

## **EFL Teachers' teaching philosophies and perception of method**

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### **Abstract**

*This qualitative grounded theory study aimed at gaining some preliminary findings of Turkish instructors' beliefs and perceptions to teaching, teachers' and learners' roles for effective teaching and the concept of 'method'. It is found that their beliefs are shaped by learner centered approaches to teaching English and they mostly exploit eclectic method. The most important finding was that teachers are demotivated by imposed curricula and materials. It was concluded that their beliefs and needs need to be taken into consideration when designing curricula for efficient EFL education at tertiary level.*

### **Introduction:**

#### **Background:**

For the last two decades there has been a shift from the understanding of method based language teaching to the recognition of teachers' cognitions, beliefs and assumptions which are central to the process of understanding teaching. One interesting point which did emerge from the study of teachers' implicit theories was that teachers' thinking and behaviors are guided by a set of organized beliefs and that these generally operate unconsciously (Borg, 2006).

Traditionally, language teaching has been described in terms of what teachers do mainly focusing on action and behaviors which teachers carry out in the classroom and the effects of these on learners. According to Richards and Lockhart (1996), in most classes teachers typically face with the kinds of tasks such as selecting, learning activities, preparing students for new learning, presenting learning activities, asking questions, checking students' understanding, giving feedback on student learning and so on. In trying to understand how teachers manage them in their classes, it is necessary to examine beliefs and thinking processes which underlie teachers' classroom actions. This view of teaching involves a cognitive, an affective and a behavioral dimension (Clark & Peterson, 1986).

Borg (2006) traces the recognition of teachers' cognition and beliefs back to 1970's and 80's. In the early seventies the dominant conceptual model of teaching has been process and product approach. The aim was to study what happens in the classrooms and link to these causatively with what learners achieve and can do. Learning was conceived to be a product of teaching and teaching was conceived of behaviors performed by teachers in class. However, developments in cognitive psychology emphasized the influence of thinking on behavior paving the way for understanding teachers' mental cognitive processes rather than focusing on observable behavior. There was an increasing recognition of the fact that teachers played a much more active and central role in shaping educational processes. In the 1980's Clark and Peterson (1986) organized their view of work on teacher thinking into three categories: teacher planning; teacher interactive thoughts and decisions and teachers' theories and beliefs. The inclusion of the last category was heralding the new research on teachers' beliefs which was lacking before and recognition of it as part of language curriculum.

All classroom practices reflect teachers' principles, perceptions and beliefs and different belief systems among teachers can often explain why teachers conduct their classes in different ways (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Teachers have their own evaluations of the activities and how they perceive them may directly influence their classroom practices. The perceptions and beliefs of the teachers are important for several reasons. First, the way teachers perceive teaching methods and techniques shapes the way they teach, so their perceptions may give deeper insights about the real classroom practices, and the type of activities used in the class. To illustrate, teachers dedicating themselves to accuracy may mainly deal with grammatical exercises and activities, or teachers who favor communicative approaches may use learner-centered activities more frequently than teacher-fronted activities (Kaya, 2007).

Although trained for some certain methodologies, teachers usually apply the same methodology in different ways using their beliefs and intuitions as every context is unique surrounded by its own socio political, cultural and physical conditions. So, in this paper the issue of beliefs has been elaborated in the light of the current literature. Recently, the importance of exploring the cognitive dimensions of how language teachers' thoughts, judgments and decisions influence the nature of language instruction has been recognized (Richards & Nunan, 1990; Johnson, 1992). There have been some recent research studies conducted on the beliefs of teachers about methods (Bell, 2007), specifically about communicative approach (Chiou-hui Chou; Penning & Richards, 1997; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Li, 1998; Li 1997; Choi, 1999), inservice teachers' beliefs and practices in an EFL setting at tertiary level (Borg, 2009), pre-service ESL teachers' beliefs about second language learning (Peacock, 2001) on particular skills, reading (Collie, 1996; Kuzborska, 2011; Gebel, & Schrier, 2002; Richards, et al., 1991), grammar and grammar teaching (Borg, 1999; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Farrel, 2005), writing (Burns, 1996).

To better indentify this issue in terms of the perspectives' of teachers one descriptive study of teachers' beliefs was conducted to identify the English language instructors at one state university in Turkey with these research questions:

1. What are the teaching philosophies of English language instructors in an EFL context?

2. What are their beliefs about methods?

a) Are they familiar with post-method pedagogy?

b) If yes (to a) what do they think about that?

3. How do they perceive their roles as language teachers?

4. How do they perceive their students' roles in the classroom?

In the next section the discussions in terms of the issue of method and post method era and the concept of "beliefs" will be elaborated. "Articulating teachers' beliefs" has also been regarded the first step of curriculum development by Graves (2000). So far, in terms of the local context of the study, there hasn't been a qualitative study to get the teachers to articulate their beliefs in a formal way. It is hereby hoped that the beliefs of the teachers can contribute to the program and studies on curriculum development at the local context of the study.

## **Literature Review**

### **The issue of "Method"**

Second language teaching history can be characterized as a search for more effective ways of teaching second and foreign languages. To solve the problem of second language teaching one method has been used was seen to lie in the adoption of a new approach or method (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). "A method refers to a specific instructional design or system based on particular theory of language and language learning." (Richards and Rodgers 2001). It contains detailed specifications of content, roles of teachers and learners and teaching procedures and techniques. The concept of method has been regarded as prescriptive of the teachers' role as to follow the method and apply it precisely according to the rules. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) methods can solve many problems of beginning teachers face with because many of the basic decisions on the course of teaching have already been made for them. The acceptance of methods depends on their ease or difficulty of introducing the changes the approach or method requires that is "practicality is the key issue" (Richards & Rodgers 2001). There is a broad range of methods and approaches which affect teachers' pedagogical values and beliefs, their understanding of the nature of second language learning, their classroom practices and use of teaching materials.

In the 1990's "the post method era" came into play criticizing "the methods" being too prescriptive and constrictive and there is not much room for teacher intuitions and beliefs as well as their personal initiative and teaching style. "...methods should no longer be considered a valuable or viable construct what is needed is not an alternative method but an alternative to method" (Kumaradivelu, 2003). Prabhu (1990) argued that there is not a best method and what is to be emphasized is teachers' awareness of "their personal conceptualization of how their teaching leads to desired learning- with a notion of causation that has a measure of credibility for them" (p. 172). It is what he emphasized as the *sense of*

*plausibility*, teachers' intuitions and subjective understanding of their teaching. The issue here is rather than devising a method that works in every context, but to devise a new way activating their senses of plausibility. Post method pedagogy can be considered to "put a premium on the teachers' sense of plausibility" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 73).

However, the concept of method and its practicality haven't been abolished altogether. What post method and the following critical discourse pedagogy (Kumaradivelu, 2006) attempts creating a pedagogy to be "constructed by teachers themselves by taking into consideration linguistic, social, cultural, and political particularities" (p.69). Teachers and teachers in training need to be able to use approaches and methods flexibly and creatively based on their own judgments and experience. At this point Richards and Rodgers (2001) suggest that training in the techniques and procedures of a specific method is important as it provides them with the confidence, techniques and strategies they will need in a classroom environment. They assume that as the teacher gains experience and knowledge, he or she will begin to develop an individual approach or method that will reflect the teacher's individual beliefs, values, principles and experiences. They further emphasize that it doesn't mean that the teachers will dismiss or totally abandon the approach they adopted at the beginning but will lead to a modification of it as the teacher add modify and adjust the approach or method to the realities of their particular contexts. Similarly, Kumaradivelu (1992) suggests

we cannot prepare teachers to tackle so many unpredictable needs, wants and situations; we can only help them develop a capacity to generate varied and situation-specific ideas within a general framework that makes sense in terms of current pedagogical and theoretical knowledge ( p. 41).

Kumaravadivelu proposed three principles as a product of postmethod condition: particularity, practicality, and possibility. *Practicality* seeks to by enabling and encouraging teachers to theorize from their practice and to practice what they theorize. *Possibility* seeks to tap the sociopolitical consciousness that students bring with them to the classroom so that it can also function as a catalyst for identity formation and social transformation (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). The construction of a context-sensitive postmethod pedagogy that is informed by the parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility entails a network of ten macrostrategies derived from the current theoretical, practical, and experiential knowledge base.

They are

- (a) maximize learning opportunities,
- (b) facilitate negotiated interaction,
- (c) minimize perceptual mismatches,
- (d) activate intuitive heuristics,
- (e) foster language awareness,
- (f) contextualize linguistic input,
- (g) integrate language skills,
- (h) promote learner autonomy,
- (i) ensure social relevance,
- (j) raise cultural consciousness.

According to Kumaravedivelu (2006) using these macrostrategies as guidelines, practicing teachers can design their own microstrategies or classroom activities. In other words, macrostrategies are made operational in the classroom through microstrategies. It can be claimed that by exploring and extending macrostrategies to meet the challenges of changing contexts of teaching, by designing appropriate microstrategies to maximize learning potential in the classroom, and by monitoring their teaching acts, teachers will eventually be able to devise for themselves a systematic, coherent, and relevant theory of practice.

Bell (2003) compromises the issue of method and postmethod stating that teachers should be exposed to all methods and they themselves would construct their own methods or decide which principles they would adopt more in their teaching practices. According to him, we can not underestimate the importance of guiding principles of these methods and their influence on our teaching practices.

During teachers' personal development process of teaching the primary reference point is their personal beliefs and principles concerning their role in the classroom, the nature of effective teaching and learning, the difficulties learners face and how they can be addressed, successful learning activities and the structure of an effective lesson (Richards & Rodgers 2001). Beliefs and theories concerning these aspects can pave the way for the development of core principles guiding the teachers' plans and decisions (Richards, 1998 cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001). As in the current discussions and literature is based on the beliefs and intuitions of the teachers in their teaching practices it is significant to shed light into the issue of "beliefs" in the next section of this paper.

### **Teachers' Beliefs**

Teachers' belief systems are usually shaped by the goals, values and beliefs teachers hold with regard to the content and process of teaching, beliefs about social context of language, the instructional decisions and practices that teachers employ in teaching, their learning and learners (Graves, 2000; Richards & Lockhart, 1996). It is suggested that what teachers do is a reflection of what they know and believe and teacher knowledge and teacher thinking provide the underlying framework which guides the teacher's classroom actions.

When we talk about the concept of "beliefs", it shouldn't be regarded as a simple concept but a complex one which are "built up gradually over time and consist of both subjective and objective dimensions" (Richards & Lockhart, 1996, p. 30). Some may be simple beliefs for example the opinion that grammar errors should be corrected immediately. Others may be more complex- for example, the belief that learning is more effective when it involves collaboration rather than competition (Richards & Lockhart, 1996).

Richards & Lockhart, (1996) summarizes that teachers' belief systems are derived from a number of different sources (Kindsvatter, Willen, and Ishler, 1988) as the sources of teachers' belief systems such as their own experience as language learners, experience of what works best, established practice of a particular school or institution, personality factors, educationally based or research-based principles teachers adopt or principles derived from an approach or method (p. 30- 31). In the remainder of this part of the paper teachers' beliefs concerning about English, learning, teaching, the program and the curriculum, language teaching and curriculum and the teaching profession are examined, as well as connections between beliefs and teachers' classroom practices.

### **Beliefs about language and English**

Language may represent different things to different people. According to Graves (2000) your view of what language is or what being proficient in a language means affects what you teach and how you teach it. An emphasis on language as rule-governed may translate into the belief that learning a language means learning to use it accurately with no grammatical errors. Therefore, a teacher who has such a belief may give more emphasis on accuracy than fluency focused exercises. Another example given by Graves (2000) is that

According to Richards and Lockhart (1996) peoples' views of English or other languages are affected by contacts they have had with the language and its speakers. It is these contacts which vary significantly from one person to another. Therefore, it is significant to examine the underlying beliefs teachers hold about English and how these influence attitudes towards teaching it.

### **Beliefs about learning**

Teachers' beliefs of learning may be based on their training and education process and their experience as a learner and how they can transfer it into teaching, or their own teaching experience (Freeman, 1992).

When learners and teachers meet for the first time, they may bring with them different Expectatitons concerning not only the learning process in general, but also concerning what will be learned in a particular course and how it will be learned. (Brindley, 1984, p 95 cited in Lockhard & Richards, 1996).

Brindley (1984, p. 97 cited in Lockhard & Richards) points out that teachers in favor of learner-centered view of learning would probably describe their assumptions in terms of the following:

- Learning consists of acquiring organizing principles through encountering experience.

- The teacher is a resource person who provides input for learner to work on.

- Language data is to be found everywhere-in the community and in the media as well as in the textbooks.

- It is the role of the teacher to assist learners to become self directed by providing access to language data through such activities as active listening, role play and interaction with native speakers.

- For learners, learning a language consists of forming hypotheses about the language input to which they will be exposed, these hypotheses being constantly modified in the direction of target model.

Graves (2000) categorized the teaching beliefs as process of learning, learner roles and focus of learning. Regarding the process, learning can be perceived as a process of problem solving and discovery which is an inductive process, on the other hand learning can be viewed as a process of applying received knowledge which is a deductive process. In terms of the role of learners, learning may be regarded as individual effort in which learners work alone or a group effort in which learners work collaboratively. Learners may be regarded as decision makers or partners in the process of learning, In terms of the focus of learning, it may be regarded as acquiring new knowledge, mastering skills, or learning about



attitudes. It may focus on how the language works, or on using the language or the development of meta-cognitive and critical thinking skills.

### **Beliefs about teaching**

As teaching is very personal activity, individual teachers may bring to teaching very different personal beliefs and perceptions about what makes effective teaching. While some teachers believe that students should learn English in a relaxed atmosphere and based on learner wants and desires, others may follow a strict and teacher-centered as he or she believes that their classroom is a place where students only come to learn in a formal environment.

Their beliefs about teaching may affect how they see their role in the classroom, what teaching methods they use, what resources they make use if, how they define effective teaching, the qualities of a good teacher or their approach to classroom teaching (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). In different contexts, teachers may have different beliefs and different instructions based on their beliefs.

### **Beliefs about the program and curriculum**

Although teaching seems to be an individual process, teachers are influenced by the curriculum and institution they work. There may be particular ways of thinking and implementations, decisions taken by the administration.

According to Richards and Lockhart (1996) any language teaching program reflects both the culture of the institution and the collective decisions and beliefs of individual teachers. Within a program or school, teachers' views on such things as lesson planning, the use of objectives and assessment may lead to quite different classroom practices. Some teachers make significant use of textbooks and "teach to the book" following the instructional decisions made by them, while others give more importance to creating their own materials and using authentic ones. According to Richards and Lockhart (1996) suggest that teachers like the former ones may become "deskilled" through their overdependence on commercial materials; "their input to instructional program gradually becomes limited to making decisions about presentation, timing and the orchestration of practice activities" (p. 39). Furthermore, teachers may also have specific beliefs about the problems with the programs they work in and they need to be investigated for the improvement of the current program.

### **Beliefs about teaching as a profession**

Language teaching requires some skills, training, and dedication for lifelong learning. According to Richards and Lockhart (1996) teachers' understanding of this profession depends on their working conditions, their personal goals and attitudes, and the career prospects available available to language teachers in their community. In different settings teachers may have different beliefs as in some setting teaching as a profession may be regarded as important and valuable, in other settings it may be rejected and despised.

As we trace the current literature, we have seen that although the training teachers for specific methods is important, we need to depend on the beliefs of teachers while interpreting the underlying factors of their classroom applications and varieties they display.

**Methodology:**

For the purpose of the study the data have been collected via semi-structured interviews asking the following questions:

- 1 What is your teaching philosophy?
- 2 What do you think the most difficult aspect of learning English are (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) and how do you reflect it in your teaching? What kind of learning strategies do you encourage in learners? (As supplementary question)
- 3 What teaching methods do you try to implement in your classroom?
- 4 What teaching materials do you make use of?
5. How would you define effective teaching?
6. What are the qualities of a good teacher?

**Settings:** In the context of the study, the preparatory class was established two years ago by the School of Foreign Languages. The medium of education in English medium in two faculties; Economy and Administrative Sciences and Engineering Faculties in some introductory courses, initially providing a preparatory class for one year to prepare students for the courses of the following years in English and ideally to enable them to use English communicatively in their continuing life after school. In most of the classes, the multimedia, computer, DVD and the internet exist to enhance the quality of English language education. Previous director of Foreign Languages provided some in service training to the faculty who teaches at the preparatory classes in order to enhance the practice of communicative language teaching and use of the technology in the classes during weekly meetings and separate workshops.

**Participants:** The participants are English language instructors at a state university in Turkey which is an EFL context. A convenient sampling of the participants have been made and 10 English language instructors who volunteered to participate in the study were interviewed. They were given code names as T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, and so on considering the order of the interviews. The first four of them had MA degrees in teaching English.

Code	Age	Gender	Teaching experience (year)
T 1	30	Male	7
T 2	31	Male	6
T 3	26	Female	4
T 4	33	Female	9
T 5	46	Female	23
T 6	25	Female	3
T 7	27	Female	4
T 8	30	Female	7
T 9	31	Male	7
T 10	27	Female	5

During the study, the participants were asked to reflect on and to articulate their subjective perceptions and experiences concerning the related questions.



The interview transcriptions were checked by another researcher from the same institution to ensure inter-rater reliability.

## **Results**

### **Teachers' teaching philosophies:**

For the first question concerning the teaching philosophies, teachers all reflected on their experiences with communicative approach. They all stated they have emphasized the importance of being learner centered and responding to the learners' needs and interests. All teachers emphasized being learner-centered, communicative and responding learners' needs and interests Some teachers (n=5) suggested that they give importance to create a fun and motivating class atmosphere. Several others (n=6) emphasized using variety of teaching procedures is important. Overall, they mentioned the following ideas in the Table 1:

**Table 1: Teachers' teaching philosophies:**

<b>What is your teaching philosophy?</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
	Learner-centered	10
	Communicative	10
	Responding to needs and interests	10
	Creating funny and motivating class atmosphere	7
	Using variety of techniques	6
	Giving a lot of input	10
	Making students learn how to learn English	8
	Using their own experiences while learning English	6
	Fluency development	7

“Teachers should get their students involve in the classroom. So in my teaching philosophy making the learning activities varied and interesting is important” (T1).

“My teaching philosophy is shaped by communicative and interactive methods and learners' needs.” (T4).

“In my teaching philosophy, I try to put the students in the center then I think what I can do for effective teaching” (T 5)

“Without noticing and input there can't be learning.” (T 6).

“Activities should be learner-centered rather than teacher centered” (T 6).

As in the following comment the teacher pointed out her own experiences as learner “The question is learning rather than teaching, we should focus on learning, how we learnt English and how our students can learn English.” (T 10)

The second question in the interview was what the most difficult aspect of learning English are (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) and how they reflect it in their teaching.

For this question three main difficulty of learning English for Turkish students have been identified by teachers; vocabulary (n=10) and pronunciation (n=6) have been acknowledged as the most difficult aspects. To tackle this problem they emphasize the pronunciation of the words a lot by using the CDs of the book or the internet sources such as videos or films (n=10). Some of them mentioned the importance of reading aloud for pronunciation. For vocabulary building they also emphasized the watching videos, reading and studying vocabulary in context and separately (n=3). Some of them more specifically stated that they encouraged keeping vocabulary notebooks (n=2) or keeping list of words of the units and use them in sentences or making stories using those words and extensive reading (n=10).

Third question in relation to it was that what kind of resources they use to practice their teaching. Also for this question, some of the teachers stated that due to the constraints of the institutions, they can't perform their actual teaching philosophies. They regard using variety of activities which are funny and interesting but because of the syllabus and curricular goals, they can't use them. They complained that had to teach to textbook many times (n=3). One of them also stated that the activities and photocopiable materials of the book selected by the material office are also fun but the time constraint lead her to focus on accuracy only rather fluency. All the teachers responded that they used textbooks but they are not satisfied with this situation. One teacher (T5) stated that “Our students need extra-curricular materials so I suggest them reading the readers provided by our institutions or get them buy more, and then write a summary of them. In addition, I lead them to practice listening skills through some websites and watching movies. They prepare some posters of the films they watched.”

Another teacher said he didn't follow the textbook all the time but had used some other resources especially for grammar exercises. He stated that “I believe that grammar should be taught explicitly because language is also made of grammar, we can not ignore it. I write a lot of drills on the board from various books after I introduce the grammar from our textbook” reflecting his personal beliefs of language into his classroom instruction.

The common points were as follows:

Resources used by teachers	Category	Number of respondents
	Textbook	10
	The internet	10
	Projectors	10
	Photocopiable materials of textbooks	6
	CDs of the texbooks	10
	Games	5

All the teachers responded that they used the internet which is available in all classes with computers and projectors. Some of them added that if it hadn't been for it in the classes the lessons would be very boring. Some of them classified pictures as separate (T 2) or as part of the internet. Similarly, they cited using videos or songs from the internet (n=6). In addition, three of them mentioned the use of portfolios for writing classes (n=3).

**Beliefs about the use of methods:**

All the teachers interviewed agreed that methods have been useful during their teaching practices. The most agreed point was they don't teach within the borders of one method but make use of some elements of each method. While some of them specifically used the term "eclectic" some others didn't use it but made such implications:

One teacher (T 3) stated that "I don't use one specific method but in our classroom instructions we teach within a method consciously or unconsciously. For example, in some stages of our lesson we have task based while in another we practice audio lingual method."

Another (T 7) who has master degree used the term eclectic as follows: "I adopt an eclectic method, we can't stick to one single method, we have to base our teaching and method choice on our learners' needs and interests. We mostly exploit communicative methods considering our students' communication needs but I personally use direct method or grammar translation while teaching grammar. It is important how we integrate them into our teaching practices rather than which methods we adopt and how successful the result is."

T (5) stated that "Methods are shaped by our class atmosphere and students as the center of it. Teachers may think they use the best methods but it may be in conflict with learners' perceptions. In this case, teachers' role in implementing methods is to enable learning" She added that "it also depends on the level of the class, in some classes we have more teacher centered lessons, sometimes we have to emphasize grammar exercises more than fluency. I think both learners and teachers determine it in a way."

One another teacher stated : "Methods provide us how we can create learning opportunities, how we can give linguistic input, so I am glad that I was trained to practice different methods and now I apply them at my institution."

Only the teachers who had master degree cited the word "eclectic" but all the rest implied that their method is an eclectic one. As in line with the literature on post method they are aware that methods are useful in their classroom applications and they benefit from different aspects of various methods based on their current situations.

Although one teacher who has MA degree cited the word "post-method", the others are aware of it considering the comments they made.

The methods they cited during the interview are as follows:

**Table 2. Cited methods used by the teachers.**

Resources used by teachers	Category	Number of respondents
	Eclectic	3
	Grammar-translation	10
	Audio-lingual	4
	Task-based	10
	Direct-method	1
	Communicative	10

**Their perception of their roles as language teachers:**

Most of the teachers defined teachers' role as enabling effective teaching and learning (n=7). Another shared point was the importance of understanding learners' needs and interests and adjust their teaching to them (n=10). Other common points were as follows:

**Table 3. Teachers' perceptions of the roles of language teachers.**

What's the role of language teachers?	Category	Number of respondents
	Being flexible and adaptable	8
	Material developer	8
	Guiding learning process	10
	Motivating students	10
	Choosing effective tasks for classroom communication	7
	Leading students to participate in the tasks and facilitate	8
	Problem solver	3
	Providing feedback	7
	Referring to different learning styles	6
	Reflecting to teaching	2
	Develop themselves lifelong	7
	Attend seminars and conferences	5
	Using technology and integrate	7

### **Their perception of learners' roles:**

All teachers agree that learners should be "active participants of the classroom activities".

One of them stated that

"If they are passive and only observe or listen but don't participate they can't learn effectively. Even if they learn in a passive way they can't use language to communicate. I think this is our students' problem. They want to learn it in a passive way, so most of those can't communicate in English." She added that "of course learners will listen or read which are passive skills, but when it comes to speaking and writing they should also practice as much as possible. In this respect, teachers' role here to guide them is very important so learners' role can be shaped by teachers".

Another teacher stated "Learners should be able to understand how they can learn a language. They should be autonomous after a while. Of course at the beginner level they are very dependent on their teachers but they need to practice English independently outside the classes. They have to know their responsibilities as learners. For example, if they don't read outside the class, they can not improve their English. I believe that reading is the most important skill for them to practice grammar, discourse and vocabulary. However, in Turkey reading is not appreciated even in Turkish. It is the problem of our education system. So teachers should give learners projects or extensive reading activities."

So these two teachers also pointed out teachers' roles' affect in determining the learners' roles. The other three teachers also pointed out that being autonomous learners is very important to learn a foreign language. Another two teachers added that learners should be social to learn a language, and they need to collaborate and be willing to practice English in groups.

### **Discussions:**

In terms of the first question investigated regarding the teachers' teaching philosophies, it can be concluded that teachers act by their knowledge of methods, their beliefs systems and their experiences both as teachers and learners. Their beliefs and philosophies are all in line with communicative way of teaching and more specifically, communicative approach and its core principles. This result may be the effect of in-service trainings provided by the previous director of the school of foreign languages and seminars provided by the keynote speakers invited to the institution. Also, there are many instructors who had or still pursuing MA degree and several others who pursue PHD. So, it seems that institutional support and intrinsic motivation of teachers to apply communicative ways of teaching have been accomplished in the current context. Also, the administration provided the classes with technological equipment. However, there is a need for classroom observation to see how they apply their articulated beliefs in their teaching practices and how effectively these resources are used in the classroom.

The aim of the second question was to identify what kind of difficulties they have experienced while teaching English to Turkish students. In other contexts, while grammar of English may be regarded as the most difficult in some contexts, in others pronunciation may be difficult due to the native language or learners' perceptions. In our context and in my own experience with Turkish students, vocabulary and pronunciation have been found the most

difficult aspects of learning a foreign language. They were asked how they tackle them while teaching they recommended authentic way of learning English via films, videos, reading extensively or traditional way of learning from the lists or keeping vocabulary notebooks. For vocabulary building the literature on explicit learning, repetition and multiple exposures to words in various contexts have been found very important (Schmitt, 2000; Nation, 2001; Sökmen, 1997). The suggestions of instructors are in line with the literature on vocabulary acquisition.

As for the materials and resources they used for their teaching practices, all of them stated that they have to follow the textbook selected by some instructors at the material office. Only a few of them praised the book pointing out it has online support and audio CDs but the rest implied that it was in conflict with their teaching philosophies to use only the textbooks even for the sake of standardization. The administration had made the decision to use only textbooks for standardizing the tests and materials, and for copy right reasons. Moreover, using extra photocopies from other books outside the content of the books was also not recommended by the administration. On the other hand, they allow teachers use the internet, computers and OHPs in the classes. For this situation, teachers stated that they mostly benefit from the internet in the classes. Some of them said if it hadn't been for the internet in the class, only using the textbook, the lessons textbook would be rather dull and boring. As some teachers pointed out students need some more grammar exercises or reading materials in the classroom. In the current institution, the readers are provided to the students for extensive reading but the textbook doesn't provide enough reading texts and exercises to improve reading skills or sub-skills in the classroom for intensive reading. During some informal interviews with some students at the institution they complained that they could not perform well in the exam especially for reading section. The exam result can reveal better data of this situation, and especially for the students who perform poorly in the exams, supplementary materials are of great importance.

On the other hand, this situation lead them to use and search for internet materials and beneficial for both the quality of teaching and learners' perception of modern way of teaching in the classes at the school of foreign languages. Almost all the teachers pointed out that they used the internet as part of the classroom activities. Some of them mentioned showing pictures from the internet, or some others mentioned listening websites such as ESL lab, and all of them mentioned YouTube videos and songs. Students' perceptions of teaching, resources, teachers' roles or their role in the class can also be investigated with a follow up study and compared with teachers' perceptions. Alongside students' test results, data of the students' perceptions can provide a more solid data of effectiveness of the resources used for the program and administration can be informed about the results.

When it comes to methods, they all use eclectic method and their teaching philosophies and the way they articulated their beliefs about the use of methods were in line with the discussions of post-method pedagogy. They all pointed out the importance of caring the context of teaching English and students' needs and interests. Teachers comments of using methods indicated that they have produced their own *sense of plausibilities*, which was the intended goal of the post method. In the current institutions teachers implied that they use their intuitions "by taking into consideration linguistic, social, cultural, and political particularities" (Kumaradivelue, 2006 p. 69). Also some teachers also pointed out the

importance of tackling with problems while explaining the teachers' roles (n=2). They were the ones who have had master degree and have more insight into postmethod and action research, which are inline with Kumaradivelu's macrostrategies. When we consider teachers' responses regarding teachers' roles we can see the relevance of them to the macrostrategies proposed by Kumaradivelu in this study: being learner-centered, communicative, responding to needs and interests, creating funny and motivating class atmosphere, using variety of techniques, leading students to participate in the tasks and facilitate negotiation, problem solver, providing feedback, referring to different learning styles, reflecting to teaching, develop themselves lifelong, attend seminars and conferences, using technology and integrate. Here, we can clearly see that all the responses serve the aim of maximizing learning. Teachers clearly put emphasis on life-long learning by attending to seminars or conferences, that is developing self and growing as an English language instructor. Moreover, using and integrating technologies also indicate that they regard language teachers' role as keeping up with technological developments in language learning.

When it comes to learners' roles it is also shaped by the descriptions suggested by both method and post method era. They expect learners to be active participants of activities rather than passive ones. It is also related to their beliefs of teaching and language as most of them stated that language is for communication so the language classes should involve communicative tasks. Learners' role thereby is to actively participate in those activities. However, some of them also emphasize that learners' role is affected by the beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and language. Teachers should lead them to participate in the activities and facilitate. Their beliefs are in line with Brindley's description of teachers in favor of learner-centered view of learning "it is the role of the teacher to assist learners to become self directed by providing access to language data through such activities as active listening, role play and interaction with native speakers." Due to some students' previous learning experiences, some of them are not willing to attend the interaction in the class and favor studying grammar rules. At this point it is our teachers' role to lead them to be more active and try to use language to communicate rather than to study grammar rules in a passive learner. It also indicate that teachers use their intuitions and experiences with Turkish students when responding to this question.

### **Conclusions:**

This study is descriptive in nature but it gave some preliminary findings of Turkish instructors' beliefs and perceptions to teaching, teachers' and learners' roles for effective teaching. It is found that their beliefs are shaped by learner centered approaches to teaching English. Another conclusion can be that they are constricted by the rules of their institutions which are imposed on them. Curriculum development should be bottom-up process rather than top- down. When teachers' beliefs are included in curriculum development process and they find that they are also involved in the decision making process, they can perform more effectively being more motivated. On the other hand, teachers articulated their experiences and intuitions when tackling with institutional drawbacks and students' language learning needs and lacks which is in line with post method pedagogy.



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