## EFL TEACHERS' REFLECTIVE PRACTICE VIA ONLINE DISCUSSIONS

## A MASTER'S THESIS

BY

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## EFL TEACHERS' REFLECTIVE PRACTICE VIA ONLINE DISCUSSIONS

The Graduate School of Education of İhsanDoğramacıBilkent University

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# İHSAN DOĞRAMACIBILKENT UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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## JUNE 2015

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Teaching English as a Foreign Language.
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## **ABSTRACT**

#### EFL TEACHERS' REFLECTIVE PRACTICE VIA ONLINE DISCUSSIONS

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## June, 2015

This study investigated EFL teachers' participation in reflective practice oriented (RP-oriented) online discussion forums. More specifically, it explored the reflection types (reflection-in, reflection-on and reflection-for-action) instructors engaged in. To this end, the study explored RP-oriented online discussions utilized in a methodology course by nine experienced English as a foreign language teachers who were students in a master's program in teaching English as a foreign language at a foundation university in Ankara, Turkey. The data were collected through three different instruments: a background information questionnaire, RP-oriented discussions and interviews. All the qualitative data were analyzed according to Boyatzis' (1998) thematic analysis. Initially, each participant's data were printed out and examined to discover the themes that naturally emerged. After that, the emerging themes in the initial analysis were color-coded and related to three sensitizing concepts, specifically a) reflection-on-action b) reflection-in-action and c) reflection-for-action.

The findings of the study revealed that in RP-oriented discussion platforms participants engaged in a) reflection-on-action by considering their past experiences both as learners and teachers, b) reflection-in-action by sharing their beliefs and teaching practices c) reflection-on-action by defining their intentions on reshaping their future practices as well as providing suggestions for their institutions.

Considering these results, this study challenged the results of studies that have investigated the use of reflective practices in online-asynchronous discussion platforms and provided further directions in identifying successful utilization of RP-oriented online discussions in in-service teacher education.

Key words: Reflective practice, reflection-on-action, reflection-in-action, reflection-for-action, reflective practice oriented discussions (RP-oriented), online/asynchronous discussion platforms, EFL.

## ÖZET

## İNGİLİZCEYİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRETEN ÖĞRETMENLERİN ONLİNE PLATFORMLAR VASITASIYLA YANSITICI DÜŞÜNME ETKİNLİĞİ

## Elif Burhan

YüksekLisans, YabancıDilOlarakİngilizceÖğretimi TezYöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. DenizOrtaçtepe

## Haziran, 2015

Bu

çalışmaİngilizce'yiyabancıdilolaraköğretenöğretmenlerininternetortamındayansıtıcıd üşünmeodaklıtartışmalarına, dahaayrıntılıolarak, yansıtıcıdüşünmetürlerini (eylemsonrasıyansıtıcıdüşünme,

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Bu sonuçlargözönündebulundurulduğunda,

buçalışmaliteratürdeyansıtıcıdüşünmeüzerineyapılançalışmalarınsonuçlarınıeleştirme ktedir. Ayrıcainternetortamında uygulanan yansıtıcıdüşünme odaklıtartışmalarayönelik çalışmalarınden eyimli öğretmenler üzerinde yapılmasını önermiştir.

Anahtarkelimeler: Yansıtıcıdüşünme, eylemsonrasındayansıtıcıdüşünme, eylensırasındayansıtıcıdüşünme, eylemöncesindeyansıtıcıdüşünme, yabancıdilolarakİngilizceöğretimi, yansıtıcıdüşünmeodalıçalışmalar, online asenkrontartışmaplatformlar.

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#### **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

#### Introduction

Teaching in general can be defined as an interactive process as teachers consciously or unconsciously shape their teaching according to several factors such as students' profiles, ages and backgrounds. Upon involving in a teaching activity, most of the time, teachers take part in a thinking process to gauge the consequences and outcomes of these actions. This process can be described as reflection or reflective practice.

Since the concept of reflection was first coined by John Dewey in 1910 and 1933, it has increased its importance as an alternative approach to the existing models of teacher education, which still predominate (Erginel-Şanal, 2006). It has been used as an important tool in practice-based professional learning, as it helps teachers transfer their pedagogical knowledge into their teaching experience.

Therefore, it may be seen as the most important source of personal professional development. Studies have been conducted in both pre-service and in-service teacher education, with the help of tools such as journals, diaries and portfolios. More recently, the concept of reflective practice and its tools have developed over its research history and started to be utilized on online platforms such as blogs and discussions.

Schön (1983) divided the reflective practices in two categories: reflection on action, which is the evaluation of past experiences, and reflection-in-action, which is done simultaneously at the time of teaching. While their categorization is still accepted by many researchers, in 1991, van Manen contributed to the field by adding another category, reflection-for-action. Van Manen developed this category, which is

based on evaluation of the existing experience and making inferences about the future situations or problems, as he thought that Schön disregarded the use of reflection for future actions. Although these three categories were recently found to be effective and supplementary to each other (Uzum, Petron, & Berg 2014), relatively few studies have been conducted in the field of ELT using this framework of reflective practices, especially on their utilization in online/asynchronous platforms. This study addresses that gap by examining the use of reflection-on, -in and -for-action by analyzing online reflective practice in in-service teacher education.

## **Background of the Study**

Reflection or reflective practice, which is a relatively old concept in teacher education, was first defined by its founder, John Dewey. According to Dewey (1933), "Reflection is an active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge, of the grounds that support that knowledge, and the further conclusions to which that knowledge leads." (p.9). In other words, it is a deliberate thoughtfulness of teachers through which they can control their own learning with the assessment and application of their knowledge in order to come to a conclusion about a problem or situation.

Dewey's (1933)concept of reflection inspired many other researchers in the field of education to revise or expand the description of the term. For instance, Daudelin (1997) defined reflection as "the process of stepping back from an experience to ponder, carefully and persistently, its meaning to the self through the development of inferences" (p.39). Schön(1983)went even beyond defining the concept and categorized reflective practice into two separate types: reflection-

onaction, which is the type of retrospective reflection done on past experiences, and reflection-in-action, which is done immediately after experiencing the action.

Although Schön's(1987) conceptsencouraged deeper analysis of reflective practice, they were also criticized and found incomplete by some scholars. It was argued that reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action did not consider the role of experience that may help educators shape their future teaching. Therefore, in 1991, van Manendeveloped the concept of anticipatory reflection as future oriented reflection where individuals lookat experiences and make inferences about possible conditions or problems that may arise in their prospective classroom settings. Many researchers supported the addition of this third type of reflection: Uzum, Petron and Berg (2014) stated that "these three types of reflection (reflection-in-, -on-, and-for-action) frequently take place in a multi-faceted and overlapping manner; that is, they may occur at the same time" (p. 5).

The frameworks suggested for the categorization of types of reflection described reflective practice as a combination of theoretical knowledge with the experience of a deliberate thinking process. In order to engage in this process, several tools, such as reflective journals (Boud, 2001; Lee, 2007) and portfolios (Whitton, Sinclair, Barker, Nanlohy, &Nosworthy, 2004) have been used in several studies. Moreover, to see the role of reflection on the professional development of teachers, over the last three decades, several researchers have developed theoretical frameworks through which to analyze functions and contributions of reflective practice on teachers. Kolb's experiential learning model, Boud, Keogh, and Walker's model of reflection, Brookfield's model for critical thinking, and Gibbs' reflective cycle are some examples reported by Rivers, Richardson, & Price (2014).

Thanks to advances in technology, tools, including the use of online platforms, to promote reflection have evolved. Blogs, which resemble online and

asynchronous version of written reflective journals, are one of these online means. They have been utilized in the field of English Language teaching, especially in preservice teacher education, and found to be effective in fostering reflective practice (e.g., Harland &Wondra, 2011; Stiller &Philleo, 2003; Sun, 2010; Tang, 2013; Yang, 2009).

Apart from the use of blogs, online or asynchronous discussion boards, which have been around for more than a decade as a support for face-to-face (FTF) classrooms, also started to be seen as an alternative instrument for reflective practice in various branches of teacher education. Lee-Baldwin (2005) used asynchronous discussions forums as a means to facilitate reflective practice for pre-service teachers who enrolled in a science teaching methods course. Similarly, at the Universite de Montreal, Collin and Karsenti (2012) analyzed the role of online interaction as a support for reflective practice in an initial training program of pre-service teachers studying different subjects. Abodeeb-Gentile, Courtney and Pedro (2012) studied the use of reflective practice oriented (RP-oriented) online discussion forums on preservice English language teachers and analyzed reflective strategies (e.g. clarifying, enhancing, providing evidence, challenging and different thinking) that participants utilized in their online platform. Although these three studies were all conducted on pre-service teachers of different disciplines, the results suggest that online platforms can yield positive outcomes on reflective practice, and even seem to develop social interactions between participants (Collin &Karsenti, 2012).

Teachers' beliefs about the use of RP-oriented online discussions via weblogs and discussion boards have also been investigated as one component of some studies in teacher education. These studies have looked at their use from two perspectives: a) to analyze they find online platforms are effective for reflective practice b) to see whether they contribute to reshaping teachers' teaching and learning. In a study to

enhance reflective practices on pre-service EFL teachers' education, Yang (2009) analyzed the teachers' beliefs to see the use of blogs. Similarly, Chanand Ridgway's(2005) study conducted on pre-service teachers in an educational technology course looked at the effectiveness of blogs as a tool for reflective thinking. In another study, McDuffie andSlavit (2002) utilized online discussions as a support to see the change in beliefs of pre-service mathematics teachers about their teaching and learning mathematics. Results of the studies show that although some of the pre-service teachers evaluate blogs as effective tools for reflective practice (Yang, 2009), some others find them inefficient (Chan, 2005) because the participants only socially interacted with their teachers and peers instead of engaging in reflective practice. Studies also have concluded that online discussion platforms are convenient places to challenge teachers' pedagogical beliefs by providing them reflection space over a period of time (McDuffie &Slavit, 2002). All in all, more studies should be conducted in order to reach more solid conclusions about the posibilities and roles of online platforms for reflective practice.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The existence of RP-oriented online discussion forums has led to several studies in teacher education. However, findings from these studies present contradictions or provide mixed negative and positive results regarding the effective use of online discussions in reflective practices. For instance, Jones and Ryan (2014) conducted a study on pre-service teachers to improve their practicum experience with the help of reflection by applying blogs and discussion forums and compared the content analysis of reflective practices on these platforms. They found that these candidate teachers rarely engaged in high-level of reflectivity. The results also revealed that participants preferred blogs and found them more suitable for

reflections, however, they also allocated time to daily life conversations rather than actively engaging in reflections. Tsang (2011) who conducted a small study on the use of online discussion forums for reflective practices suggested that these asynchronous forums might contribute to the development of critical reflective skills. Yet, with more a elaborate finding, Abodeeb-Gentile, Courtney and Pedro's (2012) study on online discussions with written reflective summaries proposed that online discussion forums and their collaborative feature promote pre-service teachers' professional development.

Apart from researching the utilization of online RP-oriented discussions, few studies have investigated teachers' beliefs and the effective use of these asynchronous platforms as a component of teacher education. The results from existing studies revealed some contradictions as well. Some studies put forward that online discussions contributed to a change in teachers' beliefs about their teaching and learning (Hernandez & Ramos, 2004; Yang, 2009) whereas others claim that they did not reshape teachers' teaching and learning (Bean & Stevens, 2002; McDuffie &Slavit, 2002). One common aspect of these studies is that the majority of them have been conducted in pre-service teacher education settings, especially in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) and provided inconsistent results both in their effective utilization and contribution to teachers' reshaping their teaching and learning. However, systematic content analysis of the application of these asynchronous online reflective discussions, particularly with in-service ELT teachers, has not been conducted. Such studies could document its effectiveness and to see how this practice might contribute to changing teachers' teaching and learning.

While studies on reflective practices have been carried out in Turkey as well (Gün, 2011; Erginel-Şanal, 2006), the utilization of online discussions to promote reflective practice is a relatively new concept. Recently, at a foundation university's

master's program in teaching English as a foreign language department, online reflective practices have started to be used with experienced teachers in their methodology course. Students have engaged in writing asynchronous reflective papers and taking part in follow-up discussion on an online platform. Since there is not enough evidence of the quality of these papers and the discussions in terms of utilizing reflective practices, a content analysis might provide further ideas for these practices' better operation. Therefore, this study aims to investigate EFL teachers' participation in reflective practice oriented (RP-oriented) online discussion forums, more specifically; it aims to explore the reflection types (reflection-in, on and foraction) they engage in.

## **Research Question**

The present study addresses the following research question:

1. What types of reflection (reflection-in, on and for-action) do experienced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers engage in during their reflective practice oriented online discussions?

## Significance of the Study

While the importance of reflective practice has been documented through studies, more focus has been put on the use of traditional tools such as writing journals, diaries, and keeping portfolios. However, the use of online platforms such as blogs and discussions for reflection is a relatively new concept in the field of teacher education. The studies conducted to see their effective use in reflective practices and to understand whether they contribute to reshaping teachers' instruction and learning have provided varying positive and negative results. This study, which evaluates the effective use of online reflective practices, may contribute to the

literature by providing further support for their application as part of face-to-face (FTF) and distance education courses.

In Turkey, reflective practices have been examined in several studies both at pre-service and in-service teacher education, and their contributions to the teacher education have been suggested. At the local level, the findings of the study may first offer implications for the use of reflective practices in online platforms, specifically via asynchronous discussions. The study may provide further suggestions to enhance the course, in which the participants engage during their Master's degree, and its content to facilitate the effective use of RP-oriented online discussions.

#### Conclusion

This chapter has presented a brief overview of the literature on reflective practice, tools of reflective practice and asynchronous discussion platforms utilized for teacher reflection. The statement of the problem, the significance of the study, and research questions has also been presented. In the second chapter, the relevant literature is reviewed in more detail. In the third chapter, the methodology of the study is described. In the fourth chapter, the results of the study are presented, and in the last chapter, conclusions are drawn from the data in the light of the literature.

### **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **Introduction to Reflective Practice**

Teaching is as a complex task, which demands that teachers not only deliver information to their students, but also analyze their own interactions with them and evaluate their teaching practices. In other words, both teaching and learning how to teach requires "interrelated sets of thoughts and actions, all of which may be approached in a number of ways" (Loughran, 1996, p. 3).

In order to control and enhance their teaching processes and practices, teachers try new activities or strategies through which they either become successful or fail in their teaching. Even if successful in one classroom, it does not mean that the same activity or strategy will work in every classroom due to the students' profiles, need and classroom dynamics. Instead, teachers should ponder and look back to find the strong or weak points of what they have done before, in other words, they should engage in the evaluation processes via reflections.

Reflective practice, also called reflection or reflective teaching, has been defined by first Dewey (1933), a notable founder of the field, and a number of researchers throughout the last century; however, there is not a single, accepted definition (Harrington, Quinn-Leering, &Hodson, 1996). According to Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985), reflection is simply "a form of response of the learner to experience" (p. 18). In other words, if teaching is considered as a life-long learning path, teachers are walking on this long path as learners and when they have experiences, they think about and analyze them to reach a solution or solve a problem. Loughran (1996) described reflection in a more detailed way stating that:

Reflection is a process that may be applied in puzzling situations to help the learner make better sense of the information at hand, and to enable the teacher to guide and direct learning in appropriate ways. The value of reflection in teaching and learning is that it encourages one to view problems from different perspectives. (p. 4)

This definition meticulously claims that once experience is received, thinking on it, evaluating it and learning from it build up to reflection. The most important point of Loughran's (1996) definition of reflection is that when a person reflects on a problem or a situation, the person can look at the action from different angles. That means, it enhances the point of view of the person, transforming the individual into what can be called a *reflective practitioner* who participates in this kind of life-long learning.

## John Dewey as the Father of Reflection

John Dewey, as the originator of the term reflection, clearly described reflection around a hundred years ago in his books called *How We Think* (1910, 1933). Since then, the term reflection has prevailed in several research fields including education. He located reflection at the center of teaching and learning, stating:

*Reflective* thinking, in distinction from other operations to which we apply the name of thought, involves (1) a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty, in which thinking originates, and (2) an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity. (Dewey, 1933, p. 12)

In other words, according to Dewey's definition, reflection is the deliberate and active thought of people about their actions to figure out solutions to the problems.

Upon feeling doubt, conflict or hesitation about an action, people question each condition that takes place in this process to reach the roots of these feelings, and this process is defined as reflection. Thus, reflection is not a shallow and superficial concept; instead it is intense thinking about an action.

In order to understand Dewey's concept of reflective thinking, Rodgers (2002) summarized and listed four key criteria of reflection stated by Dewey. The first one, reflection as a meaning making process, states that according to Dewey, experience is gathered from the interaction of people with the whole world and environment as long as life and learning goes on. The second one, reflection as a rigorous way of thinking, expects reflective practitioners to go beyond accepting beliefs; instead it requires active thinking and questioning of a belief. The third criterion is called reflection in community. According to Rodgers (2002) "Dewey knew that merely to think without ever having to express what one thought is an incomplete act" (2002, p. 856). Therefore, what has been experienced should be shared in order to deepen and enrich its meaning with others' comments and ideas. The fourth criterion is reflection as a set of attitudes, which requires the integration of whole-heartedness, directness, open-mindedness, responsibility and readiness in a reflective practitioner. These attitudes have complementary and constructive features:

...one must remain engaged in the experience as it is happening, in an undistracted way, so that data can be gathered through observation (whole-heartedness and directness). One must also remain open-minded, entertaining many interpretations of his or her experience so that one does not limit one's understanding the actions that flow from it. Finally, one must accept that a shift in understanding an experience may call for an entire shift in outlook.

And responsibility demands that action-practice- line up with outlook - theory. (Rodgers, 2002, p. 864)

As a philosopher, Dewey defined the term reflection by constructing its key factors related to the content of reflective practice. He went beyond the importance of experience and emphasized the importance of questioning, mulling over, and evaluating people's actions within their environment.

## Donald A. Schön as a Constructor of Reflective Practice

The idea of 'reflective thinking was a theory suggested by Dewey; however, the idea of 'reflective practitioner' was developed in large part by Donald. A. Schön, who was a student of Dewey, in the 1980s and 1990s. According to Schön (1983), educationalists should engage in the study of their own practice anddevelop their own educational theories deriving from that practice (McNiff& Whitehead, 2002). With his statement, Schön(1983) demonstrated the inefficiency of teacher education books to improve teaching and foster professional development because educators sometimes come across problems that are not stated in the books and defy existing information on teaching. Therefore, to overcome the difficulties educators come across in their teaching practices, they should definitely take part in reflection to find a solution to the existing problems. To clarify the inefficiency of reflective practitioners' pedagogical knowledge and the need for reflection, Schön (1987) stated that:

because the unique case falls outside the categories of existing theory and technique, the practitioner cannot treat it as an instrumental problem to be solved by applying one of the rules in her store of professional knowledge.

The case is not 'in the book'. If she is to deal with it competently, she must

do so by a kind of improvisation, inventing and testing in the situation strategies of her own devising. (Schön, 1987, p.5)

To conclude Schön(1987) sees reflection as rigorously bound to action and personal experience. The reflective practitioner has to engage in thinking with the effect of action. In order to take part in this cognitive process of thinking and evaluation of the situation, in 1991, Schön divided reflection into two types and distinguished between "reflection-on-action" and "reflection-in-action" by expanding the theory of reflection stated by Dewey (1933).

Reflection-on-action. Reflection-on-action, as it can be concluded from the name itself, is conducted upon experiencing the action. The practitioner thinks about what the others did and engages in an evaluation to understand whether the activity was successful or not by making judgments on himself or herself. Moreover, the person tries to see if there is any other opportunity or alternative to reach the same or better outcomes of the action (Grayling, 2000). In other words, according to Schön 1983 "We reflect on action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome" (p. 26). As it can be concluded from Schön's statement, via reflection on action, the reflective practitioner can also evaluate the simultaneous decisions conducted at the time of the action. Therefore, by analyzing past, not only experiences but also active thinking processes in actions help reflective practitioners enhance their teaching practices.

**Reflection-in-action.**Reflection-in action, sometimes called active or interactive reflection, can be defined as conscious thinking and modification while on the job (Hatton & Smith, 1995). This type of reflection can help the reflective practitioner immediately reflect on the action upon confronting it. For this reason,

this type of reflection can also be defined as a stop-and-think process in which a teacher can virtually evaluate the situation and make a decision about it (van Manen, 1991, p. 101). Reflection-in-action help teachers figure out the weaknesses or provide alternatives to unexpected problems immediately. According to Murphy (2013), teachers get accustomed to some anomalies in their classrooms as they become more experienced. That way, they create frames for similar situations in their mind and apply these frames when they encounter resembling conditions. However, inexperienced teachers may not be able to engage in reflection-in-action as experiences teachers. According to Farrel (2007) "novice teachers may have [more of] a problem in reflection-in-action because they have not built up such an advanced schema of teaching routine" (p. 5). Thus engaging in reflection-in-action may seem as practical as reflection-on-action for novice teachers.

## **Max van Manen and Reflective Practice**

As a pivotal contributor to reflective practice, in his book *the Tact of Teaching*, van Manen (1991) defined reflection as "a fundamental concept in educational theory", and in some sense it is just another word for "thinking" (p.98). According to van Manen (1991),reflecting can be described as 'engaging in a thinking process' (p. 98). Therefore, the idea of reflection is closely related to the concept of teaching, during and after which educators engage in thinking in order to control, evaluate and construct the information they deliver to the students.

An important point that should be stated about van Manen (1991) is that he addressed the problems of teachers that make them less reflective. Although the use of reflective practice has a significant role in professional development, it may not be possible for educators to utilize it in every situation. There exist some situations in which teachers cannot control the classroom environment or apply their reflection

due to some constraints such as time, crowded classroom environment, or technical problems related to technology. For instance, some schools operate like business, in which teachers have to obey all the rules of teaching. Most of the time administrators provide teachers overloaded schedules or curriculums in which there is no space for the educators to reconstruct or revise their teaching practice. Therefore, the teacher is expected to teach more mechanically and not to reflect on what or how he or she teaches (van Manen, 1991).

Reflection-for-action. One of the significant contributions of van Manen (1991) was to broaden the types of reflection by going beyond Schön's reflection types, reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action (1983). According to van Manen (1991), teachers not only use reflection to solve problems that happen at the time of teaching to contemplate the alternatives about past experiences, but also consider the possible problems or situations that they may encounter in their future teaching. Therefore, van Manen (1991) proposed the third type of reflection, reflection-for-action, which can be defined as reflection before action or anticipatory reflection. Reflection-for-action

"enables us to deliberately think about possible alternatives, decide on courses of action, plan the things we need to do and anticipate the experiences we and others may have as a result of expected events or of our planned actions" (van Manen, 1991, p. 101).

In other words, by engaging in reflection-for-action, reflective practitioners can increase the power of experience by carefully identifying the strengths and weaknesses they have as teachers or evaluating the strategies or techniques they utilize in their classroom environments to enhance their teaching by overcoming anticipated problems or situations.

According to van Manen, teachers come across at least two types of anticipatory reflection. The first type requires a teacher to choose a pedagogical solution to overcome a problematic situation of a student. For instance, if the teacher has a student who acts in an aggressive manner towards the teacher, the educator can talk to this student in person, share the problem with a colleague to get some suggestion, or contact the student's family to collaborate with them in order to solve this situation. The teacher has to choose a course of action to find the most suitable way to address the problem, and anticipate the possible outcomes of each choice. Second type of anticipatory reflection, in which a teacher may apply reflection before action, concerns lesson planning. Sometimes teachers need to think ahead while planning a lesson to figure out the strong or weak parts of the plan by anticipating the possible reactions of students. The teacher may need to enhance and improve the content of this planning. While doing that the teacher may also look back at his/her past experiences and design the future course in light of this information (van Manen, 1991).

Although these reflection types,reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action suggested by Schön (1991) and reflection-for-action constructed by van Manen (1991), were designed to differentiate among different kinds of reflection, it is not very easy to separate them as they have multifaceted, overlapping features. In order to clarify the borders of reflection types, looking at their temporality facilitates distinguishing them (Uzum, Petron & Berg, 2014). Thus, Wilson (2008) stated chronological orders and created temporality for reflection types. He stated that reflection-on-action can be categorized as past situations, reflection-in-action can be clarified as present situations or general conditions of practitioners such as education place, teachers current teaching practices, and reflection for action can be analyzed

as future actions via which reflective practitioners think about future conditions. The most important contribution of Wilson (2008) can be regarded on the definition of reflection-in-action as he went beyond common definitions by expanding the scope of reflection in action by binding it with present and general conditions or situations of teachers.

To separate categories of reflection types, Murphy (2013) also supported temporality and assigned key words for each reflection types as a) "on action-retrospecting, thinking back, remembering; b) in-action- being aware, in the moment, seeing; c) for action- anticipating thinking ahead, planning" (p. 616). Instead of referring to reflection-in-action as Wilson (2008), Murphy (2013) referred to reflection-in-action as simultaneous, concurrent decisions of teachers. Considering the temporality aspect of reflection suggested by these researchers, times of actions and their interpretations can also play a vital role to distinguish reflection types.

## **Reflective Practice and Identity**

Reflective practice has been utilized to analyze the identity of language learners and language teachers via tools of reflective practice such as diaries, narrative reflections and mentoring meetings. In 2009, Hirano used reflective diary, as well as classroom interaction and interviews in one-year action research study conducted on her adult EFL student who had a difficulty in learning English and found that diaries could be used as a tool for reflection on learner identity. With reflective diaries, the researcher wanted the participant to reflect on his learning processes by using prompts in which the participant was asked to explain the things he learnt, his problems and barriers in the learning process. That way, the participant reflected on his learner identity by identifying anxiety as a problem in his second language learning process. Another study on identity reflection was carried out by

Besser and Chik (2014). With the help of narrative reflections, two groups of students studying in different primary schools defined the importance of language practice opportunities in their language learning. The students also drew on the reflections about their L2 learner identity construction in terms of the target culture.

Being similar to presented studies, some other tools or techniques were utilized to engage teachers in reflections on their teacher identity, especially identity construction. According to Urzua and Vasquez' study (2008) conducted on novice English as a Second language teachers' who worked for intensive English language program, providing teachers chances to reflect on existing conditions and their future plans via mentoring meetings on teaching practices play a vital role in the construction of teacher identity. The findings of their study revealed that by engaging in future-oriented talks on participants' metacognitive selves, such as awareness, intentionality, commitment, self-confidence and responsibility, improved participants' identity constructions as teachers.

Maclean and White (2007) conducted a study on the impact of reflection on formation of teacher identity with seven experienced teachers and five student teachers who were all graduates completing the final year of a teacher education course which qualified them both as primary and secondary teachers. First, student teachers' teaching practicums were recorded in videos, and second, experienced teachers reflected on those recorded teaching practicums by suggesting ideas for student teachers. The findings of the study indicated that student teachers could develop their teacher identity by talking about their teaching practicums and evaluating their actions, thoughts, values, feelings and goals. Besides, the participants could also develop their social identity by engaging in social interactions with experienced teachers.

To sum up, studies in the field of teaching claim that reflections can be utilized both for learners and novice teachers to construct learner identity and teacher identity.

## **Tools to Promote Reflective Practice**

A number of tools have been utilized both in pre-service and in-service teacher education to promote teachers' reflective practices. Even semi-structured interviews were utilized to have teachers engage in reflective practice analyze their beliefs about teaching (Bennet-Jackson, 2010). However, it is important to state that there are other specific tools that can be categorized as conventional tools (e.g. journals, portfolios,) and technology-oriented tools (e.g. electronic dialogue journals, chats or internet relay chats, blogs, online/asynchronous discussions) to enhance teachers' reflective practice.

## **Reflective Journals**

Reflective journals have been used for the purpose of reflection in several fields including business and nurse education, as well as teacher education.

Reflective journals are practical to apply since they are easy to assign and let practitioners share their thoughts and ideas by evaluating their experiences.

According to Gil-Garcia and Cintron (2002), a reflective journal involves learners in "self-assessment, collaborative critique, self-reflection and goal setting" (p.2). Reflective journals vary in the way that they aid the reflective process. For instance, a journal may become a shared dialogue between a trusted lecturer or mentor teacher in the classroom or it may be used for an individual journey of professional self-reflection and supported by the use of a framework for self assessment at specific times throughout the journal keeping project.

Studies conducted with reflective journals have been found them to be effective in reshaping pre-service teachers teaching practices. For instance, Gil-Garcia and Cintron (2002) stated thatkeeping journals helped student teachers in their practicum modify their teaching practice. In another study of American preservice teachers, Uzum, Petron and Berg (2014) found similar results. They conducted a study on the first teaching experience of candidate pre-service teachers. The twenty-eight participants majoring in elementary education or special education took part in the study to reflect on their experiences in teaching English as a requirement of their English as a Second Language course. The participants wrote journals to share their classroom experiences. The study indicates that the reflective papers of students helped participants connect their theoretical knowledge with teaching practicality by adapting the lessons for English language learners in varying degrees, primarily in the areas of language and content support.

Some examples of these journal types are response journals, dialogue journals double entry journals, interactive journals or diaries, dialogue journals and personal or narrative journals.

Response journals. One type of reflective journal utilized in teacher education program is the reading response journal. According to Parsons (1994), response journals involve students in recording "their personal reactions to, questions about, and reflections on what they read, write, observe, listen to, discuss, do, and think" (p.12). For instance, in this type of reflection journal, students are assigned to read a book, an article or see a film or a video and write their comments, ideas, or questions about it by engaging in reflective processes.

After writing their papers, the students sometimes share their papers within the classroom with their teachers and peers. This type of journal is frequently used in health education (Kerka, 2001) and helps the learners connect their previous knowledge in the field with new information or learning (Kerka, 1996). In teacher education, response journals are utilized, as well. For instance, Lee (2008) conducted a study on thirteen female Cantonese-speaking undergraduate students majoring in English language teaching to see the use of response journals on teachers' development of the teaching and learning processes. Participants were required to write response journals during their compulsory course called subject instruction, which aims to equip students with necessary knowledge and skills of English language teaching. The findings of the study revealed that response journals helped teacher candidates reflect their feelings and thoughts as well as enhancing their self-understanding and professional characteristics such as questioning their teaching practice, exploring alternatives to problems and self-evaluation.

**Dialogue journals.** Dialogue journals can be described as a tool that involves teachers and students in writing and exchanging their ideas in mutual responses. These types of journals have been utilized in teacher education programs and found to be effective in identifying students needs in specific areas, promoting autonomous learning, enhancing confidence and creating interaction beyond the classroom setting (Porter, Goldstein, Leatherman & Conrad, 1990). In 1998, Brookfield discussed the contribution of dialogue journals:

A self-confirming cycle often develops whereby our uncritical accepted assumptions shape actions that then only serve to confirm the truth of those assumptions. We find it very difficult to stand outside ourselves and see how some of our most deeply held values and beliefs lead us into distorted and constrained ways of being. (p. 197)

Considering Brookfield's ideas on dialogue journals, it can be concluded that these

types of journals help learners or teachers evaluate their beliefs and values. By engaging in dialogue journals, reflective practitioners canidentify the beliefs and their roles from an outer perspective in their learning and teaching.

**Double entry journals.**In double entry journal, students are expected to write one-page entries every day, week, or month depending on their assignments till the end of the semester. Throughout their journals, they are expected to share their ideas, thoughts or experiences that they come across on the left hand side of the page, and they include the readings or ideas that emerge from classroom discussions on the right side of their papers. Students then draw connections and determine contradictions whenever and wherever possible (Hatcher &Bringle, 1997).

Although double entry journals are recommended for teacher education (Whitton et al., 2004), relatively few studies exist on their implementation for teachers' reflective practices. Risko et al. (1999) implemented double entry journals written in a pre-service reading course and during participants practicum by analyzing critical discourse to see pre-service teachers' critical thinking processes. The findings of the study revealed that double entry journals provided more instances for participants to critically analyze their teaching and learning processes.

Interactive journals or diaries. The existing literature in the field suggests that interactive journals contribute to a high level of thinking and create affective support for the reflective practitioner when reflective comments are shared with a peer, a group or a supervisor with whom there is an established trust (Garcia-Mata & Barrios-Espinosa, 2002). Bain, Mills, Ballantyne and Packer (2002) claim that:

... the provision of brief written feedback, especially when it involves constructive questioning of the student's thinking, may be a sufficient stimulus to deepen the reflective process. In this context, encouraging students

to re-visit their journal entries, armed with some new insights and perspectives provided by feedback, may be a more helpful exercise in terms of improving reflective writing than continuing an oral reflective discussion... (p. 28)

Maloney and Campbell-Evans (2002) conducted a study on the use of interactive journals as a strategy for professional growth with pre-service teachers who attended school-based alternative teacher education program. They stated that students used interactive journals for several purposes such as designing and planning practice, as a tool for analysis, reflecting on emotions and solving problems.

**Personal or Narrative Journal.**Personal or narrative journal does not necessarily need to include glittering ideas of the practitioner. Instead, the person can state and restate similar ideas in order to change his or her beliefs or values in teaching. Thus, Hubbs and Brand (2005) state that "the personal journal is a narrative description of the student's inner processes" (p.67).

Personal or narrative journals have been utilized in teacher education by Lee (2004) to examine first year pre-service teachers of early childhood education. Lee (2004) aimed to see Chinese pre-service teachers' professional development and knowledge construction by promoting students' thinking and self-reflection with narrative journals via which he wanted the participants evaluate the content and delivery of a Human Development course. The findings of the study revealed that participants engaged in reflective practices by providing suggestions about the course and its insight by constructing their knowledge in teaching for their future practices. In addition, with the help of their reflections, participants shifted their positions from being passive learners to active learners who question, evaluate and provide suggestions on existing conditions. To sum up, narrative journals help teachers to evaluate their beliefs and construct knowledge about teaching.

#### **Portfolios**

The use of portfolios to improve professional development in teaching has gained considerable momentum since their first application in the 1980s. However, some debate has also arisen about their effectiveness in providing reflective practice. According to Orland-Barak (2005), reflective practice will not occur as a result of portfolio construction if the portfolio does not require the practitioner to create a link between teaching experiences, existing knowledge, values, and beliefs.

In order to see the use of reflection in professional practice portfolio, Jones (2010) conducted a study on special education teachers who were studying in a post-graduate program. Findings indicated that creating a professional development portfolio supported by teaching, written guidelines and peer interaction enhances the possibility and potential for effective and productive reflective portfolio.

### Online Tools in Teacher Education to Promote Reflection

Utilizing technology both in pre-service and in-service teacher education, including in teaching English as a foreign or second language departments, is becoming increasingly more prevalent in order to promote teachers' reflective practices. Their use enables teachers and teacher candidates to easily continue their professional development. Through distance education, they are able to pursue their career via online platforms without the restrictions of time and place. The most common technological tools for reflective practices include using chat or Internet Relay Chat (IRC), blogs, electronic dialogue journals via e-mails, and online asynchronous discussion forums.

# **Chat or Internet Relay Chat**

The word chat, or more technically, Internet relay chat, can be defined as "a

mode that allows people to talk to each other online in real time" (Farr & Riordan, 2014, p. 2). Chat discussions are useful sources for education because they provide similar discourse to spoken discussions due to their written format in a synchronous platform (Lammy&Hampel, 2007 as cited in Farr & Riordan, 2014).

However,Meskill (2009) claims that the use of synchronous discussions create a messy environment in which participants frequently write off-topic information and create lower quality discussions, a situation which happens less likely in

asynchronous discussions.

Another 2009 study supports Meskill's (2009) claim about the disorganized features of online synchronous discussions. Chen, Chen and Tsai (2009) conducted a study on sixty-one public school teachers who were participating in an in-service professional development program called *Alternative Assessment for Mathematics Teaching*. The participants were asked to describe their experiences throughout six online synchronous discussions. They posted 3600 messages, which constituted the first section for the study's data. Following these discussions, the researchers conducted interviews with 10 participants in order to analyze their perceptions about these synchronous discussions. The results of the study showed that although the researchers received a large amount of data, especially at the beginning and the end of the discussions, most of these chat conversations were based on social messaging in the form of dialogues. Most of the chat messages showed a lack of cognitive or metacognitive skills. They concluded that the content of the discussions and the quality of the shared information was not more superior than face-to-face conversation.

In examining the few studies that exist in the literature on the use of synchronous discussions for reflective practice, it can be concluded that the

application of synchronous discussions to promote professional development cannot be regarded as effective in fostering reflective practices; instead they result in disorganized interactions or dialogues of participants on social issues.

# **Electronic Journals or Electronic Dialogue Journals**

Although the use of electronic journals might seem to be a quite recentdevelopment in teacher education, it has been used for nearly two decades. Researchers have pointed to the lack of opportunity to reflect on teaching during teacher education (Feiman-Nemser & Buchman, 1985; Wildman, Magliaro, Niles & McLaughlin, 1990), therefore, beginning in the mid-1990s the use of this new type of online tool was seen not only as a new alternative for professional development, but also as a tool to enhance regular journaling.

McIntyre and Tlusty (1995) conducted a study on eleven student teachers to perform reflection via e-mail dialogue journals at two different teaching placements. The students were asked to write critiques about their teaching practices in a 16-week semester and 294 messages were received in total. Additional data were collected from the supervisors of students' and a survey of the participants. The study reported promising findings regarding the use of technology in teacher education. The students engaged in reflective discourse and some of them stated that they felt themselves more comfortable and less isolated with the help of electronic response journal. The survey conducted to see the perceptions of the students on the use of this tool indicated that its first and foremost contribution was to connect the candidate teachers to their supervisor. The use of e-mails to get moral support from the supervisors was the second most important contribution, with the third being the reflection on the philosophy of education. An obstacle to the use of e-mails was the time demands of the process of online-reflection. Students stated that providing a critique and

reflection on their teaching experience took a great deal of time during their hectic program. This comment of the students may suggest practical concerns of online dialogue journals.

Similarly, Andrusyszyn and Davie (2007) conducted a study with graduate students on interactive journal writing in an online computer conferenced courses via e-mails and asynchronous interviews. Findings of the study indicated that reflective practices in an online platform helped learners evaluate their knowledge and experiences and gave them some time to synthesize the learning from internal and external sources to reconstruct new concepts. Moreover, the graduate students felt encouraged and self-confident when they shared their learning with the instructor and their peers.

# **Blogs as a Tool for Reflective Practice**

Blogs, which are defined as online diaries with texts and images and have connection and links to the other blogs and websites, have evolved as communication tools to engage people in collaborative activity, knowledge sharing, reflection and debate (Diaz, 2009; Kim, 2008; Roberts, 2003; Williams & Jacobs, 2004).

Existing studies in the literature claim that blogs can enhance reflective thinking (Farmer, Yue, & Brooks, 2008), and deeper learning and knowledge construction (Ferdig& Trammel, 2004; Williams & Jacobs, 2004). For instance, Yang (2009) conducted a study on the use of blogs as a platform to enhance reflective thinking with 43 student EFL teachers in a methodology course and found that all the participants took part in the blog to reflect and comment on each other's ideas. By engaging in blogs utilized as a platform for reflection, participants got more opportunities and enhanced their professional development by evaluating the teaching

methods presented in their methodology course and challenged each others' ideas ad viewpoints on the implementations of methods in teaching.

Another study conducted in Turkey by Döş and Demir (2014) examined the use of blogs to make second years students of primary school teacher education department reflect on their blended learning experience. The results of the study were promising by showing that the participants engaged in reflective writing processes by discussing their own learning strategies in their own voices. By stating their own thoughts and their existing knowledge, the participants shared insights about how they learn more effectively. Moreover, the study also contributes to the understanding of how to utilize blogging in higher education settings and environments.

# **Online Asynchronous Discussion Forums**

# **Definition of Asynchronous Discussion Forums**

With the technological development in every field, teachers are also participating in the growing popularity of online teaching and learning platforms. According to Mayadas, Bourne and Bacsich"Online education is established, growing, and here to stay" (2009, p.49). Allen and Seaman's, (2013) study indicate that in the fall term of 2011 in the United Stated (U.S.) more than 6.7 million people participated in an online course. This information can be considered as a clue that online learning communities constitute a large part of education and will most probably become an indispensible part of it in the future.

One tool of online teaching is asynchronous or online discussion forums. These forums are online platforms that can be used for distance education as well as a support for face-to-face classes. Since they provide group interaction, knowledge is constructed via ideas and contributions of group members (De Wever, Van Keer, Schellens, &Valcke, 2010).

Available on most learning management systems (e.g. Blackboard, Desire2Learn, Moodle), "asynchronous online discussions complements and reinforces overall course learning experiences" (Baker, 2013, p. 12) and may also be used to share, evaluate and reconstruct experience and learning gathered out of class. Through out the discussions, student to student, student to teacher or both types of interaction take place (Xin&Feenberg, 2006).

In order to define the Instrumental Roles of Asynchronous Online Discussion Forums (AODs), Berge (1995) suggests a framework and mentions four roles in his study. The first role is the pedagogical role. According to this role, instructors must determine the aim of using AOD. Moreover, the way of using these discussions should be described to the students and the grading/evaluation criteria of the discussion participation should be stated beforehand to the participants. The second role is the social role. According to Al-Shalchi (2009), virtual classes intensify sociality and student connections. Students feel stressed when they are in a real classroom environment, so closer social connections develop in online platforms than in a traditional classroom atmosphere. The managerial role of AODs requires teachers to manage the discussion sessions, to direct them with questions to avoid students from commenting on irrelevant issues to the online discussion topic. The final role, the technical role, outlines how the school should provide the needed software or interface to connect the learners or participants to the online forum or platform (Berge, 1995).

## The Use of Asynchronous/online Discussions for Reflective Practices

Online discussion forums have been used for reflective practices in the last decade and several studies conducted in the field of teacher and health education indicate both positive and negative results about their effectiveness and content.

Lee-Baldwin (2005) conducted a study with pre-service teachers of science on the use of asynchronous discussion forums (ADFs) during the science teaching methods course to explore the group dynamics that facilitate reflective thinking. The results of the study were promising; when participants were given sufficient time, social group dynamics in ADFs helped teachers engage in in-depth reflective thinking. Similarly, Romano (2008) conducted a study on the use of discussion forums to promote interaction between novice teachers. The results indicate that teachers were involved in both high and low levels of interaction; moreover, their writings helped them benefit from each other in terms of engaging in reciprocal reflection by sharing their opinions and advice. Abodeeb-Gentile, Courtney and Pedro (2012) also examined the use of reflective strategies on pre-service teachers experiences in a language arts class via online discussions The findings of the study showed that participants engaged in reflective strategies such as clarifying, enhancing, providing evidence, challenging and differentiating thinking. In considering the findings of the studies, it can be concluded that online discussion platforms can be regarded as effective tools in reflective practices of pre-service and novice teachers of different fields.

Jones and Ryan (2014) conducted a recent study to see whether online discussion forums can be applied as a useful tool to practice reflection for pre-service teachers of primary and secondary education. In a structured discussion forum, researchers utilized blogs, which did not include guiding threads, and an online discussion platform in which researchers directed threaded discussion topics by guiding the participants to reflect on their practicum experiences in relation to the theoretical information of their studies. The study indicated that participants strongly preferred participating in blogs. The guidance of the researchers did not contribute to deepening the reflective practices of teacher candidates. Therefore, the study

suggested the need for researchers in the field to find better ways to engage teachers in reflective practices, especially in online platforms.

In contrast to the findings of the previous studies, other research conducted in the field suggests a less positive result in the effective use of asynchronous discussions. In Tsang's (2011) research, first year students of oral health and dentistry were connected with their third year peers via online group discussions to enhance reflection. The results of the study indicated that slightly more than half of the participants engaged in reflection, with the third year students especially perceiving the discussions as educationally valuable.

Given these studies, it is important to mention the application of reflective practices via online asynchronous discussion forums, especially in teacher education, is relatively new since few studies exist in literature. Moreover, there is little evidence and agreement about their successful utilization on teachers' reflective processes.

## The Role of Reflective Practice in Turkey

In Turkey, reflective practices have also been promoted as a part of some preservice and in-service teacher education. At Hacettepe University in Ankara,

Turkey, Köksal and Demirel (2008) examined the contributions of reflective thinking via teaching observation forms, camera recordings, interview forms, self evaluation forms, participant journals and lesson plans to teaching practices of twelve fourth grade pre-service teachers teaching practice internships. The findings of the study indicate that reflective thinking contributed to the participants planning, implementation and evaluation processes of their teaching.

Gün (2011) conducted a study to improve the quality of teachers' reflective practices by providing trainings to participants on reflection. The participants were provided recordings of their classroom teaching to promote the quality of their

reflection. The study suggested that recorded videos were valuable to nurture reflective thinking; moreover, when given the opportunity to discuss the reflections on teaching, teachers could identify the problems and suggest alternative solutions in a collaborative group atmosphere.

Döş and Demir (2014) have also studied technology-integrated reflective practices. The researchers wanted students to reflect on their blended learning experiences via blogs and the study concluded that the participants engaged in reflection via these online platforms.

#### Conclusion

Reflection or reflective practices, as stated previously, can be defined as engagement in a deliberate thinking process in order to evaluate learning or teaching. Educators can engage in different types of reflection: by looking at past experiences and finding solutions or alternatives to past (reflection-on-action); reflection simultaneously the time of the action or reflecting on present problems or situations (reflection-in-action); and inferring problems or situations they may come across in their future teaching or learning (reflection-for-action).

Reflective practices have been utilized intensively in several fields such as health education, and teacher education. However, their application via asynchronous discussion platforms in EFL teaching is a relatively new concept. Therefore, an investigation on their utilization in an EFL setting is needed and their effect on teachers' beliefs and ideas related to teaching and learning should be examined as well.

#### CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This study evaluated EFL teachers' participation in reflective practice oriented (RP-oriented) online discussion forums. More specifically, explored the reflection types (reflection-in, on and for-action) the participants engaged in. Thus, the study sought answers to the following research question:

1. In what types of reflection (reflection-in, on and for-action) do the experienced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers engage in during their reflective practice oriented online discussions?

The answers to the research question were pursued via a qualitative research design that took place over a five-month period. The students of teaching English as a foreign language master program were assigned to write five reflective papers on various topics directed by the lecturer of the course. Upon writing their papers, participants posted them on a Moodle platform and commented on at least three other students' ideas presented throughout their assignment. Furthermore, five semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant to see whether the discussions helped them reshape the practices about their teaching and learning. As the sixth interview, general interview questions adapted from Bennet-Jackson's (2010) study was utilized to see overall contributions of online reflective practice. In order to answer the research questions, the researcher analyzed the participants' reflective papers and their posts in discussions, as well as the data gathered from theinterviews to seethe types of reflection they engaged in. This chapter will present in detail the methodology of the study in four sections: setting and participants,

instruments, data collection procedure, and the techniques employed in the data analysis.

## **Setting and Participants**

This research was conducted at a Master's Program of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at a foundation university in Ankara, Turkey. The main reason for conducting this study at this particular program is that it provided a readily available source to the researcher in the scope of utilizing online RP-oriented discussions.

The MA TEFL program is offered to both international teachers and Turkish teachers who work in various universities in Turkey. The applicants of the program are required to have at least two years of teaching experience, and they are selected according to results of a verbal and a written exam which include open-ended questions and a language proficiency exam. Upon being accepted, most participants take part in the program as full-time students who take courses and write their thesis during a heavily loaded academic year. Under certain circumstances, students can also take part as part-time students in the program and complete their degree in four or six academic semesters. During the program, students enroll in various courses, which aim to improve teachers' knowledge and expertise in the field of foreign language teaching and academic research.

This study was conducted with nine participants enrolled in the Methodology course during the 2014-2015 academic year. Eight female and one male TEFL students whose ages ranged between twenty-five and thirty-five participated in this study. All of them are native speakers of Turkish and started learning English as a second language either at primary or secondary school. The vast majority of the participants took part in the program as full-time students and worked for public

universities, which situated in various cities of Turkey. Only one of the students attended the program as a part-time student and worked for a private institution. Participants' graduation degree, years of teaching experience and education backgrounds yielded various results.(see Table 1 and Table 2 below for more detailed demographic information about the participants).

Table1

Demographic Information about the Participants from Participant 1 to 5

Participants	P#1	P#2	P#3	P # 4	P # 5	
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female	
Age	25	35	28	26	28	
Affiliation	BülentEcevit	Erciyes	Anadolu	Bilkent	Social	
	University	University	University University		Sciences	
				BUSEL	University of	
					Ankara	
Age she / he	Fourth grade	First grade –	Prep school	Fourth grade	Prep class	
started learning	-primary	age 6	age 11	- age 10	secondary	
English	school				school – age	
					12	
University and	Hacettepe	Erciyes	Hacettepe	Gazi	METU	
the department	University	University	University	University	English	
of undergraduate	English	English	Linguistics	English	language	
degree	Language	Language		language	teaching	
	and	and		teaching		
	Literature	Literature				
Year of	2011	2001	2009	2010	2008	
graduation						
Teaching	1-2 years	More than	5-10 years	3-5 years	5-10 years	
Experience		10 years				

Table1

Demographic Information about the Participants from Participant 1 to 5

(continued)

_(continued)									
Institutions	BülentEcevit	ErciyesUniv	İzmir	Gazi	YaşarUniver				
she/he has	University	ersty – prep	Institute of	University –	sty – prep				
worked so far	prep school	school	Technology -	pre school	school &				
	department		prep school	&Bilkent	TOBB ETU				
			&Anadolu	University –	– prep school				
			University –	prep school	& Social				
			prep school		Sciences				
					University –				
					prep school				
Other MA	No	No	No	No	Yes –				
degrees					Business				
					Administrati				
					on				
Teacher training	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes				
programs			CELTA	CELTA	CELT –				
				DELTA	Swan				
					Training				
					Center				
		1	1	1	1				

Table2

Demographic Information about the Participants from Participant 6 to 9

Participants	P#6	P#7	P # 8	P#9
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	27	28	28	27

# Table2

Demographic Information about the Participants from Participant 6 to 9 (continued)

Affiliation	Yıldız	Middle East	Uludağ	Yıldız Technical

	Technical	Technical	University	University
	University	University		
Age	Fifth grade -	Sixth grade at	Fourth grade	Fourth grade
she / he	Primary	the age of 12-13	primary school	primary -school
started	school			
learning				
English				
University	Marmara	METU	Uludağ	Boğaziçi University
and the	University	English	University	English Language
department	English	Language	English	Teaching
of	Language	Teaching	Language	
undergraduate	Teaching		Teaching	
degree				
Year of	2009	2008	2009	2010
graduation				
Teaching	3-5 years	5-10 years	3-5 years	3-5 years
Experience				
Institutions she/he	Adolescents	Bilkent	Hakkari	Yıldız Technical
has worked so far	Language	preparatory	University	University – prep
	school &Yıldız SEM	school &	Vocational high	school
	young learners	METU –	school &	
	&Yıldız	preparatory	Gaziantep	
	Technical	school	University Prep	
	University prep school		school &Uludağ University prep	
	1 . F		school	
T 11 0	•	1	•	·

Table2

Demographic Information about the Participants from Participant 6 to 9 (continued)

(continuca)				
Other MA	No	No	No	No
degrees				
Teacher training	Yes	Yes	No	No

programs	CertTESOL	ICELT	
	Trinity		
	College		

### **Instruments**

#### **Data Collection Instruments**

For the demographic information about the participants, a questionnairewas designed and given to each individual by the researcher. The qualitative data of this research was obtained from two sources: 1) the participants RP-oriented papers and their discussion comments, and 2) semi-structured interviews.

**Demographic information questionnaire.**To provide deeper information about the participants' language learning background, educational information and teaching experiences, a questionnaire comprised of ten questions was designed and administered to the participants (see Appendix A for demographic information questionnaire).

Online discussions. The study was conducted as a part of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Methodology course during which students discussed major foreign language teaching methods in their historical contexts as well as some current issues (such as the role of culture and post-method) that shape the most recent teaching practices. Throughout the course, in order to encourage TEFL students to share their ideas and experiences in teaching, the participants were asked to write several reflective papers under various topics such as a) teacher as a language learner, b) reflecting on current teaching practices, c) reflecting on post-method era, d) teacher as a cultural mediator, and e) teaching with technology (see

Appendix B for reflection paper and discussion assignments). To provide deeper information about some of these concepts such as post-method pedagogy, culture in the classroom, further articles were also provided by the course lecturer (see Appendix C for the articles provided by the course lecturer). Upon writing the papers, students posted them under separate threads on Moodle, an online learning platform utilized by the university and the discussions were conducted after the post of each paper, separately. As for the discussion sessions, the participants were asked to 1) read at least three posted assignments of their classmates and 2) write at least a comment for each on Moodle and 3) answer the questions addressed to their own original post or reply to their friends' comments.

Semi-structured Interviews. The interview questions were divided into two sections. The first section included questions that were chosen purposefully according to the five reflection papers and the discussion sessions (see Appendix D for individual interview questions). The number of questions varied in the first section as the sole source of these questions came from the interaction between the students regarding the questions, comments and replies they directed to each other in the online discussion forum. As a result of this, the length of the total interviews ranged from twenty-five minutes to eighty minutes.

The second section of the interviews, which can be clarified as the sixth interview, included 5 open-ended general questions, which were adapted from Bennett-Jackson's (2010) study, to evaluate the overall thoughts of the participants regarding these reflection papers and the discussion sessions (see Appendix E for general interview questions).

## Table 3

The Duration of the interviews

	Duration of the interviews								
1 <sup>st</sup> Interview 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup> 6th Total									
P #1	00:03:34	00:10:48	8 00:04:54	00:05:5	7 00:10:5	1 00:04:47	00:35:52		
P #2	00:04:30	00:07:1	8 00:01:20	00:03:3	80 00:06:5	00:04:34	00:27:52		
P #3 0	0:03:27	00:05:10	00:05:59	00:11:47	00:06:48 0	0:05:50 00	:39:11		
P #400	0:01:15	00:01:32	00:03:42	00:02:58	00:03:57	00:03:53 00:1	17:17		
P #5	00:07:53	00:10:22	00:08:09	00:08:55	00:09:06	00:07:50	00:52:15		
P #6 0	0:18:50	00:07:58	00:05:35 0	0:06:08	00:04:51	00:05:50 00	):49:12		
P #7	00:11:16	00:13:05	00:03:48	00:11:12	00:23:37	00:10:43	00:73:41		
P #8	00:10:49	00:07:29	00:03:14	00:07:11	00:04:46	00:08:12	00:41:41		
P #9	00:09:48	00:14:01	00:05:52	00:06:44	00:06:01	00:06:30	00:48:56		

During the interviews, the participants were given the freedom to choose either English or Turkish depending on how comfortable they felt themselves in either language. They were also told that they could code-switch at any time they felt the need to clarify some specific points. However, all of the participants preferred to conduct the interviews in English (see Table 3 for the length of each interview).

# **Computer Technology Instruments**

**Moodle.**An asynchronous teaching tool was needed to share each and every participant's papers and postings with the TEFL student group. Moodle was utilized in order to create an online space for threaded discussions. The lecturer of the course constructed Moodle pages and directed topics and clarified the requirements of the assignments.

**Skype.**Due to time restrictions, three of the participants preferred to take part in the interviews via a teleconferencing tool, Skype.

**Voice recorder.**To record the interviews, the voice recording application of a mobile device was used.

**F5 transcription tool.**Recorded interview sessions were transcribed in a written format with the help of F5 transcription tool under the light of verbatim transcription procedure by analyzing every word and sentence of participants including emotional expressions (i.e. laughs) (Ortaçtepe, 2012).

## **Data Collection Procedures**

Upon receiving the approval from the ethics committee of the university where the study was conducted, the researcher organized a meeting with the participants to present the research procedure and to ask their consent to use their reflective papers, discussion comments, and to conduct interviews.

The data collectionprocedure was constructed in three parts: a) background information questionnaire, b) discussions and c) interviews. To gather written discussion data, screen-shots of the Moodle pages were taken and discussions were categorized under tentative themes, such as a) teacher as a language learner, b) reflecting on current teaching practices, c) reflecting on post-method era, d) teacher as a cultural mediator, and e) teaching with technology.

The interviews were conducted individually with each participantafter the completion of reflection papers and the discussion sessions. Mostof the interviews were conducted face-to-face, although three of the participants preferred to conduct the interviews on Skype because of the time restrictions.

The interviews included six parts.Questions for the first five sections questions were about the reflection papers and the discussion sessions, and the last session was allocated for the general interview questions about reflective practice and online discussion sessions. Since the participants' reflection papers and the discussion sessions were completed much before the interview sessions, the researcher compiled the reflection papers and the discussion sessions for each individual.

Before the start of each interview session, the researcher shared those compiled documents with the participants to help them remember their reflection papers and the discussion processes. Participants were given as much time as they wished to review the reflections and the discussions.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher to categorize the themes for data analysis section. Transcriptions were done according to verbatim transcription procedure, which requires the researcher to write down every word, sentence and emotion(i.e. laughs) (Ortaçtepe, 2012). The reason for choosing the verbatim transcription was to reflect the ideas and beliefs of participants in a more detailed way in their own words. Since the participants were all fluent speakers of English, the interviews were conducted in English, with no need to simplify the interview processes.

## **Data Analysis Procedures**

In this study, thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998) was adapted to analyze the qualitative data coming from the two distinct sources, the online discussions and semi-structured interviews.

The researcher first prepared hard copies of data gathered from reflection papers, the discussion sessions, and the interviews. Later, reflection papers and the discussion sessions were categorized separately for each individual and every single comment or question the participants directed to and received from each other were also listed in individuals' folders. For the interviews, the researcher first completed the verbatim transcription by writing every single detail that showed up in speech such as repetitions, incomplete utterances and affective expressions (i.e., laughs). Also, during the transcription stage, the researcher took notes about the preliminary themes that participants talked about. Then, printed copies of reflection papers,

discussion sessions, and transcribed interviews were compiled. In order to provide anonymity, the researcher gave codes to each participant (ex. Participant 1 [P # 1]) according to the alphabetical order of their names and then reorganized separate folders for each participant.

Mills, Durepos and Miebe (2010) state that "thematic analysis is a tactic for reducing and managing large volumes of data without losing the context, for getting close to or immersing oneself in the data, for organizing and summarizing, and for focusing the interpretation" (p.2). Therefore, upon compiling so many pages of raw data, the researcher decided to apply thematic analysis as the first stage. Conducting the analysis and categorizing the information require creating thematic codes which can be generated via three different ways: theory-driven, prior-research driven and data-driven which can also be called as inductive (Boyatzis, 1998). For the purposes of this study, inductive thematic analysis is more appropriate to complete the bottom-up feature of the analysis stage. As Ortaçtepe (2012) suggested "the inductive way results in codes that are driven by raw data." (p. 46). Since constructing themes and creating codes require a neat work, Boyatzis' (1998)thematic analysis was utilized to sequencethe analysis stage of the study. The steps of thematic analysis were defined as preparation, pattern recognition, creating a code, and comparing themes (as adapted by Ortactepe, 2012).

As the first step of thematic analysis, the researcher read the reflection papers and transcribed interviews several times and created the codes in these papers. Later on the researcher defined themes that naturally occurred over codes in order to categorize codes under broader concepts. Later the themes were color coded and organized under reflection types: reflection-on-action, reflection-in-action and reflection-for-action. It is important to state that Wilson's (2008)'s temporality of

reflection was utilized to distinguish reflection types. Thus, past situations and experiences were categorized under reflection-on-action, participants' awareness on present conditions was listed under reflection-in-action, and future plans and intentions of teachers were categorized under reflection-for-action.

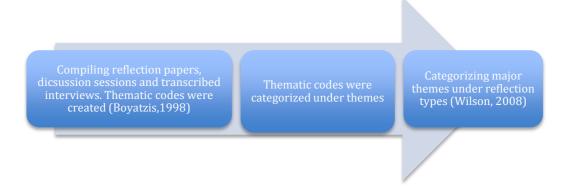


Figure 1. Data analysis procedure

For instance, participants' papers, comments and transcribed interviews were read and motivation, personal characteristics, autonomy and language learning experiences of participants were detected as codes. Looking at the codes from a broader perspective, the researcher realized that the issues in these codes revealed participants' learner identity;that way, the theme naturally occurred. Upon creating all codes and themes, researcher categorized the preliminary defined themes under reflection types reflection-on-action, reflection-in-action and reflection-for-action according to Wilson (2008)'s temporality on reflection types.

### Conclusion

This chapter first described the setting and participants, instruments used for data collection, and the data collection procedures. Then, the data analysis procedures used to seek answer for the research questions were outlined. The following chapter will present the findings of the data analysis.

### **CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS**

#### Introduction

This study evaluates EFL teachers' participation in reflective practice oriented (RP-oriented) online discussion forums. More specifically, it explores the reflection types (reflection-in, on and for-action) the participants engage in.

Thus, the study sought answers to the following research question:

1. In what types of reflection (reflection-in, on and for-action) do the experienced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers engage in during their reflective practice oriented online discussions?

In order to answer the research questions, data were collected via three different instruments: a background information questionnaire, posted reflection papers that students wrote for their Methodology course and their follow-up online discussions sessions, and individually conducted semi-structured interviews. All qualitative data collected from the reflection papers, discussion comments and interview transcriptions were analyzed according to Boyatzis' (1998) thematic analysis. First of all, the researcher categorized participants' assignments and discussion comments individually and went over their printed copies to define the codesand created the themes that emerged naturally over the codes. Afterwards, the researcher color-coded and related the emerging themes under three sensitizing concepts: a) reflection-on-on action, b) reflection-in action, and c) reflection-for-action according to description of reflection types suggested by Wilson (2008).

This chapter consists of one main section, addressing the research question,

in which the results of the data analysis are presented under the three sensitizing concepts of reflection types as reflection-on-, -in- and -for-action.

## **Results**

## **Reflection-on-Action**

Reflection-on-action requires teachers to look backon their past experiences and to evaluate them by sharing their ideas and perceptions. Participants frequently engaged in this retrospective reflection under certain themes: teacher and learner identity. Table 4 shows the themes and their codes that fall under this reflection type along with how many times they occurred in the data.

Table 4

Themes and Codes for Reflection-on-Action with Their Frequencies

Themes	Codes	Parti	cipants								
		P#1	P#2	P#3	P#4	P # 5	P#6	P#7	P#8	P#9	
Learner	Motivation	2	2	-	-	1	2	3		-	-
Identity											
	Personal	-	-	-	-	-	2	-		2	2
	characteristics										
	Autonomy	3	-	-	-	5	-	1		-	3
	Language learning experiences	6	7	5	3	5	5	8		3	5
Teacher	Teaching	4	5	4	3	5	6	8		5	4
Identity	processes										
	Professional development	6	5	5	5	6	5	5		5	5

Note: The frequencies reflect how many times participants wrote comments about each code.

**Learner Identity.** The very first theme that emerged from the reflection papers and the discussion sessions was about participants' reflections on their

identity as language learners. Participants' motivation, personal characteristics, autonomy and their language learning experiences were the codes listed under this theme.

*Motivation*. First of all, it was clear that motivation was a strong factor encouraging participants in language learning. Five of the participants left statements about motivation on their reflection papers and the discussion sessions. According to participant # 7 (P # 7), she was a really hard-working student and studied hard in order to catch up with other students when she attended language preparatory class at high school. She was highly motivated as she thought learning a language was really prestigious. Similarly, participant # 6 (P # 6) stated that she had already known that language learning would give her a great pleasure and she defined herself as a learner who had a high aptitude. She could learn the things easily and she was successful at her third language learning, German, as well. Moreover, she tried hard to improve her English by working at tourist-oriented businesses such as travel agency, a clothing store and a hotel during summers, which is a result of her high motivation level. P # 6 also defined herself as a motivated learner as she stated:

From the point of view of Lightbown and Spada, I can say that I am a good English learner as I am somehow a self-conscious and motivated learner. I always try to create an environment or situation where I am exposed to language and practice it. The other way of improving English was keeping a diary and a travel journal in English and I have always tried to find some ways to go to English-speaking countries as I believe that one of the best ways to learn a language is in its natural environment. Also, I was always motivated to learn English for two reasons. I wanted to learn it for myself

around the world, meet new people, learn new cultures and visit my relatives abroad. The idea has always triggered me to develop my English skills.

According to these explanations, it can be concluded that motivation was a crucial factor for participants' language learning processes as they reflected on its contribution to themselves as language learners. Thus, through reflecting on the role of motivation in language learning processes, they could identify the importance of learning another language in their lives as well as their aptitude for language learning, both of which enhanced their motivation for language learning.

Personal characteristics. Three of the participants shared some issues related to their personal characteristics while reflecting on themselves as they claimed that their personal issues played a role in their language learning processes. Participant # 9 (P # 9) reported in her reflection paper that her shyness was a barrier for her language learning and in order to overcome that situation, she decided to create a todo list. For instance, she created some rules in order to encourage and to motivate herself to be able to participate more in the classroom. Some of her rules were as below:

You are not a native speaker, so it is normal not to know everything about English. Your aim is to beat the fear of speaking not to show off. This is an opportunity to get started.

You don't have a reason to be embarrassed. You teacher knows that you are here to learn not to keep in silence. She is aware of your level and she will agree to help you. Don't be shy!

She shared the benefits of these rules by saying that they helped her alleviate her anxiety and fear of learning English. Besides, she added that she shared her to-do list

rules with her students in her classroom teaching to establish rapport and to facilitate their learning processes.

Participant # 8 (P # 8) also touched on her personality issues, which were triggered by her classroom's environment. For instance, participant #8 stated in her reflection that:

Our classroom was mostly teacher centered, therefore, I and my classmates did not have enough chances to practice speaking and listening skills and that situation led me to lack self-confidence in myself and I became shy about making mistakes in public. My shyness still prevails and I still haven't overcome it.

To sum up, participants revealed their learner identity by identifying the problems and barriers they had during their learning processes. That way, they engaged in reflection-on-action

Autonomy. Students' taking the responsibility for their own language learning was another code that can be illustrated under the category of reflection-on-action. Four of the participants talked about autonomy and some of them defined their own autonomous learner profile both implicitly and explicitly throughout their reflection papers and the discussion sessions. For instance participant # 5 (P # 5) noted that she took responsibility for her language learning when she had the chance of talking to native English language speakers. She stated in her reflection that:

During the summer time, we were spending the whole summer in Fethiye and it was the first time when I spoke to a native speaker. I realized that the way Turkish people speak English is totally different from the way a native speaker does. As soon as we went back home, I made my father set up some English channels on TV like BBC, CNN and Discovery Channel.

Regarding her learning experience, she was an autonomous learner in terms of observing other speakers and defining techniques to facilitate her language learning process as she went on learning out of school and took advantage of authentic materials such as TV channels. In the following part of her reflection paper she also stated that she created vocabulary journals and tried hard to deepen her vocabulary knowledge.

Participant # 1 (P # 1) was another autonomous learner. Contrary to P # 5 he explicitly stated that in his reflection paper and his third language learning process was a proof of his autonomy. He presented himself as an autonomous learner by stating the sentences below:

In those years, I was a real autonomous learner.I wanted to be a research assistant; therefore, I had to get the compulsory grade, 50, on the German proficiency exams, which included only multiple-choice questions about vocabulary and grammar. In order to achieve that aim, I started to keep a vocabulary journal and developed some vocabulary learning strategies called mnemonics via which I associated sounds, objects or similar words in Turkish to keep new words in my mind. My efforts ended in success, as I was able to get the score I had aimed for. I found those strategies really, really successful, so I still share them with my students especially to enhance students' vocabulary knowledge in English.

Considering participants' language learning experiences, it can be concluded that learner autonomy was a crucial factor and had a huge positive impact on some participants' success.

Language learning experiences. Another code, which was detected both in their reflection papers and the discussion sessions, was participants' language

learning experiences. All of the participants reflected on their language education by describing their schools, teachers, techniques their teachers used while teaching English, and themselves as language learners along with techniques they used to facilitate their learning processes.

In looking at their discussion of their schools, it can be concluded that only one of the learners attended a private institution and started their language learning when he was 7, which is an early age compared with the others participants. Other participants' ages ranged from eleven to fifteen when they first started learning English. Their experiences started either with failure or success depending on their teachers. For instance P#7 stated in her reflection that:

I was very unlucky in terms of teachers as I had three or four different teachers in one year because our school could not provide them a long-term English teacher. Therefore, my parents asked my sister to teach me English, but this attempt did not end with success, either.

Similarly P#9 experienced a similar unfruitful process due to her language teacher. She exemplified in her reflection paper as below:

she was she was unable to interact with her students, care for their needs and capacities. The characteristics of my English teachers did not change a lot even in the following stages of my adventure. Our classes were mostly teacher-centered and their lessons were basically centered on the textbook and doing lots of drilling exercises that were really boring and colorless. That unrest caused me to have some prejudgments about English and English teachers. When examining my first impression on my initial experience as an English learner, it is not hard to say that it did not seem to be fun.

In the comments session P # 9 stated that her previous teachers shaped her beliefs and teacher identity. With the help of this reflection, negative experiences and

examples helped her figure out how she should not behave as a teacher. Therefore, she defined herself as a teacher who had good relationships with her learners, considered their learning needs and also tried to meet her students' expectations.

Despite the learning processes that ended up with failure, there were some participants who had better learning experiences in terms of their teachers. For instance, P # 1 stated in his reflection that he had a really good teacher and they were using a really good course book. Even though they were primary schools students, their teacher could pay attention to both productive skills and receptive skills. He felt himself sorry when he made a mistake, but his teacher never pushed the students and had a comforting attitude towards error correction. However, he also criticized the teacher's teaching technique by stating that they never applied peer correction activities.

In order to define their language learning processes, participants also talked about their third language learning experience. The majority of the participants (P # 1, # 2, # 4, # 5, # 6, and # 7)attended third language classes either at high school or universities, and they shared their positive and negative memories by identifying their classroom atmosphere's, their teachers' teaching techniques and attitudes towards their students.

When P # 5's German learning experience is considered, it can be concluded that she was not pleased with her teacher as she mentioned that:

The teacher was always applying grammar-translation method to teach grammar structures and vocabulary and ignoring communicative activities. In order to develop my speaking skill, I downloaded an application called "Duolingo" which had a motivating affect on my third language learning process. With the help of that application, I could record my voice, check my pronunciation and kept the track of my language development. I also share

this application with my students and encourage them to try it and to use it.P
# 1 also regarded himself unlucky in terms of his third language learning
process because of his teacher. As the third language, he took up German
courses, however, he could not learn it as he didn't find his teacher as
successful as his English teachers because his German teacher only focused
on grammar aspects of the language ignoring the other language skills such as
speaking and listening.

On contrast to Participants # 5 and # 1's third language learning experience, Participant # 2 (P # 2) went through a better learning process while learning Italian and she related this to her teacher. According to P # 2:

my teacher was excellent. I was already in love with the target language; however, the way the teacher treated us and taught the language enhanced my learning. The teacher only talked in the target language. Moreover, she was sharing lots of stories she experienced during her stay in Italy and these stories were encouraging me as well as increasing my enthusiasm about learning Italian.

P # 2 also reflected on her second language and third language learning experience by comparing those two processes in terms of strategies she applied. In both of these languages, she made use of songs and movies. She memorized the songs, learned words with them and also translated them to deepen her knowledge in grammar and vocabulary. She stated that those techniques must have been successful, as she applied them as a teacher with her students while teaching English.

To sum up, it can be concluded that participants shared their language learning experiences by defining their classroom atmosphere, teaching profiles, the techniques applied by teachers and themselves throughout in their second and third language learning processes in their reflection papers, discussion sessions and

interviews. Besides they also referred to their teaching practices by stating the techniques they utilized in their own classrooms and suggestions they directed to their own students.

**Teacher Identity.**While explaining their teaching experiences, the participants engaged in a reflective process that focused on their identity as language teachers. Two codes were compiled under teacher identity: participants' teaching processes and their professional development with the help of the online discussions.

**Participants' teaching processes.** Participants' teaching processes were presented under this code along with positive and negative teaching stories, teaching experiences that participants had as novice teachers, and their past teaching techniques.

P # 9, who worked in a public university in afar east part of Turkey shared her experiences by stating that:

Encountering students who had different characteristics, who even spoke a different language, was a very difficult process for me. Moreover, applying practical knowledge in teaching was more different for me from learning pedagogical knowledge as I did during my undergraduate degree. In order to improve my teaching practice, I had asked one of my colleagues to record me in a video. I can frankly say that video recording technique was really effective in evaluating my teaching in the classroom and I also asked for feedback from an experienced colleague by watching the recorded video. However, I had some other problems related to the attitudes of students towards English and English language teachers. The students really had resisted me when we first met because they thought that my job was to assimilate them. They were not aware of the importance of speaking a second

language, neither in social life nor in academic life. In order to overcome that difficulty, my a few colleagues and I decided to translate students' Kurdish fairy tales first into Turkish, and then into English. We could finally compile those stories in a book and worked on English via those materials. That way, I could reach the students and gain their attention. At the end, we were successful in teaching English language. I believe thatthose difficulties helped me profoundly to strengthen my teaching and my teacher identity. I remember leaving the classes crying, but I believe that those were the times that helped my teaching profession a lot; I wouldn't be as I am right now without experiencing those situations.

The other participants also reflected on P # 9's reflection paper and they found reading P#9's teaching experiences really effective and they said that they also learned so many techniques to improve their teaching by reading from what P # 9 did.

P # 7 also reflected on her change as a teacher by comparing her novice years and today. She wrote in her reflection paper that:

When I first started teaching, I wanted to be like the teacher in the movie "Dead Poets Society" and touch the lives of my students by helping them become more self-confident, responsible and conscious learners as well as teaching English. As a more experienced teacher now, I have the same enthusiasm but more realistic goals.

She stated in the discussion session that when she first started, she was like a mother in the classroom. However, she realized with the help of reflection paper that now she had a more professional attitude towards her students. Still, she wanted to help her students when they had problems, but she was aware of that if students were not intrinsically motivated, it was difficult to reach them, change them and teach them.

In her reflection paper and the discussion sessions, P # 6 preferred reflecting on her teachers that she had during her secondary school and high school years. She also owed her evolution in teaching profession to the professors of her undergraduate degree and the various student profiles that she has taught. She reported that:

I have been teaching since I was at the 3rd year of my B.A. degree in ELT. I started as a part-timer at a language school with the help of what I was learning from my professors at university and my past EFL teachers' methodology. Therefore, my identity as a teacher has evolved thanks to the variety of those role models in my life and wide range of student profiles from adults to young learners.

She also stated the effects of her previous teachers on her teaching in the discussion sessions as below:

when I thought about those years, I could see that I applied techniques I have seen from my previous teachers, and found effective. For instance, while teaching vocabulary, my secondary school teacher was using vocabulary boxes. The students used to choose words from those boxes and try to guess their meanings in a game. I utilized that activity, as well, especially when I first started teaching.

To sum up, it can be concluded that participants engaged in reflection-on-action by considering their past teaching experiences, themselves as novice teachers and their teachers' effects in shaping their teaching practice.

Professional development with the help of online discussions. The methodology course is compulsory in the Master's Program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, and each year, teachers are exposed to reflective on practices for the assignments given by the course lecturer. To encourage participants to analyze

their practicesmore elaborately, during the interview sessions the researcher asked participants their ideas about the effectiveness of reflection papers and the discussion sessions. Teachers' reflections on their five assignments and the discussion processes will be discussed here in more detail.

As for the first assignment, participants found "defining yourself as a language learner" topic really effective and they were pleased with having the chance of looking through their language learning processes (See Appendix B for the online prompts). For six of the participants, it was their first chance to reflect on this issue; however, three of them had already written similar reflection papers during their undergraduate degrees or teacher training programs such as CELTA, DELTA.

According to P # 1, for whom this paper was the first chance to reflect on hislanguage learning process, this reflection assignment was really helpful. He noted its effectiveness by stating that:

it helped because I had to think about my, you know, experiences as a language learner and I was talking about my experience about learning German, not English. Because I have been learning English for like thirty years nearly, but German was my really really foreign language, so basically, it helped me to focus, you know, revisit how I did things, how I felt while I was learning the language and I believe it really helped me.

P # 2 stated similar ideas to P # 1. This assignment was also her first time to consider her language learning processes and experiences. Before the assignment, she hadn't had the chance to write anything or talk about them with anyone. So she considered this reflection paper beneficial because she remembered what she had done as a learner. She also found the assignment contributive to her teaching because she could understand the things she should do or shouldn't do by considering the problems she encountered during her learning.

For the second assignment, teachers were asked to reflect on themselves as teachers. As happened in the first assignment, three of the participants had already engaged in this type of reflection paper writing process during their undergraduate degree or teacher training programs. However, all of the participants claimed that defining themselves as teachers was a profoundly contributive assignment to realize their strengths and weaknesses and to evaluate their teaching processes. For instance, participant #3 (P # 3) reported in her interview that:

Of course the assignment has a positive contribution. It contributes to see my, err, strengths and weaknesses. I mean writing about what I do good is something very good because people comment on it and they share their positive ideas, positive beliefs with me. That's why it's good, and weaknesses to improve myself as a teacher could help me in the future for my teaching practices, so generally, it contributed, and it will contribute to my teaching.

One of the participants, P # 4, compared the first assignment called "defining yourself as a language learner" with the second assignment named "defining yourself as a language teacher" and found the reflection over her teaching experiences more contributive. She reported that:

I had some difficulties in remembering my language learning processes and considering my teaching years and what I did in those years helped me to reconsider my teaching techniques. However, I didn't have a change in my teaching.

The third reflection paper and the discussion session were about post-method pedagogy. Except P # 1, it was the first time for the participants to learn about the post-method era with the assigned articles for the reflection paper. Most of the participants found this reflection paper really effective in reshaping their beliefs about methods and teaching techniques, although they were not really optimistic

about changing these techniques because of the problems related to their institutions such as overloaded curriculum and the absolute control of administrators over teachers. For instance, according to P # 5:

Yeah, to be honest I can say that this was the most beneficial reflection I have ever had throughout the semester and it was good to read the articles first about the post-method, and after understanding what it is, their principles, it helped me to think on my own strategy and I found myself. I didn't realize it before actually. I realized that I am a supporter of methods although I am opposed to some of them like suggestopedia or some other like silent method, I found that, I mean I didn't find the post-method really useful. I realized that I am in favor of the integrated method, so it helped me to realize my way of teaching.

P#6 also stated that this was the first time for her to read and learn about post-method pedagogy. After posting her reflection paper and engaging in discussions, P#6 realized that post-method pedagogy was not relevant to teaching practice and she also became more aware of the importance of methods that she learnt during her undergraduate degree. She also added to her reply that if she hadn't learnt methods in those years, she wouldn't have felt as comfortable as she was when she first started language teaching. She also stated her beliefs about methods and said that "Methods are the skeletons of language teaching".

Considering participants' replies, it can be concluded that reflecting on postmethod era helped participants think carefully about their teaching methods and techniques, their strengths and weaknesses in their teaching. They could also take part in critical analysis of methods and their importance, although they did not believe in the practicality of post-method pedagogy. The fourth reflection paper was about defining teachers' roles as cultural mediators. This was again the first time for all of the participants to reflect on the place of culture in English Language Teaching and with the discussion session, the participants had the chance to evaluate the integration of culture in their classrooms. They found this reflection paper and the discussion session effective for reshaping their teaching. For instance, P # 7 stated in her reply to the interview question that:

I am not competing in teaching English culture in classroom. So that was what I talked in my reflection as far as I see. And, talking to other people about this topic, I saw that it is not just me, but the other people also feel the same so it was good to see, I mean, it is not just me, but we all some kind of lack of, I mean, in confidence in our abilities. And we also shared what to do. I mean, we shared ideas about what to do about this topic, so my suggestion was having exchange programs for teachers but of course this is something I can achieve. This is what institution should consider and reading about all these topics, I think I should, or may be, bring more authentic materials into classroom.

Participant # 8 also shared the contributions of thinking about the teacher's role as a cultural mediator. She stated that:

before writing this paper, I have never regarded myself as a cultural mediator. I realized that culture is important and being a cultural mediator gave me another aspect in teaching, so I now believe that should integrate both the target culture and other cultures into my classes to create relevance between my students cultures and other cultures and nations. Thus, I thought about the activities or practices I did to integrate it into my teaching. Beforehand, I had not paid attention to culture issue. Following this reflection and the

discussion session, I made a list of what I have done and what I haven't done to integrate culture in my classes.

Considering the statements of P # 7 and P # 8, it can be concluded that participants evaluated and enhanced their roles as teachers by including cultural aspect of language teaching in their practices.

The fifth assignment required participants to reconsider technology use in ELT classes. This paper was again the first time for the majority of the participants to reconsider the implementation of technological tools. Only two of the participants had the chance to reflect on technology during their teacher training courses.

Throughout the reflection papers and the discussion sessions, teachers could evaluate their use of technology, change their beliefs about the use of technology and also extended their knowledge in recent technology tools by sharing their experiences regarding the effective use of these tools. For instance; P # 6 stated in her paper that:

I had already applied technology in my classes but without knowing anything. I didn't know the results and effects of using technology. However, with the help of assigned readings of this reflection paper, I could analyze the pedagogical aspect of integrating technology. I could see that there is interplay between the pedagogical content and technology. Therefore, the reflection paper and the discussion session were contributive for myself as a teacher and a learner.

Two of the participants mentioned the change in their beliefs about the importance of implementing technology in their classes. One of these participants was P # 8, and she shared her ideas by reporting that:

I was thinking that integration of technology was important. I still, after the reflection, err, I think, it is really necessary. It is inevitable to use technology in this era. After this reflection, I thought that I must integrate it, but

beforehand, I thought okay, it is important, we should. But now, I think, it is an obligation. After writing the reflection, I saw that it is an obligation.

From what she stated it can be inferred that although she was aware of and believed the importance of integrating technology, she realized that it is a must in her teaching to enhance students' learning processes and to appeal her students more. Thus, this is a positive change in her belief the application of technological tools. The second participant who stated a change was P # 2. She mentioned that:

Considering each and every participant's profile that took part in the study, I was the one who was always in favor of using technology in teaching. Before writing this paper, I thought technology was the sole source to provide a better learning atmosphere in her classes. I thought the more technology was integrated, the better the teaching environments were created. However, uponreading my friends' papers and the discussion comments, I saw that there were other ways or techniques to enhance students' learning.

Technology is not and should not be the only source to improve my teaching and teaching techniques. I am not a graduate of ELT, that's why I may not know the techniques my friends utilized, but now, I know that there are some other ways other than technology.

Considering P # 8 and P # 2's replies it can be deduced that the participants not only evaluated their use of technology in different aspects during the interview sessions and but also enhanced their teaching by criticizing the position of technology in their own classes.

Only one of the participants, P # 7 criticized the content of this assignment in a negative way. She reported that:

I mean I reflected on my use of technology in classroom before in the other trainings that I got previously. This reflection, to be honest, I expected a lot

from this topic. I mean when I saw technology in ELT in the syllabus I was really waiting for this week because I am really into technology, the use of technology in classroom but I know that I stick to PowerPoint presentations a lot in the classroom, but the readings were full of terminology. I remember that I didn't understand anything from one of those readings. We had articles, I guess, and from one of them, I really didn't understand anything. It was just full of terminology and other stuff and so I would expect more information or how to apply them in classroom.

From what she wrote it can be claimed that, she was disappointed because she expected to see practical issues in the assigned articles instead of talking or readingabout pedagogy. She felt that the articles did not improve her teaching techniques and the assignment could not contribute to her teaching practices.

To conclude, participants' teaching processes and their professional development fostered via online reflective practices were found to be effective in shaping their teaching techniques and their roles as teachers.

## **Reflection-in-Action**

According to Schön (1983), reflection-in-action is conducted upon teachers' teaching experiences or at the time of the action, problem or situation that teachers come across during teaching. However, it is also described as teachers' reflection on the present situations and conditions (Wilson, 2008). In this study, Wilson's (2008) an extended definition of reflection-in-action was utilized as the basis of data analysis because the majority of the participants did not teach during their Master's Program, except one of them who was attending the program as a part time student. Throughout this section, the two major themes, teachers' beliefs and teaching

practices, are presented. Table 5 shows the themes and their codes that fall under this reflection type along with how many times they occurred in the data.

Table 5

Themes and Codes for Reflection-in-Action and Their Frequencies

Themes	Codes	Participants									
		P#1	P#2	P#3	P#4	P # 5	P#6	P#7	P#8	P#9	
Teachers' beliefs	Defining teachers' roles	4	4	6	3	3	6	6	7	5	7
	Strengths	2	4	3	2	2	4	-	4	-	-
	Weaknesses	-	-	3		-	-	3	-	2	-
Teaching Practices	Methods	6	10	8		5	11	8	11	7	6
	Classroom management techniques	-	5	-	3	3	4	-	-	-	3

Note: The frequencies reflect how many times participants wrote comments about each code.

**Teachers' beliefs.**Both in reflection papers and the discussion sessions, participants articulated their beliefs on their teaching practices. Regarding their beliefs, three codes were categorized as defining teachers' roles, their strengths as a teacher, and their weaknesses as a teacher.

**Defining teachers' roles**. All of the participants mentioned teachers' roles in the classroom. These were teachers as facilitators, motivators, raising critical thinkers as well as being cultural mediators. The roles of teachers were examined by regarding participants' statements from reflection papers, discussions and interview sessions.

As the first role, participants stated that teachers should work as facilitators in classrooms. P # 3 stated her role as a facilitator with these sentences:

"TelI me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." Therefore, my aim is not to be a teacher but to be a facilitator. When my students want to be actively involved in learning process, I realize that they can find the key for success.

By analyzing P # 3's statements, it can be concluded that she believed in the importance of involving her students in learning processes by acting as a facilitator in the classroom. That way, she could also help her students' develop learner autonomy. Thus as facilitators, participants can be regarded as guides during their teaching processes.

According to their reflection papers and the discussion comments, with the exception of P # 1, all of the participants regarded teachers as motivators. He also tried to motivate his students by sharing some stories from his language learning experience, however, he did not regard himself as a motivator in the classroom as he believed in the importance of intrinsic motivation. He clarified his ideas by stating that:

I do not think that I should act as a motivator in the classroom. I do share songs, movies, websites and some other tools to encourage my students and support their learning. However, I believe that their effects play a role to sum extent. I believe that if a student is intrinsically motivated he or she can learn somehow. If not, teachers roles as motivator means nothing, I believe, so I don't think that motivating or being a motivator is our job.

To the contrary of P # 1, other participants, P # 3, # 4, # 7, # 8 and # 9, attributed themselves the role, motivator. They stated in their reflection papers that in order to motivate their students, they gave information about student exchange programs such as Erasmus or Work and Travel. Participants believed that

counseling students about international exchange programs increased the motivation level of their students.

Participant # 3, # 8 and # 9 stated that one of the most important roles of teachers was to develop critical thinkers. For instance, P # 9 reported that:

I generally bring some problems into the classroom and want students to solve these problems by brainstorming. For example, I present a case about environmental problems and I want my students work in groups to find a solution to these problems. In this way, I aim to improve my students' problem solving strategies and I actually find this technique effective to foster students' critical thinking processes. My students like these tasks and act in a collaborative way to present the best idea, solution in the classroom. However, I do not talk about political issues because I believe that they are risky and the students may have different ideas. I don't want them to hurt each other by talking about these political issues.

Analyzing these comments it can be concluded that P # 9 abstained from mentioning political issues in Turkey. Whereas, P # 3 and P # 8 believed that their students were mature enough to talk about political issues and to share their ideas by evaluating these political conditions. P#3 reported on her role as below:

I like talking about political rights, justice and injustice issues. And, as they are experiencing kind of imposition by government, they like talking about it. If I feel something bad, I can stop it as a teacher because I am standing there as a teacher and I have a role over there. So, I believe that they have right to talk about political issues; they have right to criticize everything that is happening around us. And, as I said before I want them to be a critical thinker; that's why political issues can be a good way, talking about political

issues can be a good way to make them criticize what is happening in Turkey or in the world in general.

The last role that participants attributed to teachers was being a cultural mediator.

All of the participants came to a similar conclusion about this role of teachers, as they believed that an English language teacher's role was to raise cultural awarenessof students by sharing and discussing cultural aspects of their own culture and the target culture. As P # 2 stated:

Actually, what I understand from cultural awareness is not just about the cultures of the other countries. We have many students from different parts of Turkey, and although they live in the same country, they all have different backgrounds and traditions. Even talking about the different customs of the same country raises cultural awareness and cultural respect. Also, comparing the cultures of our country and foreign countries always create interesting discussion atmospheres. Therefore, even when you have not experienced another culture, it is still possible to learn and integrate what you know into your classroom.

To conclude, it can be inferred from participants' reflection papers and their reflective comments that participants engaged in reflection-in-action by defining teachers' general roles as facilitators, motivators, raising critical thinkers and being cultural mediators.

Their strengths as a teacher. The majority of the participants, P # 1, P # 2, P # 3, P # 4, P # 5, and P # 7, examined their belief about the importance of creating a meaningful and friendly atmosphere in their classroom settings. P # 3 stated in her reflection "When I take the opportunity to enjoy passing the knowledge I have, I feel that my students become more enthusiastic learners." Similarly, P # 1

provided the freedom for his students. Instead of insulting them, ordering them to do the activities, he gave them the choice to choose what they would like to do in the classroom. Moreover, by comparing himself with the other participants' approach to classrooms' atmospheres, P # 1 concluded that:

I put less pressure on my students' in the classroom and I relate my relaxed attitudes towards the students with my experience in teaching, I have been teaching more than ten years, so I am more aware of that controlling every step, every act of students does not lead success if student is not intrinsically motivated. If the students want to learn something, they can somehow learn it, not with my force or something like that. I realized this by teaching after some years, that's why I guess I have a more relaxed teaching atmosphere when compared with my friends' classes.

P # 2 stated the importance of creating a friendly and meaningful atmosphere in her classes, as well. She declared that:

I allocate some time to discussion sessions about some topics such as music or football, in which students can share their ideas with ease. During these sessions, I do not correct my students' grammar mistakes in order not to make them feel under pressure or stressed and my students are always aware that they will never be judged by me, their teacher, about their ideas or suggestions presented throughout the classroom discussion sessions.

Participants also used online discussion forums to define the relationship between themselves and their students. For instance, P # 5 stated that she was "trying to be friendly, not a friend of her students." Five of her colleagues, P # 1, # 3, # 4,# 6 and # 9, were on the same side with her. They all believed that defining the borders between themselves and the students definitely helped them prevent anticipated or possible problems in terms of student-teacher interaction.

Providing warm-up exercises to focus students' attention before each unit was another technique that P # 4, P # 5 and P # 7 applied in their classroom settings. For instance, P # 4 stated in her interview session that

I believe that good classroom atmosphere ends up with good interaction and success. I believe that this is our job to make our students ready for the lesson. I mean, I always ask my students how they do during the school term. I sometimes start the lesson with a song especially in the morning. I bring videos and warm them up for the lesson by sharing that video which is related to the unit of course book. I feel myself better when I start the lesson like that and I am not that, you know, disciplined or strict teacher who directly starts teaching.

Considering the statements appeared in reflection papers, discussion sessions and interviews, it can be concluded that participants reflected on their strengths as creating a friendly and meaningful atmosphere, setting borders in their relationship with the students and implementing warm-up sessions to engage students more in teaching processes.

Their weaknesses as a teacher. During their reflective processes, participants' examined their weaknesses both in their papers, discussions and interview sessions. One weakness was identified as exceeding teacher talking time (TTT).

P # 3 and # 6 were aware that their weakness was their excessive TTT. P #6 stated in her paper that she should improve her TTT as because of this weakness, she had to teach even during break times to keep up with teaching schedule. She was aware that reducing students' break times and keeping them in the classroom decreased her students' motivation and attention. Similarly, P # 3 stated in her

comment, which she directed to P # 6, that exceeding TTT was a bad factor in their teaching, and they should overcome that problem by facing it.

P # 8 was aware that not implementing tools of technology was one of her weaknesses and she stated in the discussion session. She reported

I should improve my technology integration into her teaching after reading about my friends' description of their technology use in their classrooms. Especially, via P # 6 with whomI work for the same institution, I realized that it was possible for us, in our teaching settings, to integrate technology, especially wiki pages, into my teaching both as an in class and out of class activity.

All in all, it can be concluded that participants' reflected on their strengths and weaknesses as teachers and they concluded that as teachers, they should enhancesome of their current teaching practices such as TTT and the use of technology.

**Teaching practices.**Participants' experiences about their practices comprised another theme under reflection-in-action section. By illustrating the methods and classroom management techniques they utilize in their classes, participants engaged in reflective processes.

**Teaching methods.** In their reflective practice oriented (RP-oriented) discussions, participants talked about the teaching methods as well as describing the activities they applied to improve their students' language skills.

To start with, the participants' statements demonstrated that they employed an eclectic method and tried to integrate bits and pieces from each method. All of the participants paid attention to the development of language skills in teaching via eclectic method. Three of the participants, P # 2, P # 4 and P

#8 also believed that integrating the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was beneficial to improve students' accuracy in grammar that was tested via quizzes and midterms. Only one of the participants, P#6 clearly states her dislike of GTM as below:

To be honest, I find teaching grammar quite boringand working on grammar handouts or discussing students' workbooks' answers are always dull and ineffective activities. Instead, I would rather work on speaking than teaching simple present tense or other tenses over and over again. This doesn't mean that I do not teach grammar, I don't think that teaching these tenses for several times like a parrot will contribute my students language production, so I allocate more time on speaking tasks and vocabulary teaching.

Besides GTM, participant stated that they also integrated communicative approach in their teaching practices and engaged in reflective practice while defining the communicative activities they utilized in their classroom. First of all, they stated that they tried to integrate communicative activities to improve students' speaking skills. They tried to assign tasks, especially authentic projects such as giving presentation topics to their students about introducing themselves and their hometowns. One of the participants, P # 6 benefitted from living in İstanbul and she clarified one of her tasks as below:

I assign roles to my students, such as video recorder, actor and actress, and want them to record videos and conduct interviews with tourists. With the help of these video activities, I make my teaching student-centered. Actually the students also enjoy themselves and they say that when they engage in these activities and talk to native speakers or speakers of other languages, they feel themselves more self-confident and they get motivated. Isn't it nice

to realize that English is actually used to communicate, not just to pass exams or to get higher grades from the quizzes?

Being similar to P # 6's task, P # 5 and P # 2 employed video recording activities and they asked students to record video clips with songs. They believed that these types of activities increased collaboration among students.

In order to improve students' writing skills, teachers utilized story-writing activities. P # 2 believed that story writing enhanced students' creativity and gave them freedom to portrait their imagination. For the analysis of writing assignments, she utilized correction codes. That way, she could give her students the chance to recognize their grammar mistakes related to sentence structure, grammar and vocabulary use.

To improve reading and listening skills, as a support for the activities only P # 7 mentioned strategy training with skimming and scanning techniques. She reflected on the way she implemented strategy training and its contributions in her reflection paper as below:

To illustrate, I ask the students to skim through the text to find the main idea of each paragraph, and then scan it for more specific details before moving on to open-ended comprehension questions in the course book. After each task, I try to give the students some time to check their answers in pairs. In this way, I can monitor students' answers and make them feel more comfortable while they are sharing their answers with the whole class.

For the listening skill, the majority of the participants integrated songs in their classes. P # 2 believed that integrating song-based activities were crucial to improve students' listening skills and to motivate them. Therefore, she assigned those activities both in and out of the classroom. In the discussion sessions, she also shared one of her song activity videos in which students listened to the songs and translated

them altogether. This way, she also enhanced students' vocabulary knowledge. P # 7 also integrated song activities. By analyzing her implementation of song activities, she criticized the way P # 2 applied them in her answer in the interview session. She reported that:

Whatever I do has a purpose in the classroom. Even if I bring a song to classroom, they should learn something. That's what my students complain about actually. What I saw in P#2's video was just for the sake of fun, having fun. It was for fun, I mean they were singing. May be they were learning something, but even if I bring a song to the classroom, there are blanks in it. Students fill in the blanks, or if I bring a video, they answer questions.

Moreover, P # 7 claimed that inadequate experience in teaching and personal characteristics of P # 2 led P # 2 to construct the application type of song activities in her classes in that way. P # 7 concluded that she was not a kinesthetic person to jump up and down, that's why she did not prefer applying even song activities in the way P # 2 did.

Apart from applying song activities, four of the participants (P # 2, # 3, # 5 and # 8) utilized film and TV-series activities either in the classroom or out of the classroom. They watched videos with English subtitles. P # 5 shared how she applied TV-series activities in one of her comments she directed to P # 2. She stated that

before watching the episode, I provide pre-watching exercises. For example, I wantthe students to guess what might happen in the episode. This way, I get the attention of my students. I also integrate some vocabulary in pre-watching exercises and facilitate the students' understanding about the plot of the episode or the film.

Looking through the activities that participants used to improve students' listening skills, it can be inferred that vocabulary teaching was also integrated into

those activities. Participants shared some additional vocabulary teaching techniques in their reflection papers and the discussion sessions.

P # 1 stated in his reflection that he found using mnemonics to help students in their vocabulary learning similar to P # 7. For instance, P # 7 found words that the sound and mean were similar in English and in Turkish. "Attach" is an English word which means adding two or more things, points, topics in an area. She related this word with "Ataç", a Turkish word, which can be translated as paper clip into English but actually has a very close meaning to the word "attach." With the help of these mnemonics, P # 1 and P # 7 believed that the students could remember the words easily. Besides this technique, two of the participants, P#6 and P#8, preferred drawing pictures on the board and wanted students to guess the meanings of words. Five of the participants (P # 2, P # 3, P # 4, P # 6 and P # 7) used PowerPoint in their classes to teach words with their pictures. P # 6 considered the preparation process of PowerPoint slides as time consuming; however, still P # 6 and all of these participants found PowerPoint slides practical and effective to teach vocabulary.

To sum up, it can be concluded that participants engaged in reflection-inaction by clarifying their teaching methods, techniques, activities they utilize in their own teaching setting. They also criticized each others teaching practices by analyzing their own teaching and even personal characteristics.

Classroom management techniques. The numerous comments about classroom management techniques were identified under a separate code.

Participants indicated that they defined their classroom rules in order to gain control over the students. For instance; P # 9 stated in her reflection paper that:

We have classroom rules hanged on the wall reminding them to be respectful each other all the time and have a collaborative relationship instead of

humiliate each other or get off course. The announcement of the rules at the beginning of the term eases the classroom instruction and clarifies dos and don'ts. This transparency makes mutual expectations clear and inhibits most possible predicaments beforehand.

P # 2 also believed in the importance of classroom management techniques as she stated in her reflection paper that when she had a respectful atmosphere, it was more enjoyable to teach, to learn and to share ideas.

To conclude, teaching methods and classroom management techniques played a vital role in shaping participants' teaching practices.

## **Reflection-for-Action**

Reflection-for-action guides teachers to make inferences about possible problems or situations that may arise in their future teaching by analyzing their past experiences or current teaching practices (van Manen, 1991). By engaging in this reflection type, teachers can reshape their teaching, even some of their beliefs, by adding techniques that they believe may contribute both to their students and their development in teaching.

Findings from the data analysis revealed that participants engaged in frequent reflection-for-action. For the data analysis of the reflection-for-action, reflection papers, discussion sessions and participants answers to the questions of semi-structured interviews were categorized under the recurring theme of teachers as agents of change. Table 6 shows the theme and its codes that fall under this reflection type along with how many times they occurred in the data.

Table 6

Themes and Codes for Reflection-for-Action and their Frequencies

Themes	Codes	Participants								
		P#1	P#2	P#3	P#4	P # 5	P#6	P#7	P#8	P#9
Teachers as agents of change	Enhancing learning processes with strategies	4	-	4	-	6	-	7	-	8
	Raising student motivation	3	3	3	7	11	6	3	6	6
	Reviving old activities	-	-	3	-	3	3	-	3	3
	Integrating culture into teaching	-	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	8
	Appealing to digital natives with tools of technology	4	-	3	2	5	6	4	4	5
N. TIL (	Offering suggestions for institutions	3	-	<u>-</u>	-	4	-	3	-	4

Note: The frequencies reflect how many times participants wrote comments about each code.

Teachers as agents of change. Under reflection-for-action, participants talked about the teaching techniques they wanted to improve in their future practices. They either explicitly stated their willingness to change certain aspects or implicitly reflected their intentions towards several changes. The codes for these changes were listed as enhancing students' learning processes with strategies, raising student motivation, reviving old activities, integrating culture into teaching, appealing to digital natives with tools of technology and offering suggestions for institutions.

Enhancing students' learning processes with strategies. Throughout their reflection papers and the discussion sessions, two of the participants, P # 1 and P # 9, shared techniques that they had utilized as language learners. For instance P # 1

mentioned using mnemonics to facilitate vocabulary learning, and P # 9 stated creating a to-do list to overcome personal barriers. During the comments session, some of the participants found these two strategies effective; thus, the researcher asked these participants whether they would like to share these strategies with their students or not in their future teaching. The results indicated that P # 3 and P # 7 would like to utilize mnemonics technique in their upcoming teaching practices. In order to elaborate on the change in her teaching techniques, P # 3 reported that:

Actually our students are not autonomous learners, so they cannot decide on which technique can help them and we as teachers should show a couple of ways to learn vocabulary, grammar or other skills and we should be, we should lead them to learn effectively if they are in trouble. Mnemonics can help as P # 1 said before. I will actually implement them whether they are in trouble or not it all depends on actually their needs. I will try to share mnemonics whether my students ask me to example mnemonics or not, this won't change. If I see the need of this technique, I will just recommend a couple of things from them.

Participant # 7 stated in her answer that she had already used samples from mnemonics; however, upon seeing P # 1's statement about mnemonics, she read articles about their implementation and she gave the signals of a change in her future teaching. She reported that:

I think vocabulary is one of the cores of language learning, and this was one of the things that I struggled actually at the very beginning because students, still my students, tend to memorise the Turkish translations. No matter what I do in classroom, I tell them to write the word forms' English definitions, examples etc. But it is not very realistic for them. They don't do it. You cannot control this. So I try to do as much vocabulary activities as possible in

classroom like preparing vocab cards or preparing games. However, my repertoire in this sense is a bit limited. That's why I asked P # 1 about this to have more activities. It was a genuine question to be honest and he explained it but I need further reading. Because I mean he just gave one or two examples, and I, actually during my presentation in methods class I guess, in the first semester, I told my about vocabulary teaching and I actually read about mnemonics and it is a white area, it is not just like a word in Turkish similar to English. There are songs, poems, and so there are many things. I may not be able to use all of them because as a learner myself, I do not like impractical or childish activities. So, yeah I use some stuff like if I can remember, attach for example. Attach English, we know it's meaning and I tell my students "atacbakın, look at attach", so you are combining two things, attach is similar. Actually this is mnemonics as far as I can understand so I kind of use it, but I wasn't aware of the terminology, so this is the first time that I hear the terminology, and when I read more about it I learned that it is a broad area. I need to read more. So, I can have a look at some of the stuff, and why not? I mean, I can use some techniques.

P # 1, P # 5, and P # 8 stated in their answers that they found P # 9's creating a to-do list strategy very effective and a new way for them to enhance both their students' learning and even their own language learning processes. As P # 5 stated:

I wasn't aware of it before, and reading P # 9's paper helped me to realize that strategy and I really find it useful. I remember when I read it, and it actually helped me to, you know, reshape my teaching style, and I thought that it would be helpful to encourage the students to have that kinds of lists in their lives. That's why it helped me to change my, teaching style or strategy, I don't know. Also, it helped me to, you know, use that as a learner, as well.

Because I am learning German and I am planning to start Spanish. That's why; I could also use that kind of strategies as a learner and as a teacher. I found it really useful.

Another aspect that one of the participants, P # 9, wanted to change in her future teaching practices was providing strategy training for her students to help them develop their language skills, especially the listening skill. P # 7 stated in her reflection paper that she enhanced her students' listening skills by teaching them note-taking strategies in her classes. That way, she not only improved her students' listening skills but also helped them get higher grades from their exams. Upon reading that, P # 9 left a comment for P # 7 in which she stated she had not provided strategy training in her previous teaching years. Therefore, in the interview session, the researcher asked her whether she would implement that listening strategy to her students or not. She declared her willingness to use strategy training by stating that:

I used reading strategy basically. I did that for reading tasks with skimming and scanning and then I just, you know wanted students answer the questions that were, you know, served by the book's itself. So, I was just limited in that way. So, when I just read hers I said oh I could do this for listening tasks as well. So strategy training is really useful in that sense. I will use it for the listening by teaching note-taking strategies to my students.

All in all, participants showed their willingness to enhance their teaching practices by allocating more time to teaching strategies to their students in order to foster the their learning processes.

**Raising student motivation.** Changes were detected about the activities teachers utilized to motivate their students, as well. In a discussion comment, P # 1 asked P # 8 to share some of the activities or ways she used to motivate her students.

P # 8 answered her classmate's question by stating that she used songs, and TV-series as authentic materials to motivate her students towards language learning. She also added that she shared the objectives of lessons and the activities in detail with her students to make them aware of the learning goals of every exercise they engaged in. Upon P # 8's reply, P # 1 did not state post any additional reply. Thus, the researcher asked P # 1 if he would like to implement these motivation strategies in his future teaching or not. He stated his willingness to use the strategies as below:

I already used activities about movies and songs in my classes; however, I have not explained the course objectives to his students, so I found P # 8's suggestion about sharing course objectives really effective to raise students' awareness about the expected learning goals and I really would like to implement it in my future teaching.

Participants in the study engaged in reflective practice by sharing their language learning experiences throughout their first reflection papers and the discussion sessions. The majority of the participants, P # 1, P # 2, P # 3, P # 4, P # 6, P # 7, and P # 9, declared that they shared their learning experiences and processes with their students to establish rapport between themselves and their students. For instance P # 4 indicated that:

Sometimes students do not understand the processes I went through. They say "Hocam you had the ability towards learning English, that's why you say that all of you can learn English, but I love learning science courses and I am much better at them than social sciences." They cannot realize that I had difficulties to learn the language, so I guess if I share my own experiences, the bad times and good times, they can see that I was also a student like them and went through similar difficulties. They believe in me and they get motivated.

However, P # 5 and P # 8 stated that they had never shared thoughts about the importance of sharing their language learning experiences. With the help of reflection papers and the discussion sessions, they recognized that the majority of their classmates took advantage of their experiences as language learners to establish rapport with the students. For that reason, both of the participants P # 5 and P # 8 stated that they would like to share their experiences with their future students. For instance, P # 8 stated that:

This suggestion, sharing language learning experiences is good for me because I have, I have never thought of sharing my experience, my language learning experiences with my students beforehand. Actually, this online discussion created an awareness. Because most of the people told that they share their experiences, learning experiences with their students. Actually, this is something that I haven't done up to now. So, I agree with them. It might be a good idea to share our experiences. I didn't share my experience, but I understood them. For example, they asked for grammar and I just taught grammar understanding their need, but I should explain them why I teach grammar, and I should explain them my experiences to also motivate my students to show them I went through similar processes, so yes, I will share them.

P #5 stated in her discussion comment for P # 1 that she utilized warm-up activities before watching an episode of a TV-series by defining the characters or providing exercises with unknown words. She asked P # 2 whether she used such pre-watching exercises or not and found out that P # 5 had never utilized pre-watching exercises before those exercises. Therefore, the researcher asked P # 2 in the interview session whether she wanted to implement pre-watching exercises in her future teaching or not. The reply to the question of P # 2 revealed that she would like

to implement those types of activities in her future teaching. She illustrated her willingness as:

Yes, I would like to apply it. I liked P # 5's suggestion because when I was applying movie activities, I observed that some of the students slept, so may be if I apply such pre-watching activities, they may be more interested in the movie and the topic. So, it is something important that I skipped, I guess.

A similar change about the implementation of warm-up sessions was seen in P # 9's answer to her interview question. In her reflection paper, P # 7 shared that she paid attention to warm-up activities to focus the attention of the students before starting each unit of her course book. P # 9 stated that "preparing students for the lesson is a really good idea, but I do not have chance to do that most of the time in order to catch up with the weekly schedule of school." The researcher wanted to confirm whether P # 9 would dedicate time to implement warm-up activities. P # 9 replied to the question by saying that;

By reading P # 7's paper, I decided that from then on, I will enter the classroom and I'll have a warm-up session. I know this thing is really impossible in my home institution, I mean going out of the weekly schedule because they do not let you to, you know, do some things that are flexible. You are not let to be flexible in your classroom as a teacher. But here I saw that, having a hectic class is not important if your students are not there, in the classroom not physically but mentally. I realizedthat I need to reach them. So, despite that, overloaded schedule, I decided to have a warm-up session. I will not be fixed with, you know, this schedule or something and will definitely implement them.

From the analysis of P # 9's answer, it can be concluded that the participant had a tendency toward changing her teaching technique by implementing warm-up activities in her teaching practice.

While talking about tools and techniques to improve their teaching, participants also talked about needs analysis. As stated previously under reflection-in-action part, participants shared example tools that they utilized in their classes.

P # 5 asked both P # 4 and P # 9 to share some of the tools they applied to define their students' needs. The participants stated that they utilized self-assessment tools, background information questionnaires, and students 'previous exam results as well as students' expectations with open-ended questions about the classroom environment. P # 5 found these needs analysis tools could be effective both for her teaching and her students. She mentioned in her interview:

I also try to learn their needs at the beginning of the term or semester and I generally used to ask some questions about their experiences and expectations at the beginning of the term. And, especially P # 4's comment made me aware that it is a good idea to, you know, document their expectations or weaknesses, or their needs. And, I am planning to use that kind of self-assessment tool in my teaching in the future and it is good idea to ask openended questions, as well in that thing. I mean, if we learn their needs well, we can, you know, meet their needs more by using the appropriate materials, or strategies, or techniques, whatever. That's why I found the comments, I mean, especially P # 4's comment really useful, I can say.

Considering the P # 5's reply, it can be concluded that she would like to utilize needs analysis tools in her future teaching in order to define her students needs and meet their expectations as well as enhancing their learning environment.

As stated in reflection-in-action section under weaknesses, two of the participants, P # 3 and P # 6, evaluated their teacher talking time (TTT), noting that they had excessive TTT. P # 6 in particular claimed that excessive talking resulted in extending the teachers hours by keeping students in the classroom during break times, which decreased student motivation in the lesson. Therefore, the researcher asked participants whether they might wish to address their weakness in the future. Both of the participants reported their intention to reduce their TTT in the future teaching practices. For instance, P # 6 stated that:

I talked about this weakness with P#3. Unfortunately too much teacher talking time does not help the unmotivated students. We identify it as a problem that we should overcome. Therefore, I know it won't be easy but I will try to reduce it by shortening my long instructions. I need to provide much space to my students to practice their speaking skill. That's why I will try to reduce it. As I said, it is a weakness and difficult to change, but I will.

To conclude in order to increase the students' motivation, participants gave signals of changes in their teaching techniques in their future practices.

Reviving old activities. While reflecting on past teaching experiences, participants talked about the activities they tried, failed, and gave up using in their classes. P # 3 stated one of those activities. In order to give feedback to her students about their grammar mistakes that appeared in her students' speaking skill, she used to take notes while the students were speaking and share those errors on the board without mentioning students' names. However, she received negative reactions about that activity from her students as they told her that they felt as if they were being insulted in front of their classmates. Although P # 3 did not announce the students' names with grammar mistakes, the students could figure out the people she was

talking about while giving feedback to correct those errors. Therefore, P # 3 quit using that activity. However, seeing P # 8 using the same error correction activity in the classroom and finding it effective, she changed her mind and stated in her interview session that she would like to use it again. To elaborate on her change, she reported:

I mean, yes, why not? I can try it again. P # 8 made me realize that whenever you change the class or whenever your students change, the atmosphere changes and the reactions of these kinds of activities could change. So, instead of OK, instead of saying that "OK, I will not do it again or anymore", yes I will try it. May be I can have better results after doing such kind of an activity. Because after seeing P # 8, I understood, it is useful for learners to see their errors and getting instant feedback.

P # 9 also changed her vocabulary teaching activity upon reading P # 7's paper. In the past, she used to teach vocabulary by acting out in front of the classroom. She was using her gestures and mimics and asking students to guess the meaning of the words. However, her students wanted her to decrease or stop using that vocabulary teaching technique as the activity was taking too much time. Therefore, she first reduced and then quit using that activity. However, she decided to revive acting out for vocabulary teaching with the help of P # 7. In the interview session, she articulated that:

Actually, I used to do act outs while teaching vocabulary, but as I stated, some of my students get bored while waiting for the meaning of the word, or they are just, you know, lazy to guess. I think it is related to student profile, I'll, so reading P # 7's reflection I understand that student profiles may change, so I should keep on doing such kind of activities while teaching vocabulary.

P # 6 stated in her reflection paper that she assigned video recording projects such as interviewing tourists, broadcasting weather to her students in groups. P # 5 stated in a comment she left for P # 5 that she stopped using video recording assignments with her students as she found it very difficult in terms of motivating students to take part in the assignment. In response to that comment, P # 6 a solution by sharing the way she implemented those assignments. She mentioned that she did not assign the roles to her students, instead, she wrote the roles on the board such as actor, actress, cameraman, and she gave students freedom to choose the one they wanted. In the interview session, P # 5 suggested that P # 6's idea might be effective, and expressed her desire try the activity again. She stated;

I really used to find it really difficult to, I mean, find the ways to motivate students in my classes because yes, some of them were eager, some of them not. And, after P # 6's answer, I mean, I realized that I made a mistake. I mean, I used to, you know, separate them into pairs and groups and I, myself, assigned the roles. And, maybe they had to do something that they didn't want to and due to her comment, in the future I would like to apply, I mean, I am planning to give them such freedom to select their own roles and, you know, let them do whatever they want to do. Yes.

To sum up, upon engaging reflective practice in RP-oriented platforms, participants stated their willingness to integrate and to revive their old activities in their future teaching.

Integrating culture into teaching. Changes that occurred in the way teachers thought about integrating culture in their teaching were identified and presented under the code "integrating culture into teaching".

P # 9 shared her teaching experience she gained in a public university in the eastern part of Turkey. During those years, she had difficulties with her students, as

language would assimilate them. In order to overcome that difficulty, P # 9, with her colleagues and students, translated Kurdish stories that were taken from students' own culture to first into Turkish first, and then into English. They compiled the stories and created a storybook for their students and they could finally interact with the students to teach English. A majority of the participants (P # 2, # 4, # 5, # 6, # 7 and # 8) found P # 9's way of overcoming cultural barriers profoundly effective.

Therefore, in the interview sessions, the researcher asked them a question about implementing P # 9's activity in their future teaching. The replies of the participants revealed that they found P # 9's experience inspiring and they would like to implement such an activity. For instance P # 8 reported;

I really liked P # 9's project, and I really would like to do such thing, to translate the stories from other cultures. But my context is different from P # 5's context because I work in Istanbul. So, okay, it is possible to do such a thing, but reading P # 5's, I thought of other ideas. For example, I have students from all over Turkey, from different cities of Turkey. May be, I may ask them to translate a story which belongs to their hometown, to translate that story into English, and I may tell them that I will compile those stories and I will have a book. I'm sure they will enjoy such a project as well. So, actually P # 5's idea, project or activity, how you call it, inspired me.

Participant P # 7, like her classmates, wanted to implement such an activity in her classroom:

I think that was the best reflection I have ever had and that was, this is something that I will ever forget. On the other reflections, I continued talking about P # 9's case. I remember. We can create wonders here with even beginner students by asking them share their fairy tales with us, just I mean it

would be may be a limited English with more drawings etc. but it would be their world. It would be really motivating and valuable for them. I think I might give it a try, I mean, I should talk to her more about it, I mean how she managed that and how she chose the topics and what procedures she followed. But I would definitely love to do such a thing in my future teaching.

Considering P # 8's and P # 7's replies, it can be concluded that P # 9's experience broadened participants' perspectives about integrating culture in their teaching via similar activities.

Appealing to digital natives with tools of technology. As twenty-first century teachers, participants frequently talked about using technology. Therefore, reshaping the integration of technological tools such as applications, websites, and tablets, was detected as a recurring topic in participants' reflection papers, discussion sessions, and interviews.

P # 4 stated in her fifth reflection paper on integrating technology that she used some websites and applications in her classes. P # 1 asked her to give examples about the websites and mobile phone applications she benefitted in her classroom. Upon that question, she stated that she used a collocation dictionary to enhance students' vocabulary knowledge and she used a website for listening practice called Esl-lab. She suggested another website called OroroTV for English TV-series with English subtitles. Moreover, she also used an application called genius scan. She could scan the students' work and she could immediately reflect them on the board with the help of projector with the help of this application. I asked participant one whether he wanted to use these tools P # 4 suggested in his future teaching, and he stated:

Actually the ESL-lab and there was another website called lyricstraining.com. I was using them before P # 4 told me and I also talked about them in my classes. So, I had asked my students to go and, you know, see what's happening on what. So, basically, if I come up with something useful, I share them with my students and my colleagues, actually. So, P # 4's suggestions seem really helpful for several skills and vocabulary teaching, I'll definitely use them in my future teaching practices.

During the discussion session of reflection on the use of technology, P#5 stated that the overloaded teaching schedule at her institution prevented her from integrating tools of technology, therefore, she asked P # 9 to share some of the tools she found effectiveand practical. Upon that question, P # 9 stated a website called Animoto, which allows educators to create music videos for selected images on the web.

Therefore, the researcher asked P # 5 whether she would implement the website,
Animoto, in her future practices teaching practices, or not. P # 5 stated that learning a practical tool from her classmate was beneficial for her and she would most probably use it. However, she still wanted to check out the website and its practicality again by herself.

Another tool that participants wanted to use in their classes in the future were Wikis. P # 6 shared her experience about the implementation of Wiki pages, which are similar to blogs and used by teachers to create a writing space for students and to help their students interact in an online discussion platform. Her classmate, P # 8, responded positively to P # 6's discussion of her teaching experience with Wiki pages and she indicated that she had changed her mind and decided to utilize a wiki page in her future teaching. She declared her future intention as:

When I think of use of technology, I thought that computer laboratories are requirement for the use of technology, but when I read P # 6's reflection, I

realized that it is not necessary to have computers in the school, but we can have other online platforms to make students use technology and learn English through technology. So, probably, I'll make use of wikis. At least once, I'll try it.

Similarly, P # 9 evaluated Wikis as valuable tools for her teaching environment. Her institution did not have a computer laboratory; therefore, she had difficulties integrating technology in her teaching. She had shares some useful links and websites for her students in the past, so she realized that it would be feasible for her to implement wiki pages and to create a collaborative teaching blog with her students. For that reason, she would like to implement them in her future teaching.

An alternative to wiki pages was Moodle discussion platforms. P # 7 stated in her comment which was directed to P#5 that although she had not liked the Moodle discussion platform for online reflective discussions, she had gotten used to engaging in them as time went by and she found Moodle very effective and interactive to share experiences, discuss ideas and suggestions. Therefore, she suggested that P # 5 use an online discussion tool such as Moodle with her students to develop their writing skill. P # 5 had a positive attitude towards using Moodle or an equivalent of it. When asked by the researcher whether she would use online discussion tools in her future practices or not, P # 5 stated that:

I know it is not an easy job to utilize these tools in our classes in which we have 20 students or more. However, if it appeals to our students, we should try it and leave our traditional teaching; we should keep up with the changes. I know that my students will get used to taking place in those websites, so will I. We went through a similar process as P # 7 stated, we had Moodle discussion platform difficult, but then we liked it. The students are living in

the technology era. Therefore, I find P # 7's suggestion really useful and I will try one of these tools in the future.

P # 6 stated in her reflection paper that she permitted her students to use tablet computers in her classroom. Whereas, P # 3 stated that she never let her students use tablets and smartphones because she did not think that they could play a vital role in students' learning processes. Therefore, P # 3 reflected her surprise in her discussion comment when she realized that one of her colleagues supported students' tablet use and found them effective during students' learning processes. In order to analyze if P # 6's experience changed P # 3's attitude towards integrating tablet computers of students into the classroom, the researcher asked P # 3 if she would let tablet use in her future teaching. She declared the change by stating that:

I remember the reason why I asked this question because when they bring tablets or when they use their mobile phones, they sometimes can have some problems with concentration, and they lose their interest, and they go on like looking at Facebook, the other twitter, the other things, social media basically. But, as P # 6 said it can be pretty useful because it saves time and they are really good at using tablet pcs, they are better than us, and yes, P # 6's reply made me, I mean, change my attitude in terms of using technology in the classroom because she listed positive effects of using it. So, if I have a chance in the future to use tablet pcs, I'll let my students use it in the classroom.

P # 5 also had concerns about the implementation of tablet computers. In order to deepen her knowledge about their implementation, P # 5 directed a question to P # 6 about the classroom management techniques P # 6 applied in order to control the students' tool uses and purposes. P # 6 stated that standing at the back of the classroom and observing students from a different angle during the students' note

taking processes were effective techniques for her while she was teaching at her institution. In order to see if there was a change in P # 5's attitudes about tablet use, the researcher asked her if she was persuaded by the suggested classroom techniques and integration of tablet computers. She reported:

I didn't find the suggestion about classroom management techniques useful. In the past I let my students use tablets. I was also observing my students whether they were using for the educational purposes or not and it didn't work, but P # 6's comment made me aware that some people are not really opposed to use of these such technological tools in the classes. So it raised my awareness let's say, and after that I came across, I mean, a kind of article about the use of tablets in the classes and her experience helped me to read that article. So, yes, it just helped me that some teachers, you know, make use of such tools, as I said it just raised my awareness. I cannot say I will definitely use these tools, but I may, or I will give a chance to use them again, may be with different classroom management techniques.

From what P # 5 stated it was inferred that she shifted her attitude towards tablets in a positive way as she gave signals of a probable change about her future teaching by stating her intention to let students use tablets in her classroom environment.

To sum up, participants revealed signals of changes for their future practices on integrating tools of technology such as websites, applications and blogs called wikis. Besides, they also stated that they would like to let students use tablet pcs in their classroom setting.

Offering suggestions for institutions. Upon engaging in discussions with each other, participants identified some issues they wanted to share with their institutions to improve their teaching practices and help students' learning processes. The

participants' comments about a desire to enhance their home teaching environments were coded under the theme "teachers as agents of change".

The first suggestion to create a change in an institution was detected in the interview session of P # 7. In the discussion session of assignment four which was about defining teachers' role as a cultural mediator, P # 7 stated the importance of exchange programs both for teachers and students. She stated that providing students a chance to participate in cultural exchange programs especially in their preparatory school year would increase their awareness of the importance of learning a second language. As a follow-up, the researcher asked the participant whether she would suggest to her administration including a student exchange program for their reparatory school year. She reported that:

I think yes, it might be a good, I mean, it might encourage students if as a prep school, we for example for students who get high score if we give such a present to a student, it might be a great motivation, rather than just passing the exams and going to their departments. If students are given awards like those who get the highest grade will get the chance to go abroad for one week, or two weeks whatever, it might be a great opportunity and it might be very motivating. Therefore, I will suggest it to my administrators, but still I have doubts about its acceptance.

A similar attempt to integrate cultural values was detected in P # 1, as well. In the discussion session of assignment four, P # 3 suggested establishing a movie club in the institutions in her comment for P # 1. In his reply, P#1 reflected his intention to recommend creating a movie club to his institution for preparatory school students to raise the cultural awareness of his students. In the interview session, he stated that:

There is an American TV-series. So basically, there is a company based in United States, but they have a call center in like India. And the workers are all Indian, so basically there are some cross-cultural issues. So watching things like that would give us a really good idea about like the differences between them, I mean cultures. That's why I found P # 3's suggestion really good. But, even if that's a good idea, the problem would be finding good movies or good TV series to, you know, show the cultural differences. But I think that's better than nothing, so yeah I would go with the watching movie stuff, yes. And when I go back, I'm planning to talk about such things like cultural differences, or TV shows, or whatever you call it, or even enable articles to my students, so that they would have a better understanding of cultural differences.

In the discussion sessions, participants discussed the importance of peer observation for their professional development as well. P # 4, P # 6 and P # 9 shared their teaching processes and the contributions of peer observation sessions they had in their previous teaching years. P # 9 stated that in her first institution, she had the chance to request her colleagues to visit her classes and to evaluate her teaching and she realized that with the suggestions of her peers, she could improve her teaching practices by reshaping her teaching techniques. However, in her current institution she could not engage in peer observation. When the researcher asked her whether she would suggest peer observation sessions to her institution, she reported that:

I'd like to. In my home institution, we don't have this kind of procedures as I had in my previous institution, but I'd like to have. That's why I will suggest it cause I like sharing the ideas or getting some signs, clues from experienced teachers, especially.

Unlike other suggestions, P # 5 decided to change the assessment procedure of the course book's online activity for her future teaching. In the discussion session of assignment five, integrating technology in ELT, P # 3 stated that the course book they used had an online practice session, which should be assigned students as an out-of-class activity and shouldn't be graded. However, administrators decided to grade the online session. No matter how hard P # 3 and some of her colleagues tried, they couldn't deter administrators from grading it. P # 3 thought that in order to help students be autonomous, the teachers should leave some space for students and shouldn't threaten students with grades. Thus, she criticized the application of the online session of the course book. P # 5 stated that they also utilized the same course book and online lab session and they graded it, as well. P # 5 believed that if the students had not been graded they would not have done the exercises for the online sessions. P # 3 disagreed with P#5's suggestion. Therefore, the researcher asked P # 5 whether the criticism of her belief about the application of course books by P # 3 created a change in her perspective or not. P#5 stated that:

Actually, I used to think that the grades, I mean taking grades out of that kind of tools would be encouraging for students but after P # 3's comment, yes I realized something. I mean, it is not a good idea to force the students to use that thing. I thought that they didn't use it because they are not autonomous learners, but I think we should find some ways to make them more autonomous rather than forcing them. So, P # 5's comment help me to, you know, think on it and maybe we could change this system and I will discuss it with my administration and the other stuff, my colleagues. May be, we should find other ways rather than praising them as a grade, we should find some other ways to make them, I mean, encourage to use such tools.

As it can be inferred from P # 5's explanation, she changed her mind and would like to talk to her administrators about reshaping the grading system of online lab session of the course book.

To conclude, it can be inferred from the findings presented under "teachers as agents of change" that participants planned to change their teaching practices by enhancing students learning processes with strategies and raising student motivation with teaching techniques. They reconsidered the old activities they had previously used and decided to reutilize those activities after considering the other participants' teaching experiences. Participants also shared their intention to integrate both target culture and the students' own cultures into their teaching practices. As teachers of a technology era, they also planned to enhance their teaching by implementing tools of technology to appeal to their students, so called digital natives, in the discussion sessions. Last but not least, participants reflected their intentions to improve their teaching environment by offering suggestions to the administrators of their institutions.

#### Conclusion

This study examined the online reflective practices of nine experienced EFL teachers who were students in a master's program in teaching English as a foreign language in Ankara, Turkey. The study investigated reflection types (reflection-in-, on- and -for-action) the participants engaged in during online RP-oriented discussions. To this end, this chapter presented the findings from participants' reflection papers, online discussion sessions and one-to-one interviews conducted with each participant organized around the three reflection types: reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action. The next chapter will provide

discussion of the findings, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research.

#### **CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION**

#### Introduction

This study investigated EFL teachers' participation in reflective practice oriented (RP-oriented) online discussion forums. More specifically, explored the reflection types (reflection-in, on and for-action) the participants engaged in.

Thus, the study sought answers to the following research question:

1. In what types of reflection (reflection-in, on and for-action) do the experienced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers engage in during their reflective practice oriented online discussions?

Data were collected through different instruments: a background information questionnaire, reflection papers written as a part of a Methodology course along with reflective practice oriented (RP-oriented) online discussions sessions, and semi-structured interviews conducted with each participant about the reflection papers and the discussion sessions. The background information questionnaire was administered to analyze participants' background in teaching and learning processes. The reflection papers and discussion sessions were used to examine whether participants engaged in reflective practice or not. Semi-structure interviews were utilized to see whether engaging in online reflective practices would create a change in the teachers' beliefs as well as their teaching and learning techniques. All the qualitative data were analyzed according to Boyatzis' (1998) thematic analysis. After the data were read several times to discover first the codes and then the themes that naturally emerged, they were color-coded. As the final step, the themes generated in the initial analysiswere related to three sensitizing concepts, which were a) reflection-on-

action b) reflection-in-action and c) reflection-for-action according to the temporality of reflection types suggested by Wilson (2008).

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in the light of the relevant literature. Following that, the pedagogical implications of the study are discussed. After that, the limitations of the study are described and suggestions are made for further research.

### **Findings and Discussion**

In this section, the researcher will describe the findings in relation to reflection types, which are a) reflection-on-action b) reflection-in-action and c) reflection-for-action and present the main conclusions.

#### **Reflection-on-Action**

One of the most notable findings of the study was how the participants engaged in reflective processes on online platforms by examining their learning processes and past experiences both as language learners and teachers.

Throughout their reflection papers, especially via the first reflection assignment on defining yourself as a learner, participants reflected on their own learner identities. According to Loughran (1996), one of the most important values of reflecting in learning is to encourage people to consider problems from different perspectives. Considering the reflections of P # 8 and P # 9 on their personal characteristics, the participants could analyze their problem, 'shyness," and its effect on their learning. As P# 9 stated in her reflection paper, in those years, her shyness was a personal barrier to her in-class participation and speaking skill. Thus, to overcome the negative effect this characteristic, she made a to-do-list to encourage her participation and fostered the learning process by engaging in speaking activities

with her peers. P # 8's case was different from P # 9's as she could not overcome her shyness. However, she identified the reason of her shyness by relating the problem to the education system. Looking at these two examples, it can be concluded that by analyzing their learning problems from various aspects and identifying their learner identity, participants engaged in reflective practices. This finding can be supported by Hirano's (2009) study conducted as an action research over the course of a year with an adult EFL learner who had a difficulty in learning English. By providing a reflective diary to the participant with prompts for identifying elements of the learning processes, the researcher found that the participant engaged in reflection on his personal barrier, anxiety. Similarly, by defining personal barriers such as shyness, motivation and autonomy, participants in this research engaged in reflective practice on their learner identity. Thus it can also be concluded that as reflective diaries, RP-oriented online discussions can also be utilized as an effective tool to foster reflection on learner identity.

Participantsreflected on their language learning experiences they gathered from both their second language learning and third language learning processes. Both in their reflection papers and the discussion sessions, participants shared factors that affected their learning in either positive or in negative ways. For instance, P # 1, who attended a private institution for his primary school education, stated that his teachers and also the course book utilized in his English classes had been effective in enhancing his second language learning. His teachers paid attention to language skills by putting the students in the center of learning. Thus, the participant became an active learner in his language learning process. Similarly, P # 2 shared her experience in learning Italian. She stated that her teacher was very effective in raising students' motivation by sharing stories from her experiences with the Italian

culture. That way, P # 2 became a more enthusiastic language learner. For P # 7, the language learning process was not as fruitful as P # 1's and P # 2, and she related this condition to the education environment. In her primary school, her English teachers changed constantly, which resulted in P # 7's demotivation towards language learning. What can be concluded from the stories of participants is that participants reflected on their learner identities by examining their language learning experiences in regard to their educational settings. This finding is supported by Besser and Chik's (2014) study in which researchers asked young learners of English in China to reflect on their educational settings using narrative reflections. The results revealed that by analyzing their education platforms, students also referred to their learner identity as being active learners or passive learners in their learning processes.

As another finding of the study, it can be suggested that participants reflected on their teacher identity as well. According to Maclean and White (2007), "Teacher identity is unstable and in continual flux, it is more accurate to speak the importance of processes of identification than just of identity" (p. 48). P # 7's reflection on her teaching process highlights the importance of the identifying processes on teacher identity. As a novice teacher, she regarded herself like a mother in the classroom, dealing with students' problems, trying to reach them with affection in order to enhance the students' learning processes. By looking at her teaching experience and identifying her role as a teacher in the classroom, she realized that as time went by she was becoming more professional by reshaping her attitudes towards her students. She kept on dealing with the students but she also created a distance in her relationship with her students. These findings supported Maclean and White's (2007) study's findings, which indicated that student teachers could reflect on their teacher identity by talking about their teaching practicums and evaluations of their actions,

thoughts, values, feelings and goals. Thus, when Maclean and White's (2007) study and P # 7's statements are considered together, it can be concluded that by evaluating the effects of teaching experiences, especially their roles as teachers, participants engaged in reflective practices, especially in reflection-on-action.

Throughout their reflection papers and the discussion sessions, participants talked about their past teaching experiences as novice teachers as part of the theme of teacher identity. For instance, P # 9 shared her teaching experience as a novice teacher when she worked for a public university in the east of Turkey. She stated the difficulties, such as students' reluctance to learn English. Further, she also shared how she overcame the problems by utilizing culture related activities in which she translated Kurdish stories into Turkish and then English with her colleagues. In that way, she could interact with her students and started teaching English via the students' own culture. Similarly, P # 6 reflected on her teaching experiences by sharing the activities she utilized as a novice teacher. She stated in her reflection paper and the interview session that she applied the activities she learnt from her teachers both as a language learner and as a pre-service teacher during her undergraduate years. Further, she added that the quality of her teaching evolved due to her teaching experiences in which she taught English to young learners and adult learners. Considering the participants' statements, by analyzing past teaching experiences and their effects on their teacher identity, it can be seen that participants engaged in reflection-on-action. This can be regarded as a notable finding since there is not a study conducted on teachers', especially EFL teachers, where teachers engaged in reflective practices by analyzing effects of past experiences on their teacher identity.

It is also important to state that participants engaged in reflection-on-action

by evaluating the contributions of reflection papers on their professional development. When asked to evaluate the RP-oriented discussions, participants stated that they had the chance to go through the processes they had as learners and teachers. In addition, they claimed that developedand enhance their teaching practices by learning additional strategies and teaching techniquesfrom each other due to the interactions that occurred in the discussion platforms. This finding can be regarded in parallel to Yang's (2009) study conducted on the utilization of blogs for reflective practices. In Yang's study participants got more opportunities and enhanced their professional development by evaluating the teaching methods presented in their methodology course and challenged each other's ideas and viewpoints on the implementation of methods in teaching.

To sum up, considering the findings of the study it can be concluded that participants of the study engaged in reflection-on-action by defining their learner and teacher identities.

#### **Reflection-in-Action**

Both in their reflection papers and the discussion sessions, the two themes naturally emerged: teachers' beliefs and teaching practices. Under the theme beliefs, participants first shared their roles as EFL teachers. To start with, the findings of the study revealed that the participants acted as facilitators in the classroom by showing some techniques to students to foster their vocabulary learning and language skills. Participants also stated their roles as motivators where they informed students about student exchange programs to extrinsically motivate the learners. Raising critical thinkers was the third role defined by the participants. They believed in the importance of fostering students' problem solving strategies and critical thinking abilities by using real-life situations and talking about political issues in Turkey. The

last role participants attributed to teachers was being a cultural mediator. Participants shared the importance of integrating students' own cultures and the target culture into their language learning setting. The studies existing in the literature generally regard reflection-in-action as a simultaneous situation that takes place at the time of teaching. According to Murphy (2013), reflection in action can also be regarded as teachers' awareness on current conditions. Considering Murphy's (2013) definition, a notable finding of this study is that the participantsengaged in reflection-in-action by elaborating upon their awareness on their roles as EFL teachers.

Reflection-in-action requires teachers to stop and think about their behaviors in their teaching atmosphere. According to Wilson (2008), "Rather than responding intuitively, there should be some conscious consideration of what is happening, how effective the behavior is, and whether there might be more appropriate alternatives" (p. 179). Regardingthis statement, it can be suggested that by engaging in reflectionin-action, participants were able to analyze their strengths and weaknesses by defining the reasons lying behind their current teaching beliefs. Participants indicated creating a friendly and meaningful atmosphere as strength in their reflection papers because they believed that creating a stress-free atmosphere enhances students learning. Similarly, they stated that defining the borders in their relationships with their students was a strength in their teaching asthey believed that "trying to be friendly, not a friend of their students" would be a facilitating factor in their classroom management. Additionally, they considered using warm-up exercises at the beginning of each lesson or unit as strength in their teaching due to their belief in the importance of such exercises on students' motivation. Two of the participants pointed out excessive teacher talking time in their classes as a weakness as they accepted that talking too much and holding students in the classroom to complete the

teaching tasks would decrease students' attention and motivation towards the lesson. One of the participants considered her lack of information on utilizing technology as a weakness in her teaching practice. As she believed that in order to appeal the contemporary students required utilization of technological tools. These findings indicate that participants engaged in reflection-in-action, especially by defining their beliefs. According to Wilson's (2008) temporality of reflection, reflection in action refers to present situations. Beliefs of teachers can naturally be regarded as present situations as they are difficult to change. Thus teachers' reflection on teaching practices, strengths and weaknesses by grounding them in their beliefs is evidence of participants' engaging in reflection-in-action.

Reflection types have overlapping features, and therefore, it is difficult to differentiate their borders. In order to distinguish reflection types, Eraut (1995) referred to reflection-in-action as being related to the teaching context. Thus, using Eraut's (1995) definition, an important finding of the study is that teachers' engaged in reflection-in-action by pointing out their practices, which were shaped according to their teaching contexts. For instance, participants stated in their reflection papers that they chose the methods according to their students' needs. Since the students were tested according to their grammar accuracy and language skills, the participants chose Eclectic Method by combining bits and pieces from several methods including the Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Language Teaching. In addition, one of the participantstook the advantage of her environment by assigning tasks in which the students recorded interviews with native speakers of English in İstanbul. Moreover, the participants trained their students for the midterm exams of their institutions in order to help students get higher grades from the exams. To sum up, it can be concluded from participants' reflections that they tried fit with the

context they teach in to enhance teaching practices. This finding can also be important in the field as none of studies in the field of reflective practice linked reflection-in-action with the concept of context.

#### **Reflection-for-Action**

The study found that participants engaging in reflection for action in three distinct orientations: a) improvement of their own teaching practices b) the students, to enhance their learning c) institutions.

First, participants wanted to enhance their teaching practices. Engaging in reflective-practice-oriented online discussions; participants had the chance to observe each other's teaching practices by reading reflection papers and discussion comments. In this way, they were able to analyze the missing parts in their teaching as well. According to Uzum, Petron and Berg (2014), "Reflection-for-action may entail a teacher's making note of the weaknesses in a lesson and proposing action to address these problems in future lessons." (p. 5). Thus, in this light, evidence of teachers engaging in reflection on action can be seen in participants' future intentions toovercome their weaknesses in their teaching. For instance, P # 3 realized that she never used mnemonics as P # 1 did in her teaching to enhance students' vocabulary knowledge, which can be regarded as identifying a weakness. Thus, she stated that she wanted to try that vocabulary teaching technique in her teaching practice. A similar attempt was seen in interview sessions of P # 1, P # 5 and P # 8, as well. Upon seeing P # 9 sharing her to-do list strategy to overcome students' personal barriers, they decided to use this technique with their own students in their future teaching.

As the second direction, participants aimed to expand the students learning processes, which can be regarded as participants' engaging in reflection-for-action.

Although it may not be possible for reflective practitioners to comment on experience, which they have not hadyet, it is possible to consider the future scenarios by observing other teachers' teaching processes with the help of reflection-for-action (Wilson, 2008). Thus, by observing each other's reflection papers and discussion comments, they became aware of the importance of applying warm-up activities to gain the attention of the students and to motivate them and stated their willingness to apply them in their future practices. Similarly, they defined the place of technology in language classroom by reading how their classmates utilized technology via some activities or tools. For instance, the majority of the participants were eager to implement wikis in their future practices to enhance students' learning environment with this brand new technological tools. Besides these things, participants also reflected upon the effectiveness of the activities they once utilized and found ineffective in their classroom environments. Seeing their classmates applying similar activities, such as error correction technique by writing students mistakes on the board, they understood that they might benefit from those activities again according to the classroom dynamics of their prospective students.

As the third orientation, teachers as agents of changes, participants mentioned their intentions to suggest ideas to their institutions to change several conditions. First of all, one of participants wanted to suggest her administrators cultural exchange programs for preparatory school students. Secondly, for the sake of increasing students' awareness towards the target culture, one of the participants indicated his desire to start movie clubs in their institutions. That way, participant believed that he could create cultural relevance between the target culture and his students' own cultures. The third intention for change was detected in the assessment procedure. Two of the participants reconsidered the grading system of their online

course book exercises. They considered the possibility of making those activities voluntary in order to develop responsibilities among students to make them autonomous learners. Last but not least, participants stated their desire to ask for peer observation sessions in their institutions in order to enhance their professional development.

Considering participants talks on their intentions towards changes in their future teaching practices, teacher identity and applications of their institutions, it can be concluded that the participants engaged in the process on reflection-for-action.

## Overall findings on the evaluation of RP-oriented online discussion platforms

Although the utilization of asynchronous discussion can be regarded as relatively new, several studies have been conducted on their implementation for reflective practices both in teacher education and health education. Lee-Baldwin (2005) conducted a study on pre-service science teachers' enrolled in a science teaching methods course and examined social group dynamics to analyze participants' reflective thinking. The results revealed that when given enough time, participants' interaction facilitated their reflective thinking. Considering a number of comments participants directed to each other after reading the posted reflection papers, it can be concluded that participants engaged in higher level of reflectivity by solely asking questions related to their teaching to each other and providing suggestions on their teaching practices. Thus, considering the numerous comments and questions participants directed to each other, it can be concluded that participants' interactions may have increased the process of their reflective thinking and they engaged in high-level of reflectivity. It is also important to state that although participants did not favor the utilization of online discussions, as the use of those discussions was obligatory for them. However, they enjoyed participating as

time went by. The participants stated that they could understand the importance of reflective practice by interacting with their classmates, observing each other's experience, comments and questions. Thus, they favored engaging in those online discussion sessions. Regarding this fact, it can be concluded that giving the enough time for teachers to reflect can help them understand the importance of reflection with the help of interactions in online platforms.

Another notable finding of the study is that participants' evaluated the threaded discussions and reflection papers effective for their professional development. By evaluating their past experiences, current beliefs and teaching practices and defining the were able to identify changes they would like to make in their future teaching. This finding is in contrast to Jones and Ryan's (2014) study conducted on pre-service teachers of primary school and secondary school education receiving their practicum experiences in several public schools of rural areas. In order to foster participants' reflective thinking on the relationship between practice and pedagogy, researcher provided both blogs and threaded discussions. The findings of the study revealed that pre-service teachers mostly preferred to engage in blogs for reflection rather than posting comments in threaded discussions. These contrast findings may have been as a result of this study's participants' experience and knowledge in the field.

Another finding regarding the effect of experience and knowledge in the field on reflection can be pointed out in relation to the results of Tsang's (2011) study. In order to foster students' reflective processes, the researcher connected the first year students of Oral Health and Dentistry department with the third year students via asynchronous online discussion platforms. Even though the first year students did not regard these platforms as useful tools for their learning, third year students noted the

strong benefits from engaging in reflective practice in online discussions. Thus, the reason for this participants' high participation in reflective processes can be attributed to their knowledge in the field and, more importantly, their experience.

Considering the limited number of studies in teacher education and health education on reflective practice in online platforms, it can be concluded that student interaction, participants' knowledge in the field as well as teaching experiences may have contributed to the positive findings on the implementation of reflective practices in asynchronous discussion platforms.

### **Pedagogical Implications of the Study**

The findings of the present study point out important pedagogical implications. Analysis of reflection types revealed that when given the opportunity, experienced EFL teachers engage in reflective practices in online, asynchronous discussion platforms by describing themselves as language learners, identifying the impact of their past teaching experiences on their teacher identity, outlining their current teaching practices and anticipating the possible situations and changes in their future practices.

Secondly, the findings of the study might benefit future teacher education programs by suggesting reflective practices in online platforms. By providing threaded online discussions to experienced EFL teachers as a support for face-to-face classes, teachers' reflective practices can be enhanced. In this way, teachers may have the chance of evaluating their teaching by associating the things they learn and experience both in and out of the classroom. In addition, the findings can provide alternatives to the content of distance teacher education programs in terms of promoting reflective practices in asynchronous discussion forums. Moreover, at the

local level, this study can also benefit the teachers, administrators and trainers in Turkey on the utilization of online discussion platforms for reflective practices.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study explored the reflection types that experienced EFL teachers engaged in RP-oriented discussions during their methodology course in a foundation university's master's degree. Even though generalizability is not the purpose of this qualitative study, a larger number of participants could have offered more insights to the analysis of reflective practices in online platforms.

Another limitation was related to the design of the master's program. The program requires participants to attend as full-time students who get permission from their institutions for two semesters to complete the compulsory courses. Therefore, the majority of the participants, except one part-time student who worked for a foundation university in Ankara, Turkey, had temporarily stopped their teaching practices. For that reason, the researcher cannot claim whether the participants will apply the changes they stated in the reflection-for-action. The results indicate only the participants' intentions on changes in teaching practices in their future teaching.

The data collection process can be regarded as another limitation in the study. The researcher received the permission for the study from the institution where the study was conducted in the second semester. Therefore the interviews were collected in the second semester as well. Thus, the probability of participants' forgetting reflection papers and the discussion sessions from earlier in the year increased. In order to remind participants of these reflection papers and the discussion sessions, the researcher compiled documents separately for each individual and shared the reflection papers and the comments with each participant before conducting each

interview. In that way, it was expected that the participants would remember their reflective processes.

#### **Suggestions for Further Research**

On the basis of the findings and limitations of the present research, some suggestions for further studies can be made. To start with, relatively few studies have explored experienced EFL teachers' reflective practices in online platforms. Thus a further study on this issue can be implemented starting from teachers' perspectives towards online reflective practices. Second, the present study was a qualitative study. However, a quantitative study surveying the participants in terms of their reflections on their teaching practices and past experiences could provide a broader picture of the implementation of reflective practices in online asynchronous discussion forums.

Thirdly, the participants of the study did not teach for a year during their master's program, thus, the effects of reflections, especially the participants intentions on changes of future teaching practices, have not been examined. Thus, a further study can be conducted to see if the participants will put into practice their intentions in the future when the participants start teaching in their institutions.

Moreover, future studies can also be carried out with in-service teachers who continue teaching at the time of the study to gauge actual changes in their future practice.

The factors that increase EFL teachers' reflectivity can also be another area for further research. The course instructor neither intervened in participants' reflective practices in the discussions nor guided them throughout their reflective processes. Thus, the utilization of scaffolded reflections, in which lecturers or professors control and guide teachers' reflective processes, can be examined in future

studies as a factor that may affect the implementation of reflective practices in online platforms.

Lastly, the majority of the studies conducted on reflective practices of preservice teachers in online platforms in the past yielded various results, as some studies found them contributive whereas others found online platforms ineffective to foster candidate teachers' reflective practices. Relatively few study exist in the field of teacher education on experienced teachers' reflective practices in online discussion platforms. The findings of this study indicated that online platforms could be utilized as a tool for experienced EFL teachers to promote reflective practices. Thus, future studies on the investigation of experienced teachers reflections in online discussions are needed to analyze the factors that shape the positive and negative results of the utilization of online platforms for teacher education.

#### **Conclusion**

This qualitative study explored the reflective practices of experienced EFL teachers' in online discussions. The aim of the study was to shed light on different reflection types,reflection-on action, reflection-in-action and reflection-for-action, which participants engaged in during reflective practice oriented online discussions. The findings indicated that by defining their own learner and teacher identities under the light of their past experiences, participants utilized reflection-on-action. Defining their current teaching practices, criticizing the teaching environment in their institutions, the participants engaged in reflection-in-action. In addition, by sharing their intentions on changes related to their teaching practices, participants took part in reflection-for-action. In this sense, it can be concluded that online discussion platforms were utilized as affective tools to promote reflective practices of experienced EFL teachers.

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### **APPENDICES**

# **Appendix A: Background Information Questionnaire**

## Reflective Practices via Online Discussions

Dear Participants,

Researcher

You are kindly invited to the questionnaire designed to gather information about your demographic profiles. Your responses will be kept confidential and will never be associated with your name.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and contribution.

Elif Burhan Horasanlı			
Bilkent University			
1) Gender: a) Female b) Male			
2) Age:			
3) Affiliation:			
4) At what age did you start learning English? If you started learning at school,			
please mention the grade you first received English courses.			
5) University and the department you	u received your Unde	rgraduate Degree.	
6) Year of Graduation:		_	
7) Years of teaching experience			
a) 1-2 years b) 3-5 years	c) 5-10 years	d) more than 10 years	
8) Please write down the name of the	e institutions you have	e worked since your	
graduation starting from the past to p	present. Please also in	dicate the students you	
have worked with.			

e.g.	X Primary School – 4 <sup>th</sup> grade students		
	X University – Prep school students		
9) Hav	re you received any other Master's degree?		
a) Yes	b) No		
If you	say yes, please write the name of the University and the department you		
studied	i.		
_			
10) Ha	we you attended any teacher training programs (e.g. CELTA- DELTA)?		
a) Yes	b) No		
If you	say yes, please write the name of the program(s)		
_			

#### **Appendix B: Reflection Questions Posted on Moodle Discussion Platform**

## 1) Profile of yourself as a language learner

Give us a profile of yourself as a language learner. For example, think about your own personal experiences with learning other languages and reflect on what worked for you and what did not. What are your characteristics as a learner? Do you consider yourself a "good language learner?" (See Lightbown and Spada, chapter 3 for a list of these characteristics.) How might your experience as a language learner inform your teaching practice? Is there any relationship? What similarities differences do you see between your experience as a learner and the learners you encounter/might encounter in your classes? (1-2 pages)

2) Profile of yourself as a language teacher (teaching philosophy).

Reflect on your current practices. What do you feel you do well as a teacher? What do you want to improve? How would you characterize your own teaching style? For example, is your classroom primarily teacher-centered or learner-centered? What is your personal approach to teach EFL? (1-2 pages)

- 3) Write a 1-2 page(s) position paper (not including references) that presents your current stance on the readings assigned for Week 6 (Prabhu, Bell &Kumaravadivelu). You may want to address the following questions in your paper:
- -Do you agree or disagree with any one of the researchers?
- -What are the points you can accept or you resonated with in the readings?
- -Where do you think Turkey is in terms of post-method era?

Please note that the Position Paper is *not* a simple summary of the readings but uses the published literature to support and exemplify your position.

- 4)Define yourself as a cultural mediator: This paper will deal with how you, as a language teacher, integrate culture into your classroom. What do you understand by cultural awareness? In what ways do the cultural aspects of the English language take place in your classrooms? What else can be/should be done to raise intercultural awareness as part of the ELT curriculum in Turkey? By drawing from the readings assigned (similar to Reflection # 3), write a position paper discussing the points above.
- 5) For this last reflection paper, please read the four articles posted on Moodle. Some questions MAY consider:
- -What does it mean to teach WITH TECHOLOGY, OF TECHNOLOGT AND THROUGH TECHNOLOGY? Discuss it in relation to your experiences of integrating technology in your classes?

How can TPACK framework inform teacher education or professional development programs?

What is your take on the articles?

Is technology the means or the end for language teaching?

## **Appendix C: Articles Provided By The Course Lecturer**

- a) Assignment 1: Reflecting on language learning experiences
- Chapter three, Lightbown and Spada, a list of learner characteristics
- Lightbown, P., &Spada, N. (2010). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: the United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- b) Assingment 3: Reflecting on post-method pedagogy
- Bell, D. M. (2007). Do teachers think that methods are dead? *ELT Journal*, 61(2), 135-143.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). TESOL methods: Changing tracks, challenging trends. *TESOL Quarterly*. 40(1). 59-81
- Prabhu, N. S. (1990). There is no best method why? TESOL Quarterly, 24(2), 161-176.
- c) Assignment 4: Reflecting on culture in teaching
- Cook, V. (2002). Language Teaching Methodology and the L2 User Perspective.

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  Multilingual Matters.
- Sowden, C. (2007). Culture and the 'good teacher' in the English language classroom. *ELT Journal*, *61*(4), 304-310.
- d) Assignment 5: Reflecting on the use of technology
- Blake, R. J. (2011). Current trends in online language learning. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 19-35.
- Cambre, M., & Hawkes, M. (2004). *Toys, tools & teachers: The challenges of technology*. Maryland: Scarecrow Education.

- Koehler, M. J., & Mishra, P. (2009). What is technological pedagogical content knowledge? *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 9(1), 60-70.
- Salomon, G., & Perkins, D. (2005). Do technologies make us smarter? Intellectual amplification with, of and through technology. In R. J. Sternberg, & D. D. Press (Eds.), *Intelligence and technology* (pp. 71-86). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

## **AppendixD: Sample Individual Interview Questions**

Interview questions of Participant #6 for reflection 1.

- 1) P #6, your question to P #3 was about her compulsory elective language course. You believe that making a language course compulsory may have possible negative effects on learners but P #3 stated a counter comment. She says that it did not lower her desire to learn a language. Does this opposite / counter statement affect your belief in this case?
- 2) You asked P #4 a question about strategies that she uses to analyze learner differences. She states that she uses a learning styles/preferences questionnaire most of the time after spending some time with students to get to know them. She also observes them in pair/group or individual activities. What do you think about the strategies and would you like to implement them in your class?

## **AppendixE: General Interview Questions**

Adapted from Bennett-Jackson, D. (2010)'s study

### **Interview Questions**

### Semi-structured Interview

The general questions below were structured to address themes that arose from the reflective practice oriented online discussions.

- 1. As you reflect over the period of time, what were some of your most outstanding learning moments throughout your reflection papers and the discussion sessions?
- 2. How interactive do you think the discussion forums to improve your reflective practice? For instance, have you suggested any websites or videos to example your suggestions or support your ideas?
- 3. Do you have any clarifications to make for the themes or categories generated throughout your reflection paper and the discussion processes?
- 4. Now that you have seen the themes and categories generated from my observations, what are your overall thoughts regarding how your epistemological beliefs impact on your reflection?
- 5. After reflecting over the period of time I observed your language teaching and learning experiences, what (if anything) will you change about the way you teach in the future?