in high school, and she had to pursue her high

school education in verbal studies, which included subjects such as Turkish language and literature, geography, history, etc. Her choice to pursue verbal studies influenced her entrance to the university. In the Turkish higher education system, the students were obliged to take the university entrance exam based on their high school study area and choose a department that was in line with their high school study area. Regarding her career choice, Merve stated that

I was a graduate of the credit system which was implemented once upon a time. We were the last group of the students who completed their education according to the credit system. [Because of the credit system] I did not receive any quantitative lessons in high school as I was a student in verbal studies. Consequently, I did not have many options, so I entered the university entrance exam in foreign language studies (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Based on her statement about her educational background and university entrance exam, it can be understood that her choice to pursue a career in the language teaching profession was a reluctant decision. She further explained her choice saying that

I did not choose English language because of my personal interest or emotional attachment. Being English language teacher was not my long-held dream, I mean I was not coming from such background (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

In addition to the influence of her educational background on her career choice, when asked about key figures whose ideas were crucial about her career choice, it was realized that Merve's family members, especially her mother, played a vital role in her prospects. Although she was reluctant about the teaching profession, both her educational background and the influence of her family members inclined her to choose a career path that led her to the teaching profession.

At the beginning, it was not a willing choice. My mother insisted a lot at that time. Especially my mother forced me to go in that direction. I can say that it was all her choice (Merve Individual Interview, October 20, 2019).

From her statements about how her mother compelled Merve to enter the teaching profession, it is obvious that she was reluctant and unwilling. Together with her unwillingness, her language proficiency was a serious barrier for her prospects in English language teaching profession. Although she proved her written language



proficiency in the university entrance exam, her productive language skills were inadequate, and she considered dropping out the university because she was unwilling and had language proficiency problems. When asked her initial experiences at the university she said

In my first year, I was having great difficulty because those speeches, teachers' talk, and their accents were like Chinese to me. At that time, I said yes, I am going to give up. I was so close. I had problems in speaking, understanding the spoken language, and spontaneous things (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

However, she managed to overcome her demotivating and unwilling ideas about her undergraduate studies when she realized that she could improve her language skills. Her realization that improving her language proficiency was dependent on her efforts was a turning point for Merve's initial teacher identity formation.

In my undergraduate studies, I discovered that I could go forward, I mean the stages of language improvement. I can do it. I can read the classics, even the old pieces of English literature. At that time, I understood if I focus on and devote my time, I can make progress (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Her improvement in English language was not the only discovery she experienced in the undergraduate studies because her language proficiency improvement was accompanied by her realization of joy she was having during the practicum. Both her language skill improvement and the joy she had during the observations in the practicum led her to the teaching profession.

During the practicum, in the lessons I observed, I realized that I enjoyed it very much. Then, I directed myself to the teaching profession accordingly. I mean my realization that I can be a language teacher happened in this way (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

In the first semester of the practicum when she was observing her cooperating teacher's lessons, Merve was still having questions about her prospects in English language teaching profession as she did not think that she was a real teacher. Her questions about the profession were intensified when she had her first experience of English language teaching.

In the first semester, I went to observe and do micro-teaching. If I am not mistaken it was a first graders' English lesson. I wrote something on the board, it was not a

sentence but a word or something. The cooperating teacher said “what are you doing? They do not know how to read and write.” I never forget it; it is always in my mind (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

However, her questions about her prospects in the teaching profession diminished in the second semester during the practicum as she started to teach the full sessions and carry out the duties regarding language teaching and learning.

In the second semester of the practicum, our cooperating teacher would let us teach occasionally. When I was in the class alone, I did not have any problems. I started to say that I am becoming a teacher. I felt it (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Together with the feeling of becoming a teacher, the second semester of the practicum turned out to be stimulating because she noticed that she could have a rapport with the students and respond to the needs of her students during the sessions she taught under the supervision of the cooperating teacher.

During the practicum, I became aware that I was not having difficulty in making connections with the students. I could easily communicate with them. I could understand them with ease, and I could teach them (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Furthermore, the second semester of the practicum made her think about the roles of a language teacher. This thinking was not a coincidence when it is considered that Merve developed a sense of responsibility when she was actively engaging in the language teaching processes in the second semester of the practicum. Hence, the practicum challenged her views about the roles of a language teacher, and these challenges consisted of classroom management issues, language teaching materials, and application of theory into the practice.

It was very different to manage a classroom when they are not motivated to listen to you and it seemed a simple task to teach English language in theory but when you consider those unmotivated students, it is very divergent from the theories we had seen. Besides, my cooperating teacher was using various realia and visual materials. There I noticed the importance of multiple intelligences theory. As a teacher, I realized that I needed to go beyond the theory. (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

To summarize Merve’s personal history and initial teacher identity formation experiences, it can be said that although she did not aspire to be a teacher, her parents

were influential about her career choices. At the university, she was an undergraduate student in English Language and Literature department. Initially, her language proficiency problems brought her to the edge of dropping out the university, but she resolved her language proficiency problems and became more motivated to complete the university. Becoming an English language teacher was a career option for Merve, yet she needed to take the teaching certificate courses to be an English language teacher. During these teaching certificate courses, her initial teaching experiences led her to question her career choice. Later, she developed an interest in the teaching profession and she started to recognize that she could have a rapport with the students. With the fulfillment of the responsibilities of the language teaching during the practicum, she started to see herself as a language teacher.

Although Merve started to see herself as an English language teacher, she was still questioning her career choice when she started her assigned position in a public school in Samsun because of her personal biography and undergraduate education. Her career dilemma seemed to be resolved with the idea that she could try and decide if she wanted to stay in the teaching profession.

#### **4.1.3. Merve's In-Service Experiences**

Merve's in-service experiences covered her language teacher identity formation experiences prior to the transition to the School for the Blind between 2004 and 2017. In these years, she worked in three different public schools. First, she was assigned to a rural area school in Samsun, and she taught primary and secondary school students for a year. When she was assigned to her first in-service school, she experienced several difficulties in terms of transportation, social life, and the structure of the school. Due to the fact that the school was located in a rural area, the students were transported to the school from nearby villages. In addition to this, she was the only language teacher at the school. Given that it was her beginning experiences in in-service teaching, she felt loneliness and sometimes helpless.

It was difficult in all means, not only for being a teacher. My social and daily life underwent serious changes. The students were coming from various villages around and the classes were crowded. At first, I did not know what to do and there was not anybody to get advice from (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Although her first in-service experiences were rather negative, her teacher identity formation faced a sharp transition. Contrary to her pre-service teacher identity formation, in which she had difficulties to form her language teacher identity, she considered herself to become a professional in the field of English language teaching with the beginning of her in-service experiences.

I do not know how to explain it. I mean when I started my in-service duty, I had my title and its associated responsibilities. It changed a lot of things. During my pre-service experiences, I felt that I was always under control of my supervisor. I could not have the joy of being a language teacher. Yet, in my in-service duty in Samsun, I began to think that I am a professional in English language teaching (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

With the feeling of becoming a professional in the field of English language teaching, she mentioned several privileges and prejudices she had experienced. In terms of privileges of being a language teacher, knowing a foreign language created her opportunities to position herself in a unique place in terms of school-related tasks.

It [being an English language teacher] has many advantages. Most of the people are staying away from English and you seem to be very cool. People say she knows English. For example, there were official documents in English, which were about other disciplines. The administrator brought them to us but when we checked them, we realized that it was not about English language teaching. In such cases, I feel that I am one step ahead in a topic most people are distant. It is really nice (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

However, she was often asked to prove her language skills in the school community as if she possessed a foreigner's identity.

When you are an English language teacher, people assume that you are British. As if we owned a foreigner passport, we were always posed with questions about our language skills and personal lives such as "Can you speak English? Do you share the same religion with us? Do you fast?" They expect you to be a foreigner (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

While experiencing language teacher related privileges and prejudices, she continued to shape her language teacher identity in a way that could be traced down her language learning experiences. When the researcher explicitly asked about her language learning experiences and language teacher identity, she mentioned that she was misinformed certain language items when she was learning English. Upon becoming

an English language teacher in Samsun, she assumed an informative teacher identity because she did not want to misguide her students.

I never forget the alphabet song because it was very influential for me. I was thinking that “l m n o p” [referring to their pronunciation] is a word but during my language preparatory classes, I realized that they are separate letters. When I am teaching the alphabet, I always state that they are separate letters to avoid any misunderstandings like mine (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

During the interviews, Merve inferred that Samsun and Elmadağ were temporary assignments in her career plans because she eventually wanted to be assigned in a school in central Ankara. Thus, her professional identity formation in these places was rather limited. As a novice teacher, she prioritized her joy, patience, and persistence in her teacher identity formation because she was still struggling to welcome language part of her teacher identity.

It was very pleasing for me as I liked teaching part of being a language teacher. Yet, I was not very eager about English part of it. Later times, I began to like English part as well when we did [language learning] activities with the students. (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

The excerpts above about Merve’s in-service experiences regarding her language teacher identity formation processes show that before she was assigned to the school in Samsun, she possessed rather mixed thoughts about the language teaching profession as she was unsure about staying in the profession. With her growing experiences in the field of language teaching, these thoughts seemed to diminish, and her initial experiences helped her start to form her language teacher identity as a professional in the field. In her teacher identity formation processes, Merve’s language learning experiences could be traced down and her language learning experiences guided her to be more informative about English language. Lastly, although she enjoyed being a teacher, becoming a language teacher was still a struggle for her.

From the interviews, it was seen that her teacher identity formation processes were intensified upon being assigned to the school in Ankara. Merve began to establish her educational philosophy. She thought that knowing English language is a prerequisite to follow the trends and developments of the world, but she believed that

language learning is a talent and individuals can learn English to some extent if they do not possess such a talent.

For English language learning, it may be a cliché, but English is a must to follow the improvements of the world and organize yourself according to these improvements. I admit that language learning is a talent, definitely. It is like the arts. Everybody can reach a certain level of proficiency, but I believe those with language learning talents are more successful (Merve Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

Additionally, Merve made a distinction between language learning and teaching philosophy and her general education philosophy. While she was convinced with the idea that knowing English language is a necessity to follow the trends and developments of the world, she sets the purpose of general education as living with the world and going beyond it.

In terms of general education, it is more than catching the world but going beyond it. We can reach and get ahead of the world if we ground our general education upon science, technology, and rationality (Merve Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

In line with her philosophies, Merve continued to form her language teacher identity. When she moved the school in Ankara, she questioned her language teacher roles and she tried to act in line with her philosophy of education. She defined the qualities of a language teacher as follows:

I asked myself “how can I deliver my lesson effectively? What is suitable for here [the school in Ankara]? A language teacher should think about these issues, develop professionally, prepare language teaching materials, and be creative (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Her desire to perform according to her educational philosophy was encouraged with the school’s demands on diversifying language learning activities with extracurricular projects. These extracurricular activities included theatre plays, quiz shows, and an international student exchange project.

Our school wanted to do extracurricular activities like quiz shows, plays, or movie days. In addition to this, we were expected to participate in international student exchange projects. Our students went abroad, and international students came to our school. It changed the students’ perspectives because the students experienced living English and they recognized how they were supposed to use English language in real life (Merve Individual Interview, March 4, 2020).

Before the international students' arrival, Merve aimed to prepare her students for a culturally responsive environment. Although the international student exchange project's outcomes were positive, Merve failed to create a culturally responsive environment as the students confronted with the culture shock. Upon the failure to create a culturally responsive environment in the school, she decided not to participate in the international student exchange projects. Merve recalled these series of events as follows:

It was disastrous. We taught the students about the cultural differences but cautioned them. When the international students came, the students behaved them like aliens. Some of our students asked for a signature. In terms of language learning and teaching, it was not very useful, as well. Consequently, I said never again (Merve Individual Interview, March 4, 2020).

The failure to respond to the cultural issues in English language learning and teaching was coupled with another critical incident at the school. Merve planned an activity about family members and asked her students to prepare a family tree with the students' family members' pictures. However, she did not anticipate that her learners' familial culture could be problematic, and she experienced a troublesome experience about family tree activity.

I knew that I should not involve in the students' familial issues as their parents might have passed away, etc. and the learners could have very complicated familial issues. In Ankara, I realized that I should not use real pictures of the family members because the concept of a family is not the same for everyone and I had a radical decision about the family tree activity, and I have never done it since then (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

The experiences Merve had during the international student exchange project show that she was not fully aware of cultural issues the students may undergo during an international student exchange project. Additionally, it seems that she did not take the students' familial background and the cultural environment where the school was located into consideration.

The last theme that emerged from Merve's in-service experiences is her increasing familiarity with the special education students. As stated in her personal history, Merve's mother was working in a rehabilitation center, and she was familiar

with the individuals with special needs. In addition to her prior awareness, during her in-service experiences in Ankara, Merve had several students with special needs, who were subject to inclusive education and differentiated instruction in her classes. These students had intellectual disabilities, down syndrome, and cerebral palsy. However, she did not take any courses related to special education during her pre-service education and she was unprepared to teach students with special needs. In addition to this, she did not have any in-service training to meet the needs of the special education students during her in-service years.

I learned to meet the needs of the special education students by trial and error. It was up to our experience with this group. I had special education students in my classes for five years and I did not get any training for special education. How to approach special education students was dependent on my experience (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Due to the fact that there was not any prior training regarding the students with special needs in her pre-service teacher education and during her in-service years, Merve's lacked necessary knowledge and skills to address these students. During the interviews, she emphasized that she is an English language teacher, and it is the duty of the special education teachers to respond to such learners' needs. Thus, it seemed natural to her that she may not be able to meet the needs of the students with special needs.

It is necessary to make a clear distinction that I am not a special education teacher and as a language teacher, we cannot be as effective as special education teacher (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

In addition to the distinction she made between special education and language teaching, she did not prefer to assume an identity that included special education. She rationalized her choice of not assuming such an identity as follows:

You can teach the students with special needs to some extent. But, when you dedicate yourself to meet the needs of the special education students, the school asks you to teach other students with special needs. Nobody wants that as you have very heavy workload and you have already hated what you do because of it (Merve Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).



Given that she did not have any prior training in special education, and she did not want to assume a teacher role that responded the needs of the students with special needs, Merve recalled her initial experiences with these students as difficult and struggling.

With my first student with special needs, I had very difficult experiences. For example, when it was break time, he was telling that everybody could leave but not me. I could not approach to him because I was aware that he would not understand me, and he did not have full control over her reactions and behaviors. This was scary for me. He was a real struggle for me in the class (Merve Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

In order to overcome the difficulty of addressing the needs of the students with special needs, she received the help of other students in the class.

I had another student with severe intellectual disability. It was really severe. The students in the classroom told me that he enjoyed doing puzzles, and I made sure that I brought a puzzle for him for each class. He did the puzzles I brought for the whole semester, and I did not have any problem with this student (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

In addition to the students' support she received in order to respond to the needs of the special education students, she mentioned that the students with special needs were subject to different grading criteria. Both having the students' support and different grading scheme eased her responsibilities and having students with special needs in her classes became more manageable.

In terms of English language learning, he probably did not learn anything, yet he was in the class with us. We did not bother him, or he did not bother us during the lessons. Also, I was supposed to use different grading criteria for the students with special needs and I organized his language learning activities accordingly (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

To sum up, Merve's in-service years consisted of the language teacher identity formation processes regarding the students with special needs. The excerpts above show that although Merve was familiar with the individual with disabilities, she was not prepared to teach English language to the students with special needs. The reason for unpreparedness stemmed from her pre-service education and in-service training as she did not receive any courses and training about how to teach English to the students

with

disabilities.

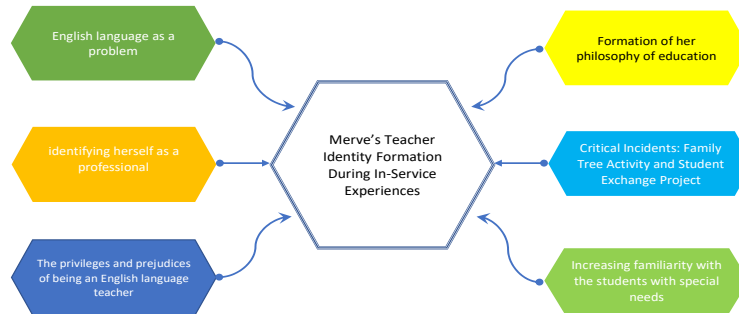


Figure 6: Merve’s Teacher Identity Formation During In-service Experiences

In addition to this, she thought that having a student with disabilities in her classes does not make her a special education teacher and she wanted to be identified as an English language teacher. Hence, she considered that it was natural to undergo a process of trial and error to meet the needs of these students. Overall, her in-service experiences increased her familiarity with the students with disabilities and she became more aware of the needs of the students with disabilities and how to meet these students’ needs.

#### 4.1.4. Merve’s Transition to the School for the Blind

Merve worked as an English language teacher in Ankara for 11 years, where she had a variety of experiences in terms of her language teacher identity formation. However, she was tired of heavy workload in Ankara and she decided to move to a school where the workload was suitable for her. She searched for a school based on her concerns about the workload and she made her mind to be assigned to the School for the Blind upon consulting a colleague.

Merve works three days a week and has approximately 15 hours of teaching in a week. There are eight students maximum in a class and there are four classes in the school from 5<sup>th</sup> grade to 8<sup>th</sup> grade (Field Notes, October 30, 2019).

Although Merve did not encounter any students with visual impairment during her in-service experiences, she was concerned with her workload and decided to move to the School for the Blind. Upon being assigned to the School for the Blind, she felt free from the hardships of her in-service experiences in terms of the teaching workload and the number of students for each class.

It is very comforting for me to have few numbers of students in terms of language teaching and preparation. It is very different to prepare your teaching for two students and 40 students (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Given that Merve did not have any experiences in a school that specifically designed for the students with disabilities, she gradually reconstructed her beliefs and attitudes towards the students with visual impairments. She thought that the reactions to the disability issues in the society are rather emotional. She added that economic sanctions and stimulus packages encouraged the families of the individuals with disabilities to seek for education, treatment, and social inclusion. According to her, individuals with disabilities started to come out in the last 20 years with the recent policies that included economic stimulus packages and increasing awareness. She also cautioned that having a child with disability is socially, educationally, and economically complicated matter.

Disability issues have just been accepted in Turkey. Special education rehabilitation centers were opened, and the state economically helped the families of the individual with disabilities. [...] These accepting processes are new in Turkey. We started to see people with disabilities in the streets, schools, etc. Normally you could not see them before. People are becoming more aware. But it is not always economic. There are many families out there with no economic problem and they keep their disabled child hidden because they do not accept it. It is really complicated (Merve Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

When asked about her individual belief, attitudes, and assumptions towards students with visual impairments, Merve positioned her views in line with the general tendencies of the society she lived in. Her initial approach to her students with visual impairment was rather emotional.

As a member of society, we always have conscience and emotional reactions to people with disabilities. We sigh for their conditions. Yet, the more you understand their way of living, the more you realize they are not different [...] Then, seeing that they are not different becomes a relief and you begin to leave your emotional reactions aside, and think about the things that can be offered (Merve Individual Interview, March 11, 2020).

From Merve's statement, it was understood that the emotional responses to the disability issues stemmed from the lack of disability awareness. When Merve started to teach in the School for the Blind, she initially experienced a process of shock because of her taken-for-granted assumptions about the students with visual impairments. She thought that students with visual impairments were not competent in many areas such as technology, sports, and problem-solving skills. Also, she expected her students with visual impairments to undergo social and academic awkwardness. Yet, with her increasing disability awareness her deeply rooted assumptions about the students with visual impairments began to be replaced with the idea that these students were capable of doing many things.

I was thinking that they are incompetent. Their physical movement, problem-solving skills, etc. But they did not have any problems [...] Seeing that the students [with visual impairment] are competent to carry out many things is shocking for me. I mean they are capable of doing more than what we think by observing them outside. They know what they are doing and how. For example, they are running in the corridor, they play football, or they can connect my phone's internet to the smartboard (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

In addition to the Merve's increasing familiarity with the students with visual impairments, which gradually changed her taken-for-granted assumptions, she participated in in-service training, in which she was informed about special education procedures and methods.

Here, I participated in a 40-hours training about special education. The training was not specifically planned for the students with visual impairment and there was nothing about language teaching, as well. It was a general special education training, and it was about what special education classroom is, how we should approach, what we should and should not do for the students with special needs. It was a very basic and informative training (Merve Individual Interview, November 6, 2019).

Attending the special education in-service training made her discern that she needed to approach her students based on their individual capabilities and disabilities because

each student experienced his/her disability in a different and personal way. Keeping this in mind, she tried to approach her students based on their individual differences.

I was aware to consider the conditions that my students were in. Here [the School for the Blind], I paid further attention to the students' socio-economic and disability conditions (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Some students can only carry out basic survival needs. Some are success-oriented, and s/he can learn as much as you can teach. I cannot generalize the students here (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Her awareness of the students' socio-economic and disability conditions led her to compare her in-service experiences and transition to the School for the Blind. She considered that the needs of the students in mainstream schools and in the School for the Blind were similar. She also thought that the needs of the students regardless of their conditions needed to intersect.

I do not know whether their needs concur, but they should. The students with visual impairments may require additional effort and care. Apart from this, they [mainstream students and the students with visual impairment] are the same, only their profiles change (Merve Individual Interview, March 4, 2020).

The changes in the students' profile brought several alterations in Merve's language teacher identity formation. The students with visual impairment needed counseling and guidance both in dealing with their disability experiences and academic endeavors. In order to meet the counseling and guidance needs of the students with visual impairment, she improved her language teacher role as a counselor. For example, the students in the School for the Blind can only be eligible to enroll for the individualized education programs and receive differentiated instruction if the district counseling services approves the students' conditions and prepare a report for them. Merve took initiatives for her students with visual impairments and counseled some of the parents to apply the district counseling services.

When I see a student, who is different or has difficulties and problems in my classes, it is necessary to first report to the school counseling service and then parents. The parents apply to the district counseling services and if the family can get a report that explains their child's conditions, the student becomes eligible for the individualized education program and begins to receive differentiated instruction. Otherwise, I cannot provide an individualized education program on my own (Merve Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

In addition to the counseling procedures to receive differentiated instruction, Merve closely observed her students and intervened in the students' academic and social lives.

We had a student with no vision and there was his friend with low vision. The student with no vision was asking from his friend with low vision, waiting for his friend to carry out the things he was supposed to do such as taking his book, preparing for the lesson. I stepped in their relation and compelled the student with no vision to carry out his responsibilities (Merve Individual Interview, March 11, 2020).

Merve tried to inform the families about the procedures of the counseling services as well as helping her students to be more independent about fulfilling their responsibilities. What is more, she tried to create a welcoming and positive environment for her learners. The reason behind this attention was due to the fact that the students with visual impairment tended to drop out the school.

Given their special conditions, we do not want them to be remote from the school. They should come to the school with love and willingness, and they should be socializing in the school. Our primary concern is always their positive attitudes toward the school. Apart from that, the more they are academically improving, the happier they are (Merve Individual Interview, March 4, 2020).

Other domains of her language teacher identity that altered upon the transition to the School for the Blind were her language teacher roles as lesson planner and resource provider. In terms of Merve's role as a lesson planner, she taught English language according to Ministry of National Education's curricula.

During the observation sessions, the researcher realized that Merve only brought her coursebook and followed the activities of the book as a lesson plan. As she did not prepare a lesson plan, she generally asked the students what they did in previous lesson(s) (Field Notes, February 5, 2020).

Although she tried to make curricular adjustments to cater to the needs of the students with visual impairment in the School for the Blind, she did not prepare lesson plans and the curricular adjustment did not follow any predetermined scheme.

It was beneficial for me to organize my language teaching practices and activities and I would determine which topics to be covered and to what extent. I used lesson plans for a long time, but I have not prepared lesson plans recently because the topics are generally the same and I get used to them. When I check the topics of the day, I organize my lesson in my head (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

The spontaneity of Merve's lesson planning was also reflected in her rationale and system of curricular adjustments. She made the curricular adjustments by focusing on the main topics and avoiding the details. These details might include grammatical structures, vocabulary items, or phrases.

I will abridge if the topic is very detailed. The details can be in the activities, dialogues, or grammar. For example, a language item is used only one or two instances, I avoid it. I focus on the purpose of the unit to be covered, its main grammatical structure and vocabulary items. I avoid details (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

It was 8<sup>th</sup> graders English lesson, and the topic was about extreme sports. Although Merve realized that the students had very limited knowledge of extreme sports, she preferred not to explain all the sports the students were asking because it is time-consuming, and the students were more interested in learning about the extreme sports than learning English (Field Notes, February 5, 2020).

Following classroom excerpt showed Merve's preference not to explain the extreme sports that her student asked.

Student A: What is canoeing? What is rafting? [she tried to understand the differences between canoeing and rafting because both are water sports.]

Merve: I will tell you later.

Student A: But I am wondering. (Merve In-class Observation, February 5, 2020).

Regarding Merve's teacher role as a resource provider, when she moved to the School for the Blind, she realized that there was an immediate need to provide English language teaching and learning materials that were suitable for the students with visual impairments. The main barrier that she faced was the coursebook they had to follow. The coursebook was the same coursebook that was used in mainstream schools, but Ministry of National Education transformed the coursebook in Braille. Using the Braille coursebook caused several problems. Firstly, the coursebook needed to be printed in Braille and the Braille printing had to follow the regulations of Ministry of National Education. Thus, the students received their coursebook a while after the school started.

It was almost mid-term and the Braille coursebook has just arrived at the school. The students could not use their coursebook in English lessons. They only listened to the teacher, or they used the materials their teacher created (Field Notes, October 23, 2019).

The second problem with the Braille coursebook was the visuality. The Braille coursebook did not contain any visual materials and the descriptions for the visual materials were missing in the Braille coursebook. The missing visuals caused dislocation of the content in the book and made it difficult to follow for the teacher. Merve expressed the difficulties of using the Braille coursebook as follows:

You cannot say to the students “open your books and we are going to do the activity on page x” because it is dislocated. [...] Given that I cannot use the visual materials, I have to skip the parts that contains visuality (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

The last problem with the Braille coursebook was the Braille contractions. Ministry of National Education printed the Braille coursebook with the Braille contractions. The Braille contractions were used to shorten the text and increase the readability of the coursebook.

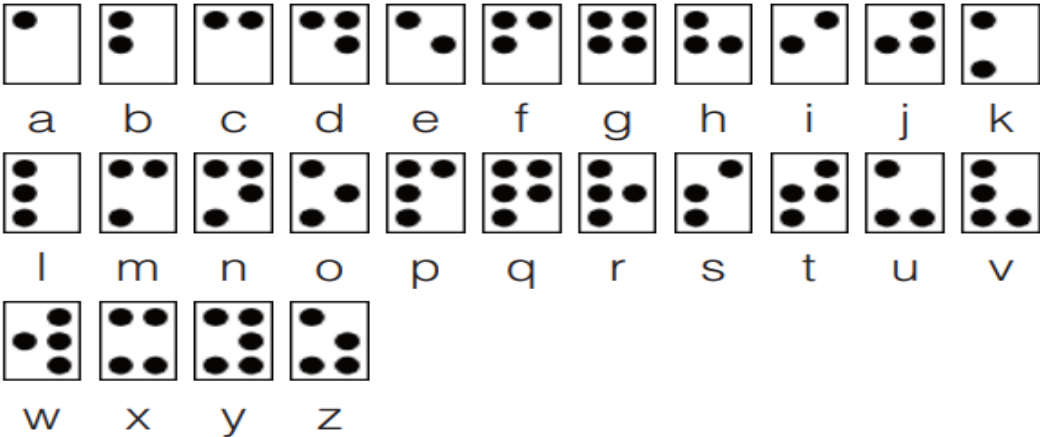


Figure 7: Braille Alphabet

Printing the coursebook with the Braille contractions resulted in two main problems. The first problem was the teacher and the students’ lack of knowledge in the Braille contractions. Another problem was how to teach the Braille contractions to the students with visual impairments as the students were supposed to be taught the Braille contractions when they start their 6<sup>th</sup> grade.



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Figure 8: Examples of the Braille Contractions

Merve thought that although the Ministry intended to make use of Braille coursebook and its contractions, the outcomes for the teacher and the students with visual impairments were rather futile since her students with visual impairment did not know the Braille contractions. She expressed her feelings about the Braille coursebook, and its contractions as follows.

We have the handbook of the Braille contractions; it is downloadable on the net. I can hand it to the students and ask them to memorize the contractions, but if you are not going to use it, it will not be long-lasting. The students do not want to read and write because the script is different, and it is complicated for them. When you use the Braille contractions, it becomes inextricable. We did not use the Braille coursebook with its contractions last year and we could navigate in the book with my students. This year the Ministry decided to use the contractions and it does not make sense for us when we read (Merve Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

As Merve could not make use of the Braille coursebook, she searched for the ways to create language teaching materials which were suitable for the students with visual impairments. She found examples of the language teaching materials on the net, then she created her own materials with certain adaptations. The pictures of the materials Merve created and used were shown in the figures below.



Figure 9: The Faces of Feelings



Figure 10: The Parts of the House



Figure 11: The Animals

Merve also experienced several difficulties when she tried to carry out her teacher role as a resource provider. Although she wanted to provide her learners with language learning materials, she did not fully achieve it because the students with visual impairment did not have adequate resources and equipment.

There are lots of applications that the students with visual impairment can use. I believe if they can use them, these applications are very useful for learning English. Yet we could not get them use these applications because they do not have necessary equipment such as mobile phones, tablets etc. (Merve Individual Interview, March 11, 2020).

The lack of English language teaching materials led Merve to assume an agentic role in addition to her role as a resource provider. She started to question the role of the School for the Blind in language teaching material development and adaptation.

We do not have our resource books for the exams, story books, and dictionary. We do not have games. No tactile materials. We have listening materials, but they are commercially produced. Yesterday, we listened to a story on the Ministry's platform but there is nothing specifically designed that meets our school's needs (Merve, Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

She looked for the available resources on the online platform of the Ministry of National Education. However, the results were unsatisfying, and she tried to find out language teaching materials that were created abroad. She searched for the websites of the schools for the blind abroad and managed to retrieve creative ideas from the websites she visited.

I searched it a lot on the net about institutions for students with visual impairment. I found that schools abroad have board games for them such as monopoly, card games, and others. They are in Braille. Our students do not have such games. I really want them play monopoly, but we cannot play. If one wishes, s/he can use the "normal" one by sticking Braille on it (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

The need to create English language teaching materials that were suitable for the students with visual impairments was apparent. What was interesting, though, is that the teachers in the English language teacher community at the School for the Blind did not collaborate when they developed English language teaching and learning materials.

We have not collaborated for language teaching materials so far. Mustafa teaches primary school students, which is not my area of expertise (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

Merve's teacher agency was not limited to the development of English language teaching materials. She participated in awareness-raising activities, in which the students from other schools in the district visited the School for the Blind.

I support the idea that the students from other schools should come to the School for the Blind, interact with our students. In doing so, we can increase awareness (Merve Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

The awareness-raising is two-sided. Both our students [with visual impairment] and the students from other schools can get to know each other (Merve Individual Interview, March 4, 2020).

Although she tried to raise awareness about the students with visual impairments, Merve was uncomfortable with the institutional approach to the visitors, namely, students from other schools and members of non-governmental organization. When the visitors came to the School for the Blind, the school administration convened the students with visual impairments in a room and they were asked to show how they read and write in Braille, solve mathematics problems, use their typewriters, etc. Due to this approach, she assumed an agentic role as a teacher, and she criticized the attitudes of the visitors because she thought that the visitors' attitudes and behaviors towards the students with visual impairment were not acceptable.

United Nations sanctioned 3 December as International Day of People with Disability. For this reason, the school's and non-governmental organizations organized school visits to the School for the Blind. After the observation session when the class ended, the administrators asked teachers bring their students in the teachers' room because there were the members of non-governmental organization and they wanted to meet with the students with visual impairment. The students showed how they use their typewriters and wrote their names in Braille. The teachers seemed very uncomfortable with this meeting (Field Notes, December 4, 2019).

The approach of the people who have never seen an individual with visual impairment act like the students with visual impairments are aliens. It bothers me a lot. When the visitors come to the school, we gather our students. The administrators ask our students to write something so that the visitors can watch them while they are writing. I think it is a general attitude to approach to the student with visual impairment (Merve Individual Impairment, February 19, 2020).

She challenged the school's policies about the visitors, and she asked the administration to change their policies, yet her efforts were unfruitful.

I asked them [the school administration] to reorganize the visitor policy of the school but every time when the visitors come to the school, I feel like we are performing in a "circus" (Merve Individual Impairment, February 19, 2020).

The last theme that emerged from Merve's transition to the School for the Blind was her redefinition of the purpose of education. When Merve started her in-service experiences, she started to form her ideas about the purpose of education. She defined the purpose of education as following the trends of the world and going beyond these trends. However, she needed to redefine the purpose of education for her upon her transition to the School for the Blind. Her revised ideas about the purpose of education were as follows:

The purpose of education, although my students here are visually impaired, is to help them reach at the same level with other [non-disabled] students. The main purpose is this and I should consider special conditions of the students (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

She explained the rationale of her redefinition of the purpose of education and compared her in-service experiences and the experiences she had when she transitioned to the School for the Blind.

In here [the School for the Blind], I am limited. I can reach at a certain point, but after that point the students' social, psychological, and academic conditions I cannot move further. If I was in the "normal" school, I could do more with enhanced resources as an English language teacher. As I said, I can help the students with visual impairment to reach at a certain point, but the further is almost impossible (Merve Individual Interview, March 11, 2020).

She also thought that visuality in English language teaching caused the students with visual impairments to lag behind the developments of the world.

I can say that the absence of visuality in English language teaching causes our students with visual impairment to fall behind following the developments of the world (Merve Individual Interview, March 4, 2020).

To summarize, Merve's transition to the School for the Blind resulted in the changes and transformations in her teacher language identity. The main reason for her to

transition to the School for the Blind was due to the workload she had in her previous assigned school. Since the workload in the School for the Blind was relatively light, she chose to work there. When she started to teach in the School for the Blind, her long-held assumptions and attitudes toward the students with visual impairments were challenged. Although Merve's initial assumptions and attitudes toward the students with visual impairment were emotional and negative, her increasing disability awareness changed her initial assumptions and attitudes into professional approaches. What is more, Merve participated in an in-service training about special education, which resulted in the increase in understanding her students' background and disability.

Her growing awareness about special education and the students with visual impairments drove her teacher roles as counselor, lesson planner as well as resource provider forward. She tried to inform the students with visual impairment and their families about the counseling services available. In terms of her role as resource provider, she had difficulty in using the Braille coursebook and its contractions and went on finding available resources such as short stories, in-class games, and English language teaching materials, on national and international platforms. Thus, she tried to make curricular adaptations in her lesson planning that aimed to cater to the needs of the students with visual impairment.

In addition to the changes in her teacher roles, Merve started to develop her teacher agency. The school's policy made her feel "performing in a circus" because the students with visual impairments were asked to read and write in Braille, show how they solve mathematics problems, etc.

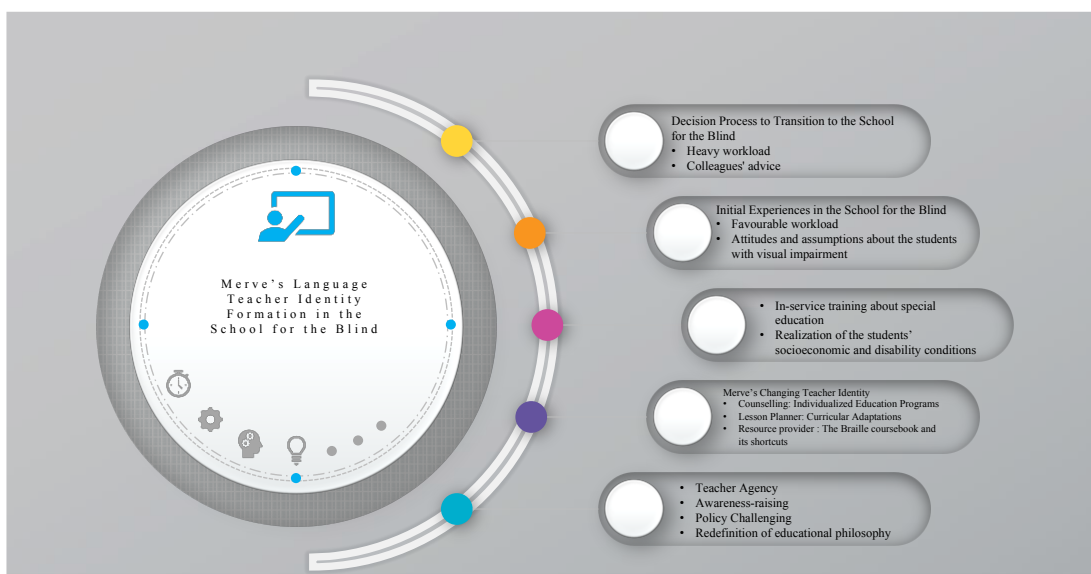


Figure 12: Merve's Language Teacher Identity Formation in the School for the Blind

Lastly, Merve's experiences in the School for the Blind led her to change her educational philosophy. Even though she explained her educational philosophy as following the developments happening in the world and going beyond these developments, she redefined the purpose of the education in the School for the Blind to help the students with visual impairment to reach to the level of "normal" students. The rationale of her newly formed educational philosophy was shaped by the students with visual impairment's socioeconomic, psychological, and academic conditions and the visuality of English language teaching.

#### 4.1.5. Merve's Language Teacher Cognition

In this section of the findings, Merve's language teacher cognition is presented. Based on the individual interviews, field notes, and in-class observations, "Subject Matter Knowledge", "Pedagogical Content Knowledge", "Pedagogical Knowledge", "Professional Development", "Language Teaching Materials", and "Technology Use" are emerged as the components of her language teacher cognition. Emerged categories and themes regarding Merve's language teacher cognition are explained in the following sub-sections.

#### **4.1.6. Merve's Subject Matter Knowledge**

Defining subject matter knowledge for language teachers is an ongoing concern because the language itself is considered to be the subject matter knowledge for language teachers. As Merve is an English language teacher, her English language proficiency formed her subject matter knowledge. However, the progress of developing her English language proficiency posed challenges and difficulties for her due to her educational background and lack of interest. As mentioned in her personal history, Merve attended a state high school and chose social studies as her major field, and she did not receive an intensive English language instruction. In addition to this, she was not interested in English language as the language seemed difficult for her. In order to compensate for her lack of English language proficiency, she attended an intensive English language program when she was preparing for the university entrance exam. She wanted to receive further English language instruction upon her entrance to the university and attended language preparatory school at the university.

I am a graduate of a state high school and I did not receive intensive language instruction. To close the gap, I received intensive language instruction for a year when I prepared for the university exam. In that year, I formed the basis of my English language proficiency. Then, I did not take a language proficiency test at the university, and I willingly received further English language education in language preparatory school. I especially wanted it to be complete. There were certain things that I improved during my undergraduate education (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Given that language is considered to possess dynamic, interactive, and changing nature, her subject matter knowledge was expected to alter over time. However, she stated that her language proficiency deteriorated in the School for the Blind. When she was asked to explain her deteriorating language proficiency, she rationalized it with her limited English language use in the School for the Blind.

Merve: English language proficiency has decayed for me. You strike the bottom, especially if you are working in a such school [the School for the Blind].

Researcher: You said that your language proficiency is deteriorating. How do you feel about it?

Merve: It feels like I am a beginner (Merve Individual Interview, March 4, 2020).

What was interesting, though, was that she did not feel the need to improve her subject matter knowledge and she did not attend any in-service training programs, in which



she could extend her English language use. When she talked about the reasons of her unwillingness to attend in-service training programs, she mentioned that the training programs focused on improving English language teaching practices and she did not consider them to provide opportunities for language proficiency development.

The Ministry of National Education offers English programs for the members of the ELT community, but I never attended. Other in-service training programs were about the improvement of English language teaching, and I think that these programs do not contribute to my English language proficiency (Merve Individual Interview, November 6, 2019).

In addition to her lack of efforts to improve her language proficiency, she was not aware of the fact that her English language use in the classroom was related to her subject matter knowledge. During the in-class observations throughout the data collection processes, it was noted that Merve used Turkish as the medium of instruction and provided linguistic information of the structures being studied in Turkish. Following excerpt illustrates Merve's use of Turkish as a medium of instruction.

Merve: Nisa tennis ve cycling dedin. Hangisi daha tehlikeli? Tennis mi cycling mi daha tehlikeli? (Nisa, you said tennis and cycling. Is tennis or cycling more dangerous?)

Merve waited for a while to get an answer from Nisa.

Nisa: Cycling diyorum (I say cycling).

Merve: Tamam o zaman. Hadi cümleyi kuralım. "Bence" diye başla bakalım (Okay, let's complete the sentence. Start with "I think").

Nisa: I think, ... I think

Merve: Şimdi sporun adını söyle (Now tell the name of the sport).

Nisa: Cycling is...

Merve: Yardımcı fiil, is, aferin (Auxiliary verb, is, good job).

Nisa: is than

Merve: Daha çok? (More?)

Nisa: More than...

Merve: Yok, sıfat nerede? (No. Where is the adjective?).

Nisa: More dangerous than...

Merve: Öbür spor neydi? Kıyaslıyoruz ya. (What is the name of the other sport? We are comparing them).

Nisa: Tennis.

(Merve In-class Observation, February 5, 2020)

Merve's assumptions about English language proficiency consisted of contradictions and conflicting ideas. When the researcher asked her about the ideal ways of

improving one's English language proficiency, she suggested that English language should be taught in a naturalistic way, that is, the sound system and syllable structure of English language should be given prior to reading and writing.

I would start with the sound system because the students do not know how to pronounce what is written. When t and h come together, nobody has any idea how to sound it. Vocabulary items are given with root memorization and when the students see the same letters in different words, they do not know how to pronounce them, and they sit quietly. It should be like learning Turkish. Start with the sound system and move on the syllable, then read (Merve Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

Even though her suggestions were indicative of her knowledge and awareness of English language and its structures, her language use as illustrated in the excerpt above contradicted her suggestions because she did not focus on the sound system of English language, nor the syllable structure.

To outline Merve's subject matter knowledge, the following inferences can be made. Although Merve's language teacher identity formation experiences showed that she had difficulties and problems when learning English language due to her lack of interest and low language skills, it could be said that she formed her subject matter knowledge, that is, English language proficiency and language awareness, during her high school and tertiary education. Upon the formation of her subject matter knowledge and resolving inadequacies of her English language proficiency in her pre-service years, she considered her subject matter knowledge was sufficient. Yet, she started to think that her language proficiency was decaying after she transitioned to the School for the Blind. Interestingly, she did not seek ways of altering her English language proficiency and did not attend any in-service training program even though she was feeling that she "struck the bottom" in terms of her English language proficiency. Her lack of effort to improve her subject matter knowledge could be interpreted as the reflection of her initial attitudes and assumptions about the students with visual impairment, which were negative and disablist. As she considered the students with visual impairment to be incapable of academic and personal growth, she might not want to alter her subject matter knowledge or increase her English language use in her classes because she might think that her current subject matter knowledge was sufficient to teach English to the students with visual impairments.

However, the in-class observations showed that she preferred to use Turkish language as a medium of instruction and explained linguistic details in Turkish. While acknowledging that teaching English to the students with visual impairment may require using the students' native language, which is Turkish, it could be concluded that Merve's deteriorating subject matter knowledge was the result of her limited English language use in class. Lastly, her use of Turkish during English lessons conflicted with her suggestions for English language learning and teaching that starts with the sound system and syllable structure of English.

#### **4.1.7. Merve's Pedagogical Knowledge**

As mentioned in her personal history, Merve was a graduate of the department of English Language and Literature, and she took the teaching certificate courses during her undergraduate studies in order to be an English language teacher. The teaching certificate courses were supposed to offer her opportunities to study general pedagogy, curriculum, educational technology, and pedagogic content knowledge. However, Merve did not have the opportunity to delve into the field-specific pedagogic knowledge because the teaching certificate program she was enrolled in was also offered to teacher candidates from other fields such as science education, mathematics, etc. and all teacher candidates in the program were taking the teaching certificate courses together.

It was not only for English Language and Literature department, the candidates from other fields also participated in the certificate program. It was not specifically designed for our department (Merve Individual Interview, November 6, 2019).

Given that the teaching certificate courses were offered to the heterogeneous groups of teacher candidates, Merve's statement about her teaching certificate courses showed that she had general education courses as the basis of her pedagogic knowledge. However, it should be noted that the teacher certificate program she participated in was an intensive program and the length and topics covered during the teaching certificate courses were rather limited when compared to the pedagogic courses that the graduates of education faculties receive throughout their teacher education.

When we talked about her pedagogic knowledge, it seemed that there were several considerations. In the available literature, the effectiveness of the teaching certificate programs is often criticized and questioned because most of the programs are offered to heterogeneous groups, which means teacher candidates from various fields take their teaching certificate courses together. Hence, it is difficult to form a pedagogic knowledge that is unique to the field of English language teaching (Field Notes, November 6, 2019).

As mentioned in the field note above, Merve acknowledged the limitations of the program, but she felt that the effectiveness and quality of the teaching certificate program were satisfactory for her.

You can think of our program as intensive and compacted. We had the same content and knowledge [compared to the pedagogic courses the graduates of education faculties received]. Yet, they had the chance to explore and delve into certain things. Apart from that, the program was no different from the one in the education faculty (Merve Individual Interview, November 06, 2020).

To summarize, Merve received the teaching certificate courses during her undergraduate education and the certificate program she enrolled in was open to candidates from other fields of education. She completed her undergraduate education and the teaching certificate program in the same year. It could be said that although she acknowledged the limitations of the teaching certificate program, she formed her base of pedagogic knowledge during the teaching certificate program, which was intensive and compacted.

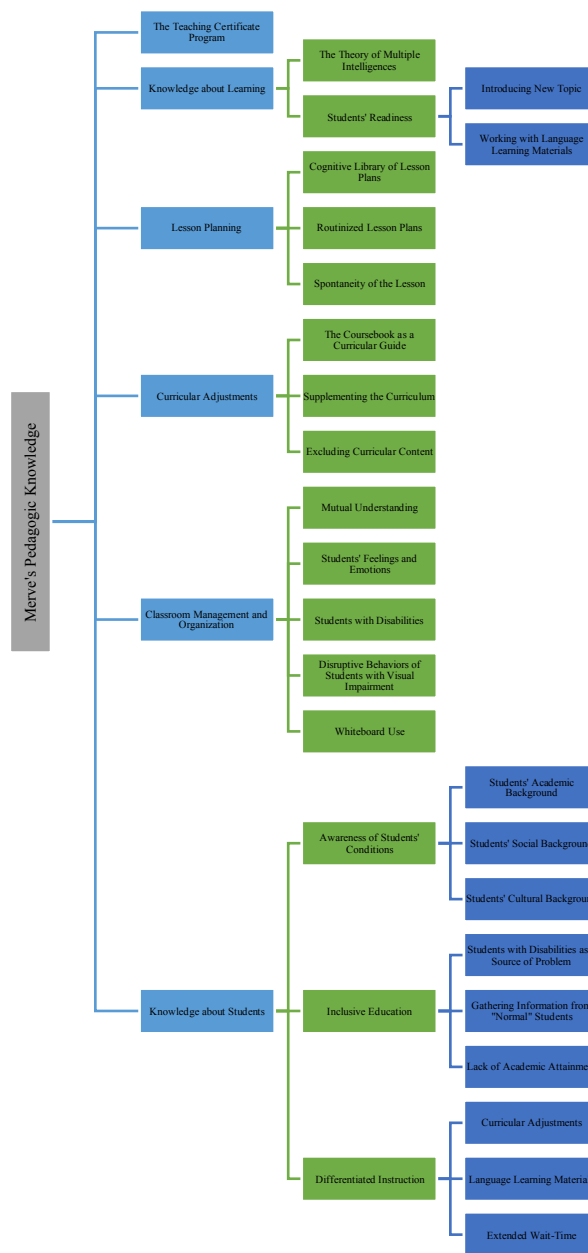


Figure 13: Merve's Pedagogic Knowledge

Based on the individual interviews, in-class observations, and field notes, it was found that Merve's pedagogic knowledge consisted of "the teaching certificate program", "knowledge about learning", "lesson planning and curricular adjustments", "classroom management and organization", "whiteboard use", "knowledge about students". Each of the components of Merve's pedagogic knowledge was explained and exemplified in the following sub-sections.

#### **4.1.8. Merve's Knowledge about Learning**

During the teaching certificate courses, Merve formed her beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge about the nature of student learning. As mentioned in her educational background, she had the chance to see the applications of learning theories during the practicum.

My cooperating teacher was using various realia and visual materials. She was drawing pictures and figures on the board and she was teaching based on these visuals. There I noticed the importance of multiple intelligences theory. When you assign students for different tasks, for example, one is supposed to draw something on the board, one is to read, etc., you can get students' attention. I realized these things in the practicum (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

The in-class observations revealed that Merve used the multiple intelligences theory by providing audio-visual. She used the Ministry of National Education's online platform for the audio-visual learning materials and described the visuals in the video when necessary.

Merve opened a video from MoNE's online platform, in which a teacher explained the topic of the unit and provided keywords. The teacher in the video was explaining the topic and key words and provided Turkish translation. In addition to this, there were visual materials in the video. When there was a visual in the video, Merve stopped the video and described the visual material. The students contributed to her explanations with their examples, but the examples were in Turkish (Merve In-class Observation, February 26, 2020).

In addition to audio-visual materials, she brought tactile materials to offer opportunities for the students with visual impairments to practice what was learned in previous lessons. The students with visual impairments were asked to act out the chores they were doing with the tactile material they had. The following excerpt showed how Merve made use of tactile materials while she was teaching the vocabulary items about the chores.

Merve: Nisa sıra sana geldi (Nisa, it is your turn).

Nisa: (Nisa had kitchen toys in front of her. There were a pan, a knife and a heater.) I am responsible cooking.

Merve: I am responsible for ... (She waited for Nisa to complete the sentence with -ing form of the verb "cook").

Nisa: Cooking.

Merve: Kübra ne yapıyorsun? Elinde neler var? (What are you doing Kübra? What do you have in your hand?).

Kübra: Tabak (The dishes).

Merve: Ne yapacaksın? (What are you going to do?).

Kübra: Washing.

Merve: I am responsible for washing the dishes. (Merve In-class Observation, March 11, 2020).

Although Merve tried to enhance the students' language learning experiences by including different modes of materials, she did not take the students' readiness and willingness into account. Observation notes showed that the students' readiness referred to their academic readiness for the introduction of the new topic, and their readiness to work with the learning material.

Merve was teaching comparative adjectives this week. She provided grammatical explanations in Turkish, which were rather complicated. She did not exemplify the comparison. She just said that she had taught the comparative adjectives last year and expected the students with visual impairment to remember. Although the students did not remember the structure of the comparative adjectives, Merve continued the lesson without further explanation (Merve In-class Observation, October 23, 2019).

The in-class observation showed that Merve overlooked the students' academic readiness and did not offer further grammatical explanations in English. When she was asked about the structure of her grammatical explanations she provided, she emphasized the students' academic readiness. However, it was evident that she could misinterpret the students' reactions and fail to comprehensively explain the topic as in the observation note above.

It is all about the students' readiness. I start a sentence in English and the moment I realize that it does not mean anything for the student I translate it into Turkish. [...] My choice is dependent on the students' reactions (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

Working with the learning materials was the other domain of the students' readiness. If the students with visual impairments were not familiar with the learning material, they would initially try to explore the material. Their process of exploration included smelling, touching, and pinching. However, Merve considered the students' process of exploration as a threat to the flow of the lesson.

Merve talked about her use of different learning materials. She mentioned that when she brought materials to the class, the students with visual impairments played with the material and disrupted the lesson. However, the in-class observations showed that

the students tried to understand and explore the material, but they were not given enough time to do so (Merve Field Notes, December 04, 2019).

To summarize, it could be said that Merve's knowledge about learning consisted of the theory of multiple intelligences, using different modes of learning materials, and students' readiness. She realized the importance of applying the theory of multiple intelligences during the practicum, during which her co-operating teacher used it to engage students. During the observation sessions, it was seen that Merve tried to arrange her lessons according to the theory of multiple intelligences. She included audio-visual materials during her lessons, and she provided descriptions of the visuals. In addition to this, she used tactile materials to improve students' learning experiences and the students with visual impairment acted out the given task with the materials Merve brought to the class. However, students' readiness seemed to be an area that needed careful consideration because Merve did not fully take the students' readiness into account and misinterpreted the students' interest in the materials used in the classroom.

#### **4.1.9. Merve's Lesson Planning and Curricular Adjustment**

Merve has been working in the state schools, which are subject to follow the curricula prepared by the Ministry of National Education. While she had to follow the curricula that were mandated by the Ministry of National Education, she tried to plan her lessons according to the needs of the students. Merve used the coursebook as her curricular guide and organized her teaching practices based on the activities in the coursebook.

I used the coursebook that Ministry provided as my curricular plan (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Merve also needed to make curricular adjustments to meet the needs of her students. While she was making curricular adjustments, she stated that she still used the coursebook as a curricular guide and she added supplementary materials.

I make curricular changes. But I should consider its viability. For example, I use the content of the coursebook and make additions. I supplemented reading materials such as short stories but not here [in the School for the Blind] or added extra material but not now (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).



When she transitioned to the School for the Blind, she continued to make curricular adaptations to cover curricular content. While she supplemented her students in Samsun and Ankara with extra materials, she preferred to exclude curricular content in the School for the Blind.

I have covered the curricular content so far and I have generally revised the content with the students. I have no difficulty in covering the curricula because I exclude certain topics and teach accordingly (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

Merve further explained that she aimed to focus on the main items of the topic by avoiding the details. She rationalized her choices in curricular adjustments as follows:

I will abridge if the topic is very detailed. The details can be in the activities, dialogues, or grammar. For example, a language item is used in only one or two instances, I avoid it. I focus on the purpose of the unit to be covered, its main grammatical structure, and vocabulary items. I avoid details (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

By excluding the details of the curricular content, Merve was able to cover the curricula in the School for the Blind. Although her statement above seemed that Merve's choice of leaving the details out followed a predetermined scheme, the following field note explained her decision process.

The topic of the day was extreme sports and there were lots of vocabulary items on the topic. Before Merve started the lesson, she quickly scanned the pages of the unit. Then she started to teach the main vocabulary items. Although the students with visual impairments had very limited knowledge of extreme sports (e.g. scuba diving, paragliding, canoeing) and wanted to learn more about the extreme sports, she preferred skipping explaining the details of the extreme sports, which could create opportunities to include additional vocabulary items (Merve Field Note, February 05, 2020).

As shown in the field note above, Merve's curricular adjustments were subject to the spontaneity of the lesson/topic and she did not follow any predetermined scheme for the curricular curtailing she made.

Along with the curricular changes she made, she had to prepare lesson plans when she worked in Samsun and Ankara because preparing lesson plans was a requirement of the Ministry of National Education. However, she mentioned that she has not prepared lesson plans in recent years as the curricula consisted of the same or similar content.

I used lesson plans for a long time and organized my teaching practices accordingly. In recent years, I did not prepare lesson plans because the topics were either the same or similar to the previous years' topics. When I check the topics, I know what to do like I can do this and that, etc. I am planning my lessons in my head (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

From the excerpt above, it can be understood that Merve's years of language teaching experiences provided her a cognitive library, in which she could retrieve lesson plans based on the topic to be covered. Additionally, in-class observations revealed that Merve's lesson planning adhered to a set of classroom routines as illustrated in Figure 14 below.

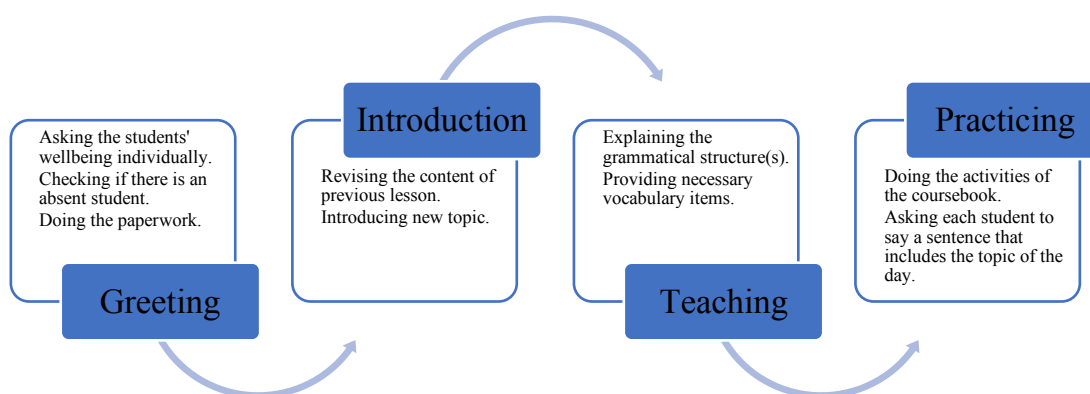


Figure 14: Merve's Routinized Lesson Plan

Merve's lesson planning consisted of four main stages. At the beginning of the lesson, she greeted the students with visual impairment and checked if there was an absent student. Given that the number of the students with visual impairment in a class did not exceed 6 students, she asked all students about their wellbeing, respectively. Then, she completed the paperwork and moved to the next stage of the lesson, that is, the introduction. The introduction part of the lesson served two main purposes. On one hand, Merve revised the previous lesson, which might include vocabulary items, grammatical structures, and the main topic. On the other hand, she introduced a new

topic, which was to be covered during the lesson. After she completed the introduction stage, she started to teach. In the teaching stage, she explained grammatical structures, gave key vocabulary items, and offered examples of the grammatical structures with the vocabulary items. In the last part of the lesson, she followed the activities of the coursebook. She selected certain activities such as fill-in-the-blank, matching, or multiple-choice questions, and read the questions. Each student was directed with a question from the activities, and she completed the lesson when she received an answer from each student.

#### **4.1.10. Merve's Classroom Management and Organization**

Merve started to form her approach to classroom management and organization during her initial teaching experiences. Her approach was based on mutual understanding and constant communication. She thought that it is important not to discourage students and lower their enthusiasm toward English language.

When you break a student's heart, it is over. S/he will lose her/his faith in the teacher and the lesson. I would never do that because my classroom management is dependent on the students' faith (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Merve also emphasized paying attention to every student in the class and having eye contact with them because understanding the students' mood was vital for her to motivate her students during the lessons.

I have a couple of seconds in a 40-minute lesson to make eye contact with every student even if I have 50 students in a class. I definitely try to understand their mood: Are they listening to me? Are they happy? Are they ill? I make sure that I pay attention to those unattended students. I think we can draw a line here; apart from their interest in English language, every student is unique and valuable, and teachers should make them feel their value (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

The excerpts about Merve's classroom management and organization approach showed that she prioritized and valued her students' feelings and emotions. In doing so, she believed that she could encourage and motivate her students. However, classroom management and organization posed her challenges and difficulties both during the practicum and early teaching experiences. These challenges and difficulties stemmed from her lack of experience in the actual classroom(s) because she mentioned

an instance in which her cooperating teacher asked her to revisit her classroom management and organization skills.

Although my cooperating teacher warned me about it, I still do it and I could not fix it. When I am paying attention to one specific student, I leave rest of the classroom on their own. Actually, I am doing it on purpose because I want them to have a refreshing break. My cooperating teacher warned me that I should keep the rest of the class busy by giving them an exercise or something. I could not resolve it, I keep managing my classes like this (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

The difficulties and challenges of classroom management and organization coupled when she had students with special needs in her classes in Ankara. As mentioned in her language teacher identity formation processes, she did not have any prior training in special education and did not know how to manage a class with inclusive students.

With my first student with special needs, I had very difficult experiences. For example, when it was break time, he was telling that everybody could leave but not me. I could not approach him because I was aware that he would not understand me, and he did not have full control over her reactions and behaviors. This was scary for me. He was a real struggle for me in the class (Merve Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

In another instance, she received the help of other students in the class to overcome the difficulty of managing a class with a student with special needs. She recalled her experiences as follows:

I had another student with a severe intellectual disability. It was really severe. The students in the classroom told me that he enjoyed doing puzzles, and I made sure that I brought a puzzle for him for each class. He did the puzzles I brought for the whole semester, and I did not have any problem with this student (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Merve's classroom management and organization experiences indicated that although her approach was based on mutual understanding and motivation, she encountered challenges and difficulties in managing the classroom. It was interesting to note that the problems of classroom management and organization gradually diminished when she transitioned to the School for the Blind. The improvements in Merve's classroom management and organization stemmed from two main reasons. When she transitioned to the School for the Blind, she attended an in-service training, which was about

special education. In this training, she became aware of how to approach the students with visual impairments when managing the classroom.

It was general special education training, and it was about what a special education classroom is, how we should approach [the students with visual impairments], what we should and should not do for the students with special needs. It was a very basic and informative training (Merve Individual Interview, November 6, 2019).

In addition to the in-service training about special education, the number of students in each classroom in the School for the Blind was an advantage for Merve in order to manage and organize the classroom.

In here [in the School for the Blind], we have three to four students in each class. One of them probably is subject to an individualized education program. I do not have any classroom management problems (Merve Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

Merve also mentioned that there was a difference between “normal” students and students with visual impairment in their disruptive behaviors during the class. According to her, the students with visual impairment wanted to play with an item during the lesson. This playing was an act of touching, switching, and/or pressing.

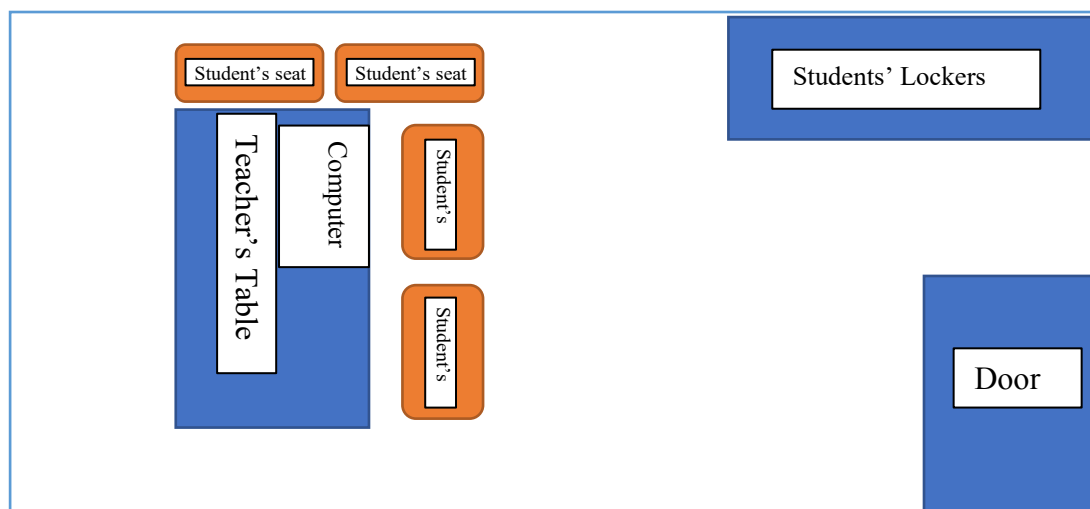
For example, I have a student in another classroom. He is really brilliant; he has no cognitive problem. There is a hole for cable on the table and a cap closes this hole. His hand is always there playing with the cap. He puts it out and in hundred times. I just took the cap and he stopped. His hand is always there. This is a general thing for students with visual impairment. They want to play with an item (Merve Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

Merve did not encounter major classroom management and organization difficulties and problems in the School for the Blind. As she participated in an in-service training when she transitioned to the School for the Blind, she accumulated the necessary knowledge for classroom management and organization. In addition to this, the number of students with visual impairment in a classroom was four students on average, which made it easier for Merve in terms of classroom management. Lastly, the movements were rather limited of the students with visual impairments were rather limited as they cannot see but Merve can observe the students and their behaviors. Given that, her ability to “see” positioned her in a powerful place, where she could easily manage a classroom in the School for the Blind.

The last theme about Merve’s classroom management and organization was whiteboard use in the School for the Blind. As illustrated in Figure 15 below, there was not a whiteboard or smartboard in classes where Merve taught English. Thus, she had difficulty in adjusting herself to the classroom environment that did not have a whiteboard and she began to write her teaching notes, which she would normally write on the board, on a piece of paper during her classes.

I oscillated when I realized that there was no board in the classroom. I was writing notes, drawing diagrams, and pictures on a piece of paper during the lessons. I needed it when I was teaching. Yet, I stopped writing on a piece of paper. Now I cannot write and draw anything on the board. I feel inefficient because I am losing one of my skills (Merve Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

The observation data confirmed that there was not a whiteboard in some of the classrooms in the School for the Blind. Hence, Merve could not use the board and she thought that she was losing her skills to use the board, which made her feel inefficient.



*Figure 15: Typical Classroom Arrangement in the School for the Blind*

#### **4.1.11. Merve’s Knowledge about Students**

Merve’s knowledge about students consisted of her awareness of students’ conditions, inclusive education, and differentiated instruction. Her awareness of the students’ conditions encompassed her knowledge about the students’ academic, cultural, and social backgrounds. As mentioned earlier, Merve’s classroom management approach indicated that she valued her students’ feelings and tried to establish mutual understanding. Establishing mutual understanding required her to be aware of her

students' academic, cultural, and social backgrounds. However, her awareness of students' conditions was not always consistent with her pedagogic experiences. Throughout her teaching career, she sometimes failed to be aware of her students' academic, cultural, and social backgrounds. The following excerpt revealed that she did not take the students' academic capabilities into account during her initial experiences with the students in the first semester of the practicum.

In the first semester, I went to observe and do micro-teaching. If I am not mistaken it was a first graders' English lesson. I wrote something on the board, it was not a sentence but a word or something. The cooperating teacher said "what are you doing? They do not know how to read and write." I never forget it; it is always in my mind (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

When she started to teach in Ankara, she became aware of her students' academic needs and capabilities and she did not encounter any difficulties that stemmed from her lack of knowledge about her students' conditions. She could also make a comparison between her previous students and the students in Keçiören. She mentioned that when she assigned her students to prepare their homework and projects, she considered their social and economic backgrounds.

When I planned my lessons, I kept the environmental, social, and economic conditions that my students were in. For example, I cannot ask the same project and homework to be prepared because students may not have the same resources and opportunities to obtain necessary materials. I adapt my lessons to the environmental conditions that my students are in (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

However, the family tree activity Merve asked her students to prepare and the subsequent experiences she had after the activity showed that Merve was not aware of her students' social background. Her failure to realize her students' familial background led her to a radical decision that influenced her pedagogic choices.

I knew that I should not involve in the students' familial issues as their parents might have passed away, etc. and the learners could have very complicated familial issues. In Ankara, I realized that I should not use real pictures of the family members because the concept of a family is not the same for everyone and I had a radical decision about the family tree activity, and I have never done it since then (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

It could be said that Merve gradually increased her awareness of her students' academic, cultural, and social background experiences throughout her teaching career. Although her awareness about the students' academic background seemed to be adequate to meet the academic needs of her students, she sometimes failed to keep her students' cultural and social background in mind when she asked her students to carry out the tasks that she assigned them.

In terms of inclusive education, Merve had several students with disabilities in Ankara and these students were subject to inclusive education, which required her to differentiate her instruction to meet the special needs of the students with disabilities. These students were her first students with disabilities and her educational background did not equip Merve to meet these students' needs. As mentioned earlier, she gathered information about the students with disabilities in her classes from their peers and managed to approach the students with disabilities according to the information she received. It can be inferred that the information she gathered about the students with disabilities and inclusive education helped her to reorganize her classroom management strategies. The following excerpt exemplifies how she gathered information about the students with disabilities and what she did afterward.

I had another student with a severe intellectual disability. It was really severe. The students in the classroom told me that he enjoyed doing puzzles, and I made sure that I brought a puzzle for him for each class. He did the puzzles I brought for the whole semester and I did not have any problem with this student (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

In addition to this, the students with disabilities in regular schools were subject to receive differentiated instruction that catered to their needs. During the interviews, Merve mentioned that she simplified curricular requirements for the students with disabilities and she expected them to learn the alphabet, numbers, and colors. However, she was more concerned with her classroom management than academic attainment of these students via differentiating her instruction.

In terms of English language learning, he probably did not learn anything, yet he was in the class with us. We did not bother him, or he did not bother us during the lessons (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).



The excerpt above was also indicative of Merve's approach to the students with disabilities because she considered the students who were subject to inclusive education and differentiated instruction as a source of pedagogic problems and the academic attainment of these students was rather overlooked.

When Merve transitioned to the School for the Blind, her initial beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions showed that her knowledge about the students with visual impairment is partial and rather biased. Yet, she started to change her initial thoughts about the students with visual impairments, and in-class observations revealed that she differentiated her instruction in the following ways: making curricular changes, providing language learning materials, and extending wait-time for students' responses. Merve made curricular adaptations for the students with visual impairments and these curricular adaptations were done in a way that curtailed the original curriculum because she wanted to focus on the main topics and avoiding the details. In terms of providing language learning materials, she tried to differentiate her instruction with the materials she created and/or adopted. Although the materials she used in the class enriched the students' learning experiences, using audio-visual and tactile materials posed several challenges for Merve. Lastly, the students with visual impairment did not generally use their Braille coursebook and Merve had to deliver her instruction orally. Due to this, the students with visual impairment needed more time when they were supposed to contribute to the lesson. In this regard, Merve's knowledge about her students with visual impairment allowed her to extend her wait-time to help her students. If her students with visual impairments had an additional disability, she prolonged the wait-time even more.

Kübra is a student with multiple disabilities. During the lesson, when she was asked to answer questions and/or complete the tasks, Merve offered her a longer wait-time than the other students in the class (Merve In-class Observation, March 11, 2020).

Although Merve's knowledge about her students in terms of differentiated instruction seemed to meet the needs of the students with visual impairment in the School for the Blind, she was not fully knowledgeable about her students' bodily movements, which caused communication failure during an activity.

The students were sitting in their places with the household items on their desks. Merve explained the activity and instructed them to stand up and change their seats because the students were supposed to communicate with each other using the materials on their desks. However, the students were having problems interacting with each other. As the students cannot see each other, they needed to face each other. Yet, Merve did not accord the students' positions for peer interaction. Thus, the students could not communicate with each other and the activity could not reach its objectives (Merve In-class Observation, March 11, 2020).

To summarize, Merve's knowledge about her students included her awareness of students' conditions, inclusive education, and differentiated instruction. While she was not fully aware of her students' academic needs and capabilities in her practicum period, her in-service practices showed that she became more knowledgeable about her students' academic needs and capabilities. Although she tried to organize her lessons according to the needs of her students, she sometimes failed to take her students' social and cultural background into the consideration as in the case of the family tree activity. Thus, her failure to understand the students' social and cultural background resulted in several difficulties and problems.

Regarding inclusive education, she had students with disabilities in her classes in Ankara, and these students were subject to inclusive education practices and differentiated instruction. It was seen that Merve's educational background did not prepare her to create an inclusive environment for the students with disabilities in her classes. As a result of her lack of pedagogical knowledge, she gathered information about the students with disabilities from the "normal" students in her classes. She used this information to solve classroom management difficulties, but the academic attainment of the students with disabilities in her classes was rather disregarded.

When she transitioned to the School for the Blind, she differentiated her instruction to meet the needs of the students with visual impairment. She made curricular changes, used audio-visual and tactile materials, and prolonged the wait-time. However, the chores activity could not reach its objectives as Merve failed to position her students to communicate with each other because she was not fully aware of the bodily movements of the students with visual impairments.

#### 4.1.12. Merve's Pedagogic Content Knowledge

Individual interviews, in-class observations, field notes, and memos collected for this study revealed that “medium of instruction”, “assessment and evaluation”, “English language teaching”, “classroom routines”, “technology use”, “language teaching materials”, and “professional development” were emerged as components of Merve’s pedagogic content knowledge. In the following sub-section, the components of Merve’s pedagogic content knowledge are presented.

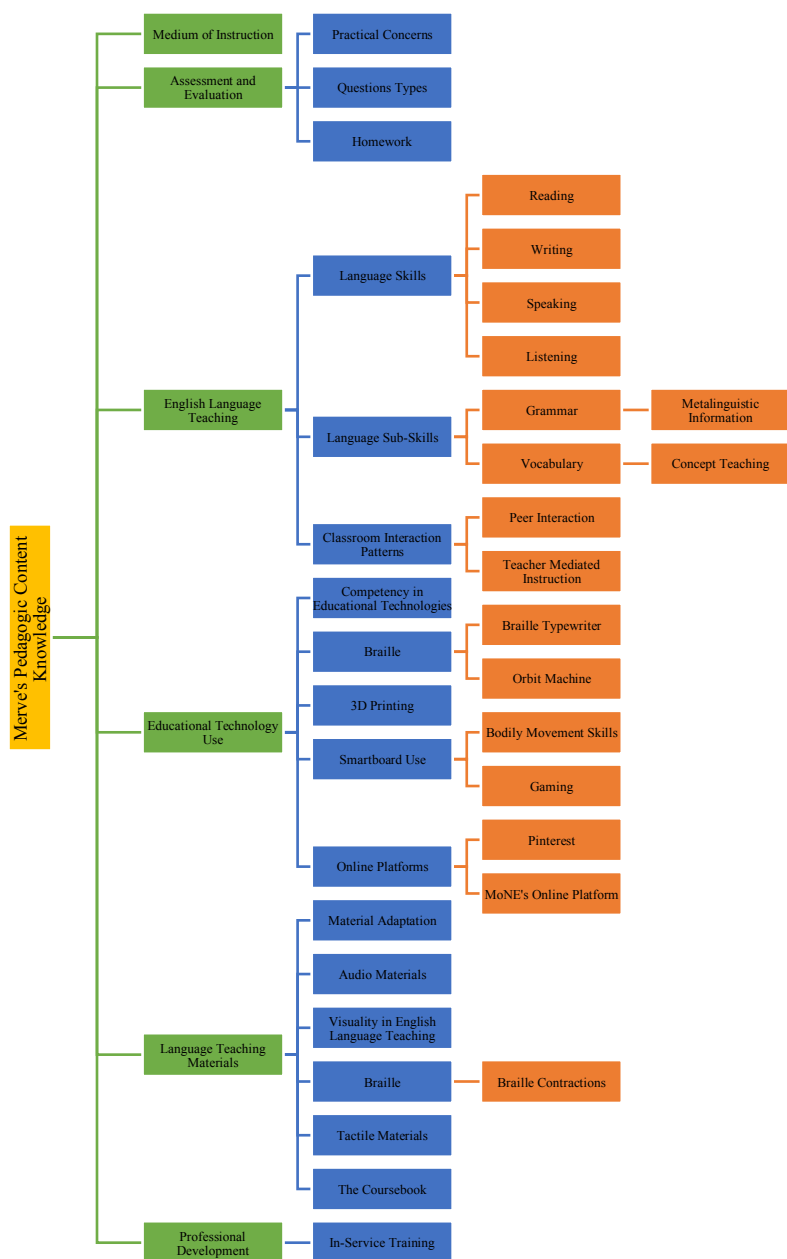


Figure 16: Merve’s Pedagogic Content Knowledge

#### 4.1.13. Merve's Medium of Instruction

Merve is an English language teacher, and she is expected to use English language during her classes in order to expose her students to the target language as much as possible. However, the in-class observations revealed that she used Turkish, which is students' native language, as the medium of instruction. When she was explaining/teaching the content of the lesson, she preferred to use Turkish.

Table 3: Merve's Medium of Instruction

Participant	Date	Grade	Duration	Medium of Instruction
Merve	23 October 2019	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes	Turkish
	04 December 2019	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes	Turkish
	11 December 2019	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes	Turkish
	08 January 2020	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes	Turkish
	15 January 2020	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes	Turkish
	05 February 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes	Turkish
	05 February 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes	Turkish
	12 February 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes	Turkish
	19 February 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes	Turkish
	26 February 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes	Turkish
	11 March 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes	Turkish
Total: 11 Classroom Observation			Total: 440 Minutes	

As shown in the table above, she chose to use Turkish as the medium of instruction during the lessons. Merve's use of extended use of Turkish in English classes stemmed from the fact that she was constantly translating English sentences, vocabulary items, and/or reading passages to Turkish.

Merve was teaching the unit of "Tourism". In this unit, the students were expected to learn to give directions, describe touristic places, understand different modes of tourism. During the lesson, it was noted that she used Turkish as a medium of instruction. For example, there was a reading passage, she first translated it to Turkish, explained the passage, and then, she read it in English (Merve In-class Observation, February 19, 2020).

Merve only used English language when she provided example sentences and vocabulary items. She rationalized her limited use of target language as follows:

It is all about the students' readiness. I start a sentence in English and the moment I realize that it does not mean anything for the students I translate it into Turkish. When I sense that the students cannot understand English, I totally avoid using it. My choice is dependent on the students' reactions (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

Given that the students in the School for the Blind cannot see, their learning mostly takes place via listening and tactile materials. Thus, Merve's rationalization of using Turkish as a medium of instruction seemed to be misleading because the students' with visual impairments medium of learning. To foster English language learning, Merve should have used English as the medium of instruction and classroom management and organization, yet she preferred not to use English as the medium of instruction. Her limited use of English as a medium of instruction was shown in the excerpt below.

Merve: Peki önce İngilizcesini söyleyecek sonra Türkçesini. Önce dinliyoruz sonra tekrar edeceğiz beraber (Okay, first the computer pronounces English then Turkish. We listen first and repeat the word together).  
Computer: Tourist attraction  
Merve: Sesi iyi mi? (Is the sound of the computer okay?).  
Computer: Tourist attraction (repeated two times).  
Computer: Turizm merkezi.  
Merve: Ne diyor anlıyorsunuz? (Can you understand what it says?).  
Nisa: Turizm merkezi (Tourist attraction).  
Computer: Type (repeated 3 times)  
The students tried to pronounce the word "type" as they hear it.  
Merve: Tür demek (It means type in Turkish).  
(Merve In-class Observation, February 12, 2020).

The excerpt above showed that Merve used an online platform, which offered pronunciation of the target words. First, the online platform pronounced the target vocabulary items in English, and subsequently offered Turkish meanings of the target words. The students with visual impairment were supposed to listen and repeat when Merve asked them to do. As can be seen, the only English the students with visual impairments could hear was from the online platform, which pronounced the words in isolation, and Merve used English in a limited way if not at all.

To summarize, interviews and in-class observations indicated that Merve's medium of instruction was Turkish, which was the native language of the students with

visual impairment. Merve's choice of using Turkish as a medium of instruction was based on her intuitions. If she thought that the students did not understand the content in English, she preferred to use Turkish as a medium of instruction. However, her choice contradicted the nature of learning that the students with visual impairments were accustomed to.

#### **4.1.14. Merve's Assessment and Evaluation**

Merve used a variety of question types in her assessment and evaluation practices in Samsun and Ankara. These practices included fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice, true-false, picture matching, and comprehension questions. She also emphasized using visual realia in her assessment practices.

I use fill-in-the-blank, matching and true-false questions in my exams. I sometimes ask my students to find which one is different and I try to use all the question types available. I definitely make sure that I use pictures. I use all types of questions, but I make adaptations (Merve Individual Interview, November 6, 2019).

When she transitioned to the School for the Blind, she changed her assessment and evaluation practices because the summative assessments needed to be prepared in Braille format. She mentioned that she prepared her examinations in a Word document and printed them in Braille. However, this process caused several formatting problems due to the differences between Braille and "normal" writing structure. She described the process of preparing a summative assessment as follows:

I cannot use uppercase and lowercase letters together. Actually, I can but not as in the "normal" exam paper. I use uppercase letters at the beginning of the line as much as possible. If I am using multiple-choice questions, I cannot use the same structure. The choices have to be in the same line. It is a big problem because the formats in Word documents get obscure and dislocated (Merve Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

The main reason for dislocated items between Braille and "normal" printing is that Braille writing requires additional symbols and marks when numbers, uppercase letters, and punctuation are used. For example, the capital sign, which is the sixth dot of the Braille alphabet, is placed before a uppercase letter. Numerical illustrations also require using 3, 4, 5, and 6<sup>th</sup> dots of the Braille alphabet before the numerical character. In order to avoid confusion, Merve prepared her exams with only lowercase letters or

used a minimum number of characters that required using additional symbols and marks.

She also employed additional strategies when she conducted her exams. The main strategy she used during the examination processes was that she was reading all questions aloud during the exam and the students with visual impairments answered questions orally. Subsequently, Merve noted the students' answers to the exam sheet. Similarly, she drew the lines between the matching questions and/or circled the answers to the multiple-choice questions. Instead of allowing the students with visual impairments to complete their exams, she used these strategies for practical concerns.

I do the matching questions for the students. I read questions aloud and they tell their responses. I use these strategies because the students with visual impairment get confused, they go forth and back to find the matching question on the paper. They can do the questions but when they do the matching questions, they sometimes forget, and it is difficult to check it repeatedly (Merve Individual Interview, November 6, 2019).

In addition to the examinations, Merve sometimes asked her students to complete the worksheets/homework. When the students with visual impairment handed in their homework, Merve asked the students to read out their peer's homework. In doing so, Merve checked her students' homework. Alternatively, when she had time constraints, Merve collected students' homework and asked for help from other teachers who can read and write in Braille.

When we were preparing for the interview, Sude came to the teachers' room and brought her homework, which was prepared in Braille. Merve asked her whether she was able to complete the homework and then she told Sude to read her homework out. After she read her homework, Merve asked for the help of a teacher who could read Braille and checked Sude's homework (Field Notes, February 26, 2020).

To summarize, Merve's assessment and evaluation practices included using a variety of question types and visual elements in Samsun and Ankara. When she transitioned to the School for the Blind, she adapted her assessment practices to meet the needs of the students with visual impairments. She used different formatting structures due to the differences between the Braille alphabet and "normal" writing. In addition to this, she read the questions and did the marking during the exams for practical concerns. Lastly, she developed a strategy for checking her students' homework because the

students with visual impairment prepared their homework in Braille. To check her students' homework, she asked her students to read out their peer's homework.

#### **4.1.15. Merve's English Language Teaching Practices**

Merve's English language teaching practices encompassed teaching main skills, sub-skills, and language teaching techniques and strategies. She used the coursebook as a guide for her English language practices and she included main and sub-skills in her English language teaching practices according to the activities of the coursebook she was using. She explained her English language teaching practices before transitioning to the School for the Blind as follows:

I generally followed the plan of the coursebook. [...] After teaching grammar, I do more listening activities than other skills. In terms of reading and speaking, I align with the coursebook activities (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Merve also mentioned that her English language teaching practices changed when she transitioned to the School for the Blind and her language teaching practices underwent several curtailments. She thought that the students in the School for the Blind cannot see and their lack of vision made it almost impossible to employ similar English language practices she had in her previous schools. Hence, her rationalization of the curtailments in her English language teaching practices based on her students' disabilities.

I mentioned the techniques and strategies, but I cannot use visual techniques in the School for the Blind. As an English language teacher, being unable to use visual techniques and show nothing is a real pain for me. The only thing I can use now is listening materials and my methods and techniques are mostly based on listening. In the past, I prepared presentations, games, and activities, I often integrated technology. I was asking my students to prepare presentations etc. If I had [grammar] a topic to teach, I started with grammar teaching, did the activities, used technology, and played games. But now, it is very superficial (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

She further commented that it was easier to work with "normal" students because these students showed more improvement than the students with visual impairments. The ease of working with "normal" students originated from the fact that Merve could use multi-modal and multi-sensory teaching techniques and strategies in Samsun and



Ankara. To organize her practices without incorporating visual elements was not only challenging for her but also time-consuming.

In addition to the ease of working with “normal” students, Merve stated that the number of students in Samsun and Ankara was higher than in the School for the Blind and it gave her more opportunities to do pair-work and speaking activities.

When I worked with students without disabilities, I could make them speak more, do group-work, etc. But I do not have that opportunity in the School for the Blind because I have only one student who can do group work. When I assign him/her to a group, the other group cannot improve. In “normal” classes, I had the chance to organize group work and assign students according to their level. Here, I cannot do it because I have one average student in each class (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

To sum up, Merve’s statements about her English language teaching practices illustrated that she changed and lessened her language teaching strategies in the School for the Blind because she could not use visual materials and technology as she used in her previous experiences. In addition to this, she thought that the students with visual impairments were less capable of learning and using English language when compared to her students in Samsun and Ankara.

When delved into Merve’s English language teaching practices, in-class observations revealed that Merve’s practices were mostly based on listening activities, grammar, and vocabulary teaching. Additionally, writing and speaking skills emerged as the most neglected language skills in her English language teaching practices. Merve’s English language teaching practices were summarized in Table 6 below.

In terms of teaching main language skills, it was realized that she mostly used listening activities and these activities were meant to revise vocabulary items she taught and/or to introduce new vocabulary items. Listening activities that required students to focus on main ideas and details were limited. During the listening activities, she generally stopped the listening, provided explanation/translation, and asked questions when the listening activity was completed. When she was asked to explain her use of listening activities, she said that she used listening activities of the coursebook because they had short listening tracks that did not exceed two minutes. She also made her students listen to the same listening track several times. The reason for listening the same track was to introduce the track and get her students used to the

pace of the listening. Upon the students' familiarity with the listening track, she moved to the next phase of the listening activity.

Table 4: Summary of Merve's English Language Practices

Date	Grade	Main Skills	Sub-Skills	English Language Teaching Techniques and Strategies	Material	Classroom Interaction Patterns
23 October 2019	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Writing	Grammar (Comparative Adjectives) Vocabulary	Translation Pre-Vocabulary Teaching Repetition Dictation	Coursebook	Teacher-Student
04 December 2019	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Reading (Merve) Listening	Vocabulary	Peer Feedback Fill-in-the blank activity Translation Q-A Session	Emotion Cards	Teacher-Student
11 December 2019	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	NA	Grammar (There is/There are) Vocabulary (At the Fair) Pronunciation	Metalanguage Information Translation Correction Scaffolding	Coursebook	Teacher-Student
08 January 2020	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Listening	Vocabulary (Ordinal numbers)	Dialogue Fill-in-the blank activity Q-A Session Translation Scaffolding Metalanguage Information	Listening Track Coursebook	Teacher-Student
15 January 2020	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Listening	Vocabulary (Weather and Emotions)	Interactive Games	Smartboard Application	Teacher-Student
05 February 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	NA	Grammar (Prefer/Would rather) Vocabulary (Extreme Sports)	Metalanguage Information Q-A sessions Contextualization Scaffolding Translation	Coursebook	Teacher-Student
05 February 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Reading (Merve reads)	Vocabulary (Jobs and Occupations)	Q-A Session Reading Comprehension Questions Multiple-choice Questions Scaffolding Translation	Coursebook	Teacher-Student

Table 4 (continued)

<b>12 February 2020</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Listening for Vocabulary Revision	Grammar (Prefer) Vocabulary Pronunciation	Revision of Previous Vocabulary Items Concept Teaching Translation Computer Assisted Vocabulary Teaching True/False Questions	Listening Track Coursebook	Teacher-Student
<b>19 February 2020</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Reading (students with visual impairment)	Vocabulary	Translation Revision of Previous Vocabulary Multiple-choice Questions Reading Comprehension Questions	Coursebook	Teacher-Student
<b>26 February 2020</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Listening for Grammar	Vocabulary (Chores) Grammar (Must)	Translation Matching Activity Listening for Main Ideas Listening for Details	MoNE's Online Platform Coursebook	Teacher-Student
<b>11 March 2020</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Speaking	Grammar (Gerunds & Infinitives) Vocabulary Pronunciation	Translation Collocation Drama Scaffolding Pair-work	Household items Coursebook	Teacher-Student Student-Student

In the second phase of the listening activity, Merve asked comprehension questions about the listening track. The comprehension questions served to revise vocabulary items and/or check the students' understanding of the main idea(s) and the details of the listening activity.

My listening activities do not exceed two minutes. I use the listening tracks of the coursebook, and the tracks have their own format. When I do the listening activities, I first let the students listen without interruption to familiarize themselves with the listening. In the second turn, I stop the listening track and ask comprehension questions (Merve Individual Interview, January 12, 2020).

In the following excerpt, Merve was doing a listening activity about jobs and occupations. She used the coursebook's listening track. While the students with visual impairments listened to the track, she stopped the track and asked comprehensive questions.

Computer: Unit 6. Listening. Track 6.1. Listen to the conversation write a name and a job under the pictures and match the pictures with the sentences. Hi children! Today

we are talking about occupations and jobs. We have guests here. They all have different jobs. This is Ms. Kennedy. She is an architect. She designs buildings.

Merve: Dur şurayı bir daha alalım. Hazır mısınız? (Let me replay this part. Are you ready?)

Computer: We have guests here. They all have different jobs. This is Ms. Kennedy. She is an architect. She designs buildings.

Merve: Kimmiş? (Who is she?)

Kevser: This is bir şey dedi. (It says this is something.)

Merve: Ne dedi? Ms. ...? Bir daha dinleyelim. (What did it say? Ms. ...? Let's listen again.)

Computer: Ms. Kennedy.

Kevser: Kennedy.

Merve: Şimdi mesleği gelecek arkasından. Bakalım ne iş yapıyormuş? (Now, it says her job. Let's see what her job is.)

Computer: She is an architect.

(Merve stopped the listening and waited for an answer).

Computer: She is architect. She designs buildings.

Merve: Neymiş Kevser? (What is her job, Kevser?)

Kevser: Architect gibi bir şey dedi. (It said something like architect.)

Merve: Evet güzel. Türkçesi neydi? (Yes, good. What is it in Turkish?)

Arda: Bilmiyorum. (I do not know.)

(Merve In-class Observation, January 08, 2020)

The excerpt above indicated that Merve was doing the listening activities the way she mentioned during the interviews. She replayed the parts about which she asked questions several times. The replays helped the students with visual impairment to understand what the speaker in the listening track was saying. However, Merve's questions about the listening track mostly focused on vocabulary items and she offered translation of the target vocabulary items in the listening track.

In terms of teaching reading skills, Merve experienced several difficulties and challenges in the School for the Blind. As mentioned before, Merve did not know how to read and write in Braille and she used Braille printing when she prepared handouts for her students with visual impairments. In addition to this, the coursebook they were using for English lessons was printed with its Braille contractions and the students with visual impairment did not know how to read and write with these contractions. Given that, using the Braille coursebook was the main barrier to teaching reading skills. She exemplified how the Braille contractions were used in the coursebook as follows:

I wanted the students with visual impairments to see the script of English language. We really tried very hard, but it did not make any sense for the students. For example, there is a "p" that stands for personal and "kn" letters stand for knowledge. It is written

as “p kn”, which means personal knowledge. They could not read it (Merve Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

In addition to the coursebook and its Braille contractions, the attitudes of the students with visual impairments toward reading were emerged as a barrier, as well. The students with visual impairments thought that reading in English was a complicated process and they did not want to do reading activities because of orthographical differences between Turkish, English, and Braille contractions.

They do not want to read because reading in English is very complicated for them. I barely get them to say something in English. In addition to this, it writes something but pronounced something else due to the orthographical differences between languages. When the Braille contractions are used, it becomes extremely complex (Merve Individual Interviews, February 19, 2020).

Given that Merve had several barriers when she did the reading activities, she mentioned that she used different activities, in which the students with visual impairments were verbally engaged.

I cannot get the students with visual impairment to do reading activities. I just do the activities, in which I can receive their verbal responses (Merve Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

In-class observations revealed that although Merve used reading materials from the coursebook, the students with visual impairments were rarely engaged with the reading material as they did not use their coursebook because of the orthographical differences. Additionally, Merve tended to read the reading passages during the lessons and the students with visual impairment were supposed to listen when she read the reading material. As in the case of the listening activities, when Merve read the passage, she stopped to provide the translation of the text and/or she asked questions about the reading passage. If the students with visual impairments could not answer the comprehension questions, she reread the parts that her questions were directed to. She also employed fill-in-the-blank activities, during which she was reading the questions and the students with visual impairments tried to fill the gaps.

During the lesson, Merve read a paragraph. While she was reading, she provided definitions of the vocabulary items and translated the sentences. When she completed reading the paragraph, she asked fill-in-the-blank questions. When she was asking the

fill-in-the-blank questions, she reread the parts where the students could get the answer (In-class Observation, December 04, 2019).

Besides teaching listening and reading skills, Merve taught speaking and writing skills, as well. However, these language skills were the most neglected ones in Merve's English language teaching practices in the School for the Blind. Although she mentioned that she taught writing to her students in Samsun and Ankara, she could not teach writing in the School for the Blind because the students with visual impairment needed to write in their Braille writing slate with its pen. The process of writing in Braille writing slate was time-consuming and tiresome for the students with visual impairments. Thus, Merve did not want to use writing tasks. She explained her choice as follows:

The students with visual impairment write with their Braille writing slate and its pen. The Braille pen is like a nail. When they write, it is very painful for them. We write a couple of sentences, and they start to tell me that their hands are aching. Then we stop (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

The process of writing in Braille slate was not the only difficulty Merve experienced when she planned writing activities. The orthographical differences also caused problems when the students with visual impairments wrote in English.

I was having great difficulty. I spelled every letter one by one during the writing activities. I was spelling with the Turkish alphabet. When we switched to English spelling, it got complicated. I was saying "e" and they wrote "i". Correcting each student in the class took a lot of time. Thus, I decided to prepare a Word document and print it out with the Braille printer. In doing so, the students with visual impairment had their learning materials (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

Merve's statement above indicated that her writing practices were not well-organized because the orthographical differences between the languages could be resolved with spelling exercises. In addition to this, Merve's use of Turkish as a medium of instruction and translating English content led the students with visual impairment to fail to learn English spelling. Thus, Merve only used the dictation technique with the writing activity, and it could be said that the writing activities were not used as novel language production.

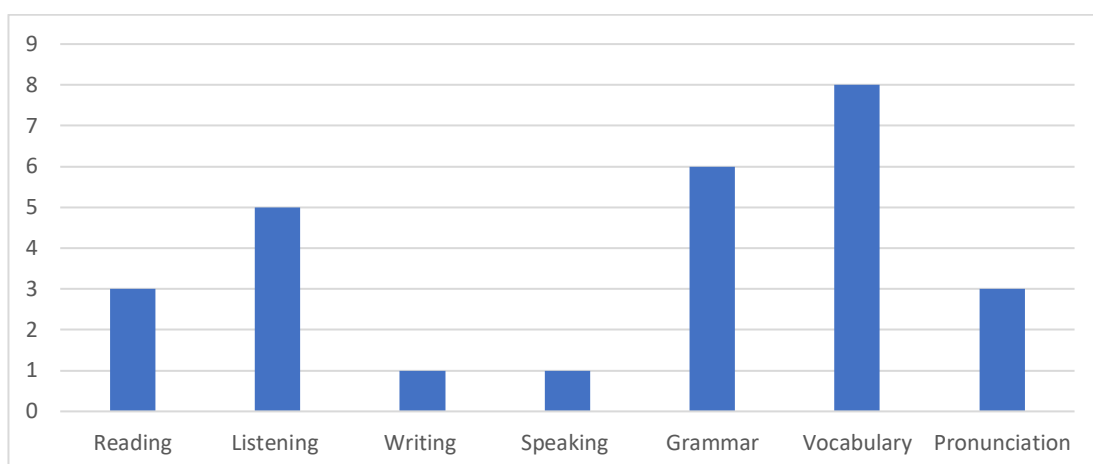


Figure 17: Merve's Teaching Main and Sub- Language Skills

Regarding the speaking skills, Merve mentioned that the number of students in each class in the School for the Blind was not suitable for speaking activities. In addition to the number of students, she also commented that the students in “normal” schools were more capable of speaking than the students with visual impairments.

The students were sitting in their places with the household items on their desks. Merve explained the activity and instructed them to stand up and change their seats because the students were supposed to communicate with each other using the materials on their desks. However, the students were having problems interacting with each other. As the students cannot see each other, they needed to face each other. Yet, Merve did not accord the students’ positions for peer interaction. Thus, the students could not communicate with each other, and the activity could not reach its goals (Merve In-class Observation, March 11, 2020).

In-class observations showed that throughout the data collection processes, Merve employed speaking activities only once, and the activity failed to reach its objectives as shown in the observation note above. The failure stemmed from her lack of knowledge about how to organize a speaking activity in the School for the Blind because the students with visual impairments needed to be physically positioned in a way that they could get involved in the speaking activity.

Merve’s teaching main language skills was also accompanied by teaching the sub-skills of English language. These sub-skills were grammar and vocabulary. In-class observations revealed that Merve’s English language teaching practices in the School for the Blind mostly focused on grammar and vocabulary teaching. Merve’s grammar teaching practices followed a sequence of steps. In a regular lesson in the

School for the Blind, she first named the grammatical topic of the day and provided discorsal information. The discorsal information she provided was based on the activities in the coursebook. Then, she provided examples sentences of the target grammatical structure, which was subsequently translated. The following excerpt illustrated Merve’s introduction to the grammatical structure of “would rather”.

Merve: Tercihlerimizi belirtirken bir kelime daha vardı. Kullanabiliyoruz ben tercih ederim anlamına geliyor ama prefer’den farklı bir kelime. “Would rather”. I would rather eat a hamburger than a pizza. Prefer olunca “to”, would rather olunca “than” getiriyoruz araya. Neyin arasına iki şeyi karşılaştırırken ilk söylediğimiz isimle ikincisi arasına. Hamburger than pizza: Hamburgeri pizzaya tercih ederim. Şimdi “prefer” yerine “would rather’la” cümleler kuralım. Kitabımızda şöyle bir soru var: What do you prefer doing on summer holidays?

(When we express our preferences, there is a word. We can use it, it means “I prefer” but it is different. “Would rather”. I would rather eat a hamburger than a pizza. When we use “prefer”, we use “to” in-between. When we use “would rather”, we use “than” in-between. We use [to and than] between the first and second words. Hamburger than pizza. I would rather eat a hamburger than a pizza. Now, let’s create sentences with “would rather” instead of “prefer”. In our book, there is a question: what do you prefer doing on summer holidays? (Merve In-class Observation February 05, 2020).

The example sentences were then followed by an activity, in which the students with visual impairments were supposed to form sentences with the target grammatical structure. Merve sometimes used the grammatical activities of the coursebook. If she thought that the activity in the coursebook was not suitable for her classroom practices, she only employed a question-answer activity, in which the students with visual impairments tried to use target grammatical structure. In the following excerpt Merve was teaching question forms of present simple tense and she made use of the activities of the coursebook as a guideline for her grammar teaching.

Merve: Sorumuza geri dönelim. Do you like fairs? Sever misiniz? Do ile başladığına göre sorumuz yardımcı fiilimiz var. Cevap verirken nasıl cevap vereceğiz? (Let’s get back to the question. Do you like fairs? Do you like it? The question starts with “do”, we have the auxialry verb. When we answer the question, how do we answer it?

Kevser: Imm.

Arda: I like.

Merve: Uzun soru olduğu için başına evet ya da hayır diye net bir cevap versek mi? Yes, sonrasında I like fairs, ya da yes, I do. Sevmiyorsak ne diyeceğiz? No, I don’t veya uzun cevap verirsek No, I don’t like ... (The question requires a full answer, and we need to use yes or no. “Yes, then [we use], I like fairs,” or “Yes, I do”. If we do



not like it, how do we answer? “No, I don’t” or if we give a full answer, “No, I don’t like...”

Arda: Fairs.

Merve: İkinci sorusu kitabınızın, which one is more exciting? Hangisi sizce daha heyecan verici? (The second question of the coursebook is which one is more exciting? [She translated the question in Turkish?]  
(Merve In-class Observation, December 11, 2019).

As shown in the excerpts above, Merve made use of metalanguage information as grammatical explanations. These explanations served as grammatical formulas. When she was asked about the rationale of using metalanguage information, she mentioned that she offered grammatical formulas, which made it easier for the students with visual impairments to memorize the grammatical structure.

In grammar teaching, the students with visual impairment are not aware of what they are doing. It is mostly memorization. I explain how the sentence starts and they try to form similar sentences. They use their coursebook as a guide. It is no different than memorizing words for them (Merve Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

However, she commented that these students lacked metalanguage information in their native language, which caused problems when she used metalanguage information in English.

I give metalanguage information so that the students with visual impairments can formularize it. Yet, I realized that the students with visual impairments did not know the terms “subject”, “verb” and others in their own language. Thus, I tended not to use metalanguage information very often but still it is a habit for me (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

In addition to the metalanguage information she provided, providing translation of vocabulary items and/or sentences was the most commonly used technique in Merve’s grammar teaching in the School for the Blind. She translated every sentence she produced during her English language teaching practices. As can be seen in the excerpts above, the translations she made were a mixture of Turkish and English. The in-class observations also revealed that the metalanguage information and grammatical explanations were verbally provided, and the follow-up written forms of metalanguage information were not offered to the students with visual impairments.

In terms of vocabulary teaching, Merve suggested the students with visual impairments to memorize vocabulary items because she thought vocabulary learning

for the students with visual impairments was a matter of memorization and repetition. Accordingly, she provided vocabulary items in isolation in her regular lessons. She listed them and told the Turkish meanings of the words. Alternatively, when she was teaching grammar, she would translate the words in the example sentences. When she was explaining her vocabulary teaching practices, she mentioned that the students with visual impairments lacked the concept that the words meant. The lack of conceptual knowledge led Merve to contextualize vocabulary items she was teaching. Thus, she offered either Turkish translation of the words or explained the vocabulary items in detail in Turkish. Then, she taught vocabulary items.

When I say this is a lion and that is a tiger, it does not mean anything for the students with visual impairments because they do not know what these animals look like. I first contextualize the words and then give their English versions. In this way, the students with visual impairment are able to embody the words they are learning (Merve Individual Interview, November 06, 2020).

Merve also tried to find suitable teaching materials to contextualize the vocabulary items due to the students' lack of conceptual knowledge. Contextualizing the vocabulary items served two main purposes. First, Merve used contextualizing to teach everyday concepts to the students with visual impairments. Second, she tried to ground the vocabulary items on the concepts she taught through contextual information.

The last theme that emerged from data analysis was classroom interaction patterns in the School for the Blind. The interaction patterns were observed to be between Merve and the students with visual impairments and interactions were directed from teacher to student, that is, Merve initiated classroom interactions, and the students with visual impairments only communicated with their teacher. The classroom interaction patterns showed that when the students with visual impairments initiated communication, it was also directed to their teacher. During the in-class observations, it was realized that the classroom interaction patterns were organized around the question-answer sequences. Merve would ask a question and the students with visual impairments answered to the question.

Merve was teaching vocabulary items about touristic and historical places. When she was asking questions, she normally named the student who was going to respond. Yet, she asked a question to the classroom without assigning questions to the students. In

doing so, although she waited for a while, she could not get any response from the students (In-class Observation, February 19, 2020).

However, it was noted that when Merve asked a general question, which was not directed to a specific student, the students with visual impairment did not answer the question. Given that the students with visual impairments cannot see mimics and gestures of their teacher, they needed a signal which reminded them that the question was directed to them.

To summarize Merve's English language teaching practices, it could be said that Merve used the coursebook as a curricular guide and organized her language teaching practices accordingly. What was interesting, though, she thought that the students with visual impairments were less capable of learning English language when compared to "normal" students. Such an attitude towards the students with visual impairments led Merve to lessen English language teaching methods and techniques.

In terms of teaching main language skills, Merve's practices showed that listening activities served to revise vocabulary items, for which she directed comprehension questions. The students with visual impairments were expected to understand chunks and phrases during the listening activities. Thus, listening activities that required the students with visual impairments to understand main ideas and details were limited.

As opposed to the listening activities, reading activities caused several challenges and problems for both Merve and the students with visual impairments. These challenges and problems were orthographical differences, Braille contractions, and attitudes of the students with visual impairments. The orthographical differences between English and Turkish made it difficult to read in the target language for the students with visual impairments. In addition to this, the coursebook was printed in Braille with its English contractions and both the students with visual impairments and Merve lacked knowledge of English Braille contractions. Combined with orthographical differences, Braille contractions caused reluctance to read in English for the students with visual impairments. Thus, reading passages were read by the teacher from the "normal" coursebook. While Merve was reading passages, she constantly translated the reading content into Turkish to make it more comprehensible for the students with visual impairment.

Similar to reading activities, teaching speaking and writing skills posed several problems for Merve, as well. Data analysis revealed that these language skills were the most neglected language skills in Merve's English language teaching practices in the School for the Blind. On one hand, she thought that the number of students in each class was not suitable for speaking activities and the classroom interaction patterns indicated that the classroom communication was mediated by Merve and the direction of the communication was always from teacher to student. Hence, the opportunities, in which the students with visual impairments interacted with their peers in English were rather limited. In addition to the interactional patterns, Merve's frequent use of translating English content into Turkish reduced the opportunities, in which the students with visual impairment could practice their speaking skills. On the other hand, Merve chose not to implement writing activities in the School for the Blind. As in the case of reading activities, the orthographical differences caused confusion and misunderstandings during writing activities. Additionally, the students with visual impairment needed to write with their Braille slate, which was tiresome and painful for them. Given these, implementing writing activities during English classes was time-consuming for Merve and she tended to skip writing activities.

Lastly, the in-class observations and interviews revealed that Merve's language teaching practices focused on grammar and vocabulary. She offered discursal and metalanguage information when she introduced and taught grammatical structures. She provided examples with the target grammatical structure and asked the students with visual impairment to produce their own examples with the target structure. In terms of vocabulary teaching, Merve mostly provided vocabulary items in isolation, which meant that she listed and translated vocabulary items. In doing so, she expected the students with visual impairments to memorize vocabulary items. In addition to this, she sometimes tried to contextualize vocabulary items because the students with visual impairments did not have conceptual knowledge of some vocabulary items.

#### **4.1.16. Merve's Use of Educational Technologies**

Educational technologies provide opportunities to improve, enhance and enrich one's language teaching practices. In this vein, Merve was asked about her use of educational technologies throughout her teaching career during the individual interviews. She

mentioned that when she enrolled in the teaching certificate program, educational technologies were a recent phenomenon and there was not a course devoted to how to integrate educational technologies in English language teaching. Thus, she did not receive any training during the teaching certificate program, and she was aware that she was not capable of using educational technologies in English language teaching when she completed the program. However, she enrolled in in-service trainings when she started to teach in Samsun and Ankara. In these in-service trainings, she learned to utilize educational technologies.

The program was not sufficient in terms of educational technologies. I learned to integrate educational technologies into my teaching through in-service trainings. In these trainings, I became competent to use the internet, utilize the smartboard, and prepare presentations (Merve Individual Interview, November 06, 2019).

After attending these in-service trainings, Merve started to use materials of the publishing houses as well as prepare her own content with the help of educational technologies. She thought that her capability to utilize educational technologies was the result of the in-service trainings she attended.

I participated in in-service trainings about educational technologies. I can utilize these technologies thanks to those trainings I attended. I know how to create my own content. I prepared some. Additionally, there are available resources of publishing houses. I combined my own materials with the ones prepared by publishing houses. As I said, I can easily use educational technologies (Merve Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

When Merve transitioned to the School for the Blind, she was surprised to see that the students with visual impairments were capable of using technological devices such as mobile phones, computers, and tablets. Subsequently, her thoughts about the use of educational technologies for language teaching in the School for the Blind began to change. She realized that the students with visual impairments tended to enjoy using technological devices. Although she valued and emphasized use of educational technologies, she was unsure about the underlying cause of her students' tendencies.

I cannot answer this question for sure. I am not sure whether the students with visual impairments really love technology, or it just breaks just the classroom routines, which makes it different and the students want it. Which one? Both can be applied. Technology something that has many visual effects, as you know it. The students with

visual impairment cannot see this vivid and colorful world. Of course, I make explanations [about visual elements]. Yet, as I said, I use it for the sake of making my lessons a little bit different (Merve Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

The excerpt above showed the mismatch between her willingness to utilize educational technologies in the School for the Blind and the value and meaning of the educational technologies for the students with visual impairments. Although her conflicting views about the use of educational technologies in the School for the Blind continued to exist, she made use of online platforms to find suitable materials for the students with visual impairments when Merve transitioned to the School for the Blind. The online platforms she often looked for were Pinterest and MoNE's platform. While Pinterest was used for material development and adaptation, she made use of MoNE's online platform for asynchronous teaching purposes.

We listen to a video about our topic. It is like an introduction. Subsequently, I teach the topic or stop the video and make explanations. This is how I make use of online platforms (Merve Individual Interview, November 6, 2019).

The following in-class observation note showed how Merve utilized MoNE's online platform.

Merve opened a video from MoNE's online platform, in which a teacher explained the topic of the unit and provided key vocabulary items. The teacher in the video explained the topic and keywords in English and subsequently provided Turkish translation. In addition to this, there were visual materials in the video. When there was a visual in the video, Merve stopped the video and described the visual material. The students contributed to her explanations with their examples, but the examples were also in Turkish (Merve In-class Observation, February 26, 2020).

In addition to Merve's use of online platforms, she mentioned that the School for the Blind has resources and necessary equipment for 3-D and Braille printing, smartboard applications, and computer systems.

In terms of 3-D printing, Merve mentioned that printing 3-D materials was a long and difficult process because she needed to follow a series of formal procedures to receive permission for 3-D printing. In addition to this, Merve thought that using tactile materials was a necessity, yet she did not use 3-D printing in the School for the Blind because there were alternative ways to use 3-D materials.

I can print 3-D materials, but it is a very laborious and long process. Plus, I cannot go and print 3-D materials as I want it. I need to follow a series of procedures. I know it exists, but I have not used it so far. I think there is nothing much in it for English language teaching. I already use my own tactile materials (Merve Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

Although Merve did not use 3-D printing in the School for the Blind, she made use of Braille printing. Merve utilized Braille printing for several purposes. As mentioned in her writing practices, the students with visual impairment had difficulty in writing in English because writing in Braille slate was a painful process, and the orthographical differences between English and Turkish confused the students with visual impairments during the writing activities. Thus, when she wanted to provide learning materials and/or give homework to the students with visual impairments, she first prepared a Word document on the computer and then printed it in Braille. Additionally, Merve considered Braille printing as timesaving and practical because she did not have to follow a series of formal procedures for Braille printing.

In the School for the Blind, there is a room for printing teaching and learning materials and there is an assistant, who is responsible for the printing duties. When teachers want to print their work in Braille, they prepare it on the computer, and they hand in their work to the assistant. The assistant then prints the materials in Braille and delivers them to the teachers. Braille printing is free of charge for the teachers in the School for the Blind (Field Notes, December 04, 2019).

In addition to Braille printing, Merve utilized smartboard applications in the School for the Blind. The purpose of utilizing smartboard applications for Merve was to enrich her English language teaching practices. In doing so, she thought that her lessons became more enjoyable.

I actively use smartboard applications. For example, the students with visual impairments can play interactive games. I describe visual elements and they do the matching. They really enjoy it. By using a smartboard, I can integrate technology in my teaching practices, and the students with visual impairments learn by joy. Otherwise, they get bored (Merve Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

However, there were two main challenges for Merve's integration of technology in her teaching practices. According to her, she could not teach English with the smartboard in the School for the Blind and it was similar to her inability to use the whiteboard. As

she could not write and/or draw on the board, utilizing the smartboard for teaching purposes emerged to be impractical.

I cannot teach English by writing and drawing on the smartboard. I cannot do anything with the smartboard (Merve Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

The other challenge she experienced when she used smartboard applications was the bodily movements of the students with visual impairments. Merve considered that the independent movement skills of the students with visual impairments were still in development.

It is poor. Their independent movement skills are below the average. Some students still try to improve their bodily movement skills (Merve Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

When she used smartboard applications, the students with visual impairments needed to navigate on the smartboard. The in-class observations indicated that some of the students with visual impairments lacked bodily movement skills and they had difficulty in playing games on the smartboard.

The students with visual impairments wanted to play games on the smartboard. Merve took the students to the computer lab, where the smartboard was located. The students with visual impairments were really happy. She then asked the students about the game they wanted to play. The students wanted to play a game, in which there were three pictures and they needed to find the picture that describes the word on the screen. When the students with visual impairments were playing the game, Merve described and explained visual elements on the screen. The students with visual impairment, although they were instructed to navigate around the screen, their movements were restricted. Sometimes, Merve held the hands of the students to show them where they needed to touch on the screen (Merve In-class Observation, January 15, 2020).

The in-class observation notes above showed that although the students with visual impairments enjoyed playing interactive games on the smartboard, they experienced difficulties when they were required to be physically active during Merve's classes.

In addition to Merve's use of educational technologies, the students with visual impairments used Braille technologies during Merve's classes. These technologies were Braille typewriter and Orbit device. In terms of Braille typewriter, Merve's experiences showed that it was not practical to use Braille typewriter because it needed



continuous arrangements, which required her to pay attention to the position of the paper in the Braille typewriter for each student, respectively.

The students with visual impairments used their Braille typewriters until last academic year. Some students preferred to write with Braille slate. The Braille typewriter is an old-fashioned technology. The paper slides out of the writing range. Writing with a Braille typewriter is a real problem (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).



Figure 18: Braille Typewriter

Alternatively, the students with visual impairment started to use the Orbit device, which was a new technology for people with visual impairments. Orbit device, as shown in Figure 18 below, allowed the students with visual impairments to write and read with a panel. Merve mentioned that writing with the Orbit device removed all the painful and time-consuming process of writing with Braille typewriter and slate. The following field note described how the Orbit device operates.

Orbit device is a technological equipment specifically designed for people with disabilities. It can be considered as a keyboard, which can be operationalized with the Braille writing system. The panel where the letter and symbols emerge as the students write contains 20 characters. The device has a memory stick, and the students can print their work by using the memory stick. Merve also can transform “normal” writing in Braille and upload it to the device. However, the device cannot connect to the internet (Field Notes, March 11, 2020).



Figure 19: Orbit Device

Although she was initially happy that the students with visual impairments can read and write with ease by using the Orbit device, she was disappointed when she learned about the features of the device.

I was really disappointed. I asked whether I could use it like a tablet and connect it to the internet, they said no. It has no value and meaning for me. I was thinking of uploading my materials to the students' devices, but I cannot. The students with visual impairments do not have phones or tablets. I was initially excited because I thought I can use it effectively. But no (Merve Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

To summarize Merve's use of educational technologies, it could be said that she was not competent to utilize educational technologies in her teaching practices when she completed her undergraduate studies and the teaching certificate program. To compensate for her lack of ability to use educational technologies, she participated in an in-service training about educational technologies and improved her capability to use educational technologies. In Samsun and Ankara, she actively used the smartboard, prepared presentations, and utilized the internet to enrich her English language teaching practices.

Upon transitioning to the School for the Blind, she started to question the effectiveness and value of educational technologies in English language teaching. She thought that technology was highly visual and colorful, and the students with visual

impairment did not see the world that was vividly created by the technology. Hence, she was not fully convinced about the effectiveness and value of educational technologies for the students with visual impairments.

In the School for the Blind, while Merve made use of 3D and Braille printing, and smartboard applications, the students with visual impairment utilized Braille slate, typewriter, and orbit device. In terms of 3D and Braille printing, Merve had the necessary resources and equipment in the School for the Blind. On one hand, Merve did not prefer to use 3D printing due to the fact that 3D printing was a time-consuming and long process. Instead, she created/adapted her own tactile materials and used them in her teaching practices. On the other hand, she actively used Braille printing for giving handouts and homework to the students with visual impairment because printing Braille materials was easy and practical for her. In addition to her use of Braille printing to cater to the needs of the students with visual impairments, Merve utilized smartboard applications to differentiate her English language teaching practices. However, individual interviews and in-class observations revealed that she did not use the smartboard for language teaching purposes. Instead, she used smartboard applications and available online platforms for the entertainment purposes, yet the bodily movement skills of the students with visual impairments caused challenges and difficulties.

The students with visual impairments used their Braille slate, typewriter, and the Orbit device during their classes and the students used these devices mainly for writing purposes such as taking notes and preparing their homework. Merve thought that the Braille typewriter was an old-fashioned device, and it caused several practical problems for both the students with visual impairments and her. Orbit device, on the other hand, was a recently developed technology for the individuals with visual impairments and it was easy to use for the students with visual impairments. The students could use the Orbit device for reading and writing. However, the device did not have internet connection and the number of characters in a line was a limiting factor for its effective use.

#### **4.1.17. Merve's English Language Teaching Materials**

Language teaching and learning materials are vital component of English language teaching practices because students can conceptualize, contextualize, and use the target language through the materials they have during their language learning processes. In this regard, Merve was asked about her experiences about English language teaching material development. She mentioned that the teaching certificate program did not equip her with the necessary skills to create and adapt English language teaching materials during her pre-service years because of the program's uniformity for all teacher candidates. She further evaluated the teaching certificate program by saying that the graduates of teacher education programs paid more attention to creating and using English language teaching materials when compared to the teaching certificate program she enrolled in.

They [graduates of teacher education programs] put intense and active effort into material development and adaptation. I believe they worked harder than us in this area. If we prepared 3 materials during the teaching certificate program, they prepared more than 20 (Merve Individual Interview, November 06, 2019).

Merve also considered English language teaching materials development as a skill set in the field of language teaching. She mentioned that preparing language teaching materials was beyond her capability because she saw herself to be less skilled to create language teaching materials. Although the teaching certificate program and her abilities did not prepare her adequately in terms of developing language teaching materials, she tried to create language teaching materials in their best forms.

I am not skilled. I try to prepare materials. I put my efforts and do as much as I can. Of course, better materials can be created, but I can do this much. I do not say that I cannot do it and I do not prepare materials. I just keep trying (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Merve's English language teaching experiences showed that she prepared multimodal language teaching and learning materials for her students in Samsun and Ankara. These multimodal materials included audio-visual materials, presentations, smartboard applications, and short stories. Similarly, upon her transition to the School for the Blind, as mentioned in her language teacher identity formation, Merve felt the immediate need to provide/create language teaching and learning materials to the

students with visual impairments because she realized that the contributions of the available recourses to English language learning processes of the students with visual impairments were rather limited. Available resources for the students with visual impairments were the Braille coursebook and MoNE's online platform. Merve mentioned her resentment with the resources she had access to as follows:

We do not have tactile materials. We have audio materials, but they are commercially produced materials. Yesterday, we tried to listen to a short story on MoNE's platform. Ineffective. We do not have materials specifically designed for the students with visual impairments. Neither in the School for the Blind nor in MoNE's platform (Merve Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

As mentioned before, the Braille coursebook was designed and printed based on the "normal" coursebook and the Braille coursebook was printed with its Braille contractions and without any visual materials in it. While Merve was not literate in Braille, the students with visual impairments were not knowledgeable about Braille contractions in English. Given that, both Merve and the students with visual impairments could not effectively use the Braille coursebook. The ineffective use of the Braille coursebook intensified Merve's emotional and professional resentment in terms of English language teaching materials.

With her increasing awareness and knowledge about the needs of the students with visual impairments, she tried to find materials from the online platforms she had access to order to compensate the Braille coursebook. She looked for alternative ways to develop language teaching materials that catered to the needs of the students with visual impairments. She, then, developed/adapted her own language teaching and learning materials based on the examples she found on the net. The platforms she searched for materials were social networking sites and the websites of the schools for the blind in Europe and the USA. She also mentioned that searching for English language teaching materials on the net and the processes of material development and adaptation were mutually informing.

Merve: I am looking for gathering creative ideas for material development and adaptation. If they have a video about the material I have looked at, I try to understand how it is used and see what the possible outcomes are. For example, I was teaching "telling the time" to my 5<sup>th</sup> graders. It gets confusing for the students with visual

impairments. You can say that it is 16:15 or alternatively it is quarter past four. Recently I looked for materials about telling the time.

Researcher: If you find the materials you are looking for and it has a video about it, as well. How do you evaluate it? Are you trying to use the material as it was used in the video?

Merve: I totally consider my students' conditions and if the material is applicable in my context. The video offers me some ideas. [After watching the video], I am able to say that this part is suitable and applicable in my context, or I should change this and that parts to make it more useful (Merve Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

Merve's efforts to develop language teaching and learning materials for the students with visual impairments made her realize that she needed to consider the level of conceptual knowledge of the students with visual impairments possessed because the students with visual impairments lacked knowledge of everyday concepts. In addition to the ineffective use of the Braille coursebook, it could be said that the need to create English language teaching and learning materials also stemmed from the lack of conceptual knowledge of the students with visual impairments. Thus, Merve developed/adapted language learning materials that could be used for concept teaching and language learning based on the ideas she gathered from the net.

I am aware that the students' lack conceptual knowledge. I needed to teach them concepts first. Thus, it becomes more difficult to teach vocabulary and find materials (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Merve developed a strategy, which was in line with the considerations about conceptual knowledge of the students with visual impairments, to teach vocabulary items to the students with visual impairments. She provided contextual information to help these students conceptualize vocabulary items they were learning. However, the questions that the students with visual impairments asked due to their lack of conceptual knowledge were emotionally and professionally challenging for Merve. She explained her reaction when a student with visual impairment asked a question about flying objects.

Last Monday, when I was teaching extreme sports, one of the students asked me a question. It was shocking for me. She asked me that "Is a plane and parachute the same thing?". Explain it if you can. When such questions came out, giving the concept is more important than vocabulary teaching because they do not have concepts (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

The interviews and in-class observations revealed that Merve was unsatisfied with the materials she had in the School for the Blind and she needed to reorganize her teaching methods, techniques, and strategies in order to align her practices with the available language teaching and learning materials. The reorganization processes led her to limit the number of methods, techniques, and strategies she had employed in Samsun and Ankara. In the School for the Blind, she began to arrange her English language practices around the listening activities, which required using audio materials. She explained her choice of using audio materials as follows:

The only material I can use is audio because my lessons are mostly based on listening activities, or I provide descriptions (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

She further mentioned that her choice of using mainly audio materials in her English language practices was due to the visuality of English language teaching and learning. She thought that what made language learning materials interesting was their visuality with colorful and animated nature. According to her remarks, she could not make use of visual materials, such as videos, photos, and other demonstrations because the students with visual impairments cannot see the visuality of the materials, which led her to question the effectiveness of using visual materials in her English language teaching practices.

I totally give up using visual materials. For example, we have a “movies” unit in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. I really wished to show them cartoons. I am not sure whether it is going to be something good for the students with visual impairments. They cannot see the animations. I do not know watching cartoons can create the same effect for the students with visual impairments (Merve Individual Interview, March 04, 2020).

Lastly, although developing and adapting English language teaching materials that were suitable for the students with visual impairments were needed, the teachers in the School for the Blind did not collaborate when they developed English language teaching and learning materials. Merve thought that they all have similar materials and sharing them was not useful for her. Instead, she valued the exchange of ideas when she developed materials and she tended to share her ideas with the ELT community at the School for the Blind.

I do not think that it [sharing materials] is very effective because we have similar materials. Tests, handouts, and other supplementary materials. In this regard, it does not change my material development processes. Instead, I value the idea part of the material development. When we have something original, we can share with each other (Merve Individual Interview, March 04, 2020).

To summarize, Merve's teacher cognition in terms of English language teaching and learning material development underwent several changes throughout her career. Merve thought that material development and adaptation were a skill set for her and the teaching certificate program she enrolled in did not adequately provide her opportunities to improve her material development and adaptation skills. However, she tried to prepare English language teaching and learning materials as much as she could throughout her career. The individual interviews revealed that she prepared multimodal and multisensory materials for her students in Samsun and Ankara. When she transitioned to the School for the Blind, she realized that the available resources, which were the Braille coursebook and MoNE's online platform, were rather limited. To compensate, Merve searched for ideas on the net and she frequently visited social media platforms and the websites of the schools for the blind abroad. She then developed/adapted her own materials based on the ideas she gathered from the internet.

What was interesting, though, Merve reorganized her English language teaching practices around the audio materials because the visuality of English language teaching and learning materials emerged to be the main obstacle to her teaching practices as well as material development and adaptation. In addition to this, the lack of conceptual knowledge of the students with visual impairments was considered to be emotional and professional barriers in Merve's material development and adaptation practices. Thus, she tried to develop/create English language teaching and learning materials that could be used for both concept teaching and language teaching and learning.

Lastly, the ELT community at the School for the Blind did not collaborate when they designed/developed English language teaching materials because Merve thought that they had similar materials that were derived from the same resources. Instead, she preferred to exchange creative ideas with her colleagues to develop her own materials.



## **4.2. Case 2: Mustafa's Teacher Identity**

Individual interviews and in-class observations revealed that “personal history”, “educational background”, “initial teacher identity formation” and “in-service experiences in the School for the Blind” emerged as components of Mustafa's language teacher identity. Emerged categories and themes are illustrated in Figure 21 below.

### **4.2.1. Mustafa's Personal History**

Mustafa was born in 1969 in Ankara. He was the youngest member of his family with his twin brother and three elder brothers. His father worked as a security guard in the General Directorate of Turkish Post and his mother was a housewife. Mustafa grew up as a “normal” child until at the age of six. By “normal”, it is meant that he did not have any visual impairments and his family did not have any visual impairment history in their nuclear and extended family. However, Mustafa and his twin brother started to lose their vision due to a pathological illness. When he was eight years old, Mustafa lost his total vision. From that time now on, he could only differentiate darkness and lightness. Thus, Mustafa divided his personal history into three parts, that is, his childhood without visual impairments, starting to lose his vision in childhood, and a person with visual impairments.

To start with, Mustafa positively mentioned the social experiences he had lived through before he started to lose his vision in his childhood. He implied that the times he could see provided him a variety of life experiences and it was these life experiences that boosted his self-confidence as an individual with visual impairment.

I have the advantage of seeing. It is about life experiences. When I was a child, I experienced lots of things. I played with my friends, climbed up a tree, picked fruits. I did all of these both when I was losing my sight and when I lost my vision. I learned many things by touching. [...] As I said, life and tactile experiences are important for an individual with visual impairments (Mustafa, Individual Interview, February 05, 2020).

When he and his twin brother started to lose their visions, Mustafa considered himself “lucky” to have his vision until at the age of eight because he was able to experience different social encounters in his childhood as mentioned above.

I was luckier than many of the disabled people. I mean I would go anywhere with my parents, meet with my relatives, get to know the neighborhood. Our relations were intimate. I made friends, too. We played many games together such as football, dodgeball, tag, etc. My friends did not have visual impairments. But it was a big group, only 3-5 children (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

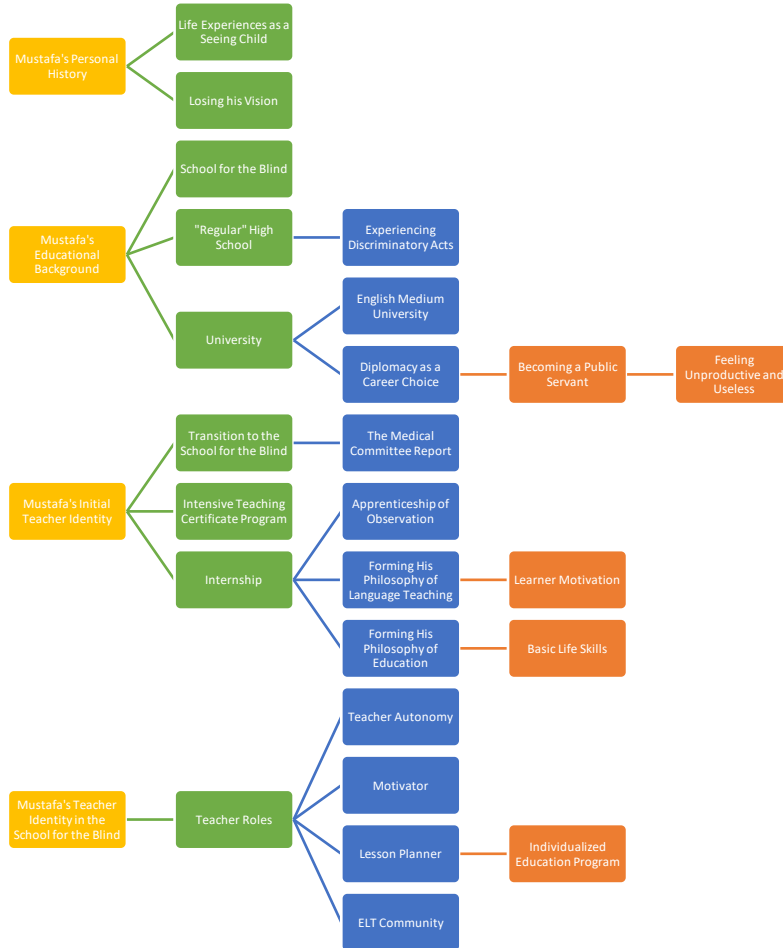


Figure 20: Mustafa's Language Teacher Identity

As opposed to his positive experiences during his childhood, he started to experience social, academic, and psychological obstacles as he grew up due to his worsening visual impairment. To overcome these difficulties, his family members supported him in various situations.

My family supported me. Having elder brothers was advantageous for me. They helped us [referring to his twin brother, as well] with our studies. They took us to our schools, picked us up after school. Thanks to them, we did not suffer a lot (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

When Mustafa lost his vision, he applied to Görenller School for the Blind, which is the second School for the Blind in central Ankara. Prior to their acceptance to the School for the Blind, students with visual impairments underwent a skill-based process of examination. The result of this examination determined their acceptance to the School for the Blind.

Academic achievement was a priority at that time. They [the School for the Blind] evaluated us. They checked whether we were Braille literate or not. They assessed our skills in hands-on tasks. Do you know what they asked when I applied there? They showed me an adjustable scanner, and they asked me whether I knew how to use it. At that time, this was the process. They [the School for the Blind] were good at assessing and classifying the students with visual impairments (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

He further commented that students with visual impairment were grouped based on their abilities in different hands-on tasks. Mustafa believed that the categorization of the students with visual impairments based on their abilities and talents fostered their productivity. Yet, he stated that the School for the Blind does not follow the same policy anymore.

For example, if a student with visual impairment was not academically competent, but skilled in music, s/he was guided to music. Or, we had installation and repairing categories. The students who were guided in these categories focused on their vocational skills. [...] They were selecting us. This was the case at that time. But now, the policy is not the same. The School focuses on the idea that a student with visual impairment should complete his/her primary school education here, learn some real-life skills. If they can, they will pursue further education in high school, etc. (Mustafa, Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

As a result of the categorization mentioned above, he was satisfied with the education he received because his primary school teacher helped them learn how to read and write in Braille by using various Braille literacy teaching methods.

Generally, we had braille nails. We learned how to read and write with nails. [...] We started with nails and moved to Braille slate. Although my primary school teacher was not a special educator, she developed a unique technique. When we started to read and write, she asked us to buy a notebook. "Normal" students use it, but we do not need a notebook. She, then, started to paste the sentences we were writing into our notebooks. She was turning our sentences into a book. When we [students with visual impairments] start to read and write, the margins have to be wide because the senses on our fingertips slowly learn to understand the written script, and if the margins are

not wide enough, it causes difficulties in learning how to read and write. Anyway, when we were at the end of the academic year in primary school, we all had a kind of storybook that was pasted into our notebooks. Her technique was really great (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

It can be said that Mustafa received satisfactory primary and secondary school education in the School for the Blind. However, in Turkey, when students with visual impairments complete their primary and secondary school education, they have to continue their high school education in a “regular” high school because the structure of Turkish education system does not allow students with visual impairments to pursue their education in a special education high school. In this regard, Mustafa applied for a high school upon his graduation from the School for the Blind. Yet, the high school he applied did not want to accept him by claiming that the school did not have the necessary resources to teach students with visual impairments.

High school was a totally different environment. The teachers did not know you; their approaches were peculiar. When I first applied there, the school rejected me. They said they did not know how to teach students with visual impairments (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Mustafa further explained that the high school administration was not aware of the inclusive education law. When he applied for the high school for the second time, he presented the inclusive education law to the school administration. Upon the presentation of the law, the administration unwillingly accepted him to the school.

They did not know the law. We have inclusive education law. We have to continue our education in a “regular” school because there was not any high school for the students with visual impairments. After we presented the law to the school administration, the school accepted me. Otherwise, they were not going to complete my registration to the high school (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

In addition to the discriminatory approach of the school administration, Mustafa experienced academic obstacles due to the fact that some of his teachers in his high school did not want to cater to his academic needs.

As I mentioned, teachers in high school had different approaches. I was in the department of quantitative studies. I was not good at mathematics. Why? Because the mathematics teachers were not willing to cater to my needs. They were using the blackboard a lot. Taking my notes was time-consuming. When I was in the middle of

writing the notes from the blackboard, the teachers cleaned the board and they moved to another topic. I could not completely take my notes. Also, they were speaking and writing very fast. Thus, my mathematics results were low. But I had science teachers, who helped me a lot. They had an inclusive approach. When they wrote something on the blackboard, they read it for me and waited for me to complete taking my notes (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Although Mustafa experienced social and academic obstacles in high school, he managed to complete his high school and took the university entrance exam in 1988. Given the popularity of the Department of International Relations at that time, he chose to continue his education in the Department of International Relations at Middle East Technical University. At the university, he enrolled in language preparatory school for a year because the medium of instruction at Middle East Technical University is English. Upon completion of language preparatory school, Mustafa started to take his departmental courses. He stated that the social and academic obstacles he experienced in high school were also reflected at the university. Thus, he had to endure discriminatory comments at the university, as well.

I took the university entrance exam in 1988. I got into the Department of International Relations at Middle East Technical University. I completed my university education in five years. I experienced a lot of difficulties. Some of the academic staff approached me with discriminatory comments. They were saying that “they cannot spare their time for my academic needs and exams”. Also, they were asking me “what are you doing here? Why did not you choose a university, in which the medium of instruction is Turkish?”. I received my university education under these conditions (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Mustafa also noted that the university encouraged its academic staff to be inclusive and conducted awareness-raising activities about students with disabilities. Similarly, the majority of the academic staff at the university, who keenly catered to his social and academic needs, allowed him to audio-record their courses, allocated time extensions for his assignments, helped him with the course materials, and found him a volunteer reader(s) by making frequent announcements during their courses. Thus, it can be inferred that the university tried to cater to Mustafa’s academic needs by utilizing inclusive practices.

He started to have vision problems at the age of six.

He was assigned as a public servant at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

He lost his vision. Thus, he started to receive his primary and secondary school education in the School for the Blind.

He started his undergraduate education in International Relations at Middle East Technical University.

He completed his English language preparatory school and undergraduate studies.

Upon the Ministry of National Education's call for teaching positions, he transitioned to the School for the Blind as an English language teacher.

Figure 21: Mustafa's Timeline of Career Path

However, data analysis revealed that the academic and social obstacles Mustafa underwent were partially stemmed from the available resources at the university. The available resources at the university were offered to all students through library services. Even though the library services were open to all students, some of these services could not be utilized by the students with visual impairments. The library did not have technological gadgets such as computers, screen readers, and braille printers in its inventory and it could not provide these services to the students with visual impairments. Thus, Mustafa had to find temporary solutions to study his lessons and to complete his assignments throughout his university education.

When I was studying at the university, computer technologies were not as developed as today. The available recourses were limited. I did not have a computer and computers were not commonly used. I was able to study for my lessons with the help of my friends and volunteer readers. They were sharing their notes with me. I completed my university education with these solutions (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

When Mustafa was studying at the university, he wanted to be a diplomat, which was a career choice in line with his university education. In his senior year at the university, he realized that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not accept the applications, which

were made by individuals with disabilities. Given this, upon the completion of his university education, Mustafa applied for the public servant positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an alternative to the position for possible diplomats. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected his public servant application on the pretext that an individual who would work for Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot have any disabilities.

I looked for possible positions for a year. I was aware that I could not be a diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I knew they would not let me work for the Ministry. Alternatively, I applied for public servant positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Even for the public servant position, they rejected my application (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Mustafa later applied for the research assistant position at a University. Based on his experiences, he wanted to make sure that he was going to be treated equally and he called the university to disclose his visual impairment. The university invited him to take the written and oral exams for the positions. Although Mustafa successfully passed the written exam, he was acknowledged during the oral exam that the university did not want a research assistant with visual impairment.

I called them [the University] and explained my situation. I clearly stated that I have visual impairments. Then, I asked whether I could apply for the research assistant position for the Department of International Relations. They asked the dean and replied that I could apply for the position. Probably, the dean thought that I was not going to pass the exams. I passed the language proficiency test and written exam. [...] During the interview, the dean told me that “we do not want such a research assistant.” He could not explicitly say that we do not want a person with visual impairments. I never forget the sentence he told me. “Mustafa, two plus two does not always equal to four.” When I insisted on a clearer explanation, they called the interview off. (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Mustafa applied for several other positions, and he was accepted as a public servant in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 1994. He worked for almost three years and his main duty was to answer phone calls. In his position in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, he felt unproductive and useless.

I worked for the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for almost three years. There, I was a simple public servant, doing simple tasks. I did not do much. I did not feel that I am productive (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Mustafa mentioned that he anticipated his application processes and working conditions to be negative and unproductive during his undergraduate education. Thus, he considered the teaching profession as an alternative path in his career based on the suggestions he received from his family members and former teachers because Mustafa wanted to feel that he was worthy, productive, and useful.

I start to consider the teaching profession as an alternative when I realized that I could not be a diplomat (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Although teaching was not his priority in his career, he wanted to be a teacher because he did not have any possible options that he could pursue a career as a diplomat. In this vein, he waited for the Ministry of National Education to call for the teaching positions. In 1997, the Ministry of National Education offered English language teaching positions to the graduates of the universities, where the medium of instruction was English, and Mustafa transitioned to the School for the Blind as an English language teacher.

#### **4.2.2. Mustafa's Initial Teacher Identity Formation**

Mustafa mentioned that he regularly got in touch with his former teacher in the School for the Blind. In these meetings, his former teachers narrated their career experiences and explained possible obstacles and difficulties in the teaching profession. His English teacher realized his English language skills in these meetings and suggested Mustafa to consider the teaching profession as an alternative career path. Mustafa's teacher's comments about his English language proficiency encouraged him to enter the teaching profession.

I kept in touch with my former English teachers when I was at the university. I paid attention to their suggestions. That's why I wanted to be a teacher (Mustafa Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

As mentioned above, Mustafa made his mind to be an English language teacher when he realized that he did not feel productive and worthy while he was working as a public servant at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. However, the transition to the teaching profession was not as easy as he considered because he had to provide an official medical report. He had to prove to the medical jury that he was capable of working as



a teacher. Having visual impairments was considered to be an obstacle and the medical jury did not want to certify him as a person who was capable of working as a teacher. Mustafa recalled the process as follows.

It was very difficult. The MoNE asked for an official medical report that certified me as a person who could teach. The report had to state that I could be assigned to any school in Turkey. This was a regular procedure. I told my administrator in the School for the Blind that I might not get the medical report because I had visual impairments. When the medical jury interviewed me, they asked me how I was going to teach. I tried to explain how I was going to teach. [...] My explanation did not satisfy them. They decided that I could not teach in a “normal” school so they certified my medical report stating that I could only teach in the Schools for the Blind. Doctors decided it, not educators (Mustafa Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

Upon the medical jury’s certification, Mustafa was assigned to be an English language teacher in the School for the Blind in January 1994, and he was required to complete his practicum during the transition period. In his practicum, he was supposed to observe, micro-teach, and complete other tasks assigned by his supervisor. During the interviews, Mustafa mentioned that he worked with his former English language teacher, who also had visual impairments. During the practicum, Mustafa had several concerns in terms of English language teaching because Mustafa did not receive any prior training in English language teaching when he transitioned to the School for the Blind. Thus, working with his former teacher lessened Mustafa’s concerns and anxiety.

At the university, I only learned the language. I did not receive any training in teaching English. Because I did not have pedagogic-content knowledge. I observed my supervisor for a semester. I did not teach. It was very beneficial for me. He also had visual impairments and he was my English language teacher. I learned a lot from him. Additionally, I received the teaching certificate courses. Then I solidified my teaching skills (Mustafa Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

In addition to the practicum, Mustafa received an intensive teaching certificate program, which was offered by the Ministry of National Education during the summer of 1994. In the teaching certificate program, Mustaf received foundational pedagogic courses such as educational psychology, material development, and assessment and evaluation. Chronologically, Mustafa first observed English language teaching practices of his supervisor and experimented with these practices in micro-teaching

sessions. Then, he received foundational pedagogic courses, which were designed as theoretical courses. In this vein, Mustafa mentioned that he could relate the practical issues he observed and experimented with their theoretical foundations during the teaching certificate program.

I did not have major practical concerns because I was following my supervisor's practices during the practicum. Yet, I did not know educational psychology, and assessment and evaluation. Taking foundational pedagogic courses was useful. For example, my supervisor was explaining how I needed to evaluate the students, but I learned the principles of assessment and evaluation in the teaching certificate program (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 25, 2019).

However, it is important to note that the teaching certificate program Mustafa received was not designed for the respective fields of the prospective teachers, that is, the prospective teachers from non-education fields received the same pedagogical education in the teaching certificate program. Given that, Mustafa was skeptical about the efficiency of the teaching certificate program because he did not think that he obtained fundamental principles of English language teaching.

I can teach grammar in some ways, and I do not have any problem in teaching grammar. However, we [English language teachers in Turkey] have problems with other language skills such as speaking. Plus, they [Pre-service teacher educators] did not teach us how to teach English. Should we speak English all the time? Can we speak Turkish if necessary? Or should we mainly use Turkish? (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

Thus, Mustafa relied on his supervisor's language teaching practices and his experiences when he started to teach, and he underwent a process of apprenticeship of observation. His supervisor helped him understand the dynamics of English language teaching through micro-teaching sessions. The observation sessions and micro-teaching practices served as opportunities to fill the gaps in his pedagogic content knowledge.

I learned English language teaching methods, strategies, and techniques from my supervisor. He had a teaching routine. He first presented vocabulary items and then taught grammatical structures. He had the students with visual impairments write example sentences. At the end of the lesson, he completed reading tasks and speaking activities. I learned to follow this routine from his practices (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 25, 2019).

Along with learning how to use different methods and techniques of English language teaching, Mustafa mentioned that the questions his supervisor was asking to the students with visual impairments helped Mustafa find the equilibrium of using English and Turkish during his lessons.

The strategy I liked most was that he was not limited to the curricula. He was asking questions about daily life. He talked about the topics that were not in the curricula. In doing so, my supervisor was trying to push students further to practice their speaking skills. I am trying to utilize the same strategy (Mustafa, Individual Interview, December 25, 2019).

To summarize Mustafa's initial teacher identity formation, Mustafa wanted to work as a bureaucrat, and he received his undergraduate education in International Relations in an English-medium university. However, when he applied for the positions in different ministries, he was not considered to be a "suitable" candidate for the bureaucracy due to his visual impairments. Thus, he looked for alternative occupations, in which he could feel productive and worthy. Upon his former English language teachers' suggestions, Mustafa decided to enter the teaching profession. Subsequently, he applied for the teaching positions. To complete his application processes and become an English language teacher, he needed to obtain a full medical report. The medical jury decided that Mustafa could only teach in the Schools for the Blind. As a result, he was assigned to the School for the Blind in Ankara. When he was assigned to the School for the Blind, he needed to complete a two-semester practicum. In the practicum period, he had the chance to observe his supervisor's English language teaching practices, which helped him understand the dynamics of language teaching. In addition to the practicum period, Mustafa completed an intensive teaching certificate program designed for the teacher candidates from non-education departments. In the program, Mustafa took pedagogical courses. Combined with the practicum, Mustafa was able to begin to bridge theoretical and practical concerns of English language teaching in his initial teacher identity formation processes.

#### **4.2.3. Mustafa's In-service Experiences**

Upon successfully completing his practicum period and the teaching certificate program, Mustafa started to work as a full-time English language teacher in the School

for the Blind. It could be inferred that Mustafa's transition to the teaching profession was a comfortable and welcoming one for three main reasons: the familiarity with the school environment, the similarity of the students' needs, his English language proficiency. As mentioned above, Mustafa was a former student of the School for the Blind, and he worked with his former English language teacher during the practicum. Given that, he was knowledgeable about the school environment and available recourses. Additionally, Mustafa could easily sympathize with his students' needs thanks to his schooling experiences in the School for the Blind. Lastly, Mustafa's undergraduate education helped him improve his English language proficiency and he did not experience any language proficiency-related problems during the practicum period.

When he started to teach in the School for the Blind, Mustafa began to form his philosophy of education and English language teaching. According to him, the students with visual impairments should receive basic education, which provides opportunities for them to master skills that are necessary for daily life. Along with this basic education, the students with visual impairments should receive further academic support and curricular differentiation to be able to continue their education after they leave the School for the Blind for high school education.

The skills and knowledge that students need to use in their daily life should be provided. These skills and knowledge are the same for all students. We should offer this basic education first. Then, if a student wants to pursue an academic career, we can offer more (Mustafa, Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

Mustafa also based his philosophy of education on the idea of equal opportunities, and he mentioned that education should minimize the discrepancies caused by unequal opportunities. To minimize the discrepancies, he suggested that education policies should be consistent and inclusive. He also added that Turkish education system does not offer equal opportunities for students with visual impairments because their needs are usually overlooked and/or ignored.

We do not have equal opportunities. When the Ministry prepares the curricula and the coursebook, they do not consult us [teachers in the School for the Blind]. That's why the coursebook is visual. I agree that the pictures in the coursebook can help "normal" students to contextualize the content, yet the Ministry should adapt the coursebook based on the needs of the students with visual impairments. [...] Also, the policies are

not consistent. The number of lessons in each grade decreased. But why? (Mustafa, Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

On one hand, Mustafa supported the idea of basic education, which teaches daily life skills to the students with visual impairments, and he thought that the needs of the students who wanted to pursue their academic lives should be accommodated. Also, he asked for consistency and inclusivity in education policies. On the other hand, when he was asked about his philosophy of English language teaching, he prioritized learner motivation and the necessity of language learning.

We should create opportunities for learner motivation. This is the number one criterion. Then, the students should realize the necessity of learning a foreign language. The students with visual impairment have negative attitudes toward English language and they are a little bit scared of it. When they start their language learning by saying 'I cannot', it is really difficult to eliminate this attitude (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

It is important to note that Mustafa did not relate English language learning to globalization and acculturation. Instead, he explained the availability of English language in students' daily lives when he tried to increase his students' motivation to learn English language.

I do not relate language learning with the trends [globalization and acculturation]. I tell my students that English language will be in every part of their lives, and it is practical to learn it. For example, they ask me what game over is, what speed means, etc. and I tell them if you do not know English, you cannot play these games. [...] The language of the computer is English. If you know English, you can use computers easily. Plus, when you apply for a job, if you know English, your chances to get the job will increase (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

The observation data revealed that Mustafa occasionally explained the importance of education and English language learning for the students' academic lives. He also set goals for his students to motivate them. In doing so, he assumed a motivator teacher role as well as he presented himself as a role model for the students with visual impairments.

Mustafa was teaching prepositions to 5<sup>th</sup> graders. After he explained grammatical structures and uses of the prepositions, he made a small motivating speech. Mustafa: Bunlar lisede üniversitede hep karşınıza çıkacak şeyler. Unutmayın bunları (You will see the prepositions in high school and at the university. Do not forget them).

Zehra: Öğretmenim, bunlar üniversitede karşımıza çıkacağı için öğrenmemiz gerekiyor (Sir, we are going to see these prepositions at the university, so we need to learn them).

Mustafa: Evet. Ne diyoruz o zaman, siz hepiniz üniversiteyi okuyacak çocuklarsınız. Mesela bazılarınız İngilizce öğretmeni olsun (Yes. Well, I believe you are all going to study at the university. I hope some of you will be English teacher.) (Mustafa In-class Observation, October 30, 2019).

In addition to his role as a motivator, Mustafa emphasized teacher agency in his language teacher identity. The importance he attached to teacher agency stemmed from his schooling experiences as well as the experiences he had during his job application processes. As mentioned above, Mustafa had difficulty adapting high school environment due to his teachers' lack of disability awareness. Also, the medical jury's attitudes made him realize that he needed to assume an agentic role for his students. In doing so, he thought that he could guide and counsel his students to the realities they would experience when they left the School for the Blind.

Mustafa: If I have 5 minutes at the end of the lesson, I talk about my experience. I mention my high school difficulties. Sometimes, I give the examples of the attitudes academic staff can have at the university. The students with visual impairments like it.

Researcher: Is not it worrisome for the students with visual impairments?

Mustafa: No, they like it. I do not always talk about my negative experiences. I talk about positive aspects, too. They do not know what they will possibly experience, so this is just a piece of preliminary information. They may be scared but it will not be shocking for them when they experience such things (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

Data analysis also showed that Mustafa's agentic role led him to think that he could help the teachers in "normal" schools to understand the needs of the students with visual impairments if a channel of communication was established. The rationale of establishing such a channel stemmed from the assumption that when the students with visual impairment completed their secondary school education and left the School for the Blind for high school education as inclusive students, the majority of the teachers in these "normal" schools would overlook the needs of the students with visual impairments. However, the observation data revealed that Mustafa expected such a channel of communication to be established by the teachers in "normal" schools.

When we were talking about the graduates of the School for the Blind, Mustafa mentioned the need to communicate with the teachers in "normal" schools because he

thought that these teachers generally did not pay attention to the needs of the students with visual impairments. Upon his suggestion, the researcher asked him whether he tried to establish a channel of communication with these teachers. His response was contradictory to his suggestion (Mustafa Field Note, January 15, 2020).

Although there was a contraction between his suggestion and his response to communicate with the teachers in “normal” schools, Mustafa took an agentic role to raise awareness about the disability issues through the community service projects. According to Mustafa, the society thinks that students with visual impairments should learn how to carry out their survival needs. Thus, academic and social achievement are not expected from the students with visual impairments.

They [society] want us to survive. They expect us to learn the skills that are necessary for survival. I am not sure they can even teach us those skills. When I say survival, I mean the things such as doing the laundry, tying a shoelace, do the cleaning, etc. (Mustafa, Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

In addition to the society’s expectations from the students with visual impairments, Mustafa thought that individuals with visual impairments are responsible for the emergence of such expectations.

You cannot do it, step aside. Individuals with disabilities try to avoid the struggle/challenge. They think that they should get a medical report so that they can be excluded from the challenging duties. They are a little bit lazy. But it is still in my mind. A teacher should be like him [referring to physical education instructor at the university]. He challenged me to complete the tasks of physical education such as running, jumping, etc. If we are challenged, we can improve ourselves (Mustafa, Individual Interview, March 04, 2020).

By acknowledging his critical view on the disability issues, Mustafa tried to raise awareness about the academic and social capabilities of the students with visual impairments. In this regard, he occasionally welcomed pre-service English teachers because these students were assigned to complete their community service projects in the School for the Blind. According to their assignments, these students needed to observe Mustafa’s English language teaching practices. After the lessons, Mustafa provided additional information about how to approach students with visual impairments. In doing so, Mustafa believed that the pre-service teachers whose community service projects were in the School for the Blind would have a constructive and welcoming attitude towards the students with visual impairments.

We had many pre-service teachers, who completed their community service projects here. I paid attention to each of them. I told them that when you have a student with visual impairment in your classes, you should not ignore them. You need to check their academic capabilities. If a student has an additional disability, that's different, but if a student is academically capable, you should approach them as you do to other students. You should differentiate your instruction based on the needs of the student with visual impairment. You must not ignore him/her. It is not acceptable to say that I do not know Braille, so I leave that student out (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

In addition to his efforts to prepare his students for the realities they might experience and to raise awareness through the community service projects, Mustafa challenged the Ministry's policies about the coursebook to cater to the academic needs of his students with visual impairments. He tried to contact the Ministry to inform that there were some students who had low vision and these students could use the coursebook if it was printed in bigger fonts. Although he could not get an immediate result from his contacts, the Ministry eventually took his suggestions into consideration.

We asked for bigger fonts for our students with low vision. The fonts should be between 18-20. This is valid for inclusive students and our students. The Ministry needs to print approximately one thousand coursebooks. Not only English coursebook, but also the other coursebook. We could not get the results we wanted. We suggested that teachers who work in special education schools can offer consultancy when they convert the "normal" coursebook into the coursebook the low-vision students use. We asked for visual descriptions for the pictures in the coursebook. Nowadays, we see the Ministry started to print the coursebook the way we suggested (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

Although Mustafa challenged the Ministry's policy regarding the coursebook formats, he did not fully embrace his teacher role as a resource provider to compensate his students' academic needs. During the interviews, Mustafa mentioned the importance of learning materials, which consisted of tactile and audio-visual materials, when he was a student in the School for the Blind. Having worked with such materials fostered his learning processes.

We had modeling lessons. We were trying to make an object by using different materials such as plastic, wood, or clay. For example, the teacher showed us a model cat. Then, he asked us to make a cat. In doing so, not only we were learning the shapes of certain objects, animals, etc. but also we understood the concept of these objects (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).



While he acknowledged the importance of learning materials for the students with visual impairments, Mustafa used the coursebook and a set of songs as the main teaching materials. He based his choice on the idea of using objects in his students' immediate environment such as desks, and tables.

Researcher: Can you give the number of language teaching materials you prepared in a year?

Mustafa: I do not know. Maybe one material in an academic year. Maybe two or three. It is not more than five or six learning materials. I generally use the commercial ones.

Researcher: Is it because it is difficult to prepare, or you do not need such materials?

Mustafa: I do not feel that I need them very much. For example, if I am teaching comparative adjectives, it is not necessary to prepare certain shapes to show the students with visual impairments which one is the bigger one. I can compare desks and tables (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 25, 2019).

Mustafa's lack of interest and effort to provide and prepare learning materials for the students with visual impairments was apparent. What was interesting, though, was that although he claimed that he was using available materials in the classroom instead of preparing new ones, the classroom observation data revealed that Mustafa did not use available resources in the classroom.

Mustafa was teaching days, months, and seasons to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. As shown in Figure 22, there was a table of seasons prepared by the classroom teacher. The researcher showed Mustafa the material and suggested to him that he could make use of such material. Although he agreed to use it, he did not use the material that was available in the classroom. Instead, he played a song of seasons from YouTube (Mustafa Classroom Observation, February 05, 2020).

When he was asked about his choice of not using the material in the classroom, he claimed that his students were good at learning new vocabulary items, so he did not need to use the material. It can be inferred from the data analysis that not only Mustafa generally preferred not to provide and prepare learning materials for his students with visual impairments, but also he preferred not to use available materials in students' immediate environment.



Figure 22: Seasons

Instead, he preferred to use the coursebook as his main teaching material and included several songs related to the theme of the topic being covered. The rationale of using the coursebook was that it was easier to organize his lesson around the curricula mandated by the Ministry of National Education and he considered using the songs during his classes was a way of differentiation of instruction. Thus, the coursebook and songs he used in his classes helped Mustafa plan his lessons based on the grade he was teaching.

Throughout the data collection processes, it was realized that Mustafa did not bring the coursebook to his 3<sup>rd</sup> graders' lesson. Instead, he brought his MP3 player. When the researcher asked him, he mentioned that he was familiar with the curricula, and he checked the coursebook before the lesson. During the lesson, he employed oral

activities such as question-answer sequences and played songs about the theme of the topic. On the other hand, he used the coursebook with 5<sup>th</sup> graders (Mustafa Field Note, March 11, 2020).

While he focused on planning his lesson around dialogues and speaking activities in primary school, he included four language skills in his lesson planning in secondary school.

The curricula are based on visual elements in “normal” schools. If you check the primary school coursebook, there are lots of pictures. The written script in these books is limited. We do not have reading and writing in primary school. They start in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. What is our difference, then? We do lots of dialogues and speaking exercises because we have four or five students in each class. So, the students have the chance to participate in dialogue activities three-four times. It is not possible in “normal” schools because they have approximately 30 students in each class. This is our advantage. Repetition is important. I start my lessons by revising the last lesson’s topic. This is my plan in primary school. In secondary school, I include reading and writing exercises in the coursebook. We write example sentences together with the students with visual impairment. Then, they write their own sentences (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

In addition to differentiation his lesson plan based on the students’ grades, Mustafa paid attention to the number of students with visual impairments in his classes who were subject to the individualized education program. If the number of these students were high, he decided to simplify the curricula to cater to the needs of these students.

I prepare individualized education programs for the students. For example, I am teaching “suggestions” and it can be difficult for the student with the individualized education program. In the class, I ask the student to do the activity. I offer him/her hints and clues. In doing so, I do not exclude him/her from the classroom activities, and I help him/her to understand the structure (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

From Mustafa’s statements, it was understood that he followed a routinized classroom practices and he usually preferred not to use learning materials apart from the songs and the coursebook. Thus, it can be said that he did not fully assume his teacher role as a resource provider. What was interesting, though, was that although he utilized a limited number of learning materials, Mustafa was critical about the learning materials, which was prepared and provided by Rosalinda.

She prepares learning material on computer and prints out in Braille. She prepares 3-4 pages homework. I come across students in the break-times, they are not eager to

complete their homework. She explains each grammatical rules with lots of examples. She provides examples of affirmative, negative, and question forms of the target tense. She prepares conversion activities like from affirmative to negative. She provides answer key. Students with visual impairments do not do this kind of homework (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

Mustafa was not only critical about the materials Rosalinda provided. From Mustafa's statements, it was understood that he criticized Rosalinda and Merve due to the fact that they were not Braille literate. According to Mustafa, being Braille literate was essential to understand the dynamics of language learning for the students with visual impairments. It is also noteworthy that Mustafa considered being Braille literate to be a privilege and his colleagues did not have such a privilege.

We have Rosalinda who can see. She has been here more than for 10 years. She is not Braille literate. She can follow reading activities from the "normal" coursebook, but she is not as lucky as me because it is not only reading. She cannot check students' writings [...] Merve is also a new teacher here. I do not know her well, but she also does not know Braille (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

Upon his criticism about Rosalinda's materials and being Braille illiterate, Mustafa was asked about the areas that he and his colleagues collaborated in ELT community in the School for the Blind. He stated that the collaboration in ELT community was limited to the paper-work and legal requirements.

We collaborated in ELT community. For example, I prepare the paperwork and print it. We talk about what we are going to add or exclude in the paperwork. After I complete the document, they check it. If there is anything to change, I make necessary changes. Also, we talk about who is going to teach which grade. [...] They did not ask for help about how to teach students with visual impairments. Regarding Braille learning, we discussed about it for the first times, and I do not remember they asked for help about Braille (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

To summarize Mustafa in-service experiences, it can be inferred that Mustafa's transition to the School for the Blind was a smooth one because he was familiar with the school and its available facilities and resources. Upon his transition to the teaching profession, he started to form his philosophy of education, which supported the idea that education system should help the students with visual impairments who are academically successful to pursue their studies in academic fields. For the others, he thought that providing basic education and survival skills would be sufficient. Also,

he rationalized English language teaching and learning on the idea that the language is used in our daily lives and students with visual impairments could benefit from learning it.

Along with his philosophies, Mustafa assumed several teacher roles throughout his career in the School for the Blind. He tried to motivate his students by narrating his schooling experiences, which were challenging. He also presented himself as a role model and asked his students to pursue their further education as he did. In addition to being a role model and motivator, Mustafa assumed agentic roles to cater to the needs of his students with visual impairments. He contacted with the Ministry of National Education to request reformatting the coursebook for the students with visual impairments. His teacher agency was not limited to catering his students' academic needs. Mustafa occasionally welcomed pre-service teachers, who were assigned to do their community service projects in the School for the Blind. By welcoming these pre-service teachers, he tried to raise disability awareness.

However, Mustafa's statements showed that he did not assume his teacher role as a resource provider, which meant that he was not willing to provide and prepare English language learning materials for his students with visual impairments although his learning experiences was enriched by additional resources provided by his former teachers in primary and secondary school. What was interesting, though, was that he was critical about his colleagues' materials, and he claimed that the students with visual impairments could not work with the materials provided by his colleagues. Given his claim, one would expect him collaborate with the ELT community in the School for the Blind to create learning experiences that were suitable for the needs and capabilities of the students with visual impairments. However, Mustafa stated that the only collaboration between English language teachers in the School for the Blind was about completing the paperwork. Lastly, Mustafa was also critical about his colleagues Braille illiteracy. According to his views on Braille literacy, his colleagues can teach students with visual impairments to a certain extent because they cannot utilize reading and writing activities due to the fact that they did not know Braille.

#### **4.2.4. Mustafa's Language Teacher Cognition**

In this section of the findings, Mustafa's language teacher cognition is presented. Based on the individual interviews, field notes, and in-class observations, "Subject Matter Knowledge", "Pedagogical Content Knowledge", and "Pedagogical Knowledge", are emerged as the components of his language teacher cognition.

#### **4.2.5 Mustafa's Subject Matter Knowledge**

English language is considered to be the subject matter knowledge for English language teachers and Mustafa's English language proficiency formed his subject matter knowledge. Data analysis showed that Mustafa was always interested in English language and he started to learn the language when he was in secondary school.

I started to like English when I was in secondary school. We had five hours of instruction in a week. Plus, we had extra two hours as an elective course. I was interested in English from my secondary school years because English language instruction started in secondary school at that time (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

In addition to his interest, the language teaching practices of his English language teacher intensified his willingness to learn the language because his teacher provided multimodal language learning experiences as well as collaborated with Australian Embassy to help his students improve their speaking skills.

My English teacher made us listen to the story of rabbit and tortoise in English. It was a simple thing, but I never forgot it. Also, there was not any community service projects or internship in the School for the Blind. A lady from Australian Embassy, I guess her name was Jean, was visiting our school. We were exercising our speaking skills for an hour after the lessons. It was very different at that time (Mustafa Individual Interview, March 04, 2020).

Although Mustafa enjoyed multimodal English language learning experiences, he had to focus on other subjects when he transitioned to high school because Mustafa needed to prepare for the university entrance exam. Thus, his English language learning process paused in high school until he started his undergraduate education. Based on his result of the university entrance exam, he chose to pursue his undergraduate education at Middle East Technical University in the Department of International Relations. As the university is an English-medium one, having high level of language

proficiency was vital for Mustafa to complete his undergraduate education. Hence, he enrolled in English language preparatory school for an academic year. After meeting the language proficiency standards in English language preparatory school, Mustafa started to take his departmental courses, which were offered in English. In his departmental courses, Mustafa completed a variety of assignments, which further improved his English language proficiency. It is also important to note that Mustafa certified his language proficiency by taking the foreign language test when he was looking for a position in the bureaucracy. Although he could not find a position in bureaucracy, being a graduate of an English-medium university opened his path to the teaching profession.

#### **4.2.6. Mustafa's Pedagogic Knowledge**

Mustafa's educational background showed that he was a graduate of the department of International Relations, so he did not receive a formal teacher education. Instead, he underwent a process of a two-semester practicum when he entered the teaching profession. In addition to the practicum, he enrolled an intensive teaching certificate program offered by the Ministry of National Education during the summer of 1994. In the program, Mustafa was presented with foundational pedagogic courses such as educational psychology, material development, and assessment and evaluation. However, Mustafa could not have the opportunity to delve into the blindness-specific pedagogic knowledge because the teaching certificate program he was enrolled in was also offered to teacher candidates from other non-education fields such as science education, mathematics, etc. and all teacher candidates in the program received the same foundational pedagogic courses.

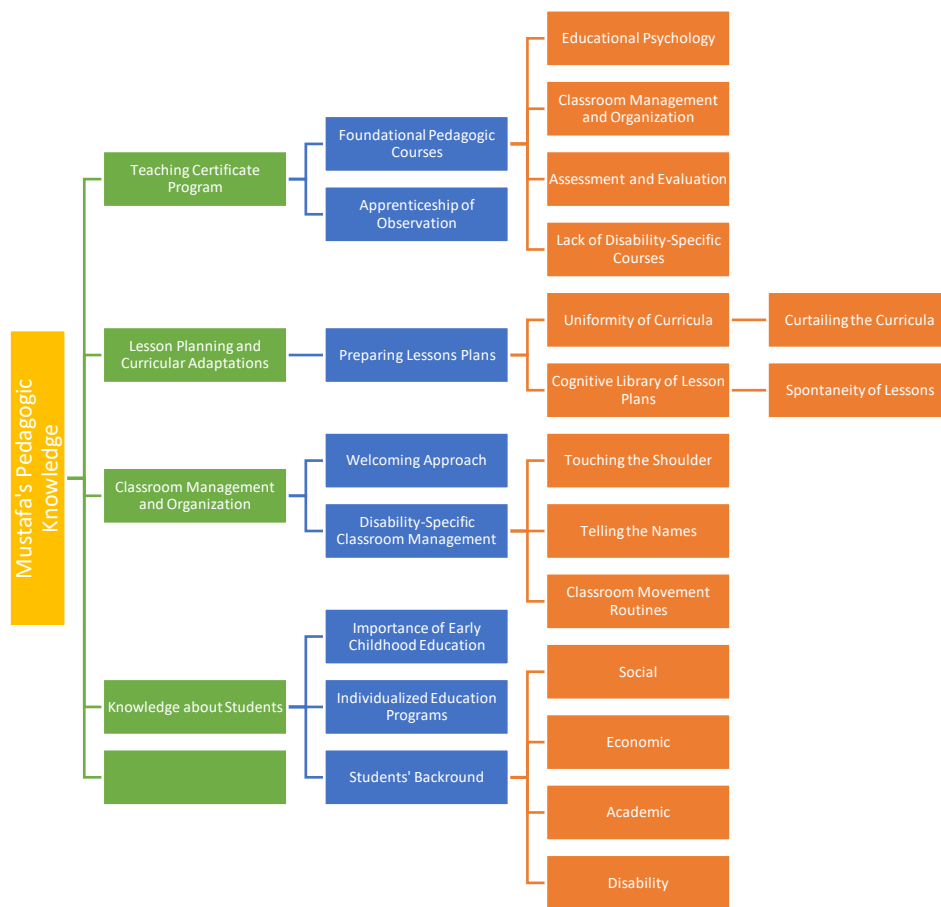


Figure 23: Mustafa's Pedagogic Knowledge

Given the generality of the teaching certificate program Mustafa was enrolled in, he did not think the program was sufficient enough for him. He also questioned the efficiency of the teaching certificate program.

Unless a teacher candidate receives his/her pedagogic formation courses in his teacher education department, I will not be effective. If a teacher candidate is a graduate of a teacher education program, then no problem with the pedagogic knowledge. It is important to receive a well-structured pedagogic course (Mustafa Individual Interview, March 04, 2020).

Mustafa also mentioned that the teaching certificate and teacher education programs did not take the needs of the students with disabilities into consideration. Thus, the prospective teachers, who would work with students with disabilities, had difficulty in meeting the needs of the students with visual impairments.

Those students who have average academic capabilities and those who have high levels of academic capabilities were ignored in special education, in practice and



teacher education. Remember that a few years ago, the Higher Education Council combined all special education teaching fields. Before that, we were in a good position because we had teachers for students with visual impairments, teachers for students with hearing impairments, etc. Combining respective fields of special education in a program is not efficient. How are you going to teach these teachers sign language or Braille (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 19, 2020)?

Data analysis also indicated that Mustafa could not practice his pedagogic skills, which he learned in the teaching certificate program, in his early years in the School for the Blind. The reason for not practicing his understanding of pedagogic issues stemmed from the influences of the school administration and his supervisor. However, he started to use his pedagogic approaches with his growing experiences in the School for the Blind.

I could not utilize the pedagogic things I learned. I was under the influence of my administrators and former teachers. They told me that the students were elder than “regular” students so be strict with them. I tried to approach my students through my administrators’ suggestions, but it did not work out well. Hence, I used my pedagogic approach and I realized that interacting with patience and compassion was the key for the pedagogy (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 05, 2020).

To summarize, Mustafa formed his pedagogic knowledge through the practicum experiences and the teaching certificate program. He was critical about the efficiency of the program because the program was a general foundational pedagogic for all prospective teachers. Thus, he could not receive pedagogic education related to blindness-specific issues. In addition to this, he could not employ his pedagogic understanding in his early years in the School for the Blind due to the influences of his administrators and supervisor. Realizing that his administrators’ suggestions on pedagogic issues could not work, he decided to approach his students with his pedagogical understanding.

#### **4.2.7. Mustafa’s Lesson Planning and Curricular Adaptations**

Mustafa was teaching primary and secondary school students in the School for the Blind, so he followed two different lesson planning and curricular adaptation strategies. In terms of the curricula, he was critical of the uniformity of the curricula mandated by the Ministry of National Education, and he suggested that the curricula had to be reorganized to cater to the needs of the students with visual impairments.

The curricula in special education schools should be flexible. Special education schools should have distinctive curricula. For example, if the overall weekly course hours are 30 in “normal” schools, the Ministry should not enforce the same weekly course hours for the School for the Blind. It should be based on the needs. If a student is talented at music, s/he should take more music lessons (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

Given that Mustafa had to follow the curricula mandated by the Ministry of National Education, he felt that he was between the devil and the deep sea because, on one hand he tried to complete the curricula in an academic year, on the other hand he wanted to be autonomous in his curricular adaptations. Data analysis also showed that the common rationale of his curricular adaptations depended on the needs of the students with visual impairments.

To be honest, I am feeling that I am between the devil and the deep sea because I try to completely cover the curricula. I want to teach parallel to the coursebook. Yet, I have my autonomy. I do not feel that restrained by the curricula. I do not think that I have to cover 10 units if there are 10 units. The student should learn as much as s/he can and learn excellently. If the curricula cannot be covered, let it be (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

Regarding his lesson planning, Mustafa mentioned that he was preparing formal lesson plans in his early years in the School for the Blind. Yet, with his growing familiarity with the curricula as well as the use of similar teaching materials, he started to prepare his lessons cognitively. By cognitively, it is meant that Mustafa was retrieving his lesson plans from his cognitive library.

I was preparing lessons plans before but I at least think about the next lesson’s topic the day before the lesson. I plan my lesson cognitively. For example, I organize what I am going to teach, which songs I am going to play, etc. (Mustafa Individual Interview, March 04, 2020).

Although it is probable that his act of preparing his lesson plans cognitively might bear a certain degree of systematicity, the in-class observations showed that Mustafa’s classroom practices were open to spontaneous shifts.

Mustafa was teaching animals to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. He first introduced the topic and provided the names of the animals the students were supposed to learn. Then, he played a song he downloaded from YouTube. While the students were listening to the song, Mustafa was mentioning the animals in the song. These new animals were not mentioned in the initial phase of the lesson. Thus, his lesson plan seemed to include

no predetermined set of vocabulary items. That's why his lessons were spontaneous (Mustafa In-class Observation, February 12, 2020).

Mustafa's spontaneity in implementing his lesson plans was also reflected in curricular adaptations he made. He decided that some of the activities in the coursebook were difficult for the students with visual impairments. Instead of reorganizing the activities, Mustafa preferred to exclude them from the curricula.

We skip fill-in-the-blanks activities. They are more difficult than other activities. For example, they scramble the letters of a word. It is difficult to understand with Braille (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

Lastly, Mustafa's lessons consisted of six main stages. At the beginning of the lesson, he greeted the students with visual impairment and checked if there was an absent student. Given that the number of the students with visual impairment in a class did not exceed 6 students, he tried to interact with all students about their wellbeing, respectively. Then, he moved to the next stage of the lesson, that is, the revision of previous topic. In this stage of the lesson, Mustafa asked questions about the previous topics and reminded the students of the vocabulary items they covered.

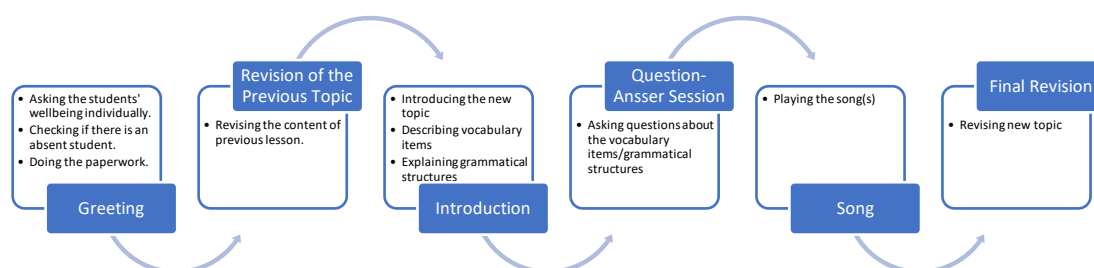


Figure 24: Mustafa's Routinized Lesson Plan

After completing the revision part, Mustafa introduced a new topic, which was to be covered during the lesson. In this part, while Mustafa focused on the vocabulary items

in primary school, he taught grammatical structures in secondary school. Following the introduction part, he implemented question-answer sessions with each student in the classroom. In the question-answer sessions, he sometimes provided extra information about the vocabulary items and/or the grammatical structures. After the question-answer session, he played songs which he downloaded from YouTube. While the students were listening to the song(s), he sometimes stopped the song and asked comprehension questions. It is important to note that Mustafa generally spent a few minutes to find the song(s) he wanted the students to listen. In the last phase of the lesson, Mustafa revised the vocabulary items and/or the grammatical structures.

To summarize Mustafa's lesson planning and curricular adaptations, it could be inferred that he was critical about the uniformity of the curricula mandated by the Ministry of National Education, and he suggested that the curricula had to be reorganized according to the needs of the special education schools. The pressure to cover all the curricular content caused dilemmas in his lesson planning as he was supposed to teach parallel to the coursebook provided by the MoNE. In terms of his lesson planning, the familiarity with the curricular content helped him to plan his lessons cognitively. As he mentioned, he took the needs of the students with visual impairments into the consideration when he planned his lessons cognitively. Although he claimed that he prioritized the needs of the students with visual impairments and tried to cover all the curricular content, the spontaneity of his lesson planning and curricular adaptations might lead him to overlook the needs of his students.

#### **4.2.8. Mustafa's Classroom Management and Organization**

Mustafa's classroom management and organization practices changed drastically throughout his career in the School for the Blind. Given the fact that Mustafa learned theoretical foundations of classroom management and organization during the teaching certificate program, Mustafa underwent a process of trial-and-error in terms of his classroom management and organization practices. The fact that Mustafa received several conflicting suggestions in terms of classroom management strategies from his supervisor and administrator intensified the classroom management challenges he experienced in his initial years in the School for the Blind because his supervisor suggested him to be a welcoming teacher.

My supervisor suggested me to move around the classroom and teach while walking around the students. In this way, I could help the students concentrate and I could check whether they were listening or not. He also told me to touch the students' shoulder to motivate them. He wanted me to have a passionate attitude toward students. I followed these strategies (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 25, 2019).

*As opposed to his supervisor's suggestions*, the school administration wanted him to follow strict management strategies.

My administrators told me to be strict and disciplined. They explained that if I was not a strict teacher, I might not do certain things in my classes. Thus, I started to strictly approach the students and sometimes reprimanded for their misbehaviors. Yet, I realized that this approach did not work.

Mustafa's classroom management and organization practices changed drastically after he realized that the suggestions of his administrators in terms of classroom management and organization did not work. He decided to have welcoming and passionate classroom management strategies, which were in line with his supervisor's suggestions.

When delved into Mustafa's classroom management practices, two major factors emerged. These factors were classroom movement routines and calling out the students with visual impairments. Regarding the classroom movement routines, Mustafa had distinctive and routinized movements in the classroom. These movement routines allowed him to know the students' seats. While he was teaching, he would approach the target student's seat. In doing so, the student knew that it was his/her turn in the activity. Following excerpt showed the importance of the routinized classroom movements in his classroom management practices.

Mustafa was teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. The classroom teacher was in the classroom, and she was preparing learning materials for the students with visual impairments. Thus, the researcher had to sit in Kemal's seat, who was absent student at that day. Mustafa approached Kemal's seat to ask a question. He assumed that the researcher was Kemal. However, the classroom teacher warned Mustafa that Kemal was absent, and the researcher was sitting in his seat (Mustafa In-class Observation, December 11, 2019).

In terms of calling out the student served two main purposes. On one hand, Mustafa specifically called out a student's name to prevent any misbehaviors. If the student

heard that Mustafa was calling out his/her name, s/he stopped talking with his classmate. On the other hand, the students with visual impairments and Mustafa cannot grasp body language such as pointing the student to participate in the activity. Thus, he would gather around the students in the classroom and touched the students' shoulder or desk to point out that it was that specific student's turn in the activity. The rationale of touching the students' shoulder and/or desk was that the students with visual impairments did not respond to general questions asked during the class, so the teacher had to specify the student who was going to participate.

While I am teaching, I am moving around the students to check whether they pay attention to what I am teaching. Sometimes, I touch students' shoulder or desk to see whether they are daydreaming or listening to me. If a student is daydreaming, I ask him/her a question. In this way, the student starts to pay attention. Calling out the students increase their concentration (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 05, 2020).

To summarize Mustafa's classroom management and organization strategies, it can be concluded that he was under the influence of his administrators and supervisor. Thus, Mustafa had to try different approaches to classroom management and organization. When he realized that the suggestions made by his administrators did not work, he aligned his classroom management strategies to his supervisor's advice as well as his early experiences in the School for the Blind. In addition to his efforts to employ classroom management strategies that could best fit his educational philosophy, data analysis indicated that Mustafa used blindness-specific classroom management practices. These practices were the classroom movement patterns and calling out the students. Moving around the students allowed Mustafa to check whether the students were paying attention to what he was teaching. Calling out students' names, on the other hand, were used to prevent any misbehaviors or to point out that it was the student's turn in the activity.

#### **4.2.9. Mustafa's Knowledge about Students**

Understanding and knowing students' socio-economic, cultural, familial, and academic background were essential to cater to the needs of the students with visual impairments. In this vein, Mustafa suggested that those families who have a child with

disabilities should be educated about the disability issues before the child is born. He also suggested that it was essential to establish collaboration between the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Health to educate these families and to provide early childhood education for the students with disabilities.

There is no early childhood education for the children with disabilities. Whether an infant is disabled can be understood during the pregnancy. We should start with preparing the parents with the collaboration of the Ministry of Health. Before the child with disabilities, the parents should be educated because they definitely need to be psychologically prepared. They need to be educated (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

Mustafa's suggestion to educate families of children with disabilities stemmed from the idea that the collaboration between the Ministries of National Education and Health could be extended to prepare the children with disabilities and their prospective teachers for their formal education.

As I mentioned, the teacher in inclusive classroom can be prepared to teach the students with disabilities with the institutional collaborations. It is getting better because teachers are not totally unknowledgeable about the disability issues (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

To understand his students' academic and social background, Mustafa collaborated with the counseling service of the School for the Blind. This collaboration consisted of regular parents' meetings, visiting students with visual impairments at their homes, working with the classroom teachers, and providing individualized education programs.

The newest example was a student named Tuba. You cannot hear her because she talks in a very low tone, and it is really difficult to understand her. I informed the counseling service. To understand what was going on, we invited her parents to the school and consulted her classroom teacher. Her parents told us that she was talking fine at home, and they did not have such a problem. She was feeling embarrassed in the school, and that's why she was reluctant to speak. Another example was Gamze. She came to the School for the Blind from a "normal" school. She was absent for 3 days a week throughout the fall semester. We went to visit her parents several times and explained the consequences of her absenteeism (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

As can be understood from the excerpt above, Mustafa was interested in his students' social wellbeing. He thought that it was easier to cater to the needs of the students with

visual impairments in the School for the Blind thanks to the total number of students in each class. He also compared “normal” schools and the School for the Blind in terms of the counseling services provided.

“Normal” schools are more crowded than here, and it is difficult to communicate with each student and parent. We have this opportunity. They [teachers in “normal” schools] can reach out the parents of their students but it is not as frequent as we do (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

In addition to Mustafa’s efforts to ensure his students’ social wellbeing, he prepared individualized education programs to accommodate the academic progress of his students with visual impairments. To prepare the individualized education programs, Mustafa gathered information about his students’ academic backgrounds at the beginning of the academic year and set academic goals for the respective students, accordingly.

I check my students’ academic capabilities. I decide how much they can learn. For example, s/he can say her/his name when asked, ask other’s names, recognize the names of the colors, ask the color of objects. Such objectives are based on the students’ academic capabilities. We have students whose academic success is very low. If a student with visual impairment comes from a “normal” school, I expect them to count from 1 to 10, tell his name and age, and ask others’ names and ages. I generally set 5 objectives because it is the amount that the students with visual impairment can do (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

The individualized education programs were supposed to be offered outside the regular teaching hours. However, when Mustafa prepared the individualized education programs, he emphasized that these programs were cautiously implemented during the teaching hours because he did not want his students with the individualized education program to feel discriminated and isolated.

I prepare individualized education programs for the students. For example, I am teaching “suggestions” and it can be difficult for the student with the individualized education program. In the class, I ask the student to do the activity. I offer him/her hints and clues. In doing so, I do not exclude him/her from the classroom activities, and I help him/her to understand the structure (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).



The in-class observation data also revealed that Mustafa implemented the individualized education programs during his lessons, and he helped his students who were subject to the individualized education programs to complete certain tasks.

Mustafa was teaching “body parts” to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. Yusuf is a student with multiple disabilities. In addition to his visual impairment, Yusuf is also an autistic child, so he is very sensitive to sounds. Generally, Yusuf did not want to listen to the song, so he tried to block his ears because he found the songs irritating. Given his multiple disabilities, Yusuf was subject to the individualized education program. During the lesson, Mustafa played a song about body parts and asked questions about the body parts in the song. Yusuf was sitting in his seat and trying to block the sound of the song. Mustafa stopped the song, approached to him. By making certain sounds (clapping, sniffing, etc.), he asked Yusuf about the body parts. In doing so, Mustafa implemented Yusuf’s individualized education program without asking him to leave the class (Mustafa In-class Observation, February 26, 2020).

To summarize Mustafa’s knowledge about his students, it can be inferred that Mustafa stressed the possible collaboration between the Ministries of National Education and Health to prepare both the parents and the students with disabilities for formal education. In addition to this, Mustafa emphasized the importance of knowing his students’ social, cultural, and familial background because knowing his students’ backgrounds helped him cater to the needs of the students with visual impairments. In order to understand his students’ backgrounds and intervene possible educational problems and challenges the students with visual impairments experienced in the School for the Blind, he collaborated with the counseling service, the classroom teachers, and the school administration. Lastly, Mustafa implemented individualized education programs which were designed for respective students. His implementation of these programs showed that he tried to include the students, who were subject to the individualized education program, in classroom activities because he did not want to odd students out due to their needs.

#### **4.2.10. Mustafa’s Pedagogic Content Knowledge**

Individual interviews, in-class observations, field notes, and memos collected for this study revealed that Mustafa’s pedagogic content knowledge consisted of his “medium of instruction”, “assessment and evaluation practices”, “English language teaching”, “classroom routines”, “technology use”, “language teaching materials”, and

“professional development”. In the following sub-section, the components of Mustafa’s pedagogic content knowledge are presented.

#### **4.2.11. Mustafa’s Medium of Instruction**

Oracy is important for English language learning and young learners need extensive exposure to the target language. Additionally, the listening and tactile language learning materials are essential to teach English to the students with visual impairments. Given these, Mustafa was expected to use the target language as his medium of instruction. However, he thought that the choice of the medium of instruction is a debatable topic, and it is not practical to use the target language all the teaching time.

If I speak English all the time, I think the students will be bored. Also, I believe they will not fully understand the content (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

His rationale of not using the target language as a medium of instruction could be traced back to his English language learning experiences at the university because he mentioned that the medium of instruction at the university was English, yet he had difficulty in following his lessons because of the level of his language proficiency. In addition to his remarks about the use of target language as a medium of instruction, Mustafa thought that the use of students’ native language, that is Turkish, was a necessity especially in grammar teaching.

It is a necessity to use Turkish when I teach grammar because I teach grammar parallel to Turkish grammar (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

What was interesting, though, was that Mustafa accepted that the extent of his target language use while he was teaching did not follow a systematic approach. This unsystematic approach in his target language use was also reflected in his language main skills and sub-skills teaching.

Especially in secondary school, I occasionally use Turkish and English together. If you ask me how you decide, I will say it does not have a systematicity (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

The in-class observations revealed that although Mustafa mainly preferred to use English as a medium of instruction, he supplemented his medium of instruction with the translation of the utterances he used in the classroom. Supplementing his medium of instruction with the translated utterances, Mustafa's medium of instruction consisted of a mixture of Turkish and English. This mixture could be used in his language teaching practices as well as classroom management. Following except showed that Mustafa's use of his medium of instruction was also reflected in students' utterances because the students with visual impairments uttered sentences, in which certain words were used in English, but the sentence was constructed in Turkish.

Mustafa was teaching "Present Simple Tense" to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Before he started to review grammatical structure of Present Simple Tense, he wanted to check the students' homework.

Mustafa: Duygu where is your homework?

Duygu: Ben homework'u bilmiyordum (I did not know we had homework to do).

Mustafa: Ama yazdırdım. Ne demiştin mazaret olmayacak (But I made you note it down. I told you that I will not accept any excuses). Nisa did you do your homework?

Nisa: Yes.

Mustafa: Kontrol edelim. Don't'un başında özne yok. I go swimming yazmışsın (Let's check it. You did not write a subject before don't. You wrote I go swimming).

Berat: Teacher benim ödevime de bakın (Teacher can you check my homework, too?).

Mustafa: I am riding a bicycle demişsin. Bu Present Continuous Tense. Bunu daha görmedik. I ride a bicycle deseydin olurdu (You write "I am riding a bicycle. This is Present Continuous Tense. I did not teach this tense yet. If you say I ride a bicycle, it will be okay). (Mustafa In-class Observation, December 15, 2019).

To summarize, Mustafa thought that using the target language as the medium of instruction caused student boredom. Also, he mentioned that he taught English parallel to the students' native language structure, thus using English as a medium of instruction was impractical for him. Thus, he preferred to use a mixture of Turkish and English as his medium of instruction, which lacked systematicity. Lastly, his use of such as mixture was also reflected in the students' utterances because the students were forming Turkish sentences with English words.

#### **4.2.12. Mustafa's Assessment and Evaluation Practices**

Mustafa's educational background showed that he completed a teaching certificate program to be a language teacher in the School for the Blind. In addition to the certificate program, he underwent an internship process, during which he worked with

his former English language teacher. During his internship, although his supervisor tried to prepare him to the teaching profession in many aspects, Mustafa mentioned that his supervisor did not adequately inform him about the assessment and evaluation practices in the School for the Blind. Mustafa compensated his lack of knowledge about the assessment and evaluation practices in language teaching profession in the teaching certificate program.

There are certain issues in terms of assessment and evaluation that my supervisor did not inform me at all, or he did not fully show. It was more beneficial for me to receive the theoretical issues in the assessment and evaluation [in the certificate program] (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 25, 2019).

Receiving the theoretical foundations of the assessment and evaluation practices, Mustafa started to form his approach of assessing and evaluating his students after the internship period. Mustafa thought that it is more important to realize a student's performance in the classroom than his/her examination result. His emphasis on formative assessment resulted in his grading, as well. He claimed that the formative assessment grades he gave were always higher than the summative ones.

To be honest, I think the results of summative assessments are not indicative of success. When I started to grade students' summative assessments after the internship period, I always prioritized students' in-class performance (Mustafa Individual Interview).

Mustafa's rationale of prioritizing students' in-class performance was rooted in his desire to motivate his students to learn English. He thought that it is important to tolerate students' minor mistakes in the summative assessments because making mistakes is a natural process of learning a language.

I think I am tolerant toward students' mistakes. If a letter is misplaced, I ignore it. Our students [with visual impairments] can press an extra dot, the letter becomes a different one. I tolerate such mistakes. Yet, if a student has more than two mistakes when s/he writes the verb of the sentence, I take points off. Some teachers in "normal" schools take full points off a student's answer if s/he writes a word wrong. That's the reason why students do not like English. Such teachers demotivate students (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 05, 2020).

In addition to his approach and concerns, Mustafa's assessment and evaluation practices indicated that reading questions aloud at the beginning of the examination

was vital for students' success. Reading questions aloud served for two main purposes. Firstly, due to the orthographical differences, the students with visual impairments could have difficulty in understanding the written questions. Thus, reading the questions aloud helped students understand the written questions. Secondly, Mustafa could clearly explain the instructions of the exam. Following excerpt described Mustafa's assessment and evaluation practices.

If it is a secondary school exam, I read all the questions aloud at the beginning of the exam. I tell my students to take the exam paper in their hands when I read the questions because I want them to understand the questions. After I read the questions, they start their exams. I let them ask maximum two questions about the words they do not know/understand. For the lower grades, for example 5<sup>th</sup> grade, I read the questions, wait for a minute or two for them to write their answers, then move to next questions (Mustafa Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

Mustafa also mentioned that he tried to ask questions that requires one-line answers because the students with visual impairments needed to write their answers in Braille and the longer answers created confusion for them. He stated that he preferred to ask questions, some parts of which could be used in students' answers.

When I read the questions aloud, I try to guide students. For example, I tell the students "What time do you have breakfast? In the mornings". There students can see the phrase "have breakfast". They are going to use it in their answers. I will write "I have breakfast at ...". Most of the phrases will be used in students' answers. That's why reading questions aloud is beneficial (Mustafa Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

In addition to these practices, Mustafa prepared different formats of the summative assessments to accommodate the needs of the students with low vision. As the students with low vision can read and write with bigger fonts, he printed the exams in at least 18 point-size. By utilizing educational technologies such as Braille printer, computer, and word processing software, he managed to have accessible assessment and evaluation practices.

I print the exams in Braille. Also, I have students with low vision in my classes. For them, I use "normal" printer. 20 point-size. They can also see the fonts bigger than 18 point-size. For the students with visual impairments, I use Braille printers (Mustafa Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

Lastly, the interview data revealed that protecting the exam reliability was a part of Mustafa's assessment and evaluation practices in the School for the Blind. He mentioned that there are several ways of cheating in the School for the Blind. While the students with visual impairments use two exam sheets in one Braille typewriter/slate, the students with low vision try to use their low vision to copy their peers' answers.

Students with low vision can sometimes exploit my visual impairments. During the exam, they look at each other's papers. It is not only them who try to cheat. Those students with visual impairments whose English is good use two papers during the exam. They put two papers in their Braille slate or typewriter. They only leave a space for their friends to write his/her name. Of course, we can easily understand what they are trying to do because the depth of the dots in their papers are not the same (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

To summarize, his supervisor did not adequately inform Mustafa about the assessment and evaluation practices in the School for the Blind. Instead, Mustafa received theoretical foundations of assessment and evaluation in the teaching certificate program and compensated his lack of knowledge about the assessment and evaluation practices. By acknowledging that the orthographical differences between Turkish, English, and Braille could confuse students with visual impairments, Mustafa prioritized students' performance in in-class activities. This priority was also reflected in his grading because he was tolerant to minor mistakes the students made in the summative assessments. In addition to his approach to assessment and evaluation in the School for the Blind, he prepared and conducted his exam in ways that the students with visual impairments could manage the summative assessments. These ways consisted of reading question aloud, allowing students to ask for help, and preparing the exams in different formats.

#### **4.2.13. Mustafa's English Language Teaching Practices**

Mustafa's English language teaching practices consisted of teaching main skills, sub-skills, and language teaching techniques and strategies. Mustafa was teaching English to the primary and secondary school students and he mentioned that his English language teaching practices depended on the level he was teaching because the needs and capabilities of the students in the primary and secondary school were different.

Thus, he could not utilize the same teaching practices at different levels. Mustafa explained his English language teaching practices as follows.

We do not teach reading and writing in primary school. We start [teaching reading and writing] in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The coursebook was handed in late this year, that's why I did not use it. The coursebook is the same as the "normal" one. It is totally based on pictures. Our difference is that we extensively revise and repeat the topics we covered. We do dialogue exercises. In "normal" schools with 30 students in a class, a student can exercise once, but here [in the School for the Blind] the students can complete 3-4 exercises in a lesson. We have few students in a class in the School for the Blind, and that's our advantage. Repetition is important. Repetition is the root of memorization or not forgetting. Thus, I start my lesson with the revision of previous topics. That's what I do in primary school. In the secondary school, we start teaching reading and writing. Generally, we do exercises, dialogues, and revisions (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

As stated in the quote above, Mustafa did not teach reading and writing in the primary school. Although he thought that reading and writing could be taught to the students with visual impairments in the primary school, he followed the requirements of the School for the Blind.

We teach reading and writing to 1<sup>st</sup> grade students in their native language. English starts in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. It is not an intensive one because we teach them 20 target vocabulary items. These words are also used in Turkish. Such as TV. We can teach these words' writings. As I said, the English course is not an intensive one and it is not correct to limit our practices by saying that it is not allowed to teach reading and writing in the primary school (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

In addition to the resentment about the limitations on his reading and writing instruction, Mustafa did not use the coursebook as a guide for his English language practices due to two main reasons. Firstly, he did not teach reading and writing in the primary school, so he thought that he did not need a coursebook. Secondly, the coursebook consisted of pictures and visual illustrations, which made it difficult to use in his lessons. Instead of using the coursebook, he used the listening and speaking activities as his main guide in his English language teaching practices.

The students with visual impairments really like listening activities. If we do dialogue activities, they like it more. They sometimes get bored when we do the reading activities. They do not like me to teach them the whole lesson (Mustafa Individual Interview, March 04, 2020).

In the listening activities, Mustafa organized his practices around the songs he downloaded from the internet. After he introduced the topic of the day, he asked the students with visual impairments to listen to the song(s), which covered most of the target vocabulary items. While the students with visual impairments listened to the song, they were not expected to engage with the song they were listening to. Thus, they passively listened to the song. The listening activities were sometimes accompanied by the hands-on activities. In these hands-on activities, the students with visual impairments were expected to show or spot the object/thing Mustafa was asking. Although Mustafa thought that the students with visual impairment liked the listening activities they did during the lesson, the in-class observation revealed that the students with visual impairments mostly got bored because they knew the songs and listened to them several times in and out of the school.

Mustafa was teaching “body parts” to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students with visual impairments. He first introduced the topic and explained keywords. Then, he asked the students to show the body part he was asking for. For example, when he asked a student to show his/her ear, the student was expected to translate the word and touch his/her ear. After the hands-on activity, Mustafa brought his MP3 player and played a song that was related to the body parts. While Mustafa was playing the song, the students were side-talking and playing their game they started in the break time. The students’ preference not to listen to the song played by their teacher was a sign of their boredom. However, not only Mustafa did not realize that the students with visual impairments were not listening to the song, but he also played another song (Mustafa In-class Observation, March 04, 2020).

In addition to the songs and hands-on activities, Mustafa revised the vocabulary items and occasionally asked listening comprehension questions after the listening phase of the activity was completed.

Mustafa was teaching the months of the year. He first told the name of the months and repeated the names several times. Then, he played a song, which lyrically sings the months of the year. When the song finished, he asked each student a listening comprehension question.

Mustafa: Bakalım bu soruya kim cevap verecek (Let’s see who is going to answer this question). How many months are there in a year? Kaç tane ay? (How many months?)  
Veysel: Twelve.

Mustafa: There are twelve months. Şimdi aylardan hangisi? What month is it now?

Kerem: February.

Mustafa: It is February. Şubattayız değil mi? (Are we in February, right?) (Mustafa, In-class Observation, February 05, 2020).



As can be seen in the excerpt, the students with visual impairments were expected to answer the listening comprehension questions with certain grammatical forms and chunk-based expressions. These expressions were exemplified by Mustafa upon a student with visual impairment answered the listening comprehension question. The in-class observation similarly revealed that the listening comprehension questions were the foundation of the speaking activities Mustafa utilized as a part of his language teaching practices. In these forms of the speaking activities, the students with visual impairments were not expected to produce novel utterances. Instead, they were expected to produce chunk-based phrases and to complete drill activities in the form of teacher-student dialogues.

Mustafa was revising key topics for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students because the students with visual impairments were going to have their first examination. While revising, Mustafa utilized a dialogue activity in the form of question and answer.

Mustafa: We have learned countries. Ülkeleri öğrendik. We have learned nationalities. Milletleri öğrendik. Where are you from? sorusuna nasıl cevap veririz (How can we answer the question “where are you from?”).

Students in Chorus: I am from Turkey.

Mustafa: I am from Russia. I am from Ukraine. I am from England. I am from Germany. Okay, what is your nationality?

Students in Chorus: I am Turkish.

Gamze: I am Japanese.

[...]

Mustafa: Where is Anıtkabir?

Kemal: In Ankara.

Mustafa: It is in Ankara. Where is Topkapı Palace?

Selen: It is in Istanbul.

Mustafa: Where is Selimiye Mosque?

Bahadır: It is in Edirne. (Mustafa In-class Observation, November 13, 2019).

It is also noteworthy that Mustafa occasionally corrected the pronunciation mistakes the students with visual impairments made during the speaking activities. However, such corrections lacked systematicity because Mustafa’s speaking practices did not include pronunciation instruction.

In terms of teaching reading and writing skills, Mustafa followed the requirements of the School for the Blind. As mentioned earlier, the primary school students with visual impairments were not expected to receive reading and writing instruction in the School for the Blind. Hence, Mustafa’s reading and writing practices were directed to the secondary school students with visual impairments.

Table 5: Mustafa's Summary of English Language Teaching Practices

Date	Grade	Main Skills	Sub-Skills	English Language Teaching Techniques and Strategies	Material	Classroom Interaction Patterns
23 October 2019	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Speaking Listening	Vocabulary	Translation Contextualization Post-Listening Activity Q-A Session	Songs	Teacher-Student
23 October 2019	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Speaking Listening	Vocabulary	Translation Pre-Vocabulary Teaching Repetition Q-A Session Post-Listening Activity	Songs	Teacher-Student
30 October 2019	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Listening	Vocabulary	Revision Translation Q-A Session	Songs	Teacher-Student
30 October 2019	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	NA	Grammar	Revision Contextualization Translation Metalanguage Information Drama A-Q Sessions	NA	Teacher-Student
13 November 2019	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Reading	Vocabulary	Reading Aloud Translation Scaffolding Q-A Session	Coursebook	Teacher Student
11 December 2019	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Listening	Vocabulary	Q-A Post Listening Activity Revision Translation	Song	Teacher Student
25 December 2019	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	NA	Grammar (Present Simple Tense) Vocabulary	Metalanguage Information Drills Q-A Session Contextualization	NA	Teacher Student
05 February 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Listening	Vocabulary	Translation Revision Dialogue	Song	Teacher Student
12 February 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Listening	Vocabulary	Translation Dialogue Q-A Session	Song	Teacher Student
12 February 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Speaking	Vocabulary	Gamification Scaffolding Contextualization	NA	Teacher Student/ Student -Student
19 February 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Listening	Vocabulary	Translation Q-A Session	Song	Teacher Student

Table 5 (continued)

<b>26 February 2020</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Listening	Vocabulary	Revision Translation Post-Listening Activities	Song	Teacher Student/ Student - Student
<b>04 March 2020</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Listening	Vocabulary	Scaffolding Translation Contextualization Conceptualization Q-A Session	Songs	Teacher Student
<b>11 March 2020</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Listening	Vocabulary	Revision Translation Q-A Session	Song	Teacher-Student

In the reading activities, Mustafa used the coursebook provided by the Ministry of National Education as his source of reading materials. He conducted reading activities in two formats. In one format, Mustafa or a student with visual impairment read the text aloud, and other students followed them. In this format, Mustafa occasionally provided guidance and feedback about the orthographical differences between Braille Turkish and English because Braille contractions in English are introduced in the secondary school in the School for the Blind. However, the occasional feedback about the orthographical differences between Braille Turkish and English was not supported with the reading activities in the coursebook because Mustafa thought that some activities were not designed to meet the needs of the students with visual impairments. Thus, the occasional guidance and feedback about Braille English failed to serve for spelling instruction.

We just read them and move to the next activity [referring to the matching activities]. Fill-in-the-blank activities are a bit more difficult for the students with visual impairments. For example, the letters are scrambled. The coursebook gives you the scramble letters for a word. It is extremely difficult when you try to understand it with Braille (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

In the second format, Mustafa read the text aloud while the students with visual impairments followed him. After Mustafa completed reading aloud session, the students with visual impairments were expected to complete the reading activities, which could include reading comprehension, fill-in-the-blank, listing, and matching

questions. The observation data also indicated that Mustafa sometimes provided pronunciation tips and clues while the students with visual impairments were engaged with the reading activities. Following except illustrate how Mustafa utilized reading activities in his lessons.

Mustafa was teaching games and hobbies to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. After introducing the vocabulary items, Mustafa asked each student to read the list of games and hobbies in the coursebook aloud.

Mustafa: Sizinle hiç okuduk mu?

Students: Hayır (No).

Mustafa: Okay. Page 31. Unit 3. Games and Hobbies. Are you ready for reading? Hazır mısınız? Buldu mu herkes? [wait for the students to find the page]. Did you find the page?

Students: Yes.

Mustafa: Unit 3. Games and Hobbies. Answer the questions. Do you know? K ile başlar ama nov diye okunur (It starts with K letter but it is pronounced /nəv/). Do you know these activities? Bu etkinlikleri biliyor musunuz? Which ones do you love? Hangisini seviyorsunuz?

Gizem: Play basketball. Play dodgeball. Play Chinese whisper. Play table tennis. Take photos.

Ahmet: Play basketball. Play dodgeball. Play Chinese whisper. Play table tennis. Take photos (Mustafa In-class Observation, November 13, 2019).

Mustafa believed that writing is the most important language skill for the students with visual impairments because it helps students memorize vocabulary items and learn the grammatical structures. He also added that spelling instruction can be included in writing activities, and it is beneficial for the students with visual impairments.

Writing and reading in English is different than Turkish because one cannot pronounce the words as it is written in English. I think writing is more valuable for the students with visual impairments because the things they write are engraved in their cognitive systems. The students with visual impairments can also learn how to spell English words (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Although Mustafa emphasized the importance of writing for the students with visual impairments, the in-class observations revealed that writing was the most neglected area in Mustafa's English language teaching practices. This neglect partially stemmed from the regulation that forbids teaching English writing skills to the primary school students with visual impairments in the School for the Blind. When Mustafa was asked about the regulation and its impact on the students' writing skills, he

mentioned that he was not aware of any rationale for the regulation, yet he tried to include writing activities to the curricula of the primary school.

I do not know the rationale. the School for the Blind wants it. There is no writing in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, but they also publish coursebooks. It does not seem logical to me. That's why I try to include writing activities in the second semester of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

It should be also noted that Mustafa did not think that the Orbit device, which is a tablet-like device designed for individuals with visual impairments to read and write, is not useful for writing instruction due to the device's technical capabilities.

I heard that the Orbit is extensively used in the USA, but the use of it is limited in Turkey. You can write 20 characters in a line. The device we are using here is the least advanced model. There are other models that you can see 9 lines on a page. Having 20 characters in a line means you can only write three words. Then, you need to move to the next line, which disappears because there is no place on the screen. It may be practical for some, but I do not consider it useful (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Lastly, Mustafa claimed that he included teaching Braille contractions in English as a part of his writing instruction. Although the in-class observation data revealed no instance of the writing instruction, in which Mustafa taught Braille contractions, Mustafa summarized his writing and Braille instruction as follows.

We have a contraction system in Turkish and in English Braille. The Braille contractions speed up the reading and writing processes. It is even more practical when one writes in Braille. For example, b means but, c means can. We have such practical contractions. I do not ask my students to memorize these contractions. Instead, I teach them these contractions when I do dictation activity (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Teaching main language skills was also accompanied by teaching the sub-skills of English language in Mustafa's practices. These sub-skills were grammar and vocabulary. The observation data showed that Mustafa's English language teaching practices mostly focused on vocabulary teaching in the primary school and grammar teaching in the secondary school in the School for the Blind.

In terms of vocabulary teaching, Mustafa thought that repetition and revision are essential to learn English vocabulary. Thus, he repeatedly used the target vocabulary items in his lessons and revised them several times. Although he could

easily teach concrete words by employing repetition techniques as the students with visual impairments possessed the underlying knowledge of the concept of the word, he thought that it is more difficult to teach abstract words because he cannot imagine how a person with visual impairments can construct the conceptual knowledge in his/her memory if s/he is with total blindness. Thus, he believed that a student with visual impairment can learn abstract words, yet it is not more than rote memorization.

As the students with visual impairments cannot see, they can learn certain words, but it is just memorization. I do not know what sort of conceptual knowledge is formed in their cognitive system. I do not even think that it is possible for students with visual impairments to have conceptual knowledge of abstract words. For example, they can tell this is green, but they cannot explain what is green or blue. As they cannot see, it will not evoke any cognitive links (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

Similarly, the observation data revealed that Mustafa was aware of his students' lack of conceptual knowledge, yet he did not look for alternative ways to compensate for the students' lack of conceptual knowledge when he was trying to teach abstract words. He mentioned that the School for the Blind was encouraging its teachers to collaborate with other institutions to enrich learning experiences of the students with visual impairments. However, he either preferred not to collaborate with his colleagues or preferred to have a minor role in such collaborations by only stating his suggestions.

There is a project. They asked me to collaborate. I just suggested them to print out animal figures with 3-D printing and write their English names. I told them to include cats, dogs, etc. because some of the students do not even have the conceptual knowledge of animals. When I ask my students how many legs a rabbit has, some of them say two. Some of the students with visual impairments do not know how many legs a chicken has. Why? Because they have never seen it (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Given his considerations on abstract words, when Mustafa was teaching vocabulary, he followed a set of teaching routines. In his vocabulary teaching routine, he first revised the last topic's vocabulary items and introduced the topic of the day. The introduction was followed by a series of questions that checked the students' prior knowledge about the topic. Then, he listed the key vocabulary items and translated them one by one. After the translation phase, he asked the students with visual impairments to tell him the meanings of the words they focused on during the lesson. In the last stage of his vocabulary teaching, he played songs, in which the target

vocabulary items were lyrically presented. Mustafa explained his use of songs in vocabulary teaching as follows:

I teach the students with visual impairments vocabulary items via songs. They learn extra words as well. For example, when I teach colors, it says sky is blue, grass is green in the songs. They learn the not only colors but also other words associated with the colors. Although it is a kind of memorization, the students with total blindness can verbally tell that sky is blue or grass is green. I do not know they can form a conceptual knowledge of it but as they never see anything, they verbally learn such things. I teach them eleven colors and they learn eleven extra words (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

In terms of grammar teaching, the in-class observation data revealed that Mustafa did not explicitly focus on grammar in the primary school in the School for the Blind as he employed vocabulary-driven language teaching practices. On the other hand, he believed that English grammar should be taught parallel to Turkish grammar in the secondary school because it is easier to learn English grammar with Turkish metalanguage information.

Grammatical rules in English should be taught parallel to Turkish grammar. Adjectives, adverbs, pronouns. All these metalanguage terminologies should be presented with Turkish grammar (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

Mustafa's rationale for teaching English grammar parallel to Turkish grammar also stemmed from the belief that the students with visual impairments lacked metalanguage terminology in their native language and when the students with visual impairments learn the grammar of their native language, they can improve their metalanguage skills.

Especially in the secondary school, using Turkish metalanguage information works well so I think it is necessary to teach English grammar parallel to Turkish grammar. Students nowadays have difficulty in learning Turkish grammar. To be honest, the students do not know what the verb/subject is (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 15, 2020).

Translation emerged to be a key strategy in Mustafa's English language teaching practices. Regardless of the main and the sub-skills he was focusing on, translation was positioned in an essential place in all his teaching practices. Mustafa usually preferred to use English sentence first, and then translated it in Turkish. In doing so,

he thought that he could increase students' comprehension. Alternatively, when he wanted to focus on grammatical structures, he chose to start the lesson with Turkish sentences, which were translated in English. While translating, he emphasized the target word and/or structure the students with visual impairments were expected to learn.

The last theme that emerged from data analysis was Mustafa's classroom interaction patterns in the School for the Blind. The observation data showed that the interactions taking place in the classroom were between Mustafa and his students with visual impairments. The interaction patterns were directed from teacher to student, that is, Mustafa initiated classroom interactions by asking questions, and the students with visual impairments usually communicated with their teacher by answering the question. The classroom interaction patterns showed that when the students with visual impairments try to interact, the interaction pattern was also directed to the teacher. The only instances the students with visual impairments initiated student-to-student interaction was a classroom game Mustafa asked the students with visual impairments play. In the game, the students with visual impairments generally asked a question, and the other student answered the question by either saying the translated meaning of the target word or using chunk-based expressions.

To sum up, Mustafa's English language teaching practices showed that he differentiated his instructional practices to meet the needs of his students with visual impairments in the primary and secondary school and he followed the regulations of the School for the Blind that forbid teaching reading and writing skills to the primary school students.

When delved into his teaching practices, it was seen that Mustafa organized his language teaching practices around the listening activities, in which he played songs. The songs were also used to teach and revise the target vocabulary items the students with visual impairments were expected to learn. A common listening activity in Mustafa's practices usually ended with the listening comprehension questions. These questions served for two main purposes. On one hand, Mustafa tried to highlight the additional vocabulary items in the songs by asking the listening comprehension questions. On the other hand, such questions facilitated the beginning of the speaking activities Mustafa had in his practices. Mustafa occasionally included pronunciation



instruction in the speaking activities he used in the classroom. It should also be noted that the interaction pattern in Mustafa's speaking activities was from teacher to student or vice versa because his practices did not generally allow the student-to-student interaction.

In term of reading, Mustafa used the coursebook as his source of reading materials and he mainly utilized reading aloud technique in his practices because it allowed Mustafa to provide information about Braille contractions, spelling, as well as pronunciation. In addition to this, Mustafa chose to skip certain activities such as scrambled words or sentences because such activities were impractical for the students with visual impairments.

When it comes to writing, data analysis showed that although Mustafa thought that writing is the most important language skill, it was the most neglected one in his language teaching practices. The in-class observation data did not yield an instance, in which Mustafa taught writing.

In terms of teaching language sub-skills, vocabulary teaching occupied a place in Mustafa's English language teaching practices. When he taught concrete words, Mustafa used contextualization strategies to help the students with visual impairments understand the meaning and use of the target words. However, Mustafa failed to provide systematic instructional practices when he taught abstract words to the students with visual impairments because the students lacked conceptual knowledge of abstract words and he could not scaffold his students to form conceptual knowledge in their cognitive systems.

Lastly, Mustafa believed that English grammar should be taught parallel to Turkish grammar, and it is easier for the students with visual impairments to understand metalinguistic terminologies he used when he taught English grammar.

#### **4.2.14. Mustafa's Use of Educational Technologies**

Mustafa's educational background showed that he started to learn to touch-type when he was a student in the School for the Blind. In his further educational pursuits, he also learned to use mobile devices and computers. He added that the School for the Blind still has a course devoted to teaching educational technologies to the students with visual impairments.

The School for the Blind teaches educational technologies. They teach one-finger typing strategies to the students with visual impairments. I can also touch-type. If you ask me when I learned it, it was in my secondary school years. At that time, we did not have computers in the School for the Blind because it was widespread. Instead, we learned to touch-type on typewriters. I had an hour of technology lesson. This is my beginning to learn information technologies. After touch-typing, we were taught how to access the internet, etc. Then, I bought my own computer and continued to use such devices (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

He also stated that he did not receive any training about how to use educational technologies in the teaching certificate program and he did not feel in need of such training because he made use of his personal experiences of educational technologies in his initial years in the School for the Blind.

Mustafa: I did not receive any in-service training about how to use technological devices.

Researcher: Do you feel the need...?

Mustafa: I am already capable of using an MP3 and a computer. To be honest, I did not feel the need to improve my technological skills (Mustafa Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

When he was asked how he made use of educational technologies in his language teaching practices, Mustafa mentioned that he was using a typewriter to prepare language learning and teaching materials as well as assessment documents until recent years. With the availability of Braille printing technologies in the School for the Blind, Mustafa now utilizes Braille printing when he prepares his language teaching practices.

In my early times, I was typewriting exam papers. For example, if there were five students, I would prepare five exam papers. It was time-consuming for me because I was spending an hour writing the exam papers. Now, I use the Braille printer and I do not spend that much time (Mustafa Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

Another technology that Mustafa uses in his lessons was the MP3 player. The observation data showed that the MP3 player was the only technological tool that Mustafa used in his lessons. The device has a speaker and works with a USB memory stick. He explained that he first downloaded the songs that were compatible with the curricular objectives from the internet and then, he transferred the files to his USB driver. In his lessons, he played the songs from the library he created with the

downloaded songs. The process of using his MP3 player in his lessons was illustrated in the excerpt below.

Although there are other technological tools that he can use such as a computer and a smartboard in the classroom, Mustafa only uses his MP3 player in his lessons. In almost every lesson, he introduces the topic, gives the list of vocabulary items and plays songs about the topic. He plays the songs with his MP3 player. If needed, he can adjust the volume. However, the files in his USB driver are not organized. Thus, in almost every lesson, he spends at least five minutes finding the song he wants the students with visual impairments to listen to (Mustafa In-class Observation, February 26, 2020).



Figure 25: Mustafa's MP3 Player

Regarding the other technological tools available in the classroom, Mustafa rarely used the smartboard and he thought that its applicability to English language teaching is limited because of two main issues. Firstly, the students with total visual impairment cannot navigate on the smartboard so they cannot make use of smartboard tools to learn English language. In addition to this, the smartboard and its applications are based on visuality. Thus, Mustafa thought that a language teacher could only use the smartboard for the listening activities.

The students with visual impairments cannot see the screen. The smartboard is based on visuality. For example, it [referring to an application] shows a picture and asks you to match it. The students with low vision can complete such exercises, but how are the students with total visual impairment going to do such activities? The only activity a language teacher can do is a listening activity. The students can do fill-in-the-blank questions and if they listen carefully, they can complete true-false questions. This is

the only use of smartboard for the students with visual impairments (Mustafa Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

Secondly, Mustafa stated that they are having accessibility problems when they try to use the smartboard because of two main technical issues. Firstly, MoNE's platform does not support a screen reader program called JAWS, thus the teachers in the School for the Blind can only use the smartboard via a keyboard. Using the smartboard via a keyboard was not practical for him. In addition to this, the Ministry of National Education provides internet connection to the School for the Blind, yet the internet connection is restricted due to the security and privacy rules.

Our information technology teacher gave us a seminar about how to use the smartboard. [As we cannot see] we can use the smartboard by plugging in a keyboard. It is not practical. Neither the smartboard nor MoNE's platform does not support screen reader programs. Also, MoNE's platform is not accessible in terms of its content because you can only visit the websites whose content are approved by the Ministry (Mustafa Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

The accessibility issues Mustafa experienced when he tried to use MoNE's platform were not only limited to his English language teaching practices. As the platform is used for the formal procedures, Mustafa has to use it when he is supposed to complete the formal procedures of the School for the Blind. Grade entering is one of these formal procedures, yet it is hindered by the accessibility problems of the platform. Hence, Mustafa had to ask for a seeing person's help when he entered the grades.

I either use my mobile phone or my computer to enter the grades. When I enter the grades, I ask for my wife's help because MoNE's platform does not support JAWS. It does not allow us to use other screen reader programs. The platform is not accessible for people with visual impairments (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

What was interesting, though, was that although Mustafa voiced his concerns about the accessibility of the smartboard and MoNE's platform, he did not get constructive results. He claimed that his request for an accessible platform was overlooked by the Ministry of National Education.

MoNE's platform does not allow us to use JAWS because it is not compatible with JAWS. We have reported it to the Ministry for 8 years. We report it at every official meeting. Nothing happens (Mustafa Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

Although Mustafa experienced accessibility problems when he used educational technologies, he occasionally tried to include these technologies in his English language teaching practices. Especially in the secondary school in the School for the Blind, he used online listening tools to help the students with visual impairments to improve their listening comprehension skills.

Of course, I change the way I teach. When I was teaching “Simple Past Tense”, I did a listening activity in the computer lab. With my 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, we listened to the stories of Jack and Beans and Spinderella. Then we completed the exercises such as fill-in-the-blank, true-false questions (Mustafa Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

Mustafa believed that prospective English language teachers, who will work in the School for the Blind, must integrate educational technologies in their practices and seek opportunities to follow emerging technologies in the field of English language teaching. Also, he maintained the idea that prospective teachers should evaluate the applicability of such technologies when they teach students with visual impairments.

A teacher should be open to the possibility of change in their practices. Integrating technology in these practices is one of these changes. S/he should follow the technological trends to find out whether there are technological innovations in the field of English language teaching. It is more difficult to find ways to integrate technology in the language learning process of the students with visual impairment (Mustafa Individual Interview, March 04, 2020).

However, the in-class observations revealed that Mustafa’s opinion about the technological capabilities of the prospective teachers contradicted his practices because he only used his MP3 player as an educational technology throughout the data collection processes.

Mustafa claimed that he is competent at using technological tools, but he could not use the computer in the classroom when he had difficulty in using his MP3 player due to the battery failure. Such an instance can be noted down as the contradiction between his thoughts and his practices in terms of technology use (Mustafa In-class Observation).

The last theme that emerged from Mustafa’s educational technology use was the Orbit device. As mentioned earlier, the Orbit device is designed to integrate the qualifications of a Braille typewriter with the recent technological tools such as

computers, printers, etc. Mustafa similarly thought that the device eases the painful and tiresome process of writing with the Braille slate and typewriter.

It is a little bit more practical. It is practical to write with it because it is like a typewriter. It is more silent and faster. One can store what s/he writes (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

However, he stated that the current version does not fully meet the needs of the students with visual impairments. Hence, he objected to the purchase of the device on the premise that the device does not support Braille contractions and the number of characters in a line. He also mentioned that the device does not have a voiceover, which allows the students with visual impairments to listen to what they write on the device.

When the Ministry decided to purchase the Orbit devices for the students with visual impairments, I made several objections because it does not support Braille contractions. [...] It does not have voiceover. I wish it had, at least with its English version. Also, it has no reading aloud option. It can only provide you Braille print. But still, there are only 20 characters in a line. Three words in a line. It is too short. It is also too expensive because I checked it online and it is sold for around 500 dollars (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

To summarize, Mustafa learned the foundational skills to use technological devices when he was a student in the School for the Blind. He later became competent in using technological devices such as typewriters and computers throughout his educational pursuits. However, Mustafa did not receive any training about how to utilize educational technologies when he transitioned to the teaching profession. He stated that he did not feel the need to receive such a training because he considered his technological skills were adequate to meet the needs of his students with visual impairments. In similar vein, the in-class observations showed that Mustafa only used his MP3 player and the Braille printer in his English language teaching practices although there were other educational technologies in the School for the Blind such as smartboard, 3D printing machine, and the Orbit device. He also thought that smartboard and the Orbit device has practical benefits, yet they do not meet the needs of the students with visual impairments due to their technical and accessibility issues. Lastly, Mustafa supported the idea that prospective teachers should be capable of using

educational technologies and they should constantly think about possible ways of implementing technological tools in the language learning processes of the students with visual impairments.

#### **4.2.15. Mustafa's Use of English Language Teaching Materials**

Language teaching materials are one of the essential components of English language teaching and learning because students, regardless of their (dis)abilities engage with available materials to learn the target language. In this vein, Mustafa thought that there are limited number of English language teaching materials, which can be used by the students with visual impairments when they learn English. Such limitations stemmed from the visuality of the available materials. Mustafa mentioned that the importance of the visuality in English language learning and teaching cannot be ignored and be fully replaced by other available modes of learning. Yet, he still tried to compensate the visuality of the materials with tactile and audio materials.

There are not a diverse materials and methods in teaching English to the students with visual impairments. It is limited. As I mentioned elsewhere, we cannot use visual materials. We try to balance this situation by using tactile and audio materials. I think it would be better if we had the change of using visual materials. I believe visual materials are more influential in English language learning (Mustafa Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

The in-class observations showed that Mustafa's opinion about English language teaching materials reflected on his material use because he utilized a limited number of English language teaching materials, one of which was the coursebook distributed by the Ministry of National Education. As mentioned earlier, the coursebook was initially prepared for the "normal" students in the mainstream public schools. Thus, the coursebook included variety of visual elements. The same coursebook was then converted to Braille coursebook for the needs of the students with visual impairments. However, Mustafa commented that the coursebook and its formats did not meet the needs of the students with visual impairments. He grounded his opinion on the fact that there are different student profiles in terms of their degree of visual impairments.

We have requested the coursebook to be printed in 20 fonts for our students with low vision. Not only English coursebook but also other coursebooks. The Ministry have

not accepted it. We offered our consultancy, it got rejected. We asked for written description for the visual elements in the coursebook. The descriptions were started to be added in the coursebooks in recent years (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

Mustafa also added that the format of visual elements in the coursebook created an equity problem for the students with visual impairments because the coursebook lacked the written descriptions of the visual elements in the course. In the absence of the written description, Mustafa stated that it is not possible for the students with visual impairments to complete certain activities in the coursebook. Thus, the activities also needed to be reorganized to meet such students' needs.

We do not have equal opportunities. When the Ministry prepares the curricula and the coursebooks, they do not consult language teachers in Schools for the Blind. That's why the coursebooks are based on the visual elements. I agree that the visual elements can evoke certain ideas for the seeing students and they can be linked in students' memories. Yet, the Ministry has to organize such things according to the students with visual impairments. For example, they gave the numbers in the coursebook, but they did not give the wordings of the numbers. They prepared a fill-in-the-blank exercise based on the figures (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

To compensate for the visuality of the coursebook, Mustafa tried to enrich English language teaching materials he used in his lessons. He explained that he made use of the objects in students' immediate environment and added audio and tactile materials in his practices.

The disadvantage of not seeing is that I cannot make use of students' visual memories. I try to compensate for the visuality of English language learning by including repetition and revision activities, as well as audio and tactile materials. When I teach certain objects, I make sounds of the object like hitting the desk and saying it is a desk. No matter how hard I try to compensate, I believe visual memory makes learning permanent (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

In addition to his concern about the visuality of English language teaching, the students with visual impairments needed to have tactile materials for their language learning processes because Mustafa stated that he was having difficulty in contextualizing and conceptualizing certain vocabulary items. As mentioned earlier, the students with visual impairments lacked conceptual knowledge of the abstract words, which made their vocabulary learning challenging. In similar vein, Mustafa mentioned that he was



struggling to explain certain concrete vocabulary items due to the lack of tactile materials.

I cannot explain some words even in Turkish. I accept that we [referring to individuals with visual impairments] may have difficulty in understanding abstract concepts. But the students with visual impairments should be provided with tactile materials such as 3D shapes for the concrete words. Tactile materials make their learning long-lasting because when a seeing student sees a picture, s/he can have cognitive connections and the picture takes up its place in the memory. For the students with visual impairment, the same process can be achieved via tactile materials (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Mustafa also suggested that the tactile materials should be prepared in caution because the students with total blindness may not understand the object/shape, and this can lead confusion and mislearning.

In 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom, they stuck a butterfly figure. I realized it today and checked it. I could not understand at first. Later, I realized that it is a butterfly. If you ask me whether I saw a butterfly, I do not remember maybe. I remember its shape from the toys I had. Yet, a student with total blindness cannot understand what it is (Mustafa Individual Interview, February 05, 2020).

However, both the individual interviews and the in-class observations revealed that Mustafa did not generally use tactile materials in his English language teaching practices. What was more interesting was that he believed that it is not compulsory to prepare tactile materials because he made use of the objects in students' immediate environment. Following dialogue during the interview showed Mustafa's point of view about material development and adaptation.

Researcher: Can you give the number of language teaching materials you prepared in a year?

Mustafa: I do not know. Maybe one material in an academic year. Maybe two or three. It is not more than five or six learning materials. I generally use the commercial ones.

Researcher: Is it because it is difficult to prepare, or you do not need such materials?

Mustafa: I do not feel that I need them very much. For example, if I am teaching comparative adjectives, it is not necessary to prepare certain shapes to show the students with visual impairments which one is the bigger one. I can compare desks and tables (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 25, 2019).

Given that Mustafa did not feel the need to prepare language teaching materials for his students, he also expected the students with visual impairments to explore and find suitable language learning materials.

We have a computer lab here. It is always open. Also, the students with visual impairments have mobile phones. They can access the internet not only through their phones but also through the computers in the lab. They can access whenever they want. If a student asks me how to learn English language, I will suggest the listening materials in MoNE's platform or to listen to the radio stations which broadcast in English. I can also tell them to find short and easy stories and listen to them (Mustafa Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

To summarize, Mustafa emphasized the importance of visuality in English language teaching and learning because he believed that visual elements are more catchy than other available materials. However, he also stated that the visuality of the available materials created an equity and accessibility problem for the students with visual impairments. To overcome such problems, he obliged to use audio and tactile materials. The in-class observation data showed that he used the coursebook, songs and objects as language teaching materials. On one hand, he mentioned that he cannot make use of the coursebook because it has a certain degree of accessibility issues such as the lack of descriptions of visual elements. On the other hand, he used the songs he downloaded from the internet, and he considered the songs to be engaging for the students with visual impairments. Lastly, Mustafa emphasized the importance of tactile materials for the students with visual impairments because it gave the opportunity to discover and understand the visuality of the materials. However, the data demonstrated that Mustafa did not generally use tactile materials in his classes, and he did not feel the need to provide such materials because he wanted the students with visual impairments to find out language learning materials through the available technological resources in the School for the Blind.

#### **4.3. Case 3: Rosalinda's Language Teacher Identity and Cognition**

Individual interviews and field notes showed that Rosalinda's language teacher identity and cognition were formed by her "personal history", "educational background", "career choices", "initial English language teaching experiences", and

“in service experiences” and “the School for the Blind”. Emerged categories and themes are illustrated in Figure 26 below.

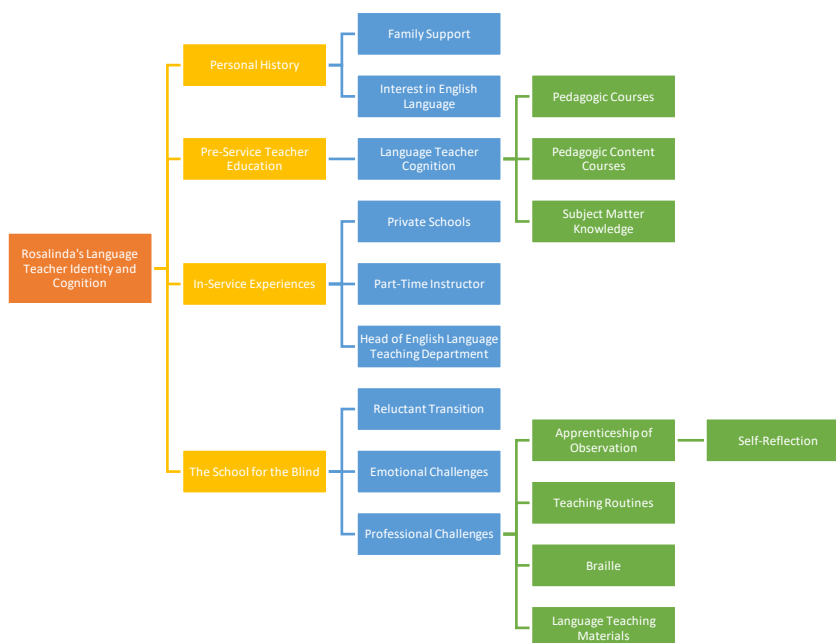


Figure 26: Rosalinda's Language Teacher Identity and Cognition

#### 4.3.1. Rosalinda’s Personal History

Rosalinda was born in 1968 in Ankara. She was the eldest daughter of her family. She had a brother. Her father was a respected bureaucrat, and her mother was a housewife. Rosalinda grew up moving from a city to another due to her father’s job and her father was a well-known person in the cities he moved. Thus, her family developed neighborhood relations with Rosalinda’s teachers as both parties were living in the same area. Rosalinda mentioned that they could see their teachers at their home, and she had a warm relationship with her teachers. Yet, she showed full respect when she saw her teachers in the schools. Also, having such neighborhood relations made her brother and Rosalinda be under the constant supervision of their teachers.

My father was a bureaucrat and in administrative position, so he was a well-known person in cities we lived. Our house was generally close to the schools we went. We were going to the school on foot. Our teachers were also living in the same neighborhood. In the evening, they were gathering at our house and enjoying their

time with activities. In the evening, we were the children of their friends, but they were our teachers in the morning. My father always warned us to respect our teachers. He was always telling us that teachers are the light for our future, and they are enlengthening you (Rosalinda, Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Rosalinda completed her primary, secondary, and high school education in the public schools. Although it was sometimes challenging to adapt new school environments, she was a hardworking student. She stated that the education system at the time required parents to decide which foreign language their kids were going to learn. Given that, Rosalinda's family decided that Rosalinda would receive English language education while her brother took French courses. She mentioned that she lived in a multilingual environment because she was talking about the things she learned in her English courses and her brother talked about the things he learned in French lessons while they were doing their homework.

Rosalinda also mentioned that her English language teacher in the high school was speaking English with an excellent accent, and she was an exemplary teacher. Rosalinda's admiration to her English teacher intensified her interest in English language.

My English teacher in my high school was an excellent woman. She was incredibly talented in teaching; she spoke English with a perfect accent. I was listening to her with admiration. I was both interested in English, and I also loved it (Rosalinda Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

It is also important to note that Rosalinda wanted to improve her English language proficiency and Rosalinda's interest in English language was supported by her family. For example, when her father went abroad, he brought several magazines for Rosalinda. Enjoying reading the magazines her father brought, she wanted to her father to subscribe a teenage magazine for her so that she could read more interesting topics in English.

At that time, the opportunities to learn English were limited. My father brought me a magazine from abroad. Then, I asked him to subscribe a teenage magazine for me. [...] While I was trying to read the magazine, I learned many phrases and words. In my senior year in high school, I started to think about my future, and I decided to be a teacher (Rosalinda Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

She, then, started to be interested in literacy texts and she enjoyed reading Shakespeare. Her appeal for English language literature led her to thinking a career in literature. In 1980, she completed her high school education and entered the university entrance exam.

My concern was Shakespeare. My high school teacher was a Shakespeare teacher. I read Shakespeare's works thanks to her. She also completed the regular curricula and covered extracurricular materials, which included English poets and writers. She lit the literature fire in me. I really wanted to enter English language and literature department. But I did not (Rosalinda Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Although she wanted to pursue a career in literature, she was forced to make a decision because the graduates of the department of English Language and Literature were not allowed to teach. In fear of not finding a job in the future, she decided to be an English language teacher and she received her undergraduate teacher education at Gazi University.

I received my university education at Central [university]. I wanted to enter the Faculty of Letters. I had this handout [referring to the guidebook for the university entrance], and there was a specific note about the department of English Language and Literature; the graduates would not be allowed to work as a teacher, they would be considered as experts in their field. Thus, I said if I were not going to be a teacher, why be an expert? I chose to go to the department of English language teaching (Rosalinda Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

In the Department of English Language Teaching (ELT), she received pedagogical, pedagogic-content, technology use, linguistics, assessment and evaluation courses. She graduated from Central University in 1984 and she started to work in a private school in Ankara because she did not want to leave the city. In 1986, she applied for a part-time instructor position at Central University and got accepted. From 1986 to 1990, she worked as a full-time teacher in a private school and as a part-time instructor at Central University. In 1990, she started to feel teacher burn-out and decided to leave her part-time position at Central University. In the same year, she was offered to be the head of English language department in the private school she was working. She carried out the duties and responsibilities of the head of English language department for four years. In 1994, she was offered to be the school principal in a different private school. She worked as the school principal for a year. In 1995, she felt that she had

been at different levels of English language teaching, and she wanted to work in the organization of the Ministry of National Education. She, then, transitioned to the Ministry of National Education to be a part of the Board of Education.

I worked in all levels of English language teaching. I became the head of English language department. Later, I was assigned as a school principal. I successfully carried out all my duties in my career. I was satisfied with my performance. Then, I said it is enough for me. What could I be more in the teaching profession? I was thinking that I did not want to teach anymore. Thus, I decided to work in the organizational issues. I applied for available positions in the Ministry of National Education. I worked in a public high school for a year. Then I transitioned to the Board of Education (Rosalinda Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

When she was officially assigned to be a part of the Board of Education, she enrolled in the training about European Union. Upon the training, she decided to work on the international projects such as European Union relations, Erasmus, United Nations Education Program and OECD. She, then, applied for the Jean Monnet scholarship program and got accepted.

In 1995, when I started in the Ministry of National Education, European Union was on the agenda. It was the year when Turkey applied to join the European Union. I took courses about European Union for a year. I successfully completed the courses I took. European Commission was offering scholarship for MA studies. Jean Monnet Scholarship. I applied for the scholarship. With the scholarship, I went to the UK to complete my MA studies on European Union. It was on European Union (Rosalinda, Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

After she completed her MA studies in the UK, she returned to her position in the Ministry of National Education, and she continued to work on the international projects and collaborations. She was happy to continue to work on European Union projects because she thought that changing her field of focus positively reflected on her productivity.

I went to the UK to complete my MA studies. When I returned, I carried out the works I was supposed to do, that is, working in the Ministry of National Education. I knew that I was going to do something equivalent to my educational efforts, and I preferred to work in the Ministry. I really liked it (Rosalinda Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

I wanted to change my academic and professional focus. There are other dimensions of education for me. The field is not a small one. It was beneficial for me. Then, I

returned to my position in the Ministry of National Education. I continued to work on European Union projects. I made great effort on the international projects at the level of the Ministry. In 2007, I was assigned to the School for the Blind (Rosalinda Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

When she was asked about the reason(s) why she preferred to work in the School for the Blind, she did not respond. Instead, data analysis yielded that she did want to continue to work in the Ministry of National Education, yet the Ministry assigned her to the School for the Blind. Upon her transition to the School for the Blind, Rosalinda realized that the current practices to teach English to the students with visual impairments did not have a systematic approach. She expressed her resentment as follows.

When the Ministry converts the coursebook designed for seeing students into Braille coursebook, it does mean the Braille coursebook is suitable for the needs of the students with visual impairments. There is a need to prepare curricula for the students with visual impairments (Rosalinda, Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

To conclude, Rosalinda's personal history showed that she had been in different educational institutions throughout her career. In these institutions, she worked as an English language teacher at the beginning of her career, and she managed to teach English to students with various background, age groups, and interests. She was, then, assigned to carry out administrative duties in the schools she worked. Before she applied for the position in the Ministry of National Education, she worked as a school principal. When she was the school principal, she started to think that there were other dimensions of education, and she wanted to work in the organization of education in Turkey. Thus, she applied for the position in the Ministry of National Education. In 2007, she transitioned to the School for the Blind.

#### **4.3.2. Rosalinda's Language Teacher Identity and Cognition**

Rosalinda experienced changes, dilemmas, transformations, and alterations in her language teacher identity and cognition before she transitioned to the School for the Blind. Data analysis showed that the changes, dilemmas, transformations, and alterations in Rosalinda's language teacher identity and cognition were tied with her personal history, career choices, initial teaching practices, and in-service experiences. In the following sub-sections, Rosalinda's experiences throughout her teaching and

non-teaching career are presented. Then, her language teaching experiences in the School for the Blind are analyzed.

#### **4.3.3. Rosalinda's Initial English Language Teacher Identity and Cognition**

Rosalinda received pedagogic and pedagogic content courses in her pre-service teacher education in the department of English Language Teaching at Central University. She mentioned that the program offered the pedagogic courses in her native language, that is, Turkish, and the pedagogic content courses in English. She stated that receiving these courses for four years throughout the pre-service teacher education prepared her to be a qualified English language teacher.

I received my pre-service education to be a teacher, so I did not have pedagogic and pedagogic content problems. The program offered extensive pedagogic courses and I can tell that I received two times more pedagogic courses than the pedagogic content courses. Also, we took these courses in Turkish and English. [...] I took very good educational courses, including educational administration and planning. I also attended such as comparative grammar and language teaching methodology courses, in which I learned how to teach English. I learned to be a qualified teacher (Rosalinda Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

Rosalinda's pre-service education showed that she started to form her language teacher cognition throughout her undergraduate education. While she acquired pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge in her pre-service years, she had the opportunity to practice her English language teaching skills in her senior year at the university because the students in the department were supposed to complete a two-semester long practicum. In the first semester of the practicum, Rosalinda initially taught English to her peers at the university and received feedback from her peers. Also, she prepared lesson plans that reflected her pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge. She believed that having the opportunity to practice her teaching skills with her peers after receiving pedagogic and pedagogic content courses was effective because she knew how to teach English when she started the second part of the practicum.

When I entered my first lesson, I did not think about what I was going to do because I had already known how to teach English (Rosalinda, Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).



In the second semester of the practicum, Rosalinda went to a high school twice in a week to complete her practicum requirements. She worked with a coordinating teacher, who played a vital role in Rosalinda's language teacher identity and cognition. During the second semester of the practicum, Rosalinda prepared lesson plans, which were then approved by the coordinating teacher. While preparing lesson plans, Rosalinda had the opportunity to improve her teacher cognition because her cooperating teacher helped Rosalinda to realize the differences between theory and practice. In addition to lesson planning, Rosalinda assumed different teacher roles during the practicum. For example, she learned the importance of motivating students through fostering interaction, and she assumed a motivator role. Also, Rosalinda realized that students' psychology played an important role in their motivation to learn English. Thus, she counseled her students to lower their anxiety to learn English.

The practicum contributed my skills of addressing the classroom and communicating with the students. If you ask me how, I can tell you that it happened when we went to our practicum school. For example, I knew the theory of preparing a lesson plan, using English language teaching methods, techniques, and strategies, and how to prepare language teaching materials. It was during the practicum that I learned how to motivate students and communicate with them. The practicum was extremely beneficial for me to understand students' psychology (Rosalinda Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

Rosalinda also mentioned that teaching English to "real" students stressed her because she was aware that if she had taught something wrong, it would have harmed students' academic progress. Thus, the sessions she had with her cooperating teacher after she prepared her lesson plans were important to Rosalinda's language teacher cognition.

I always prepared my lesson plans beforehand. I was aware that I did not have the chance to say that I mistaught this topic, but it was okay. No, it would be an academic problem for the students because I was teaching English to "real" students. In this vein, my cooperating teacher checked my plans and usually approved them. Sometimes she suggested minor changes in my lesson plans. I remember one specific example. As you can guess, teaching Present Perfect Tense is a little bit difficult. I was assigned to teach Present Perfect Tense. I tried hard to find suitable examples. My cooperating teacher helped me to improve the examples I found (Rosalinda Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

In addition to this, Rosalinda noted that she used her language learning experiences when she planned her English language teaching practices during the practicum. She

also mentioned that she frequently had to change her school due to her father's job and she saw different English language teachers throughout her schooling years. These teachers were influential in Rosalinda's language teacher identity and cognition because she made use of the teaching techniques and strategies, which she experienced throughout her schooling years.

I have always approached to language teaching in an eclectic way. I do not like to be forced to use a specific teaching method. I have this teacher, Mrs. Victoria. If I say that Mrs. Victoria taught this topic in this way, I am definitely using "this way" of teaching. These are my experiences. The things I saw in the school. I changed my school for several times, and I am familiar with different teaching styles. I knew how these different teaching styles work or do not work. Hence, I used my schooling experiences and my teachers' teaching styles (Rosalinda Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

Rosalinda's apprenticeship of observation also made her realize the areas she needed to improve in her language teacher identity and cognition. For example, her teachers did not frequently use visual materials in their English language teaching practices, but Rosalinda felt the need to provide visual materials when she started to teach "real" students during the second semester of the practicum. Thus, she began to assume the responsibilities of her role as a resource provider.

When we were students, we did not have many visual materials. Teachers needed to spend extra time to prepare such materials. During the practicum, we were cutting pictures from magazines and newspapers. You remember I had teen magazines, I really loved them. I used my teen magazines to create visual elements for my students (Rosalinda Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

Lastly, Rosalinda began to formulate her philosophy of language teaching during the practicum period. According to her philosophy, the emphasis should be placed on the reasons why students should learn English because she believed that language teacher can teach necessary skills that their students need.

I always focused on these criteria in my professional life. Why those who want to learn English learn it? Where are they going to use it? What place does English have in their career (Rosalinda Individual Interview, December 11, 2019)?

Rosalinda also mentioned that any language is alive and tends to change. Thus, the importance people attach to certain languages can vary and the main purpose of

learning a language should be based on the recent developments in science and technology.

The thing we call a language is a living system and it can change. In history, we see that French was once a predominant language. When? This is related to science and technology. The number one reason to learn English for us to be able to review the literature because it is a necessity to raise quality students. Then, we can name trading and economy. The language of science and technology is English (Rosalinda Individual Interview, December 04, 2019).

Similar to her philosophy of English language teaching, Rosalinda stated that her initial experiences made her realize that she had a unique educational philosophy. According to her educational philosophy, she considered her students as her coworkers because English language teaching is being enacted with her students. As she considered her students as her coworkers, she added that all the educational activities need to be complete with maximum level of seriousness, which does not mean for teachers to create unwelcoming and anxious classroom environments.

I mentioned seriousness as to pay attention to what one does as her/his job. Being serious does not mean having unsmiling face. Do what you do with care. I think if I take my job, that is, teaching serious, students will also take it seriously. [...] I always tell my students that they are my coworkers because what I do is teaching, which I do to my students. Hence, students become my coworkers. [...] What do we have in such a philosophy? My philosophy indicates that my student and I become equals and they can see that I respect them. I imply that I want to have a respectful relationship with my students. This is highly effective for my students (Rosalinda Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

To summarize, Rosalinda's initial English language teaching experiences indicated that she had a comfortable and welcoming practicum environment, in which she had her first teaching experiences. The comfort she enjoyed during the practicum stemmed from her undergraduate education because she received extensive pedagogic and pedagogic content courses throughout her pre-service education. Rosalinda's pre-service experiences contributed her process of language teacher identity and cognition formation. During the second semester of the practicum, Rosalinda met her "real" students and started to teach English under the supervision of her cooperating teacher. She mentioned that her cooperating teacher created a welcoming environment, in which Rosalinda was presented with constructive feedback for her teaching practices. In addition to this, Rosalinda blended her apprenticeship of observation, that is, her

language learning experiences, with the constructive feedback her cooperating teacher offered. Data analysis also revealed that Rosalinda started to formulate her philosophy of education and language teaching during the practicum. According to her philosophy of language teaching, Rosalinda emphasized the importance of organizing English language teaching practices around the students' needs such as their purpose of learning and the areas the students use the target language. To contribute her students' language learning process, Rosalinda positioned her students as her coworkers. In doing so, she believed that she established a relationship model that prioritized mutual respect.

#### **4.3.4. Rosalinda's In-service Experiences**

Rosalinda's in-service experiences consisted of three phases. She started her English language teaching career as a language teacher in a private school. While she was working as a language teacher in the private school, she also applied for a part-time instructor position at the university. After working in the private school and serving as a part-time instructor at the university for six years, she was offered to be the head of English language teaching department in another private school. She carried out administrative duties related to English language teaching for four years. In the last phase of her in-service experiences, she worked as a school principal for a year. The phases in Rosalinda's in-service experiences are outlined below.

Rosalinda chose to stay in Ankara and started to teach English in a private school due to the ongoing political concerns at the time. Thus, she did not apply for a position in public schools in Turkey because she might have been assigned to a school in another city if she had applied for a position in a public school. On one hand, when she started to work as an English language teacher in the private school, she taught English to primary and secondary school students. She mentioned that she did not experience any difficulty when she started to work as an English language teacher because of two main reasons; the pedagogic and pedagogic content courses she took during her pre-service teacher education, and the practicum. Hence, she considered that her undergraduate education helped her acquire necessary skill set to teach English to young learners. On the other hand, Rosalinda applied for a part-time instructor position at Gazi University. Upon her acceptance, she began to work as a part-time

instructor at the university. She stated that she was competent and confident to teach adult learners, as well. The reason of her competence and confidence also stemmed from her pre-service education because Rosalinda applied her theoretical knowledge in English language teaching in practice. Following excerpt described how she managed to schedule her teaching workload as follows:

I had worked as a teacher for six years. I started in a private school. In my second year in the teaching profession, I applied for a part-time instructor position at Gazi University. I completed the university's examination process, and they accepted my application. After my acceptance, I worked until 3 o'clock in the private school and I taught English from 4 o'clock to 8 o'clock at the university. I was teaching students in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences (Rosalinda Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Rosalinda continued to work in the private school and at the university for six years. She mentioned that she assumed her teacher roles based on students' age group within these years because she was teaching English to two distinct groups, that is, children and adults. At the core of her assumed teacher roles, Rosalinda believed that her personality allowed her to get on well with her students as she could anticipate and sympathize their needs.

I get on well with children. I also felt a rapport with adults. I like teaching English to adults. I am aware of that (Rosalinda Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

Assuming teacher roles based on the students' age group helped her build rapport with these two distinct groups. It is also noteworthy that Rosalinda's emphasis on students' age groups was related to her teacher roles as motivator, rapport builder, monitor, and objective setter. For example, she emphasized rapport building and her teacher role as a motivator when she taught English to primary and secondary school students.

When I was teaching at the university, I always prioritized my students' needs. I asked myself "who is learning English, why, and for what purposes?", because the answer to the questions I asked determined my lesson planning and teaching approach. I explored possible answers I might get. My students at the university were going to be bankers, inspectors, and governors and [if they did not learn English] they were not going to know a language. Could you imagine how horrible it is? They were going to serve in important positions, and I thought that they needed to have, at least, reading and writing skills. Of course, I wanted them to speak, as well (Rosalinda, Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

As can be seen in the excerpt, Rosalinda assumed her teacher roles according to the needs of the student group she was teaching. Although she assumed motivator and rapport builder roles with young learners, she prioritized her teacher role as a monitor and an objective setter while she was working with adult learners at the university.

In addition to assuming her teacher role as a rapport builder and motivator, she did not experience any difficulty in preparing lesson plans for different age groups while she was teaching them because she learned to utilize different language teaching practices during her apprenticeship of observation. Thus, Rosalinda prioritized using her eclectic language teaching approach in her language teacher cognition. By eclectic approach, it was meant that Rosalinda used a variety of English language teaching methods, strategies, and techniques. She also used different combinations of the methods, strategies, and techniques based on the needs of her students. However, she stated that her main goal was to make her lessons fun and enjoyable.

When I was teaching English to kids, I put myself in their shoes. When I was teaching adults, I acted as an adult. I did not experience any disharmony. I believe that the more a lesson is fun, the more students enjoy it. Students like the lessons they have fun. I tried to offer such lessons (Rosalinda Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

Rosalinda's in-service experiences also showed that she was narrating her classroom experiences to different student groups. For example, when she encountered a teaching incident with young learners in her classes, she turned this incident into a teaching opportunity for the university students. The direction of the narration stemmed from the cognitive readiness of the students she was teaching.

If there was something funny or important that young learners did, I was telling it to adult students because young learners were naturally amusing. I had a student named Fatih. He was a first-grade student. While I was teaching them, I warned the whole class with a joke. I tried to imply that what they were doing was wrong. The majority of the class understood it as a joke, but Fatih comprehended the warning part, as well. He stood up and told that it was not something funny to laugh, it was something they needed to be embarrassed. For example, when I wanted to imply a problem to the adults with my classroom management, I narrated this incident (Rosalinda Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

Another dimension in Rosalinda's in-service experiences was her willingness to participate in professional development activities. While she was teaching in the private school and at the university, she was eager to develop professionally because

she thought that it was important to follow recent trends and developments in education and in the field of English language teaching. She also stated that she was open to learn new methods, strategies, and techniques in English language teaching. Her statements indicated that the professional development activities she participated in helped her revise her theoretical and practical knowledge in her language teacher cognition. However, she did not benefit from some of the in-service trainings as they were repetitive in their scope and focus.

I was satisfied with two in-service trainings in my in-service years. I was especially impressed by one of them because the scope and focus of the training was about communicative approaches to English language teaching and I learned new information about psychological and methodological aspects of English language teaching. The training helped me refresh myself. I felt revived. After the training, I started to consider what I could do with the materials I had. I tried to utilize new approaches in my language teaching practices (Rosalinda Individual Interview, November 2019).

It is noteworthy that Rosalinda's willingness to develop professionally stemmed from the idea of upgrading herself. By upgrading, she meant that upgrading was a milestone in her career, which fundamentally changed her English language teaching practices. For example, the introduction of technological devices into English language teaching upgraded her practices as she began to utilize technological devices such as computers, projectors, and smartboards in her teaching practices.

I learned new things to improve myself in the professional development activities. I mean they refreshed me. When I started my career, we did not have computers and when I participated the training about computer use in language teaching, it upgraded me. Yet, other activities are more like an update. You learn something and that is refreshing (Rosalinda Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

In her sixth year in the field of English language teaching, Rosalinda reached a milestone when she was asked to be the head of English language teaching department in another private school. After she accepted the offer, she realized that she could not endure the teaching workload of the part-time instructor position while having extensive workload of administrative position. Thus, she decided to quit her position at the university and focus on administrative duties.

In the sixth year of my career, I was offered to be the head of English language teaching department. As I was supposed to work as a full-time administrator, I quit my part-time instructor position at the university. The experience of being an administrator was valuable for me. I learned a lot (Rosalinda Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

In addition to the administrative duties, Rosalinda's first plan as an administrator was to standardize English language teaching practices and the assessment and evaluation processes in the school because she believed that it was important to provide the same quality of education to all students and it was necessary to systematize language teaching practices across the school. Regarding English language teaching practices, she drew attention of English language teachers in the school to communicative language teaching methods and she asked them to employ English-only policy to promote interactive opportunities in the target language. On the other hand, it can be inferred that she used language assessment and evaluation knowledge base in her language teacher cognition to assume her teacher role as an assessor.

At the time, I was assigned to standardize and systematize English language teaching practices and assessment and evaluation procedures. I was myself preparing the exams because it is a serious dilemma that one teaches and assesses the outcomes. It has no educational value (Rosalinda Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

What is more, Rosalinda emphasized the importance of ELT community in the school. She mentioned that when she took all her decisions about language teaching practices, she sought advice from English language teachers in the school and the decisions taken were collaborative ones. Emphasizing the importance of ELT community meant that Rosalinda was open to constructive feedback she might receive from her colleagues to alter her language teacher identity and cognition.

We had our classes until Friday noon. In the afternoons, we had our meetings. In these meetings, I presented the materials I prepared. Then, we decided our roadmap for the next week. Also, I consulted English language teachers about the methods, strategies, and techniques as well as assessment and evaluation procedures we were going to implement. After my presentation, we exchanged our opinions and decided what to add or exclude from the materials and procedures (Rosalinda Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

Rosalinda stated that they used commercially published English language coursebook in the private school as the school prepared its students to international language exams



such as TOEFL. On one hand, Rosalinda did not have to prepare language teaching materials, so she did not fully utilize her skills and experiences in material development and adaptation. This was also reflected in her teacher role as a resource provider. On the other hand, as the school used the commercially published coursebook, the publications houses offered professional development trainings. Thus, Rosalinda occasionally attended in-service training that the publishing houses offered. By attending these in-service trainings, she had the opportunity to develop professionally, enrich her teacher roles, and extend her knowledge bases in her language teacher cognition.

We were attending British Council's and American Culture's trainings. For example, Longman and Oxford publishing houses offered many seminars. In these seminars, practitioners shared their experiences. These seminars took generally three days. It was serious. There was no place for us to chase our tails at that time (Rosalinda Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

Rosalinda in-service experiences showed that she later applied to work in another school as the head of English language department. Although she originally wanted to continue her administrative position in ELT community in the school, Rosalinda was offered to be the school principal upon the current school principal's resignation at the time. She carried out the duties and responsibilities of school principal such as teacher recruitment, quality assurance, and school management and organization.

Another school was looking for a head of English language teaching department. For primary, secondary, and high school. I applied for the position. When I started to work there, the school administration was satisfied with my performance. Although I did not apply for the position, the school manager asked me to be the school principal. I did my best in the school principal position. I was satisfied with my performance and effort (Rosalinda Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

After Rosalinda fulfilled the duties and responsibilities of being a school principal, she began to question her career choices because she believed that she had been at every level of English language teaching as well as administrative positions. Thus, she decided to work at the organizational level and applied for a position in the Ministry of National Education.

I closed the chapter of being an English language teacher in my mind. I was an English language teacher because I taught English from kindergarten to university level. Then, I became the head of English department. Then, I worked as a school principal. In conclusion, I did what I could do as a teacher. Later, I decided to work on the organization of education (Rosalinda Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

Rosalinda worked on international projects in the Ministry of National Education and focused on the organization of the projects she worked on. She enjoyed carrying out the duties of the international projects and felt professional satisfaction. Although she did not want to leave her position in the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry decided to assign Rosalinda to work in the School for the Blind.

#### **4.3.5. Rosalinda's Experiences in the School for the Blind**

Rosalinda had worked in the Ministry of National Education for years and she was assigned to work in the School for the Blind in 2007. When she transitioned to the School for the Blind, she had no prior experiences with the target student group. In this regard, she experienced a reality shock when she began to teach in the School for the Blind. The reality shock she experienced stemmed from two main reasons. Firstly, Rosalinda did not want to leave her position in the Ministry of National Education, so her assignment to the School for the Blind was a forced and reluctant one for her. Secondly, upon her assignment to the School for the Blind, she expected to undergo a process of in-service training. However, she did not receive any in-service training to prepare herself to the realities of teaching English to the students with visual impairments.

Given that Rosalind did not have adequate opportunities to prepare herself to teach English to the students with visual impairments, she decided to make use of a new process of apprenticeship of observation. Hence, she asked for help from her colleagues in the ELT community in the School for the Blind. However, she could not obtain ample evidence from her colleagues' teaching practices because her colleagues were reluctant to help her.

I asked myself how I could improve my teaching practices. I searched a few things. Then, I asked for help from my colleagues. Even the ones I asked for help did not help me. When I asked how I could do such a thing, the response was very short in one or two sentences. They did not provided explanations in detail (Rosalinda Individual Interview, March 4, 2020).

Due to the fact that the ELT community did not help Rosalinda, she transformed the process of apprenticeship of observation into a process of self-reflection. She tried to reflect on her own practices. She expressed the panic and stress she experienced when she tried to align her English language teaching practices to the needs of students with visual impairments.

When I first started to teach students with visual impairments, I was shocked because I did not know what to do and how to do. I was very scared. I needed to manage such a panic. I did not want to startle anybody else in the school (Rosalinda, Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

In order to manage the emotional breakdown she experienced, she made use of limited help she received from her colleagues while she was reflecting on her teaching practices. She visited Mustafa's classes to observe how English language could be taught to students with visual impairments. It was the result of the observations that Rosalinda realized that the teaching practices of seeing teachers and visually-impaired teachers were not compatible. Hence, Rosalinda's process of self-reflection ended with individual efforts to reorganize her teaching practices based on the needs of students with visual impairments.

As you know, Mustafa is a visually-impaired language teacher. I observed him to see how he taught English. His practices were the practices of visually-impaired teacher's practices. It is different from a seeing teacher's practices. After I realized the difference, I searched how I could teach English to the students with visual impairments online (Rosalinda, Individual Interview, November 13, 2019).

As a result of her process of apprenticeship of observation and self-reflection, Rosalinda concluded that a teacher candidate who wants to work in the School for the Blind needs an orientation program. It can be inferred that Rosalinda advocated the idea of an orientation program for two reasons. Firstly, she experienced the emotional challenge of transitioning to the School for the Blind and she did not want prospective teachers to undergo similar emotional process. Secondly, she realized that teaching English to the students with visual impairments was different from teaching English to the mainstream students. Also, teaching English to the students with visual impairments required language teachers to approach such students with various professional stances. If a prospective teacher does not know what and how to do, an

orientation program can equip her/him with the necessary skill set that is needed in the School for the Blind.

A teacher who wants to work here should not see students with visual impairments for the first time in here [in the School for the Blind]. Either s/he should work with the target students before, or if s/he is assigned to the School for the Blind, there has to be an orientation program (Rosalinda Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

Rosalinda's initial and on-going experiences in the School for the Blind made her believe that she had enough experiences to provide an orientation program for the prospective and in-service English language teachers about how to teach English to students with visual impairments.

When I retire, I will talk to the school management and if they accept, I will offer an orientation program to English language teacher who will be assigned for the position. I can organize an orientation program. I can systematically show my teaching methods, techniques, and strategies. I can observe the teacher and provide feedback. S/he should see some examples. Otherwise, it is sink or swim (Rosalinda Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

She further stated that there is a need for systematic pedagogic and pedagogic content approaches to teaching students with visual impairments. Such approaches should be theoretical and institutional, which should be taught both during the teacher education program and in-service years.

The orientation program which includes pedagogic and pedagogic content approaches to teaching students with visual impairments must start before the candidate comes to the School for the Blind. It should start in the pre-service years. ELT programs should get support from Special Education programs because academic staff in Special Education programs, I think, are more knowledgeable about what to teach and how to teach students with visual impairments (Rosalinda, Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

Although Rosalinda emphasized the importance of in-service training, she criticized the structure and content of the in-service training offered by the School for the Blind because she thought that the duration, frequency, and content of in-service training did not meet their professional needs.

I believe that the in-service training offered here is not beneficial for us. We have a two-week seminar period. In this period, we are supposed to complete paperwork, prepare the school for the new academic year and/or evaluate the completed academic

year. It is necessary, yet we can do all the aforementioned things in a week. In the remaining week, in-service training can be offered but it does not happen. For example, we had a guest researcher who conducted her studies in America. She talked about the procedures and practices to teach students with visual impairments there. Although there was some interesting information, it did not cater to our needs because it was out of our context (Rosalinda Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

Rosalinda's experiences in the School for the Blind indicated that English language teachers were not systematically prepared to teach the language to the students with visual impairments. As a result of the absence of the preparation, the professional and emotional needs of English language teachers in the School for the Blind were overlooked and ignored. Thus, Rosalinda needed to overcome the emotional breakdown and realities of being unprepared for the School for the Blind with her individual efforts. After she thought that she resolved the professional and social challenges, she started to focus on her teaching practices. She initially aimed to learn and understand her students' differences because students' academic, social, and disability background defined and determined their academic and social adaptation and achievement in the School for the Blind. She related students' academic, social, and disability background to education psychology and sociology in her teacher cognition.

Educational psychology helps a teacher determine how to approach to different cohorts of students because it shows you how to teach kids, teenagers, or adults. The approach to various age groups is different. It is education psychology to support teachers decision-making process when they try to understand their learners' needs (Rosalinda Individual Interview, March 04, 2020).

One needs to change her/his behaviors in different contexts. Education sociology helps you understand and internalize the behavioral and contextual differences. It supports teachers' practices. Is it possible to approach a student with visual impairment and a regular student in the same way? One selects the words s/he uses in the classroom. For example, I use the word "seeing" in a funny way (Rosalinda Individual Interview, March 04, 2020).

The excerpts shows that Rosalinda was aware of the importance of educational psychology and sociology, and she equipped her language teacher cognition accordingly. However, when she wanted to learn her students' background, she received negative comments from some of the teachers in the School for the Blind. Thus, she had difficulty in assuming counseling and guiding teacher roles.

I wanted to learn a student's background. I went to the class teacher to ask. One of the teachers in the room ask me what I was going to do when I learned such information. She was a class teacher. [...] I could not respond to her question. I need this information because I do not want to do something wrong. For example, students were talking about their parents' occupations. One of the students told me that his father is sweeping the garden at a hospital. I did not understand because he could be a cleaner, who works at the hospital, or he could be a municipality worker. I did not ask further questions because I know if the student knew the difference, he would explain. I need information about students' background to determine my expectations from them (Rosalinda Individual Interview, February 19, 2020).

Data analysis also showed that Rosalinda paid attention to the emergence/occurrence of students' visual impairments. Based on the information she obtained about students visual impairments, she grouped them into two. She stated that the students who were born with visual impairment were more successful when compared with the students who lost his/her vision during or after childhood because those who were born blind develop their cognitive abilities and communication skills according to the limits of their visual impairments. On the other hand, those who lost their vision during or after their childhood try to continue to use their cognitive habits such as reading with their eyes.

Those who were born blind are better at comprehending what you say. For example, I read a multiple-choice question aloud and the choices. I read only once or twice; they understand the question. On the other hand, if a student learned how to read and write in a regular way and lost his/her vision later, I would read ten times, but he would not comprehend the question because it is difficult for her/him to study only in aural ways (Rosalinda Individual Interview February 12, 2020).

As a result of such cognitive habits of studying, some students with visual impairments resisted to learn Braille or other mediums of communication. Their resistance, as mentioned above, stemmed from their previous learning habits and routines. Rosalinda mentioned about a specific case.

There is a student called Akif. Akif is a student with low vision. He tried to read Braille with his eyes. This is laziness because one needs to learn Braille and its shortcuts. For example, I gave a handout today and he told me that if the handout was printed with large fonts he could read. He had a cancer and he had surgery. After the surgery, he lost his vision. I eventually told him that he should not resist to read with large fonts because he needed to learn Braille (Rosalind Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

Based on the information she gathered, Rosalinda assumed different teacher roles. For example, Rosalinda assumed psychological counselor role for the student mentioned above. As she did not want to demoralize him about his vision, she continued to provide handouts with large fonts.

Akif was seeing a glimpse of light. I did not want him to be demoralized so I gave him the handouts with large fonts. I did not expect anything in return. I gave the handouts because I did not want him to experience an emotional breakdown. When he tried to read the handout, I pretended that he could read with large fonts. I did such things for counseling purposes (Rosalinda Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

In another instance, Rosalinda talked about a student who had a sudden eye surgery. Kadir was going to spend 3 months away from the school. To help him psychologically recover, she asked Kadir's classmates to write letters to him. The purpose of writing letters was to cheer Kadir up as well as to teach the students with visual impairments how to write a letter. In this sense, Rosalinda used his psychological counselor role to teach her students with visual impairment about a writing genre.

Kadir suddenly needed to have eye surgery. He needed to spend 3 months at home. Due to his surgery, he needed to be in the face down position, he could not be in sitting position or any other physical position. It is extremely difficult. I told Kadir's classmate that let's write letters to him. In this way, we sent letters to motivate Kadir as well as learned how to write a letter (Rosalinda Individual Interview January 08, 2020).

Another teacher role Rosalinda assumed was also related to students' psychological wellbeing. Rosalinda assumed an agentic role to critically approach the school visit policy. Although she emphasized the importance of school visits to raise awareness about students with disabilities, the way the school visits were planned was disturbing for Rosalinda. She believed that the school visit should have follow-up policies to create meaningful experiences for all the parties involved.

I am curious about those students' experiences who came here and met with our students with visual impairments. I did not receive any feedback from neither the students nor the schools (Rosalinda Individual Interview February 12, 2020).

She was also convinced by the idea that if the feedback was absent, the school visits would not be different from a zoo visit because Rosalinda stated that the regular students who visited the School for the Blind brought food and gifts for the students

with visual impairments. The food and gifts were culturally given to those who were in need. Also, the students with visual impairments daily routines and study habits are different from the mainstream community. The difference created an alien environment for the mainstream students. In this regard, visiting the School for the Blind and seeing the students with visual impairments were considered to be emotional and exotic experience. To change such an emotional perspective, Rosalinda thought that there should be a school visit policy, which was collectively created by the school administration and teachers in the School for the Blind. However, data analysis revealed that Rosalinda's efforts to change the school visit policy went unnoticed and her agentic role about the school visits did not go further than criticizing the school's policy.

I cannot do only by myself. Other teachers should also help. One of the teachers here viewed the school visits as something like feeding the animals in the zoo. I do not say that the students with visual impairments feel discomfort so regular students should not visit here. On the contrary, they should visit because the School for the Blind and the students with visual impairments are different and they should be aware of these differences. Yet, before the regular students visits our school, they should be informed about the School for the Blind and its school visit policy. The School for the Blind should have rules. Then, when they come here, we can show them what we do and how we do (Rosalinda Individual Interview, March 04, 2020).

On the other hand, Rosalinda's agentic role emerged when she defined the purpose of learning English for the students with visual impairments. She believed that teaching survival skills to the students with visual impairments is more important than teaching English because they have their disabilities, which limit their potential. Survival skills mentioned here were the necessary skills and abilities for individuals with visual impairments to live independently such as using public transportation, cooking, self-cleaning, completing paperwork, etc. Thus, the students with visual impairments need to live independently and English language comes later in their independent life skills. Due to the emphasis on the survival skills, it can be inferred that Rosalinda thought those who are interested in English language and wanted to learn it should be motivated to learn the language. Otherwise, there is no point in forcing students to learn English.



They have their disabilities; we should not forget this. Prior to academic issues, they need to have necessary skills to live independently. In the context of the School for the Blind, I think living independently is more important. Thus, learning a foreign language is not going to be the number one priority (Rosalinda Individual Interview, February 05, 2020).

Another issue that Rosalinda assumed an agentic role was the students' and teachers' Braille habits. Based on her experiences, she realized that some students with low vision and seeing teachers tried to read Braille texts with their eyes. The problem of reading Braille texts with eyes was that it hindered the development of Braille literacy skills. In this respect, the students with low vision were implicitly encouraged to read with their eyes and Rosalinda found such habits and implicit encouragement were detrimental for students with visual impairments because Braille is the universal medium of communication for people with visual impairments.

Most of the teachers do not read Braille texts with their fingers. Seeing teachers read Braille texts with their eyes. They see every dot in Braille system as a word. Reading Braille texts with eyes is not logical. If you are going to read Braille text, do it with your fingers (Rosalinda Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

Although Rosalinda emphasized the importance of learning and using Braille, data analysis showed that she did not know how to read and write in Braille. She found temporary solutions to bypass Braille related issues.

Rosalinda prepared two handouts for the students with visual impairments. She prepared the handouts in a Word document and handed in to Neşe, who is the responsible personnel for the Braille printer. Neşe printed them out with Braille printer. In the first handout, Rosalinda explained the structure of Present Simple Tense. In the second handout, she prepared a variety of exercises. To group the handouts, Rosalinda asked Neşe to read the title of the handouts. After Neşe read the titles of the handouts, Rosalinda noted the titles with sticky notes (Rosalinda Field Notes, February 05, 2020).

As shown in the field note above, although Rosalinda expected students with low vision and teachers in the School for the Blind to read and write in Braille, she did not even have necessary Braille skills to group the handouts she prepared. It can be concluded that she did not have necessary pedagogic Braille literacy in her language teacher cognition.

The last issue emerged with Braille was about the coursebook. Rosalinda rail against the Ministry of National Education's policy in terms of Braille coursebook.

She noted that the coursebook that was used in the School for the Blind was a blueprint of the mainstream coursebook. The only difference was the coursebook was printed in Braille. However, the visual elements of the regular coursebook were not reorganized according to the needs of the students with visual impairments and Rosalinda concluded that the Braille coursebook was not suitable for the pedagogic content purposes for the students with visual impairments.

As you know, the Ministry of National Education gives coursebook for every student. The Ministry prepared English coursebook for each grade for the seeing students. Somebody took the regular coursebook and transformed it to Braille. But this does not make the coursebook as Braille coursebook. They [the Ministry] thought that it is Braille coursebook. For example, students are expected to draw a rabbit when they complete an exercise about numbers. We have the same exercises in Braille coursebook. Now you tell me, is it Braille coursebook? There are problems with the exercises in the coursebook (Rosalinda Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

After Rosalinda realized the problems of the Braille coursebook, she assumed a resource provider role. She first tried to learn the ways how she could teach English without using visual materials because she stated that she actively used visual materials throughout her teaching career. Being unable to use visual materials in the School for the Blind made her feel that she was stuck.

Our pre-service education was not designed to equip us to teach students with visual impairments. I always used visual materials because I got used to use them. I love using visual materials. Guess what. You are an English language teacher and you come here [the School for the Blind] and you have your hands tied. I tell myself I can teach this topic by using visual materials. Then, I remember that I cannot use visual materials. I say if I am not going to teach this topic without visual materials, what am I going to do (Rosalinda Individual Interview, February 12, 2020)?

Rosalinda found the solution to overcome the visibility of English language teaching by using Ministry of National Education's online platform. In the platform, Rosalinda searched for audio materials that she could compensate the absence of visual elements in her teaching practices.

As you may know, we have the platform called EBA [Ministry of National Education's Online Platform]. I am using the platform for listening. To clarify, the platform is not designed to serve students with visual impairments, it is for all students. We use listening materials because we cannot use the visual materials. It is a necessity. I teach what I can and complement it with the materials on the platform.

In conclusion, I try to provide them listening audios as many as possible (Rosalinda Individual Interview, November 2019).

Rosalinda tried to make use of MoNE's online platform with a smartboard and computers. However, she was not eager to use educational technologies, yet she tried to learn to utilize educational technologies in her teaching practices. She saw the use of educational technologies as something she had to utilize. It can be inferred that she made use of educational technologies.

I can use the features of the smartboard. I learn it. I made a lot of effort. I asked for help from IT teacher. Sometimes, she told me that she was busy, yet it kept asking for help. The thing is I thought that I must use educational technologies. I did not do it because I believed its efficiency. It is different to do something eagerly or reluctantly. All in all, I am dying for technology (Rosalinda Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

Her use of educational technologies was not efficient because she encountered various problems. While some of the problems were related to the technical issues such as keyboard failure, safe browser limitations, empty documents, etc., others were stemmed from Rosalinda's lack of knowledge about educational technologies. In addition to the problems, she believed that the materials in the platform were not as qualified as she expected.

When I try to open a document, I see that it is either missing or replaced. I could not find quality materials. We have a smartboard in the classroom. To what extent can we use it? For example, there is a keyboard problem with the smartboard. I can use the smartboard in a limited way. Some of the applications do not work. I cannot freely search online because the school uses safe browsers. Or there is an American woman in the platform. She is teaching English with a mixture of Turkish and English. It would be better for the students with visual impairments if the American woman could teach the topics with role plays. She is teaching English by using her broken Turkish. We do not understand what she is saying. I understand there are lots of efforts behind the curtain, yet it is not something you would say wow (Rosalinda Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

After a period of trial-and-error, Rosalinda tried to find the optimal use of what she could access. To optimize the available materials, she made use of educational technologies by focusing on her language teaching practices. In addition to the educational technologies, she started to learn to compensate the visuality in English language teaching materials with other forms of materials. As a result of the optimal

use of what was available, she developed a teaching routine over the years. Rosalinda’s teaching routine was divided into three stages. In the first stage, she prepared a handout in Word format and organized the audio materials she was going to use in the lesson. Also, she organized the classroom setting because she believed that U-shaped classrooms encouraged more interaction. During the lesson, Rosalinda opened the handout she prepared. The handouts generally focused on grammatical structures and vocabulary items of the topic being covered. The teaching of grammatical structures and lexical items was supported by the listening activities. In the last phase, Rosalinda edited the handout she prepared before the lesson based on the emerging needs of the students with visual impairments. She, then, printed it out in Braille format and distributed it to the students with visual impairments.

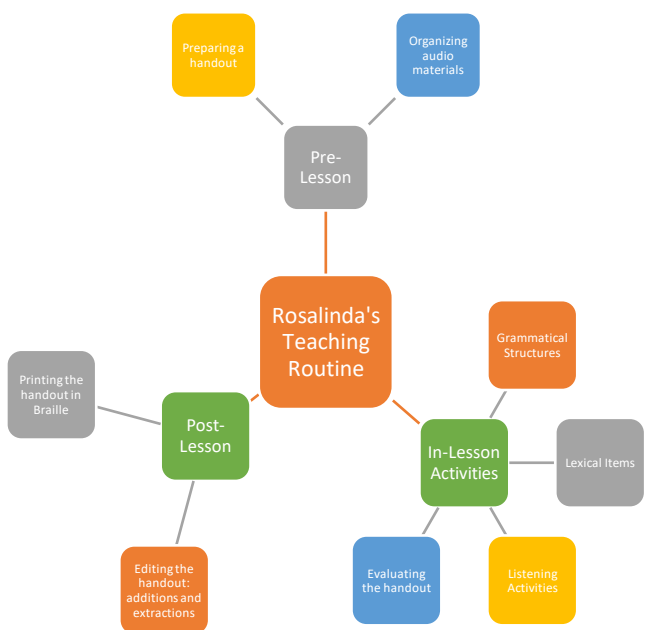


Figure 27: Rosalinda's Teaching Routine

Rosalinda summarized her English language teaching practices as follows.

I position my students in a U-shaped format because we are maximum eight in the classroom. The students with visual impairments face the smartboard. Generally, I have already prepared the lesson. I prepare a handout and when I teach, I use it as my primary source of material. We focus on listening activities because I cannot say that I write important points on the board, and you note them down because they cannot see. In the handout, I state the unit and topic. For example, there is a topic about

appearance and personality in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. I list important lexical items when we describe a person's appearance. We go over the lexical items and revise the topic. At the same time, I edit the handout if there are missing points or if the students with visual impairments need extra practice because they could not understand the topic clearly. I mean I revise the handout that I prepared at home here. Based on the needs of the students with visual impairments. After the lesson, I finalize the handout and print it in Braille (Rosalinda Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

It is important to note that Rosalinda's English language teaching routine did not include reading and writing. When she was asked about her practices in terms of writing, she responded that the coursebook was not suitable for reading instruction and writing was an activity that students with visual impairments needed to study on their own. It should also be taken into consideration that writing was not seen as a novel language practice because the activities Rosalinda implemented were generally dictation activities. The main focus of Rosalinda's lessons was on comprehension.

I do not ask my students with visual impairments to write because it is something that they need to do in their free time. Rarely, I announce that we will have a writing activity. They have their Braille tablets and Orbit devices. I cannot control their writing. I want them to use their Braille tablets. There are few students with low vision. They handwrite. We do writing activities like this. As you know, there are four language skills: reading, writing, listening, speaking. I focus on comprehension (Rosalinda Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Rosalinda mentioned that applying language teaching methods, strategies, and techniques for seeing students to the students with visual impairments was not an easy task. It required time and experience in teaching English to the students with visual impairments. Rosalinda mentioned a classroom activity she implemented that resulted in better comprehension.

I designed a classroom activity. I printed vocabulary items in Braille. I printed sentences and even paragraphs in Braille. I use the activity as a classroom game. I put all the words, sentences, and paragraphs on the table. For example, I scramble the words in a sentence. I give a question mark to show that this is a question. The students with visual impairments are supposed to make a question. We did this activity individually and with groups. The group with the highest number of correct sentences wins. It is not easy to transfer such activities to the School for the Blind. When I first started to work here, could I imagine such activities? No (Rosalinda Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Lastly, Rosalinda's years of experiences in the School for the Blind indicated that she could have been a transformative practitioner because she cared about the

psychological, social and academic wellbeing of the students with visual impairments. Her teacher roles were shaped according to the needs of students with visual impairments in the School for the Blind. Additionally, she tried to approach and guide students with visual impairments in pedagogically appropriate ways. However, when she was asked whether she would like to be a role model for the students with visual impairments as well as her colleagues in the School for the Blind, she stated that she did not have necessary tools and opportunities to be a role model in the system, yet she believed that she was a role model for the students with visual impairments.

What change? We complain about education. If something is going to change, none of us have the opportunity to do it. There is no teacher who can say that I can change this, I can be a role model. The system prevents you to be a role model. But I am a role model for the students with visual impairments (Rosalinda Individual Interview, February 05, 2020).

To summarize Rosalinda's experiences in the School for the Blind, it can be inferred that she did not choose to work in the School for the Blind and she encountered emotional and professional challenges and obstacles. To resolve such challenges and obstacles, she sought help from the ELT community in the School for the Blind and underwent a process of apprenticeship of observation, but she could not get support from her colleagues, which intensified the hardships she experienced. As a result, she turned the new process of the apprenticeship of observation into a self-reflection. In this self-reflection process, she tried to prepare herself to the realities of teaching English to the students with visual impairments. She realized that an orientation program for the prospective English language teachers was needed to systematically prepare them to teach the language in the School for the Blind.

When Rosalinda resolved the challenges and obstacles she encountered in the School for the Blind, she tried to find optimal use of English language teaching methods, strategies, and techniques, as well as available resources. To achieve, she examined students' disability, social, and academic background. Based on the information she gathered, she assumed different teacher roles to meet the needs of the students with visual impairments. What was interesting, though, she has not learned the medium of communication that students with visual impairments use. As she did not know how to read and write in Braille, she focused on teaching grammar,

vocabulary, and listening skills to the students with visual impairments. Data analysis showed that Rosalinda's English language practices in the School for the Blind neglected reading and writing skills.

Lastly, she believed that the collaboration between the mainstream schools and the School for the Blind to raise awareness about students with disabilities should bear certain rules because the current practices is pedagogically and socially disturbing. In this regard, she assumed an agentic role to change the school visit policy, but her contributions were ignored. Thus, she thought that although she tried to be a role model for the students with visual impairments, the education system she was in limited the opportunities for her to be role model for wider purposes.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This dissertation aimed to explore experiences of three language teachers of students with visual impairments in the School for the Blind. In this regard, this dissertation investigated the participants' language teacher identity and cognition through complexity theory framework. It focused on the processes of how the participants learned to teach English to the students with visual impairments, and what pedagogic, technologic, and pedagogic content methods and strategies they used. It also aimed to uncover the participants' professional teacher identities when they enacted their instructional practices in the School for the Blind. This section of the dissertation presents the findings of the study and shows the possible connections with the relevant literature. This section is aligned with the presentation of the findings chapter, that is, the discussion of each participant is presented respectively.

#### **5.1. Discussion: Merve's Language Teacher Identity and Cognition**

The societal and professional status of the teaching profession is questioned to improve the standards of education and teacher candidates are expected to follow a rigorous set of requirements to contribute to the betterment of the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond & Rothman, 2011). However, based on the assumption that teaching is not a demanding profession (Özdemir & Orhan, 2019), teacher candidates can aim to be teachers. It is also important to note that one of the requirements is to obtain a high level of content (subject matter) knowledge in the area that one is going to teach and teacher candidates, who believe that teaching does not require a demanding set of knowledge, expertise, and skills (Semerci et al., 2012), do not invest in the



development of their content knowledge. In the case of Merve, the findings showed that her family members forced Merve to be a language teacher and she started her undergraduate education in the Department of English Language and Literature. Yet, she experienced several difficulties and obstacles during her undergraduate education because she did not invest in improving her subject matter knowledge. In this regard, this study asserts that subject matter knowledge, that is, language proficiency, is at the core of language teacher identity and cognition development (Aktekin & Celebi, 2020; Haim et al., 2022; Jafari & Razmjoo, 2021; Yazan, 2018).

Forming strong pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge bases is essential to adapt one's practices and identities to the realities of actual classroom practices (Evens et al., 2018). Merve took pedagogic formation courses in order to be eligible to be a teacher in public and private schools during her undergraduate education. The teaching certificate programs (pedagogic formation courses) in Turkey do not fully foster language teacher identity and cognition development (Köse, 2017; Lafcı Tor & Sert, 2022) because the courses are designed to provide general pedagogical knowledge, and those who take pedagogic formation courses to be a teacher in Turkey lack sufficient exposure to the teaching profession, which result in tensions in their professional teacher identities, as well as gaps in their language teacher cognition. Such a condition becomes obvious with initial teaching experiences (Çimen & Daloğlu, 2019; Karataş & Karaman, 2013). Similarly, Merve experienced a reality shock during her practicum because she was not ready to teach English in a pedagogically appropriate way. As the pedagogic formation courses do not target specific teaching branches, Merve could not form her pedagogic content knowledge base. Although available literature suggests that when pre-service teachers are presented with one of the knowledge bases, they can develop other knowledge bases during their pre-service teacher education (Gess-Newsome, 1999), Merve's case does not corroborate with this perspective because Merve started to develop her pedagogic content knowledge after the teaching certificate program.

When she started her career as an English language teacher in Samsun, she relied on her language learning experiences because she did not have the opportunity to practice her pedagogic content skills during her undergraduate education as mentioned above. Hence, by reflecting on her apprenticeship of observation as a

language learner, she tried to teach English with the traditional methods, strategies, and techniques. Given these, this study shows the importance of pre-service teacher education in language teacher cognition development (Levin & He, 2008; Morton & Gray, 2010; G. Wei & Lu, 2022) because using her own apprenticeship of observation as her language teacher cognition base causes a time-lapse. Time-lapse means that utilizing language learning experiences through the apprenticeship of observation does not meet the demands and necessities of the teaching practices of the time that these practices are enacted (Aspbury-Miyaniishi, 2022; Chou, 2008; el Islami et al., 2022; Krulatz et al., 2022).

As opposed to her language teacher cognition, Merve started to assume various teacher roles and develop her professional teacher identity. The main source of her professional teacher identity was rooted in her teacher autonomy, which refers that teachers take responsibility for their practices by making practical, methodological, and curricular decisions (L. Li, 2012). This study argues that teacher autonomy fosters teacher identity development because teachers assume the responsibilities of their classrooms to cater to the needs of their students, yet willingness to improve one's subject matter equals to the willingness to assume a professional identity in the given field (Pennington & Richards, 2015). In this regard, when Merve started her teaching career in Samsun, she started to develop her teacher autonomy because she made educational decisions to support her learners' language learning processes. Her teacher autonomy development supported her professional identity development, and she started to think like a teacher (Feiman-Nemser, 2008) in general terms. However, as she could not fully form her subject matter knowledge base during her undergraduate education, she struggled with assuming language teacher identity in Samsun.

Another issue that potentially influences language teacher identity is collegial support because receiving collegial support has two implications for language teacher identity and cognition. Firstly, collegial support helps language teachers assume professional identities because they form a community of practice (Johnson, 2006; Pennington & Richards, 2015). Secondly, it nurtures the improvement of language teacher cognition because language teachers can learn from the experiences of other teachers in their communities (Johnson, 2009). Merve's case yielded similar results in terms of collegial support because she experienced professional isolation in Samsun

as she was the only English language teacher in the school. However, when she transitioned to a school in Ankara, she worked with a group of language teachers, who professionally supported her to improve her practices.

Language teacher identity is (re)formed by the realities and necessities of the educational setting and teachers need to use various pedagogic and pedagogic content approaches to meet the needs of their students in a new context (Huang et al., 2021; Yazan et al., 2018). Transitioning to the school in Ankara reshaped her teacher identity and cognition. For example, she supplemented the curricula with extra materials, used educational technologies, and planned extracurricular activities in Ankara. These changes in her practices were reflected in her professional teacher identity, as well. She assumed resource provider, lesson planner, and assessor roles in Ankara. Given the alterations and changes in Merve's language teacher identity and cognition, this study supports the idea that language teacher identity is shaped by contextual factors and adds that if language teachers are willing to reform their professional identities by assuming different teacher roles, they can develop and enrich their language teacher cognition, that is, their instructional practices (Uzum, 2013; Yazan, 2016, 2017).

Critical incidents play an essential role in language teacher identity and cognition development (Farrell, 2008) because they encourage practitioners to resolve a teaching conflict, and/or to utilize a different pedagogic approach that fundamentally changes one's language teacher identity and cognition (Griffin, 2003; Karimi & Nazari, 2021). In the case of Merve, two critical incidents (family three activity and the international student exchange program) challenged her language teacher identity and cognition in Ankara. The two critical incidents indicated that Merve was still struggling with her pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge bases to contribute to her students' language learning process. Although critical incidents are considered to change one's practices in a way that one resolves previously ignored and overlooked issues and plans the activity accordingly (Walsh & Mann, 2015; Yu, 2018). They also support teachers to question their practices and challenge their taken-for-granted assumptions about their practices and/or theoretical orientations (Farrell, 2013). The fundamental changes in Merve's practices were just the opposite because she decided to avoid using the activities mentioned above, which remained an unresolved pedagogic problem in Merve's language teacher cognition. In this regard, it can be

concluded that critical incidents do not always lead to improvements in language teachers' practices (Megawati et al., 2020). Also, the degree of teacher learning depends on their readiness to alter their practices.

Another issue in Merve's in-service experiences in Keçiören was students with disabilities. The presence of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms creates unique opportunities for their peers and their teachers because they challenge the taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions about learning (König et al., 2011; Voss et al., 2011), yet inclusive students can possibly cause several challenges because they usually fall behind the academic standards and teachers need to implement individualized education programs to help these students to progress in their academic studies (Blackwell & Rossetti, 2014; Kurth et al., 2021; Nannemann, 2021). When teachers are not professionally trained to teach students with disabilities, they usually prefer to meet the minimum requirements of inclusive practices (Cinarbas & Hos, 2022). In the case of Merve, the presence of students with disabilities in her classes did not create opportunities for language learning and she did not want to assume a teacher identity that met the needs of students with disabilities because she believed that these students caused classroom management problems. Also, she was not equipped with pedagogic and pedagogic content skills to teach students with disabilities. Thus, she preferred to meet the minimum requirements of teaching English to students with disabilities.

Lastly, teachers can feel burnout when they have heavy work conditions. To overcome teacher burnout, a teacher can decide to change their working environment to lower their workload and have a fresh restart (Quirap, 2022; Gilmour et al., 2022; Pavlidou et al., 2022). They generally choose places where they can still use their instructional practices, that is, their teaching routines (Cheng, 2022). Interestingly, findings showed that she decided to transition to the School for the Blind merely because of the workload considerations. Although she lowered her workload in the School for the Blind, considering her beliefs and assumptions about students with disabilities as well as her previous experiences with students with disabilities, transitioning to the School for the Blind was a peculiar decision. Furthermore, teaching English to students with visual impairments necessitates using various pedagogic and pedagogic content methods, strategies, techniques, and tools. Given the fact that

teachers choose to work in educational settings, where they can use their previously formulated teaching routines, Merve's decision to transition to the School for the Blind does not coincide with the assertion.

Students with visual impairments are generally considered to be academically low achieving, socially awkward, and interactionally limited (Cinarbas, 2016). Approaching students with visual impairments with such assumptions determine one's teacher identity and cognition (Ginevra et al., 2022; van Steen & Wilson, 2020). In this regard, Merve's experiences in the School for the Blind showed similar findings because her beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge about students with visual impairments led to emotional and professional dissonance and she adapted her teacher identity and cognition according to her assumptions.

In-service training and orientation are essential when language teachers are supposed to teach in an unfamiliar environment. Such training can help teachers orient their identities and practices based on the contextual factors they are in (Chitiyo et al., 2017; Cooc, 2019; C.-H. Yang & Rusli, 2012). It is important to note that in-service training should target a contextual issue to prepare language teachers and if the training is a general one, teachers can have difficulty in connecting the training to their existing identities and practices (Kang & Cheng, 2014). Similarly, when she transitioned to the School for the Blind, Merve received 40 hours of in-service training about special education. In this training, she was informed about pedagogic approaches to special education, the characteristics of students with visual impairments, and the academic and social expectations of the School for the Blind. The training influenced Merve's professional teacher identity and cognition in the following ways: (1) she assumed a counselor role to help students with visual impairments psychologically and socially, (2) she began to understand that each student with visual impairments experiences his/her disability in a unique way, (3) she comprehended the importance of differentiated instruction (Özdemir et al., 2022; Porta et al., 2022; Smets et al., 2022), (4) she equipped her pedagogic content knowledge base with skills and strategies to plan her teaching practices, and lastly (5) resolved the emotional dissonance she experienced and started to change her assumptions about students with visual impairments (Mintz et al., 2020).

Language teachers' instructional practices depend on their pedagogic content knowledge (Ball et al., 2008; K. Johnson, 2005). When teachers encounter a new cohort of students, they visit their language teaching practices repertoire to find optimal practices and when the context and the cohort of students are totally different, language teachers undergo a trial-and-error process to reorganize their classroom routines. In such cases, teachers tend to use the coursebook as their guide to creating a classroom routine because the coursebook can serve as a starting point for lesson planning (Azarnoosh et al., 2016; Khany & Kamalvand, 2022). Merve's case, in this regard, showed that she experienced this trial-and-error process while she was trying to turn her previous instructional practices into a classroom routine for students with visual impairments. To set a classroom routine to teach English to students with visual impairments, Merve used the coursebook provided by the Ministry of National Education as her curricular guide. However, her lesson planning was open to spontaneity, which referred that she relied on her previous teaching repertoire, which did not match the needs of students with visual impairments. The spontaneity of her lesson planning is also reflected in her curricular decisions. She curtailed the curriculum by excluding writing and reading activities from the coursebook because she did not have Braille literacy. Also, completing writing activities required an intense workload as well as extensive class time. Merve mentioned that the students with visual impairments generally used their Braille slate and its pin to complete writing tasks and writing on the Braille slate was a painful and tiresome activity for the students with visual impairments. However, such reasoning contradicted the observation data because students with visual impairments had their Braille typewriters and the Orbit devices. These Braille technologies made writing an easy task for students with visual impairments (Roulstone, 2016.; Wearmouth, 2009). In terms of speaking, findings showed that Merve lacked the knowledge of how to prepare speaking activities for students with visual impairments. As students with visual impairments cannot see bodily gestures and facial mimics, they need to be positioned in a way that they face each other to complete a speaking activity (Puri, 2004). In addition to this, when organizing pair-work or group discussions, it should be kept in mind that students with visual impairments rely on routinized bodily movement in the classroom and changing their classroom location can cause

discomfort. Given these, Merve failed to position students with visual impairments to communicate with each other. Thus, speaking activities failed to reach their objectives. Hence, she created a teaching routine that focused on listening, vocabulary, and grammar teaching. To conclude, teachers are expected to make informed curricular decisions to provide the best possible learning opportunities (Li, 2012), and these decisions are grounded upon the structure, intensity, and appropriateness of the topic being included/excluded (Barnard & Burns, 2012). Also, teachers can prefer to avoid activities that require extensive preparation and time to meet curricular demands (Zhu, 2017).

When closely analyzed, the following issues emerge to be important in Merve's teaching practices. Firstly, the literature indicates that exposure to the target language increases students' chances to improve their skills and it is recommended that the medium of instruction in language classes should be the target language (Cheng, 2020; Tai & Zhao, 2022; Wu & Tsai, 2022). However, Merve used Turkish as her medium of instruction while she was teaching English to students with visual impairments. The rationale for using Turkish as her medium of instruction stemmed from the students' readiness. Students with visual impairments can have difficulty in understanding conceptual and contextual words (Forlin, 2010). To support the conceptual development of the students with visual impairments, Merve translated vocabulary items, grammatical structures, or listening audios. While translating, she provided conceptual and contextual information to increase comprehension.

Secondly, the field of English language teaching relies on visuality, and language teachers tend to enrich language teaching materials with visual representations of the language items they are teaching (Azarnoosh et al., 2016). As students with visual impairments cannot see, language teachers cannot make use of visual elements. Instead, they must rely on oracy because exposure to the target language can be increased for students with visual impairments. However, Merve's practices showed that listening activities were completed in a way that the students with visual impairments were provided with Turkish translation, which limited the exposure to the target language. Similarly, she used MoNE's online platform to supplement her teaching practices with oracy. However, the audio and video materials

in the platform are also organized in a way that the speakers provide Turkish translation after they utter a sentence in English.

Other issues Merve experienced in the School for the Blind were teacher agency, material development and adaptation, professional development, and educational technologies. Teacher agency is an important dimension of language teacher identity because it encourages language teachers to challenge contextual factors to offer the best educational opportunities. It also supports teachers' initiative to make changes (Kayi-Aydar, 2015, 2019). In this regard, Merve assumed her teacher agency for two main issues. Firstly, when she began to focus on her teaching practices, she realized that she needed to find resources to enrich the learning experiences of students with visual impairments. She also found out that available resources did not cater to the needs of students with visual impairments. Thus, she assumed her role as a resource provider and started to find and/or create language teaching materials for students with visual impairments. Secondly, Merve's language teacher agency led her to question the School's awareness-raising policies. When students from mainstream schools visited the School for the Blind, the school administration asked the students with visual impairments to show how they write in Braille, how they use technological devices, etc. Such an approach discomforts Merve because it alienates the students with visual impairments. To overcome such an approach, she challenged the School's policy, yet her efforts to change the School's policy went unnoticed. In this regard, available literature suggests that if teachers assume an agentic role to change the contextual climate for the betterment and their efforts are ignored or overlooked, it is more likely that they will be demotivated to contribute to the school culture (Feryok, 2012).

Professional development emerged to be a vital issue in Merve's experiences in the School for the Blind. Although she assumed various teacher identities and utilized several teaching practices prior to transitioning to the School for the Blind, teaching English to students with visual impairments necessitates a unique set of pedagogic and pedagogic content approaches (Florian, 2012; Florian & Linklater, 2010; Florian & Rouse, 2009). However, the professional development opportunities in the School for the Blind were extremely limited and Merve underwent a process of trial-and-error to establish a set of pedagogic and pedagogic content approaches that



met the needs of the students with visual impairments. To overcome such cases, professional development activities that specifically target teaching English to students with visual impairments can help Merve develop a new repertoire of teaching practices. In doing so, she can increase her students' motivation as well as her teacher efficacy.

Lastly, the students with visual impairments actively use technological devices and software programs. For example, they use Braille typewriters, the Orbit devices, smartboards, and/or screen reader applications to carry out their daily tasks or academic duties because these technologies are time and energy-saving for students with visual impairments (Hersh & Johnson, 2008). To move the use of technological devices from a personal level to a professional level, teachers of students with visual impairments need to be able to use such technologies effectively in their practices (Blue, 2017; Merri & Monties-Cabot, 2005). However, Merve's instructional practices in the School for the Blind contradicted with the empirical suggestions because she did not know how to use these technological tools when teaching English to students with visual impairments. The main instances that she integrated educational technologies into her teaching practices were the use of computers for listening activities and the use of the smartboard for gamification purposes.

In conclusion, Merve's language teacher identity and cognition development in the School for the Blind shows that language teacher identity and cognition are intertwined and they mutually (re)shape and influence each other (Barnard & Burns, 2012; L. Li, 2020; Schutz et al., 2018; F. Teng, 2018). It is important to note that the findings illustrate that mutual influence is not linear, it is dynamic and constantly evolving. Teaching English to students with visual impairments can initially lead to professional identity tensions and crisis because Merve could not enact her previously assumed teacher roles in the same way in the School for the Blind. In addition to this, Merve's beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge about students with disabilities determined her professional approach. Although her assumptions started to change, they did not fundamentally reshape Merve's teacher identity and cognition because these assumptions continued to intrinsically exist. Hence, when language teachers resolve professional identity tensions, they start to reflect on their teacher cognition.

### **5.1.1. Discussion: Complex System of Merve's Teacher Identity and Cognition**

Merve's language teacher identity and cognition in the School for the Blind created a complex system. This complex system was the results of the changes, alterations, and adaptations throughout her English language teaching career, and it still bears its dynamicity, which means that Merve's language teacher identity formation and language teacher cognition experience constant revisions, reorganization, and alterations. In the following sub-section, Merve's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition is presented and discussed.

### **5.1.2. Contextual Considerations on Merve's Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition**

Merve's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition was dependent on the contexts she was surrounded by throughout her career. When closely explored, it was realized that the contextual factors she faced were physically, emotionally, and professionally diverse and different from each other.

As mentioned before, after completing her pre-service English language teacher education, Merve started her English language teaching career in Samsun, where she was assigned to work in a public school located in a village. She lived and worked in the area where the school was located. However, few people were residing in the village. Thus, the scope of social endeavors and transportation was extremely limited, and she felt socially and emotionally isolated. Geographical factors influenced her students in Samsun, as well. Based on the information Merve provided, it was understood that the students were transported to the school from nearby villages, and they had low socioeconomic status.

In addition to environmental and geographical limitations, she was the only English language teacher at the school, and she lacked collegial support. Being the only English language teacher at the school in Samsun led her to experience professional isolation, as well. Thus, as a novice English language teacher, she underwent a process of trial and error to cater to the needs of her students. With several adjustments and curtailments of the curricula, she preferred using traditional methods of English language teaching due to the contextual and infrastructural limitations and obstacles. Given the contextual considerations in Samsun, it can be inferred that starting her English language teaching career in Samsun was emotionally, socially,

and professionally challenging for Merve and these challenges led her to question her capabilities in the field of English language teaching.

Table 6: Summary of Merve’s Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition

Operational Considerations	Systems	System: Complex System of Merve’s Language Teacher Identity Formation and Language Teacher Cognition		
		Agents: Merve, the Students with Visual Impairment, and the School for the Blind		
	Level of Granularity	Duration of the data collection: 2019-2020 academic year Data Collection Tools: Individual Interviews, In-class Observations, Field Notes, Artefacts, Official Documents		
Contextual Considerations	Context(s)	Context(s): Samsun, Ankara and the School for the Blind		
		Contextual Factors: The Students with Visual Impairments, Teachers with and without visual impairments		
		System Adaptations: Changes, Tensions, Adaptations, Alterations, and Retrenchments in Merve’s Language Teacher Identity and Language Teacher Cognition		
Micro-structure Considerations	Components	Merve’s Language Teacher Identity	Personal History	
			Educational Background	
	Initial Teacher Identity Formation			
	In-service Experiences			
	Merve’s Language Teacher Cognition	The School for the Blind		
		Subject Matter Knowledge		
		Pedagogical Knowledge		
Interactions	From Language Teacher Identity to Language Teacher Cognition			
	From Language Teacher Cognition to Language Teacher Identity			
Macro-system Considerations	Dynamic Processes	Changes occurred when Merve emotionally, socially, and professionally challenged.		
	Attractor State	Language Teacher Identity	Career Choices	
			Assuming Language Teacher Identity	
			Educational Philosophy and Purpose of English Language Teaching and Learning	
			Special Education	
			Beliefs, Attitudes, and Knowledge about Students with Visual Impairments	
			Teacher Roles	Guidance and Counseling
		Language Teacher Cognition	Subject Matter Knowledge	Teacher Agency
				Lesson Planner
			Pedagogic Knowledge	Resource Provider
				English Language Proficiency
			Pedagogic Content Knowledge	Lesson Planning
				Curricular Adjustments
				Classroom Management and Organization
Teaching English Language Main Skills				
	Teaching English Language Sub-Skills			
	Medium of Instruction			
	English Language Teaching Materials			
	Educational Technology Use			
Stability				

As opposed to Samsun, she was emotionally and professionally relieved when she was assigned to teach in Ankara. To understand her emotional relief in Ankara, there is a need to dig into her personal history. Before she was assigned to teach in Ankara, she was on maternity leave, which meant that Merve became a mother. In this vein, having the opportunity to communicate with her family members while raising her daughter emotionally relieved Merve. In addition to this, maternity leave kept Merve away from the teaching profession for almost a year. Returning to the teaching profession posed her several difficulties and challenges because she was unaware of the contextual factors of the school in Ankara. She received guidance and support from the ELT community at the school in Ankara, which helped her to adapt to a new school environment. Thus, it can be deduced that she did not experience emotional isolation in professional issues.

Professionally, the context of Ankara was different from Samsun in terms of English language teaching practices. In Ankara, she was able to receive several in-service trainings, which improved her material development and adaptation skills, and enriched her English language teaching practices. Upon receiving in-service trainings, Merve had the opportunity to practice multiple intelligences theory by using educational technologies and differentiated English language teaching materials during her lessons. It could be inferred that when she started to teach in Ankara, she began to extend her repertoire of English language teaching methods, techniques, activities, and materials.

Although she enjoyed implementing her extended and enriched English language practices, there were several obstacles that she had to deal with in Ankara. There were approximately 40 students in her classes and the students had different demographic profiles. Having large classes with various student profiles raised pedagogical problems. She tended to have trouble managing her classes. Additionally, she had inclusive students, who had intellectual disabilities. Having large classes with 40 students as well as inclusive students intensified her classroom management difficulties. Trying to meet the needs of her students escalated Merve's workload because she was expected to implement the curricula, assess, and evaluate her students based on the objectives and outcomes of the curricula. In addition to this, she needed to cater to the needs of the inclusive students, whose curricula were different from the

regular curricula. Thus, Merve needed to organize her English language teaching practices as well as assessment and evaluation processes according to the needs of the inclusive students, too.

Lastly, Merve had to participate in the extracurricular and international student exchange projects mandated by the school administration in Ankara. Considering the additional workload caused by these projects, she decided to transition to another school, where her workload would decrease. Subsequently, she started to search for the protentional schools and upon her colleagues' advice and suggestions, she decided to transition to the School for the Blind.

When she transitioned to the School for the Blind, it could be said that she experienced a contextual reality shock. The contextual factors of the School for the Blind were totally different from Samsun and Ankara. Firstly, Merve's taken-for-granted assumptions about the students with visual impairments were challenged and falsified by the students with visual impairments. Merve came to realized that the students with visual impairments are as capable as her other students in Samsun and Ankara, yet their needs were somewhat different. In addition to these assumptions, when she met her students with visual impairments, she suffered from an emotional crisis. This emotional crisis stemmed from the psychical appearances of the students with visual impairments because she discovered that having students with visual impairments and seeing them every school day were more emotionally challenging than she expected, and she had difficulty in retrieving from this emotional burden.

Professionally, the way Merve used to teach English language in Samsun and Ankara was also challenged by the needs of the students with visual impairments because teaching the students with visual impairments required proficient knowledge of Braille, and extensive use of oral and tactile materials. Merve was not Braille literate and obtaining and creating English language teaching and learning materials in Braille became a professional challenge for her. She tried to compensate for the need to prepare English language teaching materials that were suitable for the students with visual impairments by developing her own materials.

Another contextual difference of the School for the Blind was that the classrooms she was teaching did not have a whiteboard. Although it was temporary, the absence of a whiteboard in the classrooms caused Merve to experience a process

of adaptation, which was conflicting for her. In this process of adaptation, she used her notebook or a piece of paper to write her teaching notes that she would normally write on the whiteboard. In doing so, she felt that she was losing an important component of her teacher identity.

In line with the difficulties of the absence of a whiteboard in the classroom in the School for the Blind, the ways that the students with visual impairment took their teaching and learning notes were also different. As using audio recording devices were forbidden by law, the students with visual impairments generally used their Braille slate and nail to take their notes during their classes. However, it is worth noting that the students with visual impairments were resistant and unwilling to write both in their native language and in English. Their resistance and unwillingness stemmed from the practice of Braille writing because the practice of writing emerged to be a physiological burden. After all, writing in Braille was an extremely painful activity for them. In addition to the physiological challenges of writing in Braille, writing in English by using the Braille alphabet caused frustration as the Braille alphabet is orthographically different from “normal” writing. The orthographical differences between the two modes of writing generated a series of problems. Correcting the writing mistakes that stemmed from the orthographical differences rarely took place in Merve’s English language teaching practices.

As mentioned before, Merve was Braille illiterate and she was not able to understand, check, and clarify the notes that the students with visual impairments took in her classes. To overcome this, she utilized the Braille printer, which is a device that translates “normal” writing into the Braille alphabet. Given that, she prepared her teaching notes and language learning materials in a Word document. Subsequently, she printed her notes and materials in Braille. Although she managed to provide English language learning materials in Braille, understanding, checking, and correcting the mistakes that the students with visual impairments made remained as a problem for her. Consequently, it can be inferred that utilizing the Braille printer was rather ineffective in terms of differentiating and “normalizing” English language teaching and learning practices because the students with visual impairments could not get adequate feedback on their materials, which were printed with Braille printer.

Lastly, Merve's classroom practices showed that her English language teaching practices followed routinized patterns and the dominant modes of English language teaching practices were reading, listening, and aural activities. In addition to her routinized classroom practices, Merve sometimes utilized smartboard applications, which were commercially produced. Her *raison d'être* to use smartboard applications were as follows: Merve's routinized English language teaching practices caused boredom for the students with visual impairments, and she wanted to differentiate her routinized English language teaching practices to avoid boredom because the students with visual impairments were willing to experience language learning practices that were different from their classroom routines. Secondly, she used smartboard applications to let the students with visual impairments play language learning games. By gamification, she was able to increase her students' motivation and willingness to learn English language.

To conclude, it can be inferred that although Merve was familiar with the students with disabilities –especially students with intellectual disabilities—, working with students with visual impairments was professionally and emotionally arduous for her because the contextual considerations of the School for the Blind challenged her taken-for-granted assumptions about the students with visual impairments, the way they learn English language, and Merve's language teacher identity and cognition.

### **5.1.3. Micro-Structure and Macro-System Considerations on Merve's Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition**

In this section, the micro-structure and macro-system considerations on Merve's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition are explained. Data analysis revealed that the micro-structure considerations were the components of Merve's complex system language teacher identity and cognition, as illustrated in Figure 29 below.

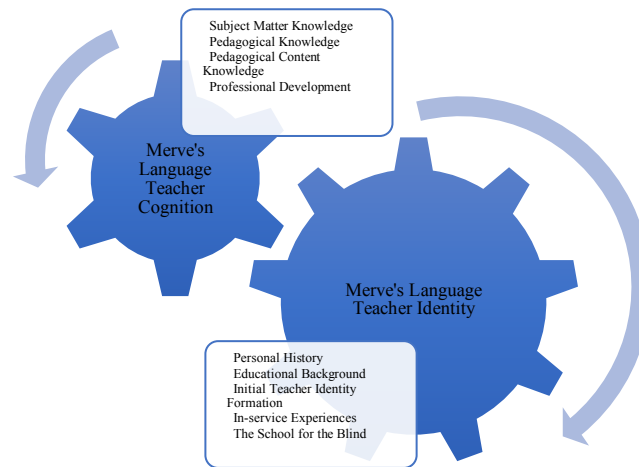


Figure 28: Components of Merve's Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition

To begin with, Merve's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition was tied with her personal history, which included her educational background, career dilemma, pre-service education, and initial teacher identity formation. Upon examination of Merve's biography, it was realized that she was forced to enter the field of English language teaching. Two main factors played crucial roles in forcing her into the teaching profession. Due to her educational background prior to the university, she had few options regarding her undergraduate studies. In addition to this, Merve mentioned her family members' impact on her career choice because both her mother and extended family members were in the teaching profession, and they wanted her to become a teacher. Given her educational background and family influence, she unwillingly started to receive her undergraduate education in English Language and Literature. Along with her undergraduate studies, she enrolled in the teaching certificate courses, which eventually gave her the license to teach in public and private schools. Merve's undergraduate education indicates that she started to form her knowledge bases in the field of English language teaching during her undergraduate studies and the teaching certificate courses. As she was a student in English Language and Literature department, she was supposed to form a knowledge base that covered the knowledge, awareness, and use of literary texts, documents, and movements in



English. To acquire such knowledge, she needed to have a high level of English language proficiency. As she successfully completed her undergraduate studies, it can be inferred that she formed her subject matter knowledge during her undergraduate education. In addition to this, she received the teaching certificate courses, which helped her form pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge because she had the opportunity to explore a wide range of subjects and topics in education such as educational psychology, technology use in education, material development, assessment and evaluation. The only problem about the teaching certificate program was that the program was not specifically designed for prospective English language teachers, that is, the prospective teachers from other departments could also enroll in the teaching certificate program.

As mentioned above, Merve needed to have a high level of English language proficiency to complete her undergraduate education. However, during her undergraduate education, it was obvious that Merve experienced several difficulties and challenges due to her English language proficiency. These difficulties and challenges intensified her unwillingness to pursue a career in English language teaching profession. Coupled with the influences on her career choice, Merve's low English language proficiency created an unstable state in her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. In this unstable state, her thoughts about the field of English language teaching were subject to drastic changes and alterations. For example, her realization that she could improve her English language proficiency created a butterfly effect in her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. This butterfly effect led her to (re)consider a career in English language teaching, but the effect was not powerful enough to convince her, so she needed further input to be fully convinced to continue in the English language teaching profession.

Merve received further input to make up her mind to stay in the field of English language teaching profession during the teaching certificate courses because the teaching certificate courses required her to take teaching practicum courses for two semesters, in which she had opportunities to observe English language teaching practices of the cooperating teacher(s) and she had the chance to teach English language. Her first experiences during the practicum showed that she was not pedagogically ready to teach English as she mentioned that Merve was criticized by

her cooperating teachers because she wrote English words on the board when she was assigned to teach first-grade students. However, in the second semester of the practicum, she developed English language teaching skills with the help of her second co-operating teacher. Seeing that teaching provided her joy and enthusiasm, she postponed her decision to stay in the profession and she sought further experiences in the field of English language teaching. When Merve completed her undergraduate education along with the teaching certificate courses, she seemed to reach a rather stable state in her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. Initial stabilizations of her complex system were the results of the improvements in her English language proficiency and her first teaching experiences during the practicum.

As mentioned earlier, when Merve was assigned to work as an English language teacher in Samsun, she had to face emotional, social, and professional challenges due to the contextual considerations. These emotional, social, and professional challenges she underwent revived her state of uncertainty to stay in the field of English language teaching. Although she enjoyed the act of teaching in general terms e.g., being in the classroom, helping students learn, she realized that she was still unwilling to teach English language and assume a language teacher identity. The following excerpt showed her dilemma in her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition.

It was very pleasing for me [to be a teacher] as I liked the teaching part of being a language teacher. Yet, I was not very eager about English part of it. Later times, I began to like English part as well when we did [language learning] activities with the students (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

From the excerpt, it was realized that Merve, as a novice teacher, emphasized her joy, patience, and persistence in her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. She reached a pseudo-attractor state, where the act of teaching was prioritized and valued while the language part of her teacher identity was not entirely and pedagogically welcomed, which can be deduced that the teaching certificate courses did not adequately prepare her for English language teaching profession. In addition to this, her reluctance to accept the language part of her complex system stemmed from the fact that she was still struggling with her English language

proficiency, and her unwillingness to assume a language teacher identity would be resolved until she reached an attractor state in her English language proficiency.

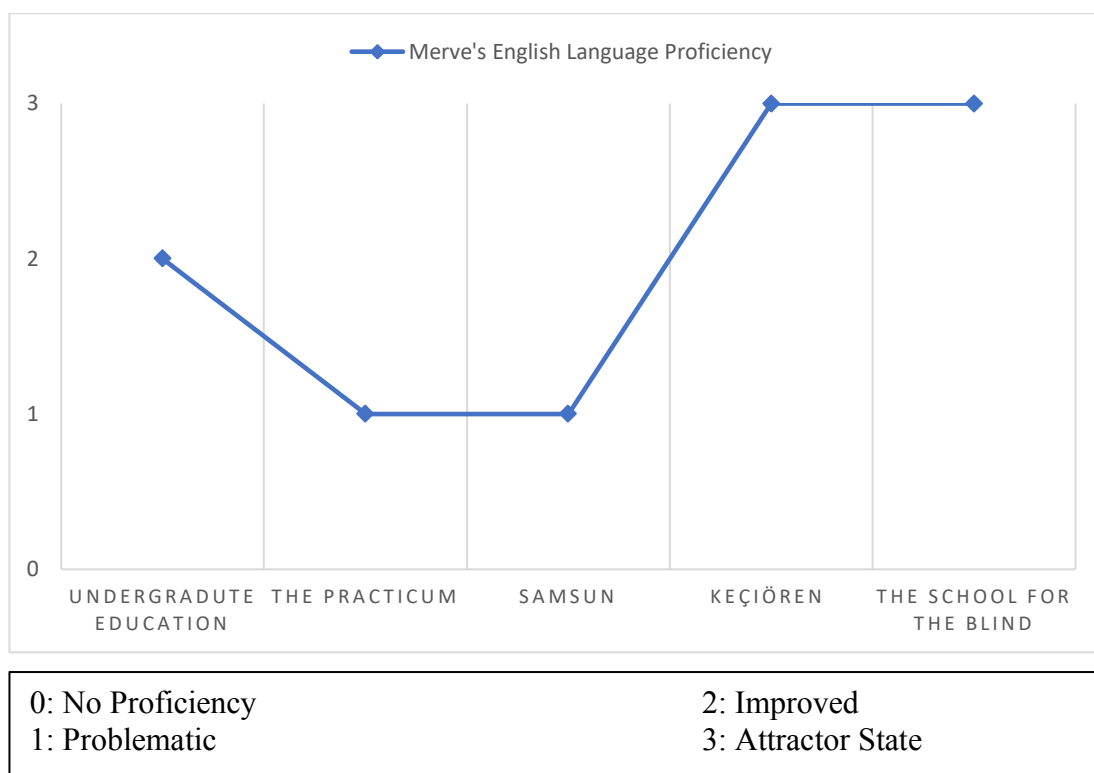


Figure 29: Merve's English Language Proficiency

As opposed to Merve's language teacher identity dilemma, she began to consider herself as a professional in the teaching profession with her initial English language teaching experiences in Samsun. In line with her beginning professionalism, she started to formulate her philosophy of education and purpose(s) of English language teaching. She later questioned the effectiveness of her delivery of English language courses and tried to act in accordance with her philosophy of education. From the complexity theory perspective, her professionalism and educational philosophy produced co-adaptation processes, which dynamically shaped her language teacher identity and cognition. Data analysis also revealed that Merve's growing professionalism in the field of English language teaching resolved her struggles with her English language proficiency and it could be said that her decision to pursue a career in English language teaching reached an attractor state and was fully stabilized with her initial experiences and growing professionalism in the field of English language teaching.

When Merve moved to Ankara, she had already decided to stay in the field of English language teaching, yet she had to adapt her complex system of English language teacher identity and cognition according to the contextual differences of the school she was assigned to teach because these contextual differences required her to differentiate her English language practices in light of the recent developments in educational sciences, English language teaching, and educational technologies. Thus, she received several in-service trainings, which targeted pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge. From the data analysis, it was understood that the in-service trainings she participated in filled the gap(s) in Merve's pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge bases. With the changes in her knowledge bases, she redefined the purpose(s) of English language learning and teaching and she extended her repertoire of English language teaching methods, techniques, activities, and materials. In addition to this, Merve's updated pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge bases underwent coadaptation processes with her English language teacher identity. She assumed new teacher roles when she taught English. These roles were material developer, resource provider, and technology user. Participating in an in-service training on material development in English language teaching helped her to produce her own materials. With these materials, she was able to enrich her English language practices and provide supplementary materials for the students in Ankara. Also, she started to actively use the smartboard during her classes and encouraged her students to complete their language learning tasks through educational technologies.

Although Merve's professional development activities helped her enjoy implementing her extended and enriched English language practices, during her classes she experienced several difficulties that altered her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. These difficulties stemmed from the contextual considerations as well as her (lack of) pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge. As mentioned above, she had to work with approximately 40 students, who had various demographic and socio-economic profiles in her classes. Meeting the needs of her students in Ankara turned out to be challenging for Merve. Pedagogically, managing her students caused problems for her and she needed to use different classroom management strategies depending on her classes' demographics. In addition to having large classes, she had students with intellectual disabilities in some of her

classes. Given that she did not receive any pedagogic courses about special education and students with special needs during the teaching certificate program, having large classes with 40 students as well as students with disabilities intensified her pedagogic problems.

In addition to the pedagogic difficulties she experienced, Merve experienced difficulties with her English language teaching practices. Although she was comfortable with her routinized English language teaching practices as Merve's years of English language teaching experiences provided her a cognitive library, in which she could retrieve lesson plans based on the topic to be covered and choose pedagogically appropriate classroom practices, the international student exchange project and the family tree activity she conducted showed that the gaps in Merve's pedagogic and pedagogical content knowledge bases. During the international student exchange project, Merve was supposed to prepare her students to be culturally responsive and sensitive because the school in Ankara hosted several international exchange students during the project. However, she could not thoroughly prepare her students and the students in Ankara had to cope with the cultural shock they experienced.

In addition to the international student exchange project, Merve tasked her students with the family tree activity. In this family tree activity, her students were required to create their family tree with the pictures of their family members. Due to the failure to provide adequate instruction to protect her students' anonymity, the activity resulted in several problems because Merve was not entirely aware of her students' backgrounds and she had to confront some of her students' parents to clarify the objective(s) of the family tree activity.

In Ankara, I realized that I should not use real pictures of the family members because the concept of a family is not the same for everyone and I had a radical decision about the family tree activity, and I have never done it since then (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

The international student exchange project and the family tree activity led Merve to reconsider her teaching practices and their consequences, yet her reconsideration resulted in the avoidance of similar projects and activities in the future. By avoidance, it is meant that she decided not to participate in the international student exchange

projects in the future and she did not use the family tree activity. Her avoidance showed that Merve became immune to the effects of these critical incidents and her complex system of language teacher identity did not alter. Instead, Merve started to think that meeting the needs of her large groups of students that includes the students with disabilities escalated her workload because she needed to follow and implement two different curricula. While she was implementing the regular curricula mandated by MoNE, she had to create curricula that cater to the needs of the inclusive students. She was also expected to assess and evaluate the objectives and outcomes of the curricula, respectively. In addition to these, she participated curricular and extracurricular activities in Ankara. Considering the teaching workload as well as (extra)curricular activities, she decided to transition to another school, where her workload would decrease. Subsequently, she started to search for the protentional schools and upon her colleagues' advice and suggestions, she decided to transition to the School for the Blind.

Although Merve was familiar with the students with disabilities from her childhood and she worked with several students with intellectual disabilities in Ankara, she did not have any pedagogic and/or non-pedagogic contact with the students with visual impairments when she chose to transition to the School for the Blind due to her workload considerations. In addition to this, Merve did not receive any special education courses during her undergraduate education so she needed in-service trainings that prepared her to teach English language to the students with visual impairments. What was interesting, though, was that MoNE did not offer any in-service trainings about the pedagogic needs of the students with visual impairments, their medium of learning, that is, Braille, and other special education related topics prior to the transition to the School for the Blind. Thus, Merve did not receive any in-service training about the students with visual impairments. Given these, it can be concluded that the absence of training(s) about the students with visual impairments led Merve to an unstable state in her complex system, in which her beliefs, attitudes and assumptions about students with impairments seemed to dynamically reshape with her initial contact with the students with visual impairments. However, she mentioned that her initial experiences with the students with visual impairments were emotional and conflicting when she transitioned to the School for the Blind. She approached her

students with visual impairments with an emotional approach because she thought that the society she lived in approached the disability issues from an emotional perspective. As a member of the society, her statements about the students with disabilities showed that Merve held similar considerations about the disability issues. In the following instance, in which Merve was asked to talk about her initial thoughts about the students with disabilities, she mentioned the moment when she faced a female student with severe visual impairments.

Merve: There was a female student with severe visual impairment. When I saw her, I could not pull myself together for three days. I really mean it. Seeing her disrupted all my emotions. I got over it with great difficulty.

Researcher: What did you do to get over it?

Merve: I just accepted, and I tried to avoid looking at her. She really loves me. When she approached me, I was able to talk to her. The more we interacted, the more I was able to approach her. This was one of the most difficult instances I experienced here (Merve Individual Interview, March 11, 2020).

Data analysis further indicated that the emotional dissonance Merve went through was stemmed from her lack of disability awareness because she assumed that the students with visual impairments were experiencing social, psychological, and physiological awkwardness. She also expected her students with visual impairments to be academically less capable and successful. It can be concluded that the unstable state of Merve's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition consisted of intense feelings and emotions as well as taken-for-granted assumptions because the mutual causality between her emotional approach and taken-for-granted assumptions fed each other.

It becomes an inner conflict. I tell myself that I am pushing too much because the students were only capable of doing less due to their disabilities. I experienced these conflicts. I try not to show these conflicts to my students (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

From Merve's statements, it was understood that she initially experienced a process of emotional and professional shock because of her emotional reactions and taken-for-granted assumptions about the students with visual impairments. However, the data analysis illustrated that Merve's increasing interaction with the students with visual impairments challenged her deeply rooted assumptions about them and her taken-for-

granted beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions about these students began to be replaced with the idea that these students were socially and academically capable. The replacement of the taken-for-granted assumptions about the students with visual impairments led Merve to reach a pseudo-attractor state, in which she seemed to resolve her emotional reactions and taken-for-granted assumptions. In this pseudo-attractor state, Merve tried to prioritize her professionalism, through which she sought possible ways to enhance and improve her language teaching practices regarding the students with visual impairments.

The data analysis also showed that Merve's changing attitudes towards the students with visual impairments led her to monitor the school's policy regarding the visitors coming from other schools and non-governmental organizations and she realized that the idea of showing the visitors how the students with visual impairments read and write in Braille was disturbing and considered it as "a performance in a circus". Her considerations and reactions about the school's policy could be traced back to her changing attitudes and assumptions about the students with visual impairments because Merve underwent a process of mutual causality, in which her reformed attitudes and assumptions about the students with visual impairments were accorded to the "ableist" perspectives, as opposed to the society and the school. It was understood that she developed a sense of agency to challenge the school's policy, yet the school did not change its policy. Challenging the school's policy with a sense of agency was indicative of that an internally driven force that resulted in the alterations in Merve's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition, but these alterations were not totally immune to the macro and micro level influences. Thus, she had to follow the school's policy although her concerns with the school's visiting policy persisted to grow.

In addition to challenging the school's policy, she realized that there was a necessity to develop English language teaching materials that catered to the needs of the students with visual impairment upon her transition to the School for the Blind. To meet this need, she developed a sense of agency in terms of English language teaching material development and adaptation. She looked for national and international platforms to find suitable materials and created her own language teaching materials based on the ideas she gathered from these platforms. It was realized that Merve's



language teacher identity as a resource provider and her teacher agency to develop language teaching materials that met the needs of the students with visual impairments would be continually reshaped until she established a set of language teaching materials. Thus, her agentic teacher role as a resource provider and her pedagogic content knowledge to develop adequate and suitable language teaching materials were subject to mutual causality and it can be said that her agentic role as a resource provider and her pedagogic content knowledge in terms of developing language teaching materials reached an attractor state. In this attractor state, her role as a resource provider seemed to be externally stable, that is, it became a part of Merve's language teacher identity in the School for the Blind. On the other hand, her pedagogic content knowledge to develop English language teaching materials was internally dynamic, that is, the changing needs of the students with visual impairments would require her to make changes in her material development processes.

However, Merve realized several obstacles during her language teaching material development processes. These obstacles originated from the content of English language curricula mandated by the Ministry of National Education. According to these curricula, all students in Turkey, regardless of their possible disabilities, have to use the coursebook and supplementary resources such as online materials and smartboard applications provided by the Ministry of National Education. The main problems of the uniformity of language teaching materials and online resources provided by the Ministry of National Education were that the materials and additional resources did not cater to the unique needs of the students with visual impairments. For example, the Ministry of National Education provided the English coursebook in two formats, that is, the "normal" coursebook which included visual elements, and the Braille coursebook, which is printed in Braille without visual elements and their description. Although these two coursebooks needed to be compatible with each other to be used simultaneously during Merve's English lessons, printing English coursebook in different formats caused structural differences in these books, which made it difficult to use for Merve because she used the "normal" one and the students used the Braille one during her lessons. Following excerpt showed the difficulty of using the same coursebook in two different formats.

Merve: Due to the absence of visual elements, there are dislocations. Ali do you have a table of content in your book [referring to the Braille coursebook]? We need to find Unit 3.

Mustafa: What is the title of Unit 3?

Merve: Downtown.

[The students were trying to find Unit 3 for a while.]

Duru: The title of unit 2 is “Breakfast”, right?

Merve: Can you find it?

Duru: Yes.

Merve: On which page is it in your coursebook?

Duru: It is on page 37. (Merve, In-class Observation, October 23, 2019).

In addition to the practical concerns of using two different coursebooks, using English coursebook in two different formats brought forth curricular problems because Merve was using the coursebook as a curricular guide. Given that, the incompatibilities between two different formats of English coursebooks made it difficult to follow the curricula mandated by the Ministry of National Education. Hence, Merve went through a process of mutual causality in terms of curricular adjustments and English language teaching practices in the School for the Blind. In this process of mutual causality, she made several changes in the curricula provided by the MoNE. While she supplemented the curricula in Samsun and Ankara with extra materials, she preferred to exclude curricular content in the School for the Blind and these changes led the curricula to lose its depth because the curricular adjustments she was making focused on the main items of the topic by avoiding the details. She rationalized her choices in curricular adjustments as follows:

I will abridge if the topic is very detailed. The details can be in the activities, dialogues, or grammar. For example, a language item is used in only one or two instances, I avoid it. I focus on the purpose of the unit to be covered, its main grammatical structure, and vocabulary items. I avoid details (Merve Individual Interview, February 12, 2020).

From the excerpt above, it was understood that Merve did not follow any predetermined scheme while she was making curricular adjustments because she excluded the curricular content which she considered as details in the School for the Blind. Thus, the curricular adjustments were subject to the spontaneity of her lessons. Similarly, Merve’s years of English language teaching experiences provided her a cognitive library, in which she could retrieve lesson plans based on the curricular content to be covered. Although she made use of her cognitive library to plan her

lessons and determine English language teaching practices she was going to use, her lesson planning was also subject to the spontaneity of her lessons in the School for the Blind.

I used lesson plans for a long time and organized my teaching practices accordingly. In recent years, I did not prepare lesson plans because the topics were either the same or like the previous years. When I check the topics, I know what to do like I can do this and that, etc. I am planning my lessons in my head (Merve Individual Interview, January 08, 2020).

When Merve's English language teaching practices were examined, it was realized that her curricular adjustments led her to reorganize her language teaching practices to accommodate the needs of the students with visual impairments in the School for the Blind.

I still continue to use my previous language teaching methods and practices, but I had to change them in here. I had to make my practices to be suitable for the School for the Blind (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Although she thought that she changed her English language teaching practices, the classroom observation data showed that the limited visibility in English language teaching materials that the students with visual impairments used made oracy the medium of their language learning yet reading and listening activities were Merve's common language teaching practices in the School for the Blind. In these activities, she initially provided the meanings of target vocabulary items in students' native language without contextualization, and she expected the students with visual impairments to memorize these vocabulary items. Then, she presented grammatical structures with metalanguage explanations and she offered example sentences with the target grammatical structures. Subsequently, she read a short passage and translated it into Turkish. The students with visual impairments had the chance to participate when Merve asked fill-in-the-blanks and reading/listening comprehension questions, which were also translated into Turkish. In doing so, she minimized the participation of the students with visual impairments. In addition to this, her use of Turkish as the medium of instruction obstructed the development of English oracy of the students with visual impairments.

Data analysis also revealed that writing was the most overlooked language skill in her practices. To teach writing to the students with visual impairments, Merve

needed to know the Braille alphabet and its orthography. Although she claimed that she was eager to learn the Braille to better provide English language instruction, the Ministry of National Education did not provide any in-service training for the teachers of students with visual impairments.

Researcher: You mention a lot of difficulties regarding the Braille coursebook, do you wish to learn it?

Merve: Yes, I do but we do not plan it; we have to wait for an in-service training. I asked for an in-service training and forwarded it to the Ministry. If the Ministry approves, they get back to us and provide the training. However, the Ministry did not offer any in-service training regarding the Braille and we have to wait for their approval (Merve Individual Interview, October 30, 2019).

Thus, Merve had to find temporary solutions when she needed to check the students' homework, which was written in Braille. What was interesting, though, Merve could have asked her colleagues to help her learn Braille, yet she preferred to wait for the Ministry's in-service trainings. Her lack of Braille literacy was not the only barrier in her writing instruction because the observation data yielded that Merve's lesson planning did not include English spelling instruction, which intensified the difficulties in Merve's writing instruction caused by the orthographical differences between Turkish, English and Braille. In addition, the students with visual impairments considered the process of writing as a painful activity due to the materialistic structure of the Braille slate and its nail. Given these, the failure to provide suitable writing instruction techniques created an environment, in which the students with visual impairments formed negative attitudes toward writing in English.

To conclude, Merve's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition experienced several alterations throughout her career. Her reluctant entry to English language teaching profession caused an identity dilemma. It was seen that she had difficulty in welcoming the language part of her teacher identity due to her subject matter knowledge. Later in her career, she became proficient in English language and considered herself a professional in the field of English language teaching. Having difficulty in welcoming the language part of her teacher identity was reflected in her language teacher cognition. She had limited resources in her pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge bases, which led her to use traditional English language teaching methods, techniques, and strategies. However, she received several in-service

trainings in Ankara. It was these in-service trainings that enhanced and enriched her pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge bases. Along with the collegial support in Ankara, Merve was able to develop professionally and deliver her lessons through a variety of language teaching methods.

Although she was professionally satisfied in Ankara since she reached an attractor state, in which her English language practices were routinized, the (extra)curricular activities and having students with disabilities in her classes increased her workload and she started to feel teacher burn-out. To resolve her workload considerations, she decided to transition to the School for the Blind.

When she transitioned to the School for the Blind, Merve was relieved to have a significantly light workload. It can be inferred that Merve thought her transition to the School for the Blind would be a smooth one. However, Merve's taken-for-granted beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions became apparent when she met the students with visual impairments. Her early reaction was emotional, and she considered that the students with visual impairments were academically low-achieving and socially awkward. Her growing disability awareness seemed to challenge her taken-for-granted assumptions and stabilize Merve's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition because she started to approach the students with visual impairments in a professional manner. Hence, Merve's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition went through processes of conflict resolution, alterations, changes, and retrogression. These processes altered her teacher roles. She developed agentic teacher roles in the School for the Blind. She developed English language teaching material to enrich language learning experiences of the students with visual impairments and challenged the school's policy to protect her students' self-esteem. In addition to this, she reorganized her English language teaching practices, which previously reached an attractor state. She managed to routinize her reorganized language teaching practices in the School for the Blind and reached an attractor state.

Data analysis, in contrast, showed that the alterations in Merve's language teacher identity and cognition through the processes of mutual causality and co-adaptation happened to retrogress her practices in the School for the Blind. Although she was aware that the needs of the students in Ankara and the School for the Blind were not similar, which caused incompatibilities in Merve's language teaching

practices, she resolved the incompatibilities by decreasing her teacher roles and curtailing her language teaching practices. It was obvious that the retrogressions in Merve's complex system stemmed from the idea that the students with visual impairments were less capable of learning English language when compared to non-disabled students.

## **5.2. Discussion: Mustafa's Language Teacher Identity and Cognition**

Schools for the Blind create a safe environment for the students with visual impairments because their needs are accommodated and their presence in educational settings are not marginalized and/or alienated (Armstrong & Moore, 2004; Douglas, 2019; Lamichhane, 2015; Miyauchi et al., 2022; Puri, 2004). In this regard, students with visual impairments do not experience negativity, marginalization, and oppression because the idea of "normalcy" in the School for the Blind is that students have disabilities (McMahon, 2014). However, when students with visual impairments move on their education journey as inclusive students, they realized that they are different from their peers and this difference causes difficulties and problems. Thus, they develop disability identities to overcome their peers' and teachers' marginalizing and alienating comments (Spirtos & Gilligan, 2022; Zapata & Pearlstein, 2022). In the case of Mustafa, when he completed his primary school education in the School for the Blind, he left a secure and welcoming environment for the students with visual impairments. As an inclusive student in the high school, he started to understand how his visual impairment influenced his academic and social life, and he needed to find alternative ways to accommodate his needs. He also began to realize that the academic and social accommodations he got used to receive in the School for the Blind were not provided throughout his high school education, so he had to advocate his rights. By advocating his rights, Mustafa developed a disability identity, which helped him to endure disabling comments, attitudes, and behaviors (Darling, 2013; Malhotra & Rowe, 2014).

In addition to advocacy practices, it is important to note that students with visual impairments improve their academic and social skills when they are supported. In this regard, peer and family support not only motivate students with disabilities but also foster their academic learning (Manitsa & Doikou, 2022; Tuttle & Carter, 2022).

Also, students with visual impairments have the opportunity to enrich their learning experiences by accessing library services to accommodate their needs (Ayoung et al., 2021; Jaeger, 2018; Simui et al., 2019). Mustafa's case showed that the disabling practices Mustafa experienced in his high school education continued to exist at the university, yet his previous experiences helped him focus on finding alternative methods of accommodating his academic needs. He received peer and family support to complete his assignments, he made use of library services, and he utilized available technologies at the time.

When Mustafa completed his undergraduate education, he dreamed of becoming a diplomat after his graduation, yet he ended up doing secretarial duties in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which made him feel worthless and useless. Thus, he decided to change his profession because individuals with disabilities are often expected to carry out simple tasks (Lindsay & Houstan, 2013; Ritter et al., 2014) because of the assumption that individual with disabilities are not as capable as non-disabled people (Goodley, 2014; Lamichhane, 2015). Regarding these, Mustafa needed to obtain a medical report that stated there was not any intellectual or physical barriers for him to be a teacher when he wanted to transition to the teaching profession. The medical jury decided that he could not teach in mainstream schools because of his visual impairment, but he could only teach in the School for the Blind. The medical jury's decision, in this regard, reflected the assumptions about individuals with disabilities mentioned above.

Although he was not comfortable with the medical jury's decision, Mustafa's transition to the teaching profession was a smooth one because he returned the safe and welcoming environment he got used to. Being in such an environment eased his adaptation process to the teaching profession. Additionally, he developed a high level of English language proficiency and interest during his undergraduate education. Realizing that he knew what he was going to teach, Mustafa believed that he could become an English language teacher. Mustafa's decision to enter to English language teaching shows that subject matter knowledge is not only the core of teacher professional identity but also the foundation of language teacher cognition (Barnard & Burns, 2012; L. Li, 2020) because one cannot teach what s/he does not know (Sullivan, 2011).

The induction period is a multidimensional teacher learning experience for those who enter the teaching profession from other fields (Haim et al., 2022; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Opfer & Pedder, 2011) and the instructional practices of language teachers are vulnerable to fundamental changes through the apprenticeship of observation in the absence of pre-service teacher education because of their limited exposure to the teaching profession (M. Öztürk, 2021). Nevertheless, the more language teachers assume their teacher autonomy, the more they minimize the influence of the apprenticeship of observation (N. C. Hong, 2012). Mustafa's case showed that he possessed subject matter knowledge base in his language teacher cognition, yet he lacked teaching experiences. Hence, his early practices were open to shifts, changes, and alterations. During the induction period, he worked with his supervisor, prepared lesson plans, conducted micro-teaching sessions, and developed language teaching and learning materials. His induction experiences with his supervisor triggered a process of an apprenticeship of observation and Mustafa aligned his practices to his supervisor's practices. In addition to the induction period, Mustafa completed an intensive pedagogic formation program, which offered the foundational educational courses. When Mustafa completed the induction period and an intensive pedagogic formation program, he was officially assigned to be an English language teacher in the School for the Blind. His assignment fostered his teacher autonomy. By developing his teacher autonomy, he started to change his professional teacher identity and instructional practices. Thus, this study asserts that developing one's teacher autonomy is a milestone in teachers' language teacher identity and cognition because they have the opportunity to experiment instructional practices and assume teacher roles accordingly (Amini & Kruger, 2022; Dilek & Altas, 2022; Kong, 2022).

Although Mustafa started to develop his teacher autonomy by developing his pedagogic knowledge base, the generality of the pedagogic formation program he received left gaps in his pedagogic content knowledge base. As a result, Mustafa tried to form his pedagogic content knowledge base while he was experimenting his English language teaching practices.

Mustafa's teaching experiences after the induction period in the School for the Blind covered a variety of language teacher identity and cognition issues. His initial experiences indicated that Mustafa experienced a process of identity formation. He



tried several teacher roles to communicate with his students and decided that being an emphatic teacher fostered rapport building with his students. With his increasing rapport with the students with visual impairments, he assumed a motivator teacher role to increase students' interest in English language and he exemplified the importance of English language in his teaching practices (Daskalovska et al., 2012; Lamb, 2017). The examples he provided were grounded his language learning experiences as well as occupational life because if he did not have a high level of English language proficiency, he could not be a teacher in the School for the Blind. Thus, Mustafa's motivator role corroborated with the available literature because learner motivation is key in language learning and language learners invest in learning the target language if they can see its value in their academic and occupational lives (Cutrim Schmid, 2022; Darvin & Norton, 2021; Norton & Toohey, 2011).

In addition to his role as a motivator, Mustafa assumed resource provider role to provide supplementary materials for his students with visual impairments. Mustafa's resource provider role stemmed from the examples he saw from his supervisor, who included extra listening and reading materials to expose students with visual impairment to the target language (Connor et al., 2015; Douglas, 2019; Forlin, 2010; Wearmouth, 2009). Similarly, Mustafa especially integrated supplementary listening materials in his initial instructional practices and conducted listening comprehension activities. Mustafa's initial resource provider role shows that he continued to be under the influence of the apprenticeship of observation process he underwent during the practicum period. In this regard, this study posits that language teachers use their apprenticeship of observation experiences as the basis of their pedagogic content knowledge until they experiment a handful of English language teaching methods, strategies, and techniques. When such experimentations saturate, they build a teaching repertoire (Johnson, 2005). Also, it is important to mention that Mustafa's initial teaching practices matched with his stated beliefs about language learning. In such a case, he assumed a professional identity to meet the necessities of his stated beliefs of language learning (Huang et al., 2021; Jiang & Zhang, 2021; Jiang et al., 2021). Lastly, Mustafa mentioned that his role as a lesson planner helped him to be flexible in terms of curricular adaptations in his initial teaching experiences in the School for the Blind because he emphasized the importance of providing language

learning experiences that catered to the immediate needs of the students with visual impairments. Also, Mustafa tested the boundaries of his teacher autonomy with the flexible lessons he conducted and the curricular adaptations he made. Regarding teacher autonomy and lesson planning, available literature points out that autonomous teachers tend to make shifts and changes during the lesson to meet the needs of their learners (Kong, 2022) and they take responsibility to make curricular changes and adaptations (Dilek & Altas, 2022). In this regard, Mustafa's lesson planning and curricular adaptations corroborated with the available literature.

Mustafa's instructional practices at the time of data collection showed that he continued to assume his role as a motivator, and he made motivational speeches during his lessons. These speeches included the importance of English language as well as his previous schooling and occupational experiences because he believed that students with visual impairments receive their education in a safe and welcoming environment, yet they must know about the realities of inclusive education and disabling practices outside the School for the Blind (McMahon, 2014). In addition to his role as a motivator, he assumed an agentic role to increase awareness about the academic and social needs of students with visual impairments. Mustafa collaborated with pre-service English language teachers for their community service projects (Karaman, 2014). In these projects, Mustafa assumed an agentic role to help these pre-service teachers understand academic needs of students with visual impairments by offering his insights about teaching English to students with visual impairments. He also invited pre-service teachers to his classes for observation. In doing so, he believed that he changed beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions of the pre-service teachers in the community service projects about students with disabilities because community service projects can help pre-service teachers to reflect on a social, academic, and/or cultural issue(s) in their environments (Joseph et al., 2007). Reflecting on such issues can increase awareness of the pre-service teachers and the collaborating parties can challenge their taken for granted assumptions about the issue (Carrington & Selva, 2010; Hallman & Burdick, 2011; Jenkins, 2011).

Although Mustafa continued to assume several teacher roles, he ignored his roles as resource provider and lesson planner. Firstly, he had a list of songs, which were used as the main teaching material in the primary school in the School for the

Blind. In addition to the songs, Mustafa started to use the coursebook as his curricular guide and followed the activities of the coursebook as his lesson plan (Azarnoosh et al., 2016; Khany & Kamalvand, 2022) because Mustafa mentioned that he did not prepare and/or adapt language learning and teaching materials. Observation data also showed that he did not use available tactile materials in his immediate environment as he thought that the materials mentioned were not suitable for the students with visual impairments. Similarly, this study suggests that the tactile materials prepared for the students with visual impairments should bear following qualities: (1) the tactile material should be simply designed, (2) it should possess the main properties of the represented item, (3) a follow-up conceptual information should be presented, and lastly (4) it should be created with durable materials (Adetoro, 2012; Cox & Dykes, 2001; Nannemann, 2021; Rule et al., 2011).

Although Mustafa's concerns about the tactile materials can be valid, his choice of not assuming his teacher role as a resource provider stemmed from the comfort of using the same teaching materials over extended time periods. Using the same set of teaching materials repeatedly also contradicted with his apprenticeship of observation as a learner when he enjoyed learning English language with a variety of materials.

Visuality of English language learning and teaching emerged to be a fundamental challenge for teachers of students with visual impairments because they need to compensate the visuality of English language learning with other means of materials and strategies. In the case of Mustafa, he did not prefer to prepare English language teaching and learning materials for the students with visual impairments. Hence, Mustafa compensated the visuality of English language teaching and learning with verbal repetitions and revisions. Although empirical studies illustrate that repetitions and revisions solidify newly learned vocabulary items and grammatical structure in the long-term memory (Chiew & Hanim Ismail, 2021; Tahir et al., 2021), the repetitions and revisions limit language learning experiences of the students with visual impairments for two main reasons: (1) the main input for language exposure becomes verbal expressions, and (2) the visuality of English language teaching and learning can be compensated with tactile materials because these materials represent visuality for the students with visual impairments.

The lack of visibility in the materials students with visual impairments worked with also resulted in the lack of conceptual and contextual knowledge because the students with visual impairments needed additional information to understand the conceptual foundations of the vocabulary items they were learning and the contextual cues these items were used (Webb, 2008). In this regard, Mustafa failed to provide adequate conceptual and contextual information to the students with visual impairments. In such a case, students with visual impairments cannot transform everyday knowledge into scientific knowledge.

What is more, Mustafa established a strict routine of classroom practices. He followed his teaching routine, and his lesson plans were not open to flexibility at the time of data collection. Although some spontaneous changes were noted in the observations sessions, these changes were the result of Mustafa's failure to find the song(s) he was going to play. In this regard, it can be concluded that teachers establish a classroom routine and design their instructional practices accordingly (Baleghizadeh & Yassami, 2010). However, when they fail to update their classroom routines, they lose the systematicity of their lesson planning (K. Johnson, 2005). Also, they start to ignore learners' differences (Tai & Zhao, 2022). In addition, using the same lesson plan repeatedly can decrease students' interest in the lesson because of the predictability of the lesson format.

Another issue related to Mustafa's lesson planning was the curricular adaptations he made. He believed that language teachers should be allowed to make curricular adaptations and changes (Teng, 2018; Teng, 2019). His belief about the curricular changes were grounded in the format of the coursebook provided by the Ministry of National Education because the Ministry prints out the "mainstream" coursebook in Braille without reorganizing the presentation of the content. Thus, the visual elements in the coursebook make it difficult to be used when teaching English to students with visual impairments. Additionally, the activities that require numbering, ordering, or matching result in difficulties and challenges for the students with visual impairments because preparing such activities in Braille format necessitates using Braille symbols for numbering, ordering, matching. In such a case, a 5-item fill-in-the-black exercise in mainstream coursebook becomes a two-page activity in Braille coursebook. The length of the activity makes it difficult for the

students with visual impairments to follow and complete the activity. In this regard, this study shows that the fill-in-the-blanks activities are generally excluded because the students with visual impairments cannot follow the activity due to the structure of it. Thus, the fill-in-the-blank activities do not concur with the academic needs of the students with visual impairments.

Another dimension of Mustafa's instructional practices was his target language use. As a language user, Mustafa preferred to use a mixture of English and Turkish as his medium of instruction. He initially used English while instructing the students with visual impairments and then translated the instruction into Turkish. His use of mixture of English and Turkish as his medium of instruction also reflected on students' language use. The students with visual impairments in Mustafa's classes utilized code-switching strategies when they participated in the classroom activities. Although mixing the target language and students' native language can possibly hinder young learners' language development (Zimmerman, 2020), it increased students' production in the target language through code-switching strategies in this study (Irawan, 2022; Zainil & Arsyad, 2021).

Similarly, Mustafa's teaching practices illustrated that he used a mixture of English and Turkish when he taught grammatical structures. It is important to note that he provided metalanguage information in Turkish and the examples of the target structure in English. He believed that explaining the grammatical structures of the target language parallel to students' native language helped students understand the structure easily. However, literature on grammar teaching shows that it is the similarities between the target language and students' native language that cause difficulties in learning the grammar of the target language. Also, students make more mistakes when grammar teaching focuses on the similarities between the two languages. This also shows that pedagogic content knowledge is important to make informed decisions about one's teaching practices (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Freeman & Cameron, 2008).

Mustafa's teaching practices can be grouped into two categories: teaching English to primary school students with visual impairments and teaching English to secondary school students. Although Mustafa followed a similar classroom routine across the two groups of students with visual impairments, the methods, techniques,

and strategies differed greatly. In the primary school, he intentionally avoided reading and writing activities because students with visual impairments were developing their Braille literacy in their native language and the orthographical differences between English and Turkish can hinder the development of Turkish Braille literacy. Thus, Mustafa focused on teaching vocabulary items and grammatical structures through listening and speaking activities. Listening activities were conducted via songs Mustafa downloaded from the Internet and these activities served for incidental learning (Restrepo Ramos, 2015) because the songs included vocabulary items that were not included in the curricula of the primary school. He also utilized listening comprehension activities to focus on the grammatical structures. In addition to the listening activities, the students with visual impairments completed dialogue activities, in which they were expected to use chunk-based expressions. It is worth noting that the dialogue activities increased students' motivation because the students with visual impairments enjoyed dialogue activities (Gilakjani et al., 2012). However, Mustafa kept the dialogue activities short during his lessons because he prioritized his classroom routine over students' motivation.

On the other hand, Mustafa included all language skills in his practices in the secondary school. Skill-based teaching in Mustafa's practices focused on teaching vocabulary items and grammatical structures. For example, Mustafa could make use of Braille coursebook in reading activities because he is Braille literate, and he can follow the reading text. Also, he implemented reading aloud technique to provide pronunciation and spelling instruction. As opposed to Merve and Rosalinda, who used the "normal" coursebook instead of the Braille one, Mustafa's Braille literacy helped him use the Braille coursebook and using the Braille coursebook created new opportunities for spelling and pronunciation instruction. In addition to spelling and pronunciation instruction, Mustafa highlighted vocabulary items in the reading activities classroom and provided contextual information. He also presented grammatical structures with metalanguage information.

Lastly, Mustafa neglected writing instruction. He stated that writing instruction formed the basis of spelling and pronunciation instruction in his practices (Oakley, 2018; Treiman, 2018; Vaisman & Kahn-Horwitz, 2020). Nevertheless, observation data revealed that writing was the most neglected language skill in his instructional

practices. Thus, his stated beliefs about writing instruction contradicted with his actual practices. Language teacher cognition studies show that language teachers can state the value of certain instructional practices, yet these practices may not be included in their practices (Barnard & Burns, 2012).

Mustafa's practices yielded essential strategies for classroom management and organization, as well. Individuals with visual impairments follow similar patterns of physical movements. These patterns help them to navigate in the environment as well as to be aware of contextual factors. In this regard, Mustafa's classroom management depended on the idea that each student with visual impairment should sit in their assigned places. Secondly, when he directed a question, he needed to call students' names because the students with visual impairments did not answer the questions that were asked to the whole class. Thirdly, Mustafa tapped students' shoulders and/or tables when he wanted that student to participate in the activity. The reason he tapped students' shoulders and/or table stemmed from the idea that students with visual impairments missed visual cues of classroom participation.

Another issue emerged in Mustafa's experiences in the School for the Blind was educational technologies. Educational technologies have the capacity to increase learning outcomes for the students with disabilities (Alves et al., 2009; Blue, 2017; L. Zhou et al., 2011) because they provide alternative ways of accessing information (Merri & Monties-Cabot, 2005). In this regard, Mustafa actively made use of his MP3 player to provide listening materials for the students with visual impairments. Apart from his MP3 use, Mustafa's educational technology use in the School for the Blind was limited. He did not use smartboard because the smartboard does not support screen reader applications. In addition to the smartboard, he did not make use of MoNE's platform because of the same problem. Also, he mentioned that navigating in MoNE's platform was difficult for him, so he decided not to use materials in MoNE's platform.

Lastly, in-service training is an essential component of language teacher identity and cognition because language teachers revisit their pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge bases (Özbilgin et al., 2016; Taşdemir & Karaman, 2022). By reflecting on their practices, they can align their professional identities and practices with the necessities of their classrooms (Alsup, 2006; Baxter et al., 2016; Block, 2012; Schutz et al., 2018). In the case of Mustafa, findings revealed that in-service training

can be ineffective to result in changes, alterations, and/or updates because Mustafa mentioned that although the in-service training that he took part provided resources to alter his practices, he did not change his practices. Thus, this study asserts that when language teachers form their pedagogic content knowledge base through apprenticeship of observation and their practices, professional development activities do not lead to changes in their practices because they establish their teaching practices through a process of trial-and-error.

### **5.2.1 Complex System of Mustafa's Language Teacher Identity and Cognition**

Mustafa's language teacher identity formation and language teacher cognition in the School for the Blind created a complex system. This complex system was the results of the changes, alterations, and adaptations throughout his career in the field of English language teaching. This system also bears its dynamicity, and it is subject to continuous revisions, reorganization, and alterations.

Using Hiver and Al-Hoorie's (2016) dynamic ensemble framework during the data collection and data analysis processes, Mustafa's complex system of language teacher identity formation and cognition was explored around four main considerations. These considerations were "operational considerations", "contextual considerations", "micro-structure considerations", and "macro-system considerations".

Operational considerations focused on the determination of Mustafa's complex system and levels of granularity. While Mustafa's complex system consisted of his language teacher identity and cognition, the level of granularity showed the duration, procedures, and tools of the data collection. The possible influences of School for the Blind on Mustafa's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition were examined in contextual considerations. The contextual considerations also sought to determine how Mustafa's complex system adapted, shaped, altered, evolved, and stabilized within the context of School for the Blind.

Micro-structure considerations dealt with the components, interactions, and parameters of the complex system of Mustafa's language teacher identity and cognition. On the other hand, macro-structure considerations addressed dynamic processes of the Mustafa's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition.



These dynamic processes, combined with the contextual considerations, (re)shaped Mustafa's complex system and these dynamic processes incorporated the system's (un)stability and attractor states. The summary of Mustafa's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition is illustrated in the Table 9 below.

Table 7: Summary of Mustafa's Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition

Operational Considerations	Systems	System: Complex System of Mustafa's Language Teacher Identity Formation and Language Teacher Cognition	
		Agents: Mustafa, the Students with Visual Impairments, and the School for the Blind	
	Level of Granularity	Duration of the data collection: 2019-2020 academic year	
		Data Collection Tools: Individual Interviews, In-class Observations, Field Notes, Artefacts, Official Documents	
Contextual Considerations	Context(s)	Context(s): The School for the Blind	
		Contextual Factors: The Students with Visual Impairments, Teachers with and without visual impairments	
		System Adaptations: Changes, Tensions, Adaptations, Alterations, and Retrenchments in Mustafa's Language Teacher Identity and Language Teacher Cognition	
Micro-structure Considerations	Components	Mustafa's Language Teacher Identity	Personal History
			Educational Background
			Initial Teacher Identity Formation
			In-service Experiences
			The School for the Blind
	Mustafa's Language Teacher Cognition	Subject Matter Knowledge	
		Pedagogical Knowledge	
		Pedagogical Content Knowledge	
		Professional Development	
	Interactions	From Language Teacher Identity to Language Teacher Cognition	
From Language Teacher Cognition to Language Teacher Identity			

Table 7 (continued)

Macro-system Considerations	Dynamic Processes	Changes occurred when Mustafa emotionally, socially, and professionally challenged.			
	Attractor State	Language Teacher Identity	Career Choices		
			Assuming Language Teacher Identity		
			Educational Philosophy and Purpose of English Language Teaching and Learning		
			Special Education		
			Beliefs, Attitudes, and Knowledge about Students with Visual Impairments		
			Teacher Roles	Guidance and Counseling	
				Teacher Agency	
		Lesson Planner			
		Resource Provider			
		Language Teacher Cognition	Subject Matter Knowledge	English Language Proficiency	
			Pedagogic Knowledge	Lesson Planning	
				Curricular Adjustments	
				Classroom Management and Organization	
Pedagogic Content Knowledge	Teaching English Language Main Skills				
	Teaching English Language Sub-Skills				
	Medium of Instruction				
	English Language Teaching Materials				
	Educational Technology Use				
Stability					

### 5.2.2. Contextual Considerations on Mustafa’s Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition

Mustafa’s personal history and educational background revealed that he has been in five different contexts. He experienced physical, emotional, professional, and psychological satisfaction and discomfort in these contexts. As a result of such satisfaction and discomfort, these contexts laid the foundation for his complex system of language teacher identity and cognition.

The first contextual consideration Mustafa had was the ability to visually explore the environments he was surrounded by such as climbing a tree, playing in nature, and going on a picnic because he was a seeing child until the age of six. It was realized that the visual exploration of the environments he was in as a seeing child helped Mustafa obtain a certain degree of life experiences during his childhood. It was these life experiences that increased his academic and social abilities before he started to receive his education in the School for the Blind. In addition to this, Mustafa recalled his experiences as a seeing child as “normal” ones and he had learned the idea of “normalcy” during his childhood.

The contextual considerations began to change when Mustafa started to lose his vision. The second contextual considerations emerged when he needed to comply his lifestyle and daily routines with his visual impairment. In the context of the School for the Blind, Data analysis revealed that Mustafa’s family members helped to adopt his lifestyle and daily routines. To further improve his skills, abilities, and capabilities, Mustafa needed to attend the School for the Blind. However, he needed to prove that he was academically, physically, and psychologically capable of receiving his primary and secondary school education in the School for the Blind as a student with visual impairment. Upon a series of examinations, he was able to prove his academic, physical, and psychological capabilities and got accepted to the School for the Blind. His acceptance made him realize that he was in an advantageous position in the visual impairment community when compared to an individual who was born with total blindness because his life experiences as a seeing child underwent a process of co-adaptation in the School for the Blind. In this co-adaptation process, Mustafa was able to transform his everyday knowledge he acquired as a seeing child into scientific knowledge by conceptualizing and contextualizing his life experiences in educational contexts. In addition, Mustafa was able to combine his life experiences as a seeing child with the new skills and capabilities he acquired in the School for the Blind. For example, while Mustafa acquired his Braille literacy in the School for the Blind, he used his previous life experiences in modelling lessons and hands-on activities.

However, Mustafa had to pursue his education in a regular high school after completing secondary school in the School for the Blind. The transition to the regular high school was emotionally and pedagogically painful for Mustafa because the high

school administration did not want to accept him to the school by claiming that the school did not have necessary human and material resources to teach students with visual impairments. In spite of the school administration's objection, Mustafa used his lawful right of education and got accepted to the high school. It can be inferred that it was the transition process that made Mustafa aware of his rights and assume an agentic role to advocate and defend his rights because he started to feel the marginalization and discrimination towards people with disabilities. It should also be noted that it was the first time that Mustafa experienced the idea of "abnormality". that the transition to his school lay foundations of Mustafa teacher agency. In addition, when he started his high school education, he realized that his educational needs were mostly overlooked. To meet his needs, Mustafa needed to find ways to study his lessons. Data analysis yielded that his family members helped him in his studies in high school and Mustafa's interest and motivation to pursue an undergraduate degree was coadapted with the help he received from his family members.

When he entered the university, Mustafa experienced different contextual considerations he had during his high school education. The first contextual consideration at the university was the accommodation of his academic needs. Instead of demanding systematic help and support, Mustafa continued to receive informal help from his immediate environment because the academic support that Mustafa's family could offer did not meet his undergraduate education needs. Thus, he asked for his friends' help at the university. The act of seeking informal help indicated that Mustafa created a system bypass in his complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. By system bypass, it is meant that Mustafa tried to accommodate his needs without referring to the macro level issues. In the context of the university, macro level issue was to demand disability-friendly higher education environment from the university administration. The rationale of utilizing such a system bypass was that he wanted to be in a safe environment where he did not have to confront the academic staffs' unwillingness to accommodate his needs.

The second contextual consideration at the university was the career choice Mustafa had to make. As an undergraduate student of Department of International Relations, Mustafa acquired high level of English language proficiency and he thought that he could pursue a career as a diplomat. However, the employment requirements

for the prospective diplomats caused a process of mutual causality in Mustafa's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition because the Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized that they were recruiting diplomats who did not have any disabilities at the time. As a result, the contextual factors at the university made Mustafa realize that he could not be a diplomat, and these factors caused him to consider alternative professions.

In spite of the ongoing challenges, Mustafa started to look for available positions he could be assigned, and he managed to find a position in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. In the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, he was assigned to complete secretary duties such as answering and directing phone calls. Combined with his disappointment about the employment requirements, Mustafa felt that he was unproductive and useless, which intensified the process of mutual causality in his complex system. As a result of this mutual causality process, he decided to change his profession because his early career experiences deepened his wish to feel productive.

The last contextual consideration Mustafa experienced was the School for the Blind. As a legal requirement, teacher candidates have to prove that they are psychically, psychologically, emotionally, and cognitively suitable for the teaching profession. Similarly, Mustafa underwent a medical examination process to prove that he was suitable for the teaching profession. However, the medical jury decided that he was not a suitable teacher candidate for "normal"/regular schools and Mustafa was allowed to work only in Schools for the Blind in Turkey. Mustafa criticized the medical jury by stating that there was not a teacher educator, who could evaluate his condition and advise the medical jury. Thus, the absence of a teacher educator in the jury as well as the medical report he received demonstrated a rather prejudiced and belittling approach toward people with disabilities. It is also important to note that Mustafa experienced such attitudes on several occasions throughout his career path. Hence, he developed a system immunity in his complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. Mustafa's system immunity can be described as a defense mechanism which protected his psychological wellbeing when he was marginalized due to his visual impairment and it was the system immunity that helped Mustafa to overcome the prejudiced assumptions he was imposed on as well as to focus on his

productiveness.

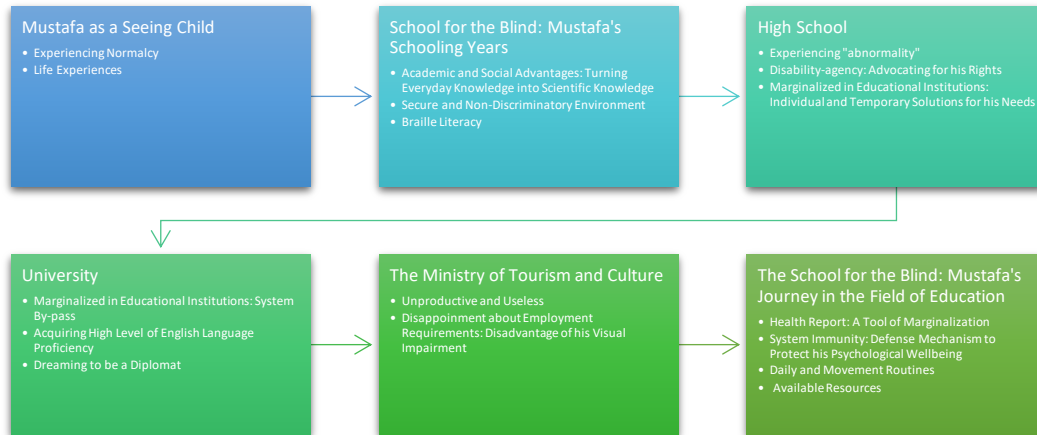


Figure 30: Contextual Considerations in Mustafa's Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition

After he obtained the medical report, Mustafa was assigned to work in the School for the Blind. As mentioned elsewhere, individuals with visual impairments depend on the movement routines to navigate in the physical structures such as schools, hospitals, etc. Data analysis similarly revealed that Mustafa knew the physical context of the School for the Blind, which eased his process of establishing movement routines to navigate in the school. In addition to his awareness about the physical context of the School for the Blind, Mustafa knew the other contextual considerations in the School for the Blind such as available resources, facilities, and organizational structure of the school. His knowledge and awareness of the contextual considerations of the School for the Blind led Mustafa a process of mutual causality. In this mutual causality process, Mustafa was able to focus on pedagogic and pedagogic content issues. As he did not have any difficulty in adapting himself to the context of the School for the Blind, Mustafa concentrated to align his practices and pedagogical approach(es) with the needs of the students with visual impairments.

### **5.2.3. Micro-Structure and Macro-System Considerations on Mustafa's Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition**

The complex system of language teacher identity and cognition that Mustafa has been forming throughout his career was linked to his personal history, which included his educational journey, career choices, and the transition to the teaching profession. Firstly, Mustafa's biography showed that he experienced several obstacles throughout his educational journey. These obstacles were stemmed from his visual impairment because the educational institutions he enrolled in could not fully accommodate Mustafa's academic needs after he graduated from the School for the Blind. The failure to accommodate his academic needs marginalized Mustafa's existence in the high school as well as at the university. For example, the high school he attended did not want to accept him to the school because of his visual impairment. Although the high school administration had to accept Mustafa to the school due to the legal requirements, some of the teachers overlooked Mustafa's academic needs. It can be inferred that Mustafa's high school experiences made him realize that he had to prove his social, academic, and cognitive abilities to the third parties and his visual impairment is a major component of his complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. Proving his abilities and accepting his visual impairment as the major components of his complex system were the results of the process of mutual causality. In this process of mutual causality, Mustafa's experiences in the high school led him to questioning his capacity. Realizing that his low academic achievement in certain subjects stemmed from his teachers' willingness to accommodate his needs, Mustafa accepted his visual impairment as a part of his complex system. Similarly, Mustafa received his undergraduate education in an English medium university to be a diplomat in the bureaucracy. Although he acquired a high degree of English language proficiency, the academic staff at the university questioned his existence in the department, that was the Department of International Relations, as well as at an English medium university. The attitudes of the academic staff also contributed to the marginalization of Mustafa's existence in educational institutions. Given that the process of mutual causality that he underwent in the high school reached an attractor state, in which Mustafa learned to deal with discouraging comments about his educational pursuits and his existence in educational institutions while accepting his

visual impairment as a major part of his complex system. Secondly, the attractor state he reached as a result of the mutual causality process at the university made him believe that if he could prove his capacity, he would reach his long-wanted goal to be a diplomat. However, he applied several positions in the bureaucracy upon his graduation, and his applications were rejected due to his visual impairment. Instead, he was offered to work as a public servant, which required carrying out secretary duties in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The nature of the secretary duties did not require neither intellectual abilities, nor knowledge and skills Mustafa acquired in the Department of International Relations. The mismatch between Mustafa's intellectual capabilities and the duties he fulfilled indicated that the attractor state he obtained at the university did not work. Thus, Mustafa reprocessed the mutual causality he experienced at the university to stabilize his complex system. It was this mutual causality reprocess that made Mustafa understand that he did not feel that he was worthy and useful, so he needed to change his career path, where his visual impairment was not a question for his academic capabilities. As a result, in order to exist as a productive individual in the society, he decided to transition to the field of English language teaching upon his former teachers' suggestions. Data analysis revealed the mutual causality reprocess that he underwent resolved to be a complete attractor state in his complex system of language teacher identity and cognition when he transitioned to the field of English language teaching. Two main components of his complex system played crucial roles in reaching such an attractor state. Firstly, Mustafa was a graduate of English medium university, and he had the chance to document his high level of English language proficiency, which made him a suitable candidate for the field of English language teaching. Secondly, he was assigned to work in the School for the Blind. Working in the School for the Blind helped him to reform his self-esteem and self-confidence because his visual impairment was not seen as an obstacle to teach in the School for the Blind.

Mustafa's transition to the School for the Blind required him to obtain a medical report that ensured his visual impairment was not an obstacle for the teaching profession. The medical committee questioned his ability to teach in regular schools and decided that Mustafa could only teach in the School for the Blind. Although the committee's decision revived Mustafa's marginalization in the educational



institutions, Mustafa's system immunity helped him to navigate around the prejudicious attitudes and assumptions about his capacity without confronting macro level discriminatory acts. After obtaining the medical report, Mustafa was officially assigned to work in the School for the Blind. The transition processes showed that he did not receive any teacher training prior to his assignment to the School for the Blind. Given that, he needed to complete a two-semester practicum before he started to teach English to students with visual impairment. During the practicum, Mustafa worked with a supervisor, who was his former English language teacher. Mustafa also carried out duties related to English language teaching as well as enrolled in an intensive teaching certificate program. Working his former teacher created a safe environment for him because Mustafa was able to observe and use his supervisor's English language teaching practices, which Mustafa thought that these practices were the ideal ones for the students with visual impairments. It should be noted that Mustafa's use of his supervisor's English language teaching techniques and strategies was a result of his lack of teacher education. Thus, he relied on the apprenticeship of observation while he was forming his teacher identity and equipping his language teacher cognition.

However, Mustafa's increasing experience in English language teaching led him to form his English language teaching techniques, strategies, and methods. Mustafa's emerging philosophy of English language teaching triggered a co-adaptation process in his complex system language teacher identity and cognition. In this co-adaptation process, Mustafa evaluated his supervisor's practices, and tried to utilize the practices that were in line with his language teaching philosophy. Data analysis showed that the process of co-adaptation in Mustafa's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition led to the state of system-merging due to his apprenticeship of observation. In the state of system-merging, Mustafa copied his supervisor's language teaching approaches to his complex system. Then, he blended his English language teaching philosophy with his supervisor's approaches. For example, his supervisor was asking questions that were not included in the curricula and Mustafa still follows the same strategy during the listening activities he implements.

In the listening activities, Mustafa tried to use YouTube videos that were in line with the curricula. Generally, the listening tracks included some words that were not in the curricula. During the activity, Mustafa paused to ask the meanings of such words. He rationalized his strategy by saying that asking questions and guiding students to learn new vocabulary items increased the students' motivation as well as their language knowledge. Interview data shows that Mustafa's rationalization stemmed from his apprenticeship of observation when Mustafa was a student in the School for the Blind (Mustafa Field Note, March 04, 2020).

However, the system-merging process in Mustafa's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition reached an attractor state through system-cleansing. In system cleansing, Mustafa removed the components of his supervisor's system which contradicted with Mustafa's language teaching philosophy. For example, his supervisor suggested Mustafa to form a teacher identity, which could show Mustafa's strictness and seriousness in the classroom. Although Mustafa tried to assume such a teacher identity, he realized that grounding his teacher identity on the students' motivation by being tolerant and welcoming was in line with his philosophy of English language teaching. Thus, he removed the strict teacher identity from his complex system.

Mustafa also attended to an intensive teaching certificate program as a part of his practicum. In the certificate program, he received the foundational pedagogic courses such as educational psychology, material development and adaptation, assessment and evaluation, and classroom management. Taking such intensive pedagogic courses triggered a system-equipping process. To exemplify, Mustafa identified the gaps in his complex system during the process of system-merging and system-cleansing. Then, he repaired the gaps in his complex system by accumulating necessary knowledge and skills in the teaching certificate program. For example, he mentioned that the assessment and evaluation practices that his supervisor was implementing could not meet reliability and validity criteria. In the teaching certificate program, Mustafa learned how to prepare assessment and evaluation tools that were in line with his teaching objectives. Hence, the system-equipping process helped Mustafa fill the gaps in his complex system of language teacher identity and cognition with the recent knowledge he acquired in the teaching certificate program.

What was interesting, though, was that Mustafa developed system by-passes in his complex system of language teacher identity and cognition throughout his

English language teaching career. By system by-pass, it was meant that instead of resolving them, Mustafa did not show adequate willingness and effort to confront the challenges, obstacles, and problems he encountered while teaching English to the students with visual impairments. Relying on the listening activities best illustrated Mustafa's system bypass because Mustafa believed that oracy is the key element in teaching English to the students with visual impairments. His emphasis on oracy resulted in using mainly audio materials in his language teaching practices. Using mainly audio materials helped him to by-pass the need for other forms of materials such as tactile, visual, and worksheet. For example, he mentioned the importance of different forms of materials in his language learning experiences, yet he neither prepared different forms of materials, nor he showed any willingness to prepare one during the data collection processes.

Researcher: Can you give the number of language teaching materials you prepared in a year?

Mustafa: I do not know. Maybe one material in an academic year. Maybe two or three. It is not more than five or six learning materials. I generally use the commercial ones.

Researcher: Is it because it is difficult to prepare, or you do not need such materials?

Mustafa: I do not feel that I need them very much. For example, if I am teaching comparative adjectives, it is not necessary to prepare certain shapes to show the students with visual impairments which one is the bigger one. I can compare desks and tables (Mustafa Individual Interview, December 25, 2019).

In addition to this, data analysis also showed that Mustafa utilized his system by-pass in the awareness raising activities he had in his lessons. Mustafa occasionally talked about his schooling experiences, and he mentioned possible issues that his students with visual impairments can experience. The examples he gave were about the accessibility issues and the attitudes and assumptions about people with disabilities. Although Mustafa intended to minimize the demotivating effects of such issues, he by-passed mentioning how the students with visual impairments can solve the problems, challenges, and obstacles they can experience after they graduate from the School for the Blind. The by-pass was caused by Mustafa's experiences of solving the problems he encountered in his schooling years because he preferred to find individualistic and temporary solutions. For example, although he was aware of his rights at the university, he did not confront the university's policy of accessibility. Instead, Mustafa chose to access the course materials with the help of his friends.

The last system behavior emerged from the data analysis showed that Mustafa developed system resistance in his lesson planning and curricular adaptation and the use of educational technologies. Mustafa's years of English language teaching experiences helped him develop teaching routines. The teaching routines included five phases: Revision of the previous topic, introduction to new topic, question-answer sequence with translation, listening activity with songs, and final revision. He strictly followed his teaching routines. Although the teaching routines were indicative of Mustafa's cognitive library of lesson plans, he struggled to organize his lessons when he drifted away from his teaching routine.

Mustafa taught "animals" to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, and he decided to use a classroom game that the students with visual impairments could play. In the game, one of the students with visual impairments was expected to describe an animal and another student would tell what animal it was. The game was supposed to facilitate peer interaction and novel language production. The students with visual impairments were enthusiastic about the game because they prepared the descriptions that they would tell during the break time. However, Mustafa did not provide clear and sufficient instructions about how to play the game. Also, the absence of teaching the language forms the students with visual impairments needed to use during the game led to the failure of the activity. It was also noteworthy that the game did not contain any predetermined vocabulary items, nor it had a specific focus on the language skills (Mustafa, In-class Observation, February 12, 2020).

The in-class observation mentioned above was indicative of a system malfunction. By system malfunction, it was referred that Mustafa failed to organize his teaching practices when he drifted away from his teaching routines and his complex system of language teacher identity and cognition could not provide him necessary tools to keep his practices on the track. Thus, Mustafa developed system resistance to avoid such system malfunctions. Another example of Mustafa's system resistance was the use of educational technologies. Although he insisted that the prospective teachers who are willing to work in the School for the Blind should possess the skill set to utilize educational technologies, Mustafa resisted to use such technologies in his practices by saying that the educational technologies were not practical for him because of the accessibility issues. To illustrate his resistance, Mustafa did not see the use of Orbit devices as productive and practical as he was dissatisfied with the qualifications of the device. He also thought that it is better for the students with visual impairments to use

traditional Braille formats when they write something. It was obvious that Mustafa's personal insights of the use of educational technologies overcame the students' benefit.

### **5.3. Discussion: Rosalinda's Language Teacher Identity and Cognition**

Language teachers' personal histories and educational backgrounds influence their language teacher identity and cognition development (Kissau et al., 2012; Mullock, 2006). While personal histories determine language teachers' investment in their profession (L. Li, 2020), educational background shows how language teachers form their teacher identity (Barnard & Burns, 2012; K. Johnson, 2005). Rosalinda's case showed that she grew up in a relatively multilingual environment, where his brother was learning French while she was learning English because Rosalinda's family wanted their children to learn foreign languages. They supported Rosalinda's English language learning process by purchasing teen magazines. With her interest in the language, Rosalinda improved her English language proficiency. When she completed her high school education, she wanted to pursue a career in English language literature, yet given the occupational opportunities, she decided to be an English language teacher. Her interest in the language and developing English language proficiency formed the foundations of her subject matter knowledge base (Sullivan, 2011).

When she started her pre-service teacher education, she possessed a high level of English language proficiency and formed her subject matter knowledge base. In addition to her subject matter knowledge, she received pedagogic and pedagogic content courses. In these courses, she learned pedagogic strategies such as classroom management and organization, knowledge about learner differences, and age-appropriate pedagogic approaches. She also studied the theoretical and practical foundations of English language teaching. With these courses, she equipped her language teacher cognition with pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge bases (Ball et al., 2008; König et al., 2016, 2017).

In her final year in pre-service teacher education, she was tasked to complete micro-teaching sessions. In these micro-teaching sessions, Rosalinda taught the assigned topic(s) to her peers and tried to bridge her theoretical knowledge of English language teaching with the practical concerns of classroom realities (Canagarajah, 2006; Higgins & Nicholl, 2003; Johnson, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 2006). She received

feedback for her practices from her peers and teacher educators and the feedback sessions supported her language teacher identity and cognition development (Fernández, 2010; Girvan et al., 2016; Ismail, 2011). The micro-teaching sessions also lead to a smooth transition to the practicum period. The practicum pre-service teachers complete assists them to reflect on their pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge (Ogeyik, 2009; Otsupius, 2014; G. Wei & Lu, 2022). Similarly, Rosalinda focused on lesson planning, pedagogically appropriate practices, and material development and adaptation in her practicum period. With the feedback she received from her supervisor, she started to form her professional teacher identity and assumed several teacher roles such as resource provider, motivator, and assessor. She also worked with her supervisor to establish pedagogically appropriate teaching routines, for which she used her pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge bases (Borg, 2011).

In addition to establishing pedagogically appropriate teaching practices, Rosalinda evaluated her apprenticeship of observation during the practicum period. Rosalinda's personal history showed that her family frequently changed the city they lived in because of Rosalinda's father's job. Thus, she attended several schools, and worked with different English language teachers. Hence, Rosalinda possessed a rich pool of apprenticeship of observation as a learner. During the practicum, she tried to reflect on her pre-service education, her supervisor's comments and feedback, and apprenticeship of observation to find appropriate practices for her students (Borg, 2004). In addition to her focus on her language teacher identity and cognition, Rosalinda formulated her educational philosophy during the practicum period. She deduced that it is important to understand why students learn English language and in what areas they are going to use it (Li et al., 2022; Schiller & Dorner, 2021) because language teachers can motivate their learners by providing pedagogically appropriate approaches. Also, language teachers can assume a variety of language teacher identities to foster their learners' language development (Daskalovska et al., 2012; Gilakjani et al., 2012). In a similar vein, Rosalinda embodied her educational philosophy when she started her career in the field of English language teaching. She utilized her language teacher cognition to have pedagogically appropriate practices to meet her students' needs. Also, she assumed various teacher roles to address learner differences (Zadjali et al., 2016). To exemplify, she started to work in a K-12 private

school as an English language teacher. She taught English to primary and secondary school students. In addition to the private school, she started to work as a part-time instructor at the university. To work with these groups, Rosalinda tried to understand her learners' needs and she planned her instructional practices according to the needs of her students. Thus, she was able to choose pedagogically appropriate language teaching methods, strategies, and techniques. It is worth noting that Rosalinda had a smooth transition between the two cohorts of students thanks to her strong language teacher cognition. On the other hand, working with two distinct groups, that is, young learners and adults, shaped Rosalinda's professional teacher identity because she assumed her teacher roles based on the age group she worked with. While she prioritized her roles as motivator and rapport builder in the private school, she assumed monitor and objective setter roles at the university. Additionally, she turned the critical incidents she experienced with the young learners in the private school into a teaching moment at the university (Karimi & Nazari, 2021). This shows Rosalinda's ability to reflect on her practices and make use of the critical moments in her instructional practices because she understood her students' cognitive readiness as well as their needs (Griffin, 2003; Smets et al., 2022).

Another issue that emerged from Rosalinda's in-service experiences was professional development. Rosalinda believed that language teachers should update their pedagogic content knowledge every six years because the theoretical and practical developments can change one's instructional practices (Fairman et al., 2020; Garner & Kaplan, 2021; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021). Thus, Rosalinda stated that she was eager to develop professionally and reflect on her language teacher cognition. Thus, she participated in several professional development activities. In these trainings, Rosalinda revisited her pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge bases (Taşdemir & Karaman, 2022), and equipped her language teacher cognition with the recent developments in English language teaching (Çimen & Daloğlu, 2019).

Lastly, Rosalinda started to work as the head of English language teaching department in another private school and assumed administrative roles. She worked with a group of native and local teachers and focused on quality assurance. To provide the same quality of English language education, she implemented an English-only policy in the school (Galante et al., 2020; Kani & İğsen, 2022; J. Yang & Jang, 2022)

to increase exposure to the target language. She also systematized formative assessment procedures because she believed that continuous formative assessments are an essential part of English language learning (Aslam et al., 2020; Baran-Łucarz, 2019; Muho & Taraj, 2022; Xiao & Yang, 2019). In addition to English-only policy and formative assessments, Rosalinda conducted teacher evaluation sessions. She observed the native and local teachers' classes and provided feedback. Given these, this study asserts that well-grounded pre-service teacher education combined with continuous professional development enables language teachers to work on different dimensions of English language teaching. When language teachers merge their educational background with their practices, they establish strong pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge bases, which gives them the ability to evaluate other teachers' instructional practices.

After working as an administrator, Rosalinda decided to continue her career in the Ministry of National Education, and she worked on several international projects. She also completed her Master of Arts degree in European Studies in the UK. Although she thought that she possessed all the necessary skill-set for her position in the Ministry of National Education, she was assigned to teach in the School for the Blind.

Transitioning to the School for the Blind was challenging for Rosalinda for three main reasons: (1) she did not want to return to teaching because she wanted to work at the organizational level of education, (2) working with students with visual impairments created an emotional dissonance, and lastly (3) she did not know how to teach English to students with visual impairments and the School for the Blind did not provide an orientation program for her.

Given that Rosalinda's transition to the School for the Blind was a reluctant one, she initially struggled to find pedagogically appropriate approaches to teaching English to students with visual impairments. Thus, she asked for help from her colleagues and observed Mustafa's classes to understand the dynamics of teaching English to students with visual impairments. Yet, she did not get enough support from her colleagues because of the lack of community of practices in the School for the Blind (Johnson, 2006, 2009). Due to the fact that Rosalinda's effort to form an apprenticeship of observation through Mustafa's instructional practices failed, she reflected on her previous experiences because reflecting on one's instructional



practices helps language teachers challenge their assumptions about English language teaching (Larrivee, 2007), change their practices if necessary (Yu, 2018), and reduce the discrepancy between what they think and what they do (Farrell & Ives, 2015). In this regard, she reflected on her practices and revisited her knowledge bases to find optimal practices to teach English to students with visual impairments (Walsh & Mann, 2015).

To find optimal practices, Rosalinda sought to understand how visual impairment influences her students (Harvey et al., 2010; Kilinc, 2018; Michalko, 2001). Her increasing knowledge about students with visual impairments led her to group students with visual impairments into three: born with blindness, visually impaired, and low-vision. Based on her grouping, she assumed different teacher roles because assuming professional identities based on students' needs increases academic achievement (R. Brown & Heck, 2018; Buchanan, 2015). For example, while she assumed motivator role for students who were in process of losing their sight, she set objectives for students with low vision to learn and use Braille.

Rosalinda did not want her classes to be observed. Instead, she explained her teaching practices during the interviews. She mentioned that she could not use the Braille coursebook because of two main reasons: (1) she did not know Braille, and (2) the mainstream coursebook was printed in Braille without organizing the content and visual elements in it. Thus, Rosalinda believed that the current Braille coursebook has no educational value for students with visual impairments and the content and structure of the Braille coursebook need to be reorganized for its effective use (Andjelkovic, 2017b; Kızılaslan, 2007). In addition to the coursebook, Rosalinda's lack of Braille literacy led her to exclude reading and writing instruction from her instructional practices. Hence, she had to revolve around teaching English through listening activities that focused on lexical items and grammatical structures.

As she could not make use of the Braille coursebook, Rosalinda prepared handouts in a Word format and taught English by following the handouts she prepared. After her classes, she printed out the handouts and handed them to students with visual impairments. She focused on vocabulary and grammar teaching when she prepared the handouts. She cautioned that the handouts should be prepared in lower cases only to avoid confusion when it is printed in Braille. In addition to the handouts, she used

MoNE's platform to compensate for visuality in her practices. She used audio materials and interactive games on the platform. Although the handouts provided extensive examples of vocabulary items and grammatical structures, field notes revealed that students with visual impairments did not use the handouts when they studied the language. Instead, the audio materials and interactive games increased her students' interest and motivation (Waluyo & Leal Bucol, 2021) because students with visual impairments could interact with their teacher and peers during the lesson.

Lastly, Rosalinda assumed an agentic role to initiate change in the School's visiting policy because the format of the School's policy created an exotic experience for the mainstream students and alienated students with visual impairments. By assuming a transformative practitioner role (Kayi-Aydar, 2015, 2019), Rosalinda suggested that school visitings offer opportunities to raise awareness about students with disabilities (Armstrong & Moore, 2004; Charlton, 2000; Douglas, 2019; Karaman, 2014; Puri, 2004) and awareness-raising activities should be two-sided. By two-sided, she recommended that follow-up interviews and seminars should be conducted to evaluate the effect of school visitings on both students with visual impairments and mainstream students (Connor et al., 2015). However, Rosalinda's efforts to change the School's visiting policy were ignored by the school administration. Thus, she concluded that the micro and macro structures of the current education system do not allow teachers to be transformative practitioners (Kayi-Aydar, 2019; Steadman et al., 2018). In addition to the School's visiting policy, Rosalinda believed that there need to be curricular changes because survival skills, which are Braille literacy, independent bodily movements, and basic self-care should be presented first, and academic content should follow these survival skills (Brown & Beamish, 2012). It is important to note that although Rosalinda prioritized Braille literacy for students with visual impairments, she did not know Braille and it caused several problems for her English language teaching practices.

### **5.3.1 Discussion: The Complex System of Rosalinda's Language Teacher Identity and Cognition**

Rosalinda's language teacher identity and cognition in the School for the Blind create a complex system. In this complex system, Rosalinda's language teacher identity and

cognition were (re)shaped by the results of the changes, alterations, and adaptations throughout his career in the field of English language teaching. Rosalinda's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition is also dynamic in nature, and it undergoes to continuous revisions, reorganization, and alterations.

During the data collection and analysis processes, this study utilized Hiver and Al-Hoorie's (2016) dynamic ensemble framework. In this regard, Rosalinda's complex system of language teacher identity formation and cognition was explored around four main considerations. These considerations were "operational considerations", "contextual considerations", "micro-structure considerations", and "macro-system considerations".

Rosalinda's complex system and levels of granularity were determined by the operational considerations. While Rosalinda's complex system consisted of her language teacher identity and cognition, the level of granularity showed the duration, procedures, and tools of the data collection. The possible influences of School for the Blind on Rosalinda's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition were examined in contextual considerations. The contextual considerations also sought to show how Rosalinda adapted, shaped, altered, evolved, and stabilized her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition within the context of School for the Blind.

The components, interactions, and parameters of Rosalinda's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition were dealt within the micro-structure considerations. On the other hand, macro-structure considerations addressed dynamic processes of Rosalinda's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. These dynamic processes, combined with the contextual considerations, (re)shaped Mustafa's complex system and these dynamic processes incorporated the system's (un)stability and attractor states.

### **5.3.2. Contextual Considerations in Rosalinda's Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition**

Rosalinda's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition was dependent on the contexts she was in throughout her career. Data analysis yielded that the

contextual factors she experienced were academically, emotionally, and professionally diverse and different from each other.

Rosalinda's personal history showed that she wanted to be English language teacher in her childhood as she was interested in the language. As a result of this interest, she chose to pursue a career in English language teaching, and she entered one of the most prestigious pre-service teacher education programs in Turkey. She received her undergraduate education in the context of the program where she took pedagogic and pedagogic content courses and completed teaching practicum. Completing her pre-service English language teacher education helped her reach an attractor state in her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. In this attractor state, Rosalinda accepted her identity as an English language teacher and wanted to pursue a career in the field of English language teaching. It was also this attractor state that convinced Rosalinda that she equipped her language teacher cognition with the necessary pedagogic and pedagogic content skills and knowledge. Given that she reached an attractor state in her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition, she immediately wanted to start her career. Although she could have been assigned as an English language teacher in a public school, Rosalinda decided to stay in Ankara due to the political concerns at the time and she started her career in a private school in Ankara. The context of private school she worked showed that the school followed curricula that were in line with international language assessments such as TOEFL and/or IELTS. Thus, while she was working as an English language teacher in the context of a private K-12 school, she had the opportunity to collaborate with other local and native English language teachers and she received collegial and professional support to bridge the theoretical knowledge she acquired during her pre-service education and practical concerns of English language teaching. In addition to the collaboration, the private school used commercially produced coursebook, which required teaching English language skills discretely. The use commercially produced coursebook led to a co-adaptation process in Rosalinda's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition because Rosalinda was relieved from the burden of making curricular changes. In such a case, she tended to use the methods, strategies, and techniques outlined in the coursebook and she supplemented the curricula with the quizzes she prepared for her students. In addition

to the co-adaptation process, Rosalinda experienced system-altering process in her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. In the process of system-altering, Rosalinda attended to professional development activities and altered her complex system. By system-altering, it is meant that she acquired various skills to approach the practices of English language teaching, which prepared her to the administrative position she took after she left her position in the private school.

Given the contextual considerations in the private school, it can be inferred that starting her English language teaching career in the private school was emotionally, socially, and professionally beneficial for Rosalinda because she received collegial support, attended professional development activities, and managed to bridge the theoretical considerations of English language teaching with the actual practice of it.

Rosalinda left her position to become the head of English language teaching department in another private school. The context she worked was similar to her previous working environment. The only difference was that she was responsible for the curricular decisions, teacher recruitment, and other extracurricular activities. As an administrator, she held weekly meetings with the local and native teachers in the school. In these meetings, she evaluated the curricular objectives, disseminated weekly teaching objectives, prepared summative and formative assessments, conducted observation sessions, and provided feedback. Carrying out the responsibilities of being the head of English language teaching led to a process of mutual causality. In the process of this mutual causality, the more Rosalinda carried out administrative duties, the more she started to think that she wanted to work in the organization of education. The process of mutual causality reached an attractor state when Rosalinda decided to work for the Ministry of National Education.

In the Ministry of National Education, she was assigned to be a part of the Board of Education. She worked on international projects such as Erasmus, United Nations Education Program and OECD. She contributed to align the educational objectives of the Ministry of National Education to the international standards and expectations. Rosalinda was happy and eager to work for the Ministry of National Education because she was able to merge the components of her language teacher identity and cognition with the administrative duties she fulfilled. However, she was

assigned to work in the School for the Blind and she reluctantly left her position in the Ministry of National Education.

When Rosalinda started to work in the School for the Blind, she experienced emotional and professional challenges. Emotional challenges stemmed from her lack of willingness to leave her position in the Ministry of National Education. The reluctant transition to the School for the Blind caused emotional breakdown for Rosalinda. The professional challenges, on the other hand, were the result of her inexperience with the target student group. As she did not teach English to students with visual impairments before, she underwent a process of mutual causality. In this process, Rosalinda's lack of experience in teaching English to students with visual impairments intensified her need to get professional and collegial support. Although she asked for help, she could not receive professional and collegial support as much as she expected. Thus, the mutual causality process turned into a process of co-adaptation. She tried to formulate new teaching methods, strategies, and techniques that cater to the needs of students with visual impairments. In order to achieve this, she wanted to learn the disability background of students with visual impairments and reorganized her English language teaching practices. Another contextual factor that challenged Rosalinda was the medium of communication and instruction in the School for the Blind because she did not know Braille and she has not learned it yet. Not being able to use Braille triggered a process of mutual causality, in which Rosalinda limited her English language teaching practices to the oracy as she could not use Braille documents. In addition to the process of mutual causality, Rosalinda underwent a process of co-adaptation. In the co-adaptation process, she tried to compensate the lack of Braille in her practices with the audio materials. Thus, she used various audio materials in her practices. Although she wanted to enrich language teaching materials she used in the School for the Blind, she experienced several difficulties as the School for the Blind was obliged to use the coursebook provided by the Ministry of National Education, which was not compatible with the needs of the students with visual impairments. Lastly, Rosalinda altered her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition to assume an agentic role to protect the pedagogic wellbeing of the students with visual impairments because she stated that it was like a zoo visit when students from the mainstream schools visited the School for the Blind and the

School for the Blind needed to set rules about these visits. Otherwise, students from the mainstream schools approached the students with visual impairments with a pitying perspective, which empowered the former, yet emotionally damaged the latter.

### **5.3.3. Micro-Structure and Macro-System Considerations in Rosalinda's Complex System of Language Teacher Identity and Cognition**

Rosalinda's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition was linked to her personal history, pre-service education, in-service experiences, and the School for the Blind. Firstly, Rosalinda's background showed that she enjoyed support and encouragement from her family members throughout her educational journey. She was encouraged to learn English language while she was in K-12 schools. Such support and encouragement deepened her interest in English language and literature, and improved her level of English language proficiency. As a result of her interest and high level of proficiency in the language, she chose to become an English language teacher and started her pre-service education in a teacher education program. In the program, she received several pedagogic and pedagogic content courses, which established her language teacher cognition knowledge bases. In addition to her language teacher cognition, receiving pedagogic and pedagogic content courses helped her begin to form a language teacher identity. During the practicum period, she began to complement her language teacher identity and cognition with the sheltered practice of English language teaching. When she graduated from the teacher education program, she was equipped with the knowledge bases in her teacher cognition, as well as grounded her language teacher identity with the principles she determined for her career. It can be inferred that the pre-service teacher education Rosalinda received created a process of co-adaptation. In this co-adaptation process, Rosalinda's language teacher cognition widened her options of language teacher identities she could assume, and she had the opportunity to retrieve pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge based on the teacher roles she enacted. Thus, Rosalinda learned to merge the components of her complex system of language teacher identity to perform her teaching practices. In addition, Rosalinda's ability of system-merging helped her formulate her philosophy of education and purpose of English language learning and teaching for different groups of students. Data analysis showed that Rosalinda started

her career in a private school. While she was working as an English language teacher in the private school, she also applied for a part-time instructor position at Central University. Carrying out the responsibilities of both positions was indicative of her strong language teacher cognition knowledge bases as well as language teacher identity because she could smoothly transition her language teaching practices from K-12 to university setting. She assumed various teacher identities to cater to the needs of her students in the private school and in the university setting. For example, she assumed motivator and resource provider roles in the university setting while she assumed rapport building and assessor roles in the private school. Assuming various teacher roles to meet the needs of different student groups also showed that Rosalinda's English language teaching repertoire included a variety of language teaching approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques. Thus, it can be inferred that Rosalinda's smooth transition from K-12 to university setting illustrated her complex system's adaptability, which refers to the state where the system holder can change parameters of the system based on the needs of the target student group. It is important to note that the process of Rosalinda's system adaptability was facilitated by the professional development activities she partook in because the professional development activities fed her language teacher identity and cognition, which, in return, improved her system adaptability.

Rosalinda had worked as an English language teacher and part-time instructor for years. She decided to pursue her career in an administrative position, and she applied for the head of English language teaching department in another private school. Upon her acceptance, she started to work on a different domain of English language teaching. In this position, Rosalinda was responsible for the curricular decisions, assessment and evaluation procedures, teacher recruitment, and professional development. To carry out the responsibilities of the position, she held weekly meeting and professional development activities, in which she informed the teachers working in the school about curricular objectives, regular quizzes, and professional development activities. Carrying out her responsibilities triggered a process of co-adaptation. In this co-adaptation process, Rosalinda's previous language teaching practices shaped her administrative decisions. For example, the following



excerpt showed how she managed the process of English language teaching as the head of the department in the private school.

I prepared the exams because it is a problem if the same teacher teaches and evaluates students. There is no way to validate the results. My system was like this: we held weekly meetings on Friday afternoons. I presented next week's plan to English language teachers in the school. I explained that the areas teachers needed to pay attention, the methods and techniques needed to be used, and how the assessment and evaluation processes needed to be completed when we would follow the plan for the next week. Then, we discussed about the plan, and I made necessary changes. The teacher followed the plan in the next week, and I checked the plan and the teachers with Friday quizzes I prepared (Rosalinda Individual Interview, December 11, 2019).

The excerpt above described how the co-adaptation process she experienced shaped Rosalinda's administrative approach. Although she received feedback about her weekly plans, she wanted her English language teaching practices to be utilized by the teachers in the school. It can be concluded that Rosalinda's desire for her practices to be utilized by other teachers stemmed for her complex system's stability because she was convinced about her practices' effectiveness as her previous English language teaching experiences reached an attractor state.

Although Rosalinda enjoyed her administrative position in the private school, her career considerations destabilized her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition and she decided to work on other levels of education. As a result of the unstable state of her complex system, she decided to transition to a position in the Board of Education in the Ministry of National Education. As she worked on international projects, her complex system moved to system-standby state, in which she used certain components of her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition, yet for different purposes. In her position in the Ministry of National Education, for example, Rosalinda's utilized her subject matter knowledge to take part in the international collaborations, yet other components of her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition was in standby state, which meant that they were not activated unless needed.

When Rosalinda left position in the Ministry of National Education and transitioned to the School for the Blind, she reactivated her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. However, she realized that there was a

mismatch with her complex system and the needs of the students with visual impairments. The mismatch triggered a process of mutual causality, in which Rosalinda looked for optimum language teaching practices for the students with visual impairments. Rosalinda underwent a process of apprenticeship of observation in order to find optimum language teaching practices for the students with visual impairments. She wanted to observe Mustafa's classes and practices to understand how the mainstream English language teaching practices could be utilized and rearranged for the students with visual impairments. Due to the lack of collegial support, however, the process of apprenticeship of observation turned into a process of self-reflection, in which she tried to find language teaching practices that cater to the needs of students with visual impairments by trial-and-error. As a result of the process of self-reflection, Rosalinda created a set of classroom practices to teach English to the students with visual impairments. To enact her newly created classroom routine, Rosalinda needed language teaching materials because the mainstream materials and the Braille coursebook were not considered to be compatible with the needs of the students with visual impairments. However, Rosalinda were not Braille literate and she needed to find alternative ways to provide language learning materials in Braille. Rosalinda found the solution by creating a system bypass in her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition, in which she prepared language learning materials in Word format and printed them out with Braille printer. Although she bypassed the Braille problem by using educational technologies, the need for more language learning and teaching materials that met the needs of students with visual impairments continued to exist. Instead of creating new materials and/or adapting old materials, Rosalinda preferred to create a co-adaptation process. In this process, Rosalinda's curricular decisions were dependent on the availability of the materials she could access. To illustrate, reading and writing skills were ignored and overlooked in Rosalinda's practices because of two reasons. Firstly, Rosalinda do not know Braille and the reading and writing materials she can access do not always have Word formats. Thus, she cannot follow what students with visual impairments are reading and/or she cannot check the writings of the students with visual impairments. Secondly, the available materials in the Ministry of National Education's online platform are audio-visual materials. As she cannot make use of visual materials, she focused on using

audio materials, which resulted in centering listening skills in her teaching routine. Using mainly audio materials helped her to by-pass the need for other forms of materials such as tactile, visual, and worksheet. It is important to note that Rosalinda's decision to make use of what was available and convenient could be traced back to her pre-service education. Although she completed a teacher education program, the program did not offer courses designed to train teacher candidates about how to create language teaching and learning materials for students with special needs.

Another domain of Rosalinda's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition was her philosophy of education because her philosophy of education is the driving force behind the alterations, changes, and retrenchments in her complex system. Prior to the School for the Blind, Rosalinda believed that education should prepare generations for the future while equipping them with the academic, social, and psychological qualities that include respect, love and care to the nature, animals, human beings. In the School for the Blind, she started to think that it is more important for the students with visual impairments to acquire survival skills than academic success because the existence of visual impairments is disabling. Thus, it can be concluded that the changes in Rosalinda's philosophy of education was a result of a process of mutual causality. Realizing that the disabling nature of visual impairments in academic contents intensified Rosalinda's belief that the students with visual impairments needed more survival skills than academic success. When looked from the other side of the matter, Rosalinda's intensified beliefs about the survival needs of the students with visual impairments could possibly lower the academic expectations she had for the students with visual impairments.

Lastly, Rosalinda had not assumed an agentic role throughout her teaching career, but in the School for the Blind, because she did not have any students with disabilities in the private schools she worked. However, she assumed an agentic role to question and challenge the school visit policies of the School for the Blind because she was convinced by the idea that the school visits did not serve for its main purpose, that is, awareness raising. Instead, the school visits intensified and deepened the idea of approaching individuals with disabilities with emotional perspectives. The agentic role created an unstable state in Rosalinda's complex system of language teacher identity and cognition because she wanted to initiate change in the school's policies,

yet her contributions were ignored. As a result, Rosalinda developed system immunity, which helped her to stabilize her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition by accepting the fact that she needed to raise awareness of the students with visual impairments. Thus, she became immune to the behaviors of the mainstream students and the practices of the School for the Blind in these awareness raising activities.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This doctoral study explored language teacher identity and cognition of teachers of students with visual impairments in the School for the Blind. Case study methodology was utilized because of the participants' uniqueness. Individual interviews, classroom observations, and field notes were the data collection tools. Obtained data was qualitatively analyzed. This study presented the findings and discussed their relations and links with the available literature. In this chapter of the doctoral study, the researcher presented the conclusions, limitations, and implications.

#### **6.1. Conclusion: Teacher Identity and Cognition**

Language teacher identity and cognition development is an intertwined process because language teachers' personal histories influence how they construct their professional identities and cognition. In this regard, family support and encouragement are essential to learn English language, and prospective language teachers' investment to learn English is also reflected in their willingness to assume professional identities in English language teaching. Additionally, when language teachers invest in learning English, they start to form their subject matter knowledge base. Thus, this study concludes that subject matter knowledge is at the core of language teacher identity and cognition development because language teachers ground their pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge bases on their English language proficiency.

To form their pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge bases, pre-service teacher education plays a fundamental role because language teachers' initial theoretical and practical exposure to English language teaching takes place during their

pre-service teacher education. In this regard, pedagogic formation programs (teaching certificate programs) emerge to be ineffective for language teachers' pedagogic content knowledge development. Given that these programs aim to provide general pedagogic courses, those language teachers who completed pedagogic formation programs have gaps in their language teacher cognition because they do not focus on pedagogic content knowledge development as they try to learn the job by doing it. In this regard, pre-service teacher education programs offer valuable experiences for prospective language teachers to understand the theoretical and practical concerns of English language teaching. Furthermore, prospective language teachers conduct micro-teaching sessions during pre-service teacher education programs. In these sessions, they receive feedback and mentoring, and they also focus on bridging theoretical considerations with the practical concerns of English language teaching. Hence, it can be concluded that pre-service teacher education equips prospective teachers with pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge, which foster these teachers' identity and cognition development. It is also important to note that as prospective language teachers receive feedback and supervision for their instructional practices, they become open to reflecting on their practices and developing professionally.

In addition to pre-service teacher education, this study deduces that teacher autonomy initiates professional identity formation. Language teachers, who are in the practicum and/or induction period, tend to meet the standards their cooperating teachers set for them. Thus, they generally follow language teaching practices that are similar to their cooperating teachers. When language teachers take full responsibility for their instructional practices after their practicum and/or induction period, they assume relevant teacher roles to meet the needs of their students. It is also inferred that language teachers tend to experiment with their language teaching practices when they develop their teacher autonomy. Thus, language teacher autonomy encourages language teachers to develop their professional identities and cognition and to reflect on their practices.

When language teachers develop their teacher autonomy, they tend to make curricular changes and adaptations, which generally focus on supplementing the core curriculum to increase learner motivation. The curricular changes language teachers

make are evidence of the interplay between their language teacher identity and cognition because it shows that language teachers are aware of their pedagogic, and pedagogic content decisions. Also, they assume teacher identities to enact the curricular changes they made.

However, when language teachers experience professional isolation, they do not collaborate with other English language teachers, and they usually rely on a classroom routine that focuses on teaching English with traditional methods. Also, they use the coursebook as their curricular guide. Thus, this study concludes that language teachers' cognition development is nurtured by their collaboration with their ELT communities in their immediate environment because they enrich their practices, which reflect in their curricular decisions.

To minimize the effects of professional isolation, language teachers can sometimes collaborate with the external professional communities. Collaborating with professional communities improves their instructional practices. Yet, language teachers can be reluctant to participate in professional development programs if these programs are similar in their content, scope, and structure because language teachers do not see the value to invest their resources in similar professional development programs.

Lastly, language teachers sometimes fail to design inclusive instructional practices because of two main reasons: (1) they do not receive any courses to learn to prepare inclusive classroom practices during their pre-service teacher education and/or pedagogic formation program, and (2) they do not want to assume a teacher role to cater to the needs of the students with disabilities in mainstream schools because it adds up their workload. Thus, when language teachers have inclusive students, they tend to experience emotional and professional dissonance.

To conclude, language teacher identity and cognition development is a dynamic process. Personal histories, educational background, pre-service teacher education, in-service experiences, and professional development influence language teachers' identity formation and language teacher cognition development.

## **6.2. Conclusion: School for the Blind**

This study specifically focuses on language teachers' experiences in the School for the Blind in terms of their professional teacher identity and cognition. Firstly, teaching English to students with visual impairments is a unique field that needs to be supported with theoretical and practical advancements. Thus, this study shows the importance of an orientation period for language teachers because when language teachers are assigned to teach in the School for the Blind, they feel emotional and professional dissonance, which influences their teaching practices. To avoid such dissonance, an orientation period is required because language teachers generally hold relatively negative beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge about students with visual impairments, who are expected to be academically low-achieving, psychologically unstable, and socially awkward. If an orientation program is provided before language teachers start to teach in the School for the Blind, they can question their assumptions, challenge their taken-for-granted beliefs, and focus on their instructional practices.

In addition to the orientation program, Braille literacy emerges to be a vital component of teaching English to students with visual impairments because it is the medium of instruction and communication for students with visual impairments. Thus, Braille literacy should be a prerequisite criterion if language teachers want to teach in the School for the Blind. Otherwise, when language teachers lack Braille literacy, they experience several professional and social obstacles. For example, they cannot monitor students' work or prepare formative and summative assessments in line with the needs of students with visual impairments.

Another issue that is related to Braille literacy is the Braille coursebook. The current practices show that the Ministry of National Education prints the mainstream coursebook in Braille and provides the core curriculum to students with visual impairments. However, it does not cater to the needs of students with visual impairments because of the following reasons: (1) the structure of the coursebook and visual elements make it difficult to use for classroom practices, (2) the content of the coursebook does not support conceptual and contextual knowledge development for students with visual impairments, (3) if language teachers do not know Braille, they tend to exclude curricular content from the coursebook, and lastly, (4) students with visual impairments need to work on the expanded core curriculum to reach the similar



academic attainment level of mainstream students and the current coursebook does not provide the expanded core curriculum.

In addition to the coursebook and the core curriculum, language teachers need to prepare individualized education programs to expose students with visual impairments to the expanded core curriculum. To prepare such programs, they must possess knowledge about students with visual impairments and their needs, and they should be aware of the fundamentals of curriculum development and adaptation. It is also essential to note that language teachers should assume language teacher roles such as monitor and resource provider to implement individualized education programs for students with visual impairments. To implement individualized education programs, there is also a need for differentiated instructions. When language teachers differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of students with visual impairments, they can motivate students to invest in learning English. Equally important, to differentiate their instructions, language teachers should possess a strong teaching repertoire. Otherwise, they will rely on their previous instructional practices and fail to differentiate their instruction.

As mentioned above, language teachers in the School for the Blind cannot fully make use of the Braille coursebook, to compensate for the Braille coursebook, they should differentiate their instruction by developing language teaching and learning materials. Thus, this study concludes that language teachers in the School for the Blind should be able to create, adapt, and/or adopt language learning materials to compensate for the Braille coursebook and its visual elements. Also, there needs to be a special focus on material development and adaptation in their language teacher cognition because language teachers need to develop materials according to the following criteria: (1) the materials should be simple and durable in their design, (2) the content of the materials should focus on a limited number of target language items, (3) they should be engaging, (4), they should include conceptual and contextual information, (5) they should include thick descriptions, and lastly, (6) students with visual impairments should be able to work with the materials several times.

In addition to language teaching and learning materials, selecting and utilizing pedagogically appropriate teaching methods play a fundamental role for language learning experiences of students with visual impairments. In this regard, this study

shows that language teachers in the School for the Blind do not equally pay attention to teaching main language skills. Their practices focus on listening skills for two main reasons: (1) it is one of the main ways to expose students with visual impairments to the target language, and (2) when language teachers lack Braille literacy, they exclude writing and reading skills in their practices. Hence, this study concludes that language learning requires holistic experience, that is, students with visual impairments should be able to read, write, speak, and listen in English, excluding speaking, reading, and writing skills by focusing on listening skills neglects language learning process of students with visual impairments.

Another dimension of language teachers' professional identity and cognition development is educational technologies. Recent technological development can have the capacity to enrich and support language learning processes of students with visual impairments. To actively make use of educational and Braille technologies, there is a need for professional training. Such training should focus on both parties because language teachers can effectively utilize various educational and Braille technologies to differentiate their instructional practices. On the other hand, when students with visual impairment learn to use educational and Braille technologies, they can actively participate in classroom instruction. It is also noteworthy that the Ministry of National Education should invest in accessibility and screen reader technologies because blind language teachers cannot use educational technologies, the Ministry's online platform, and student information systems if they cannot use screen reader applications.

Lastly, language teachers in the School for the Blind develop teacher agency when they experience emotional, professional, and administrative conflicts. When language teachers realize that students with visual impairments are alienated by the field trip activities, they want their students not to experience social awkwardness. Thus, they challenge the administrative policies to normalize the existence of students with visual impairments in educational settings. The other side of the coin indicates that when students with visual impairments are alienated by administrative decisions, language teachers are also marginalized due to their existence in the School for the Blind.

To conclude, language teachers in the School for the Blind experience several teacher identity and cognition issues. As teaching English to students with visual

impairments is a unique field, language teachers need orientation and professional development programs. Secondly, Braille literacy emerges to be a fundamental component of teaching English to students with visual impairments because Braille is the medium of communication and instruction in the School for the Blind. Also, the Braille coursebook needs to be reorganized in terms of its content, structure, and scope to provide essential conceptual and contextual knowledge that students with visual impairments need for language learning. Furthermore, language teachers should be skilled to prepare language teaching and learning materials that meet the needs of students with visual impairments. Preparing language teaching materials should be based on theoretical and practical concerns. In addition to language teaching and learning materials, holistic approach to teaching English language is needed for students with visual impairments because emphasizing one language skill over the other can neglect language development of students with visual impairments. Lastly, educational and Braille technologies are essential to teaching English to students with visual impairments because language teachers can differentiate their practices via these technologies.

### **6.3. Conclusion: Complexity Theory**

Complexity theory deals with how a complex system changes, stabilizes, or iterates when it interacts with its environment. The system's interactions are channeled by the components of the system and the interactions between the components of the system determine its collective behavior. In this regard, the operational concerns, contextual factors, micro-structure considerations, and macro-system illustrate how a system works.

In the context of this study, language teacher identity and cognition are nested within each other, and they can be studied retrospectively and prospectively with the complexity framework. Regarding this, this study concludes that language teacher identity and cognition create a complex system because there are patterns and links between language teacher identity and cognition.

In this study, it is concluded that when input enters the complex system of language teacher identity and cognition, the system organized itself in two main ways. The input can lead to system change or system immunity.

When the interactions give rise to system change, the system undergoes co-adaptation and mutual causality processes. These processes can reach attractor state after the system reacts the input. The system can react the input in following ways:

1. **System Merging:** It takes place when the system agent merges his/her supervisor's language teacher identity and cognition. For example, the agent can follow similar patterns of English language teaching that his/her supervisor implements during the practicum and/or induction period. Implementing the same or similar practices means that the agent merges his complex system with his/supervisor's system.
2. **System Cleansing:** System cleansing takes place when the agent develops teacher autonomy, which means taking the full account of his/her practices. By developing teacher autonomy, the agent realizes his/her complex system's patterns, components, and interactions. The agent, then, starts to establish his/her own complex system by cleansing the remainings of the system merging.
3. **System Adaptability:** It is the complex system's state, in which the agent adapts his/her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition to carry out various administrative and educational tasks. For example, when the agent fulfills administrative duties, s/he creates new system patterns based on the components of her/his complex system of language teacher identity and cognition.
4. **System Alteration:** System alteration takes place when the agent equips his/her complex system with new components. For example, teaching English to students with visual impairments is a new field for the participants in this study. They need to equip their language teacher cognition with material development and adaptation skills to meet the needs of students with visual impairments.

When the system change happens through system merging, system cleansing, system adaptability, and system alteration, the system reaches an attractor state. In the attractor state, the agent stabilizes his/her complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. It is important to note that new input can destabilize the system and system change or system immunity can iterate.

On the other hand, when input enters the system, the system can develop immunity. The agent develops system immunity if s/he does not want to alter her/his complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. System immunity can be achieved through system resistance or system by-pass.

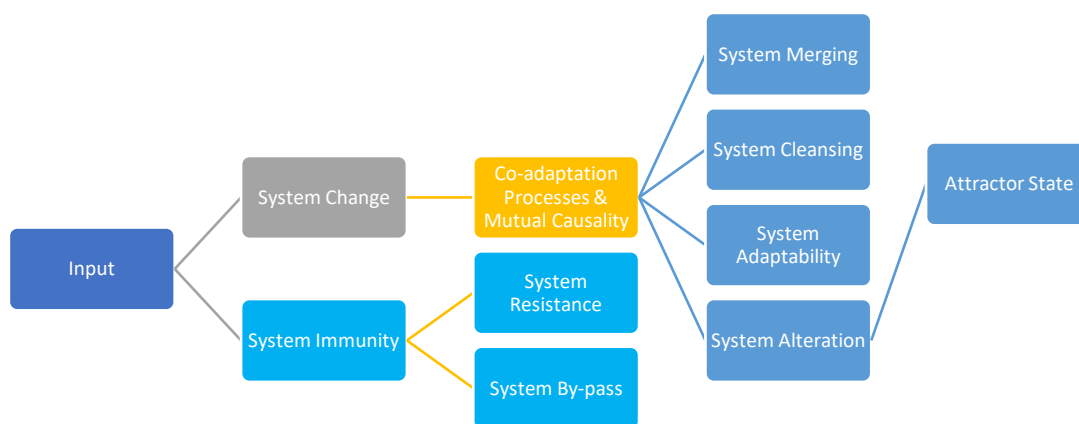


Figure 31: Complex System's Possible Behaviors

1. System Resistance: The agent develops system resistance in order not to fundamentally and/or temporarily change his complex system of language teacher identity and cognition. For example, Mustafa follows a strict routine of classroom practices, and his MP3 player is an essential component for his practices. When he fails to use his MP3 player due to the technical or practical concerns, he does not continue his lesson by including different instructional practices. Thus, he resists to alter his practices.
2. System Bypass: It is a system behavior when the agent does not change the system but needs to find a solution to an immediate instructional issue. For example, Merve and Rosalinda do not know Braille, yet they need to use Braille when they prepare summative assessments. In such a case, they either use educational technologies, or they ask for help from someone who is Braille literate. In doing so, they bypass the need to learn Braille.

Lastly, it is important to note that although the complex system cannot be predicted in its system behaviors due to its retrospective modelling. By retrospective modelling, it is meant that the agents of a complex system have their own personal

histories, educational background, and in-service experiences, which create various configurations in the complex system of their language teacher identity and cognition. However, this study shows that when the agents of the system share the same contextual considerations, they form a community of practice. In such a case, the system's prospective modelling may bear a certain degree of predictability across the agents.

To conclude, language teacher identity and cognition create a complex system because the interactions within and between the two constructs form nested patterns and links. The nested patterns and links produce various configurations. When input enters the complex system of language teacher identity and cognition, the system can configure two behaviors. The system either changes its configuration and reaches an attractor state, or it can develop immunity to preserve its attractor state.

#### **6.4. Implications**

This doctoral study explored language teacher identity and cognition of teachers of students with visual impairments in the School for the Blind. Aligned with the consensus that language identity and cognition are dynamic, interconnected, and nested with each other, exploring the experiences of teachers of students with visual impairments in the School for the Blind can offer various implications for teacher education, in-service professional development, curriculum development, and awareness-raising.

Firstly, teaching English to students with disabilities is an under-researched area in the field of English language teaching. To help language teachers understand how students' disabilities influence their academic, social, and psychological wellbeing, an orientation program is needed. The orientation program should target informing language teachers about the needs of students with visual impairments. Also, it should include how to differentiate instruction to achieve inclusive practices.

Secondly, Braille literacy should be prerequisite for language teachers in the School for the Blind. The Ministry of National Education can offer Braille courses and its implementation in teaching English to students with visual impairments. Another issue related to Braille literacy is the coursebook. Students with visual impairment use Braille version of the mainstream coursebook, yet the academic needs of students with

visual impairment are different from the mainstream students. Hence, the Braille coursebook should be reorganized in its design, content, scope, and visuality to cater to the academic needs of students with visual impairments.

Thirdly, language teachers need in-service training to enrich and differentiate their practices, follow the recent developments in the field of English language teaching, and improve their pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge bases. In this regard, this study implicates following in-service training.

1. Language teachers in the School for the Blind can benefit from scenario-based professional development. The scenarios that are grounded on the experiences of language teachers in the School for the Blind can create spaces for reflection. When language teachers reflect on the scenarios and their instructional practices, they can understand how to enrich their practices and resolve instructional issues in pedagogically appropriate ways.
2. Teaching English to students with visual impairments requires multidisciplinary approach. In this regard, special education experts and scholars in the field of English language teaching should work together because language teachers in the School for the Blind need specifically designed in-service training for their pedagogic content knowledge.
3. Educational and Braille technologies are vital in teaching English to students with visual impairments. To provide holistic language learning experience for students with visual impairments, language teachers should be aware of emerging educational and Braille technologies. Thus, professional development opportunities regarding these technologies should be offered.

Lastly, to voice experiences of students with visual impairment and their academic journeys, awareness raising activities can be included in the mainstream curricula. Both teachers and students with visual impairments should take part in organization and implementation of such activities because they represent the first-hand accounts of experiences of students with visual impairments. Also, awareness raising activities need to be supported with interviews, field trips, and other extracurricular activities.

### **6.5. Suggestions for Further Research**

This doctoral study aimed to explore language teacher identity and cognition of teachers of students with visual impairments in the School for the Blind. To achieve this purpose, case study approach based on individual interviews, classroom observations, and field notes were conducted. One of the limitations of this study is that it is grounded on interview data with the support classroom observations. However, stimulated recall sessions can inform how language teacher identities are enacted in the classroom and how language teachers make use of their cognition when they teach English to students with visual impairments.

Secondly, this study focused on exploring experiences of English language teachers in the School for the Blind in terms of language teacher identity and cognition. To corroborate interview and observation data, including the participants' interactions with the administrative staff, classroom teachers, and students with visual impairments when they plan their instructional practices would possibly yield information about how language teachers of students with visual impairments form their identities and cognition.

Lastly, in the light of the limitations of this study, further research can focus on classroom discourse in the School for the Blind to uncover how language teacher identities are enacted. Also, classroom discourse studies can inform language teachers about the necessary skills and strategies they need in their language teacher cognition.



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## APPENDICES

### A. TABLE OF INTERVIEWS

Name of the Interview	Purpose	Type of Interviews	Duration	Focus Areas
<b>Individual Interview 1</b>	Gathering demographic information	Individual	60 minutes	Family background Educational background Personal characteristics Views about education/equality/disability Legal rights and regulations
<b>Individual Interview 2</b>	Exploring teacher education experiences	Individual	60 minutes	The selection of teaching career Experiences in teacher education program Courses related to content knowledge Courses related to pedagogical knowledge Courses related to pedagogical content knowledge Assessment and evaluation Teaching and learning materials Support diverse learners and learner characteristics Use of technology Personal and professional development
<b>Individual Interview 3</b>	Philosophy of education	Individual	60 minutes	Purpose of education Purpose of English language teaching Views about education/equality/disability/visual impairment
<b>Individual Interview 4</b>	Exploring initial teaching experiences	Individual	60 minutes	Teaching practicum Difficulties, challenges and advantages of becoming a language teacher Organization of his/her teaching Teaching and learning materials Classroom management Language skills Curriculum and curricular activities Assessment and evaluation Support diverse learners and learner characteristics

				Personal and professional development
<b>Individual Interview 5</b>	Understanding technology use	Individual	60 minutes	Use of technology in and out of the class Accessibility and technology
<b>Individual Interview 6</b>	Uncovering possible links between prior experiences and early career experiences	Individual	60 minutes	In-class teaching practices Material adaptation and development Curricula Differentiated instruction Classroom management
<b>Individual Interview 7</b>	Uncovering possible (mis)matches between education philosophy and actual teaching	Individual	60 minutes	Application of theory in practice Possible changes in teaching methods, practices, strategies Learner differences and needs
<b>Individual Interview 8</b>	Gathering information about teaching English to students with visual impairment	Individual	60 minutes	Definition of a teacher Awareness Teaching Adapting learning and teaching materials Assessment and evaluation Use of technology Legislation Accommodation of the needs Mentoring
<b>Individual Interview 9</b>	Gathering information about teaching English to students with visual impairment (II)	Individual Interview	60 minutes	Classroom management Providing equal access Differentiated syllabus Flexibility in course design Collaboration Professional and institutional support Psychical arrangements of the school setting
<b>Individual Interview 10</b>	Understanding the influence of the school on language teachers	Individual	60 minutes	Institutional approach to disability Available resources for students with disabilities Application of legal regulations Adaptation and accommodation of buildings and classrooms for students with disabilities Teachers' views about disability Opportunities for personal development of students with disabilities
<b>Individual Interview 11</b>	Understanding evolution of professional identity	Individual	60 minutes	Identity formation and evolution Teacher roles and identities Professional identity change Accessible school Curriculum

				Institutional Setting Opportunities to develop professionally Guidance and training for students with visual impairments
<b>Individual Interview 12</b>	Understanding social nature of professional identity	Individual	60 minutes	Teaching and learning experiences in a School for Blind Selection of School for Blind Social nature of teacher identity Collegial support Pre-service and in-service trainings

## B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Individual Interview 1: Gathering Demographic Information

1. Could you please talk about yourself?
2. How would you describe yourself?
3. Where did you study?
4. What were your schooling experiences in primary, secondary and higher school?
5. Where did you get your university education? Why? When?
6. How do you characterize your undergraduate education?
7. What are the changes in your personality throughout your education?
8. Can you please talk about your family?
9. What is your father/mother's occupation?
10. Do you have any sisters or brothers? If yes, do they have any impairments?
11. When did you lose your sight?
12. How has it affected you?
  
13. What were your strengths and weaknesses as a student?
14. What are your strengths and weaknesses as a teacher?
15. Why did you want to be a teacher?
16. What makes a good teacher?
17. What does education mean for you?

### Bireysel Mülakat 1: Demografik Bilgiler

1. Kendinizi tanıtır mısınız?
2. Kendinizi nasıl tanımlarsanız?
3. Eğitim hayatınızdan bahseder misiniz?
4. İlk, orta ve lise okul deneyimlerinizden bahseder misiniz?
5. Üniversite eğitiminizi nerede tamamladınız? Ne zaman? Neden?
6. Lisans eğitiminizi nasıl karakterize edersiniz?
7. Eğitiminiz boyunca kişiliğinizde ve düşüncelerinizdeki değişiklikler neler oldu?
8. Ailenizden bahseder misiniz?
9. Anne-babanızın mesleği nedir?
10. Kardeşleriniz var mı? Ailenizde engelli bir birey bulunuyor mu?
11. Görme yetinizi ne zaman kaybettiniz?
12. Bu durum sizi nasıl etkiledi?
13. Bir öğrenci olarak artı ve eksileriniz nelerdi?

14. Bir öğretmen olarak artı ve eksileriniz nelerdir?
15. Öğretmenlik mesleğini neden seçtiniz?
16. Sizce iyi bir öğretmenin özellikleri nelerdir?
17. Size göre eğitimin amacı ne olmalıdır?

### **Individual Interview 2: Exploring teacher education experiences**

1. When did you decide to be a teacher? Why?
2. Do you think that you will pursue further career in the teaching profession?
3. Are there any influential people who guide you in the teaching profession?
4. Why did you choose English language teaching program?
5. When and where did you get your teacher education?
6. What were your thoughts about the teaching profession prior to and during your teacher education?
7. Do you think that the program you were enrolled equipped you with the recent and relevant content knowledge?
8. Do you think that the program you were enrolled equipped you with the recent and relevant pedagogical knowledge?
9. Do you think that the program you were enrolled equipped you with the recent and relevant pedagogical content knowledge?
10. Did you receive any courses that involves preparing teaching and learning materials for students with special needs?
11. Did you receive any courses that involves preparing assessment and evaluation procedures for students with special needs?
12. In what ways are you making use of technology? Did you receive any special training in technology use?

### **Bireysel Mülakat 2: Öğretmen eğitimi deneyimleri**

1. Öğretmen olmaya ne zaman karar verdiniz? Neden?
2. Öğretmenlik mesleğine devam edeceğinizi düşünüyor musunuz?
3. Sizi öğretmenlik mesleğine yönlendiren birileri oldu mu? Bu yönlendirmenin size etkisi ne oldu?
4. İngilizce öğretmeni olmayı neden istediniz?
5. Öğretmen eğitiminizi ne zaman tamamladınız?
6. Öğretmen eğitimi öncesinde ve öğretmen eğitimi sırasındaki düşünceleriniz nelerdi?
7. Tamamladığınız programın sizi güncel bilgi ve becerilerle donattığını düşünüyor musunuz?
8. Özel gereksinimli öğrencilerin eğitimi konusunda bir ders aldınız mı?
9. Özel gereksinimli öğrencilerin pedagojik ihtiyaçlarını karşılamaya yönelik ders aldınız mı?
10. Özel gereksinimli öğrenciler için materyal geliştirme dersi aldınız mı?
11. Özel gereksinimli öğrencilerin ölçme ve değerlendirme süreçlerini yönetmenize yardımcı olacak bir ders aldınız mı?

12. Okul ve sınıf içerisinde teknolojiyi nasıl kullanıyorsunuz?

### **Individual Interview 3: Philosophy of education**

1. What is your philosophy of education?
2. What is the purpose of education for you?
3. What is the purpose of language teaching and learning?
4. How can one achieve your philosophy of education?
5. What are the necessary components of your philosophy of education?
6. What are your views on students with disabilities?
7. What are your views on schools for students with special needs?
8. Are there any (mis)matches between your views and your teaching? Why? How? In what ways?
9. Do you think that students with disabilities can achieve and complete their education journey with success? If yes/no, why?
10. Does the current education system equip students with disabilities with the relevant skills?

### **Bireysel Mülakat 3: Eğitim Felsefesi**

1. Eğitim felsefenizi anlatır mısınız?
2. Eğitimin amacı size göre nedir?
3. Dil eğitiminin amacı ne olmalıdır?
4. Sizin eğitim felsefenizi hayata geçirmek için neler yapılmalıdır?
5. Eğitim felsefenizin ana noktaları nelerdir?
6. Engelli öğrenciler hakkındaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?
7. Engelli öğrenci okulları hakkındaki düşünceleriniz nelerdir?
8. Düşünceleriniz ve öğretmenliğiniz arasında eşleşmeyen noktalar var mı? Neden? Nasıl?
9. Engelli öğrencilerin eğitim süreçlerini başarıyla tamamlayabileceğine dair düşünceleriniz nelerdir?
10. Mevcut eğitim sistemimizin engelli öğrencileri gerekli bilgi ve becerilerle donattığını düşünüyor musunuz?

### **Individual Interview 4: Exploring initial teaching experiences**

1. Can you talk about your experiences in the teaching practicum? When was it? Where?
2. How do you define your initial teaching experiences?
3. Did you teach prior to teaching practicum?
4. What were your thoughts about the difficulties challenges and advantages of becoming a language teacher?
5. Were there any changes in your thoughts about the teaching profession? Why?
6. Did you receive any support from faculty members, cooperating teachers or any other significant person?

7. How did you organize your teaching?
8. Did you teach English language holistically? Did you teach any language skill course? If yes, what were the differences?
9. Did you have any problem related to classroom management?
10. Did you prepare any teaching and learning materials? How did you characterize this process?
11. What were the curricular demands during the teaching practicum? What were your thoughts about the curricula?
12. Have you encountered any students with special needs during the teaching practicum? If yes, what were your opinions about the student(s)?
13. Did you participate any professional development trainings? How was your experience?

#### **Bireysel Mülakat 4: İlk Öğretmenlik Deneyimleri**

1. Stajerlik döneminizden bahseder misiniz? Ne zaman ve nerede yaptınız?
2. İlk öğretmenlik deneyimlerinizi nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
3. Stajerlik döneminizden önce hiç ders anlattınız mı?
4. İngilizce öğretmeni olmanın avantaj ve dezavantajlarının neler olduğunu düşünüyor muydunuz?
5. Stajerlik döneminden sonra öğretmenlik mesleği hakkındaki düşünceleriniz değişti mi? Neden?
6. Stajerlik döneminizde kimlerden destek aldınız?
7. Öğretim şeklinizi nasıl organize ettiniz?
8. Dil eğitimi nasıl gerçekleştirdiniz? Hiç beceri dersi verdiniz mi? Farklılar nelerdi?
9. Sınıf yönetimi konusunda ne gibi sorunlarla karşılaştınız?
10. Ders materyalleri hazırladınız mı? Hazırladıysanız bu süreci nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
11. Stajerlik döneminizdeki müfredat nasıldı? Müfredat konusundaki düşünceleriniz nelerdir?
12. Stajerlik döneminizde özel gereksinimli öğrencilerle karşılaştınız mı? Bu öğrenciler hakkındaki düşünceleriniz nelerdi?
13. Stajerlik döneminizde mesleki gelişim programlarına katıldınız mı?

#### **Individual Interview 5: Technology Use**

1. In what areas do you use technological devices?
2. What is your opinion about technology and language teaching?
3. Do you think that technology is important for students with special needs?
4. How do your students use technology during the class?
5. How do your students use technology out of the class?
6. In what ways do you make use of technology in the class?

### **Bireysel Mülakat 5: Teknoloji kullanımı**

1. Teknolojik cihazları nerelerde ve nasıl kullanıyorsunuz?
2. Teknoloji ve dil eğitimi konusundaki düşünceleriniz nelerdir?
3. Özel gereksinimli öğrenciler ve teknoloji hakkındaki düşünceleriniz nelerdir?
4. Sınıf içerisinde öğrencilerinizin teknolojiyi nasıl kullanıyorsunuz?
5. Sınıf dışında öğrencilerinizin teknoloji kullanımı nasıl gerçekleşiyor?
6. Ders anlatımında teknolojiyi nasıl kullanıyorsunuz?

### **Individual Interview 6 & 7: Uncovering possible links between prior experiences and early career experiences**

1. What are your teaching practices, strategies and techniques? Why?
2. How do you adapt, adopt or develop your teaching materials?
3. In what ways do you make curricular adjustments?
4. Do you apply differentiated instruction? If yes,
5. In what ways do you differentiate your instruction?
6. When do you differentiate your instruction?
7. Why do you differentiate your instruction?
8. What are the pros and cons of your classroom management style?
9. What is the role of technology in the class?
10. How do you overcome the lack of vision while teaching English?
11. Do you see any differences in your philosophy of education and your teaching practices?
12. When differences occur, how do you resolve these differences?
13. How do you relate your teaching education, initial teaching experiences and teaching English in a School for Blind?
14. In what ways do you make use of your prior experiences?
15. How do you seek for opportunities to develop professionally?
16. What are the institutional demands on your English language teaching?

### **Bireysel Mülakat 6 & 7: Öğretmenlik öncesi ve sonrası deneyimler arasındaki bağlantı**

1. Ders öğretim teknik ve yöntemleriniz nelerdir? Neden?
2. Ders materyallerini nasıl geliştiriyorsunuz?
3. Müfredat üzerinde değişiklikler yapıyor musunuz? Neden?
4. Bireyselleştirilmiş eğitim yöntemlerini kullanıyor musunuz? Neden?
5. Ders öğretim yöntem ve tekniklerini nasıl farklılaştırıyorsunuz?
6. Ne zaman ders öğretim yöntem ve tekniklerini nasıl farklılaştırıyorsunuz?
7. Neden ders öğretim yöntem ve tekniklerini nasıl farklılaştırıyorsunuz?
8. Sınıf yönetimi tarzınızın eksi ve artıları nelerdir?
9. Teknolojinin sınıf içindeki rolü nedir?
10. Öğrencilerinin görme yetisi eksikliğiyle nasıl baş ediyorsunuz?
11. Öğretim yönteminiz ve eğitim felsefeniz arasında farklılıklar görüyor musunuz?
12. Öğretim yönteminiz ve eğitim felsefeniz arasında farklılıklar olduğunda, bu farklılıkları nasıl gideriyorsunuz?



13. Öğretmenlik eğitiminizi, ilk öğretmenlik deneyimlerinizi ve Görme Engelliler okulundaki öğretmenliğinizi nasıl ilişkilendiriyorsunuz?
14. Ders anlatımlarınızda, önceki deneyimlerinizden nasıl faydalanıyorsunuz?
15. Mesleki gelişim için neler yapıyorsunuz?
16. Kurumsal olarak İngilizce öğretimine bir müdahale var mı? Neden?

### **Individual Interview 8 & 9: Gathering information about teaching English to students with visual impairment**

1. Do you think that there is a difference between being a teacher in a regular school and in a school for blind?
2. How do you define a teacher?
3. Have you been aware of the ways you can apply when you teach English to students with visual impairments?
4. What are the possible differences and similarities between SVI and other students?
5. When you need, do you collaborate with other language teachers in the school?
6. What is your primary concern when you teach English to students with visual impairments?
7. Do you receive any institutional support in teaching English to SVI?
8. Do you think that the school is accessible for SVI?
9. Do you have flexibility in your course design? How? When?
10. Do you think that school for blind is equally accessible for all students with visual impairment?
11. What are the disability-related challenges to classroom management?

### **Bireysel Mülakat 8&9: Görme Engelli öğrencilere dil eğitimi**

1. Görme engelliler okulunda ve diğer okullarda öğretmen olmanın bir farkı olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
2. Öğretmeni nasıl tanımlarsınız?
3. Görme engelli öğrenciler için uyguladığınız farklı bir yöntem var mı?
4. Görme engelli öğrenciler ve diğer öğrenciler arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıklar nelerdir?
5. İhtiyacınız olduğunda, diğer öğretmenlerle iş birliği yapıyor musunuz?
6. Görme engelli öğrencilere İngilizce öğretirken odağınız ne oluyor?
7. Dil eğitiminde kurumsal bir destek alıyor musunuz?
8. Okulun görme engelli öğrenciler için erişilebilir olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
9. Ders planlamanızda esneklikler yapabiliyor musunuz? Neden? Nasıl?
10. Okulunuzun bütün görme engelliler için erişilebilir olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
11. Sınıf yönetiminizde engellilikten kaynaklı zorluklar nelerdir?

### **Individual Interview 10: Institutional Influence on Language Teachers**

1. What is the institutional approach to disability?
2. What are the available resources for SVI?
3. How do you make use of available resources?
4. Are you aware of legal regulations and applications when you teach English to SVI?
5. What are your opinions about disability, visual impairment, school for blind and language teaching?
6. What are the activities and professional development opportunities during the seminars?
7. Do you think that the needs of the teachers with VI are met?
8. If you are to change the school's policy in teaching SVI, what are the changes you would make?
9. Which school policies do you support? Why?

### **Bireysel Mülakat 10: Öğretmen Üzerindeki Kurumsal Etki**

1. Engellilik hakkındaki kurumsal politikanız nedir?
2. Görme engelli öğrenciler için halihazırdaki kaynaklar nelerdir?
3. Siz bu kaynakları nasıl kullanıyorsunuz?
4. Yasal düzenlemeler hakkında bilginiz var mı?
5. Engellilik, görme engeli, Görme Engelliler okulu ve dil eğitimi hakkındaki düşünceleriniz nelerdir?
6. Seminer dönemindeki mesleki gelişim etkinlikleriniz nelerdir?
7. Görme engelli öğretmenlerin ihtiyaçlarının karşılandığını düşünüyor musunuz?
8. Kurum politikasını değiştirmeniz istenirse, hangi politikaları değiştirmek istersiniz?
9. Hangi kurumsal politikaları destekliyorsunuz? Neden?

### **Individual Interview 11 & 12: Understanding the process of professional identity formation in a School for Blind**

1. What is professional teacher identity for you?
2. How do you define teachers' professional identity?
3. What are the components of professional teacher identity?
4. Do you think that teacher identity is subject to change or stability?
5. How can one start to form a professional teacher identity in the school for blind?
6. What are the teacher roles in the class?
7. What are the teacher roles out of the class?
8. Do you think that the institutional setting has influence on professional teacher identity?
9. Do you receive any guidance and training prior to teaching SVI?

10. Do you receive any guidance and training during the teaching in school for blind?
11. Did you deliberately choose to become a language teacher in the School for Blind?
12. How do your pre-service and in-service experiences shape your professional identity?
13. Do you think that opportunities to develop professional can enhance and improve one' professional identity? If yes,
14. In what ways do you think that opportunities to develop professional can enhance and improve one' professional identity?

**Bireysel Mülakat 11 & 12: Görme Engelliler okulunda mesleki kimlik edinme**

1. Profesyonel meslek kimliği sizce nedir?
2. Bir öğretmenin mesleki kimliğini nasıl tanımlarsınız?
3. Öğretmen mesleki kimliğin ana parçaları nelerdir?
4. Mesleki kimliğin değişikliklere açık olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
5. Görme engelliler okulunda mesleki kimlik inşası nasıl gerçekleşiyor?
6. Sınıf içinde öğretmen rolleri nelerdir?
7. Sınıf dışında öğretmen rolleri nelerdir?
8. Kurumsal bağlamın öğretmen mesleki kimliğine etkisi olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
9. Görme engelliler okuluna gelmeden önce bu gruba eğitim verebilmek için herhangi bir destek aldınız mı?
10. Görme engelli öğrencilere eğitim verirken herhangi bir destek alıyor musunuz?
11. Görme engelliler okulunda öğretmen olmayı isteyerek mi seçtiniz?
12. Öğretmenlik eğitimi ve hizmet içi eğitim mesleki kimliğini nasıl etkiledi?
13. Kişisel gelişim imkanlarının varlığının öğretmen mesleki kimliğine etki edebileceğini düşünüyor musunuz?
14. Hangi alanlarda kişisel gelişim imkanlarının varlığının öğretmen mesleki kimliğine etki edebilir?

### C. TABLE OF OBSERVATIONS

<b>Name of the Observation</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Focus Areas</b>
<b>School Environment Observation</b>	Gathering demographic information 1	40 minutes	School setting School environment School facilities
<b>Classroom Observation 1</b>	Gathering demographic information 2	40 minutes	Classroom setting Classroom environment Number of students Classroom facilities
<b>Classroom Observation 2</b>	Philosophy of education	40 minutes	Purpose of education Purpose of English language teaching Views about education/equality/disability/visual impairment
<b>Classroom Observation 3</b>	Exploring teaching experiences	40 minutes	Difficulties, challenges and advantages of English language teaching Learner differences and needs
<b>Classroom Observation 4</b>	Understanding technology use	40 minutes	Technology use in class Accessibility Learner differences and needs
<b>Classroom Observation 5</b>	Uncovering possible links between prior experiences and early career experiences	40 minutes	Teaching practices Classroom management Material design Curricula
<b>Classroom Observation 6</b>	Uncovering possible (mis)matches between education philosophy and actual teaching	40 minutes	Theory vs. Practice Changes in teachers' English language teaching practices

<b>Classroom Observation 7</b>	Gathering information about teaching English to students with visual impairment	40 minutes	Disability awareness Flexibility in teaching practices Professional and institutional support
<b>Classroom Observation 8</b>	Understanding evolution of professional identity	40 minutes	Identity formation and evolution Teacher roles and identities Professional identity change Accessible school Curriculum Institutional Setting Opportunities to develop professionally Guidance and training for students with visual impairments
<b>Classroom Observation 9</b>	Understanding the influence of the school on language teachers	40 minutes	Institutional approach to disability Available resources for students with disabilities Application of legal regulations Adaptation and accommodation of buildings and classrooms for students with disabilities Teachers' views about disability Opportunities for personal development of students with disabilities
<b>Classroom Observation 10</b>	Understanding social nature of professional identity	40 minutes	Teaching and learning experiences in a School for Blind Selection of School for Blind Social nature of teacher identity Collegial support Pre-service and in-service trainings
<b>Classroom Observation 11</b>	Exploring possible links between teacher cognition and professional identity	40 minutes	Teaching philosophy and actual teaching Changes in teaching methods, strategies and practices

## D. OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

**Date:**

**Duration:**

**Number of Participants:**

**Pseudonyms:**

Duration	What were the teaching practices, techniques and methods?	What was the focus of the lesson?	What did language teacher do?	What did the students do?	Researcher's comments
0-10 minutes					
10-20 minutes					
20-30 minutes					
30-40 minutes					

## E. TIMELINE OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Participant	Date	Grade	Duration
<b>Merve</b>	23 October 2019	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	04 December 2019	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	11 December 2019	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	08 January 2020	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	15 January 2020	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	05 February 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	05 February 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	12 February 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	19 February 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	26 February 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	11 March 2020	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	Total: 11 Classroom Observations		Total: 440 Minutes
<b>Mustafa</b>	23 October 2019	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	23 October 2019	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	30 October 2019	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	30 October 2019	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	13 November 2019	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	11 December 2019	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	25 December 2019	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	05 February 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	12 February 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	12 February 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	19 February 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	26 February 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	11 March 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	40 Minutes
	Total: 13 Classroom Observations	Total: 520 Minutes	

## F. TIMELINE OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Participant	Date	Duration
<b>Merve</b>	30 October 2019	36 Minutes
	06 November 2019	25 Minutes
	13 November 2019	34 Minutes
	08 January 2020	35 Minutes
	15 January 2020	36 Minutes
	12 February 2020	25 Minutes
	19 February 2020	40 Minutes
	04 March 2020	25 Minutes
	11 March 2020	35 minutes
	Total: 9 Interviews	Total: 291 Minutes
<b>Mustafa</b>	30 October 2019	50 Minutes
	13 November 2019	38 Minutes
	11 December 2019	39 Minutes
	25 December 2019	45 Minutes
	08 January 2020	38 Minutes
	15 January 2020	35 Minutes
	05 February 2020	44 Minutes
	12 February 2020	48 Minutes
	19 February 2020	45 Minutes
	04 March 2020	44 Minutes
	Total: 10 Interviews	Total: 426 Minutes
<b>Rosalinda</b>	30 October 2019	50 Minutes
	13 November 2019	51 Minutes
	04 December 2019	76 Minutes
	11 December 2019	67 Minutes
	08 January 2020	38 Minutes
	15 January 2020	42 Minutes
	05 February 2020	36 Minutes
	12 February 2020	47 Minutes
	19 February 2020	60 Minutes
	04 March 2020	45 Minutes
	Total: 10 Interviews	Total: 514 Minutes



## G. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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Sayı: 28620816/317

01 AĞUSTOS 2019

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (IAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Prof. Dr. Ayşegül DALOĞLU

Danışmanlığını yaptığımız Halil İbrahim ÇINARBAŞ'ın "Görme Engelli Öğrencilerin Öğretmenlerinin Öğretmen Bilişselliği ve Mesleki Kimlik Edinimi Üzerine Bir Vaka Çalışması" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve 297 ODTÜ 2019 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

Prof. Dr. Tülin GENÇÖZ

Başkan

Prof. Dr. Tolga CAN

Üye

Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şerife SEVİNÇ

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Süreyya Özcan KABASAKAL

Üye

## H. CURRICULUM VITAE

# Halil İbrahim Çınarbaş

English Language Instructor

### Personal details

Name Halil İbrahim Çınarbaş

Email address

Phone number

### Education

2016 - 2022 ■ Ph. D. English Language Teaching  
Middle East Technical University, Ankara  
GPA: 3.79/4.0

2014 - 2016 ■ M.A. English Language Teaching  
Middle East Technical University, Ankara  
GPA: 3.4/4.0

2010 - 2014 ■ B. A. English Language Teaching  
Zirve University, Gaziantep  
GPA: 3.7/4.0

### Employment

Sep 2020 - Present ■ English Language Instructor  
Abdullah Gul University, Kayseri

- Teaching isolated English language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening)
- Developing authentic language teaching materials and practice assessments
- Preparing and proctoring exams
- Tutoring new instructors
- Organizing professional development training
- Standardizing speaking assessment rubric

2018 - 2020 ■ English Language Instructor & Head of Foreign Languages Department  
Anlam Okulları, Ankara

- Prepared and conducted curricular and extracurricular calendar
- Taught English to kindergarten, primary, and secondary school students
- Organized international assessment and evaluation processes
- Evaluated curriculum and selected coursebook
- Developed and (re)adapted English language teaching materials
- Preparing and proctoring exams
- Organized and offered professional development seminars and training
- Conducted teacher evaluation observations

2017 - 2018 ■ English Language Instructor  
Final Okulları, Ankara

- Taught English to 9, 10 and 11th graders
- Organized assessment and evaluation processes
- Evaluated curriculum and selected additional coursebook
- Developed and (re)adapted English language teaching materials
- Prepared students about standardized tests
- Prepared and proctored exams
- Provided psychological counseling and guidance

2014 - 2016 ■ Research Assistant  
Zirve University, Gaziantep

## Publications

- Scheduled courses, mid-term and final examinations
- Administered department's social media websites
- Administered faculty website pages
- Proctoring exams (120 exams per year)
- Organized department meetings
- Preparing meeting minutes
- Conducted and reported teacher evaluation questionnaires
- Prepared handouts, exam papers and other teaching materials
- Translated official documents
- Serving as a substitute instructor
- Mentored students

### Thesis

- Cinarbas, H. I. (2022). Language Teacher Cognition and Professional Teacher Identity Formation of Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments: A Case Study (Ph. D. Dissertation), Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- Cinarbas, H. I. (2016). Experiences of Students with Disabilities in an English Language Teacher Education Program: A Case Study on Preservice Teachers with Visual Impairments (MA thesis). Middle East Technical University, Ankara.

### International Publications

- Cinarbas, H. I. & Hos, R. (2020). Access to Higher Education for Visually Impaired Students in Turkey: Disclosure, Inclusion, and Oppression of Two Pre-Service Teachers. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*
- Hos, R., Cinarbas, H. I. & Yagci, H. (2019). A Head-Start to Teaching: Exploring the Early Field Experiences in Pre-service EFL Education in Turkey. *International Journal of Teacher Education and Professional Development*, 2(2), 68-84.
- Hos, R., & Cinarbas, H. I. (2018). Learning to Teach in a Global Crisis: Teachers' Insights from a Temporary Non-Formal Refugee Education Project in Gaziantep. *Global Education Review*, 5(4), 182-193.
- Hos, R., & Cinarbas, H. I. (2017). Education interrupted: English education policy from the rubble in Syria. In R. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *English Language Education Policy in the Middle East and North Africa* (pp. 223-234). doi:10.1007/978-3-319-46778-8\_13
- Cinarbas, H. I. & Hos, R., (2016). Cultural Responsiveness in EFL Teaching: Reflections from Native Instructors. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, 4 (2), 27-39
- Cinarbas, H. I. (2015). Academic Migration, Realities, and Challenges. Retrieved from NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [http://www.nafsa.org/Resource\\_Library\\_Assets/Networks/RS/Book\\_Reviews/Academic\\_Migration,\\_Realities,\\_and\\_Challenges/](http://www.nafsa.org/Resource_Library_Assets/Networks/RS/Book_Reviews/Academic_Migration,_Realities,_and_Challenges/)

### National Publications

- Cinarbas, H. I. (2018). But I am a Ph. D. Student: Professional Identity Construction through Initial Career Experiences of a Novice Language Teacher in an EFL Setting. *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching*, 3 (3), 140-157
- Cinarbas, H. I., Hos, R., (2018). Systematic Review of Professional Development Programs for Language Teachers over ten years: Regional Perspectives. *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching*, 3(2), 42-63.
- Cinarbas, H. I., Hos, R., & Yagci, H. (2016). Turkish EFL Students' Perceptions About Blended English Courses in a Teacher Education Program. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Research*, 2(3), 959-972.
- Cinarbas H. I. (2016). 8. Bölüm Çevirisi (Sınıf Yönetimi Stratejileri), İlgisiz Öğrenci Davranışlarına Sistematik Yaklaşım, Translation Editors: Dr. Rabia Hoş ve Dr. Mustafa Toprak (Author: James S. Cangelosi, 7th Edition), Nobel Yayıncılık, Ankara.
- Cinarbas, H. I. (2015). 5. Bölüm Çevirisi (Grounded Teoride Kodlama

## Refereed Conference Presentations

Uygulama Yöntemleri ve Başlangıç Kodlaması Mantığı), Gömülü (Grounded) Teori Yapılandırma: Nitel Analiz Uygulama Rehberi (Constructing Grounded Theory), Translation Editor: Dr. Rabia Hoş (Author: Kathy Charmaz, 2nd Edition), Seçkin Yayıncılık, 2015 ANKARA.

- Cinarbas, H. I. (2015). 6. Bölüm çevirisi (Odaklı Kodlama ve Dahası), Gömülü (Grounded) Teori Yapılandırma: Nitel Analiz Uygulama Rehberi (Constructing Grounded Theory), Çeviri Editörü: Dr. Rabia Hoş (Yazarlar: Kathy Charmaz, 2. Baskı), Seçkin Yayıncılık, Ankara.
- Cinarbas, H.I. & Daloglu, A. (to be presented). Teaching English to Visually Impaired Students: Implications for Teacher Identity and Cognition, TESOL 2022 International Convention and Language Expo, 22-25 March, 2022
- Cinarbas, H. I. & Hos, R. (to be presented). Problematizing the Native Speaker Illusion: Emerging Issues in Turkey, TESOL 2022 International Convention and Language Expo, 22-25 March, 2022
- Hos, R. & Cinarbas, H. I. (2019). Learning to Teach in a Global Crisis: Teachers' Insights from a Temporary Non-Formal Refugee Education Project in Gaziantep, EARLI, 12-16 August, 2019
- Cinarbas, H. I. & Yağcı H. (2015). Turkish ELT Students' Perceptions about Blended English Courses. 12th ODTÜ International ELT Convention: Celebrating Diversity, Middle East Technical University, 25-26 May, 2015
- Cinarbas, H.I., Çepik, Ş., & Büyükçelebi, M. (2015). Improving Writing Skills of Language Learners Through Extracurricular Tech Activities. IATEFL TTEd SIG CONFERENCE, 22-26 April 2015
- Cinarbas, H. I. (2014). Seeing Through the Eyes of Blind: A Case Study of an EFL Undergraduate Student. Maltepe University International Student Congresses: The Young Teachers Of The Future Discuss The Teaching Profession, Maltepe University, 17-18 April.
- Cinarbas, H. I. (2014). Attitudes, Knowledge and Experiences of University Instructors about Students with Disabilities. The Fourth Hacettepe University English Language Teaching Undergraduate Students Conference: On the way to teach English: Trends and Challenges, 8-9 May, 2014.
- Cinarbas, H. I. (2014). A Case of an Exceptional Student in an Undergraduate ELT Program. The Fourth Hacettepe University English Language Teaching Undergraduate Students Conference: On the way to teach English: Trends and Challenges, 8-9 May, 2014.

## Professional Development

- Writing Development by Discourse and Corpus Research Group, Invited Speaker Session: Dr. Phil Durrant, January, 21, 2021
- Creative Teaching Resources & Ideas Presented by Manjit Breyal, YDS Publishing and Kolibri Education, May, 26, 2020
- Listening-Summarize Spoken Text: Tips and Strategies Presented by Berk Kavas, Pearson, May 20, 2020
- Online Teacher Education: Good Practices and Challenges, Association for Teacher Education in Europe, May 15, 2020
- Education Now: Teaching to Navigate Challenge and Uncertainty Presented by Richard Weissbound, Sarah Dryden-Peterson, Ana Tavares, Harvard Graduate School of Education, May 13, 2020
- Tips and Hints for Learners Taking Online Tests Presented by Tony Gurr, Pearson, May 12, 2020
- EFL Teachers' Language Assessment Knowledge Presented by Hossein Farhadry, International Teacher Training College, May 9, 2020
- The Future of Englishes Presented by David Crystal, International Teacher Training College, May 9, 2020
- Exclusive Inspirational Talks 5.5: Stay Home Edition Conference Presented by Chris Sheen, Scoot Thornburry, Dr. Joan Kang Shin, Maya Schools, May 9, 2020
- Advice and Ideas for Staying Motivated, Learning English Online - and Going Beyond the Test! Presented by Dr. Tony Gurr, Pearson, May 5, 2020
- Home Fun: Storyworking - keeping distance teaching alive! Presented by Jane Ritte, Cambridge, May 4, 2020

## Scholarships and Awards

- Reflective Teaching Presented by Abdollah Nazari, International Teacher Training College, May 2, 2020
  - Quick Introduction to Visualization Tools Presented by Julia Gerson, MAXQDA, March 27, 2020
  - Remote Teaching and Learning that Lasts Presented by Dr. Tony Gurr, April 22, 2020
  - Key Survival Tips and Hints for Teachers presented by Dr. Tony Gurr, April 20, 2020
  - 5th Exclusive Inspirational Talks: Go Beyond Borders, Maya Okulları, 2020, Ankara, Turkey
  - Using Assistive Technology (I-pads) for Students with Visual Impairments, Apple Education, 2014, Gaziantep
  - International Symposium on Changes and Trends in Education, Necmettin Erbakan University, 2013, Konya
  - The Chesnut That Started All: Rapport Building and Ice Breakers in Classroom, Zirve University, 2013, Gaziantep
  - I.D.E.A.S Youth in Action Program, Anadolu University, 2013, Eskişehir
  - Early Childhood Education and Child Rights, Zirve University, 2012, Gaziantep
- 
- Grant Program for Participation in Scientific Meetings Abroad by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey
  - Government Scholarship for 4 years of Ph. D. studies
  - Government Scholarship for 2 years of MA studies
  - Government Scholarship for 4 years of Undergraduate Education
  - Zirve University Scholarship Plus for 4 years of Undergraduate Education

## I. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

### 1. Giriş

İngiliz dili eğitimi alanındaki gelişmeler eğitimcileri kimin bu dili öğrettiği, kimin bu dili öğrendiği ve neden öğrendiği konularındaki varsayımlarını sorgulamalarını desteklemektedir (Canagarajah, 2016) çünkü uluslararası ve ulusal literatür eğitim alanındaki farklılıkların kabulüne odaklanmıştır. Bu nedenle, bütün öğretmenlerin bütün öğrencilerle başarılı bir şekilde çalışması hedeflenmektedir (Keane et al, 2018).

Bu bağlamda, OECD, Birleşmiş Milletler ve Dünya Sağlık Örgütü gibi uluslararası kuruluşların da katkısıyla engelli bireyler hakkındaki ana tutumlar sorgulanmıştır. Bu kuruluşlar engelli olan bireylerin eğitim, iş ve diğer alanlara erişiminin önündeki problem ve bariyerleri en aza indirmeyi hedeflemektedir. Fakat, eğitim araştırmaları gösteriyor ki eğitim alanında öğretmen ve öğrenci popülasyonu hala baskın sosyal-ekonomik ve etnik gruplardan oluşmaktadır. Böylesi bir durumda engeli olan öğretmen ve öğrenciler var olan eğitim araştırmalarında daha az görünmektedir.

Türkiye bağlamına bakıldığında, Türkiye’de 1517 özel eğitim okulu bulunmakta ve yaklaşık 426 bin engeli olan öğrenci bu okullarda eğitim görmektedir. Ayrıca bu okullarda çeşitli branşlardan yaklaşık 17 bin öğretmen görev yapmaktadır. Görme engelliler özelinde, Türkiye’de toplamda 38 görme engelliler okulu bulunduğu, bu okullarda 1081 öğrencinin eğitimlerine devam ettiği ve 508 öğretmenin görev yaptığı tespit edilmiştir.

Bu nedenle, görme engelliler okulunda çalışan öğretmenlerin deneyimlerinin araştırılması hem bu öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarının karşılanmasında hem de görme engellilere dil öğretiminin iyileştirilmesine katkıda bulunacaktır.

## 2. Problem

Öğretmenlerin bildiklerini nasıl öğrendikleri, belirli kavramların öğretmenlerin bilinçlerinde zamanla nasıl geliştiği ve bu öğretmenlerin öğrenme süreçlerinin kendi öğretme süreçlerine nasıl dönüştürdükleri araştırılması önemli alanlardır (Johnson, 2009) çünkü öğretmen bilişselliği olarak adlandırılan bu alan hem öğretmenlerin pedagojik yaklaşımlarına ışık tutarken hem de öğrencilerin akademik başarısına katkıda bulunmaktadır (Li , 2020).

Öğretmen bilişselliğinin yanı sıra, öğretmenler aktif bir şekilde öğrencilerin akademik başarısına etki etmektedir. Son on yıldaki araştırmalar, bu bağlamda, öğretmen mesleki kimliğinin eğitimsel kararları üzerine etkisini araştırmış olsa da, öğretmen kimliğinin nasıl geliştiği, hangi faktörlerin etki ettiği ve bütüncül olarak öğretmen kimliğinin öğretmen ve öğrencilerin motivasyonuna nasıl etki ettiği konusu önemini korumaktadır (Schutz et al, 2018).

Öğretmen kimliği ve bilişselliği konularını mevcut literatürde farklı teorik ve pratik kurgularla çalışılmış olsa da bu konuların engeli olan öğrencilerin eğitime etkisi konusuyula ilişkisi hakkında çalışmaların sayısı oldukça azdır. Literatürdeki bu boşluğu doldurabilmek için, bu vaka çalışmasında görme engelliler okulunda çalışan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğretmen kimliği ve bilişselliğinin araştırması amaçlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda, aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına cevap aranmıştır.

- Görme engelli öğrencilerin engeli olan ve olmayan öğretmenlerinin öğretmen bilişselliği nelerdir?
  - Bu öğretmenlerin önceki öğrenme süreçleri öğretmen bilişselliğini nasıl etkilemektedir?
  - Bu öğretmenlerin belirtmiş oldukları inanç, tutum ve bilgileri sınıf içi pratikleriyle ne kadar uyumaktadır?
  - Görme engelinin öğretmen bilişselliği üzerine etkisi var mıdır? Varsa, görme engeli öğretmen bilişselliğine nasıl etki etmektedir?
- Görme engelli öğrencilerin engeli olan ve olmayan öğretmenlerinin öğretmen kimliği nasıl oluşmaktadır?
  - Öğretmen kimliği edinimi süreci bu iki grup arasında hangi alanlarda farklılık göstermektedir?

- Bu öğretmenleri öğretmen kimliği edinimine hangi faktörler etki etmektedir?
- Görme engelliler okulunun öğretmen kimliğinin yeniden şekillenmesine olası etkileri nelerdir?

### **3. Literatür Taraması**

Bu bölümde öğretmen bilişselliği, öğretmen kimliği ve görme engelli öğrencilerin öğretmenleri alanlarındaki literatür taranmıştır. Belirtilen konulardaki literatürde çıkan önemli konular ve gelişmeler raporlanmıştır.

#### **3.1 Öğretmen Bilişselliği**

Öğretmenlerin sınıf içindeki pratikleri ve zihin dünyaları arasında bir bağ olduğunu düşünülmektedir ve öğretmenin öğretimini geliştirmesinin yolunun düşünce biçimini geliştirmesiyle mümkün olduğu belirtilmiştir (Tiilikainen et al., 2019). Bu bağlamda, öğretmen bilişselliği iki ana konu üzerinde durmaktadır: (1) öğretmenlerin inanç, tutum ve bilgileriyle birlikte, önceki deneyimlerinin öğretmen bilişselliğine etkisi ve (2) bu konuların öğretmenlerin sınıf içi öğretim yöntem ve teknikleri arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıklar.

Öğretmen bilişselliğini anlayabilmek için bu kavramın nelerden oluştuğunu bilmek gereklidir. Mevcut ampirik ve teorik çalışmalar, öğretmen bilişselliğinin pedagojik, pedagojik alan ve alan bilgisinden oluştuğunu ortaya koymaktadır (Shulman, 1987). Pedagojik bilginin öğretmenlerin sınıf yönetimi, motivasyonu sağlama, ölçme ve değerlendirme ve öğrenciler hakkında bilgi sahibi olma gibi alt alanları vardır. Bunun yanı sıra, pedagojik bilginin bağlama dayalı ve dinamik olduğu saptanmıştır. Öğretmenler pedagojik bilgileriyle eğitimin genel organizasyonunu sağlamaktadır.

Diğer yandan, pedagojik alan bilgisi ise öğretmenin alanının ve pedagojik bilgisinin özel bir birleşimi olarak kabul görmektedir. Bu nedenle, pedagojik alan bilgisi bir öğretmenin öğrettiği alanı uzman bir bakış açısıyla değerlendirmesine yardımcı olmaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle, pedagojik alan bilgisi, bir öğretmenin kendi alanını öğretme ve öğrenmeye uygun hale getirmesidir (Borg, 2006).

Son olarak, bir öğretmenin öğrettiği alanı kendisi bilmiyorsa, bu alanı öğretmez (Loewen, 1995). Bu bakış açısı bir öğretmenin alan bilgisi olarak



tanımlanmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin kendi alanlarındaki uzmanlığı göstermeleri beklenmektedir.

Öğretmen bilişselliği alanındaki ampirik çalışmalar birçok alt alanı kapsamaktadır. İlk olarak, hizmet öncesi eğitimin öğretmen bilişselliği üzerine etkisine bakılmıştır. Mevcut çalışmalar, özellikle staj döneminin öğretmen adaylarının bilişselliğine katkıda bulunduğu, öğretmenlerin danışmanlarından aldıkları dönütlerle pedagojik alan bilgilerini şekillendirdikleri gözlenmiştir (Wei & Lu, 2022). Bunun yanı sıra, hizmet içi eğitimlerin de öğretmen bilişselliğini şekillendirdiğini, öğretmenlerin pedagojik, pedagojik alan ve alan bilgilerini geliştirdikleri belirlenmiştir (Chou, 2008). Yakın zamandaki çalışmalar ise, öğretmen bilişselliğini birçok açıdan ele almaya çalışmıştır. Öğretmenlerin kültürel yeterlilikleri, merkezi sınavlara hazırlık süreçleri, sosyal medya kullanımı, lisansüstü eğitimlere katılımları, kurumsal standartlar karşısındaki yaklaşımları ve yansıtıcı öğretme yönteminin öğretmen bilişselliği üzerine etkisi araştırılmıştır.

### **3.2 Öğretmen Kimliği**

Kimlik çalışmaları İngiliz dili eğitimi alanında son yıllarda vurgulanan bir konudur çünkü öğretmen mesleki kimliğini anlamak, bireysel ve eğitimin makro dinamikleri arasındaki bağı kurmaya yardımcı olmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, mesleki kimlik iki farklı teorik çevrede tanımlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Öncelikle mesleki kimliğin stabil ve bütünlüyci karakter özelliği olduğu düşünülmüştür. Öte yandan, mesleki kimlik kişinin kendini ve dünya ile ilişkisini nasıl anladığı, bu anlama sürecinde ilişkilerini nasıl kurguladığını ve zaman ve bağlamın kişinin kimliğini nasıl etkilediği üzerinde durulmuştur.

Bu bağlamda, öğretmen mesleki kimliğinin, kişinin eğitim geçmişi, öğretmenlik deneyimi, kurumsal ve müfredat gereklilikleri gibi konularla şekillendiği düşünülmektedir. Mevcut çalışmalar, öğretmen mesleki kimliğinin farklı şekillerde kavramsallaştırıldığını göstermiş olsa da, öğretmen mesleki kimliğinin öğretmenlerin tutum, düşünce, bilgi ve becerileriyle beraber, dinamik bir şekilde şekillendiği ve kariyerleri boyunca devamlı olarak değiştiği üzerinde sonuca varmıştır.

Bu bağlamda, öğretmen mesleki kimliği üzerinde yapılan ampirik çalışmalar hizmet öncesi, hizmet içi ve diğer konular başlıklarıyla üç grupta sınıflandırılabilir.

Öğretmen adayları öğretmen mesleki kimliklerini hizmet öncesi eğitimleriyle beraber geliştirmektedir. Bu nedenle, öğretmen adaylarının danışmanlarıyla iletişimi ve danışmanlarının sağladığı geri dönütler önem arz etmektedir. Öğretmen adaylarının staj dönemlerinde birçok öğretmen rolünü üstlendiklerini ve öğretmen kimliklerinin sınıf için bağlamsal faktörlere bağlı olduğu gözlemlenmiştir (Karaman et al., 2019). Ayrıca, öğretmen adaylarının staj döneminde uyguladıkları öğretim yöntem ve teknikleri yansıtıcı düşünme ile incelemeleri, öğretmen kimliklerine olumlu yönde katkı sağladığı görülmüştür (Richards, 2021).

Diğer çalışmalar, öğretmen kimliği ve hizmet için deneyimleri incelemiştir. Özellikle deneyimsiz öğretmenlerin öğretmen eğitimi sırasında kurgulanmış mesleki kimlik edindikleri ve mesleğe geçiş sürecinde bu kurgulanmış kimliklerin değişime uğradığı saptanmıştır. Bu bağlamda, sınıf içi pratiklerin ve sınıf bağlamının öğretmen kimliğine etki ettiği görülmüştür. Diğer çalışmalarda ise, merkezi sınavların, öğretmen aktörlüğü, mesleki gelişim ve kültürlerarası iletişimin öğretmen kimliğini etkilediği ve öğretmenlerin dinamik, sürekli değişkenlik gösteren, zaman zaman duygusal olarak zorlayıcı deneyimler yaşadıkları belirlenmiştir.

### **3.3 Görme Engeli Olan Öğrencilerin Öğretmenleri**

Görme engelli olan öğrencilere dil öğretimi özel uzmanlık alanı gerektiren bir konudur çünkü bu öğrenciler ana müfredatın yanı sıra genişletilmiş müfredata ihtiyaç duyarlar. Bu ihtiyaç ise, görme engelinin öğrencileri akademik olarak kendi akranlarının seviyesinden geride bırakmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Genişletilmiş müfredat ise bireyselleştirilmiş eğitim programları ve farklılaştırılmış dil öğretimi yöntem ve metotlarıyla mümkün olabilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, görme engeli olan öğrencilerin öğretmenleri ana müfredatın yanı sıra, genişletilmiş müfredat, bireyselleştirilmiş eğitim programları ve farklılaştırılmış öğretmen yöntem ve metotları hakkında bilgi sahibi olmaları beklenmektedir (Kurth et al., 2021).

Fakat mevcut çalışmalar, görme engeli olan öğrencilerin öğretmenlerinin engeli olmayan öğrenciler için uygulanan yöntem ve metotları kullandıklarını saptamıştır (Schultz & Savaiano, 2022). Ayrıca, görme engeli olan öğrenciler engeli olmayan öğrencilerden daha fazla dil öğretim materyallerine ihtiyaç duymaktadır çünkü bu öğrencilerin kavramsal ve bağlamsal bilgileri yeterince gelişmemiştir.

Son olarak, görme engeli olan öğrencilere dil öğretiminde yardımcı teknolojilerin kullanımı önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Bu teknolojiler, görme engelli öğrencilerin bilgiye erişimini kolaylaştırmakla birlikte, farklılaştırılmış öğretim pratiklerini de desteklemektedir. Fakat, bu yardımcı teknolojilerin kullanımı öğretmenlerin bireysel çaba ve ilgilerine bağlı olduğundan, görme engeli olan öğrencilerin dil öğretiminde etkin bir şekilde kullanılmamaktadır.

### **3.4 Teorik Çerçeve**

Öğretmen kimliği ve bilişselliği alanlarındaki sistematığı araştırabilmek için, bu çalışmada karmaşıklık teorisi teorik çerçeve olarak kullanılmıştır. Karmaşıklık teorisi karmaşık bir sistemi oluşturan parçaların birbirlerini nasıl etkilediği ve bu etkilerin sistemin bütüncül davranışlarını oluşturması olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, karmaşıklık teorisi bireysel seviyeden dil öğrenilen bağlamın sosyal-politik durumuna kadar uzanan bir süreci anlatmaktadır. Bu nedenle karmaşık sistemler zamana ve bağlama bağlı olarak çeşitli konfigürasyonlar oluşturabilmekle beraber, sistemin parçaları farklı seviyelerde stabilite gösterebilmektedir.

Öğretmen kimliği ve bilişselliği iç içe geçmiş iki kavram olduğundan, karmaşıklık teorisi bu iki kavramın oluşturduğu komplike bağlantıları incelemeye olanak sağlamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, karmaşıklık teorisi, bir karmaşık sistemi geçmişe ve geleceğe dönük modelleyebildiğinden, öğretmen kimliği ve bilişselliğini bu teorik çerçeve ile incelemek araştırmacıya katılımcıların geçmiş deneyimlerinin mevcut dil öğretimi pratiklerine ve mesleki kimliklerine nasıl etki ettiği araştırma fırsatı sunmaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, karmaşıklık teorisi öğretmen kimliği ve bilişselliği kavramları arasındaki geçişkenliği incelemek üzere bu doktora çalışmasında teorik çerçeve olarak kullanılmıştır.

### **4. Araştırma Deseni**

Nitel araştırma desenleri, araştırmacılara var olan sosyal bir durumu kendi bağlamı içerisinde katılımcıların deneyimleri doğrultusunda inceleme fırsatı sunmaktadır çünkü nitel araştırma desenleri herhangi bir varsayım olmadan, katılımcıların oluşturdukları anlamlar çerçevesinde derinlemesine ve detaylı bir analiz imkânı

sunmaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu doktora çalışması nitel bir araştırma olarak desenlenmiştir. Ayrıca, bu çalışma kapsamında engeli olan öğretmen ve öğrenciler ile çalışılacağından, bu çalışmanın çıktıları bu bireylerin deneyimlerini daha geniş kitlelere duyurabilme imkânı oluşturacağından, bu çalışma özgürleştirici bir çalışma olarak da kabul edilebilir.

Bu doktora çalışmasında vaka çalışması araştırma yöntemi olarak belirlenmiştir. Vaka çalışmaları, mevcut vakanın uzun süreli ve derinlemesine araştırmasını öngörmektedir çünkü vaka çalışmaları araştırılan vakanın kendi bağlamı içerisinde bütüncül bir şekilde incelenmesini gerektirmektedir.

Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın bağlamı Ankara ilinde bulunan bir görme engelliler okuludur. Görme Engelliler Okulunda farklı branşlardan yaklaşık 20 öğretmen görev yapmaktadır ve oğul mevcudu ise 78dir. Okul bünyesinde bir yurt mevcuttur ve görme engeli olan öğrenciler bu yurttan yararlanabilmektedir. Okul içerisinde hem görme engeli olan öğrencilerin hem de öğretmenlerin kullanabileceği birçok sosyal ve teknolojik imkan bulunmaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın katılımcıları Görme Engelliler Okulunda çalışan üç İngilizce öğretmendir. Bu öğretmenler hem bu doktora çalışmasına katılmayı kabul ettikleri hem de buldukları konum itibarıyla benzersiz bir grup oluşturduklarından bu çalışmaya dahil edilmişlerdir. Katılımcıların profilleri aşağıdaki gibidir.

- Merve 40 yaşlarında bir İngilizce öğretmendir. Merve'nin herhangi bir engeli yoktur. Merve İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı mezunudur. Merve Görme Engelliler Okulunda tam zamanlı olarak görev yapmaktadır ve Merve'nin haftalık 15 saat ders yükü vardır. Merve Görme Engelliler Okuluna geçiş yapmadan önce, çeşitli şehirlerde ve seviyelerde 13 yıllık bir deneyime sahiptir.
- Mustafa 50 yaşlarında ve görme engeli olan bir İngilizce öğretmendir. Görme yetisini çocukluk yıllarının başında kaybetmiştir. Kendisi Uluslararası İlişkiler bölümü mezunu olsa da mesleğini yapamadığından ve eğitim dili İngilizce olan bir üniversiteden mezun olduğundan, tanınan imkanla Görme Engelliler Okuluna tam zamanlı İngilizce öğretmeni olarak atanmıştır. Halihazırda 20 yılı aşkın bir süredir, Görme Engelliler Okulunda görev yapmaktadır.

- Rosalinda 50 yaşlarında ve herhangi bir engeli olmayan bir İngilizce öğretmendir. Kariyeri boyunca birçok özel ve devlet kurumunda öğretmen, idareci ve düzenleyici sıfatlarıyla görev yapmıştır. Ayrıca, Rosalinda uluslararası bir burs alarak, Avrupa Birliği alanında İngiltere’de yüksek lisans yapmıştır. Kendisi 2008 yılından beridir Görme Engelliler Okulunda görev yapmaktadır.

#### **4.1 Veri Toplama Araçları**

Sınıf içi gözlemler, bireysel görüşmeler, saha notları, katılımcıların hazırladıkları materyaller ve resmi dokümanlar bu çalışmanın veri kaynaklarıdır. Bu çalışma kapsamında 2018-2019 akademik yılında, katılımcılarla haftalık olarak bireysel görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bu görüşmelerde öğretmen kimliği ve bilişselliği konularıyla birlikte sınıf içi gözlemlerde not edilen önemli noktalar görüşülmüştür. Bu çalışma kapsamında, her bir katılımcıyla 10 adet bireysel görüşme yapılmıştır.

Bireysel görüşmelerin yanı sıra, katılımcıların İngilizce öğretme pratiklerini ve mesleki kimliklerini sınıf içerisinde nasıl hayata geçirdiklerini belirlemek üzere, Merve ve Mustafa’nın dersleri gözlemlenmiştir. Rosalinda sınıf içi gözlemi kabul etmediğinden, Rosalinda’nın derslerinde gözlem yapılmamıştır.

#### **4.2 Veri Analizi**

Bu çalışma kapsamında elde edilen veriler üç aşamada analiz edilmiştir. Birinci aşamada, yapılan bireysel görüşmelerin deşifresi haftalık olarak tamamlanmıştır. Tamamlanan görüşme deşifrelerinin genel hatlarını belirlemek üzere nitel veri kodlaması yapılmıştır. İkinci aşamada ise bu çalışmanın analitik kod ve kategorilerini belirlemek üzere analiz yapılmıştır. Son aşamada ise, ortaya çıkan kodlar ve mevcut literatür arasındaki bağlantıları belirlemek üzere analiz yapılmıştır.

Veri toplama ve analiz süreçlerinde teknolojik birçok araç ve program kullanılmıştır. Bireysel görüşmeler ses kayıt cihazı ile yapılmıştır. Deşifre işlemleri Word programı kullanılarak tamamlanmıştır. Veri analizi ise MAXQDA Plus 2022 programı kullanılarak tamamlanmıştır.

### **4.3 Araştırma Etiği**

Bu çalışma Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesinin belirlemiş olduğu etik kurallar çerçevesinde yürütülmüştür. Bu bağlamda, araştırmacı üniversitenin etik kuruluna başvuru yaparak çalışma için onay almıştır. Üniversitenin onayı sonrasında, Görme Engelliler Okulu Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı bünyesinde olduğundan, araştırmacı Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın etik kuruluna başvurmuştur. Bakanlığın onayı sonrasında katılımcılarla iletişime geçilmiş ve çalışmanın amacı ve kapsamı katılımcılara açıklanmıştır. Katılımcılardan onam formu alındıktan sonra veri toplama süreci başlamıştır. Ayrıca, katılımcıların mahremiyetini korumak adına, katılımcıların isimleri yerine takma isimler kullanmıştır ve katılımcılara çalışmanın istedikleri aşamasında çalışmadan çekilme imkânı sunulmuştur.

### **5. Bulgular**

Doktora çalışmasının bu bölümünde, yapılan bireysel görüşmeler, sınıf içi gözlemler ve diğer veri toplama araçlarıyla elde edilen verilerin analiz edilmiştir. Veri analizleri sonucunda ortaya çıkan bulgular her katılımcı özelinde sunulmuştur.

#### **5.1 Vaka 1: Merve**

Merve'nin kişisel geçmişi Merve'nin öğretmen bir aileden geldiğini göstermektedir. Bu nedenle ailesi de Merve'nin öğretmen olması için teşvikte bulunmuştur ve Merve üniversite eğitimine özel bir üniversitenin İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünde başlamıştır. Yabancı dil hazırlık okulunu tamamladıktan sonra, Merve bölüm derslerini almaya başlamıştır. Yabancı dil hazırlık okulu ve bölüm dersleri sırasında Merve dil yeterliliği konusunda sorun yaşadığı için okuduğu bölüme uyum sağlamakta zorlanmıştır. Üniversite eğitiminin üçüncü yılında, lisans derslerinin yanı sıra pedagojik formasyon dersleri de almaya başlamıştır. 2003 yılında hem lisans eğitimini hem de pedagojik formasyon derslerini başarıyla tamamlayan Merve Samsun ilinde bulunan bir köye öğretmen olarak atanmıştır.

İlk görev yerinde Merve öğretmen kimliğini benimseme konusunda zorluk yaşamıştır çünkü kendisi hala dil yeterliliği konusunda sorunlar yaşamaktaydı. Fakat öğrencilerle iletişim halinde olmak, kendisinin genel bir öğretmen kimliği benimsemesine yardımcı olsa da İngilizce öğretmeni kimliğini benimsemekte

zorlanmıştır. Bulunduğu bölgede tek İngilizce öğretmeni olması da Merve'nin mesleki yalnızlık çekmesine sebep olmuştur. Daha sonraki yıllarda Merve Ankara'da bulunan bir okula görevlendirilmiştir. Bu okula geçiş aşamasında Merve dil yeterliliğini geliştirmiştir ve bu okulda Merve hem İngilizce öğretmen kimliğini benimsemiş hem de öğretmen bilişselliğini geliştirecek birçok mesleki gelişim programına katılmıştır. Öğretmen kimliği konusunda, Merve materyal sağlayıcı, motive edici, ölçme ve değerlendirmeci ve son olarak kültür temsilcisi rollerini üstlenmiştir. Bu öğretmen rolleri çerçevesinde öğrencilerine yaklaşmış ve eğitim öğretim pratiklerini düzenlemiştir. Öğretmen bilişselliği konusunda ise, Merve'nin anlatılarına göre, kendisi Ankara'ya geçtikten sonra ders anlatım yöntem ve pratiklerini sorgulamış, öğrencilerin İngilizceyi öğrenmesini nasıl destekleyebileceği konusunda araştırmalar yapmıştır. Bu bakış açısı sonucunda, Merve mevcut müfredata takviye olabilecek materyal ve etkinlikleri kendi pratiklerine dahil etmiştir. Öğrencilerin dil öğrenim deneyimlerini arttırmak için uluslararası projelerde yer almıştır. Bunların yanı sıra Merve eğitim teknolojilerini kullanmaya başlamış ve eğitim teknolojileri yardımıyla öğretim yöntem ve pratiklerini geliştirmiştir.

Bunlarla birlikte Merve kaynaştırma öğrencileriyle de çalışmıştır. Merve bu öğrencilerin akademik olarak yetersiz olduğunu ve eğitim öğretimi olumsuz etkilediklerini düşünmektedir. Bu nedenle kaynaştırma öğrencisi olan sınıflarda sınıf yönetiminin olumsuz etkilendiğini düşünmektedir. Dahası bu öğrencilerin eğitimi için bireyleştirilmiş programlar hazırlamak zorunda olması da Merve'nin iş yükünü arttırdığından, Merve kaynaştırma öğrencilerinin ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak konusunda isteksizlik göstermiştir. Bu nedenle asgari sorumluluklarını yerine getirerek bu öğrencilerin eğitim öğretim süreçlerini tamamlamıştır.

Merve'nin Ankara'da çalıştığı okuldaki sorumluluklarının artması sonucu öğretmen tükenmişliği yaşamaya başlamış ve başka bir okula geçiş yapabilmek için araştırmalar yapmıştır. Meslektaşlarının tavsiyesi üzerine Görme Engelliler Okulundaki çalışma koşullarının daha uygun olduğuna ikna olmuş ve Görme Engelliler Okuluna geçiş yapmıştır.

Merve Görme Engelliler Okuluna geçiş sürecinde çeşitli duygusal ve psikolojik durumlar yaşamıştır. Bu durumlar Merve'nin görme engeli olan öğrenciler hakkındaki tutumlar ve varsayımlardan kaynaklanmaktadır çünkü Merve görme engeli

olan öğrencilerin sosyal becerilerinin düşük olduğu, akademik olarak başarılı olmadığı ve hareket becerilerinin eksik olduğunu düşünmektedir. Bu nedenle Merve'nin görme engeli olan öğrencilere olan ilk tepkileri duygusal ve profesyonel olarak zorlayıcı olmuştur. Merve bu zorlayıcı durumu görme engelli öğrencilerin akademik ve sosyal durumlarını anlayarak atlatmıştır çünkü her öğrenci görme engeli farklı şekillerde deneyimlemektedir.

Yaşadığı şoku atlattıktan sonra, Merve çeşitli öğretmen rollerini kabul etmeye başlamıştır. Merve mevcut materyallerin görme engeli olan öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarını karşılamadığını fark ettiği için materyal sağlayıcı rolünü üstlenerek, çeşitli materyaller hazırlamıştır. Bununla beraber, hazırladığı materyalleri öğrencilerin en iyi şekilde faydalanabileceği şekilde sunmak için ders planlayıcısı rolünü de üstlenmiştir. Derslerini görme engellilerin ihtiyaçlarına göre planlamaya çalışmıştır. Fakat Merve'nin Braille alfabesini bilmemesi çeşitli sorunlara sebep olmuştur. Örneğin, Merve Bakanlığın sağlamış olduğu ders kitaplarını kullanmakta zorlanmıştır. Son olarak, Merve Görme Engelliler Okulunun uyguladığı okul ziyaretleri polimasına karşı çıkmıştır çünkü diğer okullardan gelen öğrenciler görme engelinin insan hayatını nasıl etkilediğini anlamaktan ötede, görme engeli olan öğrencilerin neler yapabildiğine odaklandığından, görme engeli olan öğrenciler bu ziyaretlerden dolayı marjinalleştirilmiştir. Bu durumdan rahatsız olan Merve, okulunu bu politikasını değiştirmesini istemişse de Merve'nin öneri ve talepleri göz ardı edilmiştir.

Öğretmen bilişselliği konusunda ise Merve'nin dil öğretim pratiklerinin Görme Engelliler Okulunda büyük değişikliklere uğramadığı saptanmıştır. Merve var olan dil öğretimi yöntem ve tekniklerini görme engeli olan öğrencilere uyarlamaya çalışmıştır. Bu bağlamda, Merve belirli pratikleri ders planından çıkarmıştır. Örneğin, hem Merve'nin Braille yetisi olmaması hem de yazma aktivitelerinin çok zaman almasından dolayı, Merve yazma etkinliklerini ders planından çıkarmıştır. Veri analizlerine göre, Merve derslerini dinleme ağırlıklı yapmakta ve çeviri tekniğini çok sık kullanmaktadır. Bu nedenle, Merve görme engelli öğrencilere İngilizceyi öğretirken sıkı bir ders rutini oluşturmuş ve derslerini bu rutine göre planlamıştır. Bu rutine göre, Merve evrak işlerini hallettikten sonra konuya giriş yapıyor, gramer ve kelime bilgilerini öğrettikten sonra çeşitli etkinlikleri tamamlamaktadır. Bu



etkinliklerden sonra da dersi bitirmektedir. Bunların dışında, Merve ders dili olarak Türkçeyi benimsemiş ve ders içi yönergelerini Türkçe olarak vermiştir.

Öte yandan, Merve'nin Görme Engelliler Okulundaki deneyimleri gösteriyor ki, Merve'nin görme engeli olan öğrenciler için bireyselleştirilmiş eğitim programı tasarlaması ve uygulaması gerekmektedir. Fakat Merve öğrencilerin sosyal ve psikolojik durumlarını hesaba katınca, bu öğrenciler için hazırlamış olduğu bireyselleştirilmiş eğitim programlarını ders esnasında uygulamayı uygun görmemektedir. Son olarak, Merve sınıf yönetimi konusunda sorun yaşamamaktadır çünkü görme engeli olan öğrenciler sınıf içerisinde kalıplaşmış hareketlerde bulunuyor ve fiziksel olarak yer değişikliği yapmamaktadır. Merve'nin görme engeli olmaması da öğrencilerin sınıf içindeki durumlarını daha iyi analiz etmesine yardımcı olmuştur.

## **5.2 Vaka 2: Mustafa**

Mustafa görme engeli olan bir İngilizce öğretmenidir. Mustafa görme yetisini çocukluk döneminde kaybetmiştir ve ilk ve orta okul eğitimini Görme Engelliler Okulunda tamamlamıştır. Çocukluğunun bir döneminde görme yetisinin olması, Mustafa'yı akranlarından daha başarılı yapmıştır çünkü kendisinin önceki deneyimleri Mustafa'nın öğrendiği akademik bilgileri içselleştirmesini kolaylaştırmıştır. Fakat, lise eğitimi için okul değiştirmek durumunda kalan Mustafa birçok ayrıştıracı uygulamayla karşı karşıya kalmış ve haklarını savunabilmek için lise yıllarından itibaren engelli kimliği oluşturmuştur. Mustafa eğitim dili İngilizce olan bir üniversitenin Uluslararası İlişkiler bölümünü kazanmış ve lisans eğitimini bu alanda almıştır. Lisans eğitimi sürecinde de ayrıştıracı uygulamalara maruz kalsa da ailesinin ve akranlarının yardım ve desteğiyle bölümünü tamamlamıştır. Mustafa diplomat olmak istese de görme engellinden dolayı diplomat olamamaktadır. Bu nedenle kendisi bir bakanlıkta memur olarak göreve başlamıştır. Mustafa aldığı eğitim doğrultusunda, daha verimli ve üretken bir görev yapmak istese de çeşitli engellerle karşılaşmıştır. Öğretmenlerinin tavsiyesi ile öğretmen olabilmek için gerekli başvuruları yapmış ve Görme Engelliler Okuluna İngilizce öğretmeni olarak atanmıştır.

Mustafa'nın Görme Engelliler Okuluna atanmasından sonra bir yıl süren bir staj dönemini tamamlaması gerekmektedir. Bu nedenle, Mustafa bir yıl boyunca

danışmanı eşliğinde ders gözlemleri yapmış, verilen akademik ve idari görevleri yerine getirmiştir. Bununla birlikte, yaz döneminde yoğunlaştırılmış bir pedagojik formasyon kursu almış ve sonraki akademik yılda derslere girmeye başlamıştır. Bu süreçte Mustafa'nın öğretmen kimliği ve bilişselliği çeşitli değişikliklere uğramıştır. Öğretmen kimliği konusunda Mustafa danışmanı örnek alarak danışmanına benzer bir öğretmen kimliği oluşturmuştur. Bu bağlamda Mustafa öğrencilerin müfredatı öğrenmesinin yanı sıra müfredat dışında da konuları bilmelerinde fayda olduğunu düşünmüştür. Ayrıca öğrencileri hem akademik hem de sosyal hayata adapte edebilmek için motive edici öğretmen rolünü üstlenmiştir.

Mustafa staj sürecini tamamladıktan sonra öğretmen özerkliğini geliştirerek kendi derslerinin sorumluluğunu almaya başlamıştır. Bu dönemde Mustafa danışmanın etkisinden çıkmaya başlayarak kendi öğretmen kimliğini oluşturmaya başlamıştır. Eğitime bakış açısıyla birlikte Mustafa öğrencileri anlama ve anlayış gösterme üzerine bir öğretmen kimliği oluşturmuştur. Bununla birlikte öğrencilere materyal sunabilmek için materyal geliştirici rol de üstlenmiştir ve derslerini planlarken mevcut materyalleri göz önünde bulundurmuştur. Ayrıca görme engelinin bireyin hayatına nasıl etki ettiği bildiği için öğrencilerine bu anlamda psikolojik danışmanlıkta yapmıştır. Son olarak, Mustafa görme engelinin öğrenciler için hayatlarının geri kalanında ayrıştırıcı uygulamalara neden olacağını bildiğinden, öğrencilerini bu konuda Görme Engelliler Okulu sonrasına hazırlamaya çalışmıştır. Bu bağlamda, kendi deneyimlerini öğrencileriyle paylaşan Mustafa, öğrencilerine bu tür durumlarda neler yapmaları konusunda da tavsiyelerde bulunmuştur.

Öğretmen bilişselliği noktasında ise, Mustafa öğretmenlik mesleğini yaparak öğrenmekle beraber, almış olduğu pedagojik formasyon dersleriyle pratikteki konuların teorik altyapılarını öğrenmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Mustafa uzunca bir süre danışmanın staj sürecinde ona göstermiş olduğu dil öğretim yöntem ve tekniklerini kullanmıştır. Öğretmen özerkliğinin gelişmesiyle beraber, Mustafa deneme yanılma yoluyla çeşitli yöntem ve tekniği uygulamaya çalışmış ve öğretim yöntem ve teknik repertuarı geliştirmiştir. Belirlemiş olduğu yöntemlerle derslerini planlamıştır.

Mustafa derslerinde İngilizceyi yönerge dili olarak kullanmaktadır. Yönergelerin ve ders içeriğinin İngilizce sunumundan sonra ise çeviri yaparak bu bilgilerin Türkçesini de ifade etmiştir. Bu sayede öğrencilerin konuları tam olarak

anladığı ve herhangi bir yanlış anlaşılmanın önüne geçildiğini düşünmektedir. Ayrıca, Mustafa derslerini internetten indirmiş olduğu şarkılar çerçevesinde işlemektedir. Bu şarkılarda geçen kelime ve gramer yapılarını öğretmekle beraber, bu şarkılarda geçen diğer kelimelerin bilgisini de vererek öğrencilerin kavramsal bilgilerini geliştirdiğini düşünmektedir. Bu şarkılar dışında veri toplama sürecinde Mustafa herhangi bir materyal geliştirmemiş veya kullanmamıştır.

Bunula birlikte, Mustafa'nın uzun yıllar süren Görme Engelliler Okulundaki deneyimleri sonucunda çok katı bir sınıf rutini geliştirmiştir. Bu rutine göre, Mustafa her dersin başlangıcında geçmiş son konuyu tekrar ettikten sonra yeni konuya giriş yapmaktadır. Konu anlatımını tamamladıktan sonra da ilgili İngilizce şarkıyı öğrencilere dinleterek soru cevap etkinliği yapmaktadır. Veri analizinin gösterdiği üzere, bu rutin içerisinde iletişimin kısıtlı olduğu ve öğretmen öğrenci arasında iletişim olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Bu durum öğrencilerin kendi aralarında hedef dilde bir iletişim kurmalarına fırsat vermediğini gerçeğini gözler önüne sermektedir. Son olarak, Mustafa ölçme ve değerlendirme süreçlerinin dikkatle yapılmasını gerektiğini vurgulamıştır. Örneğin, sınava dahil edilen bir gramer konusunda öğrenci hata yapmamış fakat başka bir kelimenin yazımında yanlış yaptıysa, öğrencinin tam puan alması gerektiğini ifade etmiştir.

### **5.3 Vaka 3: Rosalinda**

Rosalinda çocukluğunda babasının mesleğinden dolayı yabancı dil öğrenmenin önemini farkında olarak yetişmiştir. Bu farkındalıkla birlikte, İngilizceye ilgisinin olması Rosalinda'nın ilkokul yıllarından itibaren bir dil yeterliliğinin geliştirmesine zemin oluşturmuştur. İngilizceye ilgi duyması meslek seçimini de etkilemiştir. İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümü okumak istemesine rağmen o zamanki mevcut iş olanaklarını göz önünde bulundurunca Rosalina Ankara'da büyük bir üniversitede İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümünü tercih etmiştir. Lisans eğitimi sürecinde birçok pedagojik ve pedagojik alan bilgisi dersleri alan Rosalinda lisans eğitimini staj yaparak tamamlamıştır.

Staj sonrasında özel bir okulda İngilizce öğretmeni olarak göreve başlayan Rosalinda aynı zamanda mezun olduğu üniversitede yarı zamanlı okutman pozisyonunda da görev yapmıştır. Bu süreçte, Rosalinda hem öğretmen kimliğini hem

de bilişselliğini öğrenci gruplarına göre şekillendirmiştir. Küçük gruplarla çalışırken motive edici ve uyum sağlayıcı rollerini üstlenirken, yetişkin gruplarda ise hedef koyucu ve gözlemleyici rollerini üstlenmiştir. Rosalinda bu roller çerçevesinde, öğrencilerinin akademik ve sosyal ihtiyaçlarına karşılık vermiştir. Bir süre hem İngilizce öğretmeni hem de yarı zamanlı okutman olarak çalıştıktan sonra Rosalinda başka bir özel okulda zümre başkanı olarak çalışmaya başlamıştır. Zümre başkanı olduğu süreçte hem müfredat kararları almış hem de okulda çalışan diğer öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimini üstlenmiştir. Yapmış olduğu haftalık toplantılarla da zümre içerisinde ortak politikalar geliştirerek bu politikaların İngilizce öğretmenleri tarafından uygulanması sağlamış ve değerlendirmesini yapmıştır.

Kariyerinin ilerleyen dönemlerinde idareci görevlerini de üstlenen Rosalinda, eğitimin organizasyonu içerisinde yer almak istediği için Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı Talim ve Terbiye kurulu için çalışmaya başladı. Aynı zamanda İngiltere’de Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri üzerine yüksek lisans yapan Rosalinda daha sonrasında Görme Engelliler Okuluna İngilizce öğretmenliği yapması için görevlendirilmiştir.

Görme Engelliler Okuluna geçiş süreci Rosalinda için mesleki anlamda zorlayıcı olmuştur çünkü Rosalinda daha öncesinde hiçbir engel grubu öğrencisiyle çalışmadığından, görme engeli olan öğrenciler için dil öğretiminin gerekliliklerini bilmemekteydi. Bu durumu aşmak için Rosalinda Görme Engelliler Okulundaki meslektaşlarından yardım talep etmiş ve Mustafa’nın derslerine gözlemci olarak katılmıştır. Aldığı sınırlı destek ve Mustafa’nın derslerinden öğrenebildiği kadarıyla, Rosalinda görme engeli olan öğrenciler için bir rutin belirlemiştir. Braille bilmediği için bilgisayardan hazırlanmış olduğu notları ders anlatımlarının merkezine koyan Rosalinda, ders bitiminde bu notları düzenleyerek Braille çıktı olarak alıp görme engeli olan öğrencilerle paylaşmıştır.

Son olarak, Rosalinda Görme Engelliler Okulunun okul ziyaretleri politikasından rahatsızlık duymaktaydı çünkü mevcut politikaların görme engeli olan öğrencileri marjinalleştirip yardıma muhtaç bir konuma getirdiğini düşünmekteydi. Bunun yerine, diğer okullardan gelen öğrencilerle görme engeli olan öğrencilerin farkındalık etkinliklerine çift yönlü katılmalarının her iki taraf içinde daha faydalı olacağını ifade etmiştir. Bu bağlamda her iki tarafa da bu ziyaretler öncesinde

bilgilendirme seminerleri yapılmasını, okul ziyaretleri sonrasında ise çeşitli görüşmeler yapılarak farkındalığın kalıcı hale getirilmesini tavsiye etmiştir.

## **6. Tartışma ve Sonuç**

Bu doktora çalışması bir vaka çalışması olarak tasarlanmış ve Görme Engelliler Okulunda görev yapan iç İngilizce öğretmenin öğretmen kimliği ve bilişselliğini araştırmıştır. Karmaşıklık teorisi kullanılarak katılımcıların Görme Engelliler Okulundaki deneyimleri incelenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular doğrultusunda öğretmen kimliği, öğretmen bilişselliği ve karmaşıklık teorisi tartışılmıştır. Aşağıda belirtilen hususlar öğretmen kimliği, öğretmen bilişselliği ve görme engeli olan öğrencilere dil öğretimi alanlarındaki önemli noktaları vurgulamaktadır.

### **6.1 Öğretmen Kimliği**

Öğretmen kimliği oluşumu öğretmenlerin bireysel ve eğitimsel geçmişlerinden etkilenmektedir. Bu bağlamda öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğini isteyerek seçmeleri öğretmen kimliğinin benimsenmesinde önemli rol oynamaktadır. Ayrıca, öğretmenlik mesleğini isteyerek seçen adayların alan bilgisi olan dil yeterliliklerini geliştirme konusuna daha fazla özen göstermektedirler (Sullivan, 2011).

Öğretmen eğitimi öğretmen kimliğinin diğer önemli ayağıdır çünkü pedagojik formasyon programları pedagojik alan bilgisini sınırlı biçimde içerdiği için İngilizce öğretmenleri öğretmen kimliği ediniminde zorlanmaktadır. Bunun aksine, bir eğitim fakültesi bünyesinde öğretmen eğitimi alan adaylar öğretmen mesleki kimliğini eğitimleri sürecinde edinip geliştirmektedirler (Ball et al., 2008, König et al., 2016, 2017).

Öğretmen kimliğinin diğer önemli hususu ise mesleki gelişim ve İngilizce zümreleridir. İngilizce zümrelerinin güçlü olduğu kurumlarda öğretmenler birbirlerinin çalışmalarını inceleme fırsatı bulmaktadır ve bu fırsat öğretmen kimliği gelişimine olumlu yönde katkıda bulunmaktadır. Bununla birlikte mesleki gelişim etkinliklerine katılmak öğretmenlerin becerilerini geliştirmelerini desteklediği için (Çimen & Daloğlu, 2019; Fletcher-Wood, 2021) öğretmen kimliğini de olumlu yönde etkilemektedir (Garner & Kaplan, 2021). Öğretmenlerin mesleki yalnızlık yaşadığı durumlarda ise, öğretmen kimliği gelişimi duraksamaktadır.

Özetle, öğretmen kimliği öğretmenlerin bireyler tarihçelerinden, eğitim geçmişlerinden, almış oldukları öğretmen eğitimi ya da pedagojik formasyondan, mesleki deneyimlerinden ve gelişimlerinden etkilenmektedir. Öğretmen kimliği edinimi dinamik bir süreç olduğundan, yukarıda belirtilen durumlar her bir öğretmen adayı için öğretmen kimliği ediniminde farklı bir etki oluşturmaktadır.

## 6.2 Öğretmen Bilişselliği

Öğretmen bilişselliği üç ana alandan oluşmaktadır. Bu alanlar alan bilgisi, pedagojik bilgi ve pedagojik alan bilgisidir. Bu bağlamda alan bilgisi yani dil yeterliliği öğretmen bilişselliğinin temelini oluşturmaktadır (Aktekin & Celebi, 2020; Haim et al., 2022; Yazan, 2018). Pedagojik alan bilgisi öğretmenlerin kendi alanlarını öğrencilerin anlayabileceği seviyede anlatabilme yetisi olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda öğretmenlerin müfredat konularında kararlar alabilmeleri hangi konulara daha fazla zaman ayrılması gerektiği hangi konuların nasıl anlatılması gerektiği gibi bilgilerin temelini pedagojik alan bilgisi oluşturmaktadır (Kong, 2022). Öğretmenlerin kendi özerkliklerini geliştirmeleri sonucunda müfredat konularında karar alma süreçlerinin daha kolaylaştığını sonucuna ulaşılabilir (Dilek & Altas, 2022).

Pedagojik bilgi ise öğrencilerin sosyal, bilişsel, psikolojik ve akademik durumlarının anlaşılması ve eğitim öğretim süreçlerinin öğrencilerin durumlarına göre düzenlenmesi olarak kabul edilebilir. Bu nedenle, pedagojik bilgi öğrenciler hakkındaki bilgilerin artırılmasıyla gelişen bir alandır. Özellikle hizmet öncesi öğretmen adaylarının topluma hizmet uygulamalarıyla çeşitli öğrenci gruplarıyla çalışması bu adayların pedagojik bilgilerini geliştirmekle beraber çeşitli gruplar hakkında farkındalıkta oluşturmaktadır (Karaman, 2014).

Son olarak, öğretmen bilişselliği mesleki gelişim ve yansıtıcı öğretim yöntemiyle beraber gelişmektedir. Öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim etkinliklerine katılmaları kendi pratiklerinin uygunluğunu tartmalarına yardımcı olmaktadır. Ayrıca kendi pratiklerine yansıtıcı öğretim yöntemleriyle yaklaşmak öğretmenlerin farkında oldukları ya da olmadıkları varsayım ve tutumlarını gözden geçirmelerine yardımcı olmaktadır (Carrington & Selva, 2010; Jenkins, 2011).

### **6.3 Görme Engelliler Okulu**

Bu çalışma özellikle Görme Engelliler Okulunda çalışan öğretmenlerin deneyimlerine odaklanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda görme engeli olan öğrencilere dil öğretmek hem özel eğitim hem de İngilizce öğretmenliği alanlarının ampirik bulgularının bir araya getirilmesiyle mümkün olacaktır. Bu nedenle Görme Engelliler Okulunda çalışan ve çalışacak olan öğretmenlerin belirli aralıklarla oryantasyon programlarına ihtiyaç duyduğu ortadadır çünkü görme engeli olan öğrencilerin öğretmenleri bu öğrenciler hakkındaki tutum ve varsayımlarını sürekli olarak sorgulamak durumundadırlar.

İkinci olarak, Braille görme engeli olan bireylerin iletişim dili kabul edildiğinden, Görme Engelliler Okulunda çalışan ve çalışacak olan öğretmenlerin Braille yeterliliğinin olması bir önkoşul olarak kabul edilmelidir. Aksi halde, Braille kullanımı gerektiren durumlarda çeşitli eksiklik ve sorunlarla karşılaşmaktadır.

Braille ders kitabı mevcut ana akım okullarda okutulan kitabın Braille yazıcı ile bastırılıp görme engeli olan öğrencilere dağıtılmaktadır. Fakat görme engeli olan öğrencilerin hem ana müfredat hem de genişletilmiş müfredata ihtiyacı olduğundan, mevcut uygulamanın görme engeli olan öğrencileri dezavantajlı bir konuma getirdiği görülmektedir. Bu nedenle görme engeli olan öğrencilerin kullanacağı ders kitaplarının, içerik, tasarım ve konu derinliği olarak ana akım kitaplarından farklı olması gerekmektedir.

Bunların yanı sıra, ders materyalleri görme engeli olan öğrenciler için büyük önem arz etmektedir. Özellikle dokunmaya dayalı materyallerin çoğaltılması ve çeşitlendirilmesi gerekmektedir. Bu konuda Görme Engelliler Okulunda çalışan öğretmenlere mesleki gelişim etkinlikleriyle nasıl dokunma odaklı materyal geliştirebileceklerinin bilgisini verilmesi gerekmektedir.

### **6.4 Karmaşıklık Teorisi**

Karmaşıklık teorisi bir karmaşık sistemin nasıl ve hangi koşullarda değişim gösterdiğiyi ilgilennmektedir. Bu bağlam, çevresel faktörler, küçük ve büyük ölçekli durumlar bir karmaşık sistemin durumunu etkileyebilmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın bağlamında, katılımcılar öğretmen kimliği ve bilişselliği konularında bir karmaşık sistem oluşturmuşlardır. Bu sistem hem Görme Engelliler

Okulu hem de katılımcıların bireyler tarihçelerinden, hizmet öncesi ve içi tecrübelerinden etkilenmektedir.

Bu çalışmada, katılımcıların karmaşık sistemleri bir durumla karşılaştığında sistem iki ana tepki vermektedir. Mevcut durum sistem içerisinde bir değişikliğe sebep olacak ise sistem değişimi kanalında mevcut durum işlenmektedir. Sistem değişikliği kanalına giren durum sistemin birlikte adapte olması veya karşılıklı nedensellik ilişkileri sürecine girerek sistem birleşimi, sistem temizliği, sistem adaptasyonu ve sistem gelişimi süreçlerinden birini tamamlayarak stabil hale gelmektedir. Örneğin, Mustafa Görme Engelliler Okuluna atandığında danışmanı ile beraber staj sürecini yürütmüş ve öğretmen özerkliğini kazanana kadar danışmanın mesleki kimliğini ve bilişselliğini benimsemiştir. Bu benimseme Mustafa'nın karmaşık sisteminde sistem birleşimi olarak görünmektedir. Mustafa'nın öğretmen özerkliğini geliştirmesinden sonra ise kendisi öğretmen kimliği ve bilişselliği karmaşık sistemini temizleyerek kendi mesleki kimliğini oluşturmuş ve İngilizce öğretim yöntem ve pratiklerini geliştirmiştir.

Bu durumun aksi halinde, sistem bağışıklığı gelişmektedir. Sistem bağışıklığı iki şekilde gerçekleşmektedir. Sistem direnci oluşması durumunda katılımcılar mevcut durumun sistem değişikliğine yol açması beklenmesine rağmen direnç göstererek sistem değişikliğini reddetmektedir. Örneğin, Mustafa'nın MP3 çalarının bozulmuş olmasına rağmen, Mustafa ders esnasında ders planını değiştirip farklı bir materyal üzerinden dersi işleyebilecekken MP3 çalarını düzelmeye çalışmıştır. Bununla beraber, sistem baypas yoluna gidebilir. Bu durumda mevcut duruma kalıcı bir çözüm olarak sistem değişikliğine yol açmak yerine katılımcılar buldukları kısa süreli çözümlerle süreci devam ettirmektedirler. Örneğin, Merve ve Rosalinda Braille bilmemektedir. Bu nedenle Braille yazımı içeren etkinlikleri yapmamakla beraber ölçme ve değerlendirme süreçlerinde de zorluklar yaşamaktadırlar. Braille öğrenmek yerine Word dosyası üzerinden hazırladıkları materyalleri Braille çıktı olarak öğrencilere vermektedirler. Bununla birlikte öğrencilerin sınav kağıtlarının değerlendirilmesinde ise Braille bilen meslektaşlarından destek alarak süreci yürütmektedirler.

Son olarak, karmaşık sistemlerin danışlarının tahmin edilemez olduğu kabul edilmektedir. Mevcut bir durum kişilerin bireysel tarihçeleri farklı olduğundan kendi



karmaşık sistemlerinde vermiş oldukları tepkiler de deęişmektedir. Fakat bu doktora çalışmasının bağlamında, aynı ortamı paylaşan katılımcıların karmaşık sistemlerinin davranışlarında benzerlikler olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

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