

**EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHER RESEARCH AS A FORM OF
TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
A COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
OF
THE BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY**

BY

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**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

AUGUST 2016

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHER RESEARCH AS A FORM OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY

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Master's Thesis, Master's Program in English Language Teaching

Supervisor: Asst. Dr. Kenan DİKİLİTAŞ

August 2016, 88 pages

Traditionally, teachers have been seen as technicians who employ certain pedagogic practices in their classrooms. Received practice was often never criticized as it was passed down to them by educators and teacher trainers perceived as experts. However, teachers are now seen more than ever as having the power and potential to become the teachers they have always dreamt of being. As professionals, teachers are expected to make decisions based not on assumptions, but on sound judgement. Teacher research is one form of professional development that teachers all over the world are taking advantage of, and it is the stories of three teachers who evolved into researchers of their own classrooms that I share with you here. This collective case study aims to explore the impact that engagement in teacher research has had on the professional development of three English language instructors, and on their learners. The results showed that both novice and experienced teachers alike were able to develop their pedagogic practice, increased self-efficacy, stronger awareness of the self and their learners, and an increase in self-agency.

Keywords: Teacher Research, Action Research, Teacher Professional Development, Continuous Professional Development.

ÖZ

ÖĞRETMEN ARAŞTIRMASININ PROFESYONEL GELİŞİM ÜZERİNE ETKİSİNİN ARAŞTIRILMASI: KOLLEKTİF DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

Akyazı, Koray Haki

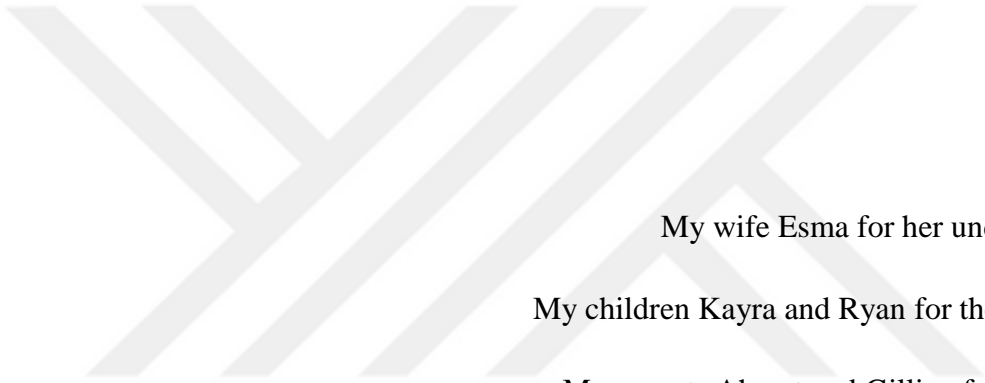
Yüksek Lisans, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans Programı

Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Kenan DİKİLİTAŞ

Ağustos 2016, 88 sayfa

Öğretmenler geleneksel olarak sınıflarındaki belli pedagojik uygulamaları kullanan teknisyenler gibi görülmektedirler. Uygulamalar, uzman eğitimci ve öğretmen eğitimcileri tarafından aktarıldığından çoğunlukla asla eleştirilmez. Ancak, artık istedikleri gibi öğretmenler olma potansiyeli ve gücü geçmişten daha fazla sahip olarak görülmektedir. Profesyoneller olarak, öğretmenler varsayımlara dayalı kararlardan çok doğru yargılara dayanarak karar vermeleri beklenir. Öğretmen araştırması, dünyadaki öğretmenlerin yararlandığı profesyonel gelişim modellerinden biridir ve size bu tezde anlatacağım araştırmacıların kendi sınıflarında ortaya çıkan hikâyeleridir. Bu kolektif vaka çalışmasının amacı, öğretmen araştırması yapmanın üç okutmanın profesyonel gelişimine ve öğrencilere olan etkisini araştırmaktır. Çalışmanın sonucunda uzun süre öğretmen araştırması yapmanın öğretmenlerin öğretimlerinde pedagojik gelişimlere ve farkındalık artmasına ve özerklik fikrinin olgunlaşmasına ve öğretmen-öğrenci birlikte öğrenme deneyimleri yaşamalarına yol açabileceği ortaya konmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen Araştırma, Eylem Araştırması, Öğretmen Profesyonel Gelişim, Sürekli Profesyonel Geliştirme.



My wife Esma for her understanding

My children Kayra and Ryan for their patience

My parents Ahmet and Gillian for their faith

And Kenan for his enlightenment

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ELT	English language teaching
INSET	In-service education training
TR	Teacher Research
TRer	Teacher Researcher
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
PD	Professional Development
TPD	Teacher Professional Development

Chapter 1: Introduction

Teachers today are more than ever seen as being autonomous professionals, which portrays teachers as having a certain amount of empowerment. Ur (1997) makes this argument clearer by contrasting teaching with conceptualising 'lay', 'amateur', 'technician' and 'academic'. However, there are those who would say that teaching may not be a true profession such as doctors or lawyers (Mann, 2005). I believe that teachers do indeed deserve the right to call themselves professionals for two reasons. Firstly, teachers are accountable to accepted and recognized standards of practice and operate within an ethical framework to various stakeholders including students, their parents, the institution, and to society as a whole. Secondly, the claim to belong to a profession is also supported through the extent to which teachers base their pedagogic practice on a body of theoretical knowledge (Carr & Kemmis, 1983). Since teachers belong to a community of professionals, it could be useful to consider what this means for teachers and the various approaches that lead to professional development.

1.1 Teacher Professional Development

Where teaching is seen as a profession, it is often believed to be a dynamic or learning profession. This notion of teaching and learning as being intertwined is stated by Wyatt (2016, p. 3) in that he believes "teaching is a learning profession". Therefore, the need for continual opportunities for teachers to develop themselves is a crucial claim to professionalism. Richards and Farrell (2005) also argue for the need for constant training and development of teachers in order to maintain long-term achievement.

This raises the question, what does professional development for teachers look like? Day (1999) believes that effective teacher development ought to be consciously and consistently targeted towards the direct benefit of the teacher and the institution in terms improving the quality in education; it can be done either alone or in

collaboration with colleagues and needs to develop the teacher's knowledge, skills, and sense of identity.

1.2 Approaches to Teacher Development

There appears to be two opposing paradigms in terms of how teachers develop. Borg (2015 a) groups the multitude of approaches to CPD in two contrasting ways, the first group belonging to teachers as 'knowledge consumers'. Here, it is assumed that there is a deficiency (Breen, Candlin, Dam & Gabrielsen, 1989) in either pedagogic knowledge or practice. It may be the case that the teacher is unaware of the various forms of error correction, or that the he or she is aware, but is unable to enact the methods effectively in class. The second assumption is that good teaching practice is reducible into separate parts and can be discretely expressed (Richards, 1987). Finally, the teacher as knowledge consumer entails that newly learnt practice can be transferred to the teacher's own context, and can be used at a later date when the action is required. Pre-service teacher education, CELTA, and in-service teacher one-off workshops are often forms of teacher training where teachers are seen as knowledge consumers.

At the other end of the paradigm are teachers as 'knowledge as creators' (Borg 2015c). Referring back to Day (1999), teachers are involved in the process of critically developing their own knowledge rather than knowledge being imposed on them. This form of teacher development usually occurs in-house, for example, in the classroom where teaching and learning co-reside. It is with this form of teacher development that is used to describe the process of "continual, intellectual, experiential, and attitudinal growth" (Richards, 1987, p. 215) that Day (1999) so clearly pointed as to what constituted effective professional development.

This case study describes how one such approach, that to a great extent meets the requisites of effective PD, can be used by language teachers as a way to be the agents of their own change.

1.3 Teacher research

Although both forms of professional growth in terms of teacher training and teacher development mentioned previously have their unique advantages and disadvantages which shall be described later on, English language teachers feel that when they are seen as knowledge consumers, they cite a lack of personalization, practicality, and feasibility (Borg, 2015c). One strategy that may better suit the individual needs of language teachers then may be teacher development in the form of inquiry, where teachers become researchers of their own practice in their own classrooms. With an inquiry mindset, teachers begin by posing questions about issues they personally experience. This approach of problematising (Burns, 2010) does not imply a deficiency, but involves taking a “self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring your own teaching contexts” (Burns, 2010, p.2).

If teaching is a practice that involves prolonged inquiry and renewal (Ayrers 1993), one of the more powerful forms of development as a professional teacher may be through asking questions with the aim of understanding and ultimately, improving the dynamic environment in which teachers find themselves placed in.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Research is often as a result of a problem or an issue at heart, and to quote Dewey, a problem is something which “Perplexes and challenges the mind so that it makes belief uncertain” (1993, p. 13). Therefore, in order for the reader to interpret what is being said in a paper, a problem statement is necessary so as to lay out the logic of the study (Merriam, 2009).

I started this case study as a result of my own personal experience in TR. Although it allowed me to develop my research and academic writing skills, I was at the time unable to see any real impact on my pedagogic practice. This preconception of teacher research was rather negative as it did not fit in well to what I thought of as professional development. It is this lack of true understanding of the transformative nature of teacher research that still persists in the mind of both teachers, teacher

trainers, and managers that often deters many teachers from becoming the teachers they aspire to be by engaging in their own teacher research

This case study builds on previous research in TR through the longitudinal interpretation of multiple perspectives thus giving the reader a clearer understanding of the issues involved in prolonged engagement in TR. This need for more descriptive accounts of the impact of their constructed knowledge on practice over time was also called for by Johnson & Freeman (2001). In summary, the purpose of this study is to better understand the impact on teachers who are engaged in TR as part of an institutionalised teacher development programme, and also what impact it might have on their language learners.

1.5 Research Questions

My study aims to paint a clearer picture of the notion of teacher research as a form of teacher development, and how teachers develop as a result of being engaged in research. Through the experiences of those involved within the phenomenon, the following research questions give a sense of structure and focus throughout the study.

1. What are teachers' perceptions of TR?
2. How does engagement in TR affect teachers?
3. What is the experience of learners whose teachers are engaged in TR?

1.6 Significance of the Study

More and more teacher research projects are being carried out across the world (Borg, 2013, 2015a; Burns, 2014; Dikilitaş, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016; Smith, 2015; Wyatt, 2015), which requires more research into the process and impact of teachers' research engagement for both teachers and learners. I believe that more teachers could benefit from becoming researchers in their own right, and I believe that institutions and teacher educators ought to release control that is often a result from top-down approaches, thus allowing teachers to construct their own knowledge by becoming autonomous professional teachers.

For language teaching to be seen as a profession, it means that the pedagogic practice used ought to be dependent on a body of theoretical knowledge (Carr & Kemmis, 1983). I believe that as well as theoretical knowledge, teacher methodology ought to make use of practical knowledge as a result of an enquiry approach to professional development. An enquiry mindset has started to gain momentum with the spreading teacher research studies, so investigating individual teachers engaged in doing research could also produce critical insights into the theoretical understandings of teacher development. As Stremmel (2002) said, “when it is well designed, teacher research has the potential to contribute substantially to the knowledge base of teaching and teacher education” (p. 7). Hiebert, Gallimore & Stigler (2002) also feel that if the findings of teacher research offer meaningful understanding of teaching, they ought to be considered as research to be added to the knowledge base of education.

Finally, as highlighted by Edwards and Burns (2015), there is a lack of research that shares teachers’ sustained engagement and development through action research. As I have included data from two TRers with several years of experience in TR, it is hoped that the longitudinal nature will add to the knowledge base on teacher research.

With this in mind, this study is significant in several ways as it:

- explores the impact of engagement in TR within an institutionalised context where TR is a programme of continuous professional development,
- uses data from various sources as opposed to solely reported impact that is often found in other similar masters’ studies.
- rather than using a quantitative research paradigm, this case study offers a thick description of the context, and findings.

1.7 Operational Definitions

Professional Development - Learning that takes the form of knowledge transfer often found in teachers training approaches. CELTA and other certificate

programmes, one-shot workshops and seminars are examples of professional development.

Continuous Professional Development - Teacher development which is ongoing throughout the working life of the individual. The teacher plays an active role in the process. Peer observations, lesson-study, teacher research, blogging, and keeping a reflective journal may all be forms of continuous professional development.

Teacher Professional Development - Teacher development is any form of the above mentioned approaches in CPD for teachers.

Teacher Research – Is an umbrella term for all forms of research done by teachers with the aim of bettering themselves ultimately to improve learning. It includes action research, exploratory practice, exploratory action research, teacher inquiry, practitioner research. Class research done by teachers as part of graduate or post graduate assessment is not classed as teacher research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Teacher Professional Development

The link between teacher practice and learner success has been widely accepted (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Sparks, 2002). Thus, in the case of second language teaching, teachers are expected to deliver quality instruction in line with current pedagogic methodologies with the ultimate aim of helping EFL learners improve their language proficiency. With this in mind, teachers' engagement in PD is seen as a key element of improving language education (Guskey, 2002). Griffin (1983, p.2) states that although approaches to TPD will vary, they share an ultimate aim "to alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understanding of school persons toward an articulated end".

Let us say that a language teacher, who from time to time watches Youtube videos related to new pedagogical practices, or who regularly searches the Internet for interesting lessons plans be considered as being engaged in TPD? Although he or she may indeed benefit from such activities, it cannot be considered as TPD as according to Glatthorn (1995, p.41), teacher development is "the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically". This notion of being systematic is also noted by Guskey (2002, p.381), "Professional development programmes are systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom the practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students".

Though until now I have discussed PD, is there a difference between conceptions of PD and CPD? Some indeed do use them interchangeably, but I believe that although they are very similar in their ultimate aims of improvement, they differ in approach. Mann (2005) refers to PD as relating to instrumental aims, such as pedagogic practice, and to CPD as a more intrinsic notion of PD as in the attitudinal beliefs of the teacher.

2.2 Teacher Training

The traditional approach to teacher professional development is often conceived as preparing teachers to teach also known as pre-service education or initial teacher education (Stuart, Akyeampong & Croft, 2009). Based on behaviourism, (Roberts, 1998) a model-based learning approach that viewed learning as a result of operant conditioning by shaping teachers' actions according to target behaviour. Such model-based approaches are still used today, in the form of micro-teaching and craft-craft model approaches as seen on CELTA and TESOL courses where salient teaching skills are taught to both pre-service teachers but also in-service teachers. Teachers are expected to demonstrate their understanding of this propositional knowledge through observation or essay type evaluation (Borg, 2015 b). Feedback is then given with the aim of altering the future behaviour of the teacher when they continue teaching, with a focus on correct pedagogic practice as opposed to the underlying theory (Stuart et al., 2009). This implies that knowledge is learnt in a separate context from the situation in which practice will take place, which may be more complex and dynamic compared to the training (Wallace, 1991). Borg (2015c) too states the paradox involved in teacher training "while teachers spend the bulk of their time in the classroom, professional development typically involves activities that occur away from the site" (p. 12)

The 'correct' teaching practices taught in such training programmes are based upon propositional knowledge otherwise known as received knowledge or knowledge for practice (Stuart et al., 2009). Based on an applied science model (Wallace, 1991), teachers are uncritically taught how to teach according to principles based on research disseminated from academia (Kennedy, 2002). Therefore, knowledge is transferred both in terms of from the expert to the trainee, but also in terms of temporal and spatial transfer. An example of temporal transfer would be a teacher being exposed to a new pedagogic practice, then perhaps using this practice sometime in their career. Most forms of training also involved spatial transfer in the form of learning about something in a location different from the place that knowledge will be used.

In summary, Underhill gives a very descriptive account of what teacher training is perceived of as being.

I believe that my effectiveness as a teacher depends largely on my pedagogic skills, and my knowledge of the topic I am teaching and on all the associated methodology. My teaching is only as good as the techniques or materials that I employ, and I improve by learning more about them. I acknowledge that the kind of person I am affects my teaching but I don't really see what I can do about this other than by further training and by gaining experience. (Underhill, 1984 p. 4)

2.2.1 Drawbacks with teacher training. Although teacher training as an approach to TPD still has its advantages, there are of course many reasons why it may not be so appealing in today's dynamic world of education. Roberts (1998) criticised teacher training consisting of model-based approaches in that any form of training is dependent on newly knowledge being transferred from one context to another, in a way that may not be appropriate for the learners due to a lack of consideration of humanistic principles. He also points out that any development is overly dependent on the teacher trainer, meaning the trainees have little say in the process; and secondly, the knowledge being conveyed by the trainer may be out of date.

It seems that teacher training views the teacher as technician, enacting measurable practices in the class depending on predetermined assumptions whilst paying no attention to the affective aspect of teaching, like teachers' attitudinal responses that may shape practice. The teacher as technician also negates responsibility for development; a problem with teaching is a result of poor training on the part of the trainer as the teacher is not seen as autonomous. What I feel is the biggest risk with teacher training is that when abused, it may potentially become over reliant on knowledge from external sources as the expert or academic must surely be correct.

Borg (2015c p.13) offers a summary of the drawbacks of professional development as teacher training.

Table 1

Teacher Training limitations

<i>Infrequent</i>	Teachers attend courses intermittently.
<i>Costly</i>	Teachers must pay to attend.
<i>Disruptive</i>	Teachers may be taken away from lessons
<i>Generic</i>	May not address individual needs of teachers and learners
<i>Decontextualized</i>	Learning is not situated in classrooms
<i>Receptive</i>	Knowledge is given to teacher by experts
<i>Not-owned</i>	Teachers have limited say in the process of training

Thus, although teacher training can be used to good effect at perhaps a pre-service level, or for workshops on new technology, there does appear to be many disadvantages that may result in teachers getting stuck in a rut. Perhaps a new perspective on professional development is needed.

2.3 Teacher Development

On the other side of the training/development dichotomy, we have several approaches based on humanistic theory (Rogers, 1961) with the individual as having self-agency. Roberts (1998, p.18) gives the following concepts:

- People are unique and are complete.
- People have the innate potential to develop fully.
- People are innately good.
- People are intuitively aware of their personal needs.
- People have self-agency in determining their own choices.
- People are able to develop through self-actualization.

This shift from a behaviourist teacher training approach appears to be in line with a shift from behaviourism, to a constructivist epistemological approach to. According to constructivism, “each individual creates his or her own version of reality” (Williams & Burden, 1997 p. 2). So let us look at teacher development with a constructivist lens. Rather than teachers being seen as passive vessels to be filled with expert knowledge (knowledge for practice), teachers are invited to “make their own sense of ideas and theories with which they are presented in ways that are personal to them” (Williams & Burden (1997, p. 2). Here, knowledge created from personal experience is known as *knowledge in practice, practical knowledge, experiential knowledge or individual knowledge* (Wallace, 1991).

The fact that teachers work in a social context, the knowledge he or she personally constructs is not done in a vacuum, but constructed within a classroom (contextually), and with learners and teachers (socially) (Roberts, 1998). Whilst Williams & Burden (1997, p.28) acknowledge the individual, they rather importantly add that “learners make their own sense of the world, but they do to within a social context and through social interactions” This socio-constructivist approach appears to give equal importance to *local knowledge*, that is knowledge created as a result of social interaction for example with language learners, teacher colleagues, and administration (Hoban, 2002).

Reflecting back on the notion of the teacher and PD, Day gives a definition of PD, yet based on the literature, could he be defining teacher development in terms as a form of CPD?

It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives. (Day, 1999 p. 4).

Continuing with the constructivist theory, building on the work of Dewey, the idea of the teacher as a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983) must also be considered as a quintessential approach for teacher development. Reflective practice is the

assumption that through systematic reflection on lived teaching experiences, individuals are able to construct their own understanding. A reflective teacher becomes a professional teacher by making informed choices based on the critical reflection on information that has been collected. This can either be done whilst teaching (*reflection-in-practice*) (the ultimate aim for professional expertise, or done after the lesson (*reflection-on-practice*). In fact, idea of the reflective practitioner the corner stone of teacher development in that is it necessitates critical thinking and self-inquiry (Zeichner, 1982).

Taking these various approaches into consideration, a reframed perspective of TPD ought to:

- Be situated in a constructivist approach to learning.
- View the teacher as an active individual with self-awareness and self-agency (McLaughlin & Zarrow, 2001).
- Acknowledge that the teacher has a background of experience and knowledge to work from (*Priori*) and is encouraged to build upon this knowledge with new experiences (Dudzinski, Roszmann-Millican, & Sbank, 2000; Cochrain-Smith & Lytle, 2001)
- See the teacher as knowledge creator (Borg, 2015 b)
- Allow extensive engagement with knowledge and new experiences allowing the teacher to internalise and construct their own reality.
- Happen in the same context as the teacher would normally teach, development should not be a separate entity from teaching (McLaughlin & Zarrow, 2001)

With this new perspective of TPD, what would be the implications for teachers? As Underhill so clearly and eloquently described the thoughts of a teacher with a teacher training mindset, how does he perceive teacher development?

I believe that my effectiveness as a teacher depends largely on the way I am in the classroom, on my awareness of myself and my effect on others, and on my attitudes towards my learners, learning, and my own role. I value my facility

with pedagogic skills and my knowledge of the topic, but it is the ‘me’ who operates them that primarily influences their effectiveness I teach only as well as the atmosphere that I engender. I believe that education is change and that I will not be able to educate unless I am also able to change, otherwise my work will come to have a static quality about it that is not good for me nor for my students.” (Underhill, 1988 p. 4)

Table 2

Professional Development Dichotomy

Teacher Training	Teacher Development
Imposed from above/external	Self-initiated
Pre-determined course structure	Structure determined through process
Not based on determined syllabus	Syllabus determined by the teacher
Externally evaluation	Self-evaluation
Input from experts/academics	Input from the teacher
Non-critical acceptance of knowledge	Knowledge is personally constructed
Cognitive	Heuristic
Isolated	Collaborative
Stresses professional skills	Stress personal development
Disempowers the individual teacher	Empowers the individual teacher

Based on literature by Bolitho (1986), Edge (1986), Freeman (1990), McGrath (1986), Tangalos (1991), and Underhill (1987), (Cited in Ur, 1997)

This table places various characteristics at opposite ends of the teacher learning paradigm. Of course these are extremes and there often exists opportunities that take advantage of both training and development aspects. Ur’s point is that teacher educators ought to provide a balance so that teachers benefit in a more holistic manner.

2.4 Inquiry

In an attempt to break free of the ‘banking model of education’ Freire (2000), teachers have attempted to become the agents of their own development based on the

work of Schön's reflective practice (1983) and Kolb's experiential learning theory (2014). Teachers are no longer on the receiving end as passive consumers of knowledge, but are gaining autonomy through asking their own unique questions in search for answers that are relevant to themselves, and their learners. Freeman made salient the relationship between teaching and inquiry "teaching is about asking questions, and that in seeking questions, you will learn" (1998 p.vi). Here we are reminded again that teaching is more than just implementing techniques (Schön, 1983), and that teaching is a process of continual inquiry, reflection, and reframing (Ayers, 2001).

Munby and Russell (1994) have furthered these ideas of inquiry and reflection with the 'authority of experience' as a way for teachers to better understand the complexities of teaching and learning through critical reflection on personal experiences. It seems that teachers that teach and develop with an inquiry mindset are more able to break free from the shackles of teacher training as they begin to appreciate and see value in their own experiential knowledge.

Whilst discussing the various approaches available for teachers to develop themselves, it may be understood that development is seen as being something other than teaching. I believe this is where teacher training and teacher development are quite at odds, and I agree with Zeichner's interpretation inquiry.

My approach to teacher research is similar to what Marlyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle have talked about as an inquiry stance, where the research is part of, rather than, something that's an addition to teaching. I see teacher research more as an inquiring stance towards one's practice, and the contexts in which that practice exists. (Zeichner, 2015. p. 50)

We see here that teacher research is firmly set in an inquiry framework, where inquiry is not something other than teaching, but a part of the teaching culture and identity of a teacher, and by fostering this inquiry based approach to teaching, "teaching becomes synonymous with professional growth that can lead to meaningful change for children" (Dana and Yendol-Hoppey, 2014 p, 6). Here we see that inquiry is a symbiotic stance of teaching and development. So we are reminded

that teacher research is a *form* of inquiry, and thus ought not to be confused. However, TR and *teacher inquiry* are often used interchangeably.

2.5 Teacher Research

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) define TR in the broadest possible sense to encompass all forms of practitioner inquiry that involve systematic, intentional, and self-critical inquiry about one's work. As can be seen, a similar, if not identical definition of teacher inquiry offered by Dana and Yendol-Hoppey, (2014) "teacher inquiry is systematic, intentional study of one's own professional practice" (p.5). Although teacher research is a strongly contested area, there appears to be some consensus on the following key themes (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004).

- TR is a movement in direct opposition to positivistic approach to the teacher knowledge base.
- TR is done by teachers researching their own classrooms.
- TR aims to raise the perception of teachers' professional identity.
- TR aims to improve the quality of teaching and ultimately improve student learning
-

Borg (2010) gives a very explicit definition of how he defines TR taking into account an analysis of the literature on TR:

Systematic inquiry, qualitative and/or quantitative, conducted by teachers in their own professional contexts, individually or collaboratively (with other teachers and/or external collaborators), and which aims to enhance teachers' understandings of some aspect of their work, is made public, has the potential to contribute to better quality teaching and learning in the individual classrooms and which may also inform institutional improvement and educational policy more broadly (Borg, 2010 p.395).

One thing that can be added to his definition is that improving teachers' quality of life is also an aim of engagement in TR (Allwright & Hanks, 2009). TR is often thought of as a way to close the gap between the two worlds of academia and teaching, but at a micro level, TR is a way of improving the quality of the teachers' life by closing the gap between what he or she experiences in the class, and what he or she believes should be seen (Burns, 2010).

Although TR in the form of action research grew from the seeds planted by the work of Lewin sometime in 1940's, it wasn't until the 80's that English language teachers became aware of the benefits of becoming TRers. This was a time when the search for the *Holy Grail* in ELT had come to an end, and educational research became more locally focused in order to understand the contextual constraints teachers were working in. Allwright & Baily (1991), Nunan (1989) and Burns (1998) were at the time championing TR as a way for teachers to not just answer questions, but more importantly, *ask* questions of their own; learning does not occur when answering questions, but by asking them.

There are various definitions of TR, but what does it look like? Zeichner (2015) believes that "it does not take any particular form. There are different versions of teacher research or action research that say there are *x* number of steps—four steps, five steps; you have to do it this way. I've always felt that those were too restrictive" (p.50). I agree with this statement that teachers should not be so fixated upon which approach they use, and that they follow the exact methodology as recommended in the literature. I personally feel that it is the aim of the TRer is of ultimate importance. As Allwright and Hanks highlight it is the aim that differentiates between the two main forms of teacher research.

Practitioner research involves two conceptually distinct processes: taking action for *understanding*, and taking action for *change*. Taking action for change is more the realm of Action Research. Whereas EP promotes action for understanding. Why insist of on two distinct processes? The answer lies in the 'for'. It is a matter of

intentions. AR starts out with an intention to change in order to solve a problem, or at least to introduce an innovation. (Allwright & Hanks, 2009).

To a certain extent, I agree with the notion of action research methodology being used in order to solve issues that teachers may encounter, but as Borg (2013) believes, I too feel that action research may also be used by language teachers in order to understand an issue.

2.5.1 Benefits of TR. After attempting to introduce the theoretical framework that TR is based on, and offered various definitions, I feel it is now necessary to focus on the impact that engaging in TR may have on teachers. Based on an extensive literature review by Borg (2013), it is believed that teacher research:

- develops teachers' capacity for autonomous professional judgements (Lankshear &Knobel, 2004);
- reduces teachers' feelings of frustration and isolation (Roberts, 1993);
- allows teachers to move out of a submissive position and be curriculum innovators (Gurney,1989);
- allows teachers to become more reflective, critical, and analytical about their teaching behaviours in the classroom (Atay, 2006);
- makes teachers less vulnerable to and less dependent on external answers to the challenges they face (Donato, 2003);
- fosters connections between teachers and researchers (Crookes, 1993)
- boosts teacher' sense of status (Davies, Hamilton, & James, 2007)

(Borg, 2013 pp.15-16)

As teachers are professionals, it is expected that they act not on impulse, but make informed judgement based on their tacit/practical knowledge, but also through more objective academic knowledge in the form of codified knowledge (McIntyre, 2005). Lankshear and Knobel (2004 p.4) believe that “involvement in research can help contribute to teachers' experiences of dignity and self-worth by supporting their capacity to make informed professional judgements”. This increase in professionalism is a way for teachers to develop autonomy (Smith, 2005) and thus give teachers the empowerment they deserve (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001).

As reflection is a central factor in the process of TR, it is fair to say that teachers are able to develop a critical standpoint in their reflection in and on pedagogic practices in the class. As Wilson (2009 p. 5) states “becoming involved in classroom-based research involves standing back and identifying what your personal values are so that you can take these into account when interpreting what you see in the classrooms”. So TR allows teachers to reframe their previous assumptions through reflection on their data collection, feelings, their colleagues’ views, and through referring to codified knowledge. In my own case, I remember that prior to a TR paper on introducing new language, I always ignored explicit instruction in favour of allowing learners to construct their own conceptions, but after several cycles of intervention and reading literature of grammar instruction, I realised that my learners actually preferred their hypotheses to be supported by an explicit approach. (Akyazı & Geylanioglu, 2015).

This process of reflection allows TRers to be knowledge creators (Borg, 2015b). Much like Kolb’s experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 2014) by following a cycle of TR, teachers are able to make sense of their real life experiences, learning more about themselves, and their learners at a deeper level. Through engaging in TR, teachers induce codified knowledge at their own pace, and at a level of their own understanding, taking into account the complex contextual factors of the class and its learners (Eraut, 1994). Wilson (2009) believes that TR is a way of translating this academic research into practical knowledge that works for the teacher.

Teachers are also able to gain an increased feeling of self-efficacy through engagement in TR. Boudah and Knight, (1998) reported that teachers felt more confident when dealing with low achieving students together with a more optimistic mindset during teacher-student interaction, similar increases in teacher self-efficacy were noticed with the use of group work interaction patterns in Wyatt (2010). Bandura (1993 p. 3) defined self-efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments”. This refers to the belief that as individuals, we have self-agency to know which course of action to take in our day to day interactions.

Increased self-efficacy often results as a result of engagement in TR as teachers gain practical knowledge through ‘mastery’ experiences (Bandura, 1986), and teachers are encouraged to do a series of cycles of intervention until they see they feel satisfied. Engagement in TR may also have an impact on teachers who see their colleagues engaged in TR via ‘vicarious’ (Bandurra 1986) experience. As TR ought to be made public (Borg, 2013), TRers have the opportunity to present their papers at yearly conferences supported by IATEFL ReSIG in Turkey. Seeing that their peers are benefitting from this experience may be more likely to have an effect on their perceived ability to do the same as opposed to seeing a university professor talk about his PhD. Finally, ‘persuasive’ experience (Bandurra, 1986) may impact TRers’ self-efficacy as they are often supported by a mentor, or critical friend who gives support throughout the process. The importance of having mentor support was noted by Kara (2015), where he mentored a group of TRers as part of the professional development programme at Marmara University. The novice TRers commented on how their mentor provided guidance, and motivation through the challenging parts of their papers, and this ‘persuasive experience’ gave them the enthusiasm they needed to complete their research.

2.6 TR in Turkey

TR as a form of professional development was first started in 2010 at the same private university’s preparatory language programme that this case study is situated in. At that time, TR in the form of action research was relatively unheard of. Until then, TR had only been done by teachers experimentally as part of the research of academia (Atay, 2007). Dikilitaş (2013, 2014). He has made huge ripples in the world of TR through his work with teachers at a private university, starting off with an in-house seminar and growing into an international event in partnership with IATEFL ReSIG. Since 2010, he has encouraged the English language instructors to be agents of their own learning as knowledge generators through engagement in TR. The aims of TR programme were to:

- Encourage instructors to reflect critically on current their teaching practices.
- Raise their awareness of new innovative practices.

- Encourage instructors to reframe their beliefs.
- Facilitate instructors to gain further insight into their teaching.
- Improve their motivation.
- Heighten their awareness of learners.

Taken from Dikilitaş (2015 p.27)

From looking at the reported benefits of engagement in TR by teachers researchers at the same institution, it would appear that many of the aims of the programme have been met. Wyatt and Dikilitaş (2015) gathered data from the teacher narratives of three TRers at a university preparatory school in Izmir. It was found that all three TRers had positively benefitted from their TR engagement.

The three TRers had demonstrated an increase in their task-specific and global self-efficacy. The participants of the study had on average three years of engagement in TR, which seems to demonstrate a certain level of intrinsic motivation in order to maintain their research engagement this long (Wyatt & Dikilitaş, 2015).

As part of an INSET research orientated programme conducted by Atay (2007), a group of 62 teachers at a university preparatory school in Istanbul had the chance to become TRers. It must be noted that this was a programme covering a short 10 week period. Unlike the programme at the private preparatory school in Izmir, this did not continue to be part of the professional development of the school. Here, week by week, the novice TRers were gradually introduced to notion of TR and research methodology. With data collected through TRers' narratives and research journals, it was noticed that teachers had initially conceived of research as being something done by others, in other words, they had been knowledge as consumers via engagement with research (Borg, 2013) in the form of reading articles and attending academic research presentations. The teacher in this programme benefitted from doing TR in the following ways:

- development of research skills,
- increased awareness of the teaching/learning process,
- renewed enthusiasm about teaching,
- collaboration with colleagues.

Teachers felt that the research they had done was more meaningful than the research they would normally have read, and that they felt they had combined the identities of teachers and researchers as a result of an increased knowledge of the research process and scientific inquiry. A direct impact on teachers' practice was also noted, as TRers had the chance to reflect on their usually teaching which encouraged them to reframe their previous assumptions about their current pedagogical practices. In addition, TRers involved in this programme had gained a sense of renewed enthusiasm about teaching. The average experience of these teachers was 9.2 years, a time when many teachers start to question their role as teachers and may also suffer from issues related to burn out. One TRer commented on how she had felt her teaching approach had stagnated, and that by doing TR, she realised teaching could be more fun as she entered into a dialogue with herself, and also between herself and her students. This reflection on classroom behaviour as being beneficial to teacher development was also pointed out by Richards & Farrell (2005); Burns & Richards, (2009). Finally, by collaborating together, sharing their issues and giving support, some of the TRers felt TR brought them closer together, yet others found working together with colleagues had its downsides.

Another similar study was done by Şakırgil (2014) at Cağ University. The researcher set up an INSET teacher development programme based on teacher research. Data was collected via two TRers who were guided in their own action research studies, which lasted 10 weeks, in order to ascertain if action research helped teachers become critically aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. The results showed teachers' engaged in action research had a better awareness of both their own teaching and of the instruction on a wider scale. This implies that they had gained a sense of self-agency as they became aware of what it was that they wanted to improve upon in order to be more effective teachers.

In Korucu's (2011) case study on the use of action research as a form of professional development, results showed that the teacher research had increased their pedagogic knowledge as a result of reading the literature related to young learners and language instruction. Managing to 'bridge the gap' between theory and

practice, the TRer had the chance to experiment in contemporary pedagogic innovations, thus altering her previous beliefs that knowledge transfer was the best approach to use when introducing new language. A greater awareness of her students was also noticed, as the teacher research gathered data from her students, she was better able to tailor her lessons plans according to the needs of her learners. Finally, the identity of the teacher had altered through reflection. Korucu (2011 p.88) stated “reflection brought about changes in the way the teacher perceived their teaching and role in the process of teaching as it enabled them to be more aware of their teaching through conducting action research”.

Smith (2013) had spoken to a group of TRers at a university who had been engaged in TR for several years. The following is a list of his thematic analysis of the findings. It must be noted that these are reported advantages of TR as perceived by the instructors.

- Action research links theory to practice
- Improvement in teaching abilities
- Increase in self-confidence
- Increase in self-awareness
- It provides new perspectives
- It gives a sense of development
- It increases student self-awareness/confidence in teachers
- It increases ability to research/develops identity as a researcher

As can be seen from the perceptions of teachers who have been engaged in TR, the impact appears to be both procedural in terms of innovative pedagogic practice, and also affective in terms of their perceived identities as teachers and as TRers. It is also interesting to see that this thematic analysis appears to match the various aims of TR as stated by Borg (2013).

Chapter 3: Methodology

“To see a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower,
hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour.” (William Blake)

This chapter aims to give a detailed account of the how this study was carried out. I shall begin by stating the problem that inspired my interest in this research followed by the significance of study. Subsequently, I share the ontology and epistemology of the study which govern the choice of case study as a research design. Finally, I conclude with a brief summary of how issues of validity and reliability in terms of trustworthiness were tackled.

3.1 Philosophical Paradigm

The aim of this study is based on teachers' and students' perceptions of the phenomenon of teacher research as a form of CPD, and their related experiences to identify the impact of TR on them. Researchers ought to be aware of the ontology and epistemology followed when designing any research, especially research of a qualitative nature as these views underlie the line of the inquiry project, from its conceptualisation to operation and interpretation. The epistemological beliefs held by the researcher permeate every stage of the research process, from the choice of phenomenon, to the way the report is composed (Yazan, 2015). In addition, Weaver and Olfson (2006) state that “paradigms are patterns of belief and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished” (p.460). Thus, the paradigm affects all the decisions made throughout the study, and an awareness of the paradigm brings a clear picture and continuity throughout the research. I acknowledge my belief that the nature of reality is subjective, and that multiple realities or truths exist. The same phenomenon may be interpreted differently depending on the subjective meanings of reality based the previous personal experiences of all those involved in the phenomenon.

According to Creswell (2003), knowledge is socially constructed in the sense that it stems from the interaction and arising discourse between individuals and their worlds. With this in mind, gaining knowledge and an understanding of the case could only have been facilitated through interaction between myself and the teachers, and their students within the context in which they are situated in.

Thus my approach to this research project is based upon “witnessing the phenomenon through the eyes of the participants” (Robson, 2002, p. 25) and how the participants interact with each other. This understanding of reality will then be interpreted through my own understanding of the phenomenon which I, as previously stated, acknowledge a certain amount of bias may be present according to my own world view.

3.2 Research Design

As this study attempts to understand how teacher research is perceived, and how these perceptions play out in their pedagogic practices, I have chosen a qualitative research paradigm that seeks not to ascertain any ultimate truth, but to gain an in depth or quality understanding of the case. This type of paradigm shares its view with the interpretive paradigm in that it accepts multiple views of truths and reality. With a holistic perspective, knowledge is gained through the perspectives of the individuals and their environment, thus providing an opportunity for the voice, concerns and practices of those involved to be heard (Cole, 2006).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) a research design is a group of guidelines that serves to relate theoretical paradigms to strategies of inquiry and methods of data collection. “Choosing a qualitative research design presupposes a certain view of the world that in turn defines how a researcher selects a sample, collects data, analyzes data, and approaches issues of validity, reliability, and ethics” (Merriam 2009). However, there seems to be no clear standing as to whether case study can be classed as a research design in its own right, or a product that calls upon various other research design methods.

3.2.1 What is a case study? “While literature is replete with references to case studies and with examples of case study reports, there seems to be little agreement about what a case study actually is.” (Lincoln & Guba 1985 p.360)

At the outset of a research project, it is important to consider whether case study is an appropriate research approach in relation to the research question and the study setting. Case study is the preferred research strategy when the researcher:

- 1) is asking how and why questions
- 2) is conducting an empirical inquiry focusing on contemporary phenomena in a real-life context
- 3) is studying a natural setting with many variables that the researcher cannot control (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009).

Furthermore, Merriam (2009 p.50) states that “the case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon”. Therefore, my research appears to meet each of the above stated requirements, thus justifying my use of case study as an approach to my research methodology.

3.2.2 Case study design. Stake (1995) divides case studies into three types: the intrinsic case study, the instrumental case study and the collective case study/multiple case study. The intrinsic case study can be labelled as a study of one specific case of which the researcher wants to arrive a deeper understanding. The main focus of the case study is a natural interest as opposed to general issues. With an instrumental case study, the focus it is not on the specific case, but the on the issue or issues that arise with the intent to gain insight into a larger issue or phenomenon or to test, refine or build a theory. This can be compared to theory seeking and theory testing case studies (Bassegy, 2008). The collective/multiple case study is an instrumental case study with a number of cases. The multi case study enables the exploration of differences between cases and the comparison of findings across cases. In the present study I am interested in producing knowledge that goes beyond

the single case. Thus, I would class this study as an instrumental collective case study as there is not anything intrinsically unique about the TRers themselves, but my aim is to better understand the notion of the current phenomenon which is the impact that engagement in TR has on teachers, and their learners.

According to Merriam (1998), the case study does not claim any specific data collection methods, but “focuses on holistic description and explanation” (p.29). Within this focus, the case study can be further described as particularistic, heuristic, or descriptive. Merriam describes particularistic as relating to the specific focus of the case. It can suggest to the reader what to do in a similar situation. A heuristic case study is able to shed light on the phenomenon, allowing the reader to extend their experience, discover new meaning, or confirm what is known. It explains the reasons for a problem, the background of the situation, what happened, and why. A descriptive case study is complete and very literal in its reporting of the findings of the research, and it references the “thick description” (p. 29) of anthropology.

Finally, the case is bounded in that it looks only at the impact of teacher research phenomena at the university that operates within the PD programme. The case (the impact of TR on teachers within the PD programme) and the three TRers serve as the units of analysis in the case study.

3.3 The Researcher

After graduating in business management from a university in the UK, and several years of self-employment I made the life changing decision to become a teacher. After gaining a CELTA certificate in 2012, I started working at the university, where I was encouraged to participate in the teacher research programme. Initially I remember being rather critical of such an approach, as I had just completed an intensive craft model training course. Until then, I had no conception of what teacher research was, and was expecting more CELTA style practical workshops in my growth as a language teacher. It took a year, and a lot of self-questioning and reflection to come to the conclusion that there had to be more to it than this. I had only seen the tip of the iceberg during my initial exposure that first year, looking at

the best way to teach phrasal verbs through controlled groups and pre/post-tests. The following year I asked myself what had I gained from this experience, and so decided to shift the focus of the research to myself. During a very rewarding second experience in TR, with much reading, and debate with the teacher trainer, I gradually became aware of the true nature of teacher research as a professional development tool finally made sense. It is this intrinsic motivation that inspired this study into how others perceived TR and how it affected both themselves, and their learners. I chose to explore the experiences of three teacher research with the hope of coming to a better understanding of the phenomenon that is teacher research at the university with the ultimate aim in coming to a greater understanding about the impact of teacher research itself. I believe that what started out as an intrinsic interest in TR, evolved into what Stake defines as an instrumental case study, where the focus is not on the specific case, but rather on the issue that arise with the intent to gain insight into a larger issue or phenomenon i.e., what happens when teacher are involved in teacher research as part of a professional development process. As this case study can be classed as instrumental in its aim to arrive at a greater understanding of the impact of TR, I chose to report the findings under themes as opposed to individual cases.

3.4 Context

As with all research based on a qualitative nature, it is essential to include a detailed description of the context in which the phenomenon is situated. This rich description may ensure trustworthiness of the case report, also allows the reader to generalise the findings based on details particular to the context.

3.4.1 The state of English in Turkey. A report done by the TEPAV and British Council (2013) found that although teachers had strong English proficiency ability, they often lacked the pedagogic knowledge and skill set needed for ESL students; both in terms of material design and tailoring, and also in classroom interaction patterns. In Turkey, many English teachers are literature or translation graduates, with minimal pre-service teacher training. The report concludes by

suggesting that teachers ought to be offered short intensive EAP/ESP training by external experts.

While I agree that there may always be room for better pedagogic practice, I feel this deficiency based form of professional development with the recommendation of external experts is out of date and an ineffective approach to real social change.

3.4.2 The preparatory school. There are just below 190 universities in Turkey, of which a large majority delivering varying amounts of their education in English. This may be due to the fact that Turkey seeks to increase its international trade with Europe, and as English is the Lingua Franca, many employers seek graduates with strong communicative competencies in English. Student wishing to study at a university with English instruction must pass an English language test at the required level which is equivalent to a level B2 of the Common European Framework. However, many students who wish to begin their department are unable to gain entry due to their lack of English ability and purely instrumental motivation.

The large majority of those who are unable to pass the English entrance exam are usually false starters at various ends of the A1 level. To put this into perspective, from the average number of 800 students, 700 of those enter preparatory school in A1 classes. The 60-70 teachers or instructors as they are named, teach around 24 contact hours with either 1 or 2 classes depending on the type of lessons they are teaching that quarter. The preparatory school administration encourages instructors to actively participate in professional development activities throughout the academic year via a staff appraisal system where teachers are awarded certain points for participation in various forms of PD.

3.4.3 The teacher research programme. When the mentor began the TR programme at this university, he was met with a certain amount of opposition from teachers whose notions of teacher development were not in line with those of their newly appointed teacher trainer “Some (teachers) reacted negatively, questioning his way of proceeding” (Smith, 2014, p.16). At first, teachers were encouraged to engage

with TR by reading articles of their own interest and when ready, present their interpretations to their colleagues.

There were of course those who felt ready to engage in their own research either individually or collaboratively. During this time, the mentor gave input sessions on the notion of action research, together with basic research methodology with the aim of changing their cognition towards the contribution of TR to their long term change and development (Dikilitaş, 2013). The mentor's motivations for doing TR as a form of PD was the recognition of teachers' previous background knowledge, which demonstrates epistemological views based on a constructivist theoretical background. He acknowledges the dual roles of teacher research by allowing teachers to learn more about areas of personal interest, but also as professionals through improvement in pedagogic theory and practice (Dikilitaş, 2014). The TR programme at the university aimed to:

- Encourage instructors to reflect critically on current teaching practices
- Increase awareness in contemporary practice
- Encourage instructors to examine and review their beliefs
- Help them gain further insight into their teaching
- Increase and maintain motivation
- Heighten their awareness of learners.

It appears that the aims of the TR programme reported here reflect many of the aims reported in the literature (Atay, 2007, Borg, 2013, Smith, 2013).

3.4.4 Universe and participants. Within the TR programme, the universe is made up of an on average of 20 English language instructors from backgrounds in either English or American literature, translation, English language teaching, and there are others from non-English related subjects. While there are several native English teachers, the majority of the instructors are Turkish, and have various amounts of experience in teaching.

The participants included in this case study were chosen according to their years of experience as well as their length of engagement in TR. The table below shows the details of each participant including their educational background and the current TR paper teachers were doing at the time this research was carried out.

As a secondary group of units of analysis, I gathered data from the learners of each of the three TRers. The learners were randomly sampled and came from a range of English proficiency levels from A2-B1 according to the CEF framework. Two learners per class were interviewed following the observations. Interviews were done in English, however one student was unable to express herself clearly, so continued the interview in Turkish.

Table 3

Participants

Name	Number of <i>Previous TR</i> done	Number of years teaching	Educational background	Current study
Gulşah	0	2	BA-ELT MA-ELT	Error correction
Esin	2	5	BA-Translation MA-ELT	Podcasts
Inci	4	10	BA-Eng. Lit MA Eng.Lit PhD ELT ongoing	Text-based speaking

I thought it may also be of use to see the TR papers done prior to this research. To see the kind of research the teachers have done in the past may help to provide a better appreciation of the path these TRers have travelled in their pursuit of professional development.

Table 4

The Previous and Current TR Done by the Three Teacher Researchers

Teacher	Research title
Inci	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The effects of collaborative learning on EFL students: A study on group writing ○ Leading students to self-correction by differentiation of mistake and Error ○ Practices of teaching main course at the university preparatory Classes ○ Experiencing feedback from student and teacher perspectives ○ <i>Fostering speaking: A text-based syllabus approach</i>
Esin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The use of the mother tongue in EFL classroom: what are the issues? ○ How can teachers find a happy medium between what students want and their own practices? ○ <i>Podcasts- A novel approach to enhancing listening and speaking Skills</i>
Gülşah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Developing skills for giving oral corrective feedback in my grammar lessons</i>

The titles in italic are the TR papers that were being done during the time of this case study. As can be seen from the previous research papers, the majority of research done seems to have focused on technical aspects of TR, that is to say the aims are related to improving their pedagogic practices by gaining a better understanding of their unique contexts.

3.4.4.1 Gülşah's initial engagement with TR. Gülşah had recently graduated in ELT from a state university in Ankara. She had just completed her first year of

teaching at a state university preparatory language school similar the school this case study was carried out. Although she was new to teaching, she came across as being very committed to her profession as an English teacher.

Gülşah started working at the preparatory school in 2014. It was during this year that the professional development programme had undergone several changes in terms of the approaches it made available for teachers. Firstly, a teacher appraisal system was introduced, with points being given for various forms of professional development. While TR was still mandatory, teachers now had the choice of doing TR, material design, or lesson study. At the beginning of the academic year, teachers were presented with brief introductions of these various approaches to PD.

Although Gülşah had previously heard about action research whilst studying her degree in ELT, she admitted that she didn't pay much attention as it she didn't see the relevance at that particular stage in her education. It wasn't until her new job at the preparatory school that she was given the chance to be involved in one of the three forms of professional development programmes. Having been present at the introductory presentation by the head of TR, and speaking to several other previous TRers, she decided that TR would give her the best opportunity for professional development. In her document response, Gülşah wrote "*since I should be writing in an academic way for my MA, it affects me too because it's also a kind of research*" So it is clear to see Gülşah's motivation for *choosing* TR was due to the perceived similarities to her MA.

3.4.4.2 Esin's initial engagement in TR. Esin studied English translation at a private university in Izmir. There was no pedagogic education in this programme, and she found it difficult getting full-time employment, so after graduating in 2011, she moved to England where she spent a year studying for her master's degree in English language teaching. It appears that this experience in England was to be one of the biggest factors in her teaching career as she often refers back to her time there as a learner. This may be due to the fact that she was gaining pedagogic knowledge as well as developing her language skills, allowing her to reflect on her practice as a

teacher. Joining the preparatory school in the same year as I did, and despite the fact that she had little teaching experience, she seemed to have made a smooth transition into teaching from my interaction with her throughout our first year together.

3.4.4.3 Inci's initial engagement with TR. Inci was one of the first teachers at the university to be involved in doing teacher research as part of the professional development programme. She had previously completed her BA and MA in literature and was looking to further develop herself as a very committed teacher. It is also worth noting that Inci had the longest experience in TR at the university with five previous four previous papers. Inci's introduction to TR was that of bewilderment, as she commented on the ambiguous nature at first not knowing what it was, and why they *had* to do it. Although it was mandatory for teachers to be researched engaged as part of the new PD programme, there were some teachers who chose to engage with TR as opposed to engaging in it. Those who were willing were gradually guided through the process of transition into becoming researchers in their own right.

In both the online document and interviews, Inci painted a rather negative picture of how it was imposed on her, ambiguous, and a waste of time “*First I didn't like it and thought it wasn't necessary, I didn't like it at all. It was a burden filing office hours, I was pushed into it, I didn't know anything about it before our mentor introduced, led us this way*”. Interestingly, although Inci was unhappy about doing TR as she didn't see the relevance to her at the time, the notion of leading the teachers as opposed to forcing them is of importance as it demonstrates a certain amount of willingness to follow without any penalty for lack of involvement.

On a more positive note, she talked about how her first time in doing TR was of benefit not herself and her students “*though I was not very willing at first, I started my first research which aimed to see how students could produce their writing tasks in collaborative groups. Having seen that both my students and I really benefited from it, I continued my research the next year*”.

3.5 Procedures

Due to my epistemological views, I chose to gather qualitative data in order to get a better understanding of *what* and *how* questions via a variety of methods. Creswell (2012) stated that “based on the general characteristics of qualitative research, qualitative data collection consists of collecting data using forms with general, emerging questions to permit the participant to generate responses; gathering word or image data; and collecting information from a small number of individuals or sites”. Once I had chosen case study as a research methodology, the following series of steps were followed recommended by Creswell (2012).

1. I systematically identified my participants and site using purposeful sampling, based on places and people that could best help to understand the phenomenon.
2. As I was a participant observer, gaining access to the site was not an issue, however I did need permission from the participants in order for them to be included in this study. I also sought permission from the participants to observe their lessons and speak to their language learners.
3. I began collecting data firstly through document analysis of the TRers’ previous publications. I then conducted a series of interviews and discussion with the participants in relation to their engagement in TR. This was done towards the end of the academic year, just as the participants were about to finish their research. Finally, I set up online documents for each of the participants to respond to. After I had done an initial analysis and engaged in related literature, I was able to ask specific questions in the form of sentence starters that allowed the participants to respond in their own time. Finally, I observed each participant in their classrooms that they had conducted TR with. It was during this time that I also talked to their students in relation to their teachers’ engagement in TR.
4. A system was set up so as to organise all the data I was in the process of collecting. I kept data on both my laptop, cloud software, and on a USB, this ensured data was safe, and also in the event of any technical fault, I would still have all the

data at hand. After I had transcribed the interviews, I gave each participant a colour code. This especially helped me when analysing data across the cases so that I knew who had said what, and from where that data had been taken.

3.6 Sources of Data

The sources of data chosen for this case study were shaped by my interpretive world view and my aim in conducting this particular case study. Merriam states “the data collection techniques used, as well as the specific information considered to be ‘data’ in a study, are determined by the researcher’s theoretical orientation, by the problem and purpose of the study, and by the sample selected” (2009, p.86.).

3.6.1 Documents. Documents may also be used in order to gain a deeper understanding of the case and can be placed into two categories. Personal documents include items written by the participants of the study for their own purpose, a journal, student essays or in this case, previously published teacher research chapters from the preparatory university published books series. “they can contain clues, even startling insights, into the phenomenon under study” (Merriam, 2009 p.186).

Data were also collected via researcher-generated documents in the form of narrative frames based on the literature. Sentence starters, Barkhuizen & Wette (2008), were given in order to provide cross case structure and focus for the findings. It must be noted that during the interviews, a wide angle was chosen when asking questions relating to the impact that TR had had on them. The use of sentence starters allowed me to narrow focus down to specific areas I felt would help to triangulate what I had observed in lessons, read in their TR papers, and questioned during interviews.

Another form on researcher generated documents was the use of metaphors. As part of the publication of teachers’ research carried out at the same preparatory school in 2014, the teacher trainer had asked TRers to express their perceptions of TR through the use of a metaphor, he hoped that “metaphors can indirectly visualize

opinions with rich meaning content, giving deeper insight into the minds of researchers” Dikilitaş (2014, p.279).

3.6.2 Observations. As the aim of this case study centred on the impact of engagement in TR on teachers, I believed that participants’ reported impact could be confirmed or contrasted by my own observations. This would offer a deeper insight into the phenomenon from my own perspective. Data collection was done via field notes taken throughout entire duration of the lesson. Once transcribed, these notes were member checked by the TRers within a few days after the lesson.

First, observations take place in the setting where the phenomenon of interest naturally occurs instead of a location designated for the purpose of interviewing; second, observational data represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a second hand account of the world obtained in an interview. (Merriam, 2009 p117).

According to Mackey and Gass (2005) the use of observational data is a popular choice in second language research, as stated “observations are a useful means for gathering in-depth information about such phenomena as the types of language, activities, interactions, and instruction”. As the three TRers were not only my colleagues, but I was also involved in the TR programme as a TRer myself. I was an active member of the TR workshops and would also act as critical friend to both Gülşah and Inci during their current studies included in this case study. Creswell (2013) states that there are in fact various roles which observers may take throughout a study. He believes that as a participant observer, the researcher is able to get a clearer picture of the intricate interactions between the participants and their context. Merriam (2009) also wrote about the role of the *observer as participant* stance that enables the researcher to participate in the group activities as desired, yet the main role of the researcher in this stance is to collect data, and the group being studied is aware of the researcher's observation activities.

3.6.3 Interviews. I chose to use interviews as the key approach of data collection. As Merriam states (2009 p.87) “in education, if not in most applied fields, interviewing is probably the most common form of data collection in qualitative

studies”. It can be said that interviews allow the researcher to access a special kind of information what is “in and on someone else’s mind” (Patton, 2002 p.341). I used semi structured interviews with open ended questions that were given to the participants several days prior to the interviews. The participants were invited to talk to me at various times and in different contexts, such as over lunch, at the conference, in their offices. This helped me to maintain reliability by lessening the social expectation impact. It was hoped that participants would reveal their true feelings and understandings of TR rather than what they think I wanted to hear. Prior to the interviews, I sent the teachers a copy of the questions to be discussed in order to allow them the chance to think about what they wanted to say. It was hoped that by doing this, more detailed responses would be given, whilst also lessening the stress that is often involved in being interviewed. As I was also at the teacher research conference, I was able to witness the teachers presenting their posters and had the opportunity to talk to them after they had finished. Transcriptions were member checked soon after the interviews so that participants had the chance to make any amendments if necessary.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

The research term used for qualitative sampling is *purposeful sampling*. In purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. The standard used in choosing participants and sites is whether they are “information rich” (Patton, 1990, p.169). In any given qualitative study, you may decide to study a site (e.g., one college campus), several sites (three small liberal arts campuses), individuals or groups (freshman students), or some combination (two liberal arts campuses and several freshman students on those campuses). Purposeful sampling thus applies to both individuals and sites. “One characteristic of qualitative research is to present multiple perspectives of individuals to represent the complexity of our world. Thus, one sampling strategy is to build that complexity into the research when sampling participants or sites” (Creswell, 2012, p.206)

I started collecting data in October 2014. Beginning with interviews about TR notions of TR. In the second half of the first term, I talked to the teachers again this time focusing on the impact of TR. During this time, I also set up the Google Docs page with the sentence starters. This was done asynchronously giving the participants the chance to mull over their answers and edit them if needed.

Interviews with learners were done individually after the lesson observations and were done outside the class in a quiet area. These too were member checked after I had transcribed them, giving the opportunity for clarification or amendment where they felt necessary.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedures

After gaining enough data to the point of saturation came the process of making sense from all the findings. This was a process of understanding through “consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read” (Merriam, 2009, pp. 175-176). Thus it can be said that the researcher constructs meaning from his or her own understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon.

Selecting significant units of data is the approach to data analysis I used in this case study by identifying segments or bits from the data that may help to answer the research question. Guba and Lincoln (1985) describe this as the process of giving meaning to the emerging themes and ideas within the data. It is the process of “breaking down bits to categories or classes which bring them back together again” (Merriam, 2009, p.178). As I had previously transcribed the interviews, together with the online interview data, I made notations attached to chunks of data that I thought had the potential to shed light on the case. During this initial stage of analysis, I made notes next to anything I felt was meaningful, a process known as open coding which may be note directly, paraphrased, or based on the literature. Having mined through the all data from interviews and the participants current and previous research papers, I tried to combine the initial coding into umbrella themes, a process termed axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2007, as cited in Merriam, 2009) I repeated

this process several times and over a period of time. It was an iterative approach in the fact that I gathered data, analysed it, whilst also reading literature.

3.9 Trustworthiness

While researchers operating within a quantitative research design refer to language like validity and reliability, there are also several ways to ensure validity in qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that humans as instrument for data collection are just as trustworthy to collecting data from standardized means. Merriam helpfully (2009) gives a clear explanation about the various ways in which researchers using a qualitative research design may ensure trustworthiness in their report.

Unlike experimental designs in which validity and reliability are accounted for before the investigation, rigor in a qualitative research derives from the researcher's presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretation of perceptions, and rich, thick description. (Merriam, 2009, pp.165-166)

So I could say that due to my prolonged and extended presence within the context, and as a colleague whom they trusted, I was able to gather enough quality data so as to ensure a thick description of the phenomenon. With regards to trustworthiness, Creswell (2012) advises the use of data triangulation, member checking, and external audit. Firstly, I gained data from three different participants who were purposefully chosen according to my criteria. I also sought data from a variety of sources including interviews, observations, and documents (both personal and researcher documents). Secondly, after the interviews and observations had been transcribed, I emailed copies of the transcripts to each participant within a week. I asked whether the transcription was an accurate portrayal of what had been discussed, and if there was anything they wanted to alter prior to analysis. Finally, I asked my supervisor to act as a critical friend after I had interpreted the data for the three cases into emerging themes. Schwandt and Halpern (1988, as cited in Creswell 2012) recommended the following aspects to be audited:

- Are the findings grounded in the data?
- Are inferences logical
- Are the themes appropriate?
- How can credibility be increased?

I might also add that with regards to the impact of TR, I gathered data from two students per TRer. These were chosen randomly by picking the first two people on the class register. It was hoped that their perspectives of their teachers' engagement in TR would increase the credibility of my findings.

3.10 Limitations

An awareness of any possible limitations is an important factor to be considered in any form of research. Creswell (2012) states “similar to quantitative research, the qualitative researcher suggests possible limitations or weaknesses of the study” (p.259). This was a collective case study based on the experiences of three teacher research at a preparatory language school of a private university in Turkey. Firstly, this was a collective case study done at a single site. Therefore, it could be said that if I had accessed several other sites, the findings would have been more robust. Secondly, this study was based on a sample size of three TRers. Due to constraints in both time, and access, it was difficult to include a more teachers who were willing to be participants of the study. It may also be apparent that all three participants had an academic background. While I did plan to include TRers with a non-academic history, it was soon realised that actually their research did not fit the criteria necessary to be included in this study. As this case study was carried out at a university preparatory school, the majority of the instructors either had, or were at the time studying towards an MA or PhD. Finally, one other possible limitation of this research could be the fact that I only observed one lesson throughout the academic year. I could have done several observations over the duration of their engagement in TR which may have given a more holistic window into their classrooms.

3.11 Delimitations

The aim of this case study was to explore the impact that engagement in TR had on English language teachers at a preparatory language school in Turkey. With this in mind, although I started data collection through a wide angle lens before filtering out unnecessary data, I did not focus on the process TRers went through, or the obstacles they faced and how they overcame such issues. I did not see the need to include such data in my case study as it would have little relevance to my research questions, and ultimately, the purpose of this study.

3.12 Conclusion

As with all qualitative research but more so with a case study design, a clear description of the context is important in order to allow the reader to draw their own conclusions (interpretation) of the findings. I have also given a detailed account of how I arrived at the findings by providing a clear trail of data collection and analysis methods.

Chapter 4: Results

In this section, each of the three cases will be presented beginning with the novice TRer, followed by the TRer will limited engagement, and finally the TRer with prnlonged experience in TR. I have written each case with the following main themes that emerged from the coding of data.

Table 5

Emerging Themes

	Gülsah	Esin	Inci
Theme 1 Initial Perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Tension o Academic o Problem/Solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Tension o Academic o Inquiry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ambiguity o Academic o Inquiry
Theme 2 Developed Conceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Relevance o For the self o For the learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Relevance o For the self o For others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Teachers o For the learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Relevance o For the self o For others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Teachers o For the learners o Institution
Metaphor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Scaffolding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Renewal
Theme 3 Impact on the teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Pedagogic practice o Learner awareness o Self-efficacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Pedagogic practice o Learner Awareness o Reflexivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Self efficacy o Professionalism o Reflexivity
Theme 4 Impact on the learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Language awareness o Subjects of TR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Language awareness o Motivation o Socialisation o Self-efficacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Language awareness o Motivation o Self-efficacy o Engagement

4.1 Gülşah's Case

4.1.1 Initial perception about TR. There was a certain amount of tension that arose in Gülşah's early perceptions of TR. In her interview, Gülşah seemed to be unsure about what TR was, and impact it would have on her. She spoke about the initial ambiguity of TR *"I still didn't understand much about it from the presentation"*. Despite her admitting a lack of understanding what TR entailed, her conception of TR was based on TPD through problem solving *"all I knew was that it could develop me if I see anything deficient in my teaching problematic areas"*. This demonstrates a fairly accurate view of how TR can promote teacher development through tackling issues found in your own classroom. Along with the notion of TR as being about solving personal issues, Gülşah commented in her document that *"at first I thought TR might be useful because it would help with my research and professional development"*. Gülşah also wrote in her online document response that she used to think of TR as being academic *"I used to think TR was academic like the research I was doing for my MA, so I thought it was the same kind of thing"*. It appears that TR is perceived as being academic, knowledge for academia as opposed to for the self. Could it be that perhaps when Gülşah talked about PD, she was indeed referring to her development as an academic, as opposed to her development as a teacher?

4.1.2 Developed conception of TR. Despite Gülşah being purposefully chosen due to this being her first engagement in TR, it seems at times, she was able to display a very clear understanding of TR, and how it was personally relevant to her own professional development. Gülşah used to think TR was no different to the research she had been doing for academic purposes. However, in her TR chapter, I saw how she had made good use of diagrams and tables throughout the paper. In her interview, when asked about how she felt about TR towards the end of the project, she confirmed this notion of TR as being more easily accessible to teachers saying *"now I realize it must be more reader friendly especially in the literature review, more tables and encourage people to read it so it is more accessible to teachers"*. When asked about what caused this change, Gülşah talked about how she had been

alerted to this fact during discussions with the teacher trainer, together with reading good examples of previously published articles by her colleagues.

Gülşah, early on her engagement with TR, demonstrated to good effect the idea of teacher and student development due to direct implications of TR on her pedagogic practice. When asked what she now thought about TR in the online document, Gülşah answered *“it’s about developing yourself as teacher while enhancing students learning”*. This notion was further touched on in the online document where Gülşah said *“after doing my first TR I became more aware of its being useful to me and also to my students with the development that we experienced”*

4.1.2.1 Metaphorical expression of TR. *“TR is a mentor because it helps the teacher about what to do, but not making them obligatory about doing something specific. It leads, controls the teachers about their research with the aim of developing them”*.

In Gülşah’s metaphor, the teacher perhaps takes a more passive role as being the receiving end of TR, *“it helps the teacher... it leads, controls the teacher”*. We also see the learner being absent in Gülşah’s metaphor, which may demonstrate role she sees TR as being one of personal development as opposed to learner development. Gülşah’s explanation also demonstrates her perceived need for guidance at this stage in her development as a TRer. Although she comments that teachers are somewhat autonomous in their choice of area to research, they require guidance and direction from an expert. This need for guidance and mentoring was also reported in Wyatt and Dikilitaş (2015). They found that many teachers valued the presence of having a mentor to guide their progress throughout the research process. The importance of support for teachers doing research was also made by Borg (2013) stating that TRers, even motivated ones, relied upon support in order to sustain their engagement in TR.

4.1.3 Impact on the teacher. Gülşah's first venture into TR was a good example of engagement in TR. It was about her own pedagogic practice in relation to error correction. Based on her personal experience, she believed that despite students' grammar and vocabulary awareness, their speaking was hindered due to making too many mistakes. With recent popularity of communicative language teaching, Gülşah wasn't sure when to correct students' mistakes "*I sometimes felt that I wasn't giving enough feedback when students make mistakes*". Gülşah also spoke about the personal motivation for this TR based a feeling of discomfort "*because of the difficulty I had during my grammar lessons while giving feedback*".

Gülşah recorded her lessons and made notes of the types of error correction she had been using. After reading the literature, and conducting a classroom survey, she reported that she had altered her corrective feedback methods according to her students' preferences. It was clear that Gülşah believed she had benefitted a lot from her engagement in TR when asked about the impact this experience had on her she replied "*I was able to develop my teaching style and skills...doing some action to teach more effectively*". This pedagogic impact was also a point made in response to the document frame "*it impacts the practice in the classroom directly*".

However, there seemed to be some differences between the student preferences and her reported new practice. In the observation, I noticed that Gülşah had indeed used several different forms of error correction throughout the lesson as reported. I also noticed the majority of error correction was recasting, and repetition, which was in line with the reported preferences of the learners. Although, in her findings, the data taken over a 10 lesson period showed that metalinguistic feedback was used almost twice as much as recasting and repetition. Her pre-intervention data reflect that metalinguistic feedback was her favoured choice so there seems to be some discrepancy between what I observed, what the data shows, and what Gülşah reported in her findings. This could be due to the misconception that TR has to be successful in terms of the goal of the research, when really the result may not be possible to achieve in such a short time frame.

Gülşah, talked about how her self-efficacy had increased as a result of her work with error correction. In her online response she reported feeling more confident when correcting errors and mistakes. *“Now I know when to correct and how”* and again in the interview she spoke about an increase in confidence due to developed pedagogic knowledge *“I feel more confident because I know about the different methods”*. When asked to elaborate on this, Gülşah talked about the importance of experiential practice *“practicing, not just reading, when you do something in the class then you see for yourself if it works or not”*. In her document response, Gülşah reflected on how she used to feel with regards to error correction *“sometimes I used to feel insecure about error correction, how could I do this in a different way. I felt like I was learning and improving whilst reading the literature”*. As she was an ELT graduate, and was doing her MA also in ELT, I questioned had she not already known the various methods of error correction. She brought up the notion of experiential knowledge here *“we talked about error correction during my BA but more so in my MA for methodology lessons. I didn't understand so much, we just talked about the different strategies. No practice”*. We could say that her increase in self efficacy is a result of her mastery of experience with repeated cycles of reflection and intervention.

4.1.4 The impact on the learner. Gülşah sent me a copy of her paper before submission for publication, in the reflection, I saw a tentative account of the impact of her work with the class *“I made students exposed to the different kind of corrective feedback types as the literature suggests”*. Gülşah’s online response also points to a similar direction. I noticed that Gülşah used the passive voice when she spoke of impact on the learners *“they were taught with new techniques...they were made aware of the different types of error correction”*, this may highlight a teacher centric role in TR, or perhaps that students are seen as subject of study as sources of data.

One area that arose was the fact that Gülşah had not integrated her students in the process of teacher research. This leans towards a positivistic approach to research where students are merely sources of data to be experimented on. Her students

reported their lack of knowing about the research she was doing *“I can't remember her talking about the research, she said to write our mistakes down, but she never talked about her research with us”*. One student said similar things *“she didn't talk to us about her research directly, she gave us a questionnaire asking about our opinions about being corrected. She said it was to find out how to be more useful, how to behave in the class”*. When asked if he had heard about TR, another student replied *“I think it's when teachers give us forms to find out about what we want in lessons”*.

When I asked students how their teacher's work with error correction had affected them, they spoke about the impact on their language *“I think my English is better because I know when I make a mistake, I realise it and I try not to make the same mistake again”*. Gülşah's students also mentioned their positive experiences about being in class whose teachers is engaged in TR *“teachers correcting us the way we like is a good thing...I like it when Gülşah corrected us because it made me notice which mistakes I was making.*

4.2 Esin's Case

4.2.1 Initial perception about TR. Like Gülşah, Esin also displayed evidence of tension at an early stage in her transition to becoming a TRer. As mentioned in Esin's background, Esin confused research for academic purposes and her work with TR. This academic conception of TR was clear to see in her online document she commented that *“when I first heard TR I didn't know what it was, I thought it was more academic because I wrote my dissertation and I thought I would be doing a similar thing in an academic way”*. As she was so used to engagement with research for academic purposes, she found the writing up of her TR rather confusing *“yes it was difficult for me because I had just written my dissertation in very academic language. Our Mentor helped me a lot with that, he kept saying that it doesn't need to be so academic”*.

Esin's early conception of TR as being of an academic nature was evident in her 1st engagement in TR about L1 use in the classroom. Throughout my own

experience in reading and doing teacher research, I have never encountered such a large proportion of a TR paper that consisted of a literature review with 48 references. The lack of any personal relevance for the research also highlights Esin's tension between TR for TPD research for academia "*using L1 has always been a contentious issue for teaching English in EFL...in this article*". Esin explicitly states that this was an academic paper as "*participants were informed that data would be used for academic purposes*". Together with the extensive literature review, Esin seemed to have deepened her understanding of L1 use based on the attitudes of her colleagues "*non-native teachers' attitudes were asked...it has been indicated the L1 use is beneficial for several reasons*".

Another factor that stood out with this paper was the amount of prescriptive language used in her conclusion "*this article suggests judicious use of L1 in the language learning classroom...teachers can facilitate learning with L1 when teaching grammar structures...L1 should be kept to a minimum...teachers should be aware when to use L1*". Finally, my apprehension as to whether or not this could be classed as TR was settled when I read just 4 sentences in her reflection, finishing with the impact it had on her awareness and "*the effectiveness of L1 if it is used in judicious doses*".

Despite this conception of TR being similar to research for academic purposes, Esin spoke of the role of personal enquiry in our interview. "*I had this question on my mind all the time which kept occurring, kept coming and I wanted to solve it. I wanted to see the result based upon my classroom practices, it would be more influential*". This problem based research approach also goes to show how Esin perceived TR as a form of TPD. Esin viewed TR as a way of improving her pedagogic practice based on issues that persistently troubled her, and the best way for this was through personal experience "*I think to do (teacher) research, it must always be a problem you have in the class that needs to be looked at in detail and explicit and implicit teaching work were real problems in my classroom*". This problem solving ethos displayed as a result of her early experience may also point to

TR as addressing the technical side of which methodology or approach to use, as opposed to understanding her developing identity as a teacher.

One final comment on how she felt about TR was that it was *“I used to think TR was time-consuming”* which while not entirely negative, does portray TR as being something that takes up valuable time whilst outside the class. As she spent a lot of effort with extensive literature reviews, it is easy to understand her initial lack of enthusiasm.

4.2.2 Developed conception of TR. As a teacher with substantial engagement in TR, Esin reported in her online document that her beliefs about TR had changed over the years. While TR was once thought of as being time-consuming, Esin’s developing attitude towards TR is that *“it is helpful to understand the beliefs, expectations and interests of both teachers and students”*. Here we see the notion of TR as a cognitive form of developing a greater understanding. Esin’s previous and current TR paper indeed focus on her own understanding her own learners’ attitudes towards their language learning. Like two sides of the same coin, students and teachers are it seems inseparable. This theme of TR for understanding was also mentioned in her online document where she views TR as exploration and reflection for understanding rather than problem solution. When asked what TR is all about, Esin saw it as *“exploring classroom practices and reflecting on them”*. As mentioned earlier on, we again see a focus on pedagogic practices as being at the centre of Esin’s understanding of TR.

During our interview, when asked how she would introduce TR to a new instructor, Esin gave quite a detailed response that appears to demonstrate a deeper understanding and commitment to TR. The idea of TR as being intentional is a key issue that separates TR from reflective that teachers often do in the office or staff room *“It’s intentional enquiry that teachers want to develop themselves... you should see the results of the experiment you conduct based on your classroom practice...you don’t have to read the literature a lot”*. Here, we also see that TR is for the professional development of the teacher, as opposed to academic research for the

understanding of others, which may also explain the perceived less importance given to what the experts say in her more recent literature reviews. This development is also reflected in her teacher research papers. Her second TR paper was about an issue she experienced with teaching, in particular introducing new language. Based on data she gathered from her students, Esin gained personal knowledge based on her own experience with various methodologies. Her current paper was also in response to the issue of a lack of authentic communication in an EFL context, an issue she felt her students had, and which she attempted to solve through problematizing own teaching. In her online document Esin talked again about problematizing saying TR was a “*kind of research that teachers do to solve the problems or a dilemma on their mind*”.

4.2.2.1. Metaphorical expression of TR. “*From my point of view, TR is a window to teaching. If teachers look through it, they can see students’ expectations, beliefs, and interests. They can also listen to learners’ unique voices and reflect on their own teaching practices which may raise self-awareness and trigger a new phase in self-development*”.

From looking at her metaphor, it can be seen that Esin sees TR as a learner centric concept in the way that TR allows teachers to get a better understanding of their learners and thus tailor their lessons according to their unique needs. With windows there are two perspectives, so you could say that she also sees the window from the outside looking in. Esin not only views TR as a way for teachers to reflect on their classroom, but also as a means for ongoing reflexive dialogue. For understanding to occur, we need to reflect on our beliefs according to experience. As TR has its roots in reflective practice, it is not unusual to see such elements in teachers’ conceptions of TR.

4.2.3 Impact on the teacher. Although reflection can be classified as a type of action, reflection without concrete action in the class may limit the transformative nature of TR as a tool for PD. In her online document, Esin mentioned the practical side of TR when asked about the biggest impact of TR “*it was tailoring my activities*

and classroom practices regarding my students' needs...it also made me gain self-awareness of my practices by reflecting upon them". Esin also wrote explicitly how her engagement of TR had resulted in a change in her teaching *"I had always thought implicit way of instruction was the best one. Having conducted last years' TR about vocabulary teaching, I am now aware that it is not sometimes enough to employ a single approach. I now use a combination of methods in the classroom"*.

In relation to her current podcast TR paper, Esin again shared with me the pedagogical impact of engagement in TR *"I am not obsessed with grammar anymore. If students express themselves and communicate fluently, I won't correct their grammatical mistakes"*. In her recent paper on the use of podcasts in improving listening and speaking skills, Esin felt she was more confident in integrating information technology as part of her usual pedagogic practice. *"I used to think podcasts was just for listening, but when reading the literature about podcasts, I realized that they could be used effectively for speaking too"*.

4.2.4 Impact on the learner. When asked how her students benefited in relation to the podcast project, Esin responded with gave a very brief description in her online document *"I listened to their voices and tailored my lessons regarding their needs and expectations"*. Here we see that Esin uses the passive voice when talking about the impact on the learners, the students are on the receiving end of the action, which may highlight the notion of the teacher being in control of what happens in relation to students' benefit from TR. This notion of students being at the receiving end of the intervention can also be seen in her reflections from the podcast paper below.

Despite the lack in elaboration in her document response, Esin was very specific in her report of how her students benefited from being involved in her TR, probably due to the fact that learners' attitudes towards podcasts were the focus of the study. It seems that Esin may be developing a much stronger awareness of the importance of the learner in TR and teacher development when compared to her previous TR experience. By looking at the results of her current paper, Esin said students displayed a positive attitude towards podcasts developing their language

skills *“their speaking and listening skills improved in terms of fluency and pronunciation”*. One member of the class also spoke to me about her improvement in accuracy *“I think my accuracy got better because I had to keep recording the same podcast over and over again, I realised my mistakes by listening to them and correcting them”*.

Esin also commented on how her students developed their knowledge of vocabulary as students had the chance to be exposed to a wider variety of language used by their friends, and over a greater length of time. This was confirmed in my discussion with her students, one felt that *“it didn’t just improve my speaking, I was more careful about my vocabulary and grammar, and the way I pronounced things because I had the chance to listen to myself”*.

Esin also talks about the affective impact on the learners *“it helped reduce their speaking anxiety as weaker students felt more comfortable talking behind the scenes”*. Esin believed that her students’ motivation towards speaking English also improved as a result of the study *“students’ motivation increased because they had fun creating and listening to each other’s’ podcasts”*. A Taiwanese student in Esin’s class, who came from a very non-communicative language learning background, told me in our discussion that *“it allows shy people to speak more freely and listen without being embarrassed...we got the chance to listen to ourselves first then we could erase it and do it again till we felt happy with it...it was less stressful than speaking in class”*.

Esin finally commented on how some of the students involved in this project talked about the impact it had on the class in terms of bringing the class together *“they were socially developed because the podcast experience helped them to get to know each other by listening to their podcasts and making comments”*. Students also commented on the social impact this TR had on their class. One of her students believed that *“thanks to this activity, I learnt a lot about my friends and so we got to know each other and bonded more as a class”*. Moreover, in the results section, a

student related similar feelings *“we can discover each other and learn many new things about different people”*.

It is clear that Esin’s students developed both their language skills as well as their motivation for language learning. However, when speaking to member of her class, they told me that yes they had indeed felt better about their English, but Esin hadn’t involved them in how the project ran its course. Esin had told them she wanted to try something with them that she felt would improve their speaking and listening skills. *“one day she said she had something exciting that she wanted to try with us...it would be fun and involve making our own podcasts... she didn’t say it was for research, just that it was for us to improve our speaking”*. Although students didn’t have much choice in relation to the project, one of the students commented that the best part of the project was where they could talk about anything they wanted *“the best time was when we spoke about things that we wanted to talk about, I told them about the political problems in Turkey, everyone was commenting on that”*. As mentioned earlier in Esin’s metaphor and answers relating to how students benefitted from her engagement in TR, the majority of language is used with her language learners at the receiving end of either the project, or herself. This may demonstrate that students are the subjects of teacher research as opposed to participants.

4.3 Inci’s Case

4.3.1 Initial perception of TR. Her first attempt at TR was based on collaborative writing and involved a strong inquiry stance posing such questions as *“what is the role of students? How much effort should teachers put into working with individual students? Isn’t this time consuming?”* Despite the personal inquiry, it was very academic in nature with 36 citations throughout the paper, and included positivistic themes. *“It is extremely significant for us to check the validity of the methods being used...examine the effect of these...a rise in scores and motivation was expected...based on the results, students benefited from collaborative writing as was anticipated”*.

There was also a lot of prescriptive language in her conclusion of the paper which may imply that the purpose of the paper wasn't for her own development, but for the benefit of others. She offers advice and recommendations for collaborative writing, rather than personal reflection and dialogue. *“If a teacher intends to do this, he/she should start with small techniques...collaborative learning must be tried in our classes...results indicate that more attention should be paid to formal mistakes...whoever wants to apply collaborative writing should be well informed about the advantages and disadvantages of the approach...students shouldn't be overloaded but they should be informed and guided”*.

4.3.2 Developed conception of TR. After her initial engagement in TR, it appears Inci may have gained a deeper understanding of what TR meant to her. This understanding came about as a result of prolonged engaging in TR and reflecting on the impact it has on professional development *“I realised these things helped us to have a real interest in ELT. This interest and understanding started to grow, and now I feel I really understand it. I realised to be a good teacher, you have to have some good qualifications, not just certificates, but development, and an improving teacher”*. Inci's development in her understanding of TR came as a result of an intrinsic interest in her professional development, as opposed to certificates from training or education programmes.

However, there appears to be some conflict between academic and TR. The aims of doing TR in Inci's view is for the benefit of academia, the teacher comes second yet in the same interview she also sees the teacher as being the centre of TR. *“It's for yourself first, and then it's for your students, and then for your colleagues, and lastly for your school. But first it's for the academic field of teaching English, I see it as the science of teaching English, and then it's for you”*.

This conflict in the relevance of TR is also apparent in the recursive use of prescriptive language in the reflection sections of her TR publications. In her first experience with TR, we saw that Inci's first paper contained lots of prescriptive language, this is something that presents itself throughout her further publications to

various degrees. In her third paper for example, almost every sentence in the implementing action section was prescriptive “*students should be given more duties...what we need is to encourage students more...if teachers want students to speak, they should be less controlling*”. Again in the reflection section of her current paper we see further examples of advice for other teachers “*once your students develop their linguistic skills, they should be introduced to authentic materials...it is highly important that we, as teachers, encourage them to speak and provide them with the authentic materials they may need*”

Inci shared with me her experience at the various conferences she had attended, where she talked about the knowledge being generated there in terms of research. “*I noticed that the English teachers at a conference all the teachers are expected to replenish their knowledge, to do and to share research*”. This vicarious experience it seems acted as a catalyst for her continuing enthusiasm for engagement in TR. This motivational impact of TR was also mentioned in her online document response, where she displays a sense of self-agency “*doing TR is motivating and helps you flourish as a teacher*”.

4.3.2.1 Metaphorical expression of TR. “*Imagine yourself as a smart phone. If you don't upgrade yourself, after a few years you'd be nothing, but an artefact. Teacher research is that tool that upgrades you and your surroundings*”. Inci appears to demonstrate a more active role in that teacher is in control or is the agent of change, using TR to rejuvenate their enthusiasm for teaching whilst also upgrading their pedagogic skills in the class. Interestingly, Inci also hints at the social impact of engagement in TR implying that the TRer is not the sole benefactor of engagement in TR, but that the class, and the institution also improve as a result.

4.3.3 Impact on the teacher. The notion of flourishing as a teacher also highlights issues in development and improvement in terms of pedagogic practice. Inci conceives TR as “*making sure of what you are doing as a teacher.*” So, using research to confirm both her existing and innovative teaching practice in the classroom hints towards a developing sense of professionalism as a teacher. This is

as a result of making informed decisions rather than practice based on previous assumptions.

From data collected from the interview, Inci views TR as inquiry of reflective practice *“You begin with a question and for example, one day you ask yourself, how can I teach speaking in a more authentic way”*. Borg’s work on TR (2013) separated engagement with and engagement in TR, here we see this in practice. Engagement with research is not enough, she believes that *“experience is needed to reflect on the personal implications and interpret one’s own findings then you do some research, but research is not enough, you have to do some application, with students or with colleagues, yourself and in kind of an experimental way then reflect the result in a paper or conference”*.

In the past, Inci reported that she felt a lack of confidence in speaking lessons. However, after engagement in TR she sees her perceived lack of native like speech as being of less importance. *“TR has changed the way I approach speaking lessons in the sense that it is not just speaking; it is teaching how to speak”*. It appears that she has realised you don’t have to be a native speaker of English to focus on a speaking activity, and that the pedagogic skills used by the teacher may prove to be more beneficial for language learners.

Although she feels more comfortable teaching a lesson that focuses on speaking, I noticed an excessive amount of Turkish being spoken by both the teacher and the language learners. With the popularity of SLA, at first I found this to be counter-productive. The class I observed was a weak B2 class of whom many had previously failed the B1 quarter and I remember it was very difficult to get the same students to utter anything comprehensible in English in my lesson when they were in the A2 quarter. Although I wasn’t used to seeing so much teacher L1 use in such a class, I later read in Anne Burn’s study of text-based speaking (2006) that L1 was advised during the discourse analysis stage, letting language learners interact with the text in their native language at the beginning it seemed would lower the affective filter.

I noticed that Inci was very calm and at ease throughout the lesson, despite the fact that there were many complicated stages that need careful planning and organisation. At the beginning of the research, Inci used materials prepared by others, but in the third cycle she felt confident enough to create her own materials with my assistance. We recorded our own dialogue for the students as a model text that allowed Inci to grade the language to her learners' level. In the interview when asked about what text-based speaking was she said *"it's funny, even though I did it a few times, I still don't know if I'm doing it right, but I think I'm getting the hang of it now, next time I will try my own materials with your help for the recording"*. When doing the recording for the following lesson, I remember Inci saying that *"It really doesn't matter if I do it exactly as she (Burns) says in the book, just as long as the students enjoy it and speak is the main thing"*. This was a very interesting comment as Inci had always been very self-critical but it seems she was gaining a greater sense in the authority of her own experience as a result of her prolonged engagement in TR.

4.3.4 Impact on the learner. Teacher research is best when all of those involved have benefitted in a salient way. When asked about what her students gained from this study Inci talked about the deeper relationship between teacher and learner *"They discovered new things in learning and knew me better as a person... helping my study also made them happy too"*. This relationship between the teacher and the learner was also picked up on by her students, in the interview with her students, one student said *"I saw that she had put a lot of effort into preparing lessons for us and this made me feel special and lucky to have Inci as our teacher"*. While another of her students commented that *"we were doing something unusual and we wanted to help our teacher in her project"*.

Perhaps as a result of this closer teacher/learner relationship, there seems to be a knock on effect from her own increase in self-efficacy for her learners. Inci talked about how they gained a higher sense of self efficacy as a result of her engagement in TR. *"I made their effort salient. They thought that as a teacher I trusted them and gave them the confidence that they could understand authentic text a create their*

own dialogue like the ones they had listened to” Moreover, in the interview Inci states *“the activities appealed to them and they felt more confident as a result... it raised their self confidence in using real language”* Mirroring her comments, her students said similar things about their own self efficacy *“It gave me confidence when speaking to foreigners because now I can understand how they really speak with greater confidence”* another student felt more efficacious in vocabulary saying *“I feel more confident because words are easier to understand”*

Another theme that emerged from the data was that of learner engagement. Inci commented on how students would normally talk in Turkish most of the time, however, during this research, she noticed students were actively involved in the lesson and really wanted to practice speaking in English. In her reflection of the paper, she commented on how *“role play was chosen as the most affective part in terms of learning and practising real language”* Elsewhere in her reflection section of her paper, she wrote that *“over half the class said they had more fun in the lessons as it was more student-centred and social... another effect was seeing my students actively participating in the activities”*. This theme of learner and social engagement and was also evident in her online document where she stated that *“students said the most interesting part was creating authentic dialogues and an enhanced sense of collaboration with peers”*.

Learner engagement was also mentioned a great deal in interviews with her students where they pointed out how the lessons were more interesting and how this acted as a catalyst for their engagement. *“it made us speak about things that we created, things that were more interesting...we felt motivated to do be more active in the class, I saw that she had put a lot of effort into preparing lessons for us, it also helped us to concentrate on the lesson because it was something serious”*. A break from the norm was also a factor that added to learner engagement *“we were doing something unusual and we wanted to help our teacher in her project, this made it exciting because other classes were doing normal lessons”*. The intrinsic motivation as a result of engagement was also touched on by one student *“the points were fun at*

first, but the later the points became less important, we got more excited about the project”.

In her reflection on the impact of the study with text based speaking, Inci stated how language awareness was one of the key areas that her learners benefitted from as a result of her project. In several instances she commented *“the most important achievement from my perspective is that students have increased their awareness of language...students were introduced to authentic language that isn’t usually found in text books”*. Furthermore, Inci spoke about this in the interview *“because language was recycled regularly, it increased their effect and made it more memorable for them to use later”*. Inci’s perceptions of how her learners were affected by this project were reciprocated in comments by members of her class when I asked *“First speaking, I mean it helped us practise pronunciation by recording and listening to ourselves and our friends”*. Another student shared similar feelings saying *“we learnt lots of real vocabulary, not like the stuff in the books, but proper things that we can use in real life”*.

Inci’s students talked about their experience in TR as being a project of experiment *“the teacher had a project that she wanted to try with us”*. Although Inci may not have specifically explained what she was doing and why, students had a positive attitude towards her ‘project’, and were grateful for their opinion being acknowledged at the beginning *“we agreed because we felt it might be beneficial for our English. I like the fact that she asked us first instead of just telling this is what we were doing”*.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I offered my interpretation of the experiences of three TRers and their learners. Each case had its own sense of uniqueness even though all three were situated in the same context. You may well have noticed themes which emerged that bore resemblance between the three cases. In the next chapter, I shall attempt to offer a cross case analysis.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter, I aim to build on the rich description and initial analysis of each case. I have attempted to highlight my interpretation of the emerging similarities and differences between the three cases. It is hoped that this analysis will help the reader to appreciate the integrative impact offered as a result of prolonged engagement in TR. Let us reflect back on the original research questions which this case study aimed to address.

5.1 Research Question 1. How is TR Perceived by Teachers as a Form of TPD?

5.1.1 Initial perceptions. I wanted to see how other teachers who had been in the TR programme understood of TR as I believed these perceptions may have an effect on their engagement in TR and ultimately, on their professional development. After reading Borg's work on teacher cognition (2003), I felt it would be useful to see how teachers initially conceived TR, and how their conceptions may have altered with prolonged engagement in doing TR.

5.1.1.1 Sceptical. The themes from both interviews and online sentence starters seem to reflect rather cynical notions of TR as a potential path of their professional development. All three TRers displayed initial feelings that TR was ambiguous, unnecessary, and time consuming. This is perhaps due to the initial misconception by many teachers that TR is academic in nature (Borg, 2010) and involves the same standards in terms of the literature review and research methodology. It also demonstrates the ambiguity novice TRers may sometimes experience due to a lack of understanding of the benefits of teacher research. Borg (2010) found that teachers often cited their reasons for not doing TR were due to a lack of time, and also a lack of perceived personal relevance. These rather unenthusiastic views of TR are examples that Allwright (1993) also saw as obstacles preventing teachers from engaging in teacher research. The issue of TR as being something that takes up vital time inspired exploratory practice's use of combining research with usual

pedagogical activities that are embedded in the syllabus. So theoretically, collecting data could be done in line with what the teacher would normally do in every day lessons (Allwright and Hanks, 2009).

5.1.1.2 Academic. As the three participants initially believed TR was similar to academic research, it is clear to see why they were not aware of the personal relevance of TR, and the impact it may have had in terms of their learners' language learning and their own professional development. This notion of TR as being academic in nature is also reflected in the way that it is seen as time consuming due to perhaps all effort involved in doing academic research. Teachers have very little time for doing things other than lesson planning, marking students' work, and grading exam papers; doing extensive literature reviews, collecting and analysing data using sophisticated tools, (Borg 2013) together with writing up and presenting the research does entail precious time besides teaching.

We know that both Gülşah and Esin had a very academic mindset due to their MA studies. They saw TR as a continuation of their research, and felt it would support their academic skills in terms of writing and research methodology. This is most probably due to their recent academic schemata, which Inci did not share as it had been a long time since her MA graduation from literature (Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1992). In a study by Çelik and Dikilitaş (2015) which gathered data from the same preparatory language school as this case study is situated in, they found that there was a general tendency to view teacher research as academic research. This academic tendency was apparent whilst reading the TR publications by both Esin and Inci. It was clear to see how they saw TR as being similar to research for academia. With approximately 40 citations throughout their papers, the literature in Esin's case in particular seemed to make up the majority of her paper. In the same study, Celik and Dikilitaş (2015) also reported that teachers spent time *engaging with literature* (Borg 2013) "by spending time reading the work of other researchers, they broadened their awareness and the scope of the research and were able to identify gaps in existing literature". My understanding of TR is that the aim of reading literature ought not to be in seek of 'finding gaps', but instead used to refer to In

Esin's case, I would say this extensive reference to literature was due to her time in England spent doing her MA. While in Inci's case, it could be due the teacher trainers' developing initial attitude towards TR, as seeing the literature of high importance comparable to those found in more academic publications.

5.1.1.3 Prescriptive. In Gülşah's TR paper I was unable to see any sign of prescriptive language. Although rather superficial, the conclusion referred to the personal impact her research had had on her. However, the same cannot be said for Esin and Inci. Both felt the need inform the pedagogical practice of other teachers in an attempt to add to the knowledge base of the profession. As Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1992) point out, "Teacher research is a way of generating both *local knowledge* and *public knowledge* about teaching; that is, knowledge developed and used by teachers for themselves and their immediate communities, as well as knowledge useful to the larger school and university communities" (p.450). In Inci's 1st, 2nd and 5th paper, almost every sentence in the reflection contained elements of prescription. The reason why this may be is that again, the misconception and confusion of relevance between TR and academic research. While teachers may benefit from engagement with TR (Borg 2013), in my opinion, this is ought not to be the main priority when writing up a reflection. Rather the reflection in a TR paper could perhaps be more useful for personal discussion in a reflexive manner, reflecting on what their engagement in the research meant for them, as opposed to for the sake of others. This was once aspect that the teacher trainer often asked the TRers to focus on the personal impact they gained from their engagement in TR rather than informing the practice of others.

5.1.1.4 Problematizing. Esin's initial TR publication lacked any personal relevance in her reason for doing this research, this coupled with the fact that Esin collected data about other teachers' perceptions of L1 use highlight the unease I had at classing this as TR in the sense that it wasn't really about her own use of L1, nor or her learners' attitudes towards L1 use in the class. Although she came to a better understanding of L1 use in the class, basing this understanding on the perceptions of other teachers is more like class based research.

However, both Gülşah and Inci wrote about their prolonged unease and discomfort in their own instruction. Action research has always been associated with problem solving as a means of ridding the burdensome issues that plague teachers of a daily basis. So it seems that “by focussing on generating specific solutions to practical, localised problems, action research empowers practitioners by getting them to engage with research and the subsequent development or implementation activitie” (Meyer 2000). This notion of TR as inquiry in the form of action research was also made by Rock and Levin (2002) that “educational researchers have found that the action research process effectively promotes skills of inquiry, reflection, problem solving, and action” (p.8). In Çelik & Dikilitaş (2015) we see that the teacher trainer guided the novice TRers to focus on problems in their classrooms in order to form personal solutions.

However, Burns (2010) prefers to use the term *problematizing* as opposed to problem solving in an attempt to inform practitioners that action research, like exploratory practice, may be equally be used in order to gain understanding of the classroom and the learners. Inci entered into the world of teacher research with a very strong inquiry mindset, questioning her current practices that had plagued her. Burns (2010) stated “*for a teacher who is reflective, and committed to developing as a thinking professional, AR is an appealing way to look more closely at puzzling classroom issues or to delve into teaching dilemmas*”.

5.1.2 Developed conceptions. It was interesting to see how teachers’ perceptions of TR matured over their prolonged engagement in TR. We see TR from quite a different perspective from a more experienced TRer with Esin seeing it as a learner centric concept in the way that TR allows teachers to get a better understanding of their learners and thus tailor the lessons according to the unique needs of the learners. With windows there are two perspectives, so you could say that she also sees the window from the outside looking in. Esin not only views TR as a way for teachers to reflect on their classroom, but also as a means for ongoing reflexive dialogue. Inci too has demonstrated a more developed understanding of the impact that TR can have on herself, and on others around her.

Although all three TRers have developed an understanding of TR as being for their own TPD, in both Esin's and Inci's cases, academic conceptions remained strong with lots of prescriptive language in their reflections of past and current TR papers. It appears they see TR as belonging to the growing knowledge base of ELT.

5.1.2.1 Learner/teacher development. From the document analyses, we saw that all three TRers had initially conceived of TR as being academic and bewildering, but after engagement in TR, their perceptions appear to have altered. Gülşah now believes that TR was *“useful to me and also to my students with the development that we experienced”* and Esin displaying similar feelings *“developing yourself as teacher while enhancing students learning because it impacts the practice in the classroom directly”*. All three TRers now view TR as being a way for teachers to develop their practical knowledge of pedagogy in their own classrooms in such a way that also has a direct implication for learner development. Atay (2008 p. 144) too found that her group of teacher research reported similar views after an INSET research programme *“many teachers indicated that research led to an increased sense of professionalism, and focused particularly on how research raised their awareness to their own teaching practices”*. Inci too saw that TR wasn't just about getting a certificate as another 'qualification' but views TR as allowing her to really develop as a professional.

5.1.2.2 Motivation. Rather than focusing on TR as being a technical notion of development, Inci, the more experienced TRer, now sees TR as a way to sustain motivation and stay fresh as a teacher. Again the affective factor of engagement in TR was also reported by Atay in terms of motivation in that it brought about a *“renewed enthusiasm about teaching”* (2008, p. 145).

5.1.2.3 Understanding. Esin demonstrated clearly that she perceived TR as a way understanding through exploration. Understanding her colleagues, her learners' needs, and her own pedagogic practice. Inci too talked about using TR as a way of *knowing* what she does in the class, and how the learners feel about her teaching. It seems this notion of understanding is brought about through a systematic approach of

experiencing followed by purposeful reflection. As Wallace (1998) sees action research as an approach for reflection on professional practice in which the TRer may make use in relation to his or her own practice.

The notion of engagement in TR for understanding is supported by Allwright (2003, 2005) and Allwright and Hanks (2009) who believe teachers should *work for understanding* first before seeking solutions to problems, “putting understanding first is clearly what is required, and not just in science or education”. Allwright (2015) goes further in defining two different types of understanding that I believe may help provide us a deeper insight of impact that engagement in TR has had on the TRers. Through my analyses of the case studies, I believe that all three teachers have developed an *intellectual understanding* (Allwright 2015) in what he describes as understanding ‘things’ i.e. experimentation in pedagogic practice of various methodologies. However, both Esin and Inci appear to show to a greater extent *empathic understanding* (Allwright 2015) or ‘understanding people’ in the sense that the relationship as a result of the continual dialogue between themselves and their learners has led them to really understand how their learners feel as opposed to just knowing what they want. This is probably due to the fact that Gülşah is a novice teacher with less just 2 years of teaching experience whose main concern is developing her pedagogic practice, as she said teacher research is a way of solving deficiencies. According to Berliner (1988, cited in Wyatt, 2015) novice teachers see teaching as performance based, Gülşah’s intellectual understanding of error correction is a demonstration of this.

5.1.2.4 Experiential learning. After being engaged in TR, it seems the TRers began to perceive it as a way of learning about various pedagogic approaches and practice based on their own experiences in the class. ‘Meaningful’ (Atay, 2008) professional development is seen when teachers are exposed to both intellectual and emotional challenges (Day & Sachs, 2004; Stoll, Harris, & Handscomb, 2012). Although Gülşah referred to learning a lot from the literature, the teachers generally spoke about how they experienced the results of their experimentation and saw the impact their intervention had on themselves and on their learners. They reflected on

both the results of their data collection, but also on their feelings during the process (Minnot, 2010).

5.2 Research Question 2. What is the Impact of Engagement in TR on Teachers?

5.2.1 Pedagogic practice. Engagement in TR allowed teachers to learn about new pedagogical practice through reading the literature or *codified knowledge* (McIntyre, 2005).that related to their issues. Yet it was implementation of what they had read about that was said to have had more of an impact in their classrooms. When reading the literature, Gülşah and Inci were not quite sure about how it would work in the class until they had the chance practice and experiment with their learners. This practical knowledge (McIntyre, 2005) was created after teachers had the opportunity to reflect on both their feelings, and on student learning. Knowledge that results from the opportunity to personally experience newly learnt methodology in their own classrooms. Thus, engagement in TR is a way for teachers to truly understand the pedagogic knowledge upon personal reflection both in and on action (Schön 1983). This practical knowledge as a result of reflection on action was also evident in Esin's case. She saw the results in experimenting with various forms of vocabulary teaching and speaking lessons and came to the realisation that upon reflection, things were not quite as they once thought.

There was some discrepancy between what I saw in my observation, what the data in her publication said, and what Gülşah wrote in her report of the findings. While I do not think she deliberately misinterpreted her findings, to show her practice had changed more in line with her learners' preference, I do believe that novice TRer may often get caught up in wanting their research to be a success. I remember during my time in the TR workshops, TRers would sometimes be very disappointed when they found the results did not go as expected. Something Mc Niff and Whitehead (2002) commented on "learning from the processes where things do not go right is as valuable as when they do. The struggle to make sense is the research process. It does not matter that an external situation does not go as one hopes" (p.90). Here, we are reminded that teacher research ought not to be product,

but process orientated. If teachers are aware of the process, then with reflection, some level of deeper understanding may be expected.

5.2.2 Self-efficacy. Gülşah talked how through her engagement in TR, she had become more self confident when correcting errors. This was a result of her gaining ‘mastery of experience’ (Bandura, 1986) as she knew what her students wanted and benefited from based on systematically seeking to improve her error correction pedagogic skills. This is in opposition to her previous practice of just assuming things worked because. So, her self-efficacy increased due to her ability to make informed choices between various error correction approaches. Making informed judgements leads of increased self efficacy. Esin and Inci too became more efficacious when in the teaching as there practice was based on what they experienced in class combined with what they had read in the literature.

5.2.3 Motivation. Inci talked about her she felt *rejuvenated* as a result of her prolonged engagement in TR. Teacher burnout is an issue that may be encountered by more experienced teachers, as is the case with Inci. Burns (2014) made a point that TR is a sustainable approach for PD that may negate the effect of burnout on teachers. Roberts (1993) too claimed that TR reduced teachers’ feelings of frustration and seclusion. Another point made by Inci was that being engaged in TR helped her to *flourish*, in a sense TR helps teacher to grow as professionals by bringing out their own innate capabilities and promoting self-improvement (Judah & Richardson, 2006). Again this feeling of rejuvenation was found due to it’s immediate nature, “doing AR can reinvigorate our teaching” (Burns, 2010 p.7). This motivation too could be as a result of the satisfaction (Burns, 2010) TRers often feel having seen the fruits of their labour.

5.3 Research Question 3. What is the Experience of Learners whose Teachers are Engaged in TR?

5.3.1 Learners as subject of TR. As Wyatt states, “If we listen, though, to the voices of learners and teachers connected through teacher research, the psychological and educational benefits of such activity very soon start to emerge” (Wyatt, 2016

p.3) Here we see the idea that the voice of both the teachers and learners are of equal importance when looking at the impact that TR may have.

Looking at the responses from the online documents, both Esin and Gülşah used passive sentences when talking about how students benefitted from their engagement in TR, whereas Inci gave agency to her learners using active language. This may demonstrate Inci's more matured understanding of the nature of TR and how it can be used to put the focus of learning on the learner through increasing learner autonomy (Habermas, 1973) and learner empowerment (Lomax, 1994). Elsewhere, Gülşah was also rather reticent in her willingness to reflect on the impact her engagement had on her learners other than that they were exposed to her experimentation with new pedagogic practice and had learnt of the various ways of error correction as a result. This seems is in contrast to what "TRers' primary responsibility is to their students, and their students are the primary beneficiaries of their work" (Mohr, 2004, p.25)

5.3.2 Ethics. Although it is accepted that TR differs from academic research in that TR ought to have a direct effect on the learners, the extent to which teachers learn in cooperation together with their learners remains somewhat to be seen. The TRers did not appear to have involved their learners in the process of their research to any extent. It seems that their learners were perhaps seen as subjects of their research for the purpose of giving data. Their learners were not told explicitly what the teachers were planning to do, and why, and or how it could progress. Although Inci's students reported they had benefited from being involved in her class, data was still collected via questionnaires. However, we do see TR as being more ethical in Esin's case where data was collected through their pedagogic practice. Esin's learners were using podcasts to practise their speaking and listening skills which Esin also analysed for her data collection.

5.3.3 Language. There appears to be much literature about the impact of professional development on teacher education and teacher practice, however there is a lack of research on how teacher PD affects student achievement (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Yoon, 2001). Both teachers and students talked about the

impact that teacher engagement in research had on their language ability in terms of language awareness, vocabulary use, prosodic ability and confidence when dealing with authentic language.

5.3.4 Motivation. With regards to the affective impact on learners whose teacher are engaged in TR, we saw that both Inci's and Esin's learners became more motivated in terms of speaking and dealing with authentic speech. Their learners really wanted to engage more with the lesson, but also with each other as there was a reason for them to speak. Wyatt (2016) commented on this notion of learner motivation as a result of teacher engagement in TR when students realise their teachers learn together with them. Dörnyei and Ushioda also believe that there exists a connection between the teacher and their learners, "if a teacher is motivated to teach, there is a good chance students will be motivated to learn" (2011, p. 158).

5.3.5 Social impact. Again in both Esin's and Inci's case we saw the notion of students benefitting from teacher engagement in TR in terms of developing stronger relationships, turning their class mates into friends. TR was also seen by both Inci and her students as a way of bridging the gap between the teacher and the learner. Here we see learners, who feel motivated through being engaged in research through their learning teacher. Allwright and Hanks, (2009) believe that some forms of teacher research may fail to appreciate the potential of their learners' participation in their TR, however EP places value in learners as potential equals or co-researchers in the research process.

5.3.6 Self-efficacy. Learners in all three cases appeared to benefit from teacher engagement in TR in terms of an increased self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993). In Gülşah's case, learners felt they were more aware of the mistakes they made, which they reported made them certain they would not make the same mistakes again in the future. Due to an increase in the pronunciation and range of vocabulary, learners in both Esin's and Inci's classes felt they were better able to communicate in a meaningful and authentic manner. Edge (1996, cited in Akyazi, 2016) argued that authentic use of language sources can assist students' to engage in authentic cultural

experiences. In my own TR paper, I too noticed how the learners who had experience with authentic language both in terms of authentic input and output

5.4 Conclusion

I feel that this paper has successfully answered each of the three research questions. Teachers' initial perceptions were shown to have developed over time with prolonged engagement in TR. Although TR was something foreign for the teachers, they have now formed clearer conceptions about the true nature and impact that results from experiencing engagement in TR. It seems that even if TRers were told extensively about the nature of TR, teachers need to actually go through the experience of doing TR several times before they may ultimately benefit from it.

Another key finding to have emerged was that all three TRers developed intellectual understanding of things, as in the practical knowledge they gained concerning pedagogic practice. However, with prolonged engagement in TR, teachers may also demonstrate more empathic understanding of people, including both themselves, and their learners.

With regards to the learners' experience of teacher engagement in TR, learners are still seen as object and subjects of TR. This is probably due to their conceptions of TR as being academic, and positivistic in nature. However, both Esin and Inci demonstrated that their learners also benefitted as a result of their data collection as opposed to merely being given questionnaires or being interviewed. If we learn best thought inquiry, why not encourage our learners to inquire with us?

Exploratory practice as a form of teacher research gives emphasis to the learner as being central to the process of teacher research where Hanks (2015) elaborates "learners are not only encourages to investigate questions that have puzzled their teachers, but also formulate their own questions and investigate themselves" (p.118)

In summary, it seems that the results of this case study show that learners benefit by being taught by teachers who are reframing assumptions through their own experiential learning and development, whilst enhancing their pedagogic skills and knowledge by becoming TRers.

5.5 Recommendations

As this study was based at a single site, a multiple case study with multiple units of analysis may shed more light on the phenomenon of TR as a form of TD. Also, students views could be researched further, in order to give learners a voice in TR which is somewhat lacking in the literature. Finally, student assessment could also be evaluated as a measure of the impact on students learning with pre-tests and post-tests. This may strengthen the case for TR as a viable option for teachers' development.

5.6 Implications

We saw that teachers often confuse the relevancy of TR moving from personal relevance, to prescribing practice for other teachers in the hope of adding to the theoretical knowledge base of the profession. Perhaps more support and guidance is needed by the institution in order for teachers to be given the opportunity to reframe their attitudes towards TR as a form of PD, rather than for academia. Novice TRers would benefit from reading other examples of previously published TR thus allowing them to see the differences between the various forms of research. This developed understanding of TR, in all its forms may also allow their learners to be given more status throughout the process of the research as opposed to being subjects for the purpose of data collection.

Finally, I feel that TD should not be viewed as something external to teaching, but be an intrinsic part of the lives of teachers. This can only be achieved by reframing attitudes towards development through prolonged experience and critical reflection of the implications that engagement in TR have on learners, their teachers, and their institutions.

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Appendix A

An example of the semi structured interview questions for the teacher researchers

- What does TR mean for you?
- If a teacher new to this school asked you what TR was, what would you say?
- Is this idea of TR the same as when you first started?
- What did you initially think tr was when you first started?
- Why did you choose to research X?
- What was your initial understanding of it?
- What about towards the end of the study?
- How would you say you benefitted from this research paper?
- What impact do you think the research had on your students?
- What did they think about being participants of your research?

Appendix B

Online sentence starters for teacher researchers

- Could you complete these sentences:
- TR is all about...
- The biggest impact of TR for me is ...
- At first I thought TR was, but after being engaged in TR I think...
- I think my students benefited from my engagement in TR as ...
- TR has changed the way I feel about x lessons in the sense that...
- I would really love a short narrative about how you became a teacher researcher.
- Could you write a metaphor about TR?

Appendix C

Examples of semi-structured interview questions for students

- What do you understand from teacher research?
- Why do you think your teacher did the project with you in the class?
- What do you think about it?
- How did your teacher introduce the project?
- Did x talk to you about her research?
- Did she explain why she gave you the survey?
- Why do you think she gave you this questionnaire?
- Before this questionnaire, how did she correct your mistakes?
- What about after the questionnaire?

Appendix D

Samples showing open coding data analysis

It is a mentor because it helps teacher about what to do, but not making them obligatory about doing something specific. It leads, controls the teachers about their research with the aim of developing them.

Gulsah reflection from Error Correction paper

As this was my first experience of doing teacher research, I was **unsure how** [H1] it would progress, but I feel satisfied and **more confident** at the end of the **research** [H2] [H3]. I am **now more aware** of my student's needs, [4] to respond effectively to feedback. This research enabled me to further **recognize** [5] the importance of giving different kind of corrective feedback towards students' errors. This research has also **brought to my attention the** need for students to **engage in classroom activities, speaking in English** [H6] and correct their own errors. I made the students **expose to the different kind of corrective feedback types and learn them as the literature** [H7] **suggests** [H8]. My final thoughts are that I **improved my teacher skills** [9] **related to error correction**, I have learnt about my **own teaching, correcting errors** [10], **my students and the role of feedback**. I feel that my research has been a **success and my students have benefited from it**. [11]

Initial/Developing beliefs

Online documents

How do teachers see their perceptions of TR having altered after engagement in TR?

I may split these responses initial and developing perceptions of TR.

At first I thought TR was time-consuming but after being engaged in TR I think that it is helpful to understand the beliefs, expectations and interests of both teachers and students.

At first I thought TR was wouldn't be useful to me but after being engaged in TR I'm aware of its being useful to me and also to my students with the development that we experienced.

At first I thought TR was a bit unnecessary but after being engaged in TR I think that it is motivating and helps you flourish as a teacher.

Initial views of TR are reflected the negative notions that TR is of little use, unnecessary, and time consuming. This is perhaps due to the initial misconception by many teachers that TR is academic in nature and all about theory. This notion of TR as being academic in nature is also reflected in the way that it is seen as time consuming due to perhaps all effort involved in

I started doing research whilst doing my MA in TESOL. It was challenging at first as I didn't know what to do, where to start, how to reference things and analyse the data and so. Having written my dissertation, I learnt all the steps and gained self confidence.

When I started working at Gediz, I wanted to continue doing research. So far, I've conducted 3 AR. This year I am also planning to do one which will be about the effectiveness of 'Kahoot', an online learning platform- as I use this tool in my classes. From this AR experience, I've learnt and benefitted a lot and I want other teachers to take the advantage of doing research and so I am mentoring the colleagues in my institution this year.

What factors have helped you maintain your interest and commitment in doing TR?

Two factors helped me maintain my interest and commitment in doing TR. The first one is the positive impact on my lessons. I believe that the way I teach enhanced thanks to

- Açıklama [H52]:** Low self efficacy in TR at beginning
- Açıklama [H53]:** The end of the research self efficacy has increased.
- Açıklama [H54]:** TR as a product
- Açıklama [H55]:** Does this show a product orientated approach?
- Açıklama [56]:** Learner centred impact
- Açıklama [57]:** Again learner centred impact. The impact seems to be awareness cognitive impact
- Açıklama [H58]:** Learner awareness
- Açıklama [H59]:** Peripheral learning
- Açıklama [H60]:** Simultaneous benefit students to learn the different ways of feedback
- Açıklama [H61]:** Referring to literature implies gulsah is still stuck to what the expert say as authoritative figures.
- Açıklama [62]:** Pedagogic impact
- Açıklama [63]:** Reflective Pedagogic Awareness
- Açıklama [64]:** It seems her notion of tr is product based seeing it as being a success. Gulsah also finishes with the how students have also benefited from it, but not how. Her reflection is very superficial and was very different compared to her original version initially submitted to the editor.

- Açıklama [4]:** TR for understanding at deeper level Teachers and students as focus
- Açıklama [H5]:** Mutual benefit learner and teacher
- Açıklama [H6]:** Experiential learning
- Açıklama [7]:** Motivation
- Açıklama [8]:** Like a flower, whose beauty is there waiting to express itself before it opens. Rukiye views herself as having the knowledge and ability to improve, and uses tr as a means of flourishing to the outer world.
- Açıklama [9]:** Ambiguous notion of the aims of tr, motivation for doing tr wasn't clear.

- Açıklama [H17]:** Initial conception of Research as challenging, note people with high self efficacy see problems as a challenge to overcome.
- Açıklama [H18]:** Motivation for continuing TR as result of high self efficacy in research
- Açıklama [H19]:** Positivistic, Measuring effectiveness TR as Evaluation,
- Açıklama [20]:** Being a professional means making justifiable decisions. Action research appears to serve this purpose though personal experience cross referenced with literature.
- Açıklama [H21]:** TR had such a strong impact on her that she wants to assist others in TR
- Açıklama [H22]:** Impact on pedagogic practice

Appendix E

Sample of observation field notes

Inci

Repeat class B1, I had taught some of the same students in a previous quarter and noticed it was very difficult to motivate them to join in, and even harder to get them to utter a complete sentence in English.

Students watched a short film clip

Inci gives instructions in a mix of English and Turkish

They talked about a film they had seen to their partner (lots of Turkish)

Listen to Inci and I talking

Again T asks lots of questions in Turkish trying to get them engaged in the lesson.

T hands out dialogue they had listened to with stages

T translates the stages from English to Turkish

Sts get a new dialogue to locate similar stages

Inci teaches words from dialogue

Mixed between English and Turkish

Some time for students to guess the meanings through elicitation

T sometimes give direct transitions

Students looked for various parts of speech in the texts

Lots of Turkish being spoken

Again students play with word formations

Watch a clip to listen for the words

T groups students and they make outline for their own dialogues

T monitors and helps when needed

Groups go to record their own dialogues, some seem to be unwilling to do it, but the majority of the class are eager to get started.

Open class they listen to the dialogues and get points,

Teacher asks the class to comment on their colleagues and give a score. Students laughing

Lots of Turkish being spoken by teacher and students

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TEFL Certificate 125 hours through I-to-I UK.	2011

PUBLICATIONS

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