

## A Review of Challenges and Recommendations for Novice EFL Teachers in Turkey

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**Abstract:** This qualitative systematic review synthesizes the challenges and recommendations for novice English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in the Turkish context. To this end, this study reviewed the studies which investigated the challenges encountered by novice EFL teachers and the recommendations for dealing with these challenges. Empirical studies published between 2010 and 2020 and those that appeared in locally and internationally peer-reviewed indexed journals as well as theses and/or dissertations were searched thoroughly in the literature. Adhering to the steps of the systematic review process, nine studies which fit the predefined inclusion criteria were selected and meticulously examined. As a result of the analysis, the data were categorized under two main themes as challenges and recommendations. Specifically speaking, the analysis yielded two major themes related to common challenges novices face: professional and social adaptation challenges. Also, the overall analysis indicated recommendations in relation to pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher training. In the final section of the study, this review not only offers a discussion of challenges that novice EFL teachers experience but also provides future directions and implications for novice EFL teachers as well as all the stakeholders including mentors, teacher trainers, and school administrators.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenler, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretimi, zorluklar, öneriler, tavsiyeler

**Türkiye’de Mesleğe Yeni Başlayan İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Yaşadığı Zorluklar ve Bu Zorluklara Dair Öneriler Üzerine Bir Alanyazın Derlemesi**

**Özet:** Bu nitel sistematik alanyazın derlemesi, Türkiye bağlamında mesleğe yeni başlayan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin yaşadıkları zorlukları ve bu zorluklara istinaden sunulan önerileri bir araya getirmektedir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda bu çalışma, mesleğe yeni başlayan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin yaşadıkları zorlukların ve bu zorluklarla başa çıkabilmek için tavsiyelerin ele alındığı araştırma çalışmalarını gözden geçirmiştir. Türkiye bağlamında mesleğe yeni başlayan İngilizce öğretmenlerini konu edinen, 2010-2020 yılları arasında yerel ve uluslararası hakemli dergilerde ve yüksek lisans ve/veya doktora tezi olarak yayımlanmış ampirik çalışmalar alanyazında etraflıca araştırılmıştır. Sistematik alanyazın derlemesinin adımlarına bağlı kalınarak, önceden belirlenmiş kriterlere uyan dokuz ampirik çalışma seçilmiş ve titizlikle incelenmiştir. Analiz sonucunda veriler, yaşanan zorluklar ve tavsiyeler olarak iki ana tema altında toplanmıştır. Mesleğe yeni başlayan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin karşılaştığı ortak zorluklara istinaden, profesyonel ve sosyal uyum zorlukları olmak üzere iki ana tema ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca, çalışmaların analizi sonucunda hizmet öncesi ve hizmet içi İngilizce öğretmen yetiştirilmesi ve eğitimi ile ilgili öneriler de sunulmuştur. Son olarak, bu derleme çalışması sadece mesleğe yeni başlayan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin deneyimlediği zorlukların bir tartışmasını ele almakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda öğretmenlerin yanı sıra mentorlar, öğretmen eğitimcileri ve okul yöneticileri de dahil olmak üzere tüm paydaşlar için birtakım öneriler ve tavsiyelerde bulunmuştur.

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## 1. Introduction

Novice teachers (also referred to as new, beginning, newly qualified, neophyte, or early career teachers) are generally defined as teachers who are in the early years of their teaching career. While there is no final agreement on when teachers stop being novices, early studies often characterize novices as teachers with five (Kim & Roth, 2011), three (Farrell, 2012), or fewer years of teaching experience. In their initial years that typically affect what kind of teachers they eventually become, novice teachers go through a “long” and “complex” (Flores & Day, 2006) transition process during which they form their professional identity as well as construct a professional practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). In the meantime, they also make a “sudden” and “sometimes dramatic” (Flores & Day, 2006) transition “from student of teaching to teacher of students” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1027), which is generally described as the “transition shock” (Veenman, 1984). In this respect, novice teachers have two jobs during this transition period to the profession: “they have to teach, and they have to learn to teach” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1026). These tasks are generally accompanied by some other challenges as well: feeling isolated due to the lack of systemic support or an induction system for new teachers (OECD, 2005); having difficulties in adapting to school culture and full-time teaching workload (Bekdemir, 2019; Buchanan et al., 2013); dealing with overwhelming stress (Bekdemir, 2019); not getting the respect they deserve for their profession; experiencing discipline issues (EU, 2013); having difficulties in handling the relationships with parents, their colleagues, and administrators (Bekdemir, 2019; Buchanan et al., 2013); and experiencing tensions due to the divide between the theoretical knowledge gained in pre-service teacher education and the practical realities of real classroom environments (Buchanan et al., 2013; Farrell, 2019), to mention just a few. Additionally and perhaps even more importantly, novice teachers—besides all the other challenges—are oftentimes charged with the same responsibilities as their more experienced counterparts and expected to meet similar performance standards despite not having the qualities of an experienced teacher (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Ozturk & Yildirim, 2012). As a result of all these, some teachers usually start “finding their work frustrating, unrewarding and intolerably difficult” (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009, p. 814).

Although such challenges for novice teachers are generally considered a part of life’s rich tapestry, they are an acute problem and a grave concern which might persist for years: They might transform into traditional teachers, continue teaching with low levels of professional motivation and commitment (Flores & Day, 2006), or affect student achievement and quality of education given that the quality of teachers is one of the key determinants of quality education (UNESCO, 2015). As Feiman-Nemser (2001) notes,

What students learn is directly related to what and how teachers teach; and what and how teachers teach depends on the knowledge, skills, and commitments they bring to their teaching, and the opportunities they have to continue learning in and from their practice. (p. 1013)

Therefore, it is important to realize and treat novice teachers’ challenges and concerns during their induction years through creating a supportive and encouraging school environment, reducing teaching workload, enabling collegial support and collaboration, promoting meaningful professional development (hereafter PD) opportunities both inside and outside the school, and providing meeting and reflection opportunities with other colleagues from different schools having similar concerns (Buchanan et al., 2013). All of these can be realized through designing and developing effective teacher induction and mentoring programs to deal with problems such as teacher attrition (or retention, turnover) or burnout. Although,

in Turkey, teacher attrition (novice teacher attrition, in particular) does not seem to pose a grand problem mainly due to the appreciation of the rights and benefits of the lifetime civil servant status by teachers (EU, 2013) and economic reasons (Kozikoglu & Senemoglu, 2018), teachers—especially novices—continue experiencing several challenges and generally suffer from burnout when they remain in teaching with all these challenges and concerns.

Hence, of particular interest here is that it is vital to better understand the challenges for novice language teachers, provide some recommendations that would help their induction process and contribute to their PD, and systematically bring all these challenges and recommendations together into a single study. However, it is first necessary to look closely at the professional teacher career continuum in Turkey as a contextual background.

### **1.1. Professional Teacher Career Continuum in Turkey**

The professional career continuum of teachers in Turkey primarily ranges from pre-service teacher education to in-service teacher training: Pre-service teacher education starts at the undergraduate level with four-year teaching programs offered by the Faculties of Education both in public and private universities. In these programs, pre-service teachers (hereafter PSTs) receive campus-based (theoretical) education along with school-based (practicum) education provided in the senior year. Until recently, graduates of English Language and Literature, American Language and Literature, and Translation and Interpretation Departments carried out by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences could also become teachers by participating in a one-year-long Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program after their graduation, in which pedagogical courses such as Educational Psychology, Classroom Management, and Guidance were offered. However, with the recent decision of the Board of Education and Discipline of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) (no.12 of official bulletin on 29.06.2020), the Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program was abolished. Instead, with the joint decision of MoNE and Council of Higher Education (CoHE), teaching certificates will be obtained through postgraduate education (i.e., non-thesis masters programs) from this year on. In either case, following their graduation, the newly certified teachers (both graduates of education departments and those with the teaching certificates) who would like to work in the state sector are subjected to a nationwide field-specific test (Public Personnel Selection Examination) prior to their recruitment at state schools, a test which is administered once a year. On the other hand, those who would like to work in the private sector (e.g., in language courses, private schools) do not generally take a test; rather, they go through institutions' employment processes.

Upon starting the profession, novice teachers are generally subjected to an induction program. In the public sector (in the K12 educational systems and schools), novice teachers go through a centrally regulated formal induction program undertaken by the MoNE General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development. On the other hand, in the private sector, such an induction program is under the initiative of the administration. As to the induction programs at the university level, regardless of being state or private universities, the decision for conducting an induction program is up to the institution as they are autonomous bodies under the roof of the CoHE, which is also an independent body responsible for planning and coordination of higher education. Regarding the centrally regulated teacher induction program prescribed for novice teachers teaching at the K12 state schools, it indeed went through several changes over the years: With the directive of 1995 regulations (no. 2423 of official bulletin on 30.01.1995), novice teachers were not required to teach on their own, that is, without the supervision of their mentor. However, in practice, this mostly did not work

(Aktas, 2018). By the recent directive issued by the MoNE General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development on March 2, 2016, regarding the “Candidate Teacher Training Process,” novice teachers are now involved in a process called the candidate teaching process upon entering the teaching profession. In their first six months of their candidacy, candidate teachers are subjected to a 26-week teacher induction programme, as a part of which they are paired with a mentor teacher in the school they work at. Within this scope, they perform in-class as well as in and out-of-school activities and are involved in in-service training practices.

## 1.2. Aim and Significance

A considerable number of studies were conducted to investigate the experiences and problems during the first years of teaching. However, even though much previous work portrayed several challenges which novice teachers face, scant attention has been paid to strategies and/or recommendations to overcome their problems (Cakmak et al., 2019). What is more, to the best of the researchers’ knowledge, there is no study which synthesizes the challenges encountered specifically by novice EFL teachers or recommendations for alleviating such difficulties, especially in the Turkish context. Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap by providing a systematic review of the earlier studies regarding the challenges and recommendations for novice Turkish EFL teachers. Taking all these into consideration, the aim of this review is threefold:

1. to systematically review and discuss earlier research articles, books, book chapters, theses, and dissertations conducted with novice EFL teachers in Turkey regarding the challenges they encounter and recommendations to overcome these challenges,
2. to offer recommendations for novice teachers as well as all the stakeholders including mentor teachers, teacher trainers, school administrators, and education policymakers as well as academics at universities, and
3. to offer suggestions for future research in this area.

## 2. Methodology

This study is a systematic literature review, adopting a descriptive research design based upon the qualitative research methodology. Unlike meta-analysis which comprises statistical integration of findings reported by quantitative studies and is, therefore, more suitable for synthesizing quantitative research (Suri, 2018), a systematic literature review is more suitable for synthesizing qualitative research. Specifically speaking, it refers to “a review of the research literature using systematic and explicit accountable methods” (Gough et al., 2012, p. 5). A systematic literature review “bring[s] together different studies to provide evidence to inform policy making and planning” (Suri, 2018, p. 430) by “follow[ing] explicit protocols and criteria for searching for relevant primary, usually empirical studies” (p. 430). As well as primary research, reviews are also of great importance for they characterize “[...]what is known, how it is known, how this varies across studies, and thus also what is not known from previous research” (Gough et al., 2012, p. 3).

Reviews tend to involve three key activities: “identifying and describing the relevant research (‘mapping’ the research), critically appraising research reports in a systematic manner, and bringing together the findings into a coherent statement, known as synthesis” (Gough et al., 2012, p. 5). For the purposes of the study, first of all, relevant research was searched and identified: Accordingly, a comprehensive literature search was conducted, and research

articles published in indexed, fully refereed, and open access journals, books, book chapters, theses, and dissertations were investigated. To this end, the following key terms were defined *a priori* and used to search for relevant studies on online databases in both Turkish and English languages: “novice teachers,” “beginning teachers,” “novice EFL teachers,” “novice service teachers,” “early-career EFL teachers,” “challenges,” “problems,” “difficulties,” “recommendations” and “suggestions” with the Boolean operators (AND and OR). The databases which were reviewed included Scopus, ERIC, ProQuest, Google Scholar, Dergipark, Turkish Education Index, EBSCO, Springer, Turkish Academic Network and Information Center (ULAKBİM), National Thesis Center, ScienceDirect, and Wiley Online Library. The inclusion criteria in this systematic review of the literature were as follows:

Criterion 1: Study was published between 2010-2020 (i.e., in the last decade) in a refereed journal, books, book chapters, and in the thesis and dissertations in the database of ProQuest and Turkish Higher Education Council.

Criterion 2: Study participants include novice EFL teachers from public or private institutions in Turkey, who have one to five years of teaching experience.

Criterion 3: Study focuses on the challenges, problems, difficulties of novice EFL teachers in Turkey.

Criterion 4: Study is empirical or descriptive in nature, adopting a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method research design.

Criterion 5: Study was published in English or Turkish.

In light of these five criteria, the search yielded nine articles for review from various journals. Given that there is not a minimum or maximum number of studies to be included in a systematic review (Gough et al., 2012), and it is important that studies fit the predefined inclusion criteria, the nine articles that were drawn in accordance with the inclusion criteria were then systematically subjected to critical appraisal. For doing so, a literature review matrix (see Table 1) was created by the authors based upon the review criteria itemized above, with an aim to minimize the risk of selection bias as well as organize information and systematically compare and contrast the selected studies collated after the article search procedure. The matrix included the following information:

- Name of the author(s), the study title, publication year
- Source information (i.e., journal article, book, book chapter, thesis, or dissertation) and indexing information (if any)
- Research design (i.e., empirical or descriptive)
- Purpose of the study
- Number and description of participants

Table 1.

*List of reviewed studies*

No	Author(s)(Year of publication)	Research design	Aim(s) of the study	Setting & Participants
1	Akcan (2016)	Exploratory case study	Explore novice EFL teachers' perceived preparedness to teach and the challenges they face in their early teaching years in primary and secondary schools	Novice EFL teachers ( $N = 55$ ) at state and private primary, secondary, and high schools in the Marmara region of Turkey
2	Bekdemir (2019)	Qualitative	Identify novice EFL teachers' adaptation problems and to provide solutions for these problems as well as to uncover the impacts of these problems on novices	Novice EFL teachers ( $N = 85$ ) having 1 year to 3 years of teaching experience, who teach at state and private pre-schools, primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education as well as language courses
3	Bulut Albaba (2017)	Longitudinal and qualitative case study	Understand novice EFL teachers' learning and cognitive changes that occur during their transformation from a student teacher to a language teacher	Novice EFL teachers ( $N = 5$ ) working in state and private schools
4	Gok Kaca & Yigitoglu (2017)	Case study	Delve deep into the contextual factors affecting novice teachers' beliefs and practices	Novice EFL teachers ( $N = 2$ ) with different educational backgrounds, who work in an English preparatory program in a state university in Northern Cyprus
5	Gungor et al. (2019)	Exploratory	Investigate novice teachers' shared and divergent challenges in Poland and Turkey	Novice Turkish ( $N = 23$ ) and Polish ( $N = 11$ ) EFL teachers, who were in the first three years of their profession working with K-12 learners
6	Karatas & Karaman (2013)	Exploratory qualitative case study	Understand the challenges that novice language teachers experience	A novice teacher at a university in Cyprus
7	Ozturk & Yildirim (2012)	Qualitative	Explore the nature of the induction process of EFL teachers who teach at universities	Novice EFL teachers ( $N = 15$ ) teaching at four different public universities in Ankara, with different educational backgrounds and 1 to 3 years of teaching experience
8	Sali, & Kecik (2018)	Qualitative	Reveal the perceived challenges for novice Turkish EFL teachers in public primary and secondary schools	Novice EFL teachers ( $N = 7$ ) teaching at primary and secondary schools in Bursa and Eskisehir
9	Yazan (2016)	Qualitative	Gain a better understanding of the challenges that novice EFL teachers	Novice EFL teachers ( $N = 10$ ) working as English language instructors at the intensive English program of a private university in Ankara, with 4 to 5 years of teaching experience

Afterwards, the authors entered the information about the selected studies on the review matrix following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA-P) protocols (Moher et al., 2015) and analyzed the content of the selected studies thoroughly, with no attempt at evaluation at this stage. The studies were analyzed through detailed qualitative content analysis (Dornyei, 2007) by two authors: The authors initially read the studies thoroughly multiple times in terms of their content, coded the content independently, and then they had a meeting in which they did check-coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to ensure consistency across the authors. Together, they compared and contrasted the codes, and the key themes under which these codes fall under were established accordingly. As the third activity, the findings were synthesized.

### **3. Findings and Discussion**

The nine studies selected for the systematic review were investigated, and challenges identified and recommendations asserted in these studies were analyzed thoroughly via content analysis. Accordingly, findings are presented and discussed under these two main sub-headings: 1) Challenges for novice EFL teachers in Turkey and 2) Recommendations for these challenges.

#### **3.1. Challenges for Novice Turkish EFL Teachers**

The challenges commonly faced by novice Turkish EFL teachers are tabulated in Table 2 in detail. As these nine studies revealed, there are many challenges that novice Turkish EFL teachers face in the early years of their teaching career. When the authors investigated these studies in detail, a conventional categorization emerged by reclassifying these challenges. Table 3 indicates this categorization and the reviewed studies where these challenges are presented.

As indicated in Table 3, the challenges encountered by novice Turkish EFL teachers can be categorized under 1) professional and 2) social adaptation challenges. The professional adaptation challenges included instructional challenges, school-context related issues, lack of PD opportunities and support, and teacher identity-related issues. Out of nine studies, the majority ( $f = 5$ ) of them commonly referred to novice teachers' challenges concerning classroom management issues, student-related issues, and the lack of PD opportunities and support as the most frequently voiced challenges.

Regarding classroom management issues, several novice teachers indicated that they generally had difficulty in managing the classroom, establishing and keeping classroom discipline, defining and sticking to teacher roles, establishing a good rapport with students and catching their attention (e.g., Akcan, 2016; Bekdemir, 2019; Gungor et al., 2019; Ozturk & Yildirim, 2012; Sali & Kecik, 2018). Such management problems might be interpreted with their lack of experience. Although it must be noted that effective classroom management might similarly be challenging even for experienced teachers, they tend to be more dynamic in decision-making and more effective in transforming disruptions into teachable moments when compared to novices (Sánchez Solarte, 2019). Another possible interpretation is that novices are still in the process of forming their teacher identity and constructing their professional practices (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), a process during which such classroom management problems are expectable. Indeed, a teacher's job includes "expecting the unexpected" (Sánchez Solarte, 2019, p. 195), and as novices gain experience, they become more confident and learn how to deal with such challenges more effectively.

Table 2.

*Challenges for novice Turkish EFL teachers*

No	Author(s) (Year of publication)	Challenges include
1	Akcan (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>classroom management issues;</li> <li>difficulty in the implementation of the communicative approach in their classes; and</li> <li>dealing with unmotivated students and students with learning disabilities.</li> </ul>
2	Bekdemir (2019)	<p>Professional adaptation problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpersonal issues with colleagues, directors, mentors and parents;</li> <li>student issues such as absence, child labor and student profile;</li> <li>teaching procedures including managing the classroom, following the curriculum, entering the profession with high expectations, dealing with the gap between theory and practice, having insufficient teaching materials, lacking technological supplies and infrastructure, and testing;</li> <li>workload issues involving workload, hall monitoring and teaching load;</li> <li>institutional issues including mobbing, hierarchical structure and institutional adaptation; and</li> <li>issues with the self-as-a-teacher involving forming teacher identity, lacking an induction program, having financial issues, and teacher assignment processes.</li> </ul> <p>Social adaptation problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>human issues including cultural differences, sexual apartheid, public perceptions towards teachers and restriction to independence;</li> <li>environmental issues comprised of deprivation of residential relegation and hometown; and</li> <li>personal issues involving ideological issues and socioeconomic status.</li> </ul>
3	Bulut Albaba (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conservative and oppressive attitude of the immediate school community in state schools, including colleagues and administrators;</li> <li>restrictive effect of prescribed curriculum and coursebooks;</li> <li>lack of in-service training to deal with classroom realities (e.g., students' diverse ethnic backgrounds); and</li> <li>not having access to other PD opportunities (due to teaching in rural areas).</li> </ul>
4	Gok Kaca & Yigitoglu (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experiencing tension due to not being able to put their beliefs into practice, resulting in feeling disempowered; and</li> <li>experiencing confusion in curricular and instructional issues resulting from lack of guidance (e.g., regarding the way teachers are expected to exploit the institutional materials/tools, how to provide writing feedback, etc.).</li> </ul>



5	Gungor et al. (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• difficulties in choosing age and language appropriate teaching materials, managing classrooms, and capturing student attention; and</li> <li>• lack of skills necessary for adapting teaching techniques to cope with the challenges resulting from context-specific factors (e.g., the clash between the high-stake examination system and the teaching practices), the students' diverse ethnic backgrounds and language barrier (their mother tongue interference), lack of proficiency, and low motivation to use English.</li> </ul>
6	Karatas & Karaman (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• need for psychological and professional support;</li> <li>• professional identity change; and</li> <li>• pedagogy-related issues (e.g., preparing materials for the students, managing teacher-student relationships).</li> </ul>
7	Ozturk & Yildirim (2012)	<p>in-class challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• instructional challenges;</li> <li>• motivating students;</li> <li>• use of instructional technologies; and</li> <li>• classroom management.</li> </ul> <p>challenges outside the class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work-related issues: curriculum and lesson planning, testing and evaluation, and partnership system in teaching; and</li> <li>• social issues: relationship with students, colleagues, administrative staff and teacher trainers.</li> </ul>
8	Sali & Kecik (2018)	<p>challenges concerning foreign language pedagogy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• classroom management related challenges: providing and maintaining classroom discipline, establishing rapport with learners, setting teacher roles, instructional planning and managing lessons;</li> <li>• foreign language learning and teaching related challenges: lack of learner proficiency in English, lack of learner motivation and interest, dealing with individual learner differences, etc.; and</li> <li>• school context-related challenges: large class sizes, inadequacy of school materials, heavy teaching load, and attitudes of the school administration.</li> </ul> <p>challenges concerning forms of professional support available to novice EFL teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school administration-related;</li> <li>• colleague related;</li> <li>• mentor teacher related; and</li> <li>• teaching orientation courses related challenges.</li> </ul>
9	Yazan (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• curricular constraints; and</li> <li>• students' low motivation to learn and use English.</li> </ul>

Table 3.

*Categorization of challenges for novice Turkish EFL teachers*

Challenges	The study referred*	
Professional Adaptation Challenges	Instructional challenges	
	• Classroom management issues	1, 2, 5, 7, 8
	• Student-related issues	1, 2, 7, 8, 9
	• PCK-related issues	5, 6, 7, 8
	School-context related issues	2, 3, 8, 9
	Lack of PD opportunities and support	2, 3, 4, 6, 8
Social Adaptation Challenges	Teacher identity related issues	1, 2, 4, 6
	Social issues	2, 3, 7, 8
	Socio-cultural issues	2

\* The numbers refer to the study number in Table 2.

Another commonly mentioned challenge was student-related issues. Several novice teachers stated they often struggled to cope with demotivated and uninterested students as well as individual differences in students. For example, most students were learners of low English proficiency and did not seem to be intrinsically motivated to learn English. In fact, student profiles also appeared to pose challenges especially for those who taught in rural areas. In Bekdemir's (2019) study, for example, some novice teachers raised concerns about student absence due to child labor. As some students had to work, they could not attend classes regularly.

Another challenge stemming from different student profiles was the language barrier resulting from students' diverse ethnic backgrounds (including Arabic, African, Kurdish, Persian) and their mother tongue (L1) interference in primary and secondary level state schools, which Gungor et al. (2019) attribute to refugees and immigrants living in Turkey. Novice teachers, in their study, stated that they had difficulties while teaching students with such profiles. Albeit not frequently voiced, Akcan's (2016) study described dealing with students with learning disabilities as another challenge. In respect of individual differences, novice teachers in Sali and Kecik's study (2018) referred to the problem of how to balance and adapt their instruction according to students with different needs in the same classroom (i.e., mixed ability classes). As one of the greatest challenges for novice teachers, differentiating instruction to address the diversified and special needs of students might result from the lack of school support and inadequate training to deal with the exceptional situations or students, as asserted by Fantilli and McDougal (2009).

As regards the lack of PD opportunities and support, novice teachers mostly stated that they lacked professional and emotional guidance and support. In fact, novices tend to describe their initial years in the classroom as "unsupportive" and "lonely" (Scherff & Daria, 2010). In Gok Kaca and Yigitoglu's (2017) study, for instance, novice teachers stated that they had some confusion regarding making curricular and instructional decisions and practices, such as how to give feedback, how to exploit instructional materials effectively, and so forth. Indeed, this professional and emotional guidance and support can be provided by the school administrators, mentor teachers, other colleagues, and novice peers (e.g., Sali & Kecik, 2018). Lack of in-service teacher training opportunities, including the lack of effective teacher induction programs, was another problem novices encountered. In Bulut Albaba's (2017) study, to exemplify, novice teachers stated that they had no access to PD opportunities and had difficulty in dealing with instructional challenges due to the teaching context (i.e.,

teaching in a rural area). As indicated earlier, the lack of PD opportunities also included induction program problems. To exemplify, Bekdemir (2019) stated that “induction programs are not effective, or does not exist at all, or some teachers do not even have the knowledge of an existing induction program” (p. 61). Bekdemir continued by indicating the following:

Even if they have a mentor during the period of their contract as new teachers, it is obvious that they may not work with mentor in the same branch. So, the idea of having a mentor is nothing but a formality (p. 61).

As for pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)-related issues, novice teachers experienced challenges in carefully selecting, adapting, and preparing appropriate context and student-specific instructional materials and teaching techniques for different age and language proficiency students having different needs (e.g., Gungor et al., 2019; Karatas & Karaman, 2003). Among the contextual considerations, novices particularly pointed out the mismatch between the high-stake examination system and the teaching practices as a major source of challenge. In a similar vein, planning and managing lessons was another concern among novice teachers (e.g., Ozturk & Yildirim, 2012; Sali & Kecik, 2018). PCK-related challenges also stemmed from the novice teachers' background. For example, in Ozturk and Yildirim's (2012) study, especially non-education faculty graduates (such as those who graduated from English Language and Literature, American Culture and Literature, or Translation and Interpretation departments) stated that they felt insufficient and anxious regarding how to teach effectively as they could not effectively benefit from the one-year pedagogical formation training.

Problems that stemmed from the school context were another challenge for novice teachers. In Bekdemir (2019) and Sali and Kecik's (2018) studies, particularly heavy teaching load was frequently uttered, especially at the times when they were required to deal with extra paperwork (i.e., duties other than teaching such as filling in forms) as a requirement of the induction program. Likewise, the inadequacy of instructional materials was mentioned in both studies. Lack of technological equipment and having difficulty in following the curriculum because of time management (e.g., Bekdemir, 2019), crowded classes (e.g., Sali & Kecik, 2018) were other serious problems giving novice teachers hard times. Besides, novices often mentioned the pressure and constraints of following a prescribed curriculum (e.g., Bulut Albaba, 2017; Yazan, 2016), which takes us to another problem: teacher identity.

Feeling obliged to conform to the prescribed and imposed curriculum, novice EFL teachers stated that they experienced teacher identity-related challenges which adversely affect their professional adaptation. Several novices indicated that they experienced a cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957, as cited in Bulut Albaba, 2017, p. 147) by undergoing the theory-practice gap problem (e.g., Bekdemir, 2019); in other words, they experienced tension and even frustration (McCann & Johannessen, 2004) due to the discrepancy between what they learned in university (i.e., that they should adopt a communicative approach) and their teaching practices (conventional grammar-translation method) (e.g., Akcan, 2016; Bulut Albaba, 2017; Farrell, 2012). Novices generally enter the profession with great idealism and enthusiasm, yet when they cannot put their actuals into practices, their understanding of self-as-a-teacher is therefore exposed to changes in their teacher identity (e.g., Bekdemir, 2019; Karatas & Karaman, 2013) by causing them to reform their identity and reconstruct their knowledge. In the end, novice teachers adapted their practices to the institutional and context-specific requirements (e.g., Bulut Albaba, 2017; Gok Kaca & Yigitoglu, 2017;

Gungor et al., 2019), which resulted mostly from the curricular constraints and prescribed instructional materials.

Apart from those challenges concerning professional adaptation, social adaptation challenges comprised social and socio-cultural issues. As to social issues, many novices complained about their relationship with the school administrators, colleagues, and teacher trainers (or mentors). More specifically, the conservative and oppressive attitude of the school community and mobbing within the institution (e.g., Bekdemir, 2019; Bulut Albaba, 2017; Sali & Kecik, 2018) were pointed out. As Bekdemir (2019, p. 48) reported a novice teacher's experiences, some novice teachers stated that they "can be bullied by their directors and colleagues" (p. 48) and that there is a "caste system" (p. 59) in the school and teachers' lounge. In terms of the socio-cultural issues, novice teachers touched upon issues arising out of cultural, ideological, socioeconomic differences among themselves, school and social community, public perceptions towards teachers, and restriction to independence (Bekdemir, 2019).

### **3.2. Recommendations Regarding the Challenges for Novice Turkish EFL Teachers**

The recommendations provided for novice Turkish EFL teachers by the reviewed studies are tabulated in Table 4. As seen in Table 4, numerous recommendations were made for novice Turkish EFL teachers in accordance with the challenges they encountered (see Table 3). After the meticulous analysis of these nine studies, the authors developed the following categorization as illustrated in Table 5.

As shown in Table 5, the recommendations offered by these nine studies are subsumed under two fundamental sub-headings: recommendations in relation to 1) pre-service teacher education and 2) in-service teacher training. Those that can be associated with pre-service teacher education comprise bridging the gap between theory and practice, teaching PSTs' skills and strategies for managing mixed-ability classrooms, raising PSTs' awareness, enriching the practicum experiences, teaching how to handle resistance, and culture. Recommendations linked to in-service teacher training, on the other hand, consist of teacher development, professional guidance and support, and recognition of teacher autonomy. It is also apparent in Table 5 that the most recurrent recommendations ( $f = 4$ ) concern raising PSTs' awareness, fostering induction and PD opportunities, and enhancing communication and collaboration with other novices.

Regarding pre-service teacher education programs, earlier studies suggested that it is important to enable PSTs to come together with novice English teachers to raise their awareness towards the potential adaptation challenges they are likely to face when they enter the profession (e.g., Bekdemir, 2019), emphasize and incorporate the discrepancies between theory and actual classroom realities to better train PSTs for their future teaching contexts (e.g., Gok Kaca & Yigitoglu, 2017), use problem-based learning and analysis of case studies in which real classroom problematic situations are analyzed in order to raise the awareness of pre-service EFL teachers towards the potential challenges for becoming language teachers (e.g., Sali & Kecik, 2018; Yazan, 2016). As "overly unrealistic ideals with no foundation in reality can make novice teachers' self-concept and motivation more vulnerable to the power of reality shock" (Kumazawa, 2013, p. 53), PSTs should be better braced for the classroom realities during their pre-service years.

Table 4.

*Recommendations regarding the challenges for novice Turkish EFL teachers suggested by researchers*

No	Author(s) (Year of publication)	Recommendations
1	Akcan (2016, pp. 61-62)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-service teacher education programs should connect theory with more practice opportunities (in particular during the practicum) and help PSTs with the ability to adapt their pedagogical content knowledge and skills for diversified classrooms in order to better prepare them for classroom realities.</li> <li>• Cooperating (mentor) teachers should be selected under the guidance of the school administrators and university supervisors.</li> <li>• A brief training program for cooperating (mentor) teachers should be provided by university supervisors to better their mentoring.</li> <li>• Online support groups should increase support network opportunities to promote communication with other teachers experiencing similar concerns and to facilitate collaboration in reflective processes.</li> <li>• An ongoing connection with peers and university supervisors after graduation should be available.</li> </ul>
2	Bekdemir (2019, pp. 114-115)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSTs should be invited to meetings with novice English teachers to raise their awareness of the potential adaptation challenges.</li> <li>• Novice teachers should be encouraged to collaborate with other novices in different contexts to discuss their challenges and think on the possible solutions to their problems.</li> <li>• Teacher trainers (university supervisors) should provide ongoing support for novices after their graduation for helping them overcome their adaptation problems.</li> <li>• Practicum duration should be lengthened and opportunities for experiencing varying contexts should be increased.</li> </ul>
3	Bulut Albaba (2017, pp. 151-153)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support should be provided to equip PSTs with skills to handle possible resistance to novel practices in their future teaching contexts.</li> <li>• PSTs should be provided with examples of the application of theoretical knowledge to classroom practices as well as the opportunities to practice them.</li> </ul>
4	Gok Kaca & Yigitoglu (2017, pp. 12-14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal mentoring and guidance programs in which all the stakeholders (i.e., cooperating teachers and mentees) observe each other for the better adaptation of novice teachers should be developed.</li> <li>• In-service teacher education programs should resort to post-observation discussion sessions on context- and teacher-specific concerns.</li> <li>• Institutions should support and leave some space for teacher autonomy in the curriculum.</li> <li>• Pre-service teacher education programs should emphasize and include possible discrepancies between theory and actual classroom realities to better train student teachers for their future teaching contexts.</li> </ul>

5	Gungor et al. (2019, pp. 298-299)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-service teacher education programs should incorporate skills and strategies necessary to teach in multi-cultural and multi-level classrooms.</li> <li>• Online discussion opportunities (e.g., through forums) for novice teachers should be provided.</li> <li>• Informal contacts of novice teachers with their university supervisors and experienced colleagues should be encouraged.</li> <li>• Cooperative forums which would enhance the exchange of information and practice with other colleagues should be organized in school-university partnership to promote continuous PD of novice teachers.</li> <li>• Novice teachers should be encouraged to engage in systematic reflection on their teaching practices.</li> </ul>
6	Karatas & Karaman (2013, p. 21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Novice teachers should be encouraged to share their experience with other novices to better handle potential in-class challenges.</li> <li>• Cases in useful resources (such as case studies, short stories, and narratives) should be examined and exploited to promote reflective thinking among novice teachers.</li> <li>• Collaborative opportunities with novice teachers should be organized.</li> </ul>
7	Ozturk & Yildirim (2012, p. 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-service teacher training activities should be promoted and in-service teacher educators should continue providing continuous support, guidance, and feedback to novice teachers.</li> <li>• An effective teacher induction program and extensive mentoring programs in which mentees are matched with experienced teachers should be provided to novice teachers to smooth their introduction to profession and to ease the induction process respectively.</li> </ul>
8	Sali & Kecik (2018, p. 129)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem-based learning should be used, in which real classroom problematic situations would be analyzed to raise the awareness of pre-service EFL teachers towards the potential challenges for becoming language teachers.</li> <li>• Teaching contexts in their practicum experience should be diversified.</li> <li>• In-house (school-based) teacher development programs should be designed, which require the collaboration of school administrators, mentors, and colleagues to help novices in their tough journey, with the support of online discussion boards and social media platforms.</li> <li>• Systematic corroboration and constructive feedback should be provided to support novice teachers emotionally for their self-efficacy, motivation, and professional identity development.</li> </ul>
9	Yazan (2016, pp. 214-215)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching contexts in a practicum experience should be varied to help novices get prepared for the potential challenges.</li> <li>• More field-based experiences should be integrated.</li> <li>• Case studies should be analyzed.</li> <li>• Further support and assistance from administrators and more experienced colleagues should be provided.</li> <li>• More practical facets of courses such as linguistics and SLA in pre-service teacher education should be focalized to better internalize how course content is relevant to their future practices.</li> <li>• Courses that foster the integration of both target language culture and home culture into English language classes in pre-service teacher education programs should be included.</li> </ul>

Table 5.

*Categorization of recommendations for novice Turkish EFL teachers*

Recommendations	The study referred*	
Pre-service teacher education	Bridging the gap between theory and practice	1, 3, 9
	Teaching PSTs skills and strategies for managing mixed ability classrooms	1, 5
	Raising PSTs' awareness	2, 4, 8, 9
	Enriching the practicum experiences	2, 8, 9
	Teaching how to handle resistance	3
In-service teacher training	Culture	9
	Teacher development	
	• Fostering induction and PD opportunities	4, 5, 7, 8
	• Training mentors	1
	• Promoting self-reflection	5, 6
	Professional guidance and support	
	• Providing further support	8, 9
• Enhancing communication and collaboration with other novices	1, 2, 5, 6	
• School-university partnership	1, 2, 5	
Recognition of teacher autonomy	4	

\* The numbers refer to the study number in Table 4.

Recommendations for pre-service teacher education programs also centered upon bridging the gap between theory and practice (e.g., Akcan, 2016; Bulut Albaba, 2017; Yazan, 2016). To this end, connecting theory with more practice by maximizing practice opportunities especially during the practicum period can be of great benefit (e.g., Akcan, 2016). Similarly, PSTs should be provided with the examples of the application of theoretical knowledge to classroom practices as well as the opportunities to practice them (e.g., Bulut Albaba, 2017). Therefore, focusing on more practical facets of courses such as linguistics and SLA in pre-service teacher education to better internalize how course content is relevant to their future practices carries great importance as well (e.g., Yazan, 2016). Apart from the recommendations in these studies, another solution might be to provide reflective practice opportunities during pre-service education, as recommended by Farrell (2012). Although it is unrealistic to prepare PSTs for every single scenario they might face in their future classrooms, it is important to help them develop skills in reflective practice before they enter the profession. Farrell (2012) also suggests forming and persevering formal/informal university supervisor–novice teacher–mentor teacher arrangement during the initial years of novices to fill this theory-practice gap.

In connection with the previous recommendation, some studies also suggested to diversify teaching contexts and lengthen the duration of teaching practice in PSTs' practicum experience so as to help novice teachers get prepared for the potential challenges of their future career (e.g., Bekdemir, 2019; Sali & Kecik, 2018; Yazan, 2016). On the contrary, interestingly, in the latest undergraduate program for English language teachers released in 2017, the School Experience course in which junior PSTs were observing lessons in practicum schools was removed from the curriculum.

As noted above, diversifying teaching contexts is highly important for the classroom realities, but just providing PSTs with opportunities to observe and practice different classrooms does not guarantee effective handling of classroom realities, among which one common problem

is mixed-ability classrooms. Most classrooms, if not all, comprise students with mixed abilities because no two students are alike. Hence, studies suggested that pre-service teacher education programs should help PSTs gain necessary skills and strategies and adapt their PCK for teaching in multi-cultural and multi-level classrooms (e.g., Akcan, 2016; Gungor et al., 2019).

Regarding recommendations pertaining to in-service teacher training, these nine studies indicated that what would perhaps be more effective is to foster induction and PD opportunities. As the literature shows, initial induction and subsequent professional development programs might help alleviate the challenges novices encounter, which corroborates the recommendations made in the reviewed studies. For example, an effective teacher induction program and extensive mentoring programs in which mentees are matched with experienced teachers should be provided to novice teachers to smooth their introduction to the profession and to ease the induction process respectively (e.g., Ozturk & Yildirim, 2012). Specifically, in-house (school-based) teacher induction and development programs with the participation of all the stakeholders (i.e., cooperating teachers and mentees) who observe each other for the better adaptation of novice teachers (e.g., Gok Kaca & Yigitoglu, 2017). However, these programs should also resort to post-observation discussion sessions on context- and teacher-specific concerns (e.g., Gok Kaca & Yigitoglu, 2017). To this end, online discussion boards and social media platforms can be very supportive in terms of enabling a meaningful exchange of information and practice with other colleagues (e.g., Gungor et al. 2019; Sali & Kecik, 2018). Nevertheless, while doing all these, one must also make sure that in-service teacher educators should continue providing continuous support, guidance, and feedback to novice teachers (e.g., Ozturk & Yildirim, 2012).

Enhancing communication and collaboration with other novices was another commonly stated recommendation for in-service teacher training programs. These studies suggested that it is of great importance to organize collaborative opportunities with novice teachers (Karatas & Karaman, 2013). Specifically speaking, it is necessary to create opportunities for novices to share and discuss their experience with other colleagues so that they can think of possible solutions to their problems and thus better handle potential in and outside class challenges, with other novices teaching in different contexts in particular (e.g., Bekdemir, 2019; Karatas & Karaman, 2013). Nevertheless, in order to make such implementations more feasible and practical, some studies recommended increasing the support network opportunities through online support groups to promote communication with other teachers experiencing similar concerns and involve in reflective processes collaboratively (e.g., Akcan, 2016). For example, as indicated by Gungor et al. (2019), online discussion opportunities (e.g., through forums) for novice teachers can be provided.

As another recommendation, studies drew attention to the school-university partnership. It is frequently indicated that novices continue to struggle to survive in the profession while also trying to learn to teach. To this end, to help novices overcome adaptation problems, ongoing connection with university supervisors and peers after graduation is highlighted (e.g., Akcan, 2016; Bekdemir, 2019; Gungor et al., 2019) because most novice teachers in the reviewed studies stated that they did not have any further contact with their university supervisors. This problem is also remarked by Farrell (2019):

Unfortunately, what usually occurs is that on graduation, many NQTs [Newly Qualified Teachers] suddenly have no further contact with their teacher educators or programs, although



they must face the same challenges as their more experienced colleagues from the very first day on the job, but often without much guidance from the new school/institution (p. 8).

Likewise, Farrell proposes “SLTE educators must maintain some kind of contact with their NQTs after they have graduated.” (p. 10). Yet, further support is not limited to university supervisors. Some studies (e.g., Sali & Kecik, 2018; Yazan, 2016) suggested that administrators and more experienced colleagues should provide novice teachers with further support and assistance. Systematic corroboration and constructive feedback to novices were advised for their self-efficacy, motivation, and professional identity development, for instance. Findings from earlier studies also highlight the impact of novice-mentor teacher interactions on novices’ effectiveness; that is, the more they interact, the better they can improve their instructional practices (Pogodzinski, 2015).

Being one of the 21st-century skills, engaging in self-reflection was also recommended by some studies (e.g., Gungor et al., 2019; Karatas & Karaman, 2013). Novice teachers should be encouraged to engage in systematic reflection on their teaching practices, which can be achieved through the detailed exploration and analysis of beliefs and teaching practices, critical incidents, and case studies (Farrell, 2012). A study by Schuck et al. (2012), for example, reminds us that teacher education programs can achieve quite a lot in preparing students to teach when they help their PSTs reflect on their teaching. Similarly, Farrell (2012) emphasizes the great benefit of integrating reflective practice into teacher education programs to help PSTs develop skills to better handle struggles and problems in the early years of teaching.

As can be seen from these recommendations, mentors take an active role in the development of novice teachers. However, it is also important to question whether or not being an experienced teacher guarantees being a good mentor. Unfortunately, it does not (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), and most of the time “Experienced teachers are often recruited as mentors without consideration as to whether or not they have available time or have previous preparation,” as expressed by Gagen and Bowie (2005, p. 41). What is worse, some do not want to be mentors at all, as revealed by one of the participants in McCann and Johannessen’s (2004) study. Therefore, training mentors is of great importance, which was also suggested by Akcan (2016). A brief training program for cooperating (mentor) teachers can be provided by university supervisors in order to better their mentoring, which in turn would help student teachers get more positive attitudes towards teaching, as she put forward. She also suggested that cooperating (mentor) teachers should be selected under the guidance of the school administrators and university supervisors. This issue requires further attention because the same problem exists in induction programs. Although the old-fashioned “sink or swim” notion has started to give its place to teacher induction programs in some contexts, what is entirely clear is that not all of them result in success stories because they might fall short in mentoring novices. As Meyer (2002, p. 28) states:

In theory, the new teacher has someone to turn to for help. Mentoring programs, however, are uneven and problematic (Little, 1990). Unfortunately, the existence of a mentor program does not guarantee the frequency or quality of the mentor-novice interaction. These haphazard arrangements may or may not be effective. Some mentor teachers have nothing other than the title to support them in their efforts. Successful teaching of children or seniority cannot predict a mentor’s skill at working with novice teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 1995).

Also, Hargreaves (1992) highlights that “the mentoring arrangement can be an example of ‘contrived collegiality’—a relationship that works better on paper than in reality” (as cited in Meyer, 2002, p. 29) In fact, there are some key issues to an effective mentoring program:

School administration and mentors must possess excellent communication skills, be able to provide feedback, and be willing to share effective teaching practice. Most importantly, mentoring programs need to be monitored, structured, and well organized, and should be a year-long program that allocates a trained mentor and exposure to effective PD for the novice teacher (Pogodzinski, 2015).

#### **4. Conclusion, Implications, and Future Directions**

This study aimed at reviewing challenges and recommendations for novice Turkish EFL teachers, and a thorough review of the earlier studies in the literature indicated that the main challenges for novice Turkish EFL teachers were mainly related to professional and social adaptation. The following four main challenges were identified under the professional adaptation: instructional challenges including classroom management, student-related and PCK-related struggles; school-context related challenges; lack of PD opportunities and support; and teacher identity related challenges. Amongst them, classroom management and student-related challenges and lack of PD opportunities and support were the most frequently encountered challenges by novice EFL teachers in the Turkish context. Novice teachers stated that they often struggled to manage their classrooms, which corroborate the findings of earlier studies as well (e.g., Farrell, 2012; Meister & Melnick, 2003; Melnick & Meister, 2008; Ulvik et al., 2009). Regarding management issues, they stated that they experienced challenges like how to deal with unmotivated and uninterested students or how to handle individual differences, as also indicated by Veenman (1984). Regarding the areas of greatest concern, novices also emphasized their concerns due to the lack of professional and emotional guidance and support from their school community including administrators, mentors, other colleagues, and their novice peers, as also reported in earlier studies (e.g., Jeanlouis, 2004; Marable & Raimondi, 2007). Social adaptation challenges, on the other hand, were mostly related to social and socio-cultural issues. Novices mostly referred to their troublesome relationship with the school community such as the conservative and oppressive attitude, mobbing, and bullying. They also voiced some challenges resulting from socioeconomic, cultural, and ideological differences among themselves, school community, and social community.

As to recommendations, the review of studies offered some suggestions for both pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher training programs: What was suggested in these nine studies concurs with the earlier studies: pre-service teacher education programs should bridge the divide between theory and practice (Farrell, 2019), teach PSTs necessary skills and strategies to handle mixed-ability classrooms, raise their awareness towards possible challenges in their future career, and enrich the practicum experiences especially by varying the teaching contexts (Atay, 2007; Seferoglu, 2006). As to in-service teacher training programs, some recommendations were also made for teacher development, professional guidance and support, and recognition of teacher autonomy. As suggested by several studies in this review, further improvements should be carried out to increase induction and PD opportunities, train mentors, promote novices' self-reflection (Farrell, 2019), provide further support to novices, enhance their communication and collaboration with other novices, and encourage the school-university partnership (Farrell, 2019).

Taking these findings into consideration, there are several implications and future directions derived from this review: To begin with, both pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher training programs should address the long-standing problem of mixed-ability classrooms thoroughly. This, for example, can be realized by equipping PSTs with the

teaching skills regarding how to adapt and differentiate their instruction in mixed-ability classrooms as well as lead and manage differentiated classrooms involving students having diverse needs, learning styles, interests, and readiness levels (Tomlinson, 2001). Secondly, since findings showed that especially the graduates of non-education faculty with the pedagogical formation teaching certificate tended to feel inadequate about teaching methodologies, some improvements regarding the curriculum were necessary for pedagogical formation programs, which have just recently been replaced by the non-thesis masters programs. Although the curricular details of these new programs in terms of providing enough hands-on teaching practice opportunities are not explicitly stated, non-education faculty graduates' needs should be addressed during these graduate programs or their induction programs when they start the profession. The suggestions made for PSTs can be also taken for non-education faculty graduates as they are also learning to teach. Therefore, recommendations in Seferoglu's (2006) study are believed to be effective in this context as well: more opportunities for an increased number of micro-teaching practices and practice teaching courses, observation of diversified learning environments including different teachers, age groups, proficiency levels, and school settings. Besides, their teaching practices should be supported through "extensive and specific verbal feedback, especially related to their instructional practices" (Atay, 2007, p. 215). Next, for nearly a decade, the dramatic increase in Syrian refugees and immigrants has diversified the classroom environment, and most novice EFL teachers touched upon difficulties stemming from ethnic background differences (e.g., Bulut Alaba, 2017; Gungor et al., 2019). Amongst them, language barriers and emotional well beings of these Syrian students can be listed. As also recommended by Aydin and Kaya (2019), pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher training programs should raise awareness of novices on this issue and better prepare them to address the needs of disadvantaged students. This could be realized through culturally responsive teaching (CRT); that is by "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2018, p. 36). However, Zorba (2020) indicated that in-service English language teachers in his study could not integrate some essential components of CRT such as creating a knowledge base and learning communities, and utilizing varied assessment techniques for students from diversified cultural backgrounds although they attempted to create culturally relevant and meaningful learning environments for such students. Therefore, his recommendations definitely deserve attention: pre-service English teacher education programs "should be enriched with culture-oriented courses covering both theoretical and practical sides of multicultural education and CRT" (Zorba, 2020, p. 55); and seminars and workshops on CRT should be organized for in-service English language teachers. Lastly, earlier studies (e.g., Kucukahmet, 2007; Ulubey & Basaran, 2019) found that the abolishment of the School Experience course was criticized by faculty members at universities due to the decrease in PSTs' opportunities to get familiar with and prepare for the real classroom environment. Similarly, the reviewed studies emphasized the need for increasing and diversifying practicum opportunities. Therefore, the School Experience course could be put back in the undergraduate English Language Teaching program curriculum. As an alternative, more practice opportunities could be provided by increasing the number of observation hours or varying the school contexts during the practicum in PSTs' senior year.

We conclude that the findings of this review might help draw attention to the commonly faced challenges for novice Turkish EFL teachers. Also, the potential recommendations to cope with these challenges might spark some interest among all the stakeholders and researchers to take some meaningful and coherent actions. All in all, it must be noted that all

the stakeholders including school administration, teacher educators, and education policymakers are vested with the responsibility to alleviate the challenges novice teachers encounter, and every one of us should feel the responsibility to handle this issue as novices continue to grow and develop throughout their first few years in the teaching profession.

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### Ethical Issues

The author(s) confirm(s) that the study does not need ethics committee approval according to the research integrity rules in their country.

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