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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT WITH AND WITHOUT A TEACHER TRAINER: ELT INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS

ABSTRACT

Research on opinions and beliefs of English language teachers in relation to their professional development is seriously needed to improve professional development practices situated at Turkish universities. The purpose of this study is to analyze, compare and contrast the opinions of university level English language instructors (n=30) before and after a teacher development unit was established in their institution. The study, moreover, attempts to take the level of experience of those instructors into consideration while comparing their opinions related to their TD programs. Findings attained through a 33 item Likert-type questionnaire indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the opinions of novice and experienced instructors. They both believed TD courses should be conducted to improve teachers' professional development. However, results also reveal that there are significant differences between their opinions before and after the establishment of the teacher development unit. This study proposes that administrators consider the results of such studies while developing their own TD courses or units.

Keywords: Teacher Development, Teacher Training, Instructor, English as a Foreign Language, EFL

ÖĞRETMEN YETİŞTİRİCİLİ VE ÖĞRETMEN YETİŞTİRİCİSİZ ÖĞRETMEN GELİŞİMİ: İNGİLİZCE OKUTMANLARININ GÖRÜŞLERİ

ÖZET

Türkiye'deki üniversitelerde çalışmakta olan İngilizce okutmanlarının mesleki gelişimleriyle ilgili çalışmalara duyulan gereksinim gün geçtikçe artmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı da İngilizce okutmanlarının mesleki gelişimleri hakkındaki görüşlerinin hizmet ici eğitim programından önce ve sonraki değişime odaklanarak belirlemektir. Bu çalışmayla, ayrıca, meslekte deneyimli ve mesleğe veni başlamış okutmanlar arasındaki görüş farklılıklarını dikkate alarak karşılaştırmalar yapılması amaçlanmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçları meslekte deneyimli ve mesleğe yeni başlamış okutmanlar arasında fark olmadığı ancak öğretmen yetiştirme merkezinin açılması öncesi ve sonrasında okutmanların görüşlerinde değişiklikler olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen Gelişimi, Öğretmen Yetiştirme, Okutman, Yabancı Dil Eğitimi, YDE



1. INTRODUCTION (GIRIŞ)

The more there appeared a change in the role of teachers and the methods of teaching, the more teachers try to keep up with the latest trends to freshen themselves for the sake of their own professional development. Ur defines teacher development (TD) as the means through which teachers learn about their profession by reflecting on their own classroom experiences [1]. Defining TD as a process, Eraut articulates that TD should be seen as a natural process of professional growth in which a teacher gradually acquires confidence, new perspectives, new knowledge, and new methods by taking on new roles [2]. Lange defines TD as something that can be done only by and only for oneself [3]. Therefore, TD cannot be presented or managed by others. Rather, it is the teacher who decides which activities and/or resources should be used and for how long it should last for his/her own development. Besides, it is again the teacher who has his/her own purposes for development.

The basis of TD depends on teachers' experiences, perceptions and expectations. It is a self-reflective process as teachers utilize their experiences, perceptions and interactions for their professional development [4]. In addition to being self-reflective, TD is also continual. It can start at a very early stage at teachers' profession and can continue till retirement. Contrary to some common beliefs, not only novice teachers but also experienced teachers should have constant development. Here, it is stated that both novice and experienced teachers need constant TD since the first year of teaching can be very stressful, and those difficult first years may even cause some new teachers to give up their profession [4]. Likewise, experienced teachers feel the need for constant TD as they sometimes face professional survival challenges in the later years of their career, due to a phenomenon known as 'burn-out.', which is a feeling of boredom, or loss of momentum. As a result, in such cases constant TD can help forestall or solve the problems teachers have to deal with. As many changes occur in the field, teachers also have to adapt themselves to those changes in a fast manner.

Richards and Nunan point out those intellectual, experiential and attitudinal changes in teacher behavior may occur as a result of TD through professional in-service programs [5]. Therefore, TD is an essential component of teacher education. Another significant term under teacher education is teacher training, which is sometimes used interchangeable but again has some differences from TD.

1.1. In-Service Training (Hizmet İçi Eğitim)

The more there is an increase in the need for well-qualified teachers, the more TD has gained significance, which has given an impetus to propose and implement several TD programs. Pre-service and in-service TD programs are some of those implemented forms. Richards As cited by Kervancıoğlu, Richards argues that pre-service training programs aim at equipping what student teachers need before they start teaching [6]. These programs often set out to show future teachers basic teaching techniques and give them a broad general background in teaching and in their subject matter.

In-service training (hereafter INSET) programs are considered very important by many countries since they have the major role in increasing the quality of education [7]. These programs focus on creating a change in the teacher's behavior after they start their profession. While pre-service training gives essential basis before teachers begin teaching, INSET programs provide a life-long support for teachers. Teachers participate in INSET programs after their



initial education to enhance their effectiveness in teaching, which is an on-going process of professional development.

Day defines INSET as a planned event, series of events or extended program of accredited or non-accredited learning, in order to distinguish it from less formal in-school development work and extended partnerships and interschool networks [8]. In-service training programs are a means for some teachers to keep track on with the recent developments in the field, and for some, an opportunity to brush up on their previous knowledge and add to it. Duzan also states that INSET programs provide teachers with a variety of activities and practice sessions for the purpose of helping them develop professionally by broadening their knowledge, improving their teaching skills and increasing their self-awareness and reflective abilities [9]. From this point of view, it is clear from the definition that participation in

How should teachers participate in INSET programs? Koç states that in-service training creates an atmosphere of sharing [10]. In such programs, trainees share and discuss their problems and experiences to find practical solutions or bring about new ideas with academic help from trainers. This help is determined according to what teachers expect and how they perceive the program. Trainees, during the program, could improve their teaching skills with the help of new techniques and methods, management strategies and creating or applying an effective curriculum and/or lesson plans. Besides these, trainees may have an opportunity to reflect on their own teaching by using the feedback they receive, which later on could be used to make necessary alterations on their own teaching.

When it comes to the content of INSET programs, the perceptions and expectations of trainees play the most significant role. Research has identified eight major problems faced by novice trainees which are classroom discipline, motivating pupils, dealing with individual differences, assessing pupils' work, relationships with parents, organization of class work, insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies, and dealing with the problems of individual pupils [11]. According to him, these issues should be considered in the design of the programs. As Gültekin cites Doff's emphasis on the role of external factors such as large and overcrowded classes, lack of equipment and resources, lack of preparation time, and following a rigid syllabus which affect the design of a training program [11]. As a result, it is obvious that the attitude of teachers to teaching and learning will not only influence the content and design of the training material but also the overall effectiveness of the training program.

Another vital step in designing an INSET program is to reveal and analyze the perceptions of the trainees. Gültekin, by borrowing from Harland and Kinder, suggest that INSET has influence on individual teachers' attitudes, therefore identification of their needs is fundamentally important in the designing of INSET, rather than reproducing systems practiced elsewhere [11]. Hence, perceptions of trainees can help trainers about the effectiveness of TD programs. Similarly, by using trainees' perceptions and opinions, a number of changes or adaptations can be made to develop TD practices by and large.

1.2. Related Studies in Turkey (Türkiye'deki Araştırmalar)

A historical review of studies on TD in Turkey shows that the need for such research is needed to improve TD practices by and large. First studies in the field focused on needs and expectations of teachers in relation to their professional development. Özen



investigated the perceived needs and expectations of the staff in the Freshman Unit at Bilkent University [12]. The results of this study revealed that although the need for in-service teacher training programs as a means of professional development was high, there were problems in the implementation of TD programs because of heavy workload of instructors and insufficient funding. Participants reported that they needed to improve their knowledge of materials preparation and assessment, skills, testing, curriculum design and development, classroom management, methodology, and giving feedback. It was concluded that although there were some constraints, the teachers in the Freshman Unit were really enthusiastic about the benefits of in-service teacher training programs.

Karaca investigated the needs of teachers in twenty different schools in Turkey [13]. As the results of this study suggested, the trainees regarded INSET as a means to build professional development in the teaching and language development process. Karaca also suggested implementing INSET courses with what the trainees need and expect to find, especially on the skills and ideas they could apply in their own classrooms [13]. Kervancıoğlu studied the needs assessment of the teachers working at Gaziantep University, the department of foreign languages [6]. The participants were the teachers and the students in the department. Data were collected through а questionnaire administered to both instructors and students. The data gathered revealed two results; first the general opinions of the instructors regarding in-service training programs were explored. The opinions of the instructors showed that 67% of them believed it was necessary to implement in-service training programs in their departments and that they expected an improvement in their teaching performance following such programs. The second aim was to look for significant differences in the perceptions of teachers and students in terms of the subject matters that teachers should improve. According to the results, it was obvious that there were statistically significant differences between the perceptions of teachers and students' responses on the purposes and outcomes of TD. The responses of both groups showed differences in the areas of teaching reading and speaking skills, using audio-visual aids, giving clear instructions, using various materials, motivating the students, and giving feedback.

Coşkuner examined the perceptions of instructors in Turkey [14]. Data were gathered through questionnaires from nine state universities. According to the results, participants working at those universities considered INSET and professional development as an inseparable factor in determining the professional life. The participants also agreed that they expected to find new techniques and to keep up with the innovations in the field through INSET courses. The results also showed that the participants considered INSET programs as a means of job satisfaction.

Seferoğlu conducted a study on teachers' perceptions of TD practices, especially the experienced teachers' in improving teaching/learning [15]. He also tried to reveal the sharing and helping process among experienced and novice teachers. The results indicated in the study that there was little support of experienced teachers to novice ones since they mostly thought that novice teachers did not ask for help. The perceptions of novice teachers to ask for help from experienced ones were basically negative. In the study, novice teachers mentioned that experienced teachers should help them by giving moral support and creating an environment in which teachers could be open and sincere about their problems.

The study conducted by Sentuna aimed to investigate the INSET content interests of English language instructors working in the



preparatory schools of Turkish state universities [4]. In this study, there were 530 instructors from 24 Turkish universities. The data in this study were gathered through questionnaires. According to the results in this study, the participants were at least fairly interested in attending INSET courses on all the items asked in the questionnaire. The highest scores obtained in the questionnaires were on motivating students and raising students' language awareness. The participants also mentioned that they were interested in having further training courses on new teaching methods, using new materials, raising their students' awareness of their goals and objectives, teaching vocabulary, speaking and reading, promoting interaction, ways of determining students' needs, and ways of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching. In this study, it was also shown that the novice teachers are more interested than the experienced teachers in most of the topic areas related to INSET content.

In another study, Duzan evaluated the effectiveness of the inservice training program implemented for the newly hired teachers in the School of Foreign Languages at Middle East Technical University [9]. To collect data, questionnaires and interviews were applied to the participants and the results were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The results in general showed that the trainees specifically felt the need to improve their practical teaching skills. However, when analyzed separately as novice and experience teachers' responses, it was clear that experienced teachers did not think they needed to participate in an INSET program.

2. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE (ÇALIŞMANIN ÖNEMİ)

As these studies show, much research reporting opinions and beliefs of the trainees in relation to TD is needed to inform TD practices situated at Turkish universities. For the purpose of this study two research questions have been formulated;

- What are changes in the perceptions and perceived needs and expectations of English language instructors before and after conducting an INSET program?
- Did the change differ between novice and experienced instructors?

3. METHODOLOGY (YÖNTEM)

3.1. Participants (Katılımcılar)

This study was carried out at TOBB ETU's Department of Foreign Languages during 2007-2008 academic years. Although there were 48 instructors in the department, this study was conducted with the cooperation of only 30 instructors teaching preparatory classes all of whom were volunteers. The remaining instructors were not included in this research project, as some of them teach departmental English courses and cannot attend the program because of their class schedules (See table 1 for the profile of the participants).



Table 1. Profile of the participants (Tablo 1. Katılımcıların profili)

(Tablo I. Katilimcilarin profili)			
Gender			
Female 25 (%83)			
Male 5 (%17)			
Graduation			
English Language Teaching 15 (%51)			
English Language & Literature 4 (%13)			
English Translation & Interpretation 4 (%13)			
Linguistics 4 (%13)			
American Culture & Literature 3 (%10)			
Diploma			
Bachelor of Arts 15 (%50)			
Master of Arts 14 (%47)			
Phd 1 (%3)			
Experience			
Less than a year-1 year 7 (%23)			
2-3 years 13 (%43)			
4-5 years 6 (%21)			
6-10 years 4 (%13)			
11 years or more -			
Participated in INSET before			
Yes 19 (%63)			
No 11 (%37)			
Teaching certificate			
Yes 26 (%86)			
No 4 (%14)			

3.2. The Instrument and Procedures (Araç ve Süreç)

To investigate and analyze the data in this study, both qualitative and quantitative data were used. In this paper, however, only the quantitative data is shared. The quantitative data were obtained via a questionnaire. To analyze and compare the results of the study for the first purpose of this research, pre and post questionnaires were administered to the participants before and after the sessions of the program started. Pre-questionnaire was prepared by Gültekin [11]. The post-questionnaire was adapted and by the authors by making use of previous studies by Alan [16], Tevs [17], and Özen [12]. There were 7 questions collecting demographical information and 33 questions asked in form of 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." After making the necessary alterations, the questionnaire in Gültekin's study was administered to 39 instructors in the preparatory school at TOBB ETU [11]. After determining the items in the questionnaire by factor analysis and making several alterations, a pilot study was conducted with 17 instructors at TOBB ETU. The instructors teaching in the departments were chosen because they received a 2-month training course separate from the prep-school instructors, which is similar to the case of the participants in this study. Finally, after administering the questionnaire, the results were computed in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 15 version and Cronbach Alpha Analysis was calculated to find the reliability coefficients for the items in the questionnaire. A value of .81 was found. The results of the pilot study indicated that the questionnaire was a highly reliable data collection tool for the purposes of this research. For quantitative analyzes, Statistical Package for Social Sciences 15.0 (SPSS) was used to calculate the data. To get the mean scores for the items, a sample t-test was applied to the responses of the participants. The items



which received scores lower than $\alpha < .05$ were regarded as significantly different. The differences were also mentioned by giving some examples from the interviews of the participants.

4. FINDINGS (BULGULAR)

4.1. Changes in Perceptions (Görüşlerdeki Değişimler)

The results in both studies were compared item by item via paired-sample t-test. Table 2 demonstrates the total results of the paired t-test for the perceptions of the participants.

Tab	le 2. Tota	l scores	
(Tablo 2. Toplam değerler)			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. 2-tailed
Pre and Post-perception	, 41389	,32716	,000

The total scores of the paired-sample t-test for both studies revealed that with a 0,41 mean difference, 0,32 standard deviation difference and 0,00 significance level (0.00 < 0.05). Hence, there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in the first part of the questionnaires. To have a deeper understanding of the case under study, the results were exposed to an item by item analysis of the paired sample t-test. Table 3 demonstrates the pairedsample t-test of the items separately.

Items 5, 6, 8, 12 showed that there was no significant difference between the results of the pre-test and post-test. These findings show that there grew awareness on the perceptions of the participants after attending the training courses, and they mostly agreed that INSET programs were a part of their professional development (item 1). The items from 3 to 7 in both studies sought to determine the perceived scope and methodology of the INSET courses. As suggested by the results of these two items the participants mostly agreed on the content and activities of the courses. Items 5 and 6 focused on the activities the participants would like to have in INSET courses. The analysis of these items showed that there was no significance difference between the pre and post-test results. Hence, the participants perceived INSET courses as an opportunity to keep up with recent methods and trends in the field; and they also believed INSET courses should have activities such as seminars and conferences.

In terms of the training model the participants favor, the results showed that both before and after the INSET program in the department, the participants agreed to have courses based on the Wallace's reflective training model through which they could relate their practices with their own reflection (item 7). As for the profile of the trainer, most of the participants expected an external trainer coming from another school or institution. Also, most of the participants again agreed that the training unit in the department was not efficient enough to take all the responsibility in training (items 8 and 9). Item 9 in the post-test also showed a significant difference, the means score for this item decreased in the responses of the participants, which means that after taking INSET courses in the department the participant felt more need to have external trainers because of several reasons.

Item 10 focused on the attendance to the program. The participants highly agreed that the course should be optional. They did not want to attend the courses obligatorily. So, for the sake of the effectiveness of the program, the participants can be given an opportunity to control the process of their own development and choose the topics and activities they need to investigate. Similarly, the participants believed an effective INSET course should allow the



trainers to share their ideas and experiences with each other. In this way they believed they could learn and develop (item 13).

Table 3. Paired t-test (Tablo 3. T-test sonuçları)

Items	Mean Sto) Dev	Sig.
1. In-service teacher training programs are a			
means of professional development at the Department of Foreign Languages	,333	,661	,010
2. An in-service teacher training program maintains a balance between the needs of the institution and the individual teacher	,500	,731	,001
3. In-service training programs should provide me with practical teaching skills such as classroom organization, skills integration, giving instructions, error correction etc.	,333	, 758	,023
4. In-service training programs should introduce activities that increase the trainee teacher's language proficiency	,667	1,028	,001
5. In-service training programs should encourage trainee teachers to follow activities such as conferences, seminars, recent articles	-,333	, 994	,077
6. In-service training programs should keep the trainee teachers updated with recent methods, theories and trends in the field of ELT	,133	, 730	,326
7. In-service training programs should guide the trainee teachers to reflect on their own teaching	,267	, 521	,009
8. In-service training programs should be conducted by an external trainer	, 267	1,172	,223
9. In-service training programs should be conducted by the 'Teacher Training Unit' in the University	,800	1,064	,000
10. In-service training programs shouldn't be compulsory	1,200	, 961	,000
11. For professional development, all teachers, novice and experienced, should take part in in-service programs	,667	1,155	,004
12. All teachers, novice and experienced, needn't attend the same in-service programs	,133	1,074	, 502

4.2. Difference Between Novice and Experienced Instructors (Meslekte Deneyimli ve Mesleğe Yeni Başlamış Okutmanlar Arasındakı Farklılıklar)

Whether the results of these items differed in terms of the experience level of the participants after the program was one of the constituents which the third research question sought to answer. Table 4 shows the result of this analysis.



Table 4. Means of first 15 items (Table 4. İlk 15 maddenin ortalaması)

(Tablo 4. İlk 15 maddenin ortalaması)					
Items	Exp.	Х	Std.Dev.		
1. In-service teacher training programs are a	N	4,80	,410		
means of professional development	E	4,80	,422		
2. An in-service teacher training program	N	4,70	,470		
maintains a balance between the needs of the institution and the teacher	E	4,90	,316		
3. In-service training programs should provide	N	4,65	,489		
me with practical teaching skills	Е	4,50	,527		
4. In-service training programs should	N	4,10	,641		
introduce activities that increase the trainee teacher's language proficiency	E	3,60	,516		
5. In-service training programs should	N	4,15	,671		
encourage following activities such as conferences, seminars, recent articles	E	4,00	,943		
6. In-service training programs should keep the	N	4,55	,686		
trainee teachers updated with recent methods and trends	E	5,00	,000		
7. In-service training programs should guide	N	4,90	,308		
the trainee teachers to reflect on their own teaching.	E	4,70	,483		
8. In-service training programs should be	N	4,70	,571		
conducted by an external trainer	Е	4,10	,994		
9. In-service training programs should be	N	3,95	,759		
conducted by the 'Teacher Training Unit'	E	4,00	,816		
10. In-service training programs shouldn't be	N		,607		
compulsory.	E	4,20	,422		
11. For professional development, all teachers,	N	4,15	,813		
novice and experienced, should take part in in- service programs.	E	4,50	, 527		
12. All teachers, novice and experienced,	N	3,85	,875		
needn't attend the same in-service programs.	E	3,60	,699		
13. An INSET program should focus on the	N	4,60	,598		
specific topics which the trainees mostly need to discuss/learn.	E	5,00	,000		
14. I may improve myself with the help of the	N	4,60	,503		
INSET programs	Е	4,30	,675		
15. INSET programs may not help me improve	N	4,05	,826		
professionally	E	4,20	1,229		

Although the results of the independent t-test showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the responses of novice and experienced teachers, some items in the first part of the questionnaire were worth discussing. Novice teachers' scores for items 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 12 were higher than experienced teachers' scores. On the other hand, experienced teachers' mean scores for items 2, 6, 9, 11, and 13 were higher than novice teachers' mean scores.

According to these results, it can be concluded that novice teachers were more interested in having activities on practical teaching skills, improving their own language proficiency, attending conferences, seminars and following up-to-date articles. They perceived INSET courses as an opportunity to reflect on their own teaching practices. The results also showed that novice teachers, as well as the experienced instructors did not want to attend the courses obligatorily and they did not want to attend the same courses.

Items related to personal and institutional needs revealed that the content of the courses and the attendance were higher. Experienced



participants believed INSET courses should focus on the needs of the teachers and should help them up-to-date with recent methods and trends in ELT. Moreover, they thought all teachers, novice or experienced, should attend INSET programs to improve professionally. The general opinions of each group, after analyzing the data item by item, were given as total scores (see Table 5).

Table	5. Total	Means
(Tablo 5.	Ortalama	Değerler)

Graduation leve	1	Ν	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean	novice	20	4,41	,189
	experienced	10	4,36	,220

In table 5, the total mean scores for the general opinions of each group were presented. It was observed that the mean score of the novice teachers (M=4.41) was slightly higher than the mean score of the experienced teachers (4.36). In order to understand whether this mean difference was statistically significant or not, an independent sample t-test was used. Findings showed that there was no statistically significant mean difference in the perception scores between the novice and experienced participants (see Table 6).

Table 6. Independent t-test results (Tablo 6. T-Test sonuçları)

			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
		F	Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)
Perception	Equal variances assumed	,208	,652	,471
	Equal variances not assumed			,497

5. CONCLUSION (SONUÇ)

The findings to this research question indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the general perceptions of novice and experienced teachers. They both believed INSET courses should be conducted in the institutions to improve teachers professionally, they should include related and to-the-point activities, seminars and conferences which help them share their experiences, solve problems and suggest ideas. The instructors -novice or experienced- both believed that there should be such courses but the attendance to those programs should be optional.

As discussed above, the general opinions of both groups did not differ, which means not only novice teachers but also the experienced teachers felt the need to improve professionally and they were also aware this is an ongoing process and any teacher at whatever stage they are in the profession need those programs to help develop professionally.

As the results of this study also show, more comprehensive studies are needed to shed light on the perceptions and needs of teachers in relation to TD courses or units. Administrators should also consider the results of such studies while developing the content and delivery of their own TD courses or units. Therefore, it is advised that participants' opinions should be considered while developing or altering the content and delivery of TD programs and



units. One last pedagogical outcome can be that instructors should be given more responsibility in developing themselves as professionals by carefully choosing the areas in which they need development most.

This study is limited in its number of participants (33) and the instrument used (a questionnaire consisted of 33 items). In this study the data were gathered from 30 participants and the results in this study were compared with the results of a previous study which collected its data from 39 participants. Since this number may not be enough to make generalizations, future studies should include larger samples. According to Dubin and Wong, novice and experienced teachers benefit differently from INSET courses [18]. While experienced teachers benefit from actually trying out new methods in a simulated situation before taking them back to their classrooms, novice teachers seek to develop their basic teaching skills by implementing the methods and theories with their own classroom practices.

NOTICE (NOT)

This article is developed from the first author's Master's thesis, advisor of which was the second author. The thesis was accepted by Hacettepe University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Foreign Languages Teaching.

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