

KARADENİZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY * THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

APPLIED LINGUISTICS

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH
MASTER OF ARTS**

MASTER'S THESIS

Nil AĞAN

JULY-2020

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JULY-2020

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July, 2020

Nil AĞAN

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ÖZET

Bu durum çalışması Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinde Uygulamalı Dilbilim master programına kaydolmuş İngilizce öğretmenlerinin tecrübelerini anlamak için dizayn edilmiştir. Bu tecrübeleri inceleyerek, Uygulamalı Dilbilim alanında yüksek lisans yapmanın İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişimlerine katkısını bulmayı hedeflemektedir. Aynı zamanda, öğretmenlerin yüksek lisans yapma nedenlerini ve bu eğitim sırasında karşılaştıkları zorlukları ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Karma yöntem yaklaşımını benimseyen bu çalışmada veriler hem nicel hem de nitel olarak elde edilmiştir. Niceliksel veriler 37 katılımcıya uygulanan bir anket formu ile toplanırken, nitel veri elde etmek için 9 görüşmeci ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bulgular, yüksek lisans derecesinin öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimlerini çeşitli öğretim becerilerini geliştirme açısından olumlu yönde etkilediğini ortaya çıkarmıştır. Öğretmenlerin yüksek lisans yapma motivasyonlarıyla ilgili olarak, en motive edici nedenlerin içsel olduğu görülmesine rağmen, veriler bazı dışsal faktörlerin de bireylerin yüksek lisans yapmasında önemli bir rol oynadığını göstermiştir. Son olarak, katılımcıların eğitim sırasında çeşitli zorluklar yaşadıkları tespit edilmiştir. Ancak bulgular, en çok güçlük çekilen konunun iş ve üniversitenin neden olduğu gereklilikler arasında dengeyi sağlamak olduğunu göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen Gelişimi, Master/Yüksek Lisans Derecesi, Motivasyon/Güdülenme, Hizmetiçi Eğitim

ABSTRACT

This case study was designed to explore the experiences of students enrolled in MA (Master of Arts) in Applied Linguistics program in a state university in Turkey. More specifically, it aimed to investigate its perceived impact on teacher development and the leading motivations of teachers to undertake a master's degree in Applied Linguistics as well as the challenges they faced while studying. Adapting a mixed method approach, the data was obtained both quantitatively and qualitatively. While quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire from 37 participants, semi-structured interview was carried out with 9 interviewees to obtain qualitative data. Findings uncovered that master's degree affected teachers' professional development positively in terms of enhancing various teaching skills. With regard to motivation, even though the most driving reasons were found to be intrinsic ones, the data indicated that some extrinsic factors played a crucial role to motivate the individuals. Finally, participants experienced a few challenges during the education but balancing work and university requirements was found out to be the most difficult issue.

Keywords: Teacher Development, Master's Degree, Motivation, In-service Education

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MA	: Master of Arts
MoNE	: Ministry of National Education
ELT	: English Language Teaching
INSET	: In-service Education of Teachers
MEB	: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (Ministry of National Education)
AR	: Action Research
CET	: Cognitive Evaluation Theory
SDT	: Self-Determination Theory
LEÖY	: Lisansüstü Eğitim ve Öğretim Yönetmeliği (Regulation of Graduate Education)
KTU	: Karadeniz Technical University
ELL	: English Language Literature
T&I	: Translation and Interpretation
ACL	: American Culture and Literature
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

INTRODUCTION

Education is considered to be the leading factor in the development of societies. Even though authorities with other stakeholders are responsible for the regulation of education to achieve an effective learning environment, teachers play a crucial role in its success as they are the practitioners of it. In other words, they are the ones that put all the policies and theories into practice. Therefore, in order to increase the quality of education, it is important to raise effective teachers who can pave the way for favorable changes in the classrooms. Though a 4-year teacher training faculty can be regarded as a good start for teaching, teachers need to update themselves in a changing dynamic environment. They need “to constantly develop new knowledge and skills necessary to cope with new challenges faced when attempting to contribute to their students’ learning” (Viafara and Largo, 2018: 104). Hence, authorities should invest professional development activities so as to raise teachers who are aware of the latest advancements in their field, who can continuously refresh their knowledge and search for current trends in the field and who can benefit from these trends and advancements in their classrooms. In other words, professional development opportunities should be provided to teachers in order to “to increase their capacity for dealing with change because if they don’t, they are going to continue to be victimized by the relentless intrusion of external change forces” (Fullan, 2001: 138). There are numerous activities that specifically aim to contribute to the professional development of teachers. Teachers can attend conferences and workshops, be mentored by an experienced professional or subscribe journals and undertake their own action research and more. All intend to serve teachers to enhance their confidence, productivity and open-mindedness; therefore, they become more entrepreneur while doing their job, take risks to create an effective learning environment, and take the initiative for students’ learning.

Although the primary goal of graduate education is to raise academicians who can contribute to art, culture, and science, teachers can benefit from MA programs related to the teaching profession as a professional development opportunity since there exist studies claiming that “master-qualified teachers bring new knowledge and in-depth understanding of teaching and learning and have an enhanced critical, inquiry and research-oriented stance” (Snoek et al., 2018: 14). This is because of the curriculum of these programs which not only directs MA student-teachers to read about current topics related to their field, but also allows them to make their own investigation relevant to their profession by informing them about the steps of conducting research. Additionally, MA creates an environment in which teachers come together with their colleagues and share their experiences and ideas about teaching and learning and reflect on their classroom

practices. Furthermore, MA student-teachers would have the opportunity to discuss these topics with the experts (their professors) and get feedback and assistance from them. Taking these advantages of MA program into consideration, it can play an essential role in the development of teachers and consequently the quality of education. Moreover, since MA is on the agenda of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) for English teachers as a professional development program in Turkey (2023 Education Vision), it becomes a valuable area of interest for investigation.

On the other hand, obtaining a bachelor's degree (with a teaching certificate for non-ELT departments) is considered to be a main requirement in order to find a job as a teacher. However, some of the teachers are eager to pursue degree programs due to different reasons even though it is not compulsory for their profession. These reasons vary depending on their interest, desires as well as the social, cultural, and psychological background they have. Furthermore, these factors may shape the motivations, goals and expectations of the people which bring about particular actions. Considering pursuing MA as a particular action in this context, understanding the motivations that trigger the English teachers to make this decision is critical in their education as "this information can then serve to better understand and educate this graduate school population and help motivate them to perform at more personally rewarding levels" (Hegarty, 2011: 147). In other words, revealing the motivations of MA student-teachers helps design a curriculum that satisfies the needs of these individuals, as a result, contributes to their future success in their careers. On the other hand, employing as a teacher creates such responsibilities as preparing daily lesson plans, grading papers, attending meetings, communicating with parents, etc. While all of these responsibilities are already time-consuming and challenging, teachers who enroll in an MA program double their responsibilities since they have to do the requirements of their courses in an MA program, as well. Additionally, any regulation or application of the schools or the universities may cause some drawbacks for MA student-teachers and these difficulties may demotivate them to successfully accomplish MA education. Therefore, the difficulties which MA student-teachers encounter have to be identified in order to take necessary precautions and make supportive arrangements correspondingly with the intention of facilitating the process. This would help those individuals achieve their goals more easily, encourage them for further studies, thus, make them more qualified professionals.

CHAPTER ONE

1. FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

1.1. Background of the Study

This study originated from the experiences I had during my graduate education. When I first decided to apply for the Applied Linguistics master program, I did not know what to expect or experience from the program but I felt motivated to go for it because of the desire to improve myself as a teacher and master my English as a foreign language. Therefore, I submitted required papers online such as transcription and language proficiency exam result to the institution for the first phase of the application. A couple of weeks later, I was so pleased and thrilled by the results as I found out that I was eligible for the interview which was the second phase of the application process. Time flew so fast and the big day arrived for me. I was so nervous that I got butterflies in my stomach and my mind felt like tabula rasa with nothing in it while I was driving to the university for the interview. In the interview, I saw many people who I believe had different motivational orientations that drove them there to attend the interview which was thrilling and stressful. Every interview nearly took 20 minutes, and each of the interviewees was leaving the interview room with the expressions of self-confidence, bewilderment, or disappointment on their faces. I was more like bewildered since I did not remember what had happened there due to my anxiety. After a few exciting and tense weeks, it was announced that 10 of us achieved to be admitted to the master's program. In the first day of the academic year, all of us were ready in the class and waiting for our lecturers. However, a few weeks later, some of us started not to attend the classes and left the program. It was very fascinating for all of us to have the chance to do MA in Applied Linguistics, which was very rare and challenging. To my surprise, it turned out to be some disappointment for me to witness that some colleagues abandoned the program later after they survived with very severe competition and screening exams. This consequence might have probably arisen from various reasons which were unknown to me. Thus, these challenges needed to be explored in order to facilitate the process for graduate students.

On the other hand, throughout the first academic year, the rest of us came together in classes every week to be able to achieve our personal goals. Presentations, assignments, examinations, and any other responsibilities did not discourage us from pursuing MA. Moreover, we were living in different parts of Turkey and some of us drove more than 5 hours to attend the classes even they had to go to work next morning. In addition, they had other responsibilities at home as some of

them were married with children that they needed to take care of. However, they did not give up and kept continuing their education. Accordingly, there had to be some factors that prompt those individuals to follow this weekly routine despite all those difficulties and responsibilities.

While continuing my education, I started to feel some improvements in myself. Reading different articles on different topics or undertaking some research-based projects and researches related to my profession contributed to me a lot as a person and my teaching practices as a teacher. I felt more confident in using English as a foreign language and participated in various national and international projects. Moreover, I was more idealist in the class as I was constantly seeking better and enjoyable methods of teaching since I was always learning something new every week. As a result, it could be claimed that this academic environment directly or indirectly affected my teaching practices. This experience led me to question whether having a master's degree would have any impact on our teaching philosophy, teaching skills, and practices.

Additionally, to the best of my knowledge, at the time of the data collection of the current study, there has been no study in Turkish context that specifically investigates the impact of an English related MA program as a professional development activity for English teachers. In addition, their motivations for MA and the difficulties they experienced during this education are also the scope of this study. Similar studies have mostly concentrated on the motivations of individuals who enroll in a master's or doctorate program in any department (Nas et al. 2017; Karaduman, 2018). What separates current research from the others is that it approaches the issue in a broader sense. In other words, the present study not only focuses on the impact of MA on teacher development but also investigates the motivations of MA student-teachers for having a master's degree in addition to the exploration of the difficulties.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

It has always been a controversial issue whether teachers should have master's degree or not in Turkey for a long time. In some of the European countries like Finland (Sahlberg, 2007) and Italy (Ostinelli, 2009), it is compulsory to have a graduate education to employ as a secondary school teacher. However, there is not enough empirical evidence suggesting that teachers with a master degree are more effective than the others. Although it appears that teachers who have pursued a master's degree are likely to differ from teachers who have not, what kind of qualifications they have gained in terms of their profession are not clear. Providing preliminary data for this debate, current study has potential to provide valuable insights into the issue being discussed, through the eyes of the teachers who underwent similar experience.

Nowadays, more emphasis has been put on the use of action research as a professional development opportunity for teachers instead of traditional development activities such as

conferences and seminars. It is suggested that teachers can improve their teaching by taking a researcher role and reflecting on their teaching. Therefore, they could inquire about the effectivity of their instructional practices with a view to facilitating students' learning and finding solutions to problems depending on the dynamics of the classroom. However, existing in-service trainings barely give attention to research and its importance in creating meaningful learning environments. Benefiting from MA as a professional development opportunity, the results of this study would indicate whether undertaking MA help teachers gain the skills necessary for this renewed form of professional development.

Behaviors or decisions of people are determined by various factors such as needs, interest, environment, etc. These factors shape individuals' motivations in life to do some particular actions. Obviously, MA student-teachers who applied for the graduate education after finishing an undergraduate program related to English should have different motivations that need to be revealed as there has to be a difference in these two levels of education. Moreover, it is important to note that teachers in the current study are officially employed in schools with a regular income and with no fear of unemployment. Hence, there has to be some other underlying reasons for these teachers' interest in MA. Uncovering these motivations would help design a curriculum that fulfills the expectations of MA student-teachers which in return enhance not only the achievement of those individuals in their career but also their professional practices as well as the quality of higher education.

On the other hand, being both a teacher and a student at the same time brings about some difficulties as both require considerable amount of time while fulfilling the responsibilities. Additionally, a variety of problems might emerge because of the dynamics of the process demotivating the MA student-teachers while pursuing their goals. However, keeping them motivated is important for their involvement in the process since it could contribute to their professional development as teachers by enhancing personal and professional skills. The more motivated they feel, the more they will be willing to engage in professional development activities leading the way for an increase in quality of education. Therefore, the challenges that they experienced have to be determined in order to create a work atmosphere that facilitates the interest for professional development and arrange MA program that supports teachers' desire to develop.

Considering the fact that there exist differences between males and females with regard to number, performance, and position in academia in favor of males (Bagilhole, 2002; Goastellec and Pekari, 2013; Yenilmez, 2016; Çobanoğlu 2018), the current study additionally intends to analyze gender differences in perceived impact, motivation, and difficulties. The findings, thus, could provide some additional data about gender differences between individuals before individuals step into academia. Additionally, even if it is not among the main concerns of the study, teachers and

lecturers are also examined independently to be able to understand the widespread impact of MA on them, their motivations and difficulties separately.

All in all, as being the first educational step towards an academic career, it is essential to pay attention to all of those aforementioned factors for the sake of increasing the quality of these kind of programs, raising more effective academicians and supporting teachers' attempts for professional development.

1.3. Significance of the Study

First of all, the findings of this study may fill the gap in the literature related to the role of MA as a professional development activity, thus, generate implications for teacher education and development which can be a useful source for teacher educators as it aims to shed a light on the impact of MA on teachers' professional development. Secondly, MoNE has launched some arrangements entitled 2023 Education Vision in which it is planned to establish graduate programs in an attempt to improve English teachers' competence and skills in their profession. The results of this study could provide preliminary data for policymakers to figure out whether the graduate education has the promising potential as a developmental activity regarding the arrangements and also help curriculum designers in terms of creating an efficient curriculum that satisfies the needs and fulfills the expectations of its attendants.

As suggested by a variety of studies, action research helps the professional development of teachers (Atay, 2008; Arslan and Başağa, 2010; Yuan and Lee, 2014; Kayaoğlu, 2015). Unfortunately, most of the ELT teachers in Turkey might not be aware of its benefits in finding solutions to problems in the classrooms. In addition, they might not know how to implement it or might find it difficult to conduct. However, the impact of action research on the professional development of teachers is considered to be valuable. Thus, teachers need to be convinced that they can take advantage of undertaking their own research in order to enhance their professional competency. The result of this study may lead ELT teachers to notice the viability of action research for everyday problems in the classroom and encourage them to take action for learning and implementing it in their own teaching settings.

Additionally, it is of utmost importance to take the needs and motivations of the individuals who will benefit from the education into consideration together with the difficulties they encounter because the determination of the difficulties may contribute to the regulation of education policies regarding in-service trainings of teachers in an attempt to facilitate the process and promote graduate education as a professional development opportunity. Furthermore, the results of the study may help university instructors implement the curriculum by planning instructional activities based on the needs, motivations as well as goals of individuals in order to increase the quality of

education. On the other hand, figuring out the challenges of the master students have during their education can enable authorities to make implications about why they drop out their master education and how they can be enhanced. Finally, the findings of the current study might also inspire other English teachers to study master's degree as they will be aware of what MA would contribute to them professionally and what kind of difficulties they would face during the education.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

This case study delves into the experiences of English language teachers (ELT) currently enrolled in an English related graduate program in an attempt to identify its impact on their professional development. Besides, the study investigates the underlying motivations affecting them for pursuing a master's degree and determines the challenges they experience during this journey. In the light of these aims, proposed research questions are:

1. What is the perceived impact of undertaking a master's degree related to English on ELT teachers' professional development?
2. What are the motivations of ELT teachers for pursuing the master's degree in the field?
3. What are the challenges ELT teachers experience during the program?

With these questions in mind, the following minor questions have been formed:

1. Is there any statistical significance between genders and instructor types (teachers and lecturers) in terms of perceived impact motivations, challenges?
2. What are the most and least dominant motivational factors for ELT teachers?
3. What are the most challenging factors for ELT teachers?

1.5. Limitations

The findings of the study cannot be generalized because the sample group of the study is relatively low and they cannot represent the whole population. Additionally, the interview was conducted on the phone as data collection process coincided with the pandemic called Covid-19, thus, the researcher could not observe the interviewees' facial expressions and body language which might have prevented the researcher ask extra questions to obtain richer data or conducting the interview in person could have created a more positive atmosphere in which participants would feel more comfortable and intimate. On the other hand, a small number of participants were volunteers for the interview. More participants could have provided richer data for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is dedicated to the review of literature first to provide insights about the significance of teacher development. Second, the role of in-service trainings and action research in the professional development of teachers together with the existing studies in the literature are presented. Additionally, it reviews the literature in terms of motivation to understand how important it is in the decision of the individuals' behaviors. Next, it gives information about the system of graduate education in Turkey and studies conducted regarding the difficulties graduate students experienced. Finally, 2023 Education Vision with respect to language teaching and ELT teachers is discussed.

2.1. Teachers' Professional Development

A brief discussion about teachers' professional development, which is the main concern of this study, is provided in order to gain deep insight into what the teacher development is, why it is considered as important and how it can be enhanced. Thus, the following chapters serve this purpose trying to make the issue being discussed clear to the readers of the study.

The education process consists of multiple components such as administrators, teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders. While each of these members is integral for reaching the overall aims of the system, teachers remain in a prominent position when it comes to accountability for student achievement (Borko, 2004; Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007; Visser, Coenders, Terlouw, & Pieters, 2010: cited in Bayar, 2014: 1). As a result of being the most fundamental component of the education system, the development of the teachers can be viewed as the key to the development of education. Teacher training is the first step to recruit as a teacher, yet, it is not the final to be an effective teacher because “a vital teaching profession and dynamic institutions need teacher involvement in continuous professional development” (Arslan, 1998:5). In other words, “no matter how good pre-service training for teachers is, it cannot be expected to prepare teachers for all the challenges they will face throughout their careers” (OECD, 2009: 49). Furthermore, “in this age of fast technological and social advancements, student needs are diversifying continuously along with the fast propagating knowledge” (Arslan and Kara, 2010: 134). Regarding these changing needs in education depending on the new technological, scientific, and social developments, it is an inevitable necessity for teachers to keep pace with these

developments and reflect these changes in their classrooms. As they engage with the students more than any other component, teachers must be aware of the latest trends related to curriculum, evaluation, theory, and practice. “This situation escalates the importance of teacher education and highlights the needs for specialization, practical applications and also; continuity and innovation in teacher education” (Ersoy, 2002: cited in Arslan and Kara 2010: 133). Keeping these facts in mind, teachers should be involved in professional development activities to update themselves, otherwise, they feel unable to fulfill students’ needs, interests, and deficiencies. It is obviously clear that “teacher professional development is essential to efforts to improve our schools.” (Borko, 2004: 2).

Bell and Gilbert (1994: 493) view teacher development as a teacher learning in which, “the teachers were developing their beliefs and ideas, developing their classroom practice, and attending to their feelings associated with changing”. According to Richards and Farrell (2005: 4), teacher development refers to “general growth which serves a longer-term goal and seeks to facilitate the growth of teachers' understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers.” In line with these definitions, they also point out the necessity of teacher development in ELT by stating that “knowledge about language teaching and learning is in a tentative and incomplete state, and teachers need regular opportunities to update their professional knowledge” (Richards and Farrell, 2005: 2). To them, an ELT teacher is in the need for seeking development due to the following reasons (Richards and Farrell, 2005: 4):

- Understanding how the process of second language development occurs
- Understanding how our roles change according to the kind of learners we are teaching
- Understanding the kinds of decision making that occur during lessons
- Reviewing our own theories and principles of language teaching
- Developing an understanding of different styles of teaching
- Determining learners’ perceptions of classroom activities

On the other hand, strategies for teacher development are various. As suggested by Crandall (2001: 535) specifically for ELT teachers, some of them are as following:

On the other hand, strategies for teacher development are various. As suggested by Crandall (2001: 535) specifically for ELT teachers, some of them are as following:

Participating in professional associations, subscribing to journals and regularly reading periodicals, participating in electronic (e-mail) discussion groups, working on curriculum or textbook development teams, attending or giving workshops and seminars, participating in summer institutes or special graduate programs, researching issues in your own classroom, working collaboratively with professionals and being mentored by experienced colleagues.

Garet et al. (2001: 920) categorize activities into two groups: traditional and reform. While the former refers to the ones that take place outside the classroom or school involving expertised leaders in a scheduled time, the latter occurs during the process of classroom instruction such as

coaching and mentoring. However, despite their importance, the most “professional development opportunities remain fragmented, poorly aligned with curricula and inadequate to meet teachers’ needs” (Borko, 2004; Cohen & Hill, 2001; Corcoran & McDiarmid, 2000 cited in Creemers et al. 2013: 3) or “ineffective in providing teachers with sufficient time, activities, and content necessary for increasing teacher’s knowledge and fostering meaningful changes in their classroom practice” (Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Stiles, 1998 cited in Garet et al. 2001: 920). This is also supported by Bell and Gilbert (1994: 483) as “many teachers feel a sense of frustration that even after attending an in-service course.”

In order to avoid teachers’ frustration and provide more efficient trainings, “identifying the characteristics or features of professional development is essential as it provides a starting point for formulating the teacher development process” (Evans, 2002: 133). The best way of achieving this goal is to consult the main source, which is the teacher in this case, and to get their opinions. This would enable the activities to serve the purpose and help the teachers develop themselves in line with their needs. How these training programs should be organized is clarified by Fullan and Hargreaves (1992: 5) as following:

Teacher development then, must actively listen to and sponsor the teacher’s voice; establish opportunities for teachers to confront the assumptions and beliefs underlying their practices; avoid faddism and blanket implementation of favored new instructional strategies; and create a community of teachers who discuss and develop their purposes together, over time.

2.1.1. Teacher Professional Development through In-service Trainings

Because of the rapid changes in the world and the fact that “teachers today remain in their positions for longer periods of time” (Guskey, 1986: 5), teacher training cannot make teachers competent enough throughout their profession. As a result, teacher development plays a crucial role in the success of the education system. The distinctions between these two concepts, training and development, made clear by Freeman (1982: 21) who points out that “training deals with the building specific teaching skills: how to sequence a lesson or how to teach a dialogue, for instance.” He on the other hand emphasizes that the main focus of the development is on the individual teacher—“on the process of reflection, examination, and change which can lead to doing a better job and to personal and professional growth” (Freeman, 1982: 21). In this vein, after receiving basic skills in teaching during the training, a teacher should expand these skills and knowledge by attending development activities. Accordingly, “the importance of in-service education (INSET) and continuing professional development for the teaching profession is increasingly acknowledged in countries throughout the world” (Fraser et al., 2007: 154). INSET is simply defined by Desmarais (1992: 4) as “any program or activity designed to have a positive influence upon the teaching and learning that is occurring within the school”. It is seen as “a key factor that influences the professional development of teachers and contributes to the improvement

of their knowledge through an active role” (Saiti and Saitis, 2006: 464). According to Veenman et al. (1994: 303), it serves three main purposes: “(1) to stimulate the professional competence and development of teachers; (2) to improve school practice; and (3) to implement political agreed-upon innovations in schools.” Therefore, it implicitly aims to “bring about a change in the learning outcomes of the students” (Guskey, 1986: 5).

In Turkey, INSET has been regulated by the National Education Principal Law (1973) with the item no 48 and implemented by In-service Training Department of the Ministry of National Education. According to regulations, INSET is organized on the purpose of the orientation of teachers to their working environment, gaining the knowledge and skills required by innovations or developing professional competence of teachers (MEB Hizmetiçi Eğitim Yönetmeliği, 1995: item 5). “In-service training activities used to be conducted solely at the national level until 1993 but these courses were very inadequate in terms of quality and quantity” (Bayrakçı, 2009: 17). Thus, “in 1995 provincial administrations were given authorization and responsibility to organize such activities locally” (Altun, 2011: 853). This allowed provincial administrations to plan trainings based on local needs and requirements. On the other hand, universities can also organize INSET depending on the Higher Education Institutions’ Organisation Law after 1983 (1983: item 5). This enabled MoNE and Higher Education Institutions to collaborate and increased the variety and quality of the trainings (Özer, 2004: 92).

A variety of studies were conducted related to INSET in Turkish context, some of which focused on different aspects of INSET. Studies which evaluated INSET programs revealed that these programs were not planned based on the needs of teachers (Ünal, 2010; Uysal, 2012; Koç, 2017), they were lack of quality in terms of its connection to the practice of teaching (Bellibaş and Gümüş, 2016) and they were consisting of theoretical based training sessions (Altun et al.2007) Similarly Uztosun (2017), who investigated INSET from the ELT teachers perspectives found out six main areas regarding the weaknesses of these programmes: the limited number of programmes on offer, the lack of qualified trainers, insufficient practical focus, poor lecturing, inconvenient time and place, and the perfunctory nature of the INSET offered. However, teachers reported that these programmes were effective in terms of promoting their professional development, personal development, and cooperation between colleagues. Supporting Uztosun’s findings, Bayrakçı’s study (2009) indicated that the most important problems facing in-service training activities in Turkey were a lack of professional staff, no collaborative partnerships between teachers, no provision for feedback and no systematic in-service training model. On the other hand, Altun and Gök’s study (2010) provided some insights about how an ideal INSET training should be. Teachers’ responses revealed that INSET should be given by a teacher with a PhD degree in the same province with the school during the seminar period. Additionally, topics should be determined by teachers based on their interests and they should actively take part in the training. More specifically, Arslan’s study (1998) suggested that teachers wanted more practical knowledge

such as dealing with crowded classes, teaching the four language skills, classroom motivation techniques, utilizing teaching materials, teaching techniques, and approaches as well as classroom management.

2.1.2. Teacher Development Through Action Research

Being the practitioners of theoretical concepts in real contexts, teachers are more aware of the problems arising in the class and difficulties students face both in the process of learning and teaching. It is the teachers' duty to find out solutions to these problems and difficulties that are directly related to their classrooms, thus, facilitate students' learning and create an effective learning setting for them. Put it differently, teachers should explore their own teaching context and enhance it by taking a researcher role. Making the process more systematic, reflective, and critical, "action research (AR) can be a very valuable way to extend our teaching skills and gain more understanding of ourselves as teachers, our classrooms and our students" (Burn, 2010: 1). That is mostly because it promotes teachers "to investigate what actually happens in the classroom with a vision of challenging and changing it when/where pedagogically necessary" (Kayaoğlu, 2015: 140).

As an inquiry-based approach to teacher development, action research can be defined as "any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers to gather information about the ways that their particular school operates, how they teach, and how well their students learn" (Mills, 2003: 1). "Undertaking research in their own and colleagues' classrooms is one way in which teachers can take increased responsibility for their actions and create a more energetic and dynamic environment in which teaching and learning can occur" (Hopkins, 2008: 1). It puts the teachers in the core of their teaching process as researchers and expects them to reflect on their practices and investigate the problematic areas in an attempt to enhance their classroom practices, thus, students' learning. "So, in AR, a teacher becomes an 'investigator' or 'explorer' of his or her personal teaching context, while at the same time being one of the participants in it" (Burn, 2010: 2). As a result, "the classroom is seen as a laboratory in which teachers are now encouraged to gain new ways of knowing and generating knowledge through their own participatory research with a view to arriving at the best ways of educating their students, which in return will enable teachers to rediscover their professional status" (Kayaoğlu, 2015: 143). By doing so, according to Kemmis (2009: 463), it has the goal of "changing three things: practitioners' *practices*, their *understandings* of their practices, and the *conditions* in which they practise". Moreover, "it aims to generate theoretical as well as practical knowledge about the situation and establish an attitudinal stance of continual change, self-development and growth" (Burns, 2015: 187). The reason why action research is considered as a professional development opportunity because, frequently, teachers test a new instructional strategy, assess a new curriculum program, or evaluate an existing pedagogical method (O'Connor et al, 2006). As a result, they find out the effective practices that work well in

the classroom setting and make sense of their classroom with their own experiences instead of doing what to do told by others. Regarding the fact that theoretical knowledge often fails to help teachers deal with realities in the classroom, action research would fill the gap between theory and practice. This is because in action research, “the focus of teachers’ attention is not on what theory says should happen in practice, but on how theory and practice inform one another” (Johnson, 2009: 98). Compared to traditional development methods, action research allows teachers to learn by doing as they are actively involved in the process.

On the other hand, one of the main characteristics of action research is self-reflection because, in order to be able to take action, teacher researchers have to think about their experiences in class. Burns (2010: 14) defines it as “a kind of ‘meta-thinking’ about what happened - reflecting on the decisions we made on, our students’ and our own responses, and on our thoughts and feelings about the lesson, and working out our reactions to it all.” This will enable the teachers to specify the problematic areas that need to be focused on before the research and see the effects of the action implemented after the research.

To date studies have shown positive outcomes related to action research on teacher development in Turkey even though the participants struggle through the process as some find it a demanding task and difficult to sort out (Atay, 2008) or time-consuming and hard due to the overloaded teaching hours (Kayaoğlu, 2015). Concerning the results more specifically, participants not only experienced growth in teaching efficacies, increased self-awareness, improved problem-solving skills and enhanced autonomous learning (Cabaroğlu, 2014) but also, they increased awareness of the teaching and learning, renewed enthusiasm about teaching and collaborated with colleagues about the possible solutions of the problems (Atay, 2008). Additionally, the study carried out by Kayaoğlu (2015) proved action research as a valuable tool, encouraging teachers to reflect on their teaching, to discover different aspects of their practices, to develop awareness on problematic areas and to search for new ways to develop themselves in their professions. Consistent with these findings, in Yiğitoğlu and Dollar’s study (2018), results indicated that some of the participants improved their teaching practice and contributed to their self-improvement. Similarly, according to the study of Arslan and Başağa (2010), doing action research studies both strengthened language teachers’ professional lives and helped them adopt a critical view of their professional practice.

Similar findings were also revealed in the international studies conducted about this issue. In the study of Yuan and Lee (2014) which was conducted a study in China with 15 ELT teachers, it was found that action research can be a critical source for language teachers’ professional empowerment despite the various constraints, such as a lack of research knowledge and skills, and the rigid school curriculum. In a similar study, a group of ELT teachers who investigated their teaching practices through collaborative action research revealed that they developed professionally

by co-constructing new knowledge and changing the way they taught. However, they further stated that the experience was time consuming and required coordinated efforts (Banegas et al., 2013). Aiming to explore teachers' perceptions and motivations, challenges, and needs with regards to doing research, Ulla et al. (2017) revealed that teacher-respondents had a positive perceptions towards doing research and its benefits to their teaching practice and students' learning process. However, challenges such as lack of research knowledge and skills, heavy teaching loads, and lack of financial support from the schools were reported. Another study carried out by Dajani (2015) concluded that action research helped teachers become more autonomous, be more accountable and responsible for their practices. Additionally, teachers in this study referred to time and the overload of work as the most important constraints.

2.1.3. Teacher as a Researcher

As suggested by Campell et al. (2004: 1), when something in the news or educational press intrigues a teacher how it might apply in his/her classroom, he/she has taken the first step as a researcher to resolve an educational issue. Even though it is the first step, being a competent teacher researcher requires more information and skills that need to be learned. Unfortunately, neither pre-service nor in-service trainings equip teachers fully with the necessary skills to conduct their own systematic research. On the other hand, aiming to raise future researchers, MA in educational fields not only provides teachers with theoretical knowledge about how to undertake research but also teaches them to put into practice theoretical principals by carrying out their own research. Therefore, it could be claimed that teachers could take the advantage of MA as a professional development activity with a view to learning a method from which they could benefit throughout their careers as a professional development activity.

Carrying out their own research has a manifold impact on teachers as suggested by the studies mentioned in the previous title. Therefore, conducting research should not only be pertained to scholars, teachers should be encouraged to carry out research, either. However, they "led to think that it is researchers—usually from universities or research institutes—who have the most credible ideas about how their (the teachers') practices should be conducted" (Kemmis et al., 2014: 25). Thus, considered as the objects of the education for a long time, teachers and their ideas were benefited from outsiders to test or produce theories related to education, whereas, being the insiders of educational practices, teachers could provide more detailed, concrete and specific knowledge that is linked with practice in research (Leong et al., 2007). Depending on their lived experiences, teachers could conduct more meaningful studies as researchers based on the realities of the classroom. In other words, their researcher identities empower teachers to resolve the issues distinctive to their classrooms instead of implementing precisely what is told by external educational researchers.

In addition to taking a critical and reflective stance toward their classroom practices, “teachers who engage in their own research are developing their professional judgement and are moving towards emancipation and autonomy” (Hopkins, 2008: 38). Similarly, Kemmis (2009) stated that teacher researchers gain intellectual and moral control over their practice. Furthermore, conducting research allows “practitioners be theorists and researchers” (Kemmis, 2009: 468). Consequently, teacher researchers who become autonomous and reflective “develop a more energetic and dynamic environment for teaching and learning, articulate and build their craft knowledge, and recognize and appreciate their own expertise” (Pine, 2009: 30).

2.2. Motivation

While there employs plenty of English teachers in schools and at the universities, only a few of them continue further education. Instead of engaging in free time activities appealing to them, why this minority English teachers go back to pupillage and encumber themselves with loads of responsibilities requires to have an understanding about the motivation with its types and how they shape human behavior which has been the main interest for researchers throughout the years. While some people are more energetic, active, and persistent to do something, others prefer being passive and stay effortless. This discrepancy in human behaviors triggered researchers to find out what influences individuals’ choices to engage in an activity, in this case, continuing education. Even though they did not come up with a definite consensus, the term motivation emerged and developed onwards. The word ‘motivation’ means “move to do” (Ryan and Deci, 2000b) which is basically used to explain the driving forces behind the human actions. However, it is a multifaceted phenomenon that is not easy to define clearly. According to the definition of Dörnyei and Ottó (1998: 65), it refers to:

The dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out.

Namely, it is “responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue it” (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 4). It causes people to initiate, maintain, or end an activity whether it is a daily chore or more complex action. As a result, it can be said that (Masgoret and Gardner, 2003: 173):

The motivated individual expends effort, is persistent and attentive to the task at hand, has goals, desires, and aspirations, enjoys the activity, experiences reinforcement from success and disappointment from failure, makes attributions concerning success and/or failure, is aroused, and makes use of strategies to aid in achieving goals.

On the other hand, the fact that human beings behave differently even in similar situations or contexts makes it obvious that motivation that is the main determinant of human behavior is affected from several variables such as the country they are living, the belief they trust, the talent they have or etc., namely, environmental and individual variables. Being unique in nature, the motivation every person has is frequently shaped by emotional and social factors. These factors have a prominent impact on individuals' decisions related to their career, education, personal preferences, or more. Moreover, they can lead to success as well as failure in people's lives. However, motivation is not a consequence but an ongoing process that can change anytime depending on the conditions. Sometimes, an affective or cognitive force that drives individuals to do a particular behavior may not be attractive or intriguing anymore, consequently, it causes loss of motivation and disappearance of the behavior. Regarding this result, therefore, it is not interesting when Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 6) emphasize "motivation does not remain constant during the course of months, years or even during a single lesson" and continue "it ebbs and flows in complex ways in response to various internal and external influences."

In this case, it is undertaking a master's degree related to English that is the particular action. While there are many advantages of having a graduate degree, it is not absolutely necessary for English teachers to survive their lives. Yet, they are willing to participate in the Applied Linguistics master program that enables them not only to obtain in-depth information about theories and methodologies related to research but also to develop a better understanding of language learning and classroom practice. English teachers' desire to enroll in MA can be derived from their interests, needs, and desires, or other external factors. These factors are meaningfully related to teachers' motivation that drives them to continue graduate education.

In addition to the amount of motivation that may vary, the orientation of the motivation may differ, as well (Ryan and Deci, 2000b: 54). That is, a person could be highly motivated as he or she has an interest or curiosity about the topic while the other is only motivated in order to get an approval of others (Ryan and Deci, 2000b: 54-55). Similarly, they can be urged into action because of personal fulfillment or family expectations. The former is caused by one's own desire, whereas, the latter is the result of an external factor, not necessarily the amount of the motivation could be at the same level. However, it is obviously certain that they both have different reasons to be motivated to do perhaps the same activity. As a result, different types of motivation and motivation theories came out derived from the various reasons that trigger individuals to perform an action. In particular, psychologists make a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

2.2.1. Intrinsic Motivation

From the time of birth, individuals decide to do different actions even though there is no specific award or praise for those actions. Stated differently by Deci (1975: 32), "people seem to

engage in the activities for their own sake and not because they lead to an extrinsic reward". Instead of an external reward, such factors as enjoyment, satisfaction, or curiosity trigger individuals to perform different activities such as doing puzzles, reading books, taking photos or etc. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 23) support this by stating that intrinsic motivation "deals with behavior performed for its own sake in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction, such as the joys of doing a particular activity or satisfying one's curiosity." Sometimes, these activities might be challenging or overwhelming, still, the person prefers engaging in those kinds of activities since they bring about an inner enthusiasm or satisfaction that is regarded as a reward, accordingly, it could be said that "he becomes fully absorbed in the activity and committed to it" (Koch, 1961: cited in Deci, 1975: 24). On the other hand, no matter how much a person is internally committed to the activity, he or she may give up doing it because of the changes in his or her interests and desires. This fact proves that intrinsic motivation can change, evolve, or diminish over time depending on the conditions.

In an attempt to clarify this situation, Deci and Ryan presented Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) in 1985 that "had the aim of specifying factors that explain the variability in intrinsic motivation" (Ryan and Deci, 2000a: 70). It suggests that environmental factors have an impact on intrinsic motivation that they can decrease or increase the joyfulness or satisfaction of the action as "the maintenance and enhancement of this inherent propensity requires supportive conditions" (Ryan and Deci, 2000a: 70). Furthermore, in order to be intrinsically motivated, as explained by Jones et al. (2009: 174), "individuals have the need to: be in control of their actions (be autonomous); be good at what they do (be competent); and have secure and satisfying relationship with the others (feel relatedness)." All in all, "the CET framework suggests that social environments can facilitate or forestall intrinsic motivation by supporting versus thwarting people's innate psychological needs" (Ryan and Deci, 2000a: 71).

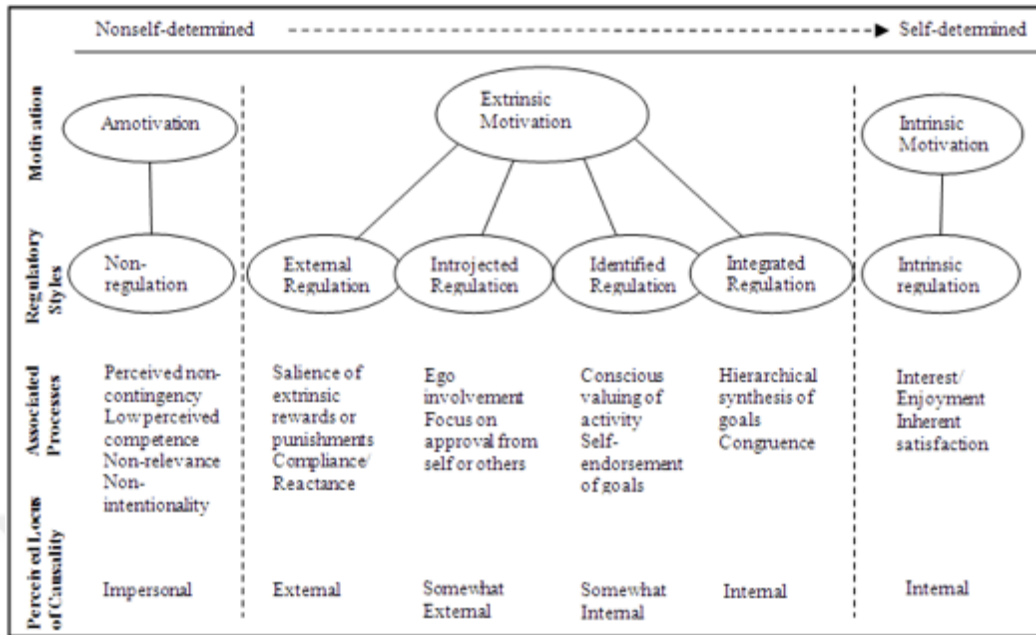
2.2.2. Extrinsic Motivation

Unfortunately, not every action of human beings can be explained by intrinsic motivation. It is apparent that individuals do manifold activities despite the fact that they do not feel an internal enthusiasm or satisfaction. On the contrary, the activities are performed due to their instrumental value such as earning more money, getting high grades and etc. As this could be the case, individuals also carry out some activities in order to avoid punishment or eliminate the undesirable situation (Ryan and Deci 2017: 14). In other words, behaviors, actions, and decisions of individuals are affected by the social values and needs that are constituted by the environment they are living in. These social values and needs act as stimulus that bring about external rewards resulting in the implementation of a particular action. Taking these aforementioned explanations into consideration, extrinsic motivation can simply be defined as "a construct that pertains whenever an activity is done in order to attain some separable outcome" (Ryan and Deci, 2000b: 60).

On the other hand, Deci and Ryan (1985) suggested Self-Determination Theory (SDT) where they “distinguish between different types of motivation based on the different reasons or goals that give rise to an action” (Ryan and Deci, 2000b: 55). Apart from making a distinction between two basic motivation types, intrinsic and extrinsic, “SDT proposes that there are varied types of extrinsic motivation, some of which do, indeed, represent impoverished forms of motivation and some of which represent active, agentic states” (Ryan and Deci, 2000b: 55). Stated simply, extrinsic motivation has different variations depending on to what extent they are controlled or autonomous. In order to have an autonomous behavior, one must internalize and integrate the action. “Internalization refers to people's "taking in" a value or regulation, and integration refers to the further transformation of that regulation into their own” (Ryan and Deci, 2000a: 71). An example given by Ryan and Deci (2000b: 55) promotes this statement “students can perform extrinsically motivated actions with resentment, resistance, and disinterest or, alternatively, with an attitude of willingness that reflects an inner acceptance of the value or utility of a task.”

Within SDT, Deci and Ryan (1985) proposed four different types of extrinsic motivation depending on the autonomy and control continuum (Ryan and Deci, 2017: 13-15). Illustrated in Figure 1, self-determination continuum starts with amotivation which means the absence of intention to act and the last phase of it is intrinsic motivation that enables autonomous and self-determined behaviors, whereas, extrinsic motivation is in between of them varying with regard to the degree of autonomy (Ryan and Deci, 2000b). Least autonomous extrinsic motivation is labeled as external regulation in which behaviors are performed because of an extrinsic reward or avoidance of punishment (Ryan and Deci, 2000a: 72-73). The second type of extrinsic motivation is introjected regulation which is also quite controlled (Ryan and Deci, 2000b: 62), yet, involves ego that means “a person performs an act in order to enhance or maintain self-esteem and the feeling of worth” (Ryan and Deci, 2000b: 62). On the other hand, identified regulation is the more autonomous one because people are aware of the personal importance of the behavior and they value it (Ryan and Deci, 2000b: 62). Finally, the integrated motivation which is the most autonomous extrinsic motivation “occurs when identified regulations are fully assimilated to the self, which means they have been evaluated and brought into congruence with one's other values and needs” (Ryan and Deci, 2000a: 73). Even though it has many common qualities with intrinsic motivation, it is still extrinsic since it has an external reward rather than creating enjoyment (Ryan and Deci, 2000a: 73).

Figure 1: Taxonomy of Human Motivation



Source: Ryan and Deci, 2017: 193

2.3. Graduate Education

Graduate education is reviewed in the literature on the grounds that it is employed as the medium of teacher development in this study, thus, to be able to have an advanced understanding and make more meaningful interpretations, how the graduate education system works are presented with the studies existing in the literature in the following.

According to Higher Education Law no. 2547, graduate education is defined as a higher education based on an undergraduate program aiming to reveal the results of education and research (Yükseköğrenim Kanunu, 1981: item 3). In other words, graduate education is a training program that develops a high level of specialization with a higher level of knowledge and effectiveness than a bachelor's degree by working in depth in a field (Çakar, 1997 cited in Baş, 2013: 62). It basically covers education after receiving a bachelor's degree and mainly consists of a master's and doctorate's program. Recently, there has been an increasing demand to enroll a graduate program because of societies' technological and scientific needs as it usually aims to raise experts in different disciplines. In this regard, it is expected from these experts to conduct and maintain researches which contribute to technological scientific and social developments of the society. Despite the possible differences in its objectives, graduate education aims to prepare the graduates in one of three broad areas according to Molseed (2009: 576):

To either prepare the student for further study (academic), to serve as a stand-alone training programme often associated with licensure issues and not intended to feed a doctoral studies (professional), and the applied or practitioner type with the intent of professional development.

Even though the application process and the requirements to apply a master's program differ depending on the university and the department, it commonly includes taking various exams and making interviews as well as preparing the documents that are required. Clifton (2009: 26) suggested these criteria depend on that "high quality programs use a combination of undergraduate grades, standardized examinations (GREs), letters of reference, and interviews to admit students; lower quality programs, of course, use fewer criteria and/or lower standards." The aim of setting these criteria is to be able to select candidates who are willing to acquire new knowledge, interpret ideas, think critically, and conduct researches. Individuals who do not have these skills most probably fail to complete their education, which is also the case most of the time.

The purpose of master education is providing students to gain the ability to access, compile, interpret, and evaluate information using scientific research methods (Lisansüstü Eğitim ve Öğretim Yönetmeliği, 2016: item 6). In order to achieve these goals in different fields, there exists a variety of programs in all majors which offer a high degree of specialization as well as depth (Vernardakis, 1998). On the contrary to undergraduate education, it enables individuals to master in a particular area in more detail. As noted by Molseed (2009: 575), it is arguable that "the educational purpose – be it at the elementary, secondary or post high level – varies over time resulting from political, economical or technical changes." As a result, nowadays, graduate education is not a prerequisite only for academic career but it also creates decent job opportunities for individuals in private and public sectors with better conditions.

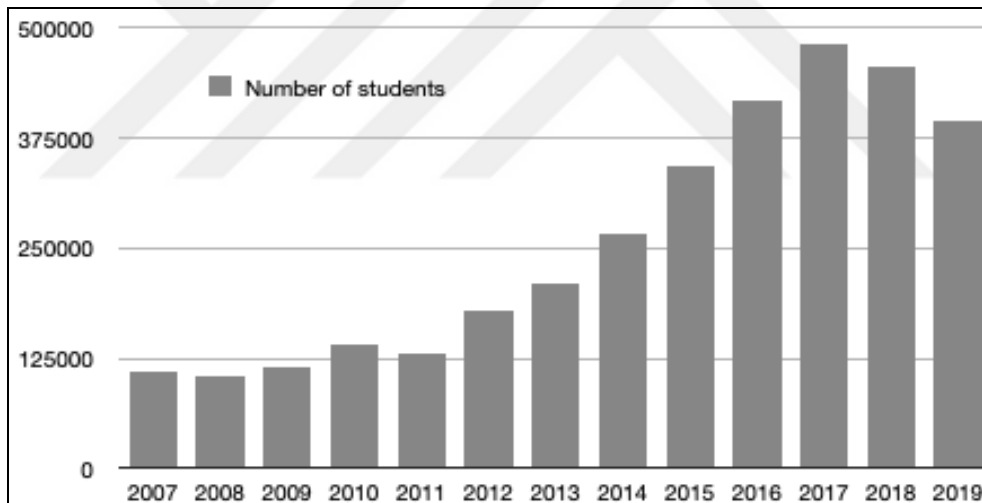
2.3.1. The Graduate Education System in Turkey

Graduate education in Turkey was carried out as a doctoral program based on 3 or 4-year graduate education which was on the basis of teacher-assistant relations until the end of the 1960s, skipping the master's degree (Karaman and Bakırcı, 2010: 99). After 1970, it was divided into two phases as master and doctoral program and master's degree was set as a prerequisite to apply doctorate, and "this education was provided by faculties of universities until 1982" (Karakütük et al., 2008: 43). After that, in accordance with the law of Higher Education numbered 2547 in 1982, institutions attached to universities were founded and assigned to implement this education in four different institutions which were educational sciences, social sciences, medical sciences, and institute of science. Aim (item 1), scope (item 2), structure (item 6), and function (item 7) of graduate education are regulated with respect to this law. As stated, the purpose of this law is to determine objectives and principles related to higher education and arrange guidelines about duties, functions, responsibilities, and authority of institutions as well as the guidelines related to

education, research, students, instructors and other personnels (Law of Higher Education,1981: item 1).

Master's degree can be carried out in two ways, with thesis or non-thesis (Lisansüstü Eğitim ve Öğretim Yönetmeliği [LEÖY], 2016: item 4). Provided that it is not less than 21 credits in total, master with thesis consists of at least seven courses, a seminar, and a thesis study (LEÖY, 2016: item 6). In order to achieve a master's degree, a graduate student has to fulfill these courses successfully in four semesters and present his or her thesis defense in a maximum of six semesters. On the other hand, even though the application process and requirements change depending on the universities, achieving a central entrance examination score, which is ALES in this case, more than 55 is the first prerequisite (LEÖY, 2016: item 5). In addition to this score, universities might request undergraduate grade average, language proficiency score as well as face to face interviews or written tests from the candidates to evaluate them (LEÖY, 2016: 5). Graduates who accomplish all these conditions entitle to enroll in the program.

Graphic 1: Number of Graduate Students per Year



Source: Adapted from yok.istatistik.gov.tr

According to data of the Higher Education Information Management System (Birim İstatistikleri (n.d.), <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr>), there are currently 12726 master programs in 702 institutions (493 public, 209 private) attached to 206 universities where the number of students enrolled in a master's program is 394174. As it can be seen in Graphic 1, the demand for a graduate program is increasing in time together with the variety of master's programs. It is clear from the table that the number of students increased most after 2012. This increase can be caused by "newly introduced non-thesis programs for branch teachers in addition to they may not require an ALES score since 2012" (Çetinsaya, 2014: 110).

Besides, there has been rapid and increasing changes in information and technology. Accordingly, the knowledge and skills achieved during higher education cannot make individuals successful throughout their lives. Consequently, “the duration of education is getting longer and pre-school education and postgraduate education are becoming widespread among other education levels” (Karakütük, 2001: 4). This is most probably because “the university is mainly responsible for producing, disseminating and ensuring the use of information while the objectives of other education levels are to transfer existing knowledge,” (Tuzcu, 2003).

2.3.2. Studies about Graduate Education

Though existing studies do not deal with the various aspects of English graduates pursuing a master’s degree in particular, similar studies focusing on different perspectives exist in general or for other graduates than English carried out in the world (Dust, 2006; Castle et al., 2013; Ion & Iucu, 2016; Kowalczuk-Wałędziak et al., 2017; Snoek et al., 2018) as well as in Turkey (Özmenteş and Özmenteş, 2005; Ören et al., 2012; Baş, 2013; Balcı, 2014; Öztürk, 2015; Nas et al., 2016; Karaduman, 2018).

One of the studied subjects is teacher development through a master’s degree. Looking through this perspective, Kowalczuk-Wałędziak et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative study in which they focused on the experiences of Polish and Portuguese teachers involved in doctoral education by exploring their motivations and perceptions of potential impacts on their practice. The results of the study indicated that personal motives and professional development were dominant factors in teachers’ decisions to pursue a doctoral degree. In terms of perceived impact, all of the interviewed teachers reported that they thought that holding a Ph.D. degree had had a positive impact on them as professionals, on their students’ learning outcomes and, to some extent, on their working environment. Similarly, in a longitudinal mixed-method study in order to determine the impact of in-service master of education programmes on teachers and their work environment between 2014 and 2017, the comparison of control and treatment group revealed that master of education programmes showed a positive impact on teachers’ pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge and skills, teachers’ use of innovative teaching strategies and the focus on their students’ learning outcomes (Snoek et. al., 2018).

With regard to teachers’ expectations from graduate education, Baş (2013) implemented a qualitative study with 14 teachers through semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study suggested four themes as teachers' expectations. These were academic, personal, occupational benefits, and the politics of the National Education. With the same goals, Özmenteş and Özmenteş (2005) reached the same results with Baş that teachers had academic and personal expectations from the master’s program. Additionally, they stated that they would like to gain a scientific approach and learn new approaches in depth and remedy the deficiencies in their fields. Delving

into the expectations of geography teachers from the master program, Balcı (2014) compared students' opinions before and after they started the program. Qualitative data demonstrated that while students' personal, academic, and vocational expectations increased after they attended the program, their social expectations such as status and prestige decreased.

In terms of motivational factors, motivational influences on the decision to pursue graduate studies in secondary music education were investigated by Dust (2006). The data collection tool was a survey consisting of both close-ended and open-ended response items. Intellectual development, personal development, and professional development were found to be the greatest motivational influences. Responses were also examined for differences based on gender. While men rated two motivational influences intellectual development and professional development as being of great importance in the decision to pursue graduate studies, women rated the motivational influences intellectual development, personal development, the potential for a new and satisfying career, and professional development as being of great importance in the decision to pursue graduate studies. Based on semi-structured interviews, Karaduman (2018) described the motivational orientations of adults in the pursuit of graduate education based on three classifications, namely goal-oriented, which was the most prominent theme, activity-oriented and learning-oriented. Interestingly, it was found that some of the individuals, especially males, developed avoidance-oriented motivations since instead of achieving something, they aimed to get rid of something such as military service. Moreover, a new category called mixed-oriented also emerged from the data as a combination of two or more categories.

From a different perspective, Öztürk (2015) focused on the evaluation of the master program in English language teaching by analyzing perceptions of the students, instructors, and program coordinator about the nature of the program regarding content, instruction, resources, and expected outcomes as well as the role of instructors. Data collected through a questionnaire, and reflective essays showed that certain aspects of the program such as instructors, content and contribution to professional development were found to be quite satisfactory although there were some weak aspects like the range of elective courses and balance between course loads.

As for the motivations of undergraduate students for choosing teaching in any field as a career, there conducted plenty of studies. While Erten (2014) reported intrinsic factors were the most influential motives and altruistic reasons were much fewer than the others, Balyer and Özcan (2014) revealed that students chose to teach mostly with altruistic-intrinsic reasons. Both of the studies examined the motivations in terms of gender and it was concluded that while females were more intrinsically motivated than their male counterparts in the former study, altruistic reasons were also rated more by females in the latter one. On the contrary, Topkaya and Uztosun (2012) found no significant difference between genders regarding motivation. Their study indicated that social utility and intrinsic values of teaching were important career motivations for the participants

which were followed by ability related beliefs. In addition to social utility value, personal utility value, and impact of prior teaching and learning experiences to choose teaching as a career were among the results of another study (Akar, 2012). Additionally, Kızıltepe (2015) found out that the main motivations of the freshmen students were having a worthwhile job/career; a stable salary; helping children and touching their lives; and personal satisfaction and improvement. Finally, fallback career appeared as a motivation to choose the teaching field in some of the studies (Akar, 2012; Topkaya and Uztosun, 2012; Erten, 2014).

In conclusion, it can be said that there are a considerable amount of studies investigating the motivations of undergraduates with their focus on gender differences even though they are not included in this review. Yet, there exist quite a few studies conducted to investigate the motivations of graduate students. Hence, this study attempted to fill this gap in the literature by focusing on the motivations of graduate students and differences in gender.

2.3.3. Difficulties Regarding Graduate Education

What this study aims to achieve is also to draw attention to the problems of MA student-teachers in their graduate education. This is of great importance since these individuals will contribute to the development of their countries whether as academicians who produce science or the teachers who raise qualified students for the future. Hence, “required attention must be paid to graduate education, and the problems in this regard has to be resolved” (Sevinç, 2001: 125). While doing this, authorities should receive opinions from the graduate students as well as the stakeholders of graduate education. This provides some insights to take necessary steps for the enhancement of the quality of graduate education on a stronger basis. For this purpose in mind, plenty of research was conducted to reveal the problems and difficulties that graduate students experience by giving ear to MA students’ voices in Turkey.

Aiming to uncover the problems doctorate students in general encountered, Özmen and Güç (2013) found that students had the most difficulty in communicating with their supervisors. In addition, participants experienced difficulty in accessing resources, transportation, social life, and financial issues. Furthermore, it emerged that working individuals, particularly the ones who employed in MoNE, had time problems because of their workload. Similarly, Yetkiner and İnce (2016) carried out a qualitative study with 10 master and 10 doctorate students in different majors for the same purpose. The results indicated that participants encountered problems such as foreign language, ALES (Academic Personnel and Postgraduate Education Entrance Exam) written exams, and non-objectivity of interviews at the beginning. During the ongoing process, it came out that some of the participants encountered the problem of getting permission from their working institution, distance, and time. Besides, ineffective courses, weak contact with the advisors, not being able to take the intended course and prejudices of lecturers were found to be as problematic

for the students. Similar findings were also obtained by Çepni et al. (2018) in their qualitative study with graduate students. They concluded that advisor support, dissatisfactory courses, financial problems, accessing sources, finding a thesis topic, transportation, foreign language, procedures in thesis writing, and social pressure caused difficulty for the students.

More specifically, there exist studies focused on the problems of teachers who enrolled in graduate education. Even though they suffered from common problems, difficulties derived from their profession appeared, as well. According to the study of Alabaş et al. (2012), it was revealed that MA student-teachers had difficulty with insufficient supervisor support in addition to attending courses because of the uncompromising attitude of the school principals while arranging the schedule at school or institutions that ignored the conditions of the students. Consistent with these findings, Öztürk and Dinç (2016) additionally unveiled that distance, elective courses inadequate in terms of diversity and offered hours and lastly, the content of the courses were found to be problematic by MA students-teachers. The content of the courses was explored to be problematic by another study as the participants stated it as outdated (Katılmış et al., 2013). Moreover, having difficulty in accessing resources in addition to attending courses because of the schedule at work were among the challenges participants experienced. Apart from these, Çalışoğlu and Yalvaç (2019) found out further that MoNE did not provide sufficient financial and moral incentives, and this discouraged MA student-teachers for continuing their education.

2.4. 2023 Education Vision

The present study intends to provide data about the effectiveness of MA as a professional development opportunity for English teachers, which is what MoNE aims to promote recently together with other educational enhancements. Understanding the scope and aim of these regulations is required so as to make further implications regarding ELT teachers and their development.

Ministry of Education (MoNE) has embarked upon new regulations and objectives that are expected to be achieved until 2023 regarding the education system of Turkey in an attempt to raise education standards and improve outputs and quality of it. This plan was announced under the title of 2023 Education Vision with the motto “Happy Children, Strong Turkey” soon after the new government was formed in 2018. It intends to create a leading and participatory educational community that is committed to values and culture as well as scientific and social enhancements. (2023 Education Vision, 2018).

Placing the human in the centre of education, it aims individuals to know and recognize themselves by individualizing the education process. According to the Vision (2018), every student should have equal opportunities for a high-quality education in which they use creative and critical

thinking and maintain life-long learning that leads them to be active citizens contributing to their country and world. The main component of this process is the teacher who is aware of individual differences and who knows that people learn differently. In addition, he or she identifies the readiness of children and arranges the curriculum, learning environment, and materials in accordance with these differences (2023 Education Vision, 2018: 21). Moreover, he is not only responsible for the evaluation of the students but also evaluation of his teaching skills besides being eager to continuous self-development (2023 Education Vision, 2018: 21).

This Vision contains a variety of goals related to every aspect of the education system that MoNE aspires to achieve. These aspects include measurement and evaluation, primary education, psychological counseling, inclusive education, life-long learning, pre-school education, vocational and technical education as well as foreign language education and more. Three goals have been determined related to foreign language education. The first goal is adjusting foreign language education based on the school type and level nationwide. In this framework, game-based learning, differentiated learning, and English for specific purposes will be applied respectively to 2-4th grades, 5-8th grades, and 9-12th grades (2023 Education Vision, 2018: 66). The second goal is that it will be provided for students to experience the English spoken world by means of new sources such as creating a digital environment in which they will be able to find the opportunity to interact with people whose mother tongue is English or else (2023 Education Vision, 2018: 69).

Last but not least, teachers' qualifications and competence will be strengthened in foreign language education (2023 Education Vision, 2018: 70). For these reasons;

- Online and face-to-face trainings will be provided to foreign language teachers in line with the philosophy of Lifelong Learning and they will be provided to work with teachers whose native language is English.
- Teachers and trainers will be sent to foreign teacher training certificate programs during the summer holidays.
- For qualified foreign language education, a National Foreign Language Education Council will be established which will determine language policies, language teaching standards, and classroom practices, and teacher competences in foreign language education.
- In addition to mastering the field methodology, opportunities will be provided for teachers to use digital resources.
- With the support of international organizations, higher education institutions, NGOs, all of the foreign language teachers will receive online, offline, and face-to-face international and themed training programs as well as master's degrees in a three-year time span.

It is a fact that English teachers' effectiveness is one of the key factors addressed in the vision for achieving success in foreign language teaching. For this reason, MoNE aims to develop comprehensive in-service trainings for foreign language teachers in order to enable them to maintain their professional developments since "advanced professional education is increasingly seen as an indispensable educational tool in (re)shaping the new profile of the teaching profession in progressively more complex and knowledge-based societies" (Frankham and Hiatt 2011; Lopes

et al. 2011; White, Fox, and Isenberg 2011; Galuzzo et al. 2012; cited in Kowalczyk-Walędziak et. al., 2017: 336). One way of developing professionally is to enroll in a master's program related to their field and MoNE will encourage English teachers to undertake a graduate degree. Therefore, determining the effectiveness of these programs will help make necessary implications for the usefulness of this investment.

All in all, after assigned as an English teacher, teachers should be involved in activities so as to develop their skills professionally and be effective throughout their careers. Even though there were various in-service training opportunities provided to teachers for this reason, they observed to have some limitations derived from methods of instruction, quality of the trainer, or fulfilling the needs of the teachers in a practical way. On the other hand, teachers are nowadays assigned a new role as researchers which make them the investigators of their own teaching practices. Therefore, they can address their own needs and problems particular to their classrooms by means of action research. Conducting action research enables teachers not only to learn by doing but also to handle the problems unique to their classrooms, consequently, develop their teaching practices. Although teachers have different motivations for pursuing MA ranging from external to internal reasons, it can also be benefited as a professional development program that is currently on the agenda of MoNE. However, it is not an easy task for teachers to undertake MA while they are working as both of them entail intensive requirements. Existing studies suggested that teachers mostly suffered from their workload and busy schedule at school. In addition, such problems as accessing sources, contacting with instructors or time and distance also appeared in the literature.

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology of the study. It includes a description of the research design, selection of the participants, data collection instruments as well as the piloting process, and data analysis procedure. Moreover, it provides justifications for the qualitative case study as a research methodology.

3.1. Research Design

This study follows a mixed-method research paradigm. “A straightforward way of describing mixed methods research is to define it as some sort of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods within a single research project” (Dörnyei, 2007: 44). Thus, “its methodological pluralism or eclecticism, frequently results in superior research (compared to monomethod research)” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 14). The reason why this study benefits from mixed methods is to “utilize the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research” (Creswell, 2009: 203) by “legitimizing the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions, rather than restricting or constraining researchers’ choices” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 17). Therefore, the quantitative phase of this study allows the researcher to make quantitative predictions by means of numerical data since one of the aims of the study is to compare two groups in terms of gender and instructor type. Also, in line with the aims of the study, quantitative data is practical in the determination of the most and least dominant factors regarding motivation and difficulties. On the other hand, in qualitative research method, “the stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants” (Bryman, 2012: 380). In this vein, the aim of this study is to understand MA program as a teacher development activity by receiving in-depth data about the experiences of MA student-teachers, and how they interpret those experiences. This is something that quantitative research fails to achieve. Hence, benefitting from the strengths of the mixed method, the researcher arrives at a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon as “the gaps left by one method can be filled by another” (Bryman, 2012: 637).

In this mixed-method paradigm, a case study design is adopted. According to Yin (2009: 28), “a case study is defined as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.” A similar definition made by Bogdan and Biklen (1998: 54)

describes the case study as “a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event.” In this regard, a case could be “people, a programme, an institution, an organization, or a community” (Dörnyei, 2007; 151). Similarly, in this setting, the case is an educational program (Master of Arts) and the study intends to seek a detailed examination of it as a professional development training in its real context without any manipulation. Furthermore, “case studies strive to portray ‘what it is like’ to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality of participants’ lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for, a situation” (Cohen, et al. 2007; 254). Accordingly, the data in this study is obtained from participants’ lived experiences revealing their thoughts about the impact of MA on their teaching practices, and difficulties they experienced during the education. Additionally, the case study strategy is preferred since the current study also examines why individuals decide to enroll in an MA program and case study is an effective strategy “when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions being posed” (Yin, 2003; 1).

3.2. Participants and Setting

In accordance with the main concerns of the study, it was implemented to MA students of Applied Linguistics at Karadeniz Technical University (KTU) during the 2019-2020 academic year. This university was chosen because of its accessibility as I was also a master student in this program. The university is located in the northeast of Turkey and was established in 1955. It has the characteristics of being one of the first universities established out of Ankara and İstanbul which are the metropolis of the Turkish Republic (Tarihçe (n.d.), <https://www.ktu.edu.tr/ktu-tarihce>). Incorporated in the department of Western Languages and Literature, Applied Linguistics master program was first introduced in the fall semester in the 2001-2002 academic year (Kuruluş (n.d.), <https://www.katalog.ktu.edu.tr>). In order to be awarded a master’s degree in this program, students have to successfully complete at least 21 credit courses, achieve at least 2.00 GPA out of 4.00 and successfully defend a thesis prepared in a related field (Kazanılan Derece (n.d.), <https://www.katalog.ktu.edu.tr>). The aim of the program is to train graduate students as well-equipped researchers by providing them information about contemporary foreign language education, the interaction of language and social life, contemporary measurement and evaluation methods used in language education, program development, material development and evaluation (Program Profili (n.d.), <https://www.katalog.ktu.edu.tr>).

Regarding the participants, the study employed a convenience sampling which “involves engaging individuals or research sites that are most accessible to you as a researcher” (Lochmiller and Lester, 2017: 328) since the population of this study consisted of the students in KTU, who were studying Applied Linguistics master program or graduated from the program and were working as a teacher or lecturer. The underlying reason to select participants employed as teachers or lecturers was to find out the impact of the master’s degree on their development as teachers. For

this reason, I, as a researcher, contacted with my supervisor and my friends from the same department in order to reach out as many e-mail addresses as possible and benefited from yoktez.gov.tr website in which the theses of graduated students were published together with their personal information. Yet, the ones whose e-mail addresses were not public were tried to be contacted through social media such as Facebook and Instagram. As a result of this endeavor, almost 50 people were sent an online form of the survey which they were kindly requested to fill out. After 2 weeks, only 21 people were surveyed, hence, a reminder e-mail was sent in order to increase the response rate. Thanks to this attempt, 37 participants in total responded to the online survey. Demographic information about the participants are summarized in Table 1 below.

3.2.1. Demographic Information of the Participants

The population of this case study consisted of 37 graduate students of Applied Linguistics program who were also working as ELT teachers and lecturers in the universities and schools. While teachers in this study referred to the ones working for MoNE, lecturers referred to the ones who were working at the English preparatory department at the university. As indicated in Table 1, lecturers outnumbered the teachers as the study included 22 lecturers and 15 teachers. With regard to gender, 26 of the participants were female while 11 of them were male. On the other hand, their ages ranged between 23 and 40. While 24 of them were the graduates of English Language Teaching (ELT), there were also 10 English Language and Literature (ELL), 2 Translation and Interpretation (T&I), and 1 American Culture and Literature (ACL) graduates.

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Participant

		Number	Percentage
Gender	Female	26	%70,3
	Male	11	%29,7
Age	23-30	13	%35,1
	31-40	24	%64,9
Undergraduate education	ELT	24	%64,9
	ELL	10	%27
	T&I	2	%5,4
	ACL	1	%2,7
Teacher type	ELT teacher	15	%40,5
	ELT lecturer	22	%59,5
Educational Status	Completed	21	%56,8
	Ongoing	14	%37,8
	Dropped out	2	%5,4

In terms of the sample groups' educational status (Table 1), 20 of the participants have already received their master's degree, 18 of whom got it between the years 2013-2019 while only

2 of them received it between 2006 and 2012. On the other hand, 14 of the population still continue their education in different years. There were 2 participants who had to drop out their education because they could not complete their theses in the maximum span of time, however, it does not have a detrimental effect on the findings of the study as they have already finished the course period successfully. This diversity of the sampling can notably produce richer data in line with the dynamic realities of MA education. While those who are in the program or just graduated can provide very valuable information about the program as their information and experiences regarding motivation and difficulties are fresh, the others who finished earlier can tell us about the impact of MA on their teaching in long term. Additionally, dropped students' ideas can be very rewarding in terms of the difficulties they experienced.

While sending the online survey, the professions of the individuals were taken into consideration, and the ones who were not employed as teachers or lecturers were eliminated. In the case that the occupations of the possible participants were not known, the researcher asked for participants not to respond to the survey if their jobs were different than the determined ones. In this regard, 22 participants stated that they worked in a university while 11 participants and 3 participants worked in a secondary and high school respectively. There was only 1 participant working in a primary school.

3.3. Research Instruments

3.3.1. Questionnaire

In order to develop a valid and reliable questionnaire, an intensive literature review related to the issue was done. Besides, since there might be some missing points, a fieldwork which “involves spending considerable time in the setting under study, immersing oneself in this setting, and collecting as much relevant information as possible and as unobtrusively as possible” (Mills and Gay, 2016: 563) was conducted. For this reason, it was kindly requested from several MA graduates to reply a few open-ended questions via Google Forms in this regard. This process continued until reaching a saturation point which means that no more new answers appeared. In the light of these answers, comprehensive literature review and piloting process, the questionnaire was formed.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections, the first part of which dealt with demographic information such as participants' age, gender, department of graduation, and level of teaching. In the other 3 sections of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to rate their agreements with the items on a 5-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. While the aim of the second section was to investigate the impact of undertaking MA on teacher development, the third section consisted of the items that try to find out the main motivational factors of the

participants for pursuing an MA. In this section, some of the items were adapted from the study of Dust (2006: 160). Additionally, participants were asked to add another motivational factor that was not included in the questionnaire if any. In the final part, which includes 20 items and one open-ended answer, it was intended to reveal the challenges graduate students had during the education.

3.3.2. Interview

Benefiting from the characteristics of mixed-method research, a semi-structured phone interview was carried out with 9 participants who were volunteers after the implementation of the questionnaire. The reason for conducting the interview on the phone was a pandemic which required social distancing, thus, prevented people to meet face-to-face. In order to implement the interview, participants were contacted via email or text messages and asked whether they would like to participate in the interview or not. In the end, 9 participants voluntarily attended the interview.

The interview was made up of 13 questions which aimed to explore the motivations, difficulties, and perceived impact on teacher development by focusing on their experiences during the education and comparing their previous teacher identities with the current one. The first question was designed to reveal the motivations of the individuals for pursuing MA while questions from 2 to 6 directly or indirectly intended to explore the impact of MA on the personal, professional, and academic development of teachers. 7th and 8th questions specifically investigated the academic outcomes of MA and obtained data about how they contributed to the academic world if they were eager. Question 9 both provided information about their opinions on whether teachers should undertake MA and implied what a teacher could gain from MA. The focus point of questions 10 and 11 was on the personal, professional, and academic challenges experienced during the education. By means of question 12, their ideas about the phone interview were also obtained in order to be sure whether they felt at ease with expressing themselves on the phone. Finally, the last question asked whether they would like to add anything more.

3.4. Piloting

Piloting the data collection tools is crucial for testing the practicality of them in terms of wording, accuracy, length, and ambiguity in order to increase the reliability and validity prior to its implementation. With this aim in mind, after negotiating the clarity, wording, and accuracy of items in the questionnaire with my supervisor, a few changes regarding the wording were made and one more item was added to the first part. In the second phase of the piloting, each item in the questionnaire was discussed with my supervisor and a PhD holder in an attempt to identify whether there was any ambiguous statement. Depending on their recommendations, further amendments were applied regarding the wording, syntax, and its design. Finally, three colleagues who were

working as English teachers and holding MA were requested to fill out the questionnaire and mark down the ambiguous and unclear items if any. After their feedback, the questionnaire was found to be satisfactory enough to carry out with the target group. On the other hand, due to the pandemic, interview questions were formed after negotiating with my supervisor via e-mail.

3.5. Data Collection Process

The data collection process of this study lasted almost two months after the questionnaire was formed. In order to collect the quantitative data, an online form of the questionnaire was prepared by means of Google Forms since the majority of the participants were not accessible vis a vis. After their e-mail addresses were obtained with the help of my supervisor and friends from the same department, the online form was sent to the individuals including a brief explanation of the study with its aim. However, only a few people filled out the form in the first attempt, thus, a kindly reminder email was sent to the participants after two weeks in case they might have forgotten about the questionnaire. In addition, the researcher also searched for more participants whose theses were published on the website of the Higher Education Council. While some of them were reached via email, social media was used to access the others whose emails were unknown. Thanks to this attempt, the questionnaire was filled out by 37 participants.

While the questionnaire worked in progress on one hand, the researcher, on the other hand, tried to contact as many people as possible for the interview. In line with this purpose, participants of whom phone numbers were available to the researcher were texted messages in which a copy of the interview questions was involved to ask them whether they would be volunteers for an interview. The others were emailed for the same purpose. While all the texted interviewees replied back positively immediately after the messages, only 3 of the emailed interviewees agreed to participate in the interview a few days later. Then, the times of the interviews were determined with the participants together according to their availability and convenience. This process completed in a short time as the interview was carried out on the phone and the participants had free time since they were not working or were carrying out distance education due to the pandemic. In order to be able to obtain clear and comprehensible recordings, I created a place free from noise and crowd for the interview. Prior to the interview, we chit-chatted about how life was going, the studies they were carrying out and the pandemic around the world in order to create a friendly atmosphere and reduce anxiety. In addition, I knew some of them in person and we had not talked for a long time. After the chit-chatting, I thanked them for agreeing to participate and informed them about the recorder. To be able to record the interview, I put them on the speaker on the phone while interviewing and used another smartphone's recorder. Then, I sent the recordings to my email address. During the interview, I sometimes asked some supportive questions to obtain more detailed data and reiterated some questions when they did not understand because of the line. Additionally, it was assured that interviewees would enquire about any item which they felt

ambiguous. Each interview lasted for almost 20 minutes with 9 participants who were kind enough to agree on follow up conversations when needed. While analyzing the qualitative data, it was noticed that there were some missing points that needed more clarification. For this reason, some of the interviewees were contacted again to make up the missing points.

3.6. Data Analysis Procedure

Since the current study benefitted from both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools, the analysis of the data was implemented in two phases. In the first phase, the quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, v.24.0). In order not to cause any confusion, codes representing individuals were assigned to each filled-forms and then, variables in the questionnaire were typed to the SPSS. Next, the data were transferred with their numerical values to the software so as to form numerical data. Once the data preparation completed, demographic information of the participants was displayed by means of descriptive frequency analysis, and the Cronbach’s Alpha reliability analysis of every three parts of the questionnaire was checked separately. The scores of Cronbach’s Alpha reliability were found as .943 for the first part, .705 for the second part and .917 for the last part as illustrated in Table 2 below. As Mills and Gay (2016: 191) highlighted about reliability coefficient, that is, “a perfectly reliable test would have a reliability coefficient of 1.00”, this scale can be considered as reliable and consistent which means that “students’ scores perfectly reflected their true status with respect to the variable being measured” (Mills and Gay, 2016: 191).

Table 2: Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Scores

Parts of the Questionnaire	Cronbach’s Alpha	N
Development items	.943	27
Motivation items	.705	12
Difficulty items	.917	20

Then, the frequencies and percentages of the items in the questionnaire were computed by means of descriptive analysis in order to find answers to the research questions. With regard to the research questions which aimed to reveal the statistically significant differences if any, the Mann-Whitney U test was applied since it allows to “test the difference of the medians of two independent groups” (Mills and Gay, 2016; 551). Additionally, in a further attempt to increase reliability, independent samples t-test was also employed after ensuring the normal distribution of the variables. As demonstrated in Table 3, the data could be considered normally distributed since in a normally distributed data, kurtosis and skewness should be between -1 and +1 (George and Mallery, 2010; Hair et al., 2014) and p-value greater than .05 indicates the normal distribution of the data (Mishra et al., 2019). Even though it was not common and might seem awkward to use both non-parametric and parametric tests for the same data, the results might be remarkable for

statistics and research itself. Furthermore, as the results achieved from both of the tests were consistent with each other, running two different types of tests had no damage on the reliability of the findings. Finally, in an attempt to find the most and least dominant motivational reasons and difficulties, the mean scores of the items were calculated and interpreted accordingly.

Table 3: Normality Test Results

Variables	Skewness		Kurtosis		Shapiro-Wilk	
	Statistic	Std. error	Statistic	Std. error	Statistic	Sig.
Development_mean	-.496	.388	-.129	.759	.966	.314
Motivation_mean	-.173		.780		.975	.558
Difficulty_mean	.056		-.410		.979	.691

In the qualitative phase of the analysis, the recorded data were first transcribed to plain text and printed out so as to have the whole data in hand and organize it properly. Next, each interviewee was assigned a number. Then, the data were read several times as qualitative analysis requires “making sense of data in terms of the participants’ definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities” (Cohen et al., 2007: 461). While getting familiar with the data, common phrases and most repeated answers were underlined and labeled so as to induce themes regarding the research questions. After this procedure, relevant data were categorized and sample quotations were highlighted in order to present in the study. Next, the obtained data were reported and interpreted under the relevant categories. This report of analysis was further checked and discussed with my supervisor and finally, a few changes were made regarding the categories and quotations.

With regard to reliability and validity of qualitative data achieved in this study, it can be claimed that the findings of this qualitative analysis are reliable firstly because of the fact that the data was triangulated which is a worthy strategy “a qualitative researcher can use to ensure consistency and dependability or reliability” (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016:252). An additional strategy that increases the validity is to “present negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes” (Creswell, 2009:192). For this purpose, some negative ideas or feelings which were revealed from the qualitative data were also presented in the qualitative analysis section. Finally, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested peer review as a valuable strategy to increase the reliability and validity of qualitative data. Thus, it could be said that the qualitative findings of the current study were peer-reviewed since my supervisor examined the qualitative analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings of the quantitative and qualitative data collection tools are presented respectively. While the quantitative data collected through questionnaires were analyzed by means of SPSS (v.24.0), qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews were examined in the light of content analysis. Both intended to serve the aims of the study which were to gain insights about the perceived impact of MA on teacher development, identifying the motivations for pursuing MA, and determining the difficulties MA students experienced during the education.

4.1. Analysis of Quantitative Data

4.1.1. The Impact of Master Program on Teacher Development

A total of 27 items in the questionnaire served to investigate the impact of the Applied Linguistics master's program on teacher development. When the findings of this part in the questionnaire were analyzed via descriptive statistics, it was seen that participants benefited from MA quite positively in terms of teacher development despite a few issues which remained neutral (Table 4). The first item was related to participants' critical thinking skills and it was observed that a vast majority of participants (91.9%) agreed that MA enhanced their critical thinking skills. While a remarkable number of participants (91.8%) stated that they developed their research skills, only less than half of the participants (43.2) believed that they enhanced their assessment skills due to MA, and 32.4 of them remain undecided.

With regard to the enhancement of pedagogical skills, 62.2% of the respondents marked it as agreed. Yet, the number of participants who indicated that MA improved their content knowledge was more than those (89.2%). Moreover, it was meaningful to notice that almost all of the participants (91.9%) affirmed that it increased their self-confidence in their works. Additionally, more than half of them (54%) stated that they were now more aware of students' individuality. Furthermore, plenty of respondents (70.2%) agreed that MA helped them increase their motivation toward their work. Similarly, 70.9% of MA students responded that it enhanced their curiosity toward their work. It was remarkable to observe that enhancement of researcher identity, on the other hand, was another impact of MA on a considerable number of participants (89.1%).

Table 4: Perceived Impact of MA on Teacher Development

A. Master's degree enhanced;	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
1. My critical thinking skills.	29.7	11	62.2	23	-	-	8.1	3	-	-
2. My research skills.	48.6	18	43.2	16	5.4	2	2.7	1	-	-
3. My assessment skills in class.	10.8	4	32.4	12	32.4	12	21.6	8	2.7	1
4. My pedagogical skills.	10.8	4	51.4	19	16.2	6	18.9	7	2.7	1
5. My content knowledge.	37.8	14	51.4	19	8.1	3	-	-	2.7	1
6. My self-confidence in my work.	35.1	13	56.8	21	5.4	2	2.7	1	-	-
7. My awareness of the students' individuality.	18.9	7	35.1	13	24.3	9	13.5	5	8.1	3
8. My motivation toward my work.	29.7	11	40.5	15	16.2	6	10.8	4	2.7	1
9. My curiosity about my profession.	40.5	15	32.4	12	21.6	8	5.4	2	-	-
10. My researcher identity.	48.6	18	40.5	15	5.4	2	5.4	2	-	-

As for the participants' foreign language skills (Table 5), they (91.9%) most agreed upon that MA helped them develop academic writing skills in English while 54% of them stated that they enhanced their speaking skills. Reading comprehension was also believed to be improved by a considerable number of MA students (70.2%). Unlike the previous item, plenty of attendants (32.4) remained undecided whether or not MA helped them improve their listening skills while there were still 37.8% of participants who agreed on that they developed their listening skills due to MA.

Table 5: Perceived Impact of MA on Foreign Language Skills of Participants

A. Master's degree enhanced;	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
11. My academic writing skills in English.	40.5	15	51.4	19	2.7	1	2.7	1	2.7	1
12. My oral proficiency skills in English.	18.9	7	35.1	13	29.7	11	10.8	4	5.4	2
13. My reading comprehension skills in English.	27.0	10	43.2	16	16.2	6	8.1	3	5.4	2
14. My listening comprehension skills in English	10.8	4	27	10	32.4	12	21.6	8	8.1	3

On the other hand, the rest of the items regarding teacher development was presented in Tables 6 and 7. According to the results indicated in Table 6, 83.8% of the participants remarkably pointed out that they gained a reflective vision in their work. Regarding entrepreneurship, more than half of them (64.8%) declared that they became more entrepreneur. More than half of the participants (59.4%) agreed that they improved their teaching practices in the classrooms. A considerable number of MA students (81%) believed that it enhanced their career opportunities, whereas, the item that “I overcome behavioral problems in class more effectively” was neither agreed nor disagreed by the majority of the participants (35.1%). With respect to the same item, 37.8% of the participants considered that MA was not helpful. More than half of the participants (54%) stated that they became more autonomous in the classroom thanks to MA. In addition to this, a considerable number of respondents (69.4%) believed that they became more aware of their teacher identity.

Table 6: Perceived Impact of MA on Teacher Development

B. Thanks to Master’s degree;	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
15. I acquired a reflective vision in my work.	24.3	9	59.5	22	10.8	4	5.4	2	-	-
16. I became more entrepreneur.	21.6	8	43.2	16	18.9	7	13.5	5	2.7	1
17. I improved my teaching practices in class.	21.6	8	37.8	14	16.2	6	18.9	7	5.4	2
18. I have more career opportunities.	35.1	13	45.9	17	5.4	2	13.5	5	-	-
19. I overcome behavioral problems in class more effectively.	5.4	2	21.6	8	35.1	13	24.3	9	13.5	5
20. I became more autonomous in my teaching in class.	16.2	6	37.8	14	27.0	10	10.8	4	8.1	3
21. I became aware of my teacher identity.	18.9	7	40.5	15	21.5	8	13.5	5	5.4	2

Demonstrated in Table 7, there were predominantly many participants (86.5%) who considered that they knew better how to develop themselves in their professions thanks to MA. What is more, 43.2% of them marked that they participated in in-service training more than before while 48.6% of the respondents stated that they collaborated with their colleagues more than before. On the other hand, it was meaningful to see that quite a lot of participants (75.6%) are now more aware of the innovations in their field. Similarly, a vast majority of MA students (91.9%) agreed that they are now more aware of the publications in academic journals thanks to MA. However, in terms of its effect on dealing with administrative problems at school, most of the participants (37.8%) preferred remaining neutral.

Table 7: Perceived Impact of MA on Teacher Development

B. Thanks to Master's degree;	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
22. I know better how to develop myself in my profession.	35.1	13	51.4	19	5.4	2	8.1	3	-	-
23. I participate in-service trainings more than before.	13.5	5	29.7	11	18.9	7	27.0	10	10.8	4
24. I collaborate with my colleagues more than before.	13.5	5	35.1	13	21.6	8	24.3	9	5.4	2
25. I am now more aware of the innovations in my profession.	27.0	10	48.6	18	10.8	4	10.8	4	2.7	1
26. I am now aware of the publications in academic journals.	51.4	19	40.5	15	5.4	2	2.7	1	-	-
27. I am able to deal with the administrative problems arising at school more effectively.	16.2	6	16.2	6	37.8	14	16.2	6	13.5	5

All in all, when observed generally, participants found MA influential in developing themselves as teachers since they believed it contributed to them a lot in terms of the skills necessary for effective teaching. Apart from enhancing their content and pedagogical knowledge which can be regarded as the most basic skills in teaching, the skills they gained thanks to MA could vary from reflective thinking to self-confidence. Besides, MA also raised their academic abilities allowing them to enhance their researcher identities and meeting them with publications in academic journals. However, they were not sure whether or not having a master's degree improved their abilities to overcome behavioral or administrative problems at the school. Not surprisingly, academic writing ability was found to be the most enhanced skill when compared to other language skills.

With regard to another concern of the study which aimed to figure out if there were any significant differences between males and females in terms of their beliefs of MA on their development as teachers, initially, Mann-Whitney U test was conducted due to the frequency data. Upon deciding the data were normally distributed by examining kurtosis, skewness, and Shapiro-Wilk test values (see Table 3), independent samples t-test was conducted in a further attempt to increase reliability. Depending on the results of these analyses, it was revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between males and females since p-values were measured as higher than .05 in both of the tests as illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8: Gender Differences in Perceived Impact

				Mann-Whitney U Test			Independent Samples T-test		
	Gender	N	Mean	U	Z	P	Mean	T	P
Teacher development	female	26	19.52	129.500	-.449	.653	3.8077	.902	.382
	male	11	17.77				3.5690		

In an attempt to compare beliefs of individuals in terms of instructor types, lecturers and teachers in this case (so as to make it clear and simple, teachers refer to the instructors working in MoNE schools and lecturers refer to the instructors working at the universities in this study), a similar process was followed. One by one analysis of the items uncovered a few differences between teachers and lecturers (Table 9).

Table 9: Teacher and Lecturer Differences in Perceived Impact

		Mann-Whitney U Test				Independent Samples T-test			
	Instructor Types	N	Mean	U	Z	P	Mean	T	P
My oral proficiency skills in English.	Teacher	15	23.60	96.000	-2.222	.026	4.0000	2.637	.013
	Lecturer	22	15.86				3.1818		
My reading comprehension skills in English.	Teacher	15	23.10	103.500	-2.011	.044	4.2667	2.622	.013
	Lecturer	22	16.20				3.4545		
My listening comprehension skills in English	Teacher	15	24.73	79.000	-2.757	.006	3.6667	2.896	.006
	Lecturer	22	15.09				2.6818		
I am now more aware of the innovations in my profession.	Teacher	15	23.37	99.500	-1.437	.029	4.3333	2.705	.011
	Lecturer	22	16.10				3.5455		

According to the results, these differences were mostly related to language proficiency skills. As demonstrated in Table 9, p-values were found lower than the value .05 ($p < .05$) based on the results of both Mann-Whitney U test and independent samples t-test. Therefore, mean ranks revealed that teachers working for MoNE believed to enhance their oral proficiency, reading, and listening comprehension in English thanks to MA more than lecturers. Moreover, they more strongly believed that MA informed them about innovations in their professions when compared to lecturers.

4.1.2. Motivational Factors for Pursuing MA

With regard to the second research question which intended to reveal the motivational reasons of the graduate students, participants responded to 12 items. Frequencies and percentages

of the items were presented in Table 10. As it was obvious from the table, the highest frequencies and rates were indicated as bolds. According to these results, it was meaningful to observe that 75.6% of the participants agreed to pursue a MA because of the potential for a new career. With regard to 30th and 31st items, the results were notably the same and all of the participants (100%) stated their motivations as intellectual and personal development. Besides, it was remarkable to see that professional development was predominantly (81%) marked as the agreed motivational reason. Furthermore, participants were hesitant about potential monetary gain as a motivational factor because the rates were close. While 35.1% of the participants agreed on it as a motivational factor, almost half of them (43.2%) disagreed. On the other hand, a considerable number of participants (78.4%) reported prestige as a motivation to undertake MA.

Next, less than half of the participants (45.9%) stated that they were influenced by other people to pursue a MA, whereas, it was interesting to observe that majority of MA student-teachers (64.8%) agreed upon the reason that they needed to refresh and regain enthusiasm for teaching. More than half of the participants (56.7) pointed out that they wanted to use their free time more effectively. Although the rates of dissatisfaction with the current/previous job as a motivational factor were very close, 45.9% of the participants did not regard it as a motivation for MA. Unlike this item, language development was considered as a motivational factor by more than half of the respondents with a rate of 51.3%. Finally, plenty of students (75.6%) notably disagreed upon the item which was ‘having no other better option’ as a motivational reason. On the other hand, no additional motivation appeared in the open-ended item in the questionnaire.

Table 10: Motivational Factors to Pursue MA

I decided to pursue Master’s degree because of;	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
29. Potential for a new career	32.4	12	43.2	16	10.8	4	8.1	3	5.4	2
30. Intellectual development (commitment to learning)	51.4	19	48.6	18	-	-	-	-	-	-
31. Personal development (know myself better)	51.4	19	48.6	18	-	-	-	-	-	-
32. Professional development	37.8	14	43.2	16	10.8	4	8.1	3	-	-
33. Potential monetary gain (income enhancement)	8.1	3	27.0	10	21.6	8	27.0	10	16.2	6
34. Prestige	21.6	8	56.8	21	8.1	3	2.7	1	10.8	4
35. Influence of another (university professor, colleague, etc.)	10.8	4	35.1	13	27.0	10	10.8	4	16.2	6
36. Need to refresh (to get a break from the classroom)	29.7	11	35.1	13	24.3	9	8.1	3	2.7	1
37. The idea of using free time more effectively.	16.2	6	40.5	15	16.2	6	18.9	7	8.1	3

Table 10: (Conninue)

I decided to pursue Master's degree because of;	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
38. Dissatisfaction with my current/previous job.	13.5	5	27.0	10	13.5	5	29.7	11	16.2	6
39. Language development.	13.5	5	37.8	14	10.8	4	16.2	6	21.6	8
40. Having no other better option.	2.7	1	5.4	2	16.2	6	35.1	13	40.5	15

In order to find out the most dominant motivational factors of the individuals, mean scores were determined for each item in the questionnaire. Illustrated in Table 11, 'intellectual development', 'personal development' with a mean of 4.51, and 'professional development' with a mean of 4.10 were ranked as the most influential reasons to pursue MA. When these factors were taken into consideration, it could be deduced that participants were motivated intrinsically rather than extrinsically.

Table 11: Most Dominant Motivational Factors

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
29. Intellectual development (commitment to learning, intellectual satisfaction)	37	4.5135	.50671
30. Personal development (know myself better, self-actualization)	37	4.5135	.50671
31. Professional development (direct application of learning to classroom teaching)	37	4.1081	.90627

In terms of the least influential motivational factors, 'having no other better option' ranked last with a mean of 1.94. On the other hand, the mean scores of the items 'dissatisfaction with current/previous job (2.91)' and 'potential monetary gain (2.83)' demonstrated that these two reasons were also low motivators in pursuing MA (Table 12).

Table 12: Least Influential Motivational Factors

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
37. Dissatisfaction with my current/previous job.	37	2.9189	1.34119
32. Potential monetary gain (income enhancement)	37	2.8378	1.23634
39. Having no other better option.	37	1.9459	1.02594

In an attempt to compare motivation scores of male and female participants, the Mann-Whitney U test and independent samples t-test were utilized. As a result of the analyses, it was discovered that there was not a significant difference between genders because the significance level was found as .086 in Mann-Whitney U test and .123 in independent samples t-test and both of them are bigger than the alpha level ($p=.05$) as indicated in Table 13.

Table 13: Gender Differences in Motivation

			Mann-Whitney U Test				Independent Samples T-test		
	gender	N	Mean	U	Z	P	Mean	T	P
Motives	female	26	20.98	91.500	-1.716	.086	3.5769	1.579	.123
	male	11	14.32				3.2803		

Instructor types were also compared via the Mann-Whitney U test and independent samples t-test to see whether there was a significant difference between teachers and lecturers (Table 14). It was observed that there was a statistically significant difference only in one item which was the language development because p-value in both of the tests was found to be .018 which is lower than .05. Hence, it could be said that language development was a more motivating reason to pursue MA for teachers than lecturers. Because of frequency data, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was employed at first, additionally, independent samples t-test was also conducted upon the normality analysis even though it was not common and there were different opinions and objections about it. However, it was interesting to observe that the parametric test revealed the same result with the non-parametric version of it.

Table 14: Teacher and Lecturer Differences in terms of Motivation

			Mann-Whitney U Test				Independent Samples T-test		
	Instructor Types	N	Mean	U	Z	P	Mean	T	P
Language development	Teacher	15	23.90	91.500	-2.374	.018	3.6667	2.482	.018
	Lecturer	22	15.66				2.5909		

In brief, analysis of the motivations uncovered that participants mostly pursue MA because of their internal desires such as intellectual development, personal development, and professional development. On the other hand, reasons such as dissatisfaction in their job, income enhancement and having no other better option had the least impact on individuals' decisions for undertaking a master's degree. Prestige which could be considered as an external factor was also an effective motivator in the decision of participants. While any gender differences were not observed in terms of difficulty, teachers agreed more than lecturers on language development as a motivational factor.

4.1.3. Difficulties MA Students Experienced

In line with the 3rd research question, the fourth part of the questionnaire which was made up of 21 items was dedicated to bringing light to difficulties ELT master students had during the education.

Analysis of the items in this part revealed that there were items which participants agreed as many as they disagreed. In this regard, what participants agreed and disagreed presented in separate tables (Table 15 and 16). In terms of the challenges they faced (Table 15), it was meaningful to see that a great majority of participants (81%) had difficulty in balancing their work and MA course requirements. Similarly, more than half of them (56.7%) found academic writing difficult. Even though the rates were very close, fulfilling the requirements of the courses was considered as difficult by 37.8% of the participants. With respect to written assignments, more than half of the MA students (55.9%) agreed upon its difficulty. On the other hand, according to 54% of participants, it was not easy to select courses because of the limited number of elective courses. While almost half of the respondents (40.5%) emphasized that it was challenging to link theory with practice, 37.8% of them had difficulty in contacting with instructors. Moreover, 48.6% of the participants marked planning their time effectively as difficult. Finding a thesis topic was observed to be challenging with a rate of 54%, as well. While 56.7% of the participants declared difficulty in adapting work and university hours, less than half of the MA students (45.9%) had difficulty in attending courses because of the long distance.

Table 15: Difficulties MA Students Experienced

I had difficulty in.....during MA.	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
42. Balancing my current work and MA course requirements.	35.1	13	45.9	17	8.1	3	8.1	3	2.7	1
43. Academic writing.	18.9	7	37.8	14	10.8	4	13.5	5	18.9	7
48. Fulfilling the requirements of the courses.	10.8	4	27.0	10	21.6	8	24.3	9	16.2	6
49. Preparing written assignments.	13.5	5	32.4	12	10.8	4	24.3	9	18.9	7
52. Course selection because of limited number of elective courses.	18.9	7	35.1	13	16.2	6	16.2	6	13.5	5
54. Linking theory with practice.	10.8	4	29.7	11	24.3	9	21.6	8	13.5	5
56. Contacting with instructors.	8.1	3	29.7	11	16.2	6	27.0	10	18.9	7
57. Planning my time effectively.	16.2	6	32.4	12	10.8	4	24.3	9	16.2	6
58. Finding a thesis topic.	27.0	10	27.0	10	13.5	5	24.3	9	8.1	3
60. Adapting my work and university hours.	24.3	9	32.4	12	10.8	4	24.3	9	8.1	3
61. Attending courses because of the long distance.	29.7	11	16.2	6	13.5	5	16.2	6	24.3	9

On the other hand, there were a few issues that participants disagreed upon as difficult which could be seen in Table 16. One of them was participating in in-class discussions since it was not regarded as a challenging activity by 54% of the participants. Similarly, a majority of the students (70.2%) disagreed that using English as a medium of communication in classes was difficult. A remarkable number of respondents (59.4%) stated that they did not experience difficulty in accessing the resources. Furthermore, neither preparing presentations (56.7%) nor presenting them orally (62.1%) in classes were considered as challenging by the majority of respondents. With regard to examinations, a considerable number of MA students (62.1%) stated that they did not have difficulty in passing the examinations. More than half of the respondents, 54% and 51.3% respectively, declared that they neither had difficulty in comprehending the courses due to the methods of instruction nor they stated difficulty in courses because of not having enough background knowledge. Finally, it was not regarded as challenging to make research for more than half of the MA student-teachers (54%).

With regard to open-ended item seeking for extra difficulties if any, taking feedback, long class sessions and communication with instructors came out from three different participants.

Table 16: Issues Participants Disagreed as Difficult

I had difficulty in.....during MA.	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
46. Participating in-class discussions.	-	-	21.6	8	24.3	9	27.0	10	27.0	10
47. Accessing academic resources.	2.7	1	18.9	7	18.9	7	37.8	14	21.6	8
50. Preparing presentations.	8.1	3	21.6	8	13.5	5	35.1	13	21.6	8
51. Passing examinations.	8.1	3	8.1	3	21.6	8	37.8	14	24.3	9
53. Comprehending the courses because of the methods of instruction.	5.4	2	21.6	8	18.9	7	29.7	11	24.3	9
55. Making research.	8.1	3	32.4	12	5.4	2	37.8	14	16.2	6
59. The courses because of not having enough background knowledge.	8.1	3	21.6	8	18.9	7	29.7	11	21.6	8
44. Using English as a medium of communication in classes.	5.4	2	2.7	1	21.6	8	37.8	14	32.4	12
45. Making oral presentations in classes.	5.4	2	16.2	6	16.2	6	35.1	13	27.0	10

One of the concerns of the study was to figure out the most difficult issues for the MA student-teachers. Therefore, the mean score and standard deviation of each item were calculated and ordered descending means. According to these results, Table 17 was generated. As can be seen from Table 17, the most dominant difficulty for the participants was balancing their current work and MA course requirements with a mean of 4. The mean score of adapting work and university

hours was 3.37, thus, making it the second difficult issue. While these two factors were related to occupations of the participants, finding a thesis topic ranked third as a difficulty for these MA student-teachers.

Table 17: The Most Difficult Issues

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
40. Balancing my current work and MA course requirements.	37	4.0000	1.00000
58. Adapting my work and university hours.	37	3.3784	1.29853
56. Finding a thesis topic.	37	3.3784	1.36120

Regarding gender differences in terms of perceived difficulties, comparison of males and females via Mann-Whitney U test and independent samples t-test so as to figure out who had more difficulty revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females (Table 18). As demonstrated in Table 18, the p-value was computed as .907 and .947 by means of both parametric and non-parametric tests and these values are bigger than .05.

Table 18: Gender Differences in terms of Difficulties

			Mann-Whitney U Test				Independent Samples T-test		
	gender	N	Mean	U	Z	P	Mean	T	P
Difficulties	female	26	18.87	139.500	-.116	.907	2.8808	-.068	.947
	male	11	19.32				2.9045		

In line with the research question which aimed to compare teachers and lecturers, a similar process was followed by utilizing both of the tests in order to see whether there was a statistically significant difference in individuals' perceived difficulties. Illustrated in Table 19, it was found that teachers had more difficulty in quite a lot of issues when compared to lecturers since p-values of the items were found lower than .050 ($p < .050$) in both of the tests.

Table 19: Teacher and Lecturer Differences in terms of Difficulties

			Mann-Whitney U Test				Independent Samples T-test		
Items	Instructor Type	N	Mean	U	Z	P	Mean	T	P
41. Academic writing.	Teacher	15	24.50	82.500	-2.647	.008	4.0000	3.106	.004
	Lecturer	22	15.25				2.7273		
42. Using English as a medium of communication in classes.	Teacher	15	26.43	53.500	-3.610	.000	2.9333	4.182	.000
	Lecturer	22	13.93				1.6364		
43. Making oral presentations in classes.	Teacher	15	24.47	83.000	-2.632	.008	3.0000	2.818	.008
	Lecturer	22	15.27				1.9545		

Table 19: (Continue)

Items	Instructor Type	N	Mean	Mann-Whitney U Test			Independent Samples T-test		
				U	Z	P	Mean	T	P
44. Participating in-class discussions.	Teacher	15	24.80	78.000	-2.781	.005	3.0667	3.101	.004
	Lecturer	22	15.05				2.0000		
45. Accessing academic resources.	Teacher	15	24.33	85.000	-2.573	.010	3.1333	2.812	.010
	Lecturer	22	15.36				2.0455		
47. Preparing written assignments.	Teacher	15	23.40	99.000	-2.109	.035	3.5333	2.231	.032
	Lecturer	22	16.00				2.5455		
49. Passing examinations.	Teacher	15	24.67	80.000	-2.725	.006	3.1333	2.961	.005
	Lecturer	22	15.14				2.0000		
51. Comprehending the courses because of the methods of instruction.	Teacher	15	24.03	89.500	-2.397	.017	3.2000	2.377	.023
	Lecturer	22	2.2273				2.2273		
52. Linking theory with practice.	Teacher	15	15.57	79.500	-2.724	.006	3.7333	3.467	.002
	Lecturer	22	2.5909				2.5909		
53. Making research.	Teacher	15	24.70	97.000	-2.206	.027	3.4000	2.293	.028
	Lecturer	22	15.11				2.4545		
55. Planning my time effectively.	Teacher	15	23.53	103.500	-1.954	.051	3.6667	2.197	.035
	Lecturer	22	15.91				2.7273		
57. The courses because of not having enough background knowledge.	Teacher	15	23.10	87.000	-2.480	.013	3.2667	2.629	.013
	Lecturer	22	16.20				2.2273		
58. Adapting my work and university hours.	Teacher	15	24.20	84.500	-2.581	.010	4.0667	3.163	.003
	Lecturer	22	14.45				2.9091		

Since higher mean scores symbolized the degree of higher agreement, one by one analysis of the items revealed that teachers found the following issues more challenging than lecturers (Table 19). These issues were: academic writing; using English as a medium of communication; making oral presentations; participating in-class discussions; accessing academic resources; preparing written assignments; passing examinations; comprehending the courses because of the methods of instruction; linking theory with practice; making research; planning the time effectively; the courses because of not having enough background knowledge and adapting their work and university hours.

In conclusion, it is obvious that pursuing MA had also some difficulties faced by the students. The most difficult issues were originated from their jobs which caused a lot of workloads and also limited their time. However, they also had university-based difficulties such as contacting with instructors, and course selection because of the limited number of elective courses. Linking theory with practice, finding a thesis topic, and arriving at university because of long-distance were other challenging factors. On the other hand, participants specified quite a lot of issues as not difficult. Among these issues were preparing presentations, passing examinations making research, etc. In terms of gender, females and males had the same level of difficulty, whereas, when instructor types

were taken into consideration, teachers stated more difficulty in a considerable number of issues compared to lecturers.

4.2. Analysis of Qualitative Data

The data was also collected through semi-structured interviews. For this reason, the researcher sent e-mails and text messages to the participants and requested them if it was possible to conduct an interview. 9 participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the interview. Due to confidentiality, those participants were coded as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8 and P9. On the other hand, the interview was conducted via phone because of a pandemic called Covid-19 which enforced people to stay at home. After negotiating when the participants were available, every interview was carried out at the determined time on the phone in Turkish and lasted almost 20 minutes. A total of 13 questions were addressed to the participants so as to gain more insight into the research questions.

As soon as the interviews completed, they were transcribed into Turkish and read several times in order to get familiar with the data and generate categories.

4.2.1. Phone Interview

As mentioned earlier, the data collection process of the current study coincided with the pandemic Covid-19, thus, the interview had to take place on the phone since individuals were expected to stay home. Therefore, the interviewees' opinions related to the phone interview were asked to them in order to find out whether they were at ease with expressing their ideas on the phone. All of the participants unexceptionally held positive thoughts toward the phone interview as they stated it was quite good and smooth. Additionally, some of them emphasized its easiness since they could conduct the interview at home whenever they were ready. One of the other advantages was that they were more relaxed as they could not see the interviewer, otherwise, they might have felt shy in a face-to-face interview. In other words, it eliminated the hierarchy between the interviewer and interviewee. They also stated that they delivered the same data easily in less amount of time. It also resolved the distance problem as some of the interviewees were living 3 or 5 hours drive away. Consequently, it could be said that the data obtained through the phone interview was as reliable as the data collected from face-to-face interviews.

P1: I felt more comfortable as I was sitting at home and not looking at you and I think I told everything that I could.

P5: Honestly, I would prefer a phone interview as I think I could express myself better. I would get excited in a face-to-face interview.

P8: It was quite good. It would be longer in a face-to-face interview and I could feel shy.

P9: It is easy and advantageous as I am far away.

Even though they stated that they expressed their ideas frankly on the phone and they felt comfortable with it, three participants additionally noted the disadvantage of phone interviews as it did not allow observing the facial expression and body language of the interviewees.

P2: I think it was quite positive but I am not sure whether there would be things that did not come to my mind right now in face-to-face interaction.

P3: Face-to-face interview could be more advantageous as you could see my facial expressions. But I believe I told almost everything that I could say.

P9: ... But we could have discussed the issue more in detail if we had met in person.

As far as the current study was concerned, the telephone interview proved to be an effective, easy, and practical method for the data collection by providing the researcher with reliable and valid data.

4.2.2. Motivations to Pursue MA

The first question was intended to explore why interviewees enrolled in a master's program and when they decided on it. Most of the participants somehow made this decision when they were undergraduate students. While one interviewee stated that after he started to work at the university, he wanted to do that, the other one decided after working 3 years as an English teacher in a secondary school.

P1: Indeed, it was always in my mind when I was an undergraduate student.

P4: I decided to pursue a master's degree at the end of the first year of undergraduate education.

P5: My instructor suggested me to undertake MA at the end of the last year of my undergraduate education.

P3: When did I decide...well...I decided when I started to work as a lecturer at the university.

P8: I decided to do it in the third year of my teaching career.

Regarding the motivations of individuals for pursuing MA, several categories emerged such as having an academic career, influence of others, desire to develop themselves, and regain enthusiasm for teaching which were consistent with the items in the questionnaire. The most dominant reason, on the other hand, was found out to be the desire for having an academic career as stated by the participants:

P1: Since university years, I was always thinking to have an academic career.

P3: The most important reason for me was to be able to go further and commence a doctorate's degree and have an academic career.

P5: Well...the most important reason...actually...one of the most important reasons was to be able to become an academic staff.

P9: My goal was to become an academician.

The second reason could also be considered as the main motivation behind the desire for having an academic career. Reported by interviewees, some external factors played a crucial role in their decision for pursuing MA. While some of them were affected by their instructors at the university or their friends, the others wanted to gain prestige or fulfill family expectations.

P1: After my friend and husband started MA, I thought that I could do it as well. They encouraged me.

P2: The most important reason for this was that I envied my instructors who had equipped with deep knowledge and were competent in their field. But beyond that more important reason could be satisfying expectations of my family and society...and, to be honest, to gain respect from society.

P4: I was really impressed by my instructors. They looked great...namely I liked the way they used English, how they addressed people...their social status and prestige influenced me.

P7: My friends applied for MA. They impressed me and I made some research as I thought that I had to apply, too.

Furthermore, teacher frustration was ranked as one of the most recurring reasons for pursuing MA. Interviewees stated that working for MoNE demotivated them in time. They felt anxious as they were losing their excitement for teaching because of the formalities and working at the same level. They also pointed out that they started to forget what they had learnt during undergraduate education.

P5: As teachers, unfortunately, it was difficult to renovate knowledge, thus we started to forget and I wanted to update myself as a teacher.

P6: I felt I started to go rusty in MoNE as a teacher...same formalities, same level, same dilemmas...I noticed that I started to forget what I had learnt back at university.

P8: Working for MoNE was tiring and it decreased my motivation so I wanted to get rid of these thoughts and refresh myself.

Finally, there were some other internal reasons that drove interviewees to pursue MA. While one of the interviewees stated that she enjoys studying, there were also others who would like to

develop themselves and their foreign language. Moreover, one of the interviewees said that she wanted to use her free time effectively.

P1: I like studying I think...I mean I feel happy while doing this kind of stuff. It is my characteristic, I think.

P2: Well, I have always been into reading, studying, and researching everything appealing to me and I have always been doing something to improve myself like attending distance education so I applied MA.

P7: I should improve myself. I should not be like other teachers who are not idealists.

P8: I both wanted to use my free time effectively and I also wanted to develop myself as a teacher.

4.2.2. The Impact of MA on Teacher Development

4.2.2.1. Personal Outcomes

Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 were designed to explore the impact of MA on teacher development from different perspectives, namely, by focusing on their personal, professional and academic improvement. In terms of personal development, a majority of interviewees agreed that it developed their self-confidence except for one interviewee who disagreed with that.

P1: I think I gained self-confidence. For example, I was sometimes too timid in some situations but now I can express my ideas openly. I can share my knowledge with my colleagues more confidently.

P5: It definitely enhanced my self-confidence as I obtained deep knowledge. I felt self-confident enough to participate in an Erasmus Project.

P6: I personally feel more confident since I am more aware of my capabilities thanks to MA.

P7: I can say for sure that I am more self-confident now. I attended the international conference held at the university, for example, I made a presentation in front of many people.

P8: To begin with, the most important thing I gained is self-confidence. I even participated in two Erasmus projects in abroad but before MA, I would not dare it.

P9: One of the most important gainings is the self-confidence because you gain deeper knowledge in your field on the contrary to undergraduate education. Gaining prestige from society also enhances my confidence.

P3: Honestly, I can't say that MA contributed to me a lot about self-confidence. I am feeling the same.

Additionally, some of the participants stated that MA enhanced their critical-thinking skills. Thus, they can evaluate the issues from different perspectives and make analyses accordingly. It was seen that one of the participants started to question the effectiveness of the coursebooks while the other one prompted her students to make reasoning as she believed it was essential in problem-solving.

P4: I believe I gained critical-thinking skills, I mean I do not look at the issues superficially anymore. For example, I started to see coursebooks more critically, I mean I'm always thinking that it would have been better if there should have been this or that in the coursebooks.

P6: I enhanced my critical-thinking skills. I mean, instead of accepting everything as how it is, I started to question why and who said so? I mean I am trying to make a reasoning of everything and also, I want my students to do that, I mean, think critically. Because it is an important skill for problem-solving and now it is necessary.

Language development was revealed to be another personal outcome of MA which directly affected the self-confidence, as well. Since they felt more competent in English, it appeared that they attended international events and they were able to express themselves and their ideas in English more confidently.

P1: My written and oral language have really improved. It is one of the things that enhanced my confidence. For example, I attended a workshop last summer and I see myself talking English with people there without hesitation.

P8: I was timider especially when I would express myself in English. But now, I feel more competent about my foreign language and I can speak English more fluently. I even worked as an English teacher trainee in Europe.

Gaining prestige was found out to be one of the contributions of MA. It was observed that MA student-teachers gained respect from not only their students but also their colleagues.

P2: I have gained more respect from my students and I think they care more about what I am saying. It is a plus for me in the classroom as I am working at the university. They feel like a lecturer should be more qualified than a high school English teacher.

P9: I feel more prestigious now. I think my colleagues give more weight to my words now because they might think I am more competent now in my field.

Moreover, according to participants' statements, MA also expanded their horizons and knowledge as well as helped them manage their time more effectively, acquire reading habit and

overcome the difficulties. In addition to these, two of the interviewees emphasized that they made friends from different backgrounds who had the same objectives.

P5: Especially, it helped me look from different perspectives to the issues, namely, I expanded my horizon and knowledge. I mean I feel like I am now more aware of my capabilities. I can do more in my job...for my students.

P3: It enabled me to manage my time effectively because of the schedule I had both in the school and university. I started to plan what to do in my free time as I have lots of responsibilities to fulfill and I also had to leave a place for my social life.

P1: Well...personally, I had new friends, met different people in the end. We shared our ideas and sometimes helped each other.

P6: First of all, I got to know new people who had different experiences...and met academics. Also, I gained reading habit...but of course academic reading. I had neither read any article related to my field nor checked what was happening in the field after graduating from the university. But now even after completing MA, I believe I will continue reading articles.

P4: I could say that I learnt to overcome difficulties. I was living far away from the university and every week I was shuttling between Erzurum and Trabzon. In addition, I had an intensive schedule at school. It was too hard but I did not give up, I insisted.

As can be seen from the individuals' comments, interviewees developed many positive skills thanks to their graduate education. However, two participants stated that it also caused negative factors such as stress and unhappiness.

P2: I can say that it also causes some unhappiness because you think that you will never be qualified enough no matter how hard you try.

P3: But adversely, it brought about a lot of stress and anxiety because it always preoccupied my mind even when I was out with my friends at the weekends. I was always like 'I have to do this and that...how is this or that going to be?'

4.2.2.2. Professional Outcomes

With regard to professional development, even though some of the participants stated that MA did not have such specific concern to develop them professionally, they further pointed out that it somehow contributed to them a lot regarding their professional identity. In other words, they stated that MA did not particularly aim to teach them how to be an effective teacher; however, they also mentioned many professional contributions of MA which were discussed in the relevant categories.

P1: I can't say that I have learnt many things pedagogically. I mean, it is not the main aim of MA.

P2: After all, MA did not provide us anything in this regard, namely, concerning how to give a lecture or how to teach English.

P7: I do not think it directly contributed a lot to my teaching skills in the classroom.

On the other hand, many of the participants specifically pointed out that the courses enforced them to read articles about different topics and thus, indirectly contributed a lot to their teaching skills. They also emphasized that now when they face a problem with teaching or classroom management, they prefer searching articles related to the particular problem in order to deal with it. Thanks to these articles, they learnt a new method, how to teach vocabulary or how to deal with errors.

P3: I can say that especially the articles we read helped me. For example, I read an article about error correction which includes information about how to correct errors and I am now reflecting this knowledge to my classes.

P5: I started to use the information that I learnt through making research due to the assignments. For instance, I searched vocabulary teaching methods for an assignment and then I implemented those methods in my classes.

P7: While having MA, I thought that it is sensible for a teacher to read articles in order to make up his or her deficiencies. Because, reading the studies is more effective than in-service trainings of MoNE, I think.

P9: For example, I started to follow scientific studies about classroom management or teaching English and this directly affects my classroom in a positive way.

MA in general enhanced other skills necessary for an effective teacher, as well. Autonomy was reported as one of the most recurring skills gained through MA depending on the views of the participants. It was observed that MA student-teachers did not implement the activities which they thought as fruitless, instead, they gave more weight on what was useful for students.

P1: I can say that for example, Dyned is considered as very important by authorities. It has to be done without questioning. But now I am not using it as I don't think that it is effective and I can justify myself for not using it.

P6: I became more pragmatic. I started to skip redundant structures and focus on teaching what students need. I do not follow the coursebook verbatim.

P7: You know the curriculum. It does not allow us being autonomous but now I can say for sure that I follow the curriculum less than until now. I implement my own activities, which I believe, more useful.

Additionally, it was found that MA student-teachers started to evaluate the effectiveness of their everyday practices in the classroom and made enhancements accordingly. This refers to being a reflective teacher which could be interpreted as the first step of action research further.

P1: I sometimes think about my teaching activities, I mean I am doing this but is it useful? I mean, I am trying new methods and I decide whether it is effective or not by observing in my own way. If I believe it is not effective enough, I try to do something else that can be more useful.

P8: I sometimes evaluate the activities I implemented whether they were useful or not. For example, I discovered that activities causing competition made students learn vocabulary better. So, I make use of this knowledge while planning my lessons.

There were plenty of teachers who emphasized that they learnt the action research process and realized its importance. For them, knowing how to evaluate scientifically their teaching practices helped improve their teaching skills. Furthermore, it was stated to be an effective and practical strategy for overcoming teaching and learning problems in the classroom.

P1: I really think that I will benefit a lot from action research. I learnt how to assess the methods I use scientifically. It is important for every teacher to adopt this kind of attitude in the process to eliminate the problems in the classrooms. I made use of it in creative writing as my students' attitudes to writing were not good. They did not like writing and were lazy about it. So, I designed an experimental study and found out that students in the control group were more eager to write in the end.

P6: I think it is effective in creating better learning environments. I did one, for example, I noticed that no matter how successful students were in grammar or vocabulary, they were unable to speak English. So, I decided to focus on this issue more with 5th graders and benefited from drama technique once a week. They were studying important expressions with their friends and acted it out in the classroom. They are now in grade 8 and still remember those expressions and even form their own sentences by using the words in those expressions.

P8: It is a practical way of solving problems in the classroom. I tried something like that with 8th graders last year. You know they had High school entrance exam so vocabulary knowledge was very important. But I had a group who insisted on not studying words. I had to do something for them. I gave them vocabulary lists and told them I would organize a 'vocabulary survivors' race at the end of the unit. At first, they did not care but then when things went competition, they seemed they studied the words. I can also say that it improved my practice as I use this strategy with other students, either.

P9: I noticed that a teacher is also a researcher who can change classroom atmosphere. I mean teachers can focus on the activities and methods they implemented in the

classroom in order to test its effectiveness. I have not conducted such a study yet, but I hope to do it because it is a good way for developing our practices as teachers.

Besides, one of the participants noted that she also enhanced her assessment skills and attached more importance to evaluating listening and speaking skills after MA. Furthermore, learning scientific methods helped one participant prepare projects for scientific institutions with her students. Finally, one interviewee stated that she became an up-to-date teacher who follows the innovations in her field.

P5: I particularly think that I diversified my assessment methods and put more emphasis on speaking and listening and I started to evaluate them, as well after MA.

P1: It helped me prepare projects with my students for TUBITAK. I prepared one before but now I realized how amateurish it was as I learned the research methods, I mean, what the scientific steps are and how to write a project, these kinds of stuff

P6: I became an up-to-date English teacher who follows the latest developments in the field and I am now more open to development. I believe I will attend conferences or seminars for this reason.

4.2.2.3. Academic Outcomes

In an attempt to explore academic gainings of the participants, question 4 which investigated what the master program contributed to their academic development, and question 7 which inquired about what they learnt about academia were addressed them. The development of researcher identity emerged as the most common category after the analysis of the answers. Participants came to agree that they gained a scientific view and developed their research skills since they learnt how to conduct a study, what the scientific research methods are, and how to write an article. Interviewees stated that they started to see phenomena from a researcher's perspective and thanks to these skills and perspectives, they could now conduct their own studies as some of the participants already did. In addition, these research skills could help them prepare school projects as illustrated below:

P1: I learned research methods, I mean, how to carry out research, what the scientific steps are, these kinds of things. This knowledge now helps me guide my students better while preparing projects. This is important because nowadays it is the era of research and project in education.

P2: Honestly, I did not know how scientific process works prior to MA but now I can say that I at least have an idea about how studies are conducted, what the steps of scientific methods are, what is worth investigating and how to interpret research results. Actually,

I can say that I sort of gained scientific view and I submitted articles to academic journals.

P3: I started to observe things from a researcher's perspective. I mean I started to perceive many things that I noticed in my job or my environment as a research question. For example, I observed my students and realized that while they had difficulty in learning English, they could learn sign language easily so I thought that it could be a research question to figure out why this is so. Furthermore, prior to MA, I could not write a research article but now I know.

P4: I gained a scientific view for example, while I am reading something or watching discussion programs, I consider that research can be conducted about those issues. I am always like I can make a research about this...a survey could be conducted about this and that. This is good, this way, I can produce things academically.

P5: The studies we carried out helped me progress in terms of being a researcher. Moreover, I learnt how to conduct a study, or at least how it should be, which sources I should use, how to analyze the results, which research methods I should use...things like that. All of these helped me become a researcher and gain a scientific view. Now, I can conduct my own studies.

Additionally, it was uncovered that interviewees were not aware of the academic journals and conferences before they started MA. As stated, these new sources of information intrigued their interest in terms of developing themselves professionally and academically. The interviewees also emphasized that they gained the habit following these academical events or publications in order to be informed about innovations in their field, overcome an obstacle, or learn a new method. Thus, it can be said that becoming aware of these journals and conferences could be useful for their continuous professional development.

P1: Prior to MA, I was unaware of the conferences and journals. Now, I try to attend conferences. I also take my students to the conferences, but there are not many where I live, I personally try not to miss NALANS conference at least. Moreover, I read, I have a schema of reading articles about everything that appeals to me. For example, I can read an article about developmental psychology if it is necessary for my child's development.

P3: Before I stepped into the academic world, I did not know about high indexed, prestigious journals or conferences. As I said before, I benefited from the information that I obtained by reading articles and I think these can contribute to me professionally, namely, my teaching skills and my academic career, as well.

P4: I was aware of the journals but I did not know the conferences, I heard about them after MA. I can learn a lot from these conferences related to my job and different topics, too by making presentations or writing articles or just watching them.

P8: Now, I can say that I know about academic journals, conferences, and projects thanks to MA. These could help me further in my development professionally, I mean, I can keep myself up-to-date as a teacher, for example.

Taking the participants' views into consideration, it could be concluded that even though the master program of Applied Linguistics did not aim particularly to contribute to teacher development, it developed teachers' skills implicitly by directing them reading, investigating, and making research. As they engaged more in these activities, they found out about current methods, theories, approaches from which they could benefit while teaching English. In addition, the personal traits they enhanced or gained through MA could also help their development as they felt more confident, esteemed, and autonomous in their work. Since they also became aware of the significance of reflection on practice, it could prompt them to observe and evaluate their teaching process to decide whether it was effective or not. On the other hand, undertaking MA introduced the principles of conducting research and writing and publishing articles to the teachers in addition to paving the way for putting their research skills into practice. When MA student-teachers integrated these research skills they gained with their reflective vision, it was revealed that they could carry out their own classroom research, thus, improved their teaching practices and overcome teaching and learning problems in their classrooms.

4.2.3. Recommendations for ELT Teachers

Since it would implicitly provide participants' views about the impact of MA on teacher development, interviewees were asked if they recommend other ELT teachers to undertake MA. It was found out that all the participants unexceptionally responded as yes.

P1: I definitely recommend other English teachers pursue MA.

P2: I do, absolutely.

P3: I definitely recommend it.

The reasons why they recommended MA suggested that research in the field could contribute to their professional development. The more they benefit from these studies, the more they will be able to know the innovations in the field which, in turn, can be integrated to their own classrooms. Apart from using the researches as a source of information, it was stated that teachers could also make their own research and generate information for other researchers and practitioners. What is more, MA was considered as a better way for teachers to develop themselves when compared to in-service trainings conducted by MoNE.

P2: As they already have the advantage of knowing a foreign language, they can benefit from national and international studies in the field. They can produce knowledge by making research, as well that others can benefit.

P3: I think that English teachers will definitely benefit professionally from MA. An article related to any subject in the field would help their professional development.

P4: Thus, they can keep themselves fresh and up-to-date. They can also implement more various and effective activities with their students as they will learn something new every day.

P7: In my opinion, in-service trainings of MoNE are not effective enough. I believe reading and making researches is more effective than that. Teachers should be informed about studies in the field and how to conduct their own studies, this can also help their development.

Interestingly enough, most of the interviewees who were working for MoNE highlighted that teachers should absolutely pursue MA because they start feeling ineffective and suffer from failure after a couple of years. These statements indicated that some of the teachers experienced teacher frustration which, in turn, motivated them to undertake MA as they believed they felt refreshed and more competent.

P4: As you know, working for MoNE causes atrophy after some time. I was feeling like an ordinary teacher as I had lost my enthusiasm.

P5: Teachers start feeling less excited in their profession after 5 or 10 years depending on the person. Teaching was perceived as just 'give your lecture and leave the class', but MA helps us in this situation. It motivates us as teachers.

P8: Because you feel exhausted after a while in MoNE. You start to think I am not good at teaching; I can't do it anymore and pursuing MA spares you the feeling of inadequacy.

4.2.4. Academic Contributions

Even though it was not among the concerns of the study, whether they would like to contribute to academia and their reasons for this were directed to the interviewees as a question. All the respondents specified they would like to submit research papers to the journals or attend conferences both as an audience or a presenter. Therefore, they would be able to contribute to the ELT field as well as their intellectual development.

P5: I absolutely consider to do something academically because this is how I can develop myself as I can obtain in depth information while I am writing an article. So, I particularly want to attend conferences to develop myself and my field.

P6: Of course, I would like to attend conferences both as an audience and a researcher as I am really willing to contribute to my field. Also, I think I can develop myself by making research as I can obtain in-depth information in my field.

P8: I certainly want...for my own development and to contribute to the ELT field. It is a good way of personal development, I think.

As for some of the participants, it was a must to participate in conferences and publish articles in their field, which is the English language in this case, since it was necessary for their academic development. Because, it was seen that some of the participants were studying doctorate, and the others were willing to go further in academia.

P2: As I am studying for a doctorate, I definitely have to contribute to my field.

P3: I would like to advance in my academic career and it is a must to have publishings and also, I like the idea of having an article published in a journal.

P7: I used to attend conferences as an audience when I was an undergraduate student and I am still willing to. I think this is important for our academic development.

On the other hand, two participants who have already tried to publish their studies stated that it was a demanding and exhausting process because of the formats demanded by the publishers. Hence, it might have a demotivating influence on people as stated:

P1: It is really annoying to see “there are problems in the language” in your email after paying money to edit your research. I don’t know what I can do more.

P2: What irritates me is the formalistic requirements of the publishers, namely, you need to obey some formats and borders.

However, the participants further stated that despite the difficulties and demanding process of publishing an article, they felt extremely satisfied and delighted when their researches were accepted to be published in a journal or presented in a conference. Furthermore, this increased their confidence, either.

P1: I felt tense during the process but now I feel like satisfied professionally and doing these kinds of things makes me feel powerful and confident. Also, accomplishing something always makes me feel satisfied.

P6: After I made a presentation at the conference, I felt proud of myself. I mean it just felt good and I felt confident, as well.

P8: I felt so happy when I got an e-mail of acceptance for the conference. It felt good to be able to do these kinds of things, I felt as if I accomplished something very important.

4.2.5. Difficulties Experienced

In line with the aims of the study, two questions (Q10 and Q11) were set to identify the difficulties MA students had during the education. There appeared three common categories like personal, professional, and academic difficulties as a result of the analysis of the interviews. Personal difficulties were caused by individuals' own conditions due to family commitment, the city they live, and some other personal problems. According to interviewees, living in another city away from the university was challenging and time-consuming as they had other responsibilities to do. Moreover, it caused financial difficulties because of travel and accommodation expenses and limited communication with their supervisors since they could not meet them face-to-face whenever necessary.

P3: Secondly, living in another city was tiring even though the cities are close. You are somewhere different from your supervisor and you need a day off to meet him/her in person which is almost impossible.

P9: As I had to go back right after the courses, I could not contact with the instructors face-to-face most of the time. If I had lived in Trabzon, I could have negotiated with the instructors more frequently. This could contribute to my ideas more.

P4: It was really difficult to leave and get back to the city I was living in the same day. This distance also restricted my time for my responsibilities.

P7: I especially had difficulty in arriving at the university as I was living in a different city. Besides, it caused financial difficulties because I needed to stay in a hotel.

Reported by the participants, another difficult issue arose because they had families and children they needed to care for. However, they had to neglect their families and focused on their goals.

P1: I must state personally that I have a child so I felt guilty as I was spending my time with my assignments instead of him.

P2: My son was too little and needed care and I had to steal from his time.

Two interviewees stated that they had difficulty because of some personal problems they encountered while having MA. This made it tough to concentrate on their academic goals.

P6: Apart from all, it was the hardest for me as I lost somebody in my family. So, I could not focus on the courses enough and I could not do the assignments as I wished.

P7: While everything was ok, I had to break up with my boyfriend. I could not concentrate on my responsibilities for a while.

Interestingly enough, one of the participants reported that she had difficulty because of her colleagues' jealousy at work since she had an off day once a week for MA. For this reason, she had problems derived from other teachers in her workplace even though her principal agreed to authorize a day.

P7: I did not have a problem in receiving an off day from my principal but my colleagues did not like the idea of me having a day off and this caused problems at my school.

As well as personal factors, individuals suffered also from difficulties caused by their professions. As they were working adults, they had other requirements or responsibilities related to their jobs. One of these factors was their workload that made it difficult to fulfill the requirements of the MA program. Majority of the participants stated that having an excessive amount of teaching hours at work restrained them to do what was required effectively as follows:

P1: I had to study at break times at school as I had an intensive workload.

P2: What was too tiring for me was the intensive schedule I had in my institution because I needed a certain amount of time to do the assignments thoroughly.

P8: It was not easy studying while working as you feel you did not have sufficient time for both. You really had to make a big effort.

Three of the interviewees, on the other hand, expressed specifically that they had difficulty in arranging their timetable due to their school principals. As this arrangement was under the initiative of school principals, they rejected helping MA student-teachers with their schedule and discouraged the participants from pursuing MA.

P4: I even discussed with my principal to schedule my school hours but he/she was not considerate and told me "Your job is to teach. Drop out the master education!"

P6: One of the problems was that my principal was inconsiderate and did not want to authorize a day off for me at first.

P9: The biggest problem was the school principals' perspectives. They were not making it easy. My principal once told me "Why bother?"

Additionally, having a job appeared to prevent MA students from attending extra activities such as thesis defenses and conferences even they wanted to as stated by one of the participants:

P5: I did not have difficulty in scheduling my timetable but I had difficulty in attending conferences and thesis defenses as I was working.

When it comes to factors caused by academia, it seems that participants experienced plenty of difficulties. One of them was the limited number of courses offered by the department. For those participants, they had to enroll in a course just to fulfill their credits.

P5: I had to choose from certain courses that did not appeal to me as there were not various options at that hour.

P6: We had limited course options to enroll. It would have been better if we had more options. Thus, we could choose what interests us more and get in-depth knowledge about it.

P8: I think there could have been more variety of courses so I could pick what was more appealing to me.

P9: There should have been more alternatives not only for the courses but also for the time of the courses. This would really help us as we are coming from far away.

Another problem the subjects reported was to do with the way how courses were delivered. It appeared that some of the courses were considered to be ineffective for some interviewees because of the methods instructors used to give lectures. However, this was not because they did not understand the topics but because they were eager to learn more. Participants preferred taking actively part in the courses and making discussions about the topics.

P1: I think we should have elaborated more on the topics after presenting them in some classes so as to make it clear for everyone.

P3: The problem was sometimes the presentations of our friends. When they could not present their subjects properly, you could not understand the subject matter.

P4: I do not think that all the courses were effective enough. What improved me most was the courses that I could actively take part in.

Some of the interviewees stated that academic writing was challenging for them while doing the assignments. They considered that if there would have been an academic writing course, it would improve their writing skills and help them in the thesis writing period, as well.

P5: I think we should have also had an academic writing course as it would really be useful in thesis writing. It would also contribute to us while doing the assignments as there was a big difference between my first and last assignments.

P7: I wish we could have academic writing. I think it is an important course for us. It would be useful while writing a research paper.

P9: We did not have an academic writing course. I think it was necessary. Because you have to present your ideas appropriately in a research paper.

Dealing with long class sessions was also a challenging factor stated by two participants. They complained that they sometimes did not have enough time to rest between the courses and they felt too exhausted in the last session that they had difficulty in comprehending the last course.

P1: We used to start classes early in the morning and finish them late in the evening. I would really make an effort to stay awake till the end.

P8: There were long class sessions in one day. As I would feel too tired in the last courses, it was hard to understand those courses for me.

Finally, two participants were hesitant about the duration of the education. This was whether because they were working at the same time or they felt they were late to start thesis writing.

P5: I think the most challenging factor is the duration of the education. I mean we have to complete the program in 3 years while we are working as well. If we had more time, we would complete it by internalizing the courses more.

P3: I think we were late; we should have decided earlier to what we should study or with whom we would study.

In conclusion, qualitative data suggested that one of the reasons for interviewees to enroll in MA was to become an academic staff. It was revealed that this desire mostly derived from their previous experiences with their instructors at the university. MA student-teachers were inspired by their instructors in terms of the status, language skills, and deep knowledge about the ELT field they had. On the other hand, it was seen that particularly MoNE teachers started to lose their excitement for their job and this triggered them for MA, as well. For some of the interviewees, the joy of studying and learning was a valid reason for enrolling in MA. With regard to impact of MA on teacher development, three general categories emerged as personal, professional, and academic. Thanks to the enhancement of personal skills, ELT teachers in this study were observed to be self-confident enough to attend conferences and international projects, and to be competent enough in English to share their ideas with the natives or other speakers of English. Even though the primary aim of the Applied Linguistics MA program was not to enhance the teaching skills of ELT teachers, it equipped teachers with various skills. According to interviewees, this was provided particularly by reading articles and researches in the field. It was seen that MA student-teachers benefited from the researches they read for an assignment in their teaching environment. Furthermore, since they became more autonomous and reflective, they started to evaluate the activities they implemented in the classroom, focus more on problematic areas and utilize the action research process to come up with better alternatives for their practices. Academically, it was found that MA students-teachers gained a researcher identity as they learnt to observe the phenomena from a researcher's perspective and how to conduct research. Furthermore, it was seen that they were volunteer to attend conferences and submit researches to the journals to make a

contribution to the ELT field. The analysis of the interview indicated that MA students-teachers experienced a variety of difficulties which could be categorized as personal, professional, and academic. Even though the difficulties were divided into such three categories, it could be said that some of them were indeed interrelated with each other. On the other hand, it was apparently seen that the difficulties were mainly originated from their employment which limited their time and increased their workload. It was identified as the major reason behind the difficulty of fulfilling the requirements of the courses. However, MA students-teachers experienced some other difficulties due to the program itself. These issues were determined as the limited number of elective courses, method of instruction in the courses, deficiency of academic writing course, long class sessions, and finally the duration of the program.



CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The present study was designed to investigate the impact of pursuing a master's degree related to the English field on ELT teachers' professional development. The second aim of the study was to explore the driving motivations of those teachers for enrolling in MA program. In addition to these, it was also aimed to identify the challenges graduate students experienced during this education process. Both quantitative and qualitative data were found to complement each other. The qualitative data served to provide not only triangulation but also a deep insight into the matter being investigated. Some major findings are highlighted below.

To begin with, when the findings of the perceived impact of MA on teacher development were examined, it was found out that MA impacted teachers' professional development quite positively as some existing studies suggested in the literature (Snoek et al., 2018; Viafara and Largo, 2018). Taking into account the fact that in-service teacher trainings were found to be ineffective by the majority of the teachers (Bellibaş and Gümüş, 2016; Uztosun, 2017), MA can be considered as a valuable opportunity for English teachers to develop themselves. It was observed that MA enhanced critical thinking, self-confidence, autonomy, and entrepreneurship, contributed to teachers' teacher and researcher identities, refreshed their content and pedagogical knowledge, and informed them about the innovations in the field and more. Thus, it can be said that teachers who gained self-confidence and autonomy, could take the initiative for the enhancement of their teaching environment and create an effective teaching setting that addresses the needs of the students instead of strictly following the curriculum. Additionally, entrepreneur teachers could take the role of a sports coach and support the individual learning process of students and contribute to the development of their personal skills (Altan, 2014: 227), hence, help students' learning. MA education could also be regarded as a worthy strategy in terms of handling with teacher frustration since the results indicated that MA not only caused an increase in the motivations of teachers towards their work but also refreshed the content and pedagogical knowledge of the teachers. One reason for this refreshment could be the fact that due to the program, English teachers in this study made use of not only scientific publications but also conferences, which they were not aware of before, as a source of new ideas for finding solutions to their problems in and out of the classroom and keeping themselves informed about the innovations in their field. Therefore, it can be claimed that MA students-teachers are now more decent in keeping pace with changing needs and trends of education in addition to handling with problems. Keeping these outcomes of MA in mind, it could also be said that MoNE pressed the right button with 2023 Education Vision by promoting English teachers for pursuing MA.

Another contribution of MA education to the teachers was observed to be the ability of self-reflection towards their work since teachers reported that they started to evaluate their classroom practices in terms of their effectivity. This evaluation might trigger teachers to seek better alternatives for the classroom practices which are found to be ineffective and fruitless in creating a meaningful learning environment for students. This endeavor is also valuable as it might mean that teachers gained an inquiry-based approach towards their classroom setting which is important in generating a change in the classroom on behalf of students' learning.

Thanks to MA, English teachers were empowered with a researcher identity as the obtained data confirmed that they gained a scientific view and enhanced their research skills. Therefore, it can be said that MA student-teachers not only benefit from researches as a reliable source of information but also take the opportunity to put what they have learnt into practice as research from which others can benefit. While doing this, the reflective vision which MA student-teachers gained can help them determine the problematic issues in their classes that need enhancement. Therefore, these teachers-now-researchers could take action with the intent to "intervene in a deliberate way in the problematic situation in order to bring about changes and, even better, improvements in practice" (Burns, 2010: 2). As appeared by the results of the study, action research received much attention by MA student-teachers in its practicality and usefulness for the everyday problems unique to their classrooms. Thus, it can be said that English teachers in this study learned a new method that could contribute to their classrooms, accordingly, their professional development. Furthermore, it can be claimed that MA achieved one of the aims of 2023 Education Vision (2018), which was to raise teachers who could evaluate their teaching skills, and who were eager to self-development.

As the motivational dimensions, data analysis informed that individuals held master's degree mostly due to internal factors, however, the results also demonstrated that external factors played a crucial role in this decision, as well. The most driving internal motivations were reported to be intellectual and personal development which were identified likewise in the study of Dust (2006). Regarding this result, it could be said that MA student-teachers undertook MA mostly to satisfy their internal curiosity instead of external forces as suggested by Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Furthermore, according to this theory, in order to perform an internally-driven behavior, one must internalize a value or a regulation. Therefore, it could be claimed that MA student-teachers in this study internalized MA as a valuable tool for intellectual, personal and professional development.

It was remarkable to note that MA holders were observed to have been inspired by the idea of pursuing an academic career. According to the analysis, the desire to be an academician resulted from the influence of various people such as family, friends, and instructors in undergraduate education. In the light of Self-Determination Theory, this finding can be explained by identified

motivation since even though individuals in this study were inspired by other people, they were aware of the fact that MA could contribute a lot to their development. Consequently, they valued MA as a learning activity and performed an autonomous behavior to pursue MA. Additionally, gaining prestige was frequently reported to be a motivating factor for the participants. This could indicate that participants of this study had also introjected regulation “in which a person performs an act in order to enhance or maintain self-esteem and the feeling of worth” (Ryan and Deci, 2000b: 62).

Findings regarding the challenges indicated that graduate students experienced some difficulties such as time, distance, arranging timetable, elective courses and more which were also revealed by various studies in the literature (Alabaş et al. 2012; Katılmış et al., 2013; Öztürk and Dinç, 2016). It was reported that MA student-teachers found it difficult to balance between work and university requirements as they were both demanding responsibilities. Moreover, it was also hard for them to adapt work and university hours because of the excessive amount of work hours or unhelpful school principals. Depending on these results, even though it seemed that the difficulties MA student-teachers experienced mostly originated from the fact that they were working individuals, actually, it could be said that the main reason of these difficulties derived from the fact that there was no clear cut policy or regulation regarding workload and working hours of the teachers undertaking MA. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that deficiency of regulation in this regard also caused the distance problem, consequently, financial problems. It could also be said that MA student-teachers would appreciate more diversity in elective courses and getting more assistance from their advisors while finding a thesis topic. Additionally, it could be claimed that participants of this study would be very pleased to have a chance to actively discuss the relevant topics with their colleagues and instructors during the courses. On the other hand, written assignments could be seen as compelling due to academic writing which was found to bring about the difficulty for MA student-teachers. Finally, the reason for having difficulty in fulfilling the requirement of the courses and preparing assignments could be based on their workload and not having enough time. In short, it could be said that all these issues somehow interrelated with each other since a problem in one issue may cause difficulty in other issues.

It is important to remember that most participants were observed not to have difficulty in various issues. On the contrary to the existing studies (Özmen and Güç, 2013; Katılmış et al., 2013; Çepni et al., 2018), accessing academic resources were not found to be difficult. This could be because of the fact the participants in this study were able to benefit from international studies as they were proficient in English, whereas, it was determined in the study of Katılmış et al. (2013) that individuals had difficulty in accessing resources since they were not competent enough in the foreign language. It could also make sense not to find English difficult as a medium of communication in classes when the proficiency level of ELT teachers in this study is taken into consideration. In addition to these, the fact that MA holders did not perceive a few more issues as

difficult could indicate how motivated they were and that any challenge did not discourage them from pursuing MA.

Unlike the studies which revealed differences between males and females in the number, performance, and position in academia (Bagilhole, 2002; Goastellec and Pekari, 2013; Yenilmez, 2016; Çobanoğlu 2018), any gender differences were not observed in this study regarding the perceived impact, motivation, and difficulty. Besides, there was no statistically significant difference between males and females regarding motivations on the contrary to the study of Dust (2006) in which males rated intellectual and professional development as their motivations, whereas, in addition to these, females also rated potential for a new and satisfying career and personal development. On the other hand, the comparison of teachers and lecturers revealed some differences particularly in terms of language development. Thus, it could be said that teachers and lecturers had different perceptions regarding language development. This difference could be derived from the fact that they were working with students at different levels even though they had the same job. Working with young learners may cause attrition in the foreign language of English teachers working for MoNE as they use simplified language most of the time. Except for the language-related problems, the reason for having more difficulty in adapting work and university hours could have arisen due to principals' attitudes towards teachers undertaking MA and vague policy of MoNE about them.

As an insider of the MA process and practitioner of this research, I would like to express my comments regarding the results of the study and my views regarding its impact on me. This study actually originated from my experiences and feelings I had after enrolling in MA. Before MA, I was suffering from frustration since what I dreamt as a teacher was disappointed by the realities of the classroom. While undertaking MA, I started to feel different as a teacher since these thoughts were replaced by enthusiasm again. I regained my motivation towards my work because I was feeling more confident, autonomous, and reflective. To illustrate, I had self-confidence enough to focus on what students needed instead of rushing to fulfill the curriculum as most of my colleagues were doing. I knew I fell behind the curriculum but I also enjoyed the fact that my students were more able to use English since I was trying various methods that they could like and actively take part instead of sticking to the coursebook word by word. Thus, it could be said that I was criticizing my practices in order to create more effective ones. The results of this study indicated that it was not only me who was feeling empowered by skills gained thanks to MA, there were other teachers who were empowered, as well. As MA student-teachers, we were equipped with quite a lot of abilities that I believe no other in-service trainings could provide. I could also state that being able to conduct research was one of the most important skills we acquired as suggested by the other participants. Thanks to MA, we not only developed ourselves as a teacher but also learned a new method that could permanently contribute to our continuous professional development. As stated by one of the participants (P1), “we learned to solve our problems as what we expected from our

students to learn” by focusing on the problems unique to our teaching context and generating knowledge from the results.

It was not surprising for me to see MA student-teachers were mostly internally driven for MA since MA was a demanding process and required more than external motivation from individuals to make sacrifices and efforts. With regard to lecturer and teacher differences, as a secondary school teacher, I can say that teachers working for MoNE were mostly working with young learners whose proficiency level was low compared to university lecturers. Furthermore, they could not find an opportunity to speak English in an authentic environment. Thus, it was not interesting for me to reveal that language development was considered more as a motivator by the teachers who also believed more that MA enhanced their foreign language. One of them was me, for example, I had difficulty in using English spontaneously in the courses at the beginning as I was shy and afraid of making mistakes but now, I feel more competent. What was surprising for me, on the other hand, was that there were many teachers who experienced problems with their principals while getting an off day for MA. Thus, I came to see that MoNE, which always tries to encourage teachers by rhetoric for their development, does not completely support MA student-teachers with clear cut regulations. Finally, all I can say that despite the difficulties and exhausting process, MA undoubtedly contributed to me and other English teachers as the findings suggested.

In the light of the findings achieved from the study, a few implications can be made regarding the teachers’ professional development, pre-service teacher training, and faculty members. First of all, providing preliminary data for MA as a professional development program for teachers, the study demonstrated that teachers should be encouraged for MA as it helps refresh their teaching knowledge, gain new skills in addition to enhancing their awareness about innovations in the field and significance of the research. This is of vital importance when it is considered that teachers should keep pace with the changing demands and needs of education as a result of technological and scientific improvements. On the other hand, it is not a straightforward process when the responsibilities and workload of the teachers are taken into consideration. Consequently, the teachers faced some difficulties resulting from their profession. The desire of teachers to enroll in MA can be jeopardized by school principals since authorities have entitled school principals to decide whether to arrange the schedule accordingly. However, so as to encourage teachers and promote their development, it should not be under the initiative of headmasters. Authorities should establish necessary regulations related to teachers’ workload and hours to facilitate the process, otherwise, there could arise problems causing stress and demotivation between the teachers and their principals. With regard to the problem arising from the distance between teachers’ workplace and the university, it is essential to grant teachers the right to be appointed where they undertake MA by regulations since they suffer from long distance, either.

Additionally, it was revealed in the study that reading studies and making research about the relevant field were two very influential factors that contributed to the development of teachers since they were perceived as a valuable source of new ideas and methods by the participants. In this regard, any course intended to teach conducting research should be integrated into the curriculum on pre-service teacher training. Thus, prospective teachers can be raised competent enough to recognize the potential of research to enhance the quality of education. Besides, in-service teacher trainings, which primarily based on research, should be planned exactly for the same reason. In other words, this could enable teachers to approach issues in the classroom more scientifically, keep them informed about innovations, and conduct their own research to create an effective teaching setting. Furthermore, they can transfer what they have learnt from research to their practices. On the other hand, the results of the study imply that MoNE should collaborate with the universities to organize an effective INSET program.

Finally, the findings suggested that graduate students experienced difficulties with regard to institutional practices. Applied Linguistics MA program which aims to deepen the knowledge of its students in particular areas related to English should not ignore the motivations and desires of the individuals alongside the difficulties they face in order to increase the quality of the education. Therefore, the program should be updated in order to fulfill the needs and different expectations of the individuals. In accordance with the results, the number of elective courses should be diversified in accordance with the students' needs and interests. This could in return increase the success of students by encouraging teachers to do MA in the field of their interest and satisfy their needs. Additionally, since academic writing is found to be a quite essential skill in this process, this course should also be included in the curriculum in an attempt to help students convey their ideas and studies favorably to the academia. MA student-teachers could also make use of it in the thesis writing process, as well. Furthermore, some of the courses can be delivered online in order to offer alternative hours to facilitate the process for learners. It is also seen that individuals prefer active learning environments in which they have the chance to discuss with their peers and instructors about various topics. Hence, instructors should take this information into account while planning their courses.

This study has a number of limitations. First of all, because of time and accessibility issues, the study included a limited number of participants in a state university. Since the sample group was not representative of a large community, the results cannot be generalized to a broader context. However, some of the conclusions can be transferred to similar contexts "when the researchers study additional cases and generalize the findings to the new cases" (Creswell, 2009: 193). Secondly, in order to reach as many participants as possible, all the participants were involved in the study. However, the ones who graduated in former times might not remember the difficulties they had in their education. Next, only 9 individuals were volunteers to carry out the interview, yet, richer data could have been obtained if more interviewees had been involved. Finally, even though

the participants found the phone interview smooth and positive, a face-to-face interview could have provided more detailed data as it would allow the researcher to observe the mimics and body language of the participants and direct the questions accordingly.

Finally, with respect to the results of the study, some recommendations could be made for further studies. First of all, this study included only a scant number of participants from one university, thus, similar studies could be conducted with a larger population across different universities so as to yield richer data. On the other hand, different research methods such as longitudinal or experimental study designs could be carried out to assess the impact of MA on teachers. Additionally, even though the difficulties obtained in this study could provide some insights about the reasons for dropping out the MA education, more comprehensive data can be obtained from the students who did not complete the education. Finally, the current study revealed that there was a significant difference between lecturers and teachers in terms of their perceived language skills even though they did the same job in different levels. Thus, further studies could be implemented to figure out why these differences result from.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear colleague,

This questionnaire has been designed to investigate the impact of pursuing a master's degree (MA) in Applied Linguistics on teacher development. Your ideas are of utmost importance as they will remarkably contribute to the study. All information you provide will be held in confidence and used only for research purposes. I appreciate your contribution.

Nil AĞAN
MA Student
agannil@gmail.com

PART 1 : DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Age: _____

2. Gender: Female () Male ()

3. Undergraduate education: a. English Language Teaching ()
b. English Language and Literature ()
c. Translation and Interpretation ()
d. Other: _____ ()

4. Profession: a. Lecturer at a university ()
b. English Language Teacher () in a a. Primary School ()
b. Secondary School ()
c. High School ()

5. I am in a. 1st () ar in my MA or I **d. completed** () my MA __ year(s) ago.
b. 2nd ()
c. 3rd ()

Appendix 1: (Continue)

PART 2 A. Master's degree enhanced;	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My critical thinking skills.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My research skills.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My assessment skills in class.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My pedagogical skills.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My content knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
6. My self-confidence in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My awareness of the students' individuality.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My motivation toward my work.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My curiosity about my profession.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My academic writing skills in English.	1	2	3	4	5
11. My oral proficiency skills in English.	1	2	3	4	5
12. My reading comprehension skills in English.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My listening comprehension skills in English	1	2	3	4	5
14. My researcher identity.	1	2	3	4	5
B. Thanks to Master's Degree;					
15. I acquired a <i>reflective</i> vision in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I became more <i>entrepreneur (girisimci)</i> .	1	2	3	4	5
17. I improved my <i>teaching practices</i> in class.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I have more <i>career opportunities</i> .	1	2	3	4	5
19. I overcome <i>behavioral problems</i> in class more effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I became more <i>autonomous</i> in my teaching in class.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I became aware of my <i>teacher identity</i> .	1	2	3	4	5
22. I know better how to develop myself in my profession.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I participate in-service trainings more than before.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I collaborate with my colleagues more than before.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I am now more aware of the <i>innovations</i> in my profession.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I am now aware of the <i>publications in academic journals</i> .	1	2	3	4	5
27. I am able to deal with the administrative problems arising at school more effectively.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 1: (Continue)

PART 3: I decided to pursue Master's degree because of;	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
28. Potential for a new career (college/university teaching, administration, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
29. Intellectual development (commitment to learning, intellectual satisfaction)	1	2	3	4	5
30. Personal development (know myself better, self-actualization)	1	2	3	4	5
31. Professional development (direct application of learning to classroom teaching)	1	2	3	4	5
32. Potential monetary gain (income enhancement)	1	2	3	4	5
33. Prestige	1	2	3	4	5
34. Influence of another (university professor, colleague, high school teacher, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
35. Need to refresh (to get a break from the classroom)	1	2	3	4	5
36. The idea of using free time more effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Dissatisfaction with my current/previous job.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Language development.	1	2	3	4	5
39. Having no other better option.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Other :.....	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 1: (Continue)

PART 4: I had difficulty in.....during MA.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
41. Balancing my current work and MA course requirements.	1	2	3	4	5
42. Academic writing.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Using English as a medium of communication in classes.	1	2	3	4	5
44. Making oral presentations in classes.	1	2	3	4	5
45. Participating in-class discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
46. Accessing academic resources.	1	2	3	4	5
47. Fulfilling the requirements of the courses.	1	2	3	4	5
48. Preparing written assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
49. Preparing presentations.	1	2	3	4	5
50. Passing examinations.	1	2	3	4	5
51. Course selection because of limited number of elective courses.	1	2	3	4	5
52. Comprehending the courses because of the methods of instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
53. Linking theory with practice.	1	2	3	4	5
54. Making research.	1	2	3	4	5
55. Contacting with instructors.	1	2	3	4	5
56. Planning my time effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
57. Finding a thesis topic.	1	2	3	4	5
58. The courses because of not having enough background knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
59. Adapting my work and university hours.	1	2	3	4	5
60. Attending courses because of the long distance.	1	2	3	4	5
61. Other:.....	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

1. When did you decide to pursue master's degree? Could you explain the most important reason(s) that led you to pursue master's degree?
2. What could you say about the contribution of the master program to your personal development? Could you explain?
3. Could you elaborate on what the master program contributed to your professional development?
4. Could you explain what the master program contributed to your academic development?
5. What differences did you feel in yourself after the program?
6. What did you gain from the master program about your profession in contrast to undergraduate program?
7. What did you learn about academia? Could you please talk about it?
8. Do you plan to contribute to academic journals or conferences? If so, could you explain how and why?
9. Would you recommend other English teachers to do master's degree? Why?
10. Did you experience any difficulties in this training process due to physical conditions, courses and reasons arising from your profession? Could you talk about them?
11. What was the most compelling factor for you in this process? Can you explain why?
12. What are your opinions about the phone interview?
13. Is there anything you want to add?

Appendix 3: Mülakat Soruları

1. Ne zaman yüksek lisans yapmaya karar verdiniz? Sizi yüksek lisans yapmaya iten en önemli neden(ler)den biraz bahsedebilir misiniz?
2. Programın size kişisel olarak ne(ler) kattığını söyleyebilirsiniz? Biraz açıklayabilir misiniz?
3. Mesleki olarak programın size ne(ler) kattığından biraz bahsedebilir misiniz?
4. Programın size akademik olarak ne(ler) kattığını açıklayabilir misiniz?
5. Programdan sonra kendinizde ne gibi farklar hissettiniz? Örnek verebilir misiniz?
6. Lisans eğitiminizden farklı olarak yüksek lisanstan mesleğinizle ilgili ne edindiniz?
7. Akademik dünyayla ilgili nelerin farkına vardınız? Biraz açıklayabilir misiniz?
8. Akademik dergilere ya da konferanslara katkı sağlamayı düşünüyor musunuz? Nasıl ve neden?
9. Diğer İngilizce öğretmenlerine yüksek lisans yapmalarını tavsiye eder misiniz? Neden?
10. Bu eğitim sürecinde fiziki şartlar, dersler ve mesleğinizden kaynaklanan sebeplerden dolayı zorluk yaşadınız mı? Bunlardan biraz bahsedebilir misiniz?
11. Bu süreçte sizin için en zorlayıcı faktör neydi? Nedenini açıklayabilir misiniz?
12. Telefon mülakatıyla ilgili görüşleriniz nelerdir?
13. Eklemek istediğiniz herhangi bir şey var mı?

CURRICULUM VITAE

Nil AĞAN was born in Trabzon in 1990. She completed her high school education in Araklı Teachers Training High School and studied English Language Teaching in Marmara University. After she graduated from that department in 2012, she started working in 2013 as a teacher. She has been teaching English in a secondary state school since then.

AĞAN is single and she can speak English.

