

THE VIEWS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (PDC) MEETINGS

ORTAOKUL İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN MESLEKİ GELİŞİM TOPLULUĞU (MGT) TOPLANTILARINA İLİŞKİN GÖRÜŞLERİ

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ÖZ: Bu araştırma, "English Together" projesi kapsamında düzenlenen PDC toplantılarına katılan ortaokul İngilizce öğretmenlerinin görüşlerini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda araştırma sürecinde karma yöntem benimsenmiştir. Araştırma sürecinde katılımcılardan hem nicel hem de nitel veriler elde edildiği için araştırmacılar bu yöntemin uygunluğu konusunda hemfikir olmuşlardır. İki ayrı veri toplama aracı kullanılmıştır. Bunlardan ilki PDC toplantılarının içeriği ve kapsamı ile katılımcıların demografik özelliklerine yönelik hazırlanan bir e-formdur. İkinci veri toplama aracı ise elde edilen nicel verilerin daha derinlemesine analiz edilebilmesi için hazırlanan görüşme formudur. Araştırma sürecine 122 İngilizce öğretmeni katılmış ve elde edilen nicel veriler öncelikle araştırmacılar tarafından bir Excel dosyasına kaydedilmiştir. Kaydedilen bu veriler araştırmanın alt problemleri çerçevesinde analiz edilmiş ve pasta grafikler halinde görselleştirilmiştir. Bu görselleştirmeler çalışmanın bulgular bölümünde paylaşılmıştır. Bazı katılımcılarla yapılan görüşmelerden elde edilen nitel veriler içerik analizine tabi tutulmuş ve nicel verileri pekiştirmek amacıyla ilgili şekillerin altında paylaşılmıştır. Araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçlara göre, katılımcıların PDC toplantılarının içeriğinden genel olarak memnun oldukları, kolaylaştırıcıları profesyonel olarak yeterli buldukları, toplantıların sıklığından kısmen memnun olmadıkları ve toplantıları faydalı gördükleri anlaşılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mesleki gelişim topluluğu; İngilizce öğretmenleri; Birlikte İngilizce projesi

ABSTRACT: This current research aims to identify the views of secondary school English teachers who participated in PDC meetings organised within the scope of "English Together" project. For this aim, mixed method was adopted in the research process. Since both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained from the participants in the research process, the researchers agreed on the suitability of this method. Two separate data collection tools were used. The first one is an e-form prepared for the content and scope of PDC meetings and demographic characteristics of the participants. The second data collection tool is an interview form prepared to analyse the quantitative data obtained in more depth. 122 English teachers participated in the research process and the quantitative data obtained were first recorded in an Excel file by the researchers. These recorded data were analysed within the framework of the sub-problems of the research and visualised as pie charts. These visualisations are shared in the findings section of the study. Qualitative data obtained from interviews with some of the participants were subjected to content analysis and shared under the relevant figures to reinforce the quantitative data. Based on the results obtained from the research, it is understood that the participants are generally satisfied with the content of the PDC meetings, they consider the facilitators professionally adequate, they are partially dissatisfied with the frequency of the meetings, and they see the meetings as useful.

Keywords: Professional development community; English teachers; English together project

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TÜRKÇE GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Giriş

Hızlı küreselleşmenin doğal bir sonucu olarak yabancı dil öğrenmek ve öğretmek giderek daha önemli hale gelmekte, ülkelerin birbirleriyle olan etkileşimi birbirlerinin dilini ve kültürünü bilmeyi bir zorunluluk haline getirmektedir. Dünyadaki çoğu ülke uluslararası ticaret, teknolojik gelişmeler ve turizm gibi faktörler nedeniyle çok kültürlü toplumlara dönüşmekte ve böylece çok dilli ülkeler haline gelmektedir. Öte yandan bir dilin diğer uluslar tarafından öğrenilmesini zorunlu ve önemli kılan etkenler, o dili konuşan ülkenin siyasi ve ekonomik durumu, askeri, tarihi, ticari ve kültürel ilişkilerin kurulması ve sürdürülmesi olarak görülmektedir (Putatunda, 2010; Demirel, 2016). Yabancı dil öğrenen birey, içinde yaşadığı evrene ve farklı bakış açılarına saygı duymayı, onları daha iyi anlamayı, tanımayı ve hoşgörü sahibi olmayı, kültürel zenginliğini artırmayı ve kendi kültürü hakkında diğer kültürlerle farkındalık kazandırmayı, yaratıcı ve eleştirel düşünme tarzına sahip olmayı öğrenir. Edinilen yabancı dilin edebiyat ve güzel sanatlar dallarının terminolojisini takip edebilme, anadilinin konuşulmadığı yerlerde kendini yabancı dilde ifade edebilme, yurtdışı eğitimlerinde ihtiyaç duydukları sosyal ve iletişim becerilerini geliştirme, özgüvenlerini artırma, iş olanaklarını artırma, liderlik becerilerinin gelişmesi ile üst düzey çalışma ortamlarına sahip olma becerisi kazandırır. Küreselleşen dünyada yer edinerek uluslararası alanlarda yaşam boyu öğrenen olma becerisi kazandırır (İşcan, 2011). ABD ve İngiltere'nin ekonomik ve siyasi güçlerinin de etkisiyle anadilleri olan İngilizce'nin dünyanın ortak dili olduğu bilinmektedir (Özbay, 2010; Yıldırım, 2012). Küreselleşen dünyanın düzenine ve bütününe uyum sağlayabilmek için yabancı dil, özellikle de İngilizce öğrenmek bir zorunluluk haline gelmiştir. Yabancı dil öğrenmek, o dilin kelime hazinesini, dilbilgisi kurallarını, kültürünü ve değer yargılarını bir bütün olarak öğrenmek olarak nitelendirilmektedir (İşcan, 2011).

İngilizce öğretmeye ve öğrenmeye çalışan üniversite, okul, kurs vb. birçok kurum olmasına rağmen ne yazık ki beklenen düzeyde bir ilerleme sağlanamamaktadır. Bunun nedeni ise İngilizce öğrenmeyi bilmemek olarak ifade edilmektedir (Gündoğdu, 2009; Işık, 2009). Ülkemizde İngilizce öğretimi ve öğrenimindeki yetersizlik düzeyinin aşılması için birçok çalışma, proje ve araştırma yapıldığı bilinmektedir. Bu bağlamda, 2020 yılında Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Öğretmen Yetiştirme ve Geliştirme Genel Müdürlüğü tarafından British Council ve Sabancı Vakfı ortaklığında düzenlenen English Together isimli proje bu çalışmanın araştırma konusunu oluşturmuştur.

Yöntem

Ortaokul İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişim topluluğu (PDC) toplantılarına ilişkin görüşlerini belirlemeyi amaçlayan bu çalışmada hem nicel hem de nitel veriler elde edilmiştir. Her iki veri türünün bir arada kullanılması nedeniyle yöntem olarak karma yöntem tercih edilmiştir. Creswell ve Plano Clark (2018) karma yöntemi, bir konuyu veya olguyu anlamlandırmak amacıyla nitel ve nicel verilerin toplanması, analiz edilmesi ve analizden elde edilen sonuçların amaçlı bir şekilde birleştirilerek yorumlanmasından oluşan bir yaklaşım olarak tanımlamıştır. Bu çalışmada desen olarak karma yöntem desenlerinden biri olan açıklayıcı sıralı karma desen kullanılmıştır. Araştırmacıların bu deseni benimsemesinde, araştırma sürecinde öncelikle nicel verilerin toplanması ve analiz edilmesi etkili olmuştur.

Bulgular

Araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçlara göre, katılımcıların PDC toplantılarının içeriğinden genel olarak memnun oldukları, kolaylaştırıcıları mesleki açıdan yeterli buldukları, toplantıların sıklığından kısmen memnun olmadıkları ve toplantıları faydalı gördükleri anlaşılmaktadır.

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Araştırma sürecine katılan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin %73'ünün "English Together" projesini daha önce hiç duymadıklarını ve ilk kez PDC toplantılarına katıldıklarında öğrendiklerini ifade ettikleri görülmüştür. Katılımcıların %27'sinin ise projeden haberdar olduğu ve pilot uygulamanın gerçekleştirildiği Ankara ilinde yapılan PDC toplantılarını çevrimiçi olarak takip ettiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğunun İDK toplantılarının neredeyse tamamına katıldığı anlaşılmıştır. 4, 5, 6, 7 ve daha fazla toplantıya katılan katılımcı sayısı %89 iken 1, 2 ve 3 toplantıya katılanların oranı %11'dir.

PDC toplantıları dört ana bölümden oluşmaktadır: "Isınma", "Katılım ve Gözden Geçirme", "Son PDC'nin Gözden Geçirilmesi" ve "Yansıtma". Katılımcılar, PDC'lerin en çok "Katılım ve Gözden Geçirme"

bölümünden yararlandıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Katılımcıların %62'sinin “Katılım ve Gözden Geçirme” bölümünü seçtiği görülmüştür. Katılımcıların %23'ünün “Isınma” bölümünü, %9'unun “Yansıtma” bölümünü ve %6'sının “Son PDC'nin Gözden Geçirilmesi” bölümünü faydalı bulduğu anlaşılmıştır.

Katılımcıların %69'u toplantıların yüz yüze yapılmasını onaylarken, %17'si toplantıların yüz yüze yapılmasının doğru olmadığını belirtmiştir. Katılımcıların %14'ü ise bu konuda kararsız kalmıştır.

Bu toplantıların yüz yüze yapılmasının uygun olmamasının en yaygın nedenlerinin aşağıdaki gibi olduğu görülmüştür: 24 okul gününün yorgunluğu, %24 çalışma saatleri, %21 çevrimiçi toplantıların daha pratik olacağı, %13 kısıtlı zaman, %10 ulaşım ve %8 diğer nedenler.

Proje sürecinde ilk yıl 5, ikinci yıl ise 4 toplantı gerçekleştirilmiştir. Katılımcılara toplantıların sıklığına ilişkin sorular yöneltilmiştir. Katılımcıların %61'i bu sıklıktan memnunken, %21'i memnun olmadığını belirtmiştir. Katılımcıların %18'i ise kararsız kalmıştır.

INTRODUCTION

Language is defined in the current dictionary of the Turkish Language Association (TLA) (2023) as "a system of audible or visual signs formed on the basis of consensus, which enables understanding between people; language, zeban". Özbay (2002), on the other hand, defines language as a culture transmitter as well as being a means for a society to understand each other. Learning a foreign language has become almost compulsory and has gained great importance as a result of the interaction of the countries in the world in the globalisation period, which is expressed as international integration. Learning a second language is accepted as the easiest and most perfect way to learn the culture of that language and understand it fully. Learning a native language involves perceiving the environment with the system of thinking and values belonging to that language, as well as learning a foreign language involves perceiving the environment by getting acquainted with the system of thinking and values belonging to that language. Acquiring a foreign language is not to find the expressions that correspond to the concepts and expressions in the native language in the foreign language learnt, on the contrary, it is expressed as having the perspective of the world of the society speaking that language by mastering the concepts, expressions and expressions of the foreign language learnt, and grasping the thinking and value systems. In this way, the individual who learns a foreign language can communicate more easily and comfortably with people who live the culture of the language he/she has learnt, in addition to this, the perspective and thought structure of the individual who learns a foreign language develops and enables him/her to expand his/her environment. The most important aspect that it adds to the individual is to help the individual to become aware of his/her own existence and self and to determine his/her own position through intercultural differences and similarities (Ozil, 1991).

Learning and teaching foreign languages is becoming more and more important as a natural consequence of rapid globalisation, and the interaction of countries with each other makes it a necessity to know each other's language and culture. Most countries in the world are transforming into multicultural societies due to factors such as international trade, technological developments and tourism, and thus becoming multilingual countries. On the other hand, the factors that make it compulsory and important for a language to be learnt by other nations are seen as the political and economic situation of the country speaking that language, the establishment and continuation of military, historical, commercial and cultural relations (Putatunda, 2010; Demirel, 2016). The individual who learns a foreign language learns to respect the universe he/she lives in and different perspectives, to understand them better, to recognise them and to have tolerance, to increase his/her cultural richness and to raise awareness about his/her own culture to other cultures, to have a creative and critical thinking style. To be able to follow the terminology of literature and fine arts branches of the acquired foreign language, to be able to express themselves in a foreign language in places where their mother tongue is not spoken, to develop the social and communication skills they need in their education abroad, to increase their self-confidence, to increase their job opportunities, to have high-level working environments with the development of leadership skills. It gives the ability to become a lifelong learner in international areas by gaining a place in the globalising world (İşcan, 2011). It is known that English, which is the native language of the USA and England with the influence of their economic and political power, is the lingua franca of the world (Özbay, 2010; Yıldırım, 2012). In order to adapt to the order and the whole of the globalising world, learning a foreign language, especially English, has become a necessity. Learning a foreign language is characterised as learning the vocabulary, grammar rules, culture and value judgements of that language as a whole (İşcan, 2011).

The important reasons why it is necessary to learn and teach English are listed as follows; it is an international lingua franca, it is an academic language, it provides access to a large number of written media

and resources online and in print, it is useful when travelling, it is a prerequisite for working in international business or trade (Ilyosovna, 2020). It is known that the education system in Türkiye has given importance and priority to foreign language learning since the foundation of the Republic. In addition to the studies carried out to learn English in schools where foreign language education is provided, the process started with the studies carried out with the Council of Europe in 1968 (Demirel, 2016). Since the 1980s, Türkiye's opening to the world has increased the importance of English language teaching and learning, and in this discipline, the number of weekly English lesson hours has been increased in order for the young people of Türkiye to adapt to the developments in the world countries, and over the years, the English language learning grade level has been reduced to the 2nd grade. Teaching English has been compulsory and uninterrupted since 2013, starting from the 2nd grade and continuing until the end of the 12th grade (MoNE, 2018). A student attends a total of 1368 hours of English lessons from Grade 2 to Grade 12, not including the elective and intensive programme in Grade 5, and despite these intensive lesson hours, Türkiye is known to be at an inadequate level in English learning and teaching in international reports (Kırkiç & Boray, 2017). In the English Proficiency Index (EPI- English Proficiency Index, 2022) study presented by Education First (EF), Turkey was ranked 64th among 111 countries in 2022 and its level was expressed as low (<http://www.ef.com.tr/epi/regions/europe/turkey/>).

Even though there are many institutions such as universities, schools, courses etc. that try to teach and learn English, unfortunately, an expected level of progress cannot be achieved. The reason for this is expressed as not knowing how to learn English (Gündoğdu, 2009; Işık, 2009). It is known that there are many studies, projects and researches to overcome the inadequate level of English teaching and learning in our country. In this context, the project named English Together, which was organised in 2020 by the General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development of the Ministry of National Education in partnership with the British Council and the Sabancı Foundation, constituted the research subject of this study.

Literature Review

"English Together" is a project that aims to improve the level of English language learning of students in secondary public schools by enabling teachers to establish a peer network with their colleagues. The aim of this project is to introduce new practices in the classrooms, to prepare the ground for the formation of classrooms where students will feel comfortable and confident, especially in the field of speaking skills, so that they can actively participate in the learning process. In this way, English teachers participating in the Professional Development (PD) programme are able to implement new communicative language teaching methods in public schools and achieve results that will increase students' willingness to learn, enrich their students' learning of English with extracurricular materials and increase the diversity of their own teaching methods. Thanks to the expanding network and dissemination of the project each year, teachers from all regions of Turkey participate in peer learning in Professional Development Communities (PDCs) to improve their performance in the classroom. The project puts teachers at the centre and at the same time they are the drivers of systemic change. The project is based on a community-based approach that enables teachers to share teaching practices with their peers, identify existing problems and find solutions together. By implementing the newly learnt methods in the classrooms, teachers are expected to increase their self-confidence and improve their classroom performance through the discovery of their own potential and abilities. In this connection, the British Council aims to link teacher educators and English language teachers in the UK and Türkiye to help teachers access resources and participate in professional networks to improve their performance in the classroom. UK English Language Teaching publishers provide high quality, effective English language teaching and learning resources for the Education Informatics Network (Turkish acronym EBA) online environment, the Ministry's Learning Management System. Supporting the establishment of Professional Learning Communities, UK Language Courses has already developed and delivered effective and successful training for Master Mentor Tutors and Mentor Teachers by Edinburgh College.

The British Council presented 20 live webinars on the Ministry's online platforms with content developed by UK English Language Teaching publishers, and it was reported that these webinars on EBA were watched more than a quarter of a million times by English teachers between June and November. Due to the continued demand from teachers and the success of the webinars, Cambridge Assessment, Cambridge University Press, Macmillan Education, Oxford University Press and Pearson will continue to develop asynchronous webinars for EBA throughout the project. The project follows a peer learning process in which selected teachers are trained to become Master Mentor Trainers (MMTs) or Mentor Teachers (MTs). MMTs, Professional Development Communities (PDCs) lead the creation and implementation of

Continuous Professional Development programmes. MMTs support MTs to establish PDCs in their schools or regions. In PDC meetings, teachers from the same field come together, learn about various topics according to their needs and interests, and share their experiences by making action plans to try out extra-curricular activity ideas from PDCs in their lessons. Vocational Learning Communities identify and share examples of good practice from their participating classrooms and promote these experiences on a national scale through EBA, the Ministry's Learning Management System and other channels. It is possible to obtain information about the "English Together" project on the websites of the British Council and Sabancı Foundation, which are the stakeholders of the project. The relevant links are as follows: <https://www.britishcouncil.org.tr/en/english-together-project-1>, <https://www.sabancivakfi.org/tr/sosyal-degisim/english-together-projesi>.

METHOD

Research design

In this current study, which aims to determine the views of secondary school English teachers on professional development community (PDC) meetings, both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained. Due to the combination of both types of data, a mixed method was preferred as the methodology. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) described mixed method as an approach that consists of collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data in an attempt to make sense of a subject or phenomenon, and interpreting the results obtained from the analysis by combining them purposefully. In this study, the explanatory sequential mixed design, which is one of the mixed method designs, was utilized as the design. The researchers' adoption of this design was influenced by the fact that quantitative data were first collected and analyzed during the research process. In order to make the quantitative data obtained more meaningful, it was necessary to collect qualitative data. In this regard, qualitative data were collected within the scope of the research following the quantitative data. Baki and Gökçek (2012), in their general literature review on mixed method designs, also focused on the explanatory sequential design and emphasized that quantitative data is dominant in this design and qualitative data is collected to analyze quantitative data in depth. They also stated that the analysis of the data obtained was interrelated and that these data were mostly combined in the interpretation and discussion sections of the research. The quantitative and qualitative data collected were integrated and presented together in the related sections of the study. The design scheme of the research process is shown below.

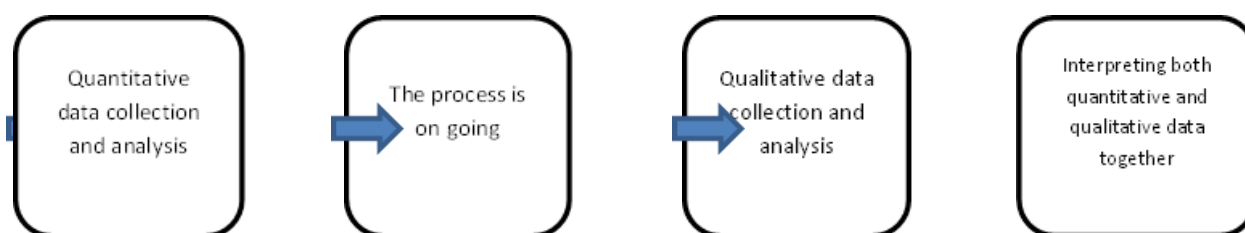


Figure 1. Schematic View of the Research Design

Participants

In this current research process, English teachers working in secondary schools affiliated to Uşak Provincial Directorate of National Education were included. In this regard, 122 English teachers participated in the research. These 122 English teachers participated in professional development community (PDC) meetings at least once. In the process of collecting the quantitative data of the study, an e-form consisting of 21 questions was sent to the participants online and they were asked to fill it out. The first part of this form included questions about gender, years of experience in the profession, education degree, faculty of graduation, and professional satisfaction. The data obtained from these questions are as follows:

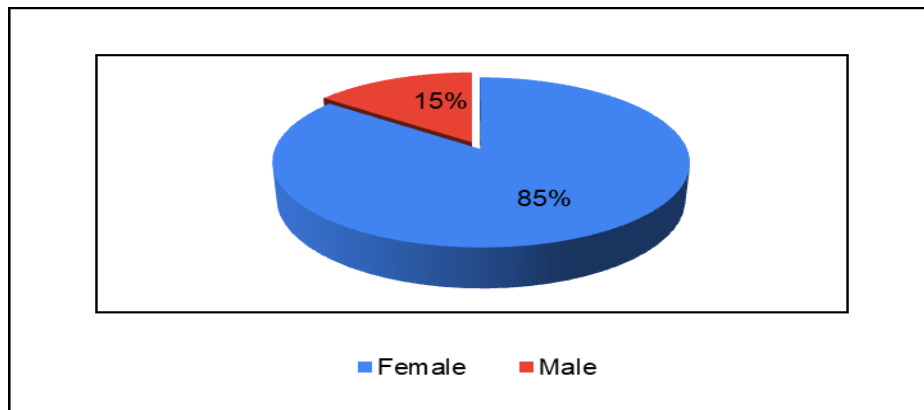


Figure 2. Participants' Gender Distribution

An analysis of Figure 2 reveals that 85% (f: 104) of the participants in the research process were female and 15% (f: 18) were male.

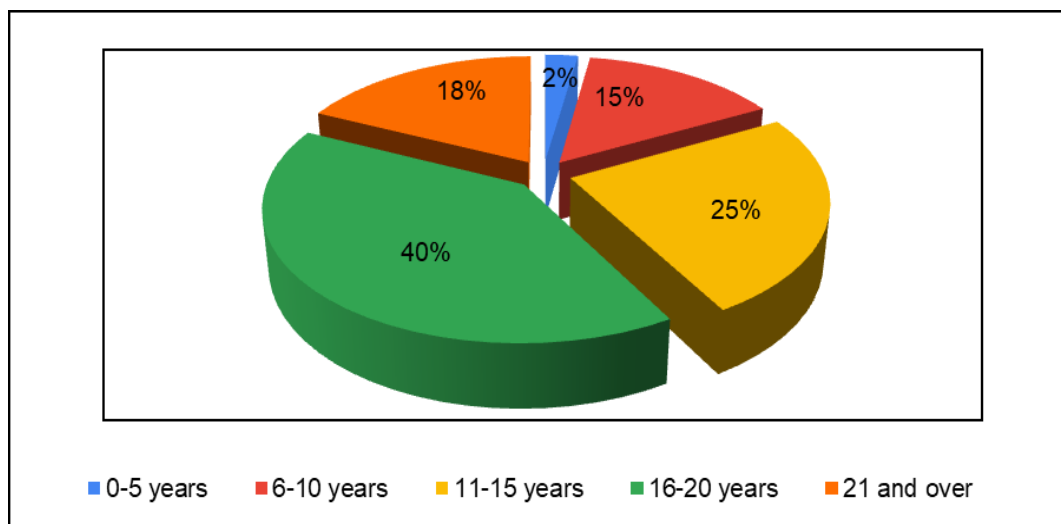


Figure 3. Participants' Professional Experience Distribution

Figure 3 presents the distribution of participants' professional experience in terms of years. According to the figure, 40% (f: 49) of the participants have a professional experience between 16-20 years. These participants were followed by those with 11-15 years of experience with 25% (f: 30), 21 or more years of experience with 18% (f: 22), 6-10 years of experience with 15% (f: 18) and 0-5 years of experience with 2% (f: 3). In general terms, when these data are analyzed, it can be stated that the majority of the teachers who participated in the study are experienced individuals in their professions.

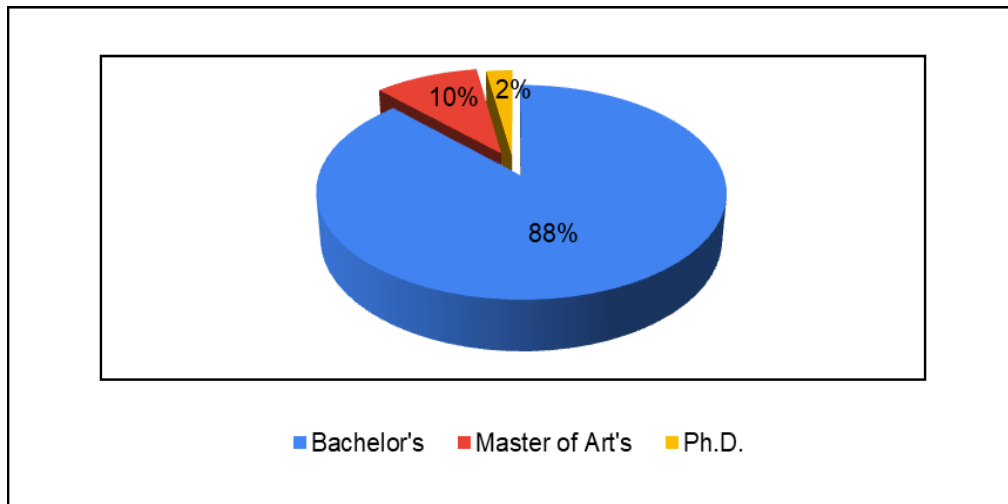


Figure 4. Participants' Education Degree Distribution

The e-form directed to the participants also included a question regarding their educational level. Figure 4 shows the data obtained from this question. The figure shows that 88% (f: 107) of the participants have Bachelor's degree, 10% (f: 12) have Master of Art's degree and 2% (f: 3) have Ph.D. degree.

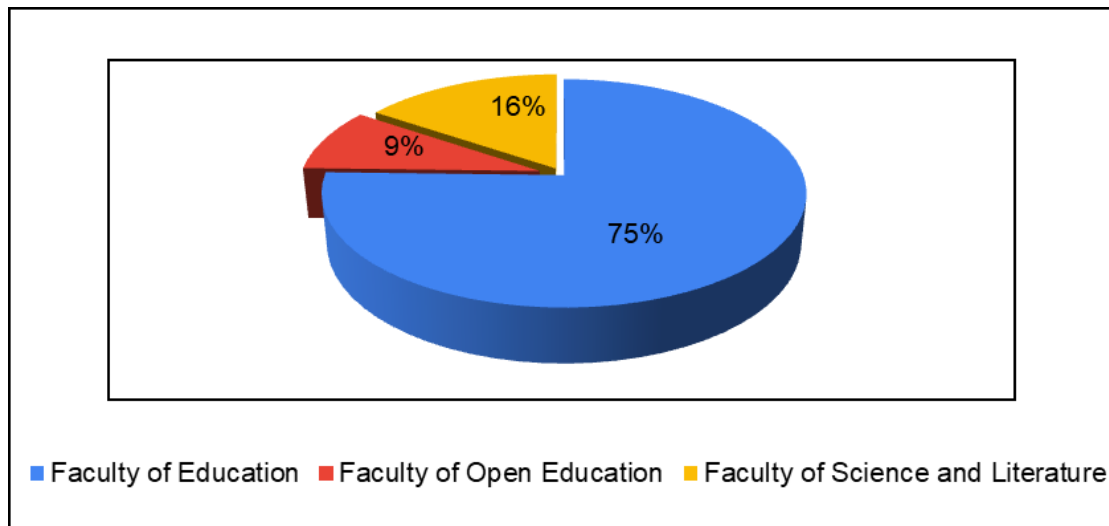


Figure 5. Participants' Faculty of Graduation Distribution

Figure 5 provides the distribution of the faculties from which the participants graduated. The data shows that 75% (f: 92) of the participants graduated from the Faculty of Education, 16% (f: 19) from the Faculty of Science and Literature, and 9% (f: 11) from the Faculty of Open Education. While the majority of the participants graduated from faculties of education, there are also a certain number of teachers who graduated from other faculties. According to the teacher appointment system in Turkey, people who graduated from faculties other than education faculties can also work in state institutions provided that they receive formation training in the relevant subject.

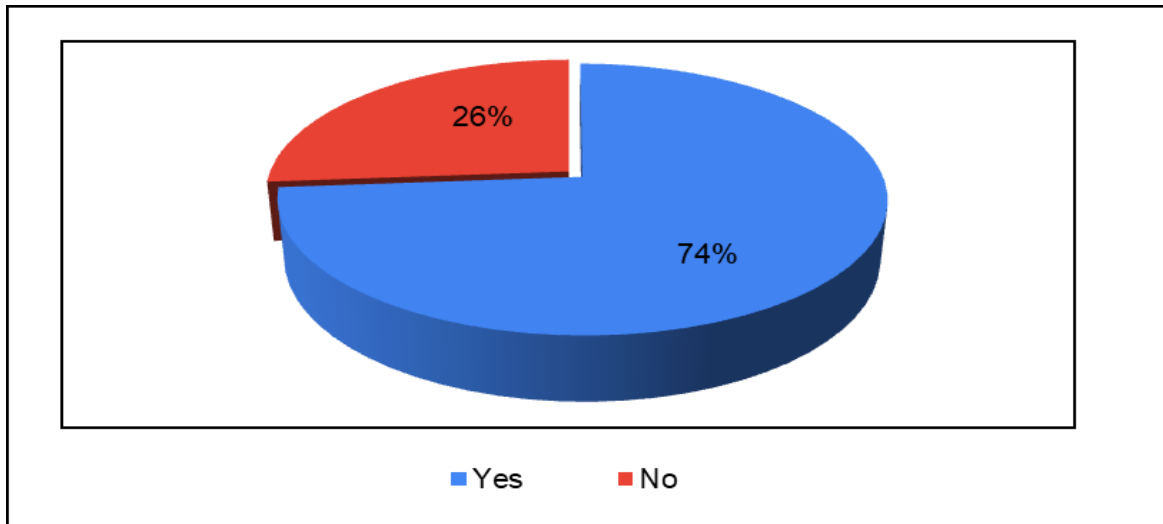


Figure 6. Participants' Professional Satisfaction Status Distribution

As in all professional groups, it can be stated that it is extremely important to know the confidence and professional satisfaction of the employees in the education sector. In this direction, in this study, it was tried to determine the occupational satisfaction levels of the participants in general terms and to reveal the reasons for dissatisfaction. Figure 6 presents the data in this direction. Figure 6 contains the distribution of participants' occupational satisfaction levels. In this context, 74% (f: 90) of the participants stated that they were satisfied with their professional satisfaction, while 26% (f: 32) stated that they were not satisfied.

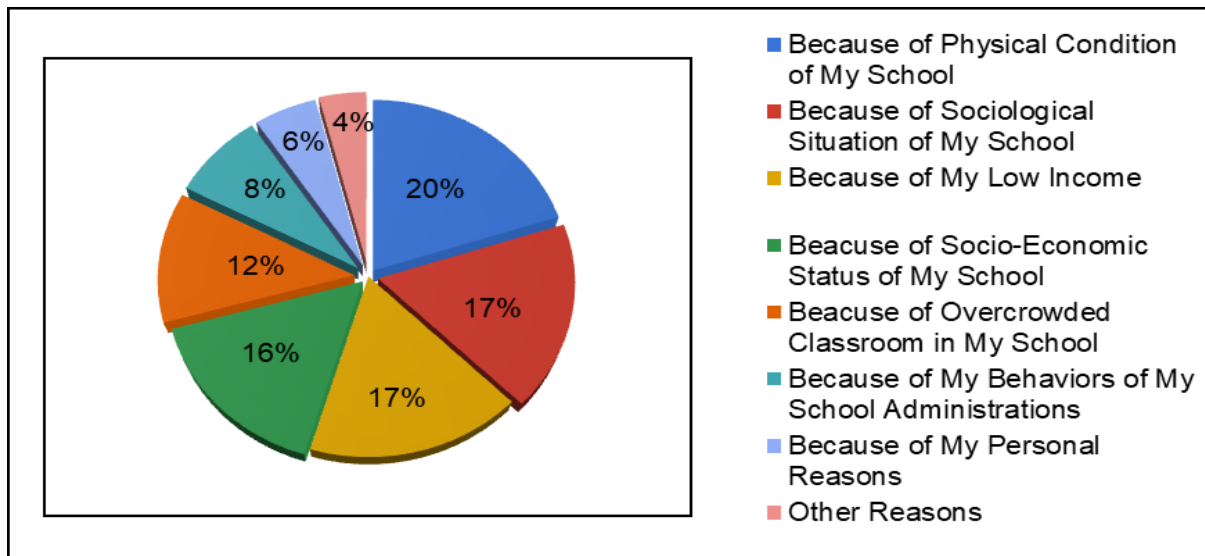
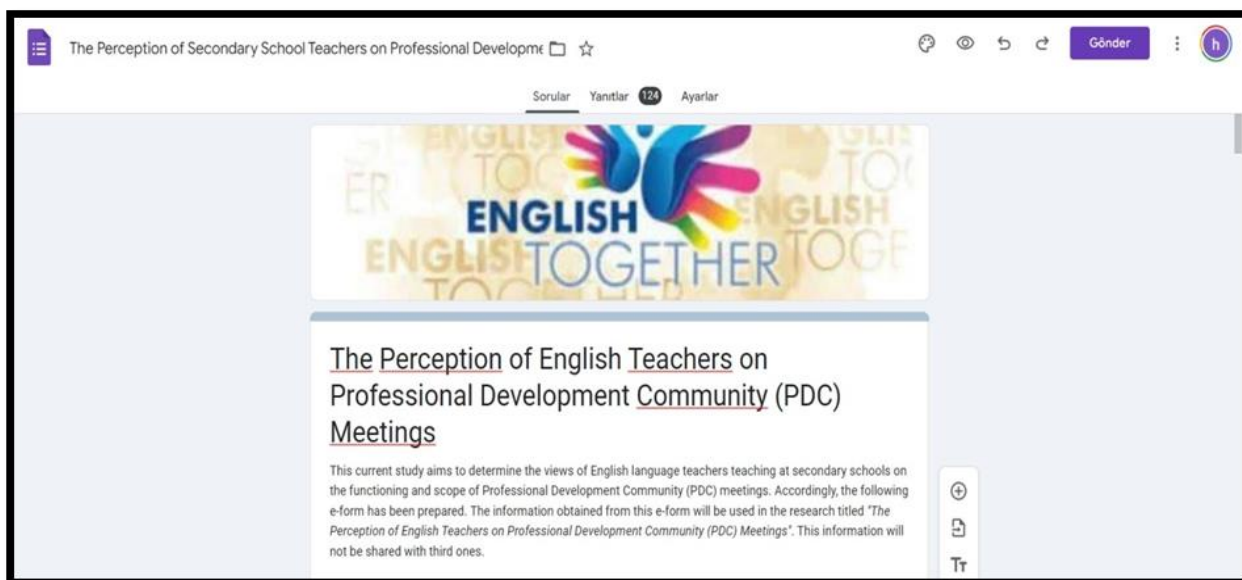


Figure 7. Participants' Reasons for Occupational Dissatisfaction Distribution

Figure 7 shows the reasons given by the participants who dissatisfied with their professional satisfaction. While filling out the e-form during the data collection process, it was stated that the participants could mark more than one option in the question about the reason for their professional dissatisfaction. As a result, it is understood that the participants who have professional dissatisfaction gave more than one answer to this question. The most repeated reason given by 20% of the participants (f: 15) was the physical inadequacy and condition of the school. This was followed by the income status of teachers and the sociological conditions of schools with 17% (f: 13). The socio-economic status of the school was mentioned by 16% (f: 12). While 12% (f: 9) of the participants stated the negative situation caused by crowded classes, 8% (f: 6) cited the attitude of school administrators as a reason. Among the participants, 6% (f: 4) saw the source of dissatisfaction as personal, while 4% (f: 3) gave reasons other than those mentioned above.

Data Collection Tools and Process

In this study, which aimed to determine the perceptions of secondary school English teachers about PDC meetings, two data collection tools were used. The first one is an online Google e-form that aims to identify participants' perceptions of PDC meetings. The second one is the interview form applied to analyse the data obtained from the Google e-form in depth. Google e-form consists of two parts. In the first part, there are 6 questions aiming to learn the personal information of the participants, and in the second part, there are 15 questions about PDC meetings. This e-form was developed by the researchers and 2 experts were consulted to ensure content validity and measurement reliability. One of the experts is a scientific expert in the field of foreign language teaching and the other one has a doctorate in the field of measurement and evaluation. The expert in the field of foreign language teaching examined the questions in the e-form in terms of content validity. The expert in the field of measurement and evaluation examined whether the questions in the e-form were measurable and evaluable. In line with the feedback from the field experts, the researchers made the necessary corrections and the e-form was finalised. After the e-form was prepared, 133 English teachers who participated in the PDC meetings were sent this e-form online. They were given a one-day period to fill in the e-form and after the expiry of the one-day period, the e-form was closed. At the end of the 1-day period, 124 participants answered the e-form. Analysing the responses of 124 participants, it was seen that 2 participants did not answer any question. Therefore, these two participants were excluded from the data analysis process and the analyses were carried out on 122 participants. The visualisation of the situation after the end of the answering period is shared below.



Visual 1. E-Form Response Status

Another data collection tool used in the research process was a semi-structured interview form. This interview form was prepared in order to analyse the quantitative data of the research more in-depth and to increase interpretation and was applied to 10 English teachers. The questions in the form were asked to the participants in face-to-face interviews of 20 minutes each. The answers given by the participants were recorded with a voice recorder in order to analyse them later.

Data Analysis Process

The data obtained during the research process were analysed in two stages: Quantitative data analysis and qualitative data analysis.

Quantitative data were analysed descriptively and the answers given by the participants were described as percentage and frequency. At this stage, firstly, the answers given by the participants were transferred from the online environment to the computer and all answers were saved as Excel files. The researchers analyzed each question in the e-form one by one and visualized it as a pie chart. The analysis of the first 6 questions including the personal information of the participants is shared in the method section of the study, on the other hand, the analysis of the questions about PDC meetings is presented in the findings section.

The interviews, which are the qualitative data of the research, were subjected to content analysis. Each interview, recorded during the data collection process, was listened to in detail one by one by the researchers. Then, the transcription stage of the interview records was started. The transcription process was carried out according to the edited transcription method. In this process, not all words in the audio recording were transcribed. The elements to be transcribed were selected by the researcher. The researcher who will carry out the edited transcription process should have a good control of the audio recordings. If the researcher who does not know which elements of the content are important and which elements are unnecessary does this process, the transcription may not be at the desired level (Maalouf, 2024). Accordingly, since the researchers were involved in every stage of the implementation process and conducted the focus interviews themselves, they did not transcribe some unnecessary elements in the transcription process. The participant views obtained from the interviews were shared with quantitative data in the related parts in the findings section of the study.

Ethics

In this study, all the rules specified to be followed within the scope of the "Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive of Higher Education Institutions" were followed. None of the actions specified under the second part of the "Directive, Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics" have been carried out.

Name of the ethical review board: Uşak University Social Sciences and Humanities
Research and Ethics Committee Date of ethical evaluation decision: 20.09.2023
Ethical assessment certificate number: E-89784354-050.99-164082

FINDINGS

There are 15 questions in the e-form prepared for the main problem statement of the research, "What are the opinions of secondary school English teachers about PDC meetings?". These questions are as follows in the order in which they were included in the e-form:

- Did you know about the "English Together" project before the first PDC meeting?
- How many PDC meetings have you attended so far?
- Which part of the PDC meetings do you think is the most productive?
- Do you think it is appropriate to hold PDC meetings face-to-face?
- If no, why is that? (You can choose more than one option.)
- Are you pleased with the frequency of PDC meetings?
- If no, what should be the frequency?
- Which of the PDC meetings you have attended so far has been the most productive?
- Would it be more effective to hold PDC meetings in the native or foreign language?
- In your experience, what are the advantages of PDC meetings?
- In your experience, what are the disadvantages of PDC meetings?
- How often do you apply what you learned in the PDC meetings in your classes?
- Are the facilitators well-equipped?
- Would you like to be a facilitator?
- If you could summarize the PDC meetings you attended in one word, what would that word be?

The percentages and frequencies of the answers given by the participants to these questions were visualised in the form of pie chart and are presented below in the order given in the e-form.

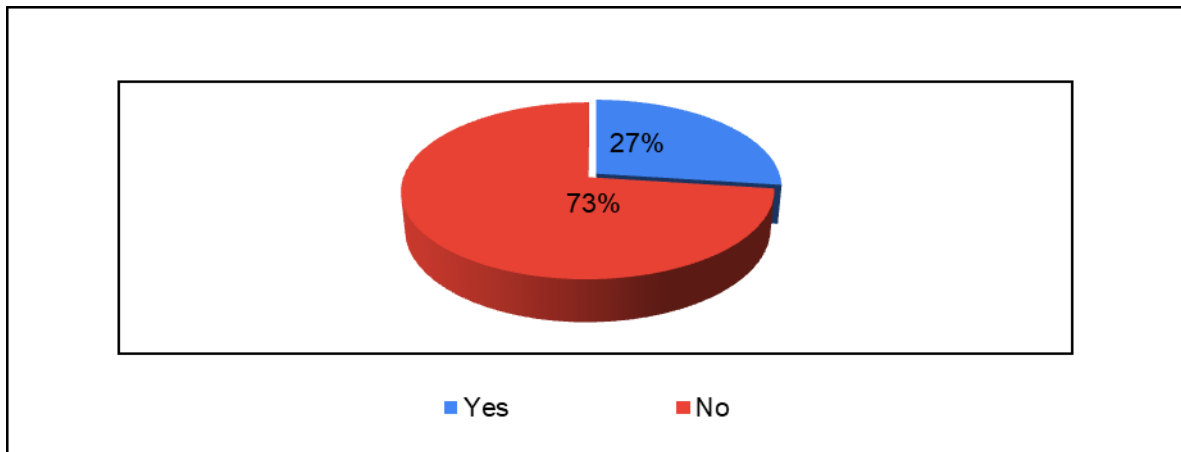


Figure 8. The Distribution of Responses to the Question "Did you know about the 'English Together' project before the first PDC meeting?"

Analysing the answers given to this question, it is seen that 73% (f: 89) of the participants stated that they had no prior knowledge of the PDC meetings held within the scope of the 'English Together' project, while 27% (f: 33) stated that they were aware of this project and PDC meetings before participating in these meetings. It is thought that some of the participants were already aware of the "English Together" project and PDC meetings because of the pilot organisations in the first years of the project. A finding parallel to this situation was also observed in the focus interviews. In the interview, the participant coded T4 stated that he had previous knowledge about PDC meetings. Asked when and where he was informed about these meetings, he used the following expressions: *"I first heard about it on the internet. Then I did detailed research and learnt that the British Council and MoNE had reached an agreement and that this project would be extended to all of Türkiye."*

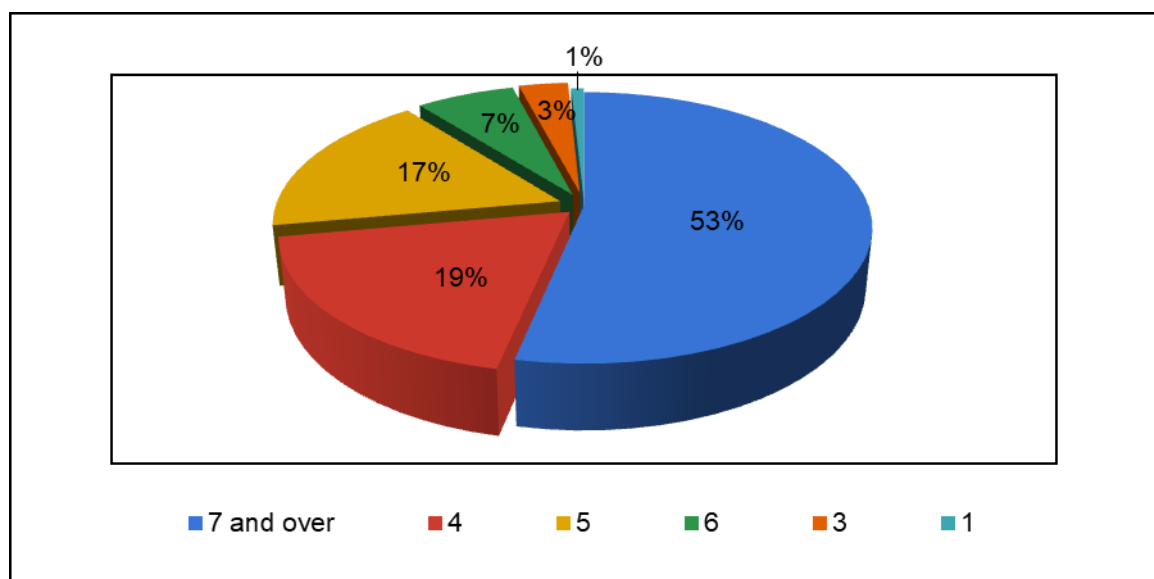


Figure 9. The Distribution of Responses to the Question "How many PDC meetings have you attended so far?"

Figure 9 shows how many PDC meetings were attended by the teachers who participated in the research. According to the distribution, it is understood that 53% (f: 65) of the participants attended 7 or more PDC meetings. The rate of those who attended 4 meetings was 19% (f: 23), whereas the rate of those who attended 5 meetings was 17% (f: 21). So far, 7% (f: 8) of the participants have attended 6 meetings, followed by 3% (f: 4) who have attended 3 meetings. The rate of participants who attended only 1 meeting since the beginning of the project was recorded as 1% (f: 1). It can be stated that the fact that a significant part of the teachers who responded to the research participated in PDC meetings at a high rate is important in terms of generalising the results obtained from the research.

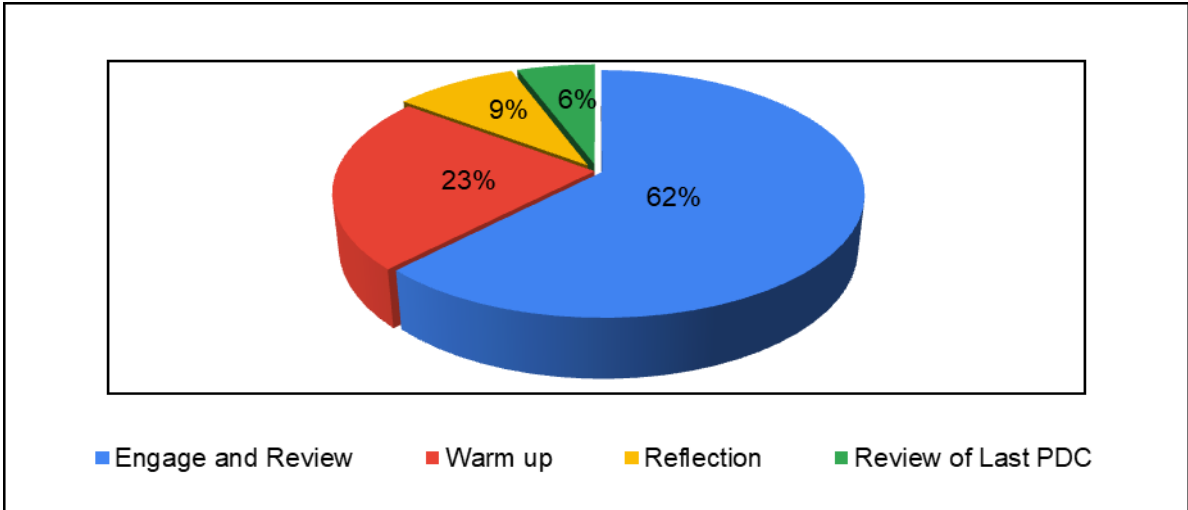


Figure 10. The Distribution of Responses to the Question "Which part of the PDC meetings do you think is the most productive?"

PDC meetings consist of 4 main parts. In response to the question of which of these four sections is more effective, 62% (f: 76) of the participants chose the "Engage and Review" section. 23% (f: 28) of the participants marked the "Warm Up". "Reflection" section was chosen by 9% (f: 11) participants, while 6% (f: 7) participants chose "Review of the Last PDC". In the interviews conducted with the participants during the qualitative data collection process, this question was asked again and they were asked to state why they chose the section. In the interview, the participant coded T9 stated that marked the "Engage and Review" option to this question and explained the reason as follows; *"I think the most effective part of the meetings is the 'Engage and Review' because in this section we have the chance to see many new techniques, methods and examples of activities related to the main theme of the meeting. This is a great opportunity especially for new teachers like me. I apply what I learnt from this section when I teach similar subjects in my class. Therefore, I follow the 'Engage and Review' section very gladly."* The participant coded T2 stated that his favourite section was the "Warm Up". The participant explained the reason for this as follows; *"When we attend the meetings, we are a little tired due to daily work. At the first stage, the facilitators show us fun warm up activities. These activities are both introduced and practised together. I love to apply the activities we learnt in this section in my class. My students have a lot of fun too. I use these activities I learnt especially at the beginning of the lesson and in the following minutes when their attention is distracted. That's why I like the 'Warm Up' the most."*

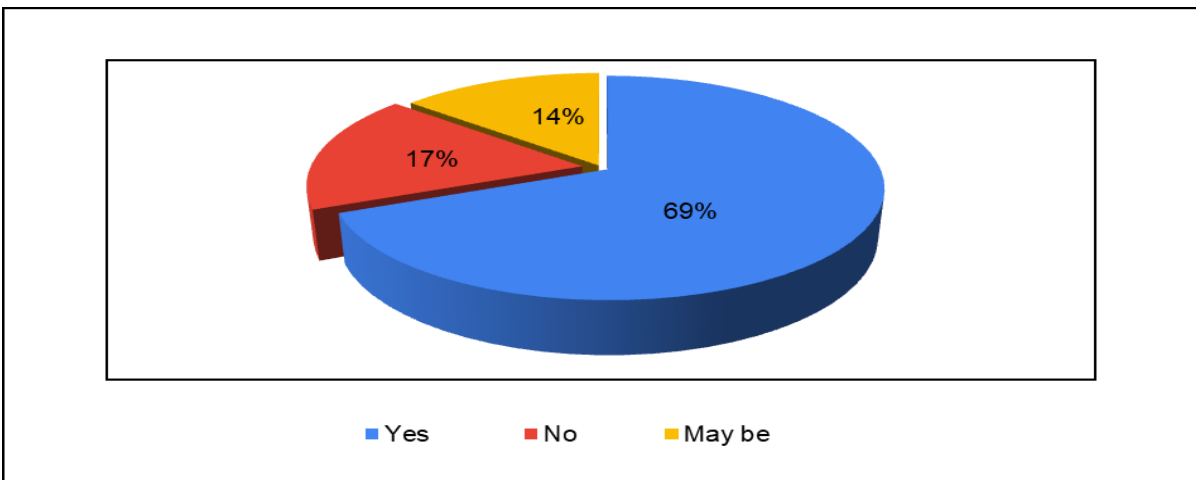


Figure 11. The Distribution of Responses to the Question "Do you think it is appropriate to hold PDC meetings face-to-face?"

Participants were also asked about the way PDC meetings are organised. In this question, the participants were asked about the appropriateness of holding the meetings face to face. According to the responses, it is seen that 69% (f: 84) of the participants are satisfied with the face-to-face meetings. While 17% (f: 21) of the participants were not satisfied with the face-to-face meetings, 14% (f: 17) preferred to keep no comment in this situation.

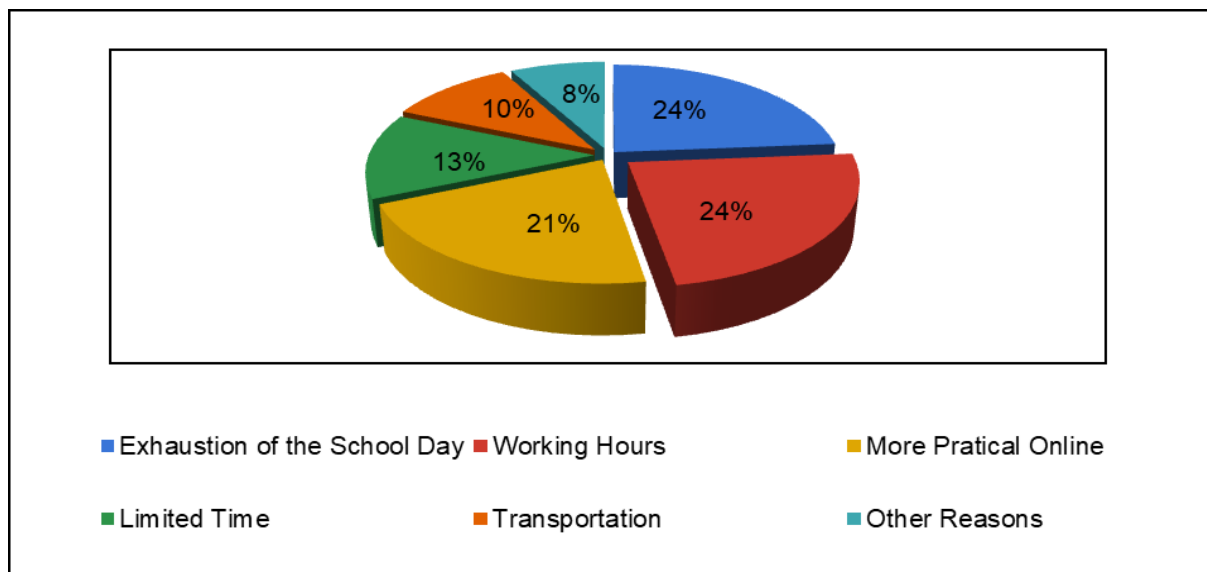


Figure 12. The Distribution of Responses to the Question "If no, why is that?"

Figure 12 shows the percentage distribution of the reasons for the participants' dissatisfaction with the face-to-face organisation of PDC meetings. Participants could tick more than one option in this question. The two most frequently repeated reasons are observed. With a rate of 24% (f: 9), exhaustion of the school day and working hours were the most selected reasons. These two reasons are followed by 21% (f: 8) of the participants who think that it would be more appropriate for the meetings to be online. This is followed by 13% (f: 5) limited time, 10% (f: 4) transport problems and 8% (f: 3) other reasons. When this issue was mentioned in the interview with the participant with the code T5, who was not satisfied with the face-to-face PDC meetings, he said the following; *"I have a very busy schedule at school. This busy programme makes me very tired. When these meetings are added on top of that, I cannot spare time for myself and my family. Why can't these meetings be held online? It would be better for both us and you, the trainers, to participate online at home. I think time saving is very valuable."*

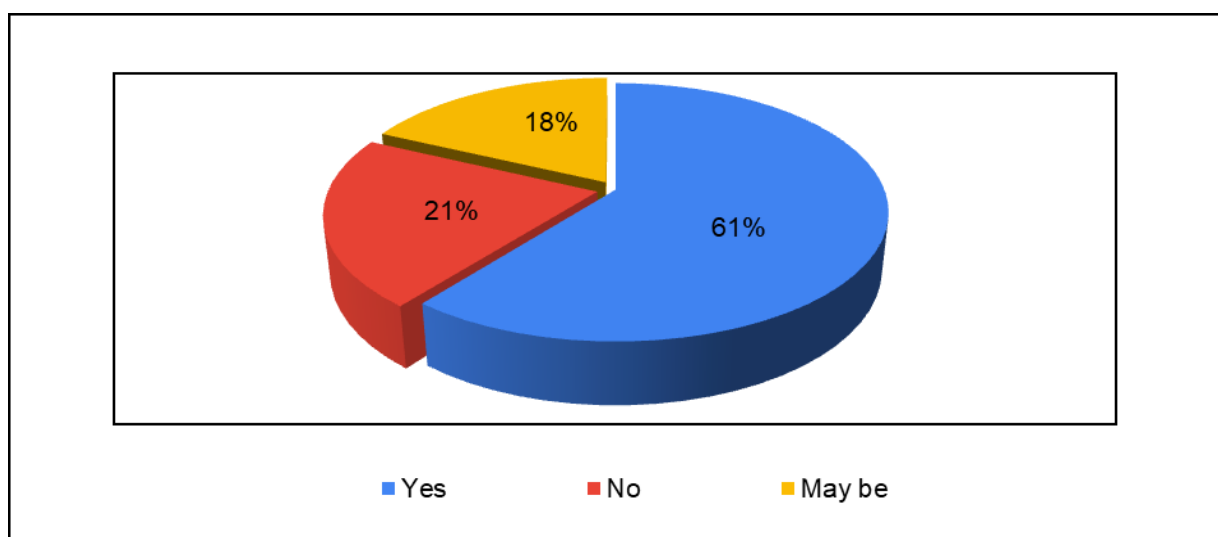


Figure 13. The Distribution of Responses to the Question "Are you pleased with the frequency of PDC meetings?"

PDC meetings within the scope of the "English Together" project are planned to be held 4 times a year under the guidance of facilitators. However, due to the earthquake disaster in Turkey, the timing of

the meetings was moved closer to each other. In this situation, this question was asked since it was thought that the frequency of the meetings might affect the participants. Asked about the frequency of PDC meetings, 61% (f: 74) of the participants were satisfied, while 21% (f: 26) were not satisfied. 18% (f: 22) of the participants were undecided.

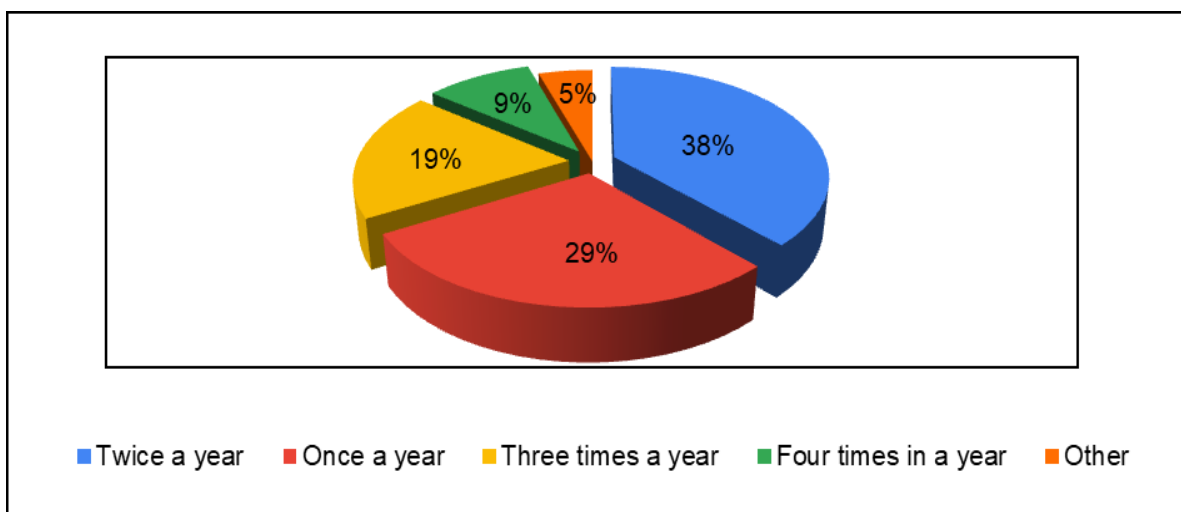


Figure 14. The Distribution of Responses to the Question "If no, what should be the frequency?"

Among the participants who were not satisfied with the organisation of PDC meetings, 38% (f: 8) stated that it would be more appropriate to hold the meetings twice a year. 29% (f: 6) of the participants think that it would be appropriate to hold these meetings once a year, 19% (f: 4) four times a year, 9% (f: 2) three times a year in terms of frequency. 5% (f: 1) of the participants did not express any opinion about the frequency and selected the other option.

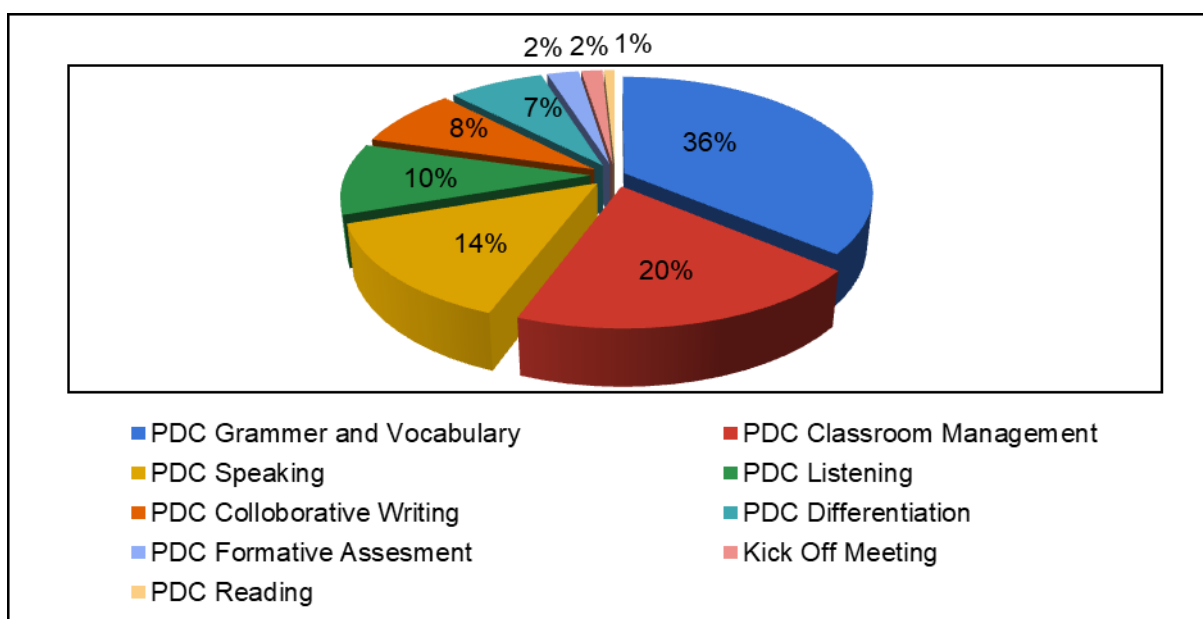


Figure 15. The Distribution of Responses to the Question "Which of the PDC meetings you have attended so far has been the most productive?"

Within the scope of the "English Together" project, 9 different PDC meetings were organised by 5 facilitators in Uşak province between September 2021 and June 2023. The participants were asked which of the PDCs they had attended so far they considered to be the most effective. According to the figure, it is seen that 36% of the participants (f: 44) stated that the PDC for "Grammar and Vocabulary" was the most useful meeting. This meeting was followed by the PDC for "Classroom Management" with 20% (f: 24). The third most useful meeting was the speaking PDC with 14% (f: 17). The first three PDC meetings are followed by "Listening" with 10% (f: 12), "Collaborative Writing" with 8% (f: 10), "Differentiation" with

7% (f: 9), “Formative Assessment” with 2% (f: 3), “Kick Off Meeting” with 2% (f: 2), “Reading” with 1% (f: 1). In the interviews, the participant coded T7 expressed the following statements about the PDCs conducted so far; *“I have participated in all PDCs since the beginning of the project. The meeting that has left the most impact on me so far has been ‘Classroom Management’. Because in my class, I have some control problems. Thanks to the techniques and methods, I acquired in this PDC, I think I overcame the problem of classroom control.”* Another participant coded T...stated that the most useful meeting was “Grammar and Vocabulary”. He also gave details as follows; *“The most difficult issue in my class is the inadequacy of my pupils' vocabulary. Unfortunately, this situation causes my pupils to have difficulty in acquiring the four basic language skills. In this meeting, I learnt what I can do to overcome this problem. I learnt a lot of new vocabulary games and vocabulary learning strategies. I also learnt a lot about grammar teaching.”*

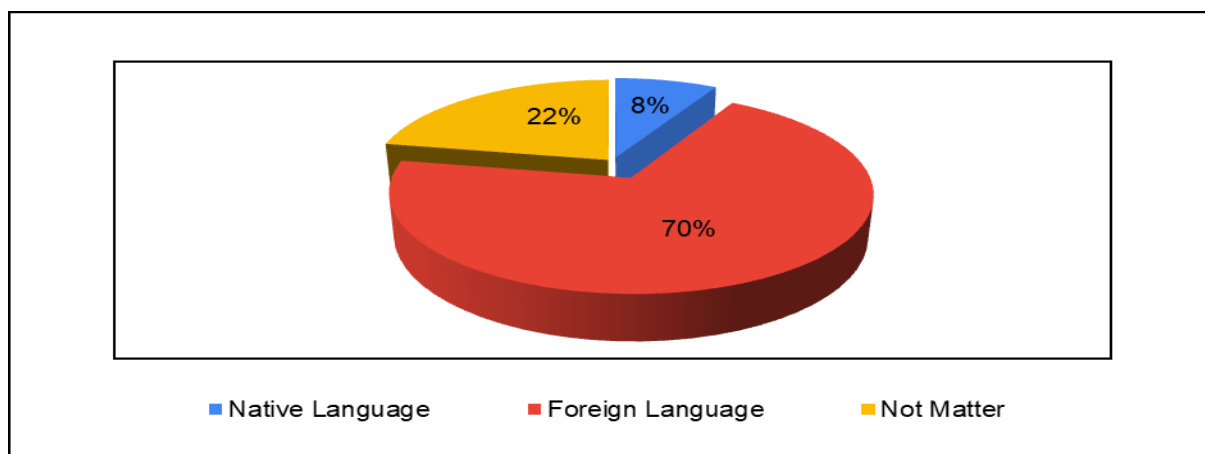


Figure 16. The Distribution of Responses to the Question "Would it be more effective to hold PDC meetings in the native or foreign language?"

When the participants were asked whether it would be more appropriate for the facilitators to speak in English or Turkish during the PDC meetings, 70% of the participants (f: 85) stated that the language of the meeting should be foreign language (English). 22% (f: 27) stated that this is not important. The rate of those who stated that it would be appropriate to use the native language (Turkish) in the meetings is 8% (f: 10). The fact that the majority of the participants stated that foreign language should be used in PDC meetings can be seen as an important finding. It can be stated that they find the speaking platform in these meetings valuable since they do not have the chance to practice speaking much in their lives outside of school.

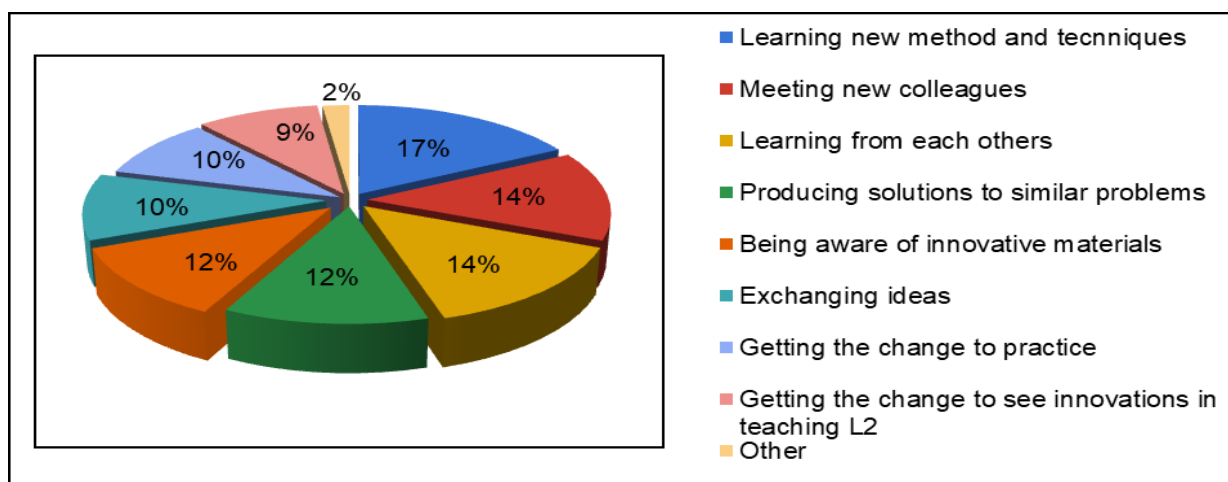


Figure 17. The Distribution of Responses to the Question "In your experience, what are the advantages of PDC meetings?"

The participants who attended the research process were told that they could select more than one option to the question about the advantages of the PDC meetings they took part in during the project process. Figure 17 shows the percentage distribution of the responses obtained from this question. According to the figure, 17% of the participants (f: 93) see PDC meetings as advantageous in terms of learning new methods and techniques. Two advantageous situations were accepted by 14% (f: 76) of the participants. These are meeting new colleagues and learning from each other during the meetings. The advantage of providing solutions to similar problems was accepted by 12% (f: 65), also the advantage of being aware of innovative materials was preferred by 12% (f: 62). The exchange of ideas among the participants was seen as an advantage by 10% (f: 56). The advantage of practising speaking was preferred by a similar percentage (f: 51). 9% of the participants (f: 50) consider PDC meetings as an advantage in terms of observing current innovations in foreign language teaching. 2% (f: 11) of the participants preferred to select the other option in terms of the advantage provided by PDC meetings.

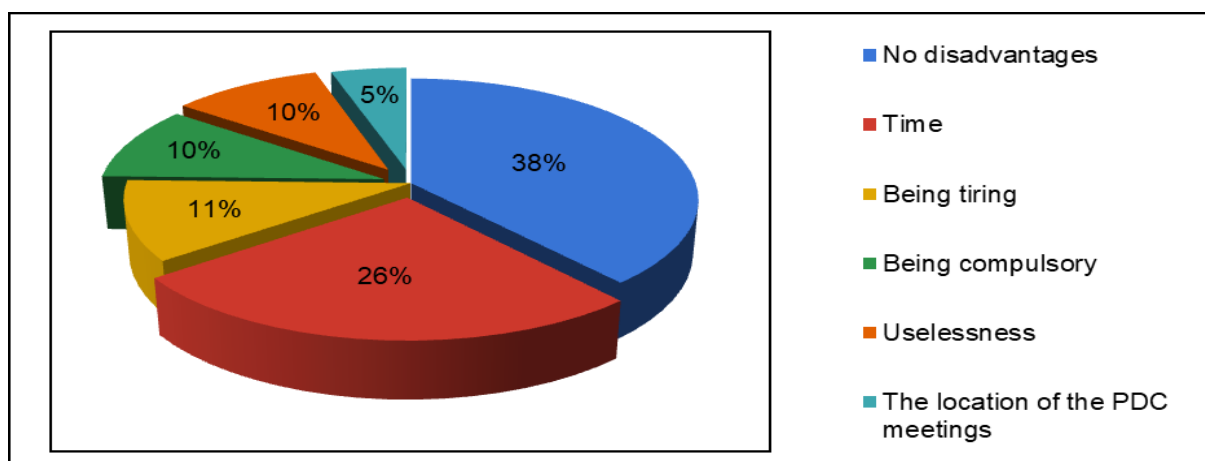


Figure 18. The Distribution of Responses to the Question "In your experience, what are the disadvantages of PDC meetings?"

Participants were asked about the advantages as well as disadvantages of PDC meetings. Figure 18 presents the distribution of the responses received. According to the data obtained, 38% (f: 47) of the participants stated that PDC meetings do not have any disadvantages, while 26% (f: 32) considered it a disadvantage to spend time for meetings after school. 11% (f: 13) of the participants regarded the tiredness caused by the meetings as a disadvantage. Two separate disadvantages were mentioned by 10% (f: 12). These are that attendance to the meetings is compulsory and the content of the meetings is useless. 5% (f: 6) of the participants considered the location of the meetings as a disadvantage. In the interviews, the participant coded T10 stated that the disadvantage of PDC meetings is the time. The participant explained statements as follows; "I tried to attend most of the meetings, but I had a lot of difficulty in this process because time is really a big problem. It was very tiring for me to have to attend these meetings after having courses during the day. I think the timing of the meetings was not right. These meetings could have been held at a more appropriate time. For example, at a proper time on weekends."

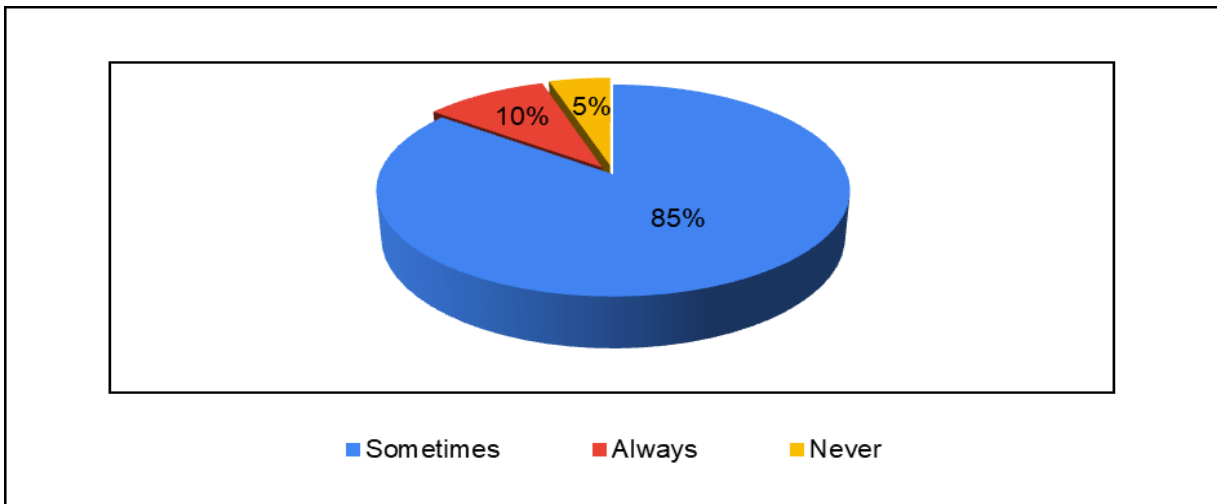


Figure 19. The Distribution of Responses to the Question “How often do you apply what you learned in the PDC meetings in your classes?”

In response to the question of how often they apply the methods, techniques and activities learnt in PDC meetings, 85% of the participants (f: 104) answered sometimes. The rate of those who said they always apply it remained at 10% (f: 12), while the rate of those who said they never apply it remained at 5% (f: 6). The fact that the majority of the participants apply what they learnt in the PDC meetings in their classrooms can be seen as an important achievement for this project.

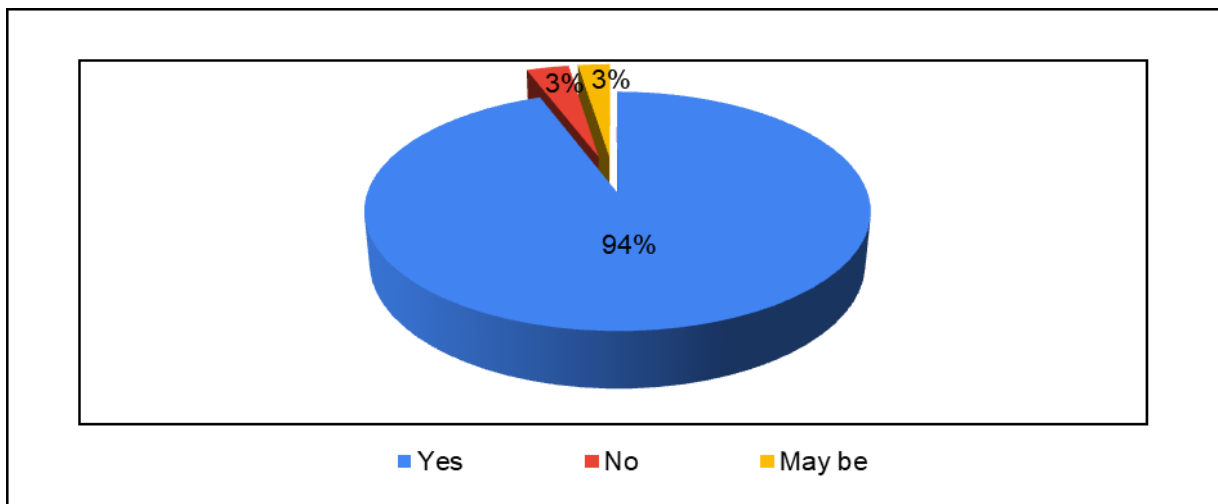


Figure 20. The Distribution of Responses to the Question “Are the facilitators well-equipped?”

Asked about the professional qualifications of the facilitators leading the PDC meetings organised for the teachers who participated in the research, 94% of the participants (f: 115) stated that the facilitators were professionally qualified. While 3% (f: 4) of the participants did not consider the professional experience of the facilitators to be sufficient, 3% (f: 3) of the participants were undecided on this question. The positive attitude of a high number of participants towards the facilitators is considered to give important clues about the general situation of the project and the PDC meetings. It can be stated that even though the rate of those who are dissatisfied or undecided with the facilitators' competences remains at a low level compared to the general situation, this should be considered as a finding. The main reason for dissatisfaction and undecision may be personal reasons or disagreement between the facilitators and the participants.

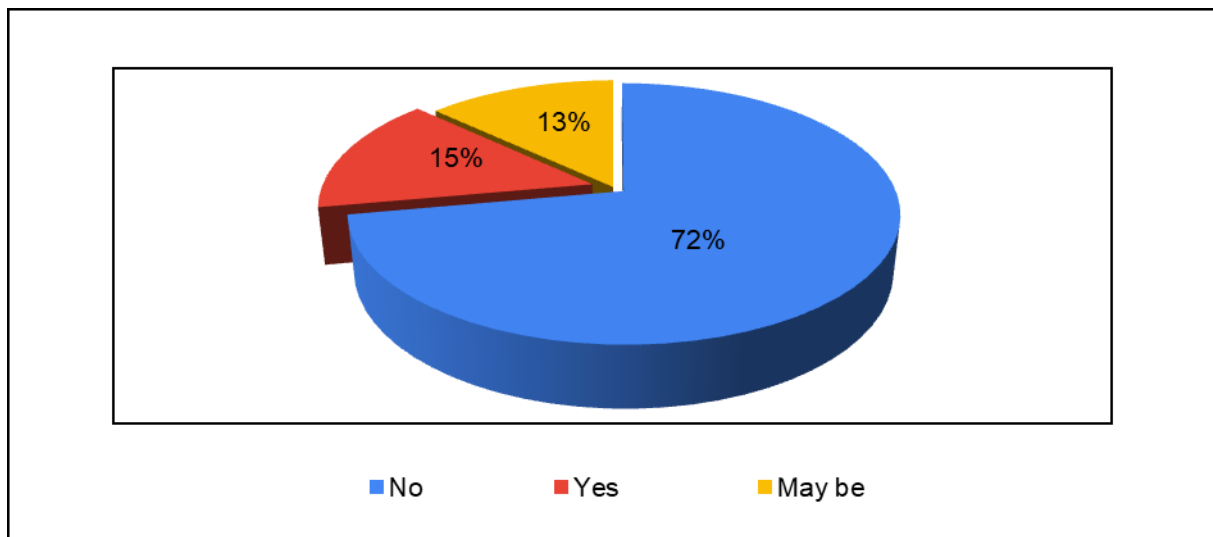


Figure 21. The Distribution of Responses to the Question “Would you like to be a facilitator?”

The last question asked to the participants concerning the PDC meetings was whether they would like to take part as a facilitator in the PDC meetings. Figure 21 shows the percentages of the responses to this question. According to the figure, 72% (f: 88) of the participants stated that they did not want to be a facilitator. 15% (f: 18) of the participants stated that they would like to take part as a facilitator in PDC meetings, while 13% (f: 16) of the participants stated that they are indecisive. Asked this question during the focus interviews with the participants, the participant with the code T1 stated that he answered "No" to this question and added the following statements: *“I answered ‘No’ to this question because I have no intention of becoming a facilitator. I think there are some differences between being a participant in these meetings and being a facilitator. As a participant, sometimes we can be passive, but facilitators have to be active all the time. Since it is a situation that requires extra research and reading, I have never had an idea of being a facilitator.”* The participant coded T3 who stated that answered "Yes" to this question explained why he said yes as follows: *“First of all, I have immense respect to facilitators because they try to be useful to us in addition to their professional responsibilities. I think being a facilitator is a privilege. I mean, you are one step ahead of your other colleagues. I also like to research innovations in my discipline. Why not, maybe I can be a facilitator one day. Also, I know that I need to do extra work for this.”*

participants stated that it was not right to hold the meetings face-to-face. 14% of the participants were undecided about this situation. Participants who did not find it appropriate to hold face-to-face meetings and undecided participants also gave a number of reasons. It was observed that the most common reasons given were as follows: 24% tiredness of the school day, 24% working hours, 21% online meetings would be more practical, 13% limited time, 10% transportation and 8% other reasons. During the research process, it was observed that the fact that the meetings were held after working hours and the feeling of fatigue caused by the working day were the most significant reasons that led the participants to online meetings.

During the project process, 5 meetings were held in the first year and 4 meetings in the second year. Questions were asked to the participants regarding the frequency of the meetings. While 61% of the participants were satisfied with this frequency, 21% stated that they were not satisfied. 18% of the participants were undecided. Those who were dissatisfied with the frequency of the meetings and undecided were asked what the frequency should be, 58% of the participants stated that it should be held twice a year, 19% once a year, 11% three times a year, 8% four times a year and 4% at a different frequency.

A total of 9 PDC meetings were organised by the facilitators during the project. These meetings addressed different topics related to English language teaching. The participants were asked which of the meetings they attended they considered to be the most effective. Accordingly, 36% of the participants accepted the PDC for grammar and vocabulary teaching as the most effective meeting. This was followed by the PDC organised for classroom management with a rate of 24%. These two PDC meetings were followed by PDC Speaking, PDC Listening, PDC Collaborative Writing, PDC Differentiation, PDC Formative Assessment, Kick Off Meeting and PDC Reading. It was observed that the PDC meeting that the participants considered the least effective was the meeting on reading and that they had a negative attitude towards this meeting.

Another conclusion observed during the research process is which presentation language should be used during the meeting. The participants expressed their opinions on how the presentation language of the meetings should be. It was observed that 70% of the participants stated that a foreign language (English) should be used during the meetings, while 8% stated that it could be done in the mother tongue (Turkish). It was understood that the rate of those who stated that both options could be used in the language of the presentations was 22%.

Participants expressed their experiences of PDC meetings during the project process in both positive and negative perspectives. In this connection, the participants were asked about the advantages and disadvantages of PDC meetings. After the analysis, it was seen that close results were obtained. Based on the results obtained, 17% of the participants stated that they learnt new techniques and methods related to their fields by attending PDC meetings. 14% of the participants indicated two different advantages. These are meeting new colleagues and learning from each other. Finding solutions to similar problems and being aware of innovative teaching materials were recognised as advantages by 12% of the participants. Exchanging ideas and getting the chance to practice in a foreign language are two separate situations that are recognised as advantages. Avidov-Ungar (2017) achieved a similar result in her study aiming to reveal the perceptions of Israeli teachers towards PDCs. When the author asked the participants about the benefits of PDCs, it was observed that 76% of the participants stated that it was the foreign language practice and sharing of experiences with colleagues. The preference rate of these two options was realised to be 10%. It was observed that being aware of current innovations in foreign language teaching was accepted by 9% of the participants.

Regarding the disadvantages of PDC meetings, the following conclusions were obtained: While 38% of the participants did not see any disadvantages, 26% of the participants stated that time was the biggest disadvantage. 11% of the participants saw fatigue due to the fact that it was held out of working hours as a disadvantage. Noom-ura (2013), who conducted a research on English language teaching and its problems in Thailand, also mentioned PDCs and asked open-ended questions to the participants. While 37% of the participants were willing to participate in professional development programmes, only two participants stated that they were not willing due to their current workload. The compulsory attendance to the meetings was regarded as another disadvantage by 10% of the participants. Similarly, the content and structure of the meetings being useless is another accepted disadvantage. The location of the meetings was also regarded as a disadvantage by 5% of the participants.

It can be expressed that the key concept of PDC meetings is to learn from each other and to implement what we have learnt. When considered in this context, it is important to use the content such as methods, techniques, ideas, etc. acquired in PDC meetings in the classroom environment. According to the results of the application of the information obtained in the meetings, 85% of the participants sometimes applied the content they learnt in their classes. Hodar and Brody (2010) mentioned the positive outcomes of PDCs on

participants in their research in which they aimed to describe a professional development project modelled on a professional development community focusing on reflection education in a teacher training school. They listed these outcomes as follows: Improvement of teaching, personal professional development, breaking work isolation, collaboration among teachers. 10% of the participants always applied this content in their classes. 5% of the participants never transferred the content they learned in the PDC meetings to their classes and did not apply them.

One of the key elements of the "English Together" project is the facilitators who run the PDC meetings. Facilitators, who have critical roles before, during and after the PDC meetings, are perhaps the invisible heroes of this project. Because they work with passion not only during the meeting but also before and after. Here, two questions were asked to the participants about facilitation and facilitators. The first one was about the general work experience and qualification of the facilitators. Based on the results obtained, it was understood that 94% of the participants considered the facilitators who guided them as professionally experienced and competent. 3% of the participants deemed the facilitators as inadequate. It was observed that the rate of those who were undecided on this issue was similarly 3%. The fact that almost all of the participants had positive attitudes towards the facilitators can be seen as an important output of the project. It is also understood that the facilitators met their duties and responsibilities diligently. It is thought that the participants who considered the facilitators as inadequate had some personal problems with the facilitators who guided them.

Ethics

In this study, all the rules specified to be followed within the scope of the "Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive of Higher Education Institutions" were followed. None of the actions specified under the second part of the "Directive, Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics" have been carried out.

Name of the ethical review board: Uşak University Social Sciences and Humanities

Research and Ethics Committee Date of ethical evaluation decision: 20.09.2023

Ethical assessment certificate number: E-89784354-050.99-164082

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