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Conflict and Collaboration: Co-Teaching Dynamics in Bilingual Private Schools

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This qualitative phenomenological inquiry aimed to explore the intricacies of conflict within the educational landscape, specifically focusing on its manifestation within the realm of private schools. The resultant dataset covered the perspectives of 37 teachers and four administrators through semi-structured interviews. This investigation leveraged the transformative power of in-depth interviews, engaging both co-teachers and school administrators, to unveil the layers of complexity hidden beneath the surface. The data analysis followed a series of thematic coding stages. The multifaceted findings uncovered a paradoxical landscape within the practice of co-teaching. While the practice itself was recognized as invaluable, a tapestry of conflicting issues emerged that warrant careful consideration. The salient points of discord that surfaced encompassed themes such avoidance of responsibility, inability to adapt to practice, not knowing the system, the partners paying more attention to their branch, intense program, lack of communication and different educational philosophies. Finally, a notable difference in perception arose: teachers often credited conflict resolution to the effectiveness of their administrators, whereas administrators leaned towards the idea that it depended on the competence of their fellow teachers. While teachers pushed for more in-service training and workshops, administrators argued that they already offer sufficient training opportunities. These results underscore the intricate dynamics within the education system. To facilitate successful co-teaching, both teachers and administrators must grasp this approach thoroughly.

Introduction

In the contemporary landscape of private education, a critical concern emerges as educational institutions strive to adopt innovative paradigms aimed at enhancing the quality of education and conforming to global standards. Among these innovative approaches, the bilingual education model, operationalized through the collaborative practice of co-teaching, has gained considerable prominence. Co-teaching, alternatively referred to as team-teaching or parallel-teaching, encompasses the collaborative efforts of two distinct educators, typically a

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primary subject instructor and an English language specialist, who jointly facilitate instructional sessions, nurture student development, and evaluate academic progress (e.g. Bouck, 2007; Friend, 2010). Extensive academic research into co-teaching practices (Magiera & Zigmond, 2005; Moore and Keefe, 2001; Scruggs et al., 2005; Stark, 2015) has substantiated a concerning pattern: co-teachers tend to grapple with conflicts at a higher frequency than their peers engaged in solo teaching. However, it is noteworthy that the scholarly examination of these challenges remains somewhat limited, with the majority of extant studies primarily centered on Western educational contexts and systems (e.g., Walther-Thomas, 1997; Keefe and Moore, 2004; Murawski & Dieker, 2004).

Concurrently with the global surge in language education and the pursuit of top-tier academic benchmarks, the bilingual education model is attracting increased attention (e.g. Edwards, 2016; Stark, 2015) from private school founders and parents in Turkey owing to its demonstrated effectiveness in English language acquisition. Nevertheless, the practice of co-teaching remains relatively unexplored and unfamiliar terrain for many educational institution founders, administrators, and instructors. Consequently, a deep exploration of the intricate web of conflicts intrinsic to co-teaching offers the potential to unearth essential insights. Such an inquiry can engender a profound understanding of the tensions that frequently manifest among co-teachers and provide guidance on how to navigate these challenges effectively, thereby bolstering the motivation of educators. This study embarks on a journey to uncover the fundamental sources of conflict experienced by co-teachers labouring within the bilingual education framework across three private educational institutions. By utilizing in-depth interviews with educators and administrators as our primary methodological lens, our objective is to address two pivotal questions: "How do teachers define their co-teaching relationships, and what are their experiences of conflict with their partners in a bilingual education system?" Furthermore, we aspire to answer the central question of "What concrete measures should be implemented to enhance the efficacy of co-teaching practices?" Through a comprehensive examination of conflicts within co-teaching practices, this research has the potential to provide pedagogical insights of great significance to a diverse range of stakeholders in the field of education. It stands to benefit educational practitioners, administrators, policymakers, and teacher trainers at higher education institutions by informing the design of both pre-service and in-service training programs for educators, thereby fostering an environment where co-teaching can flourish and the quality of education can be further elevated.

Literature Review

In order to understand what co-teaching is, it is useful to briefly explain the bilingual education model because co-teaching emerged from the bilingual education model. Co-teaching, initially introduced in the United States in the 1960s, aimed to integrate children with disabilities into general education settings without segregation. The early implementations involved a special education teacher assisting the classroom teacher. The term 'co-teaching' was coined as 'collaborative teaching' by Warwik in 1971 (as cited in Kırış, 2016). It gained prominence in the literature with the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1975 (Lee, 2014). Subsequently, the 'No Child Left Behind Act' in 2002 further shaped the practice, leading to its recognition for reducing student-to-teacher ratios and enhancing the academic achievements of students with disabilities. Beyond classroom and special education teachers, co-teaching teams have expanded to include professionals such as counselors, psychologists, physical therapists, and speech and language therapists (Lobarda, 1980). This evolution highlights the multifaceted approach co-teaching has taken over the years.

Bilingual education employs a collaborative approach known as co-teaching, where two teachers collaborate within the same classroom. Co-teaching is characterized by joint instructional planning, lecturing, and assessment, fostering a shared responsibility for the classroom (Bacharach, Heck & Dank, 2004; Stein, 2017). Despite its merits, there are common misconceptions about co-teaching that warrant clarification. It is not a division of subjects between two teachers nor a scenario where one instructs while the other handles administrative tasks like photocopying or grading exams. Additionally, it is not a unilateral decision-making process where one teacher dictates both what and how to teach. In essence, co-teaching involves two or more educators collectively shouldering the responsibility for teaching all or some students in a class. This collaborative model extends beyond sharing physical space, encompassing joint planning, teaching, and assessment duties (Cushman, 2004). This holistic approach distinguishes co-teaching as a collaborative effort that goes beyond traditional teaching practices, emphasizing shared responsibilities and mutual engagement in the educational process.

Co-Teaching Practice

Co-teaching, originating from the inclusive education philosophy, is deeply rooted in Western educational tradition. It involves the collaborative participation of multiple educators who work together to jointly plan, deliver, and assess instruction within a designated learning environment for a specified period. This cooperative approach effectively harnesses the distinct skills and expertise of each team member, as noted by Singer in 1964 (as cited in Buckley, 2000). Departing from the traditional classroom model, where a non-native English teacher typically assumes sole instructional responsibility, co-teaching capitalizes on the educators' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to better address the varied needs of students (Tsai, 2007). In this context, co-teachers share educational responsibilities and collaboratively engage in a wide range of instructional activities. This collaborative effort not only distributes the workload but also reduces the student-to-teacher ratio (Weiss & Loyd, 2002). While co-teaching initially gained prominence in special education settings, its adoption within language teaching classes has expanded over time due to the manifold benefits it offers to both students and educators (Austin, 2001; Jang, et al., 2010; Scruggs et al., 2005; Murawski & Swanson, 2001). Extensive scholarly discourse on co-teaching consistently underscores its positive impact on both student and teacher outcomes (Austin, 2001; Murawski & Swanson, 2001; Scruggs et al., 2005; Trent et al., 2003).

Co-teaching models exhibit diversity, primarily contingent on the linguistic composition of the student populations they serve. Two-way programs facilitate integration between English-dominant students and those who speak other languages. Conversely, one-way programs cater to more linguistically homogeneous groups, with students from various language backgrounds immersing themselves in English-language content instruction. Lastly, heritage programs aim to preserve and sometimes rekindle languages, often catering to immigrant youth (Fortune & Tedick, 2008). The crux of this collaborative approach lies in the belief that a diverse team, equipped with varying backgrounds and expertise, can synergize to enhance the efficiency of language instruction (Carley, 2013). As such, this cooperative paradigm in language teaching is widely acknowledged to offer substantial advantages for both educators and students, rendering it an attractive and fruitful pedagogical strategy.

Co-teaching practice in Türkiye

Co-teaching, recognized as a versatile pedagogical strategy, encompasses a variety of models specifically tailored to different program settings. These models include *one teach, one*

observe, one teach, one assist, parallel teaching, station teaching, alternative teaching, and *team teaching* (Friend & Cook, 2010). Within the Turkish educational landscape, co-teaching has gained prominence, particularly within the framework of bilingual education. A growing number of Turkish schools are integrating co-teaching into their English language instruction programs. In Turkey, this educational approach serves a dual purpose: the cultivation of English as a second language proficiency and the bestowal of international qualifications such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) or A-Level credentials upon students upon program completion.

It is noteworthy that the Turkish education system operates within a centralized structure overseen by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and adheres to the "4+4+4" system, encompassing compulsory education stages, namely primary, secondary, and high school. According to the Turkish Constitution, Turkish is mandated as the sole medium of instruction for Turkish citizens in educational institutions. However, the law allows for foreign language instruction in educational institutions, subject to specific regulations (Article 42). Most public and private schools in Turkey traditionally offer foreign language courses, with foreign language instructors assuming sole authority in their respective classes. English is the most commonly taught foreign language in public schools, while private institutions, seeking to attract parents and enhance their competitive edge, typically follow the Turkish national curriculum, emphasizing Turkish alongside mandatory foreign language instruction.

Private schools, in particular, demonstrate a strong commitment to foreign language education, often embracing bilingual education models that enable students to receive dual diplomas or report cards — one national and the other international. The adoption of a bilingual education model requires approval from the MoNE, and these schools predominantly cater to students from middle to upper-class backgrounds in Turkey. Co-teaching practices within the bilingual education paradigm span from preschool to high school levels, with their origins dating back to the early 2000s, exemplified by pioneering implementations at institutions like Bahçeşehir College and Bilfen Colleges (Benton, 2018). In the Turkish context, the prevalent co-teaching model aligns with team teaching, wherein both educators jointly deliver lectures, actively engaging students while assuming distinct roles — an approach often likened to "two brains in two bodies." The growing adoption of co-teaching in response to its observed efficacy in enhancing student achievement is undeniable.

Method

This heading includes research design, the context of the study and participants, data collection and analysis processes.

Research Design

This qualitative phenomenological study investigated the conflict as a school context issue based on the interviews carried out with private school co-teachers and school administrators to provide rich and in-depth insights.

Research Context and Participants

The study's data emanated from three private bilingual schools, located within various cities across Turkey, with a specific focus on three campuses situated in Ankara. Notably, the broader network of these bilingual schools' spans 22 campuses, ensuring a standardized curriculum uniformly administered by central general education coordinators. Classroom

observations conducted by school administrators further oversee the implementation of co-teaching practices. Within these classrooms, the co-teaching model involves the collaborative efforts of two educators, one instructing exclusively in Turkish and the other exclusively in English.

A total of 37 teachers willingly engaged in the research. These participants encompassed a range of educational levels, from kindergarten to primary school, mirroring the continuum of co-teaching practices in these institutions. Predominantly, the participants were English teachers collaborating with classroom teachers in the primary and kindergarten sections. The teachers exhibited a diverse age range, spanning from 25 to 60 years, with an average age of 32. Participants' co-teaching experience averaged nine years. Notably, all participants were Turkish citizens with Turkish as their native language. Almost all of the teachers working in these schools are women and therefore those who volunteered to participate in the study were also women.

Table 1. Teacher Participants' Characteristics

Number	Gender	Age	Teaching Experience	Experience in Co-teaching	Education Degree	Branch	Number of Partners Worked With
1	Female	32	6	2	Graduate	Turkish	2
2	Female	60	41	3	Graduate	Turkish	1
3	Female	53	31	2	Graduate	Turkish	1
4	Female	23	3	3	Graduate	English	1
5	Female	33	9	4	Graduate	Turkish	2
6	Female	39	22	5	Graduate	Kindergarten	7
7	Female	27	4	4	Graduate	English	4
8	Female	32	9	2	Masters	English	6
9	Female	27	4	4	Graduate	English	5
10	Female	26	7	4	Graduate	English	4
11	Female	28	5	5	Graduate	Turkish	5
12	Female	27	4	4	Graduate	Turkish	3
13	Female	28	4	2	Graduate	English	1
14	Female	33	5	2	Graduate	English	6
15	Female	28	8	1	Graduate	English	1
16	Female	33	8	6	Graduate	Kindergarten	4
17	Female	41	13	4	Graduate	English	4
18	Female	37	9	2	Graduate	Kindergarten	1
19	Female	27	5	5	Graduate	English	4
20	Female	25	3	3	Graduate	English	1
21	Female	29	5	4	Graduate	English	1
22	Female	25	4	4	Graduate	English	1
23	Female	25	5	2	Graduate	Kindergarten	1
24	Female	34	12	4	Graduate	Turkish	2
25	Female	52	22	1	Graduate	Turkish	1
26	Male	29	5	3	Graduate	Kindergarten	1
27	Female	47	17	2	Masters	Turkish	2
28	Female	56	33	3	Graduate	Turkish	3
29	Female	40	18	4	Graduate	Kindergarten	4
30	Female	26	1	1	Graduate	English	1
31	Female	27	4	4	Graduate	Turkish	1
32	Female	37	3	3	Masters	English	1

33	Female	29	5	5	Graduate	English	2
34	Female	39	19	5	Graduate	Kindergarten	4
35	Female	32	8	8	Graduate	English	11
36	Female	29	6	3	Graduate	Kindergarten	2
37	Female	27	3	3	Graduate	English	2

Four female school administrators participated in the interviews, including one principal, one vice-principal, and two coordinators overseeing early years. These administrators' ages ranged from 33 to 52, with an average age of 40. Principals had varying administrative experience, spanning from 1 to 15 years, with an average of 9.75 years. Typically middle-aged, these administrators had predominantly completed their master's education.

Data Collection Tool

A semi-structured interview questions were developed by the researchers within the scope of this study. While preparing the questions, the interview questions of similar studies in the literature (Kırış, 2016; Petrick, 2015) were examined. Seven expert opinions were used to ensure the validity of the semi-structured interview questions and four teachers were pre-interviewed. Two questions before the expert opinion were merged after the expert opinion, one question was removed and the questions were edited for clarity and finalized. The interview form included nine initial and 11 main open-ended interview questions were developed for teachers. This interview form was adapted to the school administrators with slight differences and consisted of eight personal and eight open-ended interview questions. The interview questions are presented at the beginning of the findings.

Data Gathering

Drawing upon the researcher's prior three-year tenure as a co-teacher within these schools, contact was established with the central office of the school chain. Formal permission was granted to approach teachers and school administrators for their voluntary participation in the study. Participants were informed about the research objectives, and their voluntary participation was facilitated through the collection of consent forms. The data collection process involved recording interviews with five teachers and one administrator who opted not to have their responses voice recorded, while the remaining participants' interviews were audio-recorded.

Data Analysis

The recorded interviews were transcribed into written form within a Word document. To anonymize and categorize participants, teachers were denoted as T1 to T37, and school administrators were identified as AD1 to AD4. English teachers were specifically designated as T1E, while class teachers were designated as T1C. The subsequent data analysis was conducted utilizing MAXQDA software and followed a series of thematic coding stages.

Prior to conducting the interviews, careful consideration was given to the pertinent literature to ensure the trustworthiness and transferability of the research design. To further enhance the comprehensiveness and ensure a robust interpretation of the data, it is recommended that data analysis involve multiple researchers (Burla et al., 2008; Schreier, 2012). In this pursuit of trustworthiness, two of the research participants reviewed the research findings to validate that they accurately represented the participants' experiences. To reinforce the credibility of the research, the study took several steps in accordance with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) principles. Firstly, the research team provided a clear and accurate description of the participants constituting the study group (Elo et al., 2014). Secondly, the data analysis process was detailed

with direct quotations included. The conformability relates to objectivity and suggests that the data accurately represent the information provided by the participants and that the inquirer did not construct interpretations of those data. The conclusions must reflect the voices of the participants and the context of the investigation, rather than the researcher's prejudices, intentions, or opinions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). At this point, the interviews were presented directly to the readers without any comments and changes to convey the trustworthiness of results (Stahl & King, 2020).

Findings

Three main categories have emerged from the data analysis in line with the research questions: Sources of conflict, conflict-resolving strategies, and teachers' expectations from school administrators. These main themes are presented with their sub-themes and their codes holistically in Figure 1.

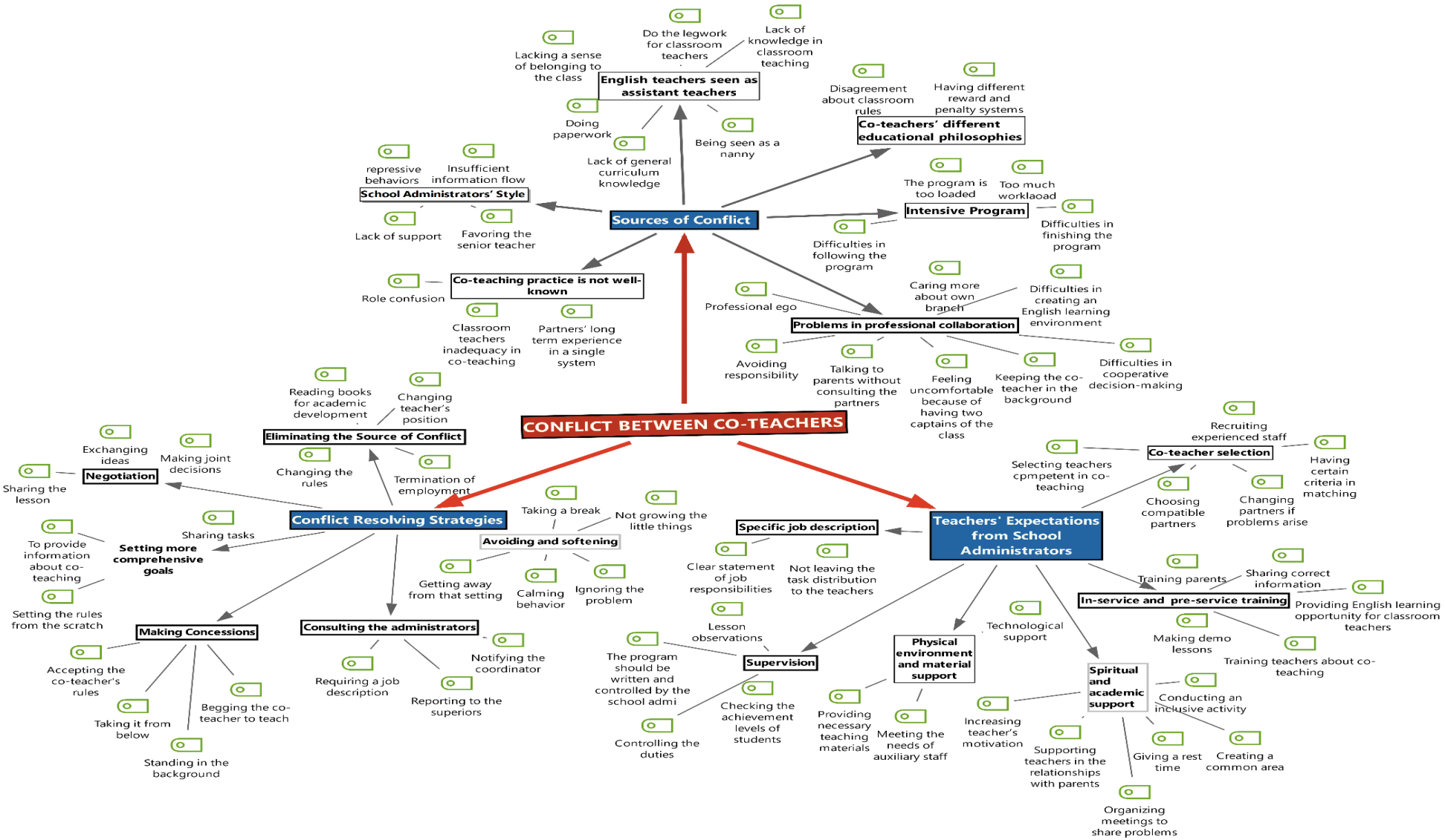

Figure 1. Conflict Between Co-Teachers

Sources of Conflict Between Co-Teachers

Sources of conflict between co-teachers were asked to the teachers "Do you have conflicts with your co-teacher? If so, what are they?" The same questions were posed to their administrators, "Do teachers have conflicts in co-teaching practice?" The sources of conflict between co-teachers generally arise from the professional attitudes and behaviors of teachers and the nature of the co-teaching practice (Figure 2).

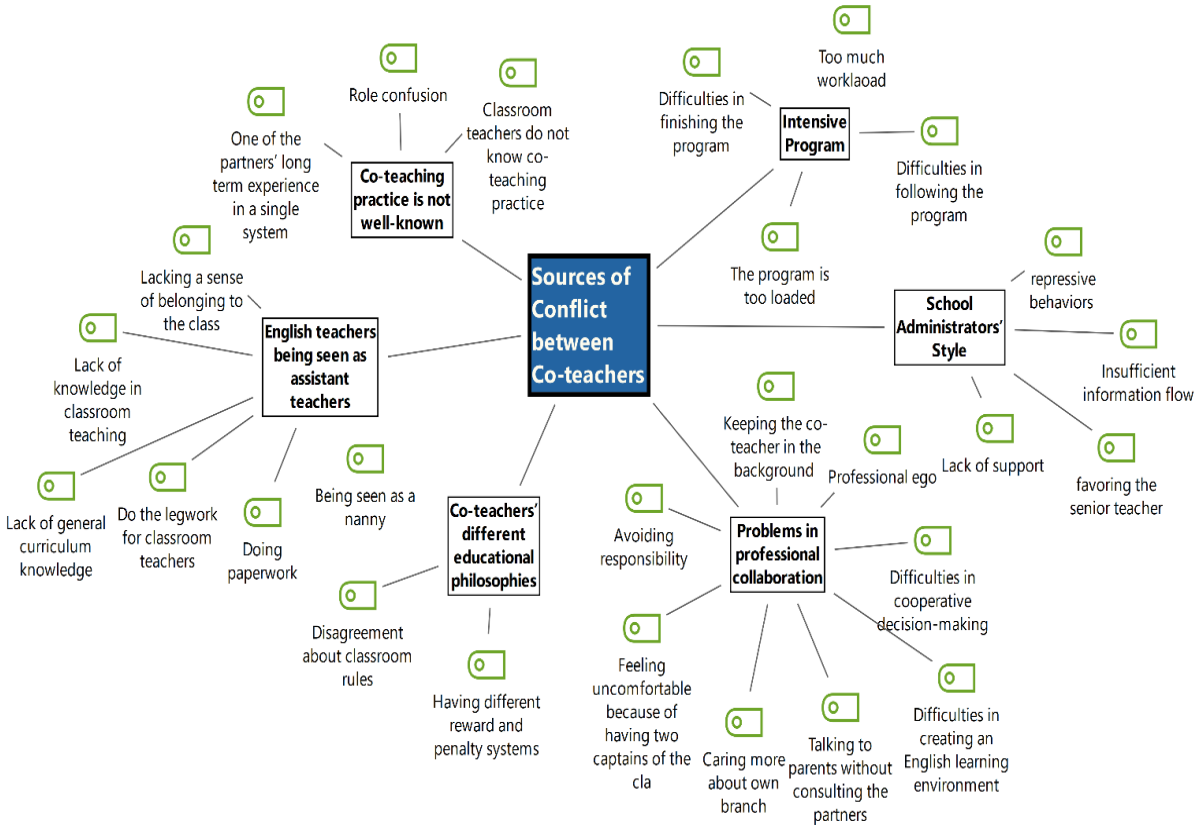

Figure 2. Sources of Conflict between Teachers

English teachers are seen as assistant teachers. English classroom teachers are uncomfortable because of being seen as assistant teachers by both the school administration and their co-teachers. They suffer from not being accepted as real "co-teachers" during classroom practices in primary schools. An English co-teacher complained:

> "My co-teacher sees me as a nanny. My duties are assigned by my co-teacher, not by my administrator. My co-teacher is a retired teacher. Since she did not know this system and worked as a teacher in the traditional approach for many years, she does not accept that I am a teacher. She does not give me any work in class and only gives me the paperwork" (T5E).

English teachers often perceive their co-teacher counterparts as dominant, whereas many classroom teachers express a sense of detachment on the part of English teachers regarding the general curriculum. This disconnect leads English teachers to invest extra effort in comprehending primary curriculum subjects like mathematics, science, and social studies, resulting in increased preparation time and energy expenditure.

Classroom teachers, who anticipate English teachers, trained primarily for branch teaching, to assume a broader instructional role encompassing multiple subjects in English, voice

disappointment when these expectations remain unmet. This discrepancy in role fulfilment fuels conflicts within the co-teaching system.

Co-teaching practice is not well-known. Some teachers have started their teaching careers with this practice, while some classroom teachers have worked in a single-teacher system for many years. Those who have subsequently switched to practice cannot adapt immediately. A teacher described her difficulty as follows: "When I first started, it was very difficult, there is an age difference between us. She's been a public school teacher for 30 years, and she's always run a one-teacher system. She was the queen of the class, and I had no right to say anything" (T12E). *Intensive program.* Since the curriculum was written in two languages, the teachers could not fully concentrate on the required subjects, time was insufficient, they had timing problems, and the workload was higher than the singular model. A teacher stated: "It's a very good system for the student, but very bad for it exploits the teacher's energy. The program is so intense and we didn't have enough time for anything as my partner was not helpful with the material" (T3E).

Co-teachers' different educational philosophies. Co-teachers reported that when their partners have a different educational philosophy or teaching style, they cannot get along. A teacher explained her challenge as follows: *"...* our teacher has no patience with the children. Kindergarten students choose food and some go hungry. I say, let's give bread at least, but my co-teacher refuses. S/he says this is wrong, there are already carbohydrates on the table. We couldn't agree on the rules. I use my reward and penalty system. Because her/his punishments are harsher, I think it's wrong" (T4E).

Similar to the teachers, school administrators believe that the reasons for the conflicts are the teachers do not match well or have different personalities: "…This is not because of the system, but related to teachers' character. I think about parting my way directly. Even if it wasn't for the co-teacher system, my teacher would already have problems with someone else (AD1)".

Problems in professional collaboration. Competition is the leading cause of co-teachers conflict. Several teachers asserted that their partners wanted to bring themselves to the forefront; they were jealous of their partners and even saw them as a threat. One participant stated: *"*We became the bloody knife enemy. That's why I changed the co-teacher. I never liked her, I would pretend to love her, but she always saw me as a threat. The idea of being more successful than herself was scary for her. If I got more attention from kids, she would do her best to get me out" (T10E).

Teachers cited conflicts arising from partners' independent actions, absence in shared classroom activities, solitary parent meetings, and unilateral decision-making. English teachers perceived it as hindrance to lesson execution, exceeding their allotted time, and lack of input on children. Conversely, classroom teachers attributed it to discomfort with another presence and disruption to their teaching: *"*Dividing the class into two groups was very difficult for her. She didn't want to share authority. It affected me very negatively. We went on a trip, there was a missing seat. She left me standing, for example. She didn't think that I was a teacher" (T12E). In line with teachers' statements, one administrator stressed this kind of conflict as follows: "...If one is too possessive and the other is less, there is trouble. Classroom teachers sometimes don't accept intervention inside their classrooms. They want to do the best or the worst by themselves" (AD2).

A notable source of professional collaboration conflict arises from the need to establish an English learning environment, dictated by institutional policies that prohibit Turkish usage

during classroom teaching and interactions. Consequently, communication between co-teachers must occur in English, posing challenges for Turkish teachers with limited English-speaking proficiency, thereby fueling conflict, as emphasized by one English teacher: "Sometimes I was saying something to my co-teacher in English, and she didn't understand. It was funny in front of the kids. Sometimes she pretended not to understand me if she didn't want to cooperate" (T12E).

School Administrators' Style. Teachers' perception that "school administrators cannot manage the system properly, take sides, and do not inform teachers adequately" fuels the conflict between partners. A teacher described her conflict as follows: "Administrators absolutely do not help us. Some teachers are favored. The old teachers are always right. While new teachers are constantly questioned, old teachers' requests are immediately accepted. There is discrimination" (T4E).

Being same-gender. Two teachers emphasized that same-gender co-teachers conflict more (T8E): "We do not have conflicts, but it is very difficult for women to work with women. Being better race is more when the partners are of the same gender".
When the answers given by the participants are evaluated together, conflicts within co-teaching environments stem from diverse factors, including role perception, curriculum intensity, philosophical differences, communication challenges, and issues related to school administration and gender dynamics. These factors contribute to a complex web of challenges in collaborative teaching settings.

Strategies Used to Resolve Conflicts

Conflict-resolving strategies were asked "Could you explain the methods you use to solve the conflicts in the co-teacher practice with examples?" to the administrators while the co-teachers were asked, "Could you explain the methods you use to resolve conflicts in co-teaching practice with examples?" Themes and sub-themes are presented in Figure 3.

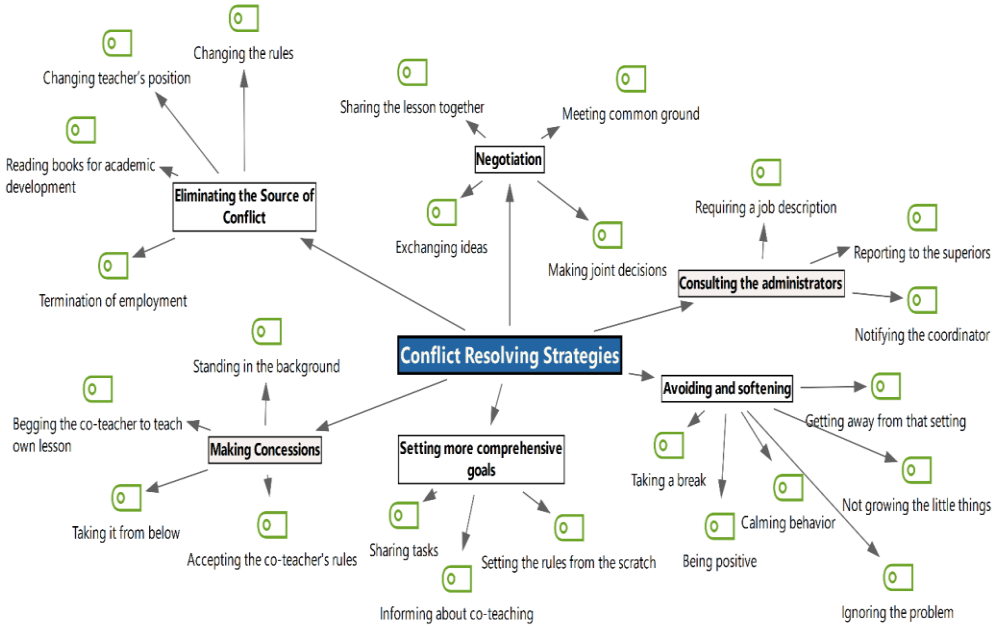

Figure 3. Strategies Used to Resolve Conflicts

Cooperation. Teachers foster cooperation through effective communication, information sharing, joint decision-making, and mutual respect. Additionally, they engage in collaboration through weekly meetings, idea exchange, and collaborative lesson planning, as expressed by one educator: "If you are my partner, I create a special dialogue in the evening, I give information about what we will do tomorrow for 10 minutes at the exit and teach her/him. I'm talking without making the little things bigger" (T30C).

Consulting the administrator. The most common method teachers use to resolve conflicts is to consult the principal after talking to their peers. The co-teachers stated that "I tell the administrator, I complain, I get help from outside, I report it to my superiors". One administrator claimed that teachers applied to them and asked for help in problem-solving: "Unless I have a private conversation, my room door is open to everyone. That's why they come because they feel that they are having problems teachers may have a problem. I try to solve the problem..." (T1C).

Avoiding and softening. Strategies that co-teachers use to resolve conflict are; ignoring the problems, living within themselves, and doing nothing. One participant expressed: "...I am a harmonious person. When there is conflict and when I am older, I ignore it. I am soothing" (T2C). Co-teachers who think that they cannot change the result of their conflict because their co-teachers are more dominant prefer the softening method as one of the participants said: "If one is dominant, the other should take it from below. So, they can complement each other" (P29E).

Making concessions. English teachers make concessions to resolve conflicts, as administrators take the side of classroom teachers. Teachers explained that they made concessions with expressions such as "begging for the lesson, doing what s/he wants, taking it from below, giving up own rules, accepting it". One teacher explained "...It happens that I beg to do my job. Once I notified the administrators, they left me in a very difficult situation. I will not consult again. They said you are always young, you will take from the below" (T7E).

Negotiation. Many teachers in this practice are aware that co-teaching will work better if partners have good relationships, so they compromise in conflict resolution methods. Administrators also use the method of consensus in conflict management: “Unless I have a private meeting, my room’s door is open to everyone... I listen to both sides, I try to find a common solution and reconcile” (AD1).

Eliminating the source of conflict. Teachers find out the reason for the conflict by talking with their partners and finding a suitable solution. Although rare, if the disputes are unresolved, co-teacher change and job change can be made. A participant's opinion is as follows: “...We couldn't figure anything out and they made me a native teacher” (T6E).

School administrators tend to eliminate the cause of the conflict. When they cannot do this, they can terminate the employment contract after several warnings. One administrator noted: “If it is not a system problem I would consider taking my way directly with the teacher. Even if there was no co-teaching system, that teacher would have problems with someone else anyway” (AD1).

Taken together, Co-teachers employ various strategies to address conflicts within collaborative teaching environments. Effective communication, information sharing, and joint decision-making foster cooperation. Weekly meetings and collaborative lesson planning contribute to idea exchange and partnership development. When conflicts arise, teachers often consult administrators for assistance, seeking resolution through dialogue and problem-solving. Strategies such as avoidance, softening, and making concessions are utilized to manage conflicts, with teachers compromising to maintain a positive working relationship. Negotiation and consensus-building play a crucial role in conflict resolution, emphasizing the importance of good relationships between co-teaching partners. In extreme cases, teachers may change partners or roles, while administrators may terminate contracts as a last resort to eliminate persistent conflicts.

Teachers’ Expectations from the School Administrators

Co-teachers' expectations from the administrators in conflict management were explored through this question; "What do you think are the roles of administrators in co-teaching practice?" The findings are presented in Figure 4.

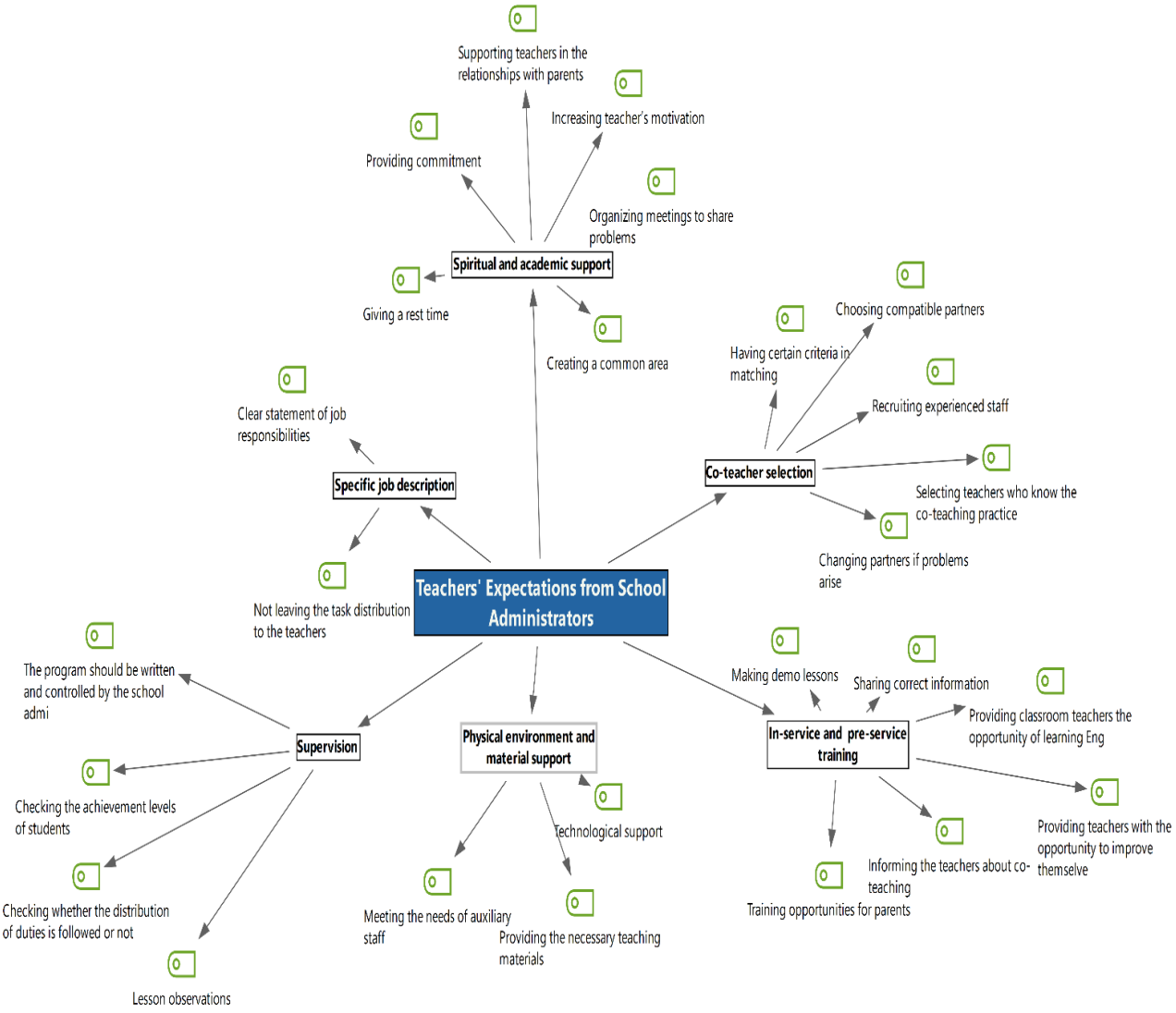

Figure 4. Teachers' Expectations from the School Administrators

Being fair. Since a class has two teachers in co-teaching practice, teachers expect administrators to listen to both sides, stand at an equal distance from teachers, and be objective. One teacher expressed: "... A clear task list should be prepared, and the duties of English and classroom teachers should be specified separately by the administration. Children should be shared in half. Teachers should be kept at an equal distance. Former teachers should not be favored" (T4E.)

In-service and pre-service training. Almost all the teachers noted that in-service training and workshops should be provided about co-teaching and its requirements.

Co-teacher selection. Although the teachers are not uncomfortable with the selection of their partners by the administration, they think that teachers should be recruited without commercial concerns and special attention should be paid to them while matching the partners. A teacher explained: "...If they want this system to move forward, they need to choose people bilingual. It may be good to teach directly, but the teacher needs to know this system as well. Experienced staff is very important in this matter" (T28C).

Administrators claimed that they were very sensitive and they tried to choose teachers who were good in their field and that co-teachers who complement each other: "…The priority is

whether the people selected can drive the business value of the organization. There is a structure here that does not stretch according to the person or change according to the student. The priority is the ideal people to run this structure. Since we choose good teachers, it is easy for them to complement each other" (AD2).

Spiritual and academic support. Teachers hold expectations for robust support that spans both academic and emotional dimensions. They advocate for the establishment of communal spaces, break allocation, problem-sharing meetings, and motivational enhancement by administrators. Although teachers claim a deficit in administrator support and resources, administrators assert their backing, both materially and in addressing parental and senior management issues, as articulated by one administrator: "If there is a problem between the parents and the teacher due to the reflexes of the people, I intervene immediately. If there are problems caused by the system, I get solutions that will make them comfortable" (AD2)

Physical environment and material support. Teachers stressed the need to employ technicians for technical problems. Technological equipment should be provided. A teacher expressed the difficulty she faced in program preparation and material preparation as follows: "We are writing the program, it must be done by the school administration. I am dealing with both preparing materials and working on the subject, however, this new system is carried out with technology, and we do not have any technological competence" (P27E).

Specific job description. Teachers expect the administration not to leave the task specification and distribution. They also want to be acknowledged about the workflow. One of the teachers expressed his expectations as follows: "...As long as they do the job distribution well, there will be no problems. If you leave this distribution to the teacher, that job will not do much good. When we do, we get into each other, everyone thinks for their interests" (P29E).

Supervision. One of the shortcomings of the co-teaching practice for the co-teachers is the lack of supervision. Teachers expect the administration to check whether the program is implemented. They also want their lessons to be observed by their administrators. A teacher emphasized the need for supervision: "I think the administrator should be as effective as a teacher in the school... They should follow the development of children. We teach, but I wonder how much they are aware of it. English may be a little more prominent" (P3E).

When the answers given by the participants are considered holistically, teachers engaged in co-teaching emphasize the importance of fairness in administrative dealings, expecting impartiality and equal consideration for both English and classroom teachers. They advocate for comprehensive in-service training on co-teaching, underscoring the need for workshops to enhance understanding and implementation. While accepting the administration's role in co-teacher selection, teachers stress the importance of bilingual competence and system familiarity. Expectations extend to robust spiritual and academic support, communal spaces, break allocations, problem-sharing meetings, and motivational enhancements. Adequate physical and material support, including technological equipment and competent technicians, is deemed essential. Teachers call for specific job descriptions and workflow acknowledgment, emphasizing the importance of effective distribution. Lack of supervision emerges as a critical concern, with teachers seeking regular checks on program implementation and classroom observation by administrators to ensure effective co-teaching practices

Discussion and Conclusion

This study delves into the intricate dynamics of conflict among co-teachers within the bilingual education model, offering perspectives from Turkish co-teachers and administrators in three private schools. Distinguished from previous empirical research primarily situated in the inclusive education context, this study pioneers a nuanced examination of co-teachers who jointly instruct the curriculum in both Turkish and English, aiming for elevated educational standards — a practice exclusive to a limited number of private schools in Turkey. Consequently, the findings of this research illuminate the shared experiences of co-teachers and administrators within the distinctive framework of the bilingual education model, contributing fresh insights to the existing body of knowledge.

The first research question delved into the origins of conflict among co-teachers, unearthing multifaceted sources. English teachers voiced concerns about their perceived lack of classroom teaching skills, which they viewed as a conflict catalyst. This sentiment was compounded by their inexperience in co-teaching, aligning with research by Scruggs et al., (2007) and Hamilton- Jones and Vail (2013), who identified conflicts arising when one teacher exerts more effort than their counterpart. Moreover, a spectrum of additional conflict sources emerged, including "avoidance of responsibility," "inability to adapt to practice," "unfamiliarity with the system," "attention disparity toward their respective branches," "intense program demands," "insufficient communication," and "differing educational philosophies." Divergent teaching philosophies sometimes ignited conflicts between partners, resonating with Çetin-Kırış's (2016) findings highlighting miscommunication as a prominent conflict catalyst among teachers. The study also revealed that classroom teachers deemed their teaching hours inadequate, while English teachers often felt relegated to the role of classroom teacher assistants, engendering conflict rooted in their inability to assert the desired level of authority. This observation mirrors Keefe and Moore's (2004) findings that special education teachers sometimes felt like secondary educators due to their limited content knowledge, suggesting that conflicts stem from a reluctance to share authority in co-taught classrooms. Furthermore, the intensity of the program emerged as a significant impediment, demanding substantial planning time from co-teachers. Additionally, the practice of breaking teaching sessions into brief 20-25 minute intervals (Walther-Thomas, 1997) was perceived as disadvantageous (Moore & Keefe, 2001). Most participants were native Turkish speakers, with numerous classroom teachers lacking proficiency in English, leading to communication challenges during class. Additionally, longstanding tenure within a single system was identified as a conflict source, as these teachers struggled to adapt to the new co-teaching system due to entrenched professional habits from their prior experiences, echoing findings by Harper (2009) and Stark (2015).

The second research question delved into the conflict resolution strategies employed by both teachers and administrators. Teachers exhibited a repertoire of strategies including cooperation, consultation with administrators, setting more meaningful goals, conflict avoidance, compromise, and addressing the source of conflict to resolve disputes. It's noteworthy that some teachers perceived co-teaching itself as a source of conflict, a perspective in line with Conderman's (2011) conflict resolution strategies, which include "avoiding conflict" and "making concessions." Interestingly, administrators appeared less attuned to conflict within their schools, despite teachers identifying numerous conflict areas. This discrepancy suggests potential explanations, such as teachers resolving conflicts amongst themselves, thereby escaping the notice of administrators. Consequently, school principals may lack a comprehensive understanding of the conflict dynamics among teachers and its implications for education. Furthermore, administrators reported conducting meetings to identify conflict sources, but simultaneously expressed reluctance to engage in conflicts that might culminate in

a teacher's contract termination. While most teachers indicated consulting administrators when conflicts persisted, some teachers perceived administrators as unhelpful and even biased. Intriguingly, teachers believed that having a competent administrator could eliminate conflicts, whereas administrators attributed conflict prevention to the competence of co-teachers. These findings underscore the presence of elevated expectations on both sides, yet a potential misalignment in shared expectations for fostering a conflict-free teaching environment. These findings parallel the observations made by Salend et al. (1997), indicating that the co-teaching system can become challenging when school administrators augment teachers' workloads without adequate support. In the current research, participants expressed dissatisfaction with the level of support provided by their administrators, aligning with Salend et al.'s (1997) findings. This perspective gains additional support from Abbye-Taylor (2013) and Edwards (2016), who emphasized the pivotal role of school administrators in mediating relationships between co-teachers. Keefe and Moore (2004) underscored the critical role of school administration in clarifying co-teachers' responsibilities, thereby preventing them from struggling in their partnerships. These consistent findings underscore the significance of school administrators in mitigating tensions among co-teachers and fostering a collaborative teaching environment, highlighting instances where these expectations may not be fully met.

The final question centered on teachers' expectations from administrators, with fairness and access to in-service training being primary concerns. This echoes Sasson's (2013) emphasis on teachers' training needs in co-teaching. Our findings suggest that administrators offer more support to classroom teachers than to English teachers, revealing disparities in support. The study indicates that teachers may lack comprehensive knowledge of co-teaching, leading to their expectation for in-service training and well-defined job descriptions. While teachers advocated for in-service training and workshops, administrators contended that they already provide necessary training opportunities. This underscores Keefe and Moore's (2004) recommendation for enhanced co-teaching competencies in teacher education programs, a responsibility that should extend to educational authorities responsible for teacher hiring.

This research bears several limitations. Firstly, it was conducted exclusively in three bilingual schools in Ankara, potentially limiting its generalizability. Future research should explore schools implementing various bilingual education models to enhance the breadth of insights. Besides, researchers may delve into the impact of cultural and contextual variations on conflict sources and resolution strategies. Furthermore, future studies could focus on the development and implementation of targeted training programs for co-teachers, addressing specific challenges identified in this research. Examining the effectiveness of such programs in enhancing co-teaching competencies and reducing conflicts would contribute valuable insights for educational policymakers and practitioners. Comparative analyses between inclusive education models and bilingual education models may shed light on unique challenges and solutions in each context. Understanding how conflicts manifest and are resolved in distinct educational frameworks can inform the design of successful strategies for fostering collaboration among educators. Additionally, this study solely represents the perspectives of 37 teachers and four administrators, warranting future research focusing on administrators' experiences. Diversifying data collection strategies, such as incorporating observational data, could yield more objective and comprehensive insights into teachers' collaborative dynamics. Finally, including the viewpoints of students and parents could provide a holistic understanding of this issue, enriching future research.

Implications and Suggestions

The study underscores several critical findings. Firstly, English teachers' unfamiliarity with the general education curriculum and the language barrier between them and classroom teachers, who do not speak English, lead to communication problems and consequent conflict. To address these challenges, it may be beneficial to incorporate bilingual teaching experience into undergraduate teacher training programs. Additionally, those currently engaged in co-teaching should receive more comprehensive and regular in-service training. Teachers expressed dissatisfaction with administrative support, highlighting the need for administrators to undergo training to gain a deeper understanding of co-teaching practices and the conflicts arising from teacher expectations. To foster effective co-teaching, both teachers and administrators should be well-versed in this methodology. It may be beneficial to introduce workshops alongside in-service training in schools implementing co-teaching. Furthermore, considering individuals with successful co-teaching experiences as potential school administrators and providing them with appropriate training could prove beneficial. In sum, this study offers valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of conflict within co-teaching and suggests strategies to enhance the management of co-teaching practices in schools, thereby contributing to improved educational practices.

Note

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