

**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**  
**ÇANAKKALE ONSEKİZ MART UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION**  
**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME**

**PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES OF TEACHER EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS  
OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING POST-GRADUATE PROGRAMS WITHIN  
THE MEDIATION THEORY**

**DOCTORAL THESIS**

**Mehmet ASMALI**

**ÇANAKKALE**

**January, 2016**

**Republic of Turkey**  
**Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University**  
**Graduate School of Educational Sciences**  
**Department of Foreign Language Education**  
**English Language Teaching Programme**

**Perspectives and Practices of Teacher Educators and Students of English Language  
Teaching Post-graduate Programs within the Mediation Theory**

**Mehmet ASMALI**  
**(Doctoral Thesis)**

**Supervisor**  
**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aysun YAVUZ**

**Çanakkale**  
**January, 2016**

## Declaration

I hereby declare that the Doctoral Thesis “**Perspectives and Practices of Teacher Educators and Students of English Language Teaching Post-graduate Programs within the Mediation Theory**”, which was written by myself, has been prepared in accordance with the ethical scientific values, and all the sources which I have used are contained in the References.

14/01/2016

Mehmet ASMALI




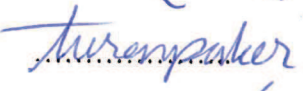



**Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University**  
**Graduate School of Educational Sciences**

**Certification**

We hereby certify that the report prepared by Mehmet ASMALI and presented to the committee in the thesis defense examination held on 14 January 2016 was found to be satisfactory and has been accepted as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Thesis Reference No: 10098596.....

	Academic Title	Full Name	Signature
Supervisor	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Aysun YAVUZ	
Member	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Ece ZEHİR TOPKAYA	
Member	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Hasan ARSLAN	
Member	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Turan PAKER	
Member	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Şevki KÖMÜR	

Date: 01.02.2016.....

Signature: 

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Salih Zeki GENÇ

Director, Graduate School of Educational Sciences

## **Foreword**

I would like to thank my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aysun YAVUZ for her supports and encouragements during my PhD period. I would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ece ZEHİR TOPKAYA and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hasan ARSLAN for guidance during this period.

I would like to thank all lecturers in English Language Teaching department at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University who spent their valuable time for me for the interviews and accepting me as an observer in their classes. I am also grateful for the advices and criticisms of the professors in my thesis inspecting committee.

Finally, I would like to thank the students in master and doctorate programs for accepting me in their classes as an observer and my offer to join focus-group interviews.

**Çanakkale, 2016**

**Mehmet ASMALI**

## **Abstract**

### **Perspectives and Practices of Teacher Educators and Students of English Language Teaching Post-graduate Programs within the Mediation Theory**

The starting point for this research was the unsatisfactory number of researches investigating the nature of post-graduate programs of ELT department in Turkey's context and the perceptions and practices of teacher educators and students in these programs regarding the role of mediator and twelve aspects of mediation theory of Feuerstein. In order to fill this gap, this study attempted to investigate the aspects of this theory in doctorate and master programs in English Language Teaching Department of a state university in Turkey.

Methodologically, this study employed a qualitative case study approach so as to provide detailed descriptions of specific learners and teacher educators within their learning setting. From this viewpoint, this research made use of data gathering techniques of observations, semi-structured personal interviews with the teacher educators, focus-group interviews with the master and doctorate program students, and document collection. 'Interpretive-descriptive' analysis technique was used for the analysis.

The results showed that the most commonly used mediation theory aspect in these programs was 'shared intention' followed by 'significance', 'individuality', and 'sharing' according to the observation results. In contrast to the popular mediation aspects, 'control of own behavior' and 'a sense of belonging' did not take place so commonly in the observed classes. No single factor, such as teacher educators' age or experience in teaching in post-graduate programs was dominant in determining the use of these aspects. Despite some major similarities and differences, all teacher educators had their own unique ways of playing the mediator role in doctorate and master programs depending on the requirements of their classes and their teaching styles. Regarding the sources of using these aspects, the most effective

factor was the role played by their teachers, especially their thesis advisors, during their PhD period and the experiences they had as a language teacher educator. Teacher educators mostly considered themselves a colleague, an experienced person, a guide, a facilitator and a moderator. Moreover ‘significance’ and ‘purpose beyond the here and now’ were the important aspects for students in showing the relationships among the current, past, and the future topics.

The results of this study allowed the teacher educators to know the views of the students in post-graduate programs regarding how, when, and where exactly they could use mediation theory aspects more effectively in their classes. However, further research is necessary to fully understand each mediation theory aspect and potential factors affecting use of them in different educational settings and cultures.

**Keywords:** Mediation theory; post-graduate program; English Language Teaching

## Özet

### **İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Lisansüstü Eğitim Programlarındaki Öğretmen Eğitimcilerinin ve Öğrencilerin Aracılık Teorisi Kapsamındaki Perspektif ve Uygulamaları**

Bu araştırmanın başlangıç noktası, Türkiye bağlamında yetersiz olan İngiliz Dili Eğitimi bölümü lisansüstü programların inceleyen, ve öğretmen eğitimcilerinin ve öğrencilerin Feuerstein'in aracılık teorisinin oniki parametresi ve aracılık rolü açısından algıları ve pratikleri ile ilgili yetersiz sayıdaki araştırmalardır. Bu yetersizliği kapatmak amacıyla bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinin İngiliz Dili Eğitimi bölümünün yüksek lisans ve doktora programlarında bu teorisinin parametrelerini incelemeyi amaçlamıştır.

Metodolojik olarak, bu çalışma, belirli öğrenenlerin ve öğretmen eğitimcilerinin kendi öğrenme ortamlarındaki detaylı tanımlamalarını sunabilmek için nitel durum çalışması yaklaşımını benimsemiştir. Bu görüşle, bu araştırma, gözlem, öğretmen eğitimcileri ile yarı yapılandırılmış kişisel mülakatlar, öğrenciler ile odak grup görüşmeleri ve doküman toplama veri toplama tekniklerini kullanmıştır. 'Yorumlayıcı-betimleyici' analiz tekniği analiz için kullanılmıştır.

Sonuçlar, bu programlarda en yaygın olarak kullanılan aracılık teorisi parametresinin 'paylaşılan niyet' olduğunu göstermiş ve bu parametre gözlem sonuçlarına göre, 'önem', 'bireysellik', ve 'paylaşım' tarafından takip edilmiştir. Tam ters olarak, 'kendi davranışını kontrol etme' ve 'aidiyet hissi' gözlemlenen derslerde çok sık kullanılmamıştır. Bu parametrelerin kullanımını belirleyen, öğretmen eğitimcilerinin yaşı ya da lisansüstü eğitimdeki deneyimi gibi hiç bir faktör dominant bulunmamıştır. Büyük benzerlik ve farklılıklara rağmen, tüm öğretmen eğitimcileri kendi derslerinin gerekleri ve öğretim stillerine bağlı olarak bu programlarda kendilerine özgü aracılık rolünü oynamışlardır. Bu parametrelerin kullanımlarının kaynaklarıyla ilgili olarak en etkili faktör, öğretmen eğitimcilerinin özellikle tez



danışmanları ve bir öğretmen eğiticisi olarak edindiği tecrübeler bulunmuştur. Öğretmen eğiticileri kendilerini bir meslektaş, deneyimli bir kişi, kolaylaştırıcı kişi ve yönlendirici olarak görmüşlerdir. Buna ek olarak, 'önem' ve 'buranın ve şuanın ötesindeki hedef', güncel, geçmiş ve gelecekteki konuların ilişkilerini göstermesi açısından öğrenciler tarafından önemli bulunmuştur.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, öğretmen eğiticilerinin, aracılık teorisinin öğrenci görüşleri çerçevesinde, onları daha etkili kullanmaları için nasıl, ne zaman ve nerede kullanmaları konusunda bilgili olmalarını sağlamıştır. Ancak, farklı eğitim ortamlarında ve kültürlerde her bir aracılık teorisi parametresini ve onların kullanımını etkileyen faktörleri tam olarak anlamak için daha fazla araştırmaya ihtiyaç vardır.

**Keywords:** Aracılık teorisi; lisansüstü program; İngiliz Dili Eğitimi

## Contents

Certification.....	i
Foreword .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Özet .....	v
Contents.....	vii
List of Tables.....	xi
Abbreviations .....	xii

### Chapter I: Introduction

1-Introduction.....	1
1.1. Statement of the Problem .....	3
1.2. The Aim of the Study .....	3
1.3. Significance of the Study.....	5
1.4. Assumptions of the Study.....	7
1.5. Limitations of the Study .....	7
1.6. Definitions.....	8
1.7. Literature Review .....	9
1.7.1. Social constructivism.. .....	10
1.7.1.1. Social constructivism from the perspective of Lev Vygotsky.. .....	12
1.7.2. Feuerstein’s mediation. ....	15
1.7.2.1. Parameters of mediation.. .....	20
1.7.2.1.1. Significance.....	21
1.7.2.1.2. Purpose beyond the here and now.....	23
1.7.2.1.3. Shared intention.....	23
1.7.2.1.4. A sense of competence.....	25
1.7.2.1.5. Control of own behavior. ....	26
1.7.2.1.6. Goal setting.. .....	26
1.7.2.1.7. Challenge.....	27
1.7.2.1.8. Awareness of change.....	27
1.7.2.1.9. A belief in positive outcomes.....	28

1.7.2.1.10. Sharing.....	29
1.7.2.1.11. Individuality.. ..	29
1.7.2.1.12. A sense of belonging. ....	30
1.7.3. Studies related to Feuerstein’s mediation.....	30
1.7.4. The state of ELT postgraduate programs in Turkey. ....	35

## **Chapter 2: Methodology**

2.Introduction .....	38
2.1. Research Problem and Questions .....	38
2.2. The Research Design .....	41
2.2.1. Selection and the rationale of the research design.. ..	41
2.2.2. Research design of the current study.....	52
2.3. Research Instruments.....	59
2.3.1. Observation form.....	59
2.3.2. Personal semi-structured interview question form.....	65
2.3.3. Focus group interview question form.....	69
2.4. The Pilot Study .....	72
2.4.1. The pilot study of the observation form .....	72
2.4.2. The pilot study of the personal semi-structured interview question form.....	78
2.4.3. The pilot study of the focus-group interview question form.....	82
2.5. Reliability and Validity Issues .....	86
2.5.1. Reliability and validity in observations. ....	91
2.5.2. Reliability and validity in personal and focus group interviews.....	94
2.5.3. Ethics and insider issues. ....	95
2.6. The Research Setting and the Program Specifications .....	97
2.7. The Research Participants .....	100
2.8. Data Collection Procedure.....	104
2.9. Analysis .....	105

## **Chapter 3: Findings**

3.Introduction .....	109
3.1. Academic’ Use of Mediation Theory Aspects .....	109
3.1.1. Sources of using mediation theory aspects. ....	119
3.1.2. The Academics’ perspectives of having a mediator role.. ..	123
3.2. The Academics’ Evaluation of Mediation Theory Aspects.....	126

3.2.1. Significance (MA1).....	126
3.2.2. Purpose beyond the here and now (MA2)..	130
3.2.3. Shared intention (MA3). .....	131
3.2.4. A sense of competence (MA4)..	136
3.2.5. Control of own behavior (MA5). .....	139
3.2.6. Goal setting (MA6). .....	140
3.2.7. Challenge (MA7) .....	141
3.2.8. Awareness of change (MA8). .....	143
3.2.9. A belief in positive outcomes (MA9) .....	144
3.2.10. Sharing (MA10).. .....	146
3.2.11. Individuality (MA11). .....	147
3.2.12. A sense of belonging (MA12). .....	148
3.3. The Differences between Perceptions and Actual Practices of Academics .....	149
3.4. Students' Evaluation of Mediation Theory Aspects .....	151
3.4.1. Significance (MA1).....	152
3.4.2. Purpose beyond the here and now (MA2)..	153
3.4.3. Shared Intention (MA3).. .....	154
3.4.4. A Sense of Competence (MA4). .....	156
3.4.5. Control of own behavior (MA5). .....	157
3.4.6. Goal Setting (MA6). .....	158
3.4.7. Challenge (MA7). .....	158
3.4.8. Awareness of change (MA8). .....	160
3.4.9. A belief in positive outcomes (MA9) .....	160
3.4.10. Sharing (MA10).. .....	161
3.4.11. Individuality (MA11). .....	161
3.4.12. A sense of belonging (MA12). .....	161
3.5. The Differences between the Views of Students and Academics Regarding Mediation Theory Aspects .....	162
3.5.1. Significance (MA1). .....	163
3.5.2. Purpose beyond the here and now (MA2). .....	164
3.5.3. Shared Intention (MA3). .....	164
3.5.4. A sense of competence (MA4). .....	166
3.5.5. Control of own behavior (MA5).. .....	167
3.5.6. Goal setting (MA6). .....	167

3.5.7. Challenge (MA7) .....	168
3.5.8. Awareness of change (MA8) .....	168
3.5.9. A belief in positive outcomes (MA9) .....	169
3.5.10. Sharing (MA10). .....	169
3.5.11. Individuality (MA11). .....	170
3.5.12. A sense of belonging (MA12).....	170
<b>Chapter 4: Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions</b>	
4. Introduction .....	171
4.1. Conclusion and Discussion.....	171
4.2. Implications .....	188
4.2.1. Implications for academics.....	188
4.2.2. Implications for institutional practices.....	191
4.2.3. Implications for post-graduate students.....	192
4.3. Suggestions for Further Research.....	193
References .....	194
Appendices .....	208

## List of Tables

1. Four Worldviews .....	42
2. Alternative Strategies of Inquiry.....	45
3. The Relationship among the Research Questions, Data Sources and Their Justifications to Use.....	57
4. Personal Information of the Participants in the Pilot Study.....	72
5. The Inter-rater Reliability Check 1 .....	76
6. The Inter-rater Reliability Check 2 .....	77
7. Personal Information of the Participants in the Pilot Study.....	82
8. Personal Information of the Academic Participants in the Main Study.....	102
9. Personal Information of the Master Student Participants in the Main Study .....	103
10. Personal Information of the Doctorate Student Participants in the Main Study.....	103
11. The Timeline of the Observations for the Main Study .....	104
12. Coding of Mediation Theory Aspects.....	108
13. Academics' Use of Mediation Theory Aspects .....	110
14. Individual Analysis of Academics in Using Mediation Theory Aspects.....	111
15. Sample Expressions of 'Shared Intention' .....	112
16. Sample Expressions of 'Shared Intention' .....	113
17. Sample Expressions of 'Sharing' and 'Significance' .....	114
18. Sample Expressions of 'Shared Intention' .....	116
19. Sample Expressions of 'Significance' and 'Challenge' .....	116
20. Sample Expressions of 'Purpose Beyond the Here and Now' and 'Individuality' .....	118
21. Sample Expressions of 'Individuality' .....	119
22. Sources of Using Mediation Theory Aspects .....	120
23. The Roles Academics Play in Doctorate and Master Classes.....	123

## **Abbreviations**

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**MLE:** Mediated Learning Experience

**ZPD:** Zone of Proximal Development

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**TEFL:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language

**TESOL:** Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

**TESL:** Teaching English as a Second Language

**TOEFL:** Test of English as a Foreign Language

**IELTS:** International English Language Testing System

# **Perspectives and Practices of Teacher Educators and Students of English Language Teaching Post-graduate Programs within the Mediation Theory**

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

### **1. Introduction**

In today's rapidly developing and globalizing world, the need for learning and teaching global language English increases, which also accelerates the demand for language teacher education programs. In parallel with this fact, the demand for language academics increases as well. Hence, master and doctorate programs in English language teaching (ELT) departments training future language academics play a fundamental role for the candidates to become future academics.

So far, several studies have shown that teacher education is a strong predictor of teacher quality and student achievement (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1999 cited in Yavuz & Topkaya, 2013). Therefore, it is also expected that academics' practices in master and doctorate programs play a significant role in the future language academics' quality and their students' success. Especially in Turkey's context, which ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> among 44 countries in English proficiency index by falling behind of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia or Chile (Koru & Akesson, 2011), all stakeholders of English language education should be investigated from different perspectives.

Specifically, English Language Teacher Education programs in Turkey were reformed in 1998 and 2006. Especially the one in 2006 covers the tenets of the constructivist approach. According to eminent supporters of this approach, Vygotsky and other social constructivists, the role of the teachers is not merely acting as the disseminators of knowledge, rather they should be 'mediators' and 'facilitators' of students' learning (Williams & Burden, 1997). "Unlike teaching and learning taking place through transmission and reception, a mediational



approach to teaching and learning aims at helping learners to construct their own knowledge, to solve problems on their own and to understand their own thinking processes" (Fraser, 2006, p. 13). Particularly, learners in the post-graduate programs of ELT departments who will train future English language teachers should have the knowledge of the role of mediator and the practices of this specific role. The mediator role is derived from social constructivism, which claims that children learn independently by exploring their environment and significant others who are the ones shaping their learning (Williams & Burden, 1997). This claim is not valid just for children. Hence, the role of mediator can be observed in undergraduate and post-graduate programs as well.

Fraser (2006, p. 1) pointed out the significance of the role of mediator in teaching by stating that: "on account of the proven ineffectiveness of the traditional teaching practices which promoted rote learning, teachers of today have to accept the role as mediator of learning". The vital role in making graduate students adopt this role is of the academics. However, there has been no effort to investigate the perceptions and practices of academics and students of post-graduate programs in ELT departments in terms of the principles of mediation. Hence, this research attempts to fill this gap by investigating the academics and students of post-graduate programs in an ELT department in their natural learning environment regarding the role of mediator and the aspects of the mediation theory.

However, it should not be deduced that post-graduate programs of an ELT department accept students only for the purpose of training future academics. Learners in master and doctorate programs have several other purposes such as personal fulfillment, professional development, and future job opportunities. Post-graduate programs of ELT departments are also significant due to their place in being major sources of professional development and personal fulfillment for the people in this academic discipline.

### **1.1.Statement of the Problem**

The knowledge and practices of academics are of primary importance for the successful implementation of educational programs. If the academics do not have the knowledge of specific roles the current educational program suggests, it cannot be possible to observe the philosophy of that approach in the practices of student-teachers when they start teaching. In this process, the biggest responsibility belongs to academics. Moreover, academics are also the trainers of future academics as well. Therefore, this critical role of embracing the philosophy of the current approach is undertaken by the academics.

However, despite the significant role of academics and post-graduate programs in language teaching, the literature on the studies conducted to investigate these programs from any perspective is scarce. This lack of studies causes the lack of information about several issues, such as the success of these programs or the attitudes of the students and academics towards these programs. Concerning the aim of the current ELT program in Turkey, the perspectives of academics in ELT departments, and graduate students, and the role of a mediator are also not known. For this reason, in this study, Feuerstein's Theory of Mediation and mediated learning experience (MLE) have been investigated both from the point of view of academics and the students of these programs.

In conclusion, the lack of studies in terms of post-graduate programs in ELT department in the context of Turkey and the uninvestigated practices and perceptions of both academics and the students in these programs regarding the role of mediator, the mediation theory of Feuerstein and the twelve aspects of his theory gave rise to the present study.

### **1.2. The Aim of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate Feuerstein's theory of mediated learning experience (MLE) in doctorate and master programs running at an ELT department

at a state university in Turkey. Feuerstein's theory of mediation has twelve aspects. By covering all these aspects, this study attempts to answer to what extent the academics teaching at master and doctorate programs act as mediators and the potential differences between them; how important the twelve aspects are for the academics and the learners and the potential differences between them; how different the perceptions of academics and their actual performance related to the twelve aspects of Feuerstein's theory of mediation and the potential sources of the use of these aspects.

While advocating applying Feuerstein's theory of mediation to language teaching, Williams and Burden (1997) also warned that teachers should be selective in using aspects of mediation, because the use of each aspect is not necessary in each learning and teaching context. By investigating Feuerstein's theory of mediation whose aim is to enrich the learning and its environment, it will be possible to see how selective the academics are in using different aspects of mediation and how the learning taking place in post-graduate programs can be improved. Thus, this study does not just shed light on how much the academics act as mediators in master and doctorate programs in the ELT department, it also reveals the potential deficiencies in these programs by investigating it from the perspectives of academics and learners in relation to the mediator role the academics play.

With respect to these aims, the current research attempts to find answers to the following research questions:

**1.** What do the academics do as mediators in doctorate and master programs of ELT department?

**1.1.** What are the sources (educational background, beliefs, personal feelings, etc.) of using Mediation Theory aspects for the academics?

- 1.2. What are the academics' perspectives of having a mediator role in doctorate and master programs?
2. How do the academics in doctorate and master programs of ELT department consider the different aspects of mediation to promote learning?
3. Do the academics' perceptions about the importance of different aspects of mediation differ from their actual practice in doctorate and master programs of ELT department?
4. How do the doctorate and master students of ELT department consider the different aspects of mediation as they experience them?
5. Are there any differences between the students' (doctorate and master) and academics' views about the different aspects of mediation?

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

This study is significant due to several reasons. Firstly, although the aspects of the theory of mediation have been investigated in the contexts of different countries, such as Taiwan (Chang, 2004), China (Xiongyong, 2012; Xiongyong et al., 2012) and France (Brown, 2002), the theory itself has not been examined in the post-graduate programs in ELT departments. Additionally, there have been very few number of studies investigating post-graduate programs in Turkey, namely doctorate and master programs (Kanatlar, 1996; KIRMIZI, 2011; Tezel, 2006). Therefore, the present study investigating Feuerstein's theory of mediation and its twelve aspects in post-graduate programs of an ELT department at a state university in Turkey is unique which is probably the first of its kind due to the fact that no published researches could be found in this specific context despite the best efforts.

Secondly, during the investigation of post-graduate programs from the perspectives of academics and students of these programs, it makes use of first-hand practices of academics and future academics' point of views in terms of implementing twelve aspects of the mediation theory which can be an important source for ELT curriculum planners and the

administrators responsible for implementing educational program changes. Although theoretically the current ELT program includes constructivist approach and suggests academics to use the role of mediator in both undergraduate and post-graduate programs, how much they play this role and the actual practices of academics especially in the master and doctorate programs are not known. Therefore, this study might reveal important findings regarding the role of mediator and the aspects of mediation theory by using observations in natural classroom settings and personal and group interviews with academics and the students. Furthermore, determining the perspectives of academics and the students in ELT post-graduate programs regarding the theory of mediation may be important in developing a deeper understanding of academic-student relationship in post-graduate programs.

It is also important that this study may provide findings about students' expectations regarding the role academics play in post-graduate programs. Therefore, the results may be helpful for the program students in gaining the understanding of what role they are supposed to be playing before starting working as an academic.

Moreover, the findings in this study are not just related with the responses of the academics. Being aware of the students' views about the use of mediation theory aspects and the mediator role may help academics understand how and where to use each aspect more effectively in their classes. The results concerning students' views about the academics' use of mediation theory aspects can also be important for the reconstruction of the academics' course plans and the way they approach to their students.

Finally, as the role of mediator is an abstract construct, it is possible that current and future academics may not be aware of it. Hence, this study will be helpful for improving the awareness of the academics and the students in master and doctorate programs in terms of the theory of mediation, its twelve aspects and the role of mediator.

#### **1.4. Assumptions of the Study**

Taking into consideration the participants, the aim and the research questions, there are some assumptions of this study. As presented above, this study investigates twelve aspects of mediation theory and the perceptions of academics and students in post-graduate programs of an ELT department with respect to the role of mediator. During this research process, six different post-graduate classes of four different academics were observed. Academics and students in these programs were interviewed through personal and focus-group interviews employing a case study design which provided detailed descriptions of these specific academics and learners in these post-graduate programs within their learning setting. Therefore, it is assumed that all academics in personal semi-structured interviews, and all students in focus-group interviews answered the questions, willingly, truthfully and in a sincere way.

In addition, suggested procedures were followed in order to establish reliability and validity in the present study (see *Reliability and Validity Issues* section for more detail). Therefore, it is assumed that data collection instruments and procedure were reliable and valid in this study.

Finally, during the observations of this study, it is assumed that the observer was not threatening for the people in the classes. Hence, it is assumed that learners and academics behaved as if the observer were not there. Moreover, field notes taken during observations by the observer were assumed to be unbiased and the time allocated for observations was enough for the necessary data.

#### **1.5. Limitations of the Study**

There are some limitations basically hindering the generalizability of the results of this study. Firstly, only one case was selected for the data gathering and analyzing. Therefore, this

study's findings are limited to the selected case, which is Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Faculty of Education, post-graduate programs (doctorate and master) of the ELT department in the academic year of 2013-2014. The results cannot be generalized to other institutions or individuals.

Secondly, the first limitation describes the place and the time when the study was conducted. Among the academics teaching in this institution, four academics were randomly chosen to observe and conduct personal semi-structured interviews. In addition, though all the students were observed during the course period, only some (4 students from master program and 6 students from doctorate program) students participated in the focus-group interviews. Therefore, the results are limited to the selected academics and their classes and the students participated in these classes and the focus-group interviews. The results cannot be generalized to other ELT master or doctorate students or academics.

In addition, there may be some overlaps among the mediation theory aspects due to similarity between them during the classification procedure. Therefore, a sentence or a behavior of an academic in the class may represent more than one mediation theory aspect.

Finally, this research aims at investigating the theory of mediation and its twelve aspects, the possible sources of using these aspects and the differences or similarities between the views of academics and students in master and doctorate programs in ELT department regarding this theory and its aspects. Hence, this study is limited to these objectives.

## **1.6. Definitions**

The theory of mediation together with the concepts of mediator, mediated learning experiences, and aspects of this theory are of primary importance for the present study and they need to be defined. Firstly, mediation theory within the foreign language context, basically represents the interaction of a learner with the learning environment with the help of

a mediator (Brown, 2002). These mediators promote learning processes and teach learners how to learn. The experiences provided by these mediators are called ‘mediated learning experiences’ (MLE) (Williams & Burden, 1997).

Secondly, a mediator is someone who empowers, helps learners to acquire the knowledge skills and strategies they will need in order to progress to learn more, tackles problems, functions effectively in a particular culture and a changing society, meets new, emerging and unpredictable demands of the learners (Williams & Burden, 1997). Mediators also make learners autonomous, have a high level of interaction with the learners, have a mutual understanding in their classes, and help learners to reach self-access materials.

Mediated learning experience (MLE) is basically concerned with the quality of the interaction between learners and mediators. This interaction helps learners to reach a higher level by becoming modified (Feuerstein & Feuerstein, 1991). The main aim of MLE is to help learners change qualitatively by enabling him/her to develop cognitive prerequisites for learning on his/her own from direct stimuli (Kozulin, 1991).

Apart from the theoretical concepts, students in the context of this study refer to the learners studying at master and doctorate programs of ELT department at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University. In addition, academics refer to the teachers teaching in these programs.

### **1.7. Literature Review**

In this following section, the literature related to social constructivism and Lev Vygotsky's perspective related to it, the theory of mediation, studies related to mediation theory and the state of ELT post-graduate programs in Turkey together with some evaluation studies regarding these postgraduate programs are reviewed.



**1.7.1. Social constructivism.** One of the most complicated and important human endeavors throughout history has been the process of education. Simplifying the importance of this process by considering it as an act carried out by one person, teacher or transmitter of knowledge simply disseminating knowledge to a group of willing receivers without taking into consideration the individual personalities of learners and teachers, their culture and personal background or the learning environment can be a big underestimation for this complex process. This complex process maintains its importance and complexity in the context of language teaching and learning as well.

Defined as the application of psychology to education by focusing on the development, evaluation and application of theories and principles of learning and instruction that can enhance lifelong learning (Kaplan, 1990), "educational psychology theory has passed through a number of changes and fashions in its comparatively brief history" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 7) in language teaching and learning context. One of the major psychological approaches among these changes is the positivist school and its main off-shoot 'behaviorism' trying to explain all learning in terms of some form of conditioning which had a profound influence on language teaching throughout the world.

Following behaviorism, which had strong criticism of choosing to concentrate only on that which is observable and denying the importance of the cognitive and mental processes that learners bring to the task of learning, cognitive psychology appeared. "In contrast to behaviorism, it is concerned with the way in which the human mind thinks and learns" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 13). Therefore, compared to the supporters of previous psychological approach, cognitive psychologists are interested in mental processes, what is going on in mind and memory.

Although cognitive approaches had important effects on language teaching and learning, due to the inadequate understanding of the workings of the human mind during the

learning process, there was a need for a change. Therefore, humanistic approaches came into the stage. These approaches focus on "the importance of the inner world of the learner and place the individual's thoughts, feelings and emotions at the forefront of all human development" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 30).

Lack of emphasis on a sense of personal meaning brought by learners to their worlds in cognitive psychology approaches brought forth the appearance of constructivism. Learning was the accumulation of facts and skills for the traditional approaches. However, what constructivism claimed is that "individuals are actively involved right from birth in constructing personal meaning that is their own personal understanding, from their experiences" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 21).

People prefer to talk about constructivism in two forms: individual constructivism and social constructivism (Woolfolk, 2004). 'Individual constructivist' approaches also known as 'psychological constructivism', of which Piaget is a preeminent representative (Paris et al., 2001), are related to how individuals establish certain elements in terms of cognition and affection derived from their psychological organ (Phillips, 1997).

In contrast, another psychological approach 'social constructivism' encompasses the insights of both cognitive and humanistic perspectives by caring about the formation of communal knowledge of distinct schools and how the process of people's common cognition about the world is conveyed to other individuals of a socio-cultural community (Woolfolk, 2004). Social constructivism has both similarities and differences with individual constructivism, which is also known as psychological or cognitive constructivism. Cognitive constructivism focuses on equipping learners with cognitive skills to construct their own sense of what is being learned; while social constructivism highlights the acquisition of knowledge through interaction with the environment instead of relying on the teacher (Fraser, 2006). However, cognitive constructivism and social constructivism are closely related in the

sense that learning environment should make it possible for learners to express their internal representations and beliefs if they are to develop meta-cognitive awareness (Human-Vogel & Bouwer, 2005; Vosniadou et al., 2001).

Two very commonly known psychologists, Russian, Vygotsky and Israeli, Feuerstein are two dominant figures in the school of social constructivism (Palincsar, 1998). Both psychologists adopted Piagetian view about children's learning. They claimed that "from the time of their birth children learn independently by exploring their environment, and with the behaviorist view that adults are entirely responsible for shaping children's learning by the judicious use of rewards and punishments" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 39). Thus, it can be assumed from the social constructivist perspective that people are born into a social world and they learn language through interaction with other people.

The claim of Vygotsky and Feuerstein regarding learning is one of the departure points for the present study, because students' learning in master and doctorate programs is shaped by the intervention of academics in these programs. Therefore, in the context of this study, post-graduate programs take the role of social world learning occurs and academics play the role of mediators in social constructivist perspective.

*1.7.1.1. Social constructivism from the perspective of Lev Vygotsky.* The extraordinary Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky's expressions and ideas were restricted because they were against the political ideology of the time he lived which supported behavioristic and anti-intellectual approach during the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. According to his suggestion, language was not the only source through which culture is transmitted, thinking develops and learning occurs but also signs and symbols as well (Williams & Burden, 1997). Two most important concepts at the heart of Vygotsky's theory are mediation and meaning (Kozulin, 1990).

Through the concept of mediation, Vygotsky was able to answer the complex question of how human development occurs. Mediation refers to the process by which socially meaningful activities transform impulsive, unmediated, and natural behavior into higher mental processes through the use of instruments or tools (Minick, 1987). As an example for this, Vygotsky (1978) conducted an experimental study on children's memory development through picture cards. At the very beginning the children were not able to remember vocabulary, but when they were provided with picture cards to mediate their remembering process, they could. The results showed that, later on when the picture cards did not exist physically, the participants were able to picture images mentally and remember them.

In elaborating the concept of mediation, Kozulin (1990) and Kozulin et al. (2003) identified three major categories: mediation through material tools (e.g., using picture cards to aid remembering); mediation through symbolic systems (e.g., silently rehearsing the words to be remembered); and mediation through another human being (e.g., children could be supported by an adult in the process of remembering) (cited in Eun & Lim, 2009). "Material tools have only indirect influence on human psychological processes, because they are directed at the processes in nature" (Pesseisen & Kozulin, 1992, p. 8). However, material tools do not work just independently and their interdependence on other class of mediators gave rise to psychological tools which mediate humans' own psychological processes. "Beyond these primitive 'tools' lies the vast area of higher order symbolic mediators which include natural and artificial languages, discourses and cultural-symbolic systems of different epochs and nations" (Pesseisen & Kozulin, 1992, p. 8).

Compared to the mediation concept, which is basically known as distinguishing characteristic of highly developed forms of human behavior, Vygotsky put forward 'generalized meaning' feature of speech as unique and distinctive (Eun & Lim, 2009). Meaning in this context is to be understood in terms of the degree of generalization and

objectivity, namely, meanings that allow social communication to become possible across contexts (Vygotsky, 1987). An example of this may be child's developing ability to name an object, such as a table from his room (not yet generalized) to all tables that he sees (generalized).

As it can be understood, "the theory of Vygotsky emphasized mediation and meaning because linguistic development occurs through social interaction. In the beginning, people first focus on meaning of words and only later focus on the forms" (Eun & Lim, 2009, p. 17). Vygotsky (1987) metaphorically explains that social planes are precursors for any functions to appear in psychological planes. According to his proposition, internalized functions in the kid's cultural development appear two times, namely social and individual levels. "For example, language takes place first between people (*interpsychological*), and then inside the child (*intrapsychological*). i.e., social interaction is a prerequisite to cognitive development to transfer an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal one" (Nunn, 2001 cited in Rahimi & Tahmasebi, 2010, p. 58). During this process, people learn and internalize both behaviors and language used between individuals which is guided by the process of linguistic mediation.

In connection with these, Vygotsky's most widely known concept is the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD), which he defines as "as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1978, p. 86). The simple reason behind the importance of ZPD in learning is that one of the easiest ways for a learner to take a step further is to be accompanied by a more competent peer at a level that is just above a learner's present capabilities. This concept and the others related with mediation mentioned above are important in the social interactionist theories.

For Vygotsky and the followers of him, mediation refers to the tools mentioned above which are used to help solve a problem in learning. The most important of these tools is the symbolic language (Kozulin, 1990). “The use of this mediational language to help learners move into and through their ZPD is of particular significance” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 65). The question of what kinds of roles are played by the teachers or other significant adults in facilitating learners’ progress from one level to the next called forth the reason of examining the theory of mediation of Feuerstein.

**1.7.2. Feuerstein’s mediation.** The word mediation coming from a social interactionist approach to psychology, which combines humanistic and cognitive notions by adding the notion that learning is affected by social context (Chang, 2004), is derived from the “Greek ‘mesites’ which means to intervene between two parties” (Fraser, 2006, p. 5).

The word ‘intervention’ in the abovementioned context should be specifically emphasized because Feuerstein suggests that “right from birth a child’s learning is shaped by the intervention of significant adults” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 67). While the people who help the learners are named as ‘mediators’; experiences provided by these important helpers are called ‘mediated learning experiences’ (MLE).

Mediation theory focuses on the balancing role of the adults, whether they are teachers or parents, peers or other care givers between learners and tasks, and between learners and social contexts, therefore promoting learning process and teaching learners how to learn. Brown (2002, p. 2) states that: “within the context of foreign language learning, MLE could be briefly defined as the interaction of a learner with the learning environment via the language instructor who assumes the role of human mediator”.

At this point concerning the theory of mediation, one of the important questions is what makes a mediator different from a traditional teacher or what makes a mediated learning experience different from traditional learning. The difference is explained by Williams and

Burden (1997) in four crucial factors. First of all, they (1997) mention the functions of mediation by focusing on some aspects, such as empowering, helping learners to acquire the knowledge, skills and strategies they will need in order to progress, to learn more, to tackle problems, to function effectively in a particular culture and a changing society, and to meet new, emerging and unpredictable demands. They also focus on the role of mediator on making the learners autonomous and problem solvers. Secondly, the difference between a mediator and the traditional view of a teacher appears in the case of interaction. They (1997, p. 68) state that: “mediation involves interaction between the mediator and learner, and that the learner is an active participant in the process”. The third difference is stressed as the reciprocation, that is, the learner is ready and willing to carry out the task presented, and there is an agreement as to what should be done and why, which Feuerstein calls ‘principle of reciprocity’ (Williams & Burden, 1997). The final difference is about the role of the teacher in provision of self-access materials. Learner autonomy, which is one of the aims of mediation theory, cannot be achieved just with providing self-access materials for the learners. Williams and Burden emphasize the difference between traditional teacher and the mediator as the latter “needs to help the learners to interact with the materials in various ways until they become truly self-directed” (1997, p. 68).

The difference that distinguishes the traditional teacher from a mediator has also been mentioned by Grosser and De Waal (2008). What has been proposed by them is the notion of ‘intentional intervention’ by the mediator to equip the learner with cognitive skills and to provide a learning environment that promotes independent learning (Falik, 2001a). Grosser and De Waal (2008) emphasize the significance of ‘intentional intervention’ which distinguishes the traditional teacher from a mediator. In this particular topic, Feuerstein, Klein and Tannenbaum (1991, p. 7) also stated that: “the main difference is that the mediator, in contrast to the traditional teacher, intentionally intervenes and assists the learner by directing

the learning process in order to obtain the desired response”. The mediators’ intentionality differs him/her from a traditional teacher. The mediator is concerned with the approaches of the learners to solve their problems. These problems give the mediators chances to understand how the learners think (Feuerstein et al., 1991).

Apart from the differences of a mediator from a traditional teacher, “mediation theory has played a central role in social constructivist framework” (Sun, 2005, p. 6). This theory is “concerned with helping learners to become autonomous, to take control of their own learning, with the fundamental aim of enabling them to become independent thinkers and problem-solvers” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 68). “Unlike teaching and learning taking place through transmission and reception, a mediational approach to teaching and learning aims at helping learners to construct their own knowledge, solve problems on their own and to understand their own thinking processes” (Fraser, 2006, p. 13). Thus, in this respect, considering the proven failure of traditional teaching practices which provided rote learning for the learners, “teachers of today have to accept the role as mediator of learning” (Fraser, 2006, p. 1).

Except as provided above in regard to the differences of mediator compared to the traditional teacher, the difference between mediated learning experience (MLE) and the traditional way of instruction is also remarkable. MLE is mostly concerned with learners’ propensity to learn and the quality of instruction which helps learners to reach a higher level by becoming modified (Feuerstein & Feuerstein, 1991). The main point in this respect is that MLE helps learners change qualitatively by enabling him/her to develop cognitive prerequisites for learning on his/her own from direct stimuli (Kozulin, 1991).

Considering the central role in social constructivist framework, mediation theory has been discussed from different perspectives, in that the Vygotskian perspective (1978), the Feuerstein perspective (1990), the Nyborg perspective (1993) and the neo-Piagetian



perspective (Haywood, 2003). According to Grosser and De Waal (2008, p. 42), there are some common points among these, such as; “the importance of mediation in cognitive development, the role of task-intrinsic motivation as crucial to the responsiveness of learners and the important role of shared activity during learning”. However, besides some commonalities among these perspectives, there are some differences as well highlighted by Miller (2003). He focuses on the Neo-Piagetian framework’s delegating a minor role to the teacher in guiding learners to discover principles and solve problems in comparison to other frameworks. In this context, there is another difference between the Vygotskian framework and the frameworks of Feuerstein and Nyborg according to Miller (2003). He states that while the former emphasizes the notion of self-mediation, the latter focuses on the dominant role of the teacher as mediator.

Despite the fact that there are four major perspectives that discussed the mediation theory, “two theories that have contributed most to the development of the mediational approach to learning are the Vygotskian sociocultural theory and Feuerstein’s theory of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE)” (Chang, 2004, p. 99). Explaining Vygotsky’s perspective, Kozulin (1990, p. 151) states that: “the gist of Vygotsky’s argument is that a psychological process which first appears as a natural endowment of the child undergoes a radical transformation under the influence of the external, culturally determined means of mediation of these processes”. Both theories emphasize the importance of sociocultural forces in learning, the role played by significant adults in defining the types of learning interaction occurring between children and their environments. However, due to Vygotsky’s early pass away and in parallel with this fact his not being able to suggest ways of how to mediate learners’ learning, Feuerstein’s theory of MLE (1991) became more operational and popular (Chang, 2004). Also, considering all these perspectives, although all focus on important

aspects that characterize a meditational approach to teaching, “the Feuerstein approach is the most widely known” (Grosser & De Waal, 2008, p. 42).

According to the mediation theory, “the mediator helps learners to bridge the gap between what they cannot do on their own and what they can do with a little help” (Grosser & De Waal, 2008, p. 43). It is quite similar to Vygotsky’s most widely known concept (ZPD). In his explanation, “ZPD is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and level of potential development as determined through solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). It has already been commonly known that the concept of mediation is in the center of the psychology of both Vygotsky and Feuerstein. This concept is used for the part played by other significant people, namely known as mediators, in learners’ lives who enhance their learning by selecting and shaping the learning experiences presented to them. Thus, it can easily be understood that the gists of both the theory of mediation of Feuerstein and Vygotsky’s ZPD are the same. In both, working together with another person, either an adult or a more competent peer at a level that is just above a learner’s present capabilities is the best way for the learner to reach the desired level. Hence, Vygotsky and Feuerstein seem to complement each other since the ZPD focuses on an arena where social forms of mediation are performed and realized (Lantolf, 2000). Proving its complementary structure, Xiongyong (2012, p. 235) states that: “Feuerstein’s (1980) MLE describes what happens within the ZPD, which centers on a mediator’s helping learners get through this special zone and obtain their competence development in it.” However, it is also claimed that “the role of the human mediator is not fully elaborated within Vygotsky’s theoretical framework” (Seng et al., 2003, p. 6). In contrast, “Feuerstein’s (1990) theory of mediated learning assigns the major role to a human mediator” (Kozulin, 1994, p. 284, cited in Seng et al., 2003, p. 7). Therefore,

mediation theory of Feuerstein seems meaningful to be adopted for the present study due to its inclusion of ZPD.

**1.7.2.1. Parameters of mediation.** According to Feuerstein, mediation should be characterized by three observable parameters, namely the universal criteria, situational or phase specific criteria, and integrative orientation belief system criteria (Falik, 2001b; Feuerstein & Feuerstein, 1991; Grosser & De Waal, 2008).

“The universal criteria are present in all interpersonal interactions and are necessary for general development and extended and elaborated learning” (Feuerstein, 1991; Falik, 2001b cited in Grosser & De Waal, 2008, p. 43). They refer to: “(a) creating opportunities in the classroom for purposeful, focused and directed interactions, (b) providing experiences in the classroom that link to broader application outside the classroom, (c) providing learners with clarity regarding the relevance and reasons for learning activities” (Grosser & De Waal, 2008, p. 43).

The situational or phase specific criteria, which are linked to specific learning, refer to: (a) encouraging learners to monitor their own learning progress, making adjustments in their responses and developing skills and insight during learning, (b) enabling learners to develop an optimistic belief in success and to feel capable of and confident to accomplish a task, (c) involving learners in activities of cooperation and shared experience, (d) emphasizing the uniqueness of each learner and accepting differences among individuals, and (e) challenging learners with complex experiences (Grosser & De Waal, 2008, p. 4).

The integrative orienting belief system criteria are necessary to integrate changes in functioning into cognitive structures for sustained behavioral change and self-perpetuation (Falik, 2001b). These criteria refer to the mediation of the following critical elements:

(a) an awareness of the human being as a changing entity and encouraging the possibility of self-change and growth among learners, (b) to facilitate and encourage an awareness of selecting from immediate experiences and considering past experiences as influential for growth and changing potential, and (c) nurturing a feeling of belonging which, according to Falik (2001b), refers to “confirming the connections at social and emotional levels between the individual and the world around him/her, validating the importance of relating to others, going outside the boundaries of self (cited in Grosser & De Waal, 2008, p. 44).

What would be ensured for teachers if these criteria and elements of mediation are applied successfully in teaching and learning are listed. These include; enhancing cognitive development, planning for purposeful teaching and learning, interacting with learners in an organized way, using the same techniques during teaching consistently, motivating learners to learn, encouraging an inquiring attitude in learners, promoting transfer of learning, creating conditions for the enhancement of learning potential, addressing special needs of learners to overcome barriers to development (Grosser & De Waal, 2008).

The mediator can mediate learners in several different ways to provide real educational learning experiences. The 12 MLE criteria represent 12 ways of mediation for the teacher to conduct (Seng et al., 2003). The first three of these are considered by Feuerstein to be essential for all learning tasks. “These are also considered universal, in the sense that they can be present in all races, ethnic groups, cultural entities, and socioeconomic strata” (Seng et al., 2003, p. 36). The remaining nine are known as situational, because they are not used in every mediated learning experience (Seng et al., 2003). The twelve key features of mediation are presented with their explanations below:

*1.7.2.1.1. Significance.* What is basically proposed by ‘significance’ is that “the teacher needs to make learners aware of the significance of the learning task so that they can

see the value of it to them personally and in a broader cultural context” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 69). With this aspect, learners are thought to be more capable of responding to challenge and difficulty (Sharron & Coulter, 1994).

People and especially learners do not always know why they do a certain task, and teachers do not explain them the logic behind that task. Feuerstein et al. (1980, p. 67) state that: “the pedagogical and didactical reasonings of teachers are often kept secret from the student to the point that one considers this ‘secrecy’ a main characteristic of pedagogic theory and practice”. Thus, at this point ‘significance’, which is also called ‘mediation of meaning’ (Brown, 2002) makes the significance of a stimulus clear. When the learners comprehend why they learn that specific topic, it is sure that they perform better. However, many teachers do not feel the need to explain. This fact “may simply be a symptom of the lack of any form of affective relationship between them and their learners” (Brown, 2002, p. 4). Brown (2002, p. 5) also states that: “preparing a learner to carry out a task he may not be interested in doing is as important as preparing the task itself”. For this reason, ‘significance’ is so important that it may change the habit of learners who are used to getting whys and wherefores of a task from their teachers and it may turn them into learners who are in search of the need and the capacity to find reasons and answers themselves.

In order to make it more understandable, Williams and Burden (1997, p. 70) put forward two questions which are listed below:

- What significance (or value) does that activity hold for these learners personally or in a wider cultural sense?
- How can I help the learners to perceive this value?

Thus, as it can be seen above in the questions and explanations, ‘significance’ refers to the fact that “any learning task must have value or personal meaning to the learners. In

mediating this way, the teacher's role is to help learners to perceive how the activity is of value to them" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 70).

*1.7.2.1.2. Purpose beyond the here and now.* The second feature of mediation is known as 'purpose beyond the here and now', which Feuerstein refers to as 'transcendence'. It is broadly known as learners' being aware of the way in which the learning experience will have wider relevance to them beyond the immediate time and place (Williams & Burden, 1997). They (1997, p. 71) argue that "the learner should learn something of more general value than the actual item taught by the task". For example, learners may learn a special technique that can help them to read faster during a reading activity. The questions presented below are provided in order to understand this feature better:

- How might the activity lead to learning that will be useful to the learners in the future?
- How can I help the learners to understand this? (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 70).

This important feature of mediation put forward as 'transcendence' can be said to broaden the immediate goal to include more remote goals. It should also be noted that it is one of the universal features of mediation. In this respect, Feuerstein (1990) points out that:

A mediator does not limit the length and breadth of an interaction to those parts of the situation that have originally initiated the exchange. Rather, he/she widens the scope of the interaction to goals that are at the moment more remote to the learner. For example, if a child points to an orange and asks what it is, merely to provide a label to name the object would be an unmediated response. A transcendent interaction would offer a broader definition, one that indicates categorical classification ("It's the fruit of a plant, a tree.") and provide other references to taste, smell, etc., in order to help the learner make further connections. (cited in Presseisen & Kozulin, 1992, p. 14)

*1.7.2.1.3. Shared intention.* The feature of 'shared intention', which is referred to by Feuerstein as 'intentionality and reciprocity' is mainly related to teachers' having clear

intention which is understood and reciprocated by the learners in presenting a task. It has two sides. One is about the instructor which is basically concerned with providing instructions precisely in any learning task. The other side is the learner who should understand exactly the required task and be willing and able to do it in a self-directed way. Brown (2002) differentiates intentionality and reciprocity. For intentionality he gives two examples of instruction. The first is as follows: "Listen to the news excerpt on the tape and find the answers to the questions" (2002, p. 4). He considers students will find it meaningless by grounding his theory on the observations carried out by Chambers (1996, p. 24) who suggests that "it is unlikely that there is any intrinsic motivation to listen. The learners are just doing what the teacher tells them to do". However, the second instruction style which is an example of this aspect is completely different.

The news excerpt on the tape is in a US accent. As you can imagine, being accustomed to the US accent is essential if you want to pass your TOEFL which you must have if you intend to spend a year at Florida Tech. The questions on the work sheet are merely to focus your attention on certain words and turns of phrase rather than information. You are probably familiar with the information content as it concerns current affairs and in particular international terrorism". (Brown, 2002, p. 4)

This may be long but it does transform an implicit intention on the part of the teacher into an explicit and clearly thought through process. Supporting the view in this example in the case of intentionality, Kozulin (1991) also emphasizes the use of this mediation aspect which helps the mediator go beyond being a mere provider of information, of data, of verbal directions. He believes in the importance of making the learners feel that the information involved is cognitively important for them and for their capacity building.

The reciprocity aspect of mediation shows us that learner's cognitive processes are more important than the object taught. In this respect, Presseisen and Kozulin (1992, p. 13) state

that: “focusing on the learner's state of attention, the strategies that he/she is using, even mistakes and insights that may not yet seem directly relevant to a task, the adult shows the child that his/her response is what is really important”. However, Brown (2002) also argues that the reciprocity is in the relational aspect set up between the teacher and the group of learners. However, these two aspects can be effective when the real language learning contexts exist, not like a language course with fixed syllabus.

*1.7.2.1.4. A sense of competence.* This feature and the following five factors are categorized as ‘factors concerned with taking control of learning’ (Williams & Burden, 1997). ‘A sense of competence’ is basically related to learners’ feeling that they are capable of coping successfully with any particular task with which they are faced. It has always been a generally known fact that successful learners are the learners who feel capable of doing a task, an exercise or any given assignment. Thus, in this respect teachers should take the responsibility to make the learners feel that they can do. In relation to this fact, Brown (2002, p. 5) states that: “people who feel competent may perform better than those who do not, irrespective of their real level of knowledge”. Therefore, tasks in language teaching and learning should be designed in a way that they can get positive feedback. However, from a different perspective, Brown (2002) also rejects setting inappropriately low tasks or behaving too kindly to the learners. He considers that these tasks or behaviors may provide no benefits for the learners. Therefore, keeping the balance is crucial in this respect for the mediators.

“Creating positive self-image in learners is seen as the primary responsibility of the teacher because they are to blame for poor motivation, for feelings of incompetence, for fear of failure and for feelings of inadequacy” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 73). As it is very hard to change when the negative self-image is settled in learners mind, ‘a sense of competence’ feature of mediation is crucially important.



*1.7.2.1.5. Control of own behavior.* "Feelings of competence are necessary but not sufficient for learning to be effective" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 73). This quotation shows us that a learner having a high self-image may not be successful in controlling his/her own learning. The ability to control and regulate their own learning, thinking and actions for the learners is another major feature of mediation. According to Brown,

Drawing attention to specific points, accentuating, accelerating or decelerating progression through activities, explaining causal relationships and giving instructions are among the most frequent aspects to be encountered in language teaching. The theory is that behavior regulated and controlled in this way cultivates the adaptability required for a reticent learner to become modified. (Brown, 2002, p. 5)

However, he also takes attention to the danger of controlling the learner because too much of it may create worse results. "In language learning, many learners do not feel that they are in control of their learning" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 73). However, learners need to be competent enough to take control and regulate their own learning by breaking a problem into pieces, gathering information, processing the information and expressing results logically. For this reason, fostering the understanding of regulation and control of behavior in learners is one of the crucial responsibilities of teachers.

*1.7.2.1.6. Goal setting.* The feature of 'goal setting', which is about the ability to set realistic goals and to plan ways of achieving them, develops the notion of control in language learning by enriching the learning process. Learners should have their personal goals in their mind and they should follow them. Otherwise, as provided by Williams and Burden (1997, p. 74) "an absence of goals can lead to aimlessness and a lack of any sense of direction". In parallel with this fact, "in the absence of genuine learning goals, motivation can be no more than instrumental and, therefore, lacking in efficacy" (Brown, 2002, p. 5). Recent research has shown that children who set their own goals in any learning activity are more likely to achieve

those goals than ones that are set for them (van Werkhoven, 1990). This does not mean that learning does not take place when goals are set just by teachers. However, helping learners to set their own achievable goals and follow them is the best way to motivate learners and to allow them to control their own learning.

*1.7.2.1.7. Challenge.* First of all, what is certain is that all human beings have an internal need to respond to challenges, and to search for new challenges in life. It is a natural reaction of learners to desire to go one step further instead of feeling that they have reached their maximum limits. However, especially in the case of language learning, the level of challenge should be appropriately set in order to have positive reactions. Williams and Burden (1997, p. 75) state that: "if we want learners to become absorbed in the tasks we set them, it is important to provide an appropriate challenge as well as helping the learners to plan appropriate strategies to meet these challenges". What they come to as a final suggestion is that since the ultimate goal of mediated learning experiences is to produce independent learners and problem-solvers, and 'challenge' as a step towards autonomy, "it is important also to help learners to set their own challenges" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 75).

From a different perspective, Brown (2002, p. 6) summarizes intelligence as "being the capacity to deal with the unexpected sufficiently quickly" and he thinks functioning in a foreign language continually presents the individual with all sorts of new and unexpected situations. Confronting these with reasonable effort gratifies learners who take up the challenge. Thus, employing a reasonable level of challenge in tasks and fostering the understanding of setting their own challenges both motivates and gratifies learners as a result of which they can be successful.

*1.7.2.1.8. Awareness of change.* What is proposed by this feature of mediation is learners' ability to recognize and assess changes in themselves and the understanding that human beings are constantly changing. This change may be cognitively, physically,

affectively or socially. Especially in cognitive aspect, teachers should help learners gain an ability to recognize, monitor, and assess the changes in themselves. Learners should be made aware of their development through regular self-assessment and introspection (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989). “Monitoring and evaluating such changes play an important part in all learning, but are crucial in something so complex as language learning” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 75).

It became like a tradition for teachers to let the learners know about their progress or current situation in their learning by means of grades, tests results, criticism or praise. However, when the ultimate aim of mediation, which is related to creating independent learners, is taken into account, fostering the ability to self-evaluate becomes important to produce autonomous learners.

*1.7.2.1.9. A belief in positive outcomes.* The last feature of mediation which is concerned with learners’ taking control of their own learning is ‘a belief in positive outcomes’, which is related to the belief that even when faced with an apparently intractable problem, there is always the possibility of finding a solution. People often face situations in which they consider they are impossible to overcome. “Deciding that a solution is impossible will automatically prevent us from seeking an appropriate way and trying out alternative paths towards solving a problems” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 76). In a similar vein, Brown (2002, p. 7) states that: “passive acceptance of an undesirable situation is not only less courageous but it is also said to inhibit the necessary cognitive activity that leads to problem solving”. Thus, it can be seen that fostering a belief in learners that the solution of any difficult problem is always possible is crucial for the motivation and eventually success of the learners.

With regard to other mediation features, Williams and Burden (1997) consider this feature closely related to that of fostering a sense of competence due to the fact that lack of

hope about the possibility of something may be a big obstacle in accomplishing it. Feuerstein et al. (1991) also consider this principle as the base of his theory, and they believe that unless we believe that anyone can become a fully effective learner, no matter what their age or disability, we shall always be setting artificial barriers to learning. Therefore, teachers should make their learners believe that there is always a solution to any problem in order to make them more effective learners.

*1.7.2.1.10. Sharing.* The following two features together with the feature of ‘sharing’ are the factors concerned with learning to become an individual and to belong to a community by fostering social development. Brown (2002, p. 5) defines this feature as “the individual’s need to belong by participating with others and by encouraging others to participate with him”. It also refers to the co-operation among learners, together with the recognition that some problems are better solved co-operatively.

Working together in groups is an important part of the social life which is generally neglected in classrooms. It is also the criticism of Williams and Burden (1997, p. 77) who claim that “in today’s classrooms instead of sharing and co-operation, competition is fostered”. This does not mean underestimating the value of competition, but for the world where trust and mutual respect and co-operation are the norm, ‘sharing’ should be emphasized.

*1.7.2.1.11. Individuality.* This feature of mediation may seem to contradict with the previous parameter. However, learners may share and recognize their own individuality and uniqueness at the same time. “It is the need to assert oneself as a separate individual who, nevertheless, shares certain aspects of his existence with the community” (Brown, 2002, p. 6). Encouraging individuality in learners which means a growing awareness of one’s own unique place in and contribution to a social world (Erikson, 1963, 1968) may get different reactions

in different cultures because “within some social contexts expression of opinions and desires would be more acceptable than in others” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 78).

Williams and Burden (1997) also suggest ways of fostering individuality in specifically language classrooms such as keeping a diary or personal journal, using drama to express oneself, using activities that require the expression of opinions, creative writing or classroom discussions.

*1.7.2.1.12. A sense of belonging.* The last way of mediating is creating ‘a sense of belonging’ in learners which refers to feeling of belonging to a community and a culture. People have this internal impetus to feel better and secure. In the context of school, learners need to feel that they belong to a classroom culture or wider community which may be a school. Williams and Burden (1997) claim that the wish to create a sense of belonging in the class should be supported not only by the teacher but also the learners. A class project, such as a newspaper in which all learners can join may be effective in creating this feeling.

**1.7.3. Studies related to Feuerstein’s mediation.** To the extent the researcher is concerned, there has not been a study related to Feuerstein’s theory of mediation to language teaching in the context of Turkey. It has been researched in many different contexts abroad. In one of these studies, Xiongyong (2012) tried to find answer to the question of how knowledgeable Chinese secondary school English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers are in terms of teachers’ cognition of mediation by using a methodological triangulation with questionnaire and interviewing in order to explore the unpopularity of mediative classes in China and what can be done to make a classroom more mediative. The data were gathered from 152 teachers by means of a survey and among them, 5 self-claimed teachers, who asserted that they were playing the mediator role, were interviewed via two-round semi-structured interviews. First of all, the results showed that almost half of the participants (41%) did not know the concept of mediator. The results also showed that participants had

misconceptions and inadequate knowledge of mediation. In addition, during interviews it was understood that teachers had incorrect or partial knowledge of mediation. Finally, the results showed that most secondary school EFL teachers in China had no knowledge of mediation and were thus unable to mediate students' learning in the language classroom.

In another study, Xiongyong, Samuel and Hua (2012) evaluated the EFL teachers' roles from the perspective of mediation in China. Due to the fact that China is historically an authoritarian society and the instruction is mostly teacher-centered, many studies have been conducted to see the value of mediation which is conceptually new for this society from the perspective of teachers as in this study. Observation and semi-structured interviews were conducted regarding teachers' mediative performance. Three teachers were observed and video-recorded twice by using an observation sheet including twelve aspects of mediated learning experience. The findings showed that one teacher out of three played the role of mediator in the class better than others by employing 'shared intention', 'sense of competence', 'control of own behavior', 'challenging', 'belief in positive outcomes', 'sharing', and 'individuality'; though lacking in 'significance' and 'purpose beyond the here and now'. Also, it was obvious that other teachers, due to the misconception of mediation, could not mediate students' learning.

Hassaskhah (2011) assessed the impact of Feuerstein's theory of mediation on EFL teachers' sense of efficacy through direct observation rather than self-reports. He used experimental techniques to measure changes in the three key components in teachers' self efficacy, efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional practices, and efficacy in classroom management. The participants were sixteen beginning teachers attending in-service teacher development program for two sessions of fifteen hours. Results of this study indicated that the participants made significant gain scores for all three components.

Chang (2004) investigated the college English teachers' and students' perceptions about the different features of Feuerstein's mediated learning experience (MLE) in Taiwan. The extent Taiwanese teachers acted as mediators, how different aspects of mediation were considered, the difference between actual and ideal importance of mediation, the students' conceptualizations of mediation aspects, and the difference between students' and teachers' views on importance of mediation were investigated. Questionnaire from 23 teachers and 93 students, 5 personal and 2 focus group interviews were conducted with teachers and students. The results showed that EFL teachers mostly considered the mediation features important, 'a sense of competence' having highest and 'awareness of change' getting the lowest mean score. From students' perspective, while the most important mediation aspect was 'a sense of competence' followed by 'control of own behavior' and 'a sense of belonging'; the least important was 'individuality' which was followed by 'significance' and 'purpose beyond the here and now'. In addition, according to the findings, a significant difference was found between the 'ideal' and the 'practice' mediation according to teachers' responses and also between teachers and students. It was also suggested according to the findings that participants' home culture was important in selection of MLE and the teacher's social roles.

Ngidi (2012) investigated educators' understanding of the mediation role in the classroom with a quantitative research approach. Questionnaire was used to gather data from 261 participants. The findings showed that educators differed significantly in the extent to which they understood the concept of mediation. Teaching phase was also found to have a significant influence on educators' understanding of the processes and competences involved in mediation.

Grosser and De Waal (2008) conducted a quantitative approach based pilot study with the aim of highlighting practicing teachers' understanding of the concept of mediation, its related processes and the competences required for providing mediated learning experiences.

The data were gathered from 40 practicing teachers studying at a South African University. The findings revealed deficiencies with regard to the group of teachers' understanding of the meaning of the concept of mediation and its related processes and competences.

In another study, Brown (2002) tried to find answer to the question of to what degree mediation took place in French university non-specialist English language classrooms by using a questionnaire. The results showed that majority of the teachers reported having engaged in mediation type interaction with their students to some degree or another. Also, the parameter of 'shared intention' referred to by Feuerstein in his writing as 'intentionality and reciprocity' was the only parameter which was considered as important and applied in classes by the teachers. 'A sense of competence' and 'control of own behavior' were also considered very important by the participants. It was interesting that the parameter of 'sharing' was both considered and used as the least important parameter of mediation. The most actively practiced parameters were chosen as 'shared intention' and 'purpose beyond the here and now'.

As it can be seen, limited number of studies were conducted in different educational contexts in different levels. While the studies of Xiongyong (2012), Xiongyong et al. (2012), and Ngidi (2012) were conducted in the secondary education institutions; Brown (2002), Grosser and De Waal (2008), and Chang (2004) investigated the concept of mediation in tertiary level. Beyond the educational setting of the studies, the methodology followed in these researches differ as well. Researchers (Ngidi, 2012; Grosser & De Waal, 2008; Brown, 2002) mostly preferred quantitative survey methodology by employing questionnaires to gather data from a large sample. Apart from questionnaires, pure qualitative approach implementers used just observation and interviews in their researches as well (Xiongyong et al., 2012; Hassaskhah, 2011). The most popular approach of the current research era 'mixed methodology' was also employed by the researchers investigating mediation in language



education by integrating the findings of questionnaire, interview, and observation (Xiongyong, 2012; Chang, 2004).

Despite employing different methodologies, both studies conducted on the secondary education level (Xiongyong, 2012; Xiongyong et al., 2012) showed that teachers had very limited or no knowledge of the mediation concept or the role of mediator. Lack of knowledge about mediation in language classrooms did not allow the teachers to play the role of a mediator. The research context of these studies may also have a role in explaining teachers' lack of knowledge about mediation because China has always been an authoritarian society and the teaching style is still teacher-centered despite much effort to change it according to new approaches.

Among the studies conducted on tertiary education level mentioned above, there are some common points in the findings. Though conducted in very different cultures (Taiwan and France), both in Brown's (2002) and Chang's (2004) studies, teachers valued 'a sense of competence' aspect the most. This aspect was the most important aspect for the students as well in Chang's (2004) study. On the other hand, there were some major differences as well. Although 'purpose beyond the here and now' was among the most actively practiced mediation theory aspects in Brown's study, it was one of the least important parameters for the students in Taiwan. The differences between the views of students and the teachers in these studies may support one of the assumptions of the present study which is related to possible differences between the academics' and the students' views about the aspects of the mediation theory.

Researchers also conducted researches about the role of mediator and the concept of mediation in language learning and teaching in South African culture as well. Grosser and De Waal's (2008) results provided similar results with those of Xiongyong (2012). Although Grosser and De Waal investigated practicing teachers' understanding of mediation which was

different from Xiongyong (2012) who conducted his research on secondary level, the results revealed deficiencies in their understanding of the meaning of mediation as Xiongyong found out in his study. Therefore, it is possible to claim that teachers are not very well aware of these concepts in different parts of the world.

Literature on the concept of mediation and the role of a mediator showed that studies on different levels of education employing different methodologies provided various results. It is also obvious that there has been a lack of studies combining Feuerstein's theory of mediation and post-graduate programs, doctorate and master programs, running at ELT department. This study tries to bridge this gap by investigating Feuerstein's theory of MLE in doctorate and master programs running at ELT department at a state university in Turkey.

As previously mentioned, right from birth a learner's learning is shaped by intervention of significant adults who can be parents or teachers. This process of mediation is provided by parents before school and teachers during school life. However, the impact of mediation cannot be limited just with the young learners as Feuerstein (2008) argues that a mediated learning approach can equip learners of any age with concepts, strategies and skills to repair cognitive deficiencies and to think independently.

In the context of this study which goes beyond the young learners and extraordinarily taking the case of adult learners with Feuerstein's theory of mediation, the primary purpose is to observe how the adult master and doctorate program learners' learning, whose primary purpose is mostly to become future academics, is shaped and mediated by the academics by taking the twelve features of mediation theory into account from both academics' and learners' perspectives.

**1.7.4. The state of ELT postgraduate programs in Turkey.** One of the recent studies focusing on the evaluation of post-graduate programs in ELT departments is the study of Kırmızı (2011) whose main aim is to evaluate M.A. ELT programs in Turkey in terms of

issues that are related to the program itself and to suggest a syllabus depending on the findings. The investigated issues are the program descriptions, program content, atmosphere in the department, departmental support, program resources, research component, linguistics component, educational sciences component, methodology component, literature and culture courses component. The data were gathered from current students and graduates from M.A. ELT programs of Hacettepe University, Gazi University, Selçuk University, Atatürk University, Çukurova University, Başkent University and Bilkent University through a questionnaire. The findings reveal that M.A program is considered as a step to further academic study and a means for personal enrichment. It was also found that research component of the program is the most important component.

Another study focusing on M.A. TEFL program at Bilkent University (Kanatlar, 1996) summatively evaluated the success of the program by making use of questionnaires and interviews to alumni and program administrators. Results showed that the program was successful in terms of fulfilling its aims and expectations of the participants. The results also revealed some changes provided as suggestions by the students of the program.

Another study was carried out by Tezel (2006) which evaluated an American University Master Program in TESOL by gathering data from all faculty, students, and alumni of the program to provide a rich description. The results revealed positive opinions about teaching taking place in the program. Some components of the program that need improvement, such as ‘university’s job placement office’ to provide more job opportunities for graduates, ‘course content’ to include cross-cultural elements, ‘lack of reading related to recent linguistic information into teaching’, ‘internship in TESL/TEFL’ were introduced as well so that students can teach and practice what they learn in the program.

Limited number of studies evaluating either the implementation of the post-graduate program itself or the students’ success provide views of the important participants of these

programs, academics and the students. It is obvious that there is a lack in the evaluation of doctorate programs in the field of ELT in Turkish context. The current study moves out of the classic concept of evaluative approach by integrating ‘theory of mediation’ and bringing innovation to researches in this field with its uniqueness by including the doctorate program in Turkish context.

## **Chapter 2: Methodology**

### **2. Introduction**

This section starts with the research problems and the questions that initiated the present study. They are followed by the explanation including why specifically that research design is selected and the details related to rationale behind it. The instrumentation involving the pilot study conducted with the aim of observing the applicability and reliability of the instruments designed for the main study, the research setting, the participants, reliability and validity issues, data collection procedures, ethical issues and analysis are revealed in detail throughout this section as well.

#### **2.1. Research Problem and Questions**

It has been a globally acknowledged fact that English is the language spoken both among the people speaking different first languages and also among the people having it as the native or second language. This popularity makes it inevitable for the learners to learn it eventually. In order to have successful English speakers, who have both receptive and productive skills and who are willing to communicate in English, teachers of it should be carefully and meticulously trained at faculties of education at universities. However, the increasing demand in the number of English language teachers quickens the need for ELT programs which eventually induces the increase in the number of post-graduate programs training future English language academics in this specific department. Additionally, as previously mentioned, post-graduate programs of an ELT department also provide students with personal fulfillment and professional development in this academic discipline. Despite the increasing demand and importance of master and doctorate programs in the field of ELT, there is an inadequacy in the number of studies investigating these programs by taking into consideration the views of both academics and students. Peacock (2009) also states that

evaluation studies on teacher education programs are relatively scarce. Although the main concern of this study is not specifically the evaluation of the post-graduate programs in ELT department, the lack of studies in Turkish context about them can be an obstacle in the process of the development of these programs and in students' success. Therefore, limited number of studies on the master and doctorate programs in the field of ELT especially in the case of Turkey generates the first research problem in the present study.

In connection with the fact mentioned above, the lack of studies investigating the post-graduate programs becomes the reason of the lack of information about the relationship between academics and students, the role of the academics and students and in many other aspects. Especially in the master and doctorate programs, which are considered as the final steps of formal educational life of a student, determining the role of a teacher and how it is considered by students are quite complex issues. It would not be possible to accept the role of the teacher in these programs as the traditional role of disseminator of knowledge. The claim of the supporters of the recent approach, which is social interactionism, shows that teachers should also act as 'mediators' or 'facilitators' of their students' learning (Williams & Burden, 1997). Going beyond the traditional roles of teacher and employing the role of a mediator, teachers may amplify learners' intellectual capacity, their knowledge, skills and strategies to let them become effective autonomous learners. Concerning the role of mediator, one of the important figures in social constructivist and social interactionist approach, Feuerstein puts forward the theory of mediation and mediated learning experience (MLE). These mediative experiences are provided by an adult, whether a teacher or parent, who understands the learner's interests, needs, and capacities and who can take an active role in creating two-way interaction. Feuerstein identified twelve ways in his theory in which mediation can take place. Though many studies in education (e.g. Burden, 1987; Savell et al., 1986) indicate the powerful and profound influence of applying Feuerstein's theory of mediation and his

Instrumental Enrichment Programme (Feuerstein, 1980), few attempts have been made to investigate mediation in language classrooms, especially in post-graduate education programs in ELT departments which reveals the second research problem of this study.

To sum up, the unsatisfactory number of researches related to the nature of master and doctorate programs in ELT departments in Turkish context and the unexamined actual practice and perceptions of both teachers and students in these programs related to the role of mediator, the mediation theory of Feuerstein and the twelve aspects of his theory generated the research problems of the present study. In the light of these research problems, this study tries to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What do the academics do as mediators in doctorate and master programs of ELT department?
  - 1.1. What are the sources (educational background, beliefs, personal feelings, etc.) of using Mediation Theory aspects for the academics?
  - 1.2. What are the academics' perspectives of having a mediator role in doctorate and master programs?
2. How do the academics in doctorate and master programs of ELT department consider the different aspects of mediation to promote learning?
3. Do the academics' perceptions about the importance of different aspects of mediation differ from their actual practice in doctorate and master programs of ELT department?
4. How do the doctorate and master students of ELT department consider the different aspects of mediation as they experience them?
5. Are there any differences between the students' (doctorate and master) and academics' views about the different aspects of mediation?

## 2.2. The Research Design

The design of the present study in relation to the worldview of the researcher, inquiry strategies, research questions, data gathering methods, and analysis is provided in this section. The current design of the research is also provided with the justifications of employing specific data collection methods for the research questions.

**2.2.1. Selection and the rationale of the research design.** "Research designs are plans and procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis" (Creswell, 2003, p. 3). Several factors play role in the selection of the research design of the studies. Although the criteria to select the right design for the research change from one perspective to another depending on the approach espoused, it can be claimed that there is a common ground shared among research experts.

One of the most commonly shared criteria list is proposed by Creswell (2003) which includes the worldview assumptions the researcher brings to the study; the strategies of inquiry procedures through which the researcher decides on the type of the study; and the specific methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation which are among the major elements of the research framework. Apart from these three important elements, he (2003, p. 3) also emphasizes the importance of "the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed together with the researchers' personal experiences and the audience of the study for the selection of the research design". The selection of the research design for the present study will be revealed through this section by referring to the elements mentioned above.

- *Philosophical worldviews*: Worldview is "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Guba, 1990, p. 17), which is also called as 'paradigms' (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) or 'epistemologies or ontologies' (Crotty, 1998). Creswell (2003, p. 6) also considers worldview as a "general orientation about the world and the nature of the research that a researcher holds". The field of study, personal beliefs of the individual researcher and the past research experiences may



have the effect on employing a specific qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approach in the research. Although there are currently two dominant research paradigms in social sciences; quantitative and qualitative paradigms (Cohen & Manion, 1994); “mixed methods approach is also considered as the third in this category” (Creswell, 2003, p. 5).

Creswell (2003) proposed four worldviews that may guide the research projects:

Table 1

*Four Worldviews*

<b>Four Worldviews</b>	
<b>Post positivism</b>	<b>Constructivism</b>
Determination	Understanding
Reductionism	Multiple participate meetings
Empirical observation and measurement	Social and historical construction
Theory verification	Theory generation
<b>Advocacy/ Participatory</b>	<b>Pragmatism</b>
Political	Consequences of actions
Empowerment issue-oriented	Problem-centered
Collaborative	Pluralistic
Change-oriented	Real-world practice oriented

(Creswell, 2003, p. 6)

Although the philosophical ideas remain largely hidden in research (Slife & Williams, 1995), they still influence the practice of research. The present research mostly has the assumptions of the constructivist worldview. However, it does not mean that it totally disagrees with the assumptions of the other three worldviews which will be discussed below in detail.

The worldview of constructivism is typically seen as an approach to qualitative research (Creswell, 2003). The assumptions held by social constructivists include individuals' search for understanding the world they are living in through which they can develop subjective meanings. According to Creswell's (2003, p. 8) suggestions, “the goal of the

research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views on the situation being studied". Therefore, by focusing on the specific contexts the participants living in, in this worldview, the researchers aim at interpreting the meanings the participants have about the world or that specific subject through questions as open as possible.

In discussing constructivism, Crotty (1998) identified several assumptions:

1. Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. Qualitative researchers tend to use open-ended questions so that the participants can share their views.
2. Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives- we are all born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture. Thus, qualitative researchers seek to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting this context and gathering information personally. They also interpret what they find, an interpretation shaped by the researcher's own experiences and background.
3. The basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community. The process of qualitative research is largely inductive with the inquirer generating meaning from the data collected in the field.

The objectives of this study are closely attached to the assumptions of the social constructivism worldview. Concerning the aims of this study which include the activities academics create with the mediator role in master and doctorate programs of ELT department, the different aspects of mediation considered by the academics and students, the difference between the academics' perceptions and the actual use of these mediation aspects and the difference between the students' and the academics' perceptions related to mediation, the researcher needs to have a thorough understanding of the research context and the participants experiencing it. In order to achieve this, open ended questions, both with the academics and the students, should be used to get a deep understanding related to mediation aspects.

Similarly, in order to get clear insights related to the actual use of these aspects, the context should be visited. To sum up, interaction is needed between the researcher and the participants so as to gather their subjective meanings with a great deal of engagement in the case of this study which conduces the present study to the assumptions of the social constructivism.

As presented above, the assumptions of this study show similarity with those of other three worldviews as well. One of them is the postpositivist assumptions, which have generally represented the traditional form of research. One of the important assumptions of this worldview is concerned with the fact that data, evidence and rational considerations shape knowledge and, in practice, the researcher gathers information on instruments completed by the participants or by researchers' observations (Philips & Burbules, 2000). Although it is mostly related with quantitative research, this key assumption of this position is in line with the present research.

The other philosophical worldview is advocacy/participatory approach, which is generally observed in qualitative research tradition. However, it can be a base for quantitative research as well. According to Creswell, this worldview suggests that "research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and political agenda. Thus, the research contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life" (Creswell, 2003, p. 9). According to the summary of this worldview from the perspective of Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998), it is practical and collaborative because it is inquiry completed with others rather than on or to others. In this spirit, advocacy/participatory authors engage the participants as active collaborators in their inquiries which is quite in accordance with the objectives of this research.

The last worldview is pragmatism which makes use of mixed method integrating qualitative and quantitative methods. Cherryholmes (1992), Morgan (2007), and Creswell (2003, p. 10-11) provide a philosophical basis for research by stating: “individual researchers have a freedom of choice. In this way, researchers are free to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes”. To sum up, in this study, constructivist worldview is employed to understand exactly the post-graduate programs from the participants’ views.

- *The strategies of inquiry:* It may not be enough for the researcher just to decide on whether to conduct qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. It is also a must to find out the type of study within these methods. “Strategies of inquiry are types of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods designs or models that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design” (Creswell, 2003, p. 11). Some experts have called them approaches to inquiry (Creswell, 2007) or research methodologies (Mertens, 1998). The overview of these strategies is illustrated in the table below:

Table 2

*Alternative Strategies of Inquiry*

<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>	<b>Mixed Method</b>
	Narrative research	Sequential
Experimental designs	Phenomenology	Concurrent
Non-experimental designs, such as surveys.	Ethnographies	Transformative
	Grounded theory studies	
	Case study	

(Creswell, 2003, p. 12)

As it has already been presented above, the assumptions of this study bring it closer to the worldview of constructivism which goes hand in hand with the qualitative approach. Among the strategies of inquiry providing specific direction for procedures in the research designs, ‘phenomenological research’ seems to work best for the objectives of the present study due to several reasons. To start with, “it is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher

identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants” (Creswell, 2003, p. 13). Description of the phenomenon by the participants, in clearer terms, means that a researcher applying phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of the people (Greene, 1997). According to Welman and Kruger’s perspective (1999, p. 189), “the phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved”. Phenomenologists, in contrast to positivists, believe that the researcher cannot be detached from his/her own presuppositions and that the researcher should not pretend otherwise (Hammersley, 2000). From these perspectives, this study tries to investigate the perceptions of academics and students in terms of theory of mediation in ELT master and doctorate programs and its actual use in these programs. In order to find answers to these issues, the researcher needs the first hand lived experiences of both academics and students in these programs. The data needed is the verbalized versions of the lived experiences of these participants. Understanding the lived experiences marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Moustaskas, 1994). In this process, the researcher brackets or sets aside his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study (Nieswiadomy, 1993). Having a small number of participants in both master and doctorate programs and spending long time both with the students and the academics in these programs also make the phenomenological research strategy the best strategy for the present study.

- *The methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation:* The next important element in the selection of research design is the research method that includes the questions of how to gather data, how to analyze and how to interpret the findings. Employing a constructivist worldview and the phenomenological research strategy, the present study becomes a

qualitative approach based research. In order to get deeper understanding in terms of the perceptual importance of the aspects of mediation theory from the academics' and students' point of view, the actual performance of it in master and doctorate classes and the potential differences in the views of academics and students regarding these aspects, more open-ended questions are required on the contrary to the closed-ended questionnaire style questions. The need to use open-ended questions brought forth the use of interviews to gather data both from academics and students. In addition, the need of prolonged engagement with the participants as presented in the inquiry of strategy section above and the objective of the present study, which questions the actual performance of the aspects of mediation theory in the master and doctorate programs, necessitated the use of observation as the data collection method (see *research instruments* section for more detail).

For the analysis and the interpretation of the data gathered from observations and interviews, the interpretive-descriptive approach to analysis is used in the present study. It is one of the approaches to analyzing qualitative data which is thought as standing in the middle of the continuum ranging from a low level of interpretation and abstraction engaged in by the researcher, to a high level of interpretation and abstraction required for theory building (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) (see *analysis* section for more detail).

In terms of selecting the research design for the study, experts have saliently claimed that one should not stick to one specific approach and ignore the others. In this sense, Turnbull (2005, p. 222) state that: "the major issues facing researchers in selecting one research paradigm over another, one should not be deciding which one is best; rather which method will provide valid and reliable data to scientifically answer the research question and hypotheses posed". Similarly, Silverman (2000, p. 22) also suggests that: "there are no principled grounds to be either qualitative or quantitative in approach. It all depends on what you are trying to do". As it can be understood, the basic concern in selecting the research

design is the research question and the reliable and valid data that will be a guide in the process of finding answers for them. In the light of the parameters which all contribute to the selection of the research design that tends to be quantitative, qualitative or mixed, the present study employs a qualitative design regarding the reasons provided above.

In order to understand the qualitative research tradition, there are some preferences employed by the qualitative researchers provided below (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967) (cited in Silverman, 2000, p. 8, adapted from Hammersley, 1992, p. 160-72):

1. A preference for qualitative data- understood simply as the analysis of words and images rather than numbers,
2. A preference for naturally occurring data- observation rather than experiment, unstructured rather than structured interviews,
3. A preference for meanings rather than behavior- attending to document the world from the point of view of the people studied,
4. A rejection of natural science as a model,
5. A preference for inductive, hypothesis-generating research rather than hypothesis testing

While comparing the quantitative research with the qualitative one, Maykut and Morehouse, (1994) also touch on several points presented above as the preferences of the qualitative researchers. Taking the first preference into account, they state that (1994, p. 2): “qualitative research, on the other hand, generally examines people’s words and actions in narrative or descriptive ways more closely representing the situation as experienced by the participants”. Also, elaborating on the second preference, Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 25) suggest that: “the qualitative researcher is a part of the investigation as a participant

observer, an in depth interviewer or a leader of a focus group but also removes himself from the situation to rethink the meanings of the experience”.

The preferences of the qualitative researchers presented above as a whole show the kind of data, the data gathering techniques and the way of analysis. By adding some more points concerning the participants, setting and the general perspectives of the qualitative researchers, Mackey and Gass (2005, p. 162-163) define the term qualitative research as “the research that is based on descriptive data that does not make regular use of statistical procedures” and they provide the characteristics of this type of research:

*Rich description:* The aims of qualitative researchers often involve the provision of careful and detailed descriptions as opposed to the quantification of data through measurements, frequencies, scores, and ratings.

*Natural and holistic representation:* Qualitative researchers aim to study individuals and events in their natural settings (Tetnowski & Damico, 2001 cited in Mackey & Gass, 2005).

*Few participants:* Rather than using a large group of participants with the goal of generalizing to a larger population like quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers tend to work more intensively with fewer participants, and are less concerned about issues of generalizability.

*Emic perspective:* Qualitative researchers aim to interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people attach to them.

*Cyclical and open-ended process:* Qualitative research is often process-oriented, or open ended, with categories that emerge. (Mackey and Gass, 2005, p. 162-163)



Qualitative research has a multi-method style which involves interpretive and naturalistic approach to its subject matter. What is common in both the preferences of qualitative researchers and the characteristics of qualitative research approach is briefly summarized and put into words by Trumbull (2005, p. 101) as: “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, and phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. Regarding the characteristic of ‘natural and holistic representation’, Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 45) state that: “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding people’s experience in context. The natural setting is the place where the researcher is most likely to discover, or uncover, what is to be known about the phenomenon of interest”. In addition, they (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 25) consider the ‘emic perspective’ a posture of indwelling which means “being at one with the persons under investigation, walking a mile in the other person’s shoes, or understanding the person’s point of view from an empathic rather than a sympathetic position”.

Above all, “qualitative research methods are designed to give real and stimulating meaning to the phenomenon by involving the researcher directly or indirectly in the process” (Trumbull, 2005, p. 104). The preferences of qualitative researchers, the characteristics of it and major objective of understanding experiences as close as possible as its participant experiences are closely in line with the present research’s objectives, because, first of all, investigating the perceptions and practices of academics and students of ELT master and doctorate programs related to theory of mediation in their natural setting is the main objective of this study.

Qualitative approach is needed for the present study because “if a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach” (Creswell, 2003, p. 18). In the case of this study, theory of mediation, the twelve aspects of it and students’ and academics’ perspectives related to them are not

known and researched especially in the post-graduate programs. “This type of approach may be needed because the topic is new, the topic has never been addressed with a certain sample or group of people, and existing theories do not apply with the particular sample or group under study” (Morse, 1991 cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 18).

It would be possible just to investigate what mediation aspect or aspects are put into action in the master and doctorate programs, how much importance they have for the academics and the students in these programs simply employing the quantitative approach. However, quantitative approach would not be able to present a detailed picture, because it is mostly concerned with whether or not something exists. Tezel (2006) finds the lacking point of this approach by claiming that quantitative approach methods cannot explain 'why' and 'how' that thing exists which are essential for making meaning. In this sense, the main aim of this study is to derive a deeper and clearer picture by asking 'why' and 'how' questions to the participants.

In the process of attaining a thorough picture of doctorate and master students in the field of ELT and their educators in the same programs, the researcher is fully involved especially in the meaning making step because “qualitative research methods are designed to give real and stimulating meaning to the phenomenon by involving the researcher directly or indirectly in the process” (Taylor & Turnbull, 2005, p. 223).

In the matter of the ways of involving in the research and the ways of data gathering in qualitative researches, Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 46) stated that: “the most useful ways of gathering these forms of data are participant observation, in-depth interviews, group interviews, and the collection of relevant documents”. The present study makes use of observation, personal interviews, and focus group interviews as the data gathering techniques. Taking a step forward, Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 46) also suggest the position of the qualitative researchers in using these techniques:

While researchers are certainly pivotal in more traditional research approaches, the qualitative researcher has the added responsibility of being both the collector of relevant data- data whose relevance changes as the study proceeds- and the culler of meaning from that data, which most often is in the form of people's words and actions. (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 46)

In conclusion, taking the qualitative researchers' preferences and the qualitative research characteristics into consideration, the present study makes use of observations of few participants in their natural settings to gather words and events rather than numbers by employing rich descriptions. Also, semi-structured interviews with the academics and focus-group interviews with the students are conducted in the master and doctorate programs to document the world from the point of view of the people studied by reflecting the emic perspective.

**2.2.2. Research design of the current study.** Case study approach is adopted in the present study due to several reasons, such as the characteristics of the case study design and their convenience on answering the research questions of the present study; and the suitability of the research topic of this study to this design.

"Case studies tend to provide detailed descriptions of specific learners or sometimes classes within their learning setting" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 171). It is defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. "Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources" (Merriam, 1988, p. 16).

From this point of view, the researcher investigated ELT post-graduate program participants (academics and the students of master and doctorate programs) within their setting by providing rich descriptions of both the setting and the participants. Multiple data

sources were used in this case study (observations, personal semi-structured interviews, focus-group interviews, documents). Firstly, observational data were gathered from the master and doctorate classes in ELT department in the faculty of education. Observations not only provided a basis for the personal and focus-group interviews that would be conducted later in the study, but also allowed the researcher to answer the first and the third research questions of the study. Following this, personal semi-structured interviews with the academics, the focus-group interviews with the master and doctorate program students and the documents related with the programs were combined in the holistic nature of the case study to examine and analyze the specific case of the present study. To sum up, the master and doctorate programs of the ELT department of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Turkey composed the case in the present study.

Taking several definitions of case study design into consideration, Mackey and Gass (2005) provided commonalities across these definitions. They suggest that despite the differences, these definitions have two main commonalities. The most important of these is the notion that a case is a 'bounded instance'. The boundary can be physical (a certain school site, a child), or temporal (as in a lesson, which has a beginning and an end). The second commonality is that the phenomenon is studied in context. Unlike formal experiments, which control and manipulate variables and look for causality, case studies focus on interpretation and description. The present case study embodied the commonalities mentioned in the definitions. First of all, it was bounded with the two programs (master and doctorate) running. Concerning the context-specific characteristic, Adelman et al. (1976, p. 2-3) suggest that case study includes 'instance in action', in other words, "the researcher selects a single entity from a class of objects or phenomena, which could be 'bilingual speakers', 'second language classrooms', etc., and investigates the way that the entity functions in context". Similarly Merriam, (1998, p. 208) suggests "in case studies a single case or nonrandom sample is

selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular in-depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many”. Thus, secondly, in the present study, the aspects of mediation theory were investigated specifically in the context of these two programs with the academics and the students in order to comprehend the role of these aspects in these programs.

Regarding the characteristics of the case study design, Mackey and Gass (2005, p. 171) suggest that “they are also usually associated with a longitudinal approach, in which observations of the phenomena under investigation are made at periodic intervals for an extended period of time”. Additionally, “involving multiple perspectives which is accomplished by the process of triangulation is another key characteristic of the case studies” (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 163). In the case of this study, the time period spent for the data collection (observation, personal and focus-group interviews) lasted for a year and the data were collected from different sources (academics, students and the documents). Therefore, both characteristics, in that longitudinal approach and the triangulation, were employed in the present study.

Concerning the type of case studies, researchers (Stenhouse, 1983; Yin, 1993; Stake, 1995) developed typologies focusing on a variety of aspects. Stenhouse (1983), one of the fathers of the case study approach, developed a typology of case study including four types. He named the first type as ‘neo-ethnographic’, which focuses on the “in-depth investigation of a single case by a participant observer” (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 165). The ‘evaluative’ case study is “an investigation carried out in order to evaluate policy or practice” (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 165). The third type is called ‘multi-site’ case study in which several researchers work together on more than one site. The final type of Stenhouse’s typology is the ‘action’ case study type, which is “an investigation carried out by a classroom practitioner in his or her professional context” (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 165). Another classification of

case study types was put forward by Yin (1993). In his typology, 'exploratory' case study type explores situations in which the intervention that is evaluated has no clear outcomes. 'Descriptive' case studies focus on the complete description of a phenomenon within its real context. The last type of Yin's typology is 'explanatory' case study, which "intends to reveal causal relationships" (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 166). Stake (1995) added three more types of case studies to those of Yin. Depending on the purpose and the choice of the researcher, he considers the case studies to be 'intrinsic', 'instrumental', and 'collective'. In intrinsic case studies, the researcher has a particular interest in the case. Instrumental case studies are used when "there is a research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding, and a feeling that to get insight into the question by studying a particular case" (Stake, 1995, p. 237). Collective type of case studies is the collection of more than one instrumental case.

Regarding the typologies and the types of case studies, it is obvious that there are some overlaps. Therefore, "a case study might fall into more than one of the categories or lie outside a category, thus calling for flexibility and open-mindedness to alternatives" (Yavuz, 2003, p. 113). Taking this perspective into account, the case of the present study has elements from different typologies and types. First, it has features of a descriptive case study type in which (Yin's 1995 typology) the main aim is to have a complete description of a phenomenon within its real context. In the current research, understanding the academics' and the students' perspectives and practices about the aspects of the theory of mediation in master and doctorate programs of ELT department is the primary objective. It is possible only on the condition that the doctorate and master classes are observed in order to collect data in its real context. The effort to present the description of how these mediation aspects are put into action in these programs generates the reason why the present study has 'descriptive case study' elements.

Second, another category of case studies that this study falls into is Stake's (1995) 'intrinsic' case study type. In this type, he emphasizes the importance of the particularity of that specific case. Stake (1995, p. 237) states that: "it is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because, in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest". From this point of view, the researcher specifically chose the doctorate and the master programs of ELT department to investigate the aspects of mediation theory not because this specific case represents other cases or there is a specific need to include the aspects of this theory in these programs. Therefore, the reason to conduct this case study is an intrinsic interest which stems from the researcher's being a part of this specific case both as a master and doctorate student and the urge to understand what mediation theory aspects play significant roles both from academics' and students' perspectives.

Third, this study includes the features of Stake's (1995) 'instrumental' case study design as well. Principally, "there is no line distinguishing intrinsic case study from instrumental; rather, a zone of combined purpose separates them" (Stake, 1995, p. 237). In this type of case study, the particularity of the specific case is of secondary importance. The focus is on the struggle to "provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory" (Stake, 1995, p. 237). Although the researcher primarily investigated this case (doctorate and master programs of ELT department) specifically in this study, there is also an 'instrumental' point of view in Stake's words due to the importance attached to the aspects of mediation theory and their actual practice in these programs.

No matter what case study type is chosen, this design is generally criticized due to its nature against generalizability. The generalizability of the results which is the most common expectation of the readers is not a major concern for the case study approach, because in this design, the researchers mostly employ only a few participants who are not randomly chosen.

For this reason, although it is suggested that “any generalizations from the individual or small group to the larger population of second language learners must be made tentatively and with extreme caution” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 172), “single case studies are not easily generalizable” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 173). The same perspective was employed for the present study as well. The researcher had the objective of conducting an in-depth analysis of the case. The results can only be generalized to larger populations when the results of similar case studies are put together.

In the light of the information about case study design provided above, a chart incorporating the research questions, the data sources and the methods and the justification of using these methods is presented below to easily spot and observe what kinds of data are needed to address the research questions. Although the data gathering methods were explained separately with their justifications in the table, the data gathered from all these methods were combined to answer the research questions.

Table 3

*The Relationship among the Research Questions, Data Sources and Their Justifications to Use*

<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Data sources and methods</b>	<b>Justification</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What do the academics do as mediators in doctorate and master programs of ELT department?</b></li> <li>➤ <b>What are the sources (educational background,</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal semi-structured interviews with six academics of master and doctorate programs of the ELT department.</li> </ul>	Interviews will provide academics’ accounts of how they perform the role of a mediator in their master and doctorate classes and their sources of using these aspects in classes.



*Table 3 (continued)*

<p>beliefs, personal feelings, etc.) of using mediation theory aspects for the academics?</p> <p>➤ What are the academics' perspectives of having a mediator role in doctorate and master programs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations of eight different classes (3 Doctorate-5 Master Program) in two terms.</li> </ul>	<p>Observations will provide what the academics actually do in their master and doctorate classes in terms of implementing the aspects of the theory of mediation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do the academics in doctorate and master programs of ELT department consider the different aspects of mediation to promote learning?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal semi-structured interviews with six teachers of master and doctorate programs of the ELT department.</li> </ul>	<p>Interviews will provide academics' evaluation of the aspects of the theory of mediation in terms of importance</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the academics' perceptions about the importance of different aspects of mediation differ from their actual practice in doctorate and master programs of ELT department?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal semi-structured interviews with six academics of master and doctorate programs of the ELT department.</li> <li>• Observations of eight different classes (3 Doctorate-5 Master Program) in two terms.</li> </ul>	<p>Interviews will provide the data related to the academics' evaluation of the importance of the mediation aspects and use of them in class.</p> <p>Observations will yield information about how the academics actually perform the aspects of the theory of mediation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do the doctorate and master students of ELT department consider the different aspects of mediation as they experience them?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group interviews with the students of master and doctorate programs.</li> </ul>	<p>The focus group interviews will provide insights of the students related to the importance they attach to the aspects of the theory of mediation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any differences between the students' (doctorate and master) and academics' views about the different aspects of mediation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal semi-structured interviews with six academics of master and doctorate programs of the ELT department.</li> <li>• Focus group interviews with the students of master and doctorate programs.</li> </ul>	<p>Interviews will provide academics' accounts of how important they consider the mediation theory aspects.</p> <p>Focus group interviews will provide the students' ideas in terms of the importance they place to the aspects of the theory of mediation.</p>

Due to the prolonged engagement of the researcher in the research setting with all the participants, it was decided to observe the classes first in order not to create any bias for the academics and the students. Following observation phase, personal semi-structured interviews with academics and the focus-group interviews with the students were also conducted.

### **2.3. Research Instruments**

Employing a qualitative approach, this study makes use of observation, semi-structured personal interview, and focus-group interview as the data gathering techniques. The instruments used in these techniques are explained in subsections below in detail.

**2.3.1. Observation form.** Observation is one of the most frequently employed data collection techniques in the qualitative research tradition. It is known as “a family of related procedures for gathering data during actual language lessons or tutorial sessions, primarily by watching, listening, and recording” (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 258). Stated in other words, observation “is usually used to refer to methods of generating data which involve the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research setting, and systematically observing dimensions of that setting, interactions, relationships, actions, events and so on” (Mason, 1996, p. 60).

There are several reasons of using observation as the data gathering technique. Mason (1996, p. 62-63) states possible reasons of using observation as the data generating technique:

- Your assessment is that the kinds of data you require are not available in other forms or ways. For example, this may be because your view is that retrospective accounts of interactions are inadequate or impossible to achieve.

- You have an epistemological position which suggests that knowledge or evidence of the social worlds can be generated by observing, or participating in, or experiencing natural or real life settings, interactive situations and so on.
- It is likely to lay some emphasis on naturally or situationally occurring data, rather than data which are clearly artificially manufactured or manipulated through, for example, experimental research design, or possibly even through the use of questionnaires and interviews.
- You may feel it is more ethical to enter into and become involved in the social world of those you research to gain an understanding, than to attempt to stand outside by using other methods. (Mason, 1996, p. 62-63)

What Mason states as the reasons of using observation is in accordance with the objectives of the present study. First of all, one of the objectives of this study is to gather data related to the actual performance of the mediation theory aspects in the master and doctorate programs of ELT department. Therefore, the kind of data required in this study in this sense is not available in other forms. Additionally, the knowledge of what is happening in a social world like a classroom or a master or doctorate program as a whole can only be gathered through observation in the natural setting, which is the classroom by participating and experiencing natural events occurring and interactions between teachers and students. Adler & Adler (1994, p. 377) supporting this claim, suggest that “for as long as people have been interested in studying the social and natural world around them, observation has served as the bedrock source of human knowledge”. Besides, as it is stated above as the last reason of using observation, ethically it is more convenient to become fully involved in these post-graduate programs and to gain the deeper picture of what is happening in terms of mediation theory in these programs.

Apart from the reasons of using observation as the data collection technique, there is another debate on the researchers' level of being involved in the observation setting. Mason (1996, p. 64) supports the idea that the observer cannot be totally neutral during this process by stating that: "for many enthusiasts of the method, this notion of researcher distance or neutrality is not only impossible but completely defeats the epistemological of immersing yourself in a setting". It can be claimed that during the observation period, especially if it takes long time, it is possible that the researcher and the participants share more and more each time which makes it inevitable for the researcher to keep being neutral. In this respect Mason states that:

Whatever the setting, it is inevitable that the researcher will get on better with some participants than others, and may actually be adopted by a key informant who might then introduce them to other people or regions in the setting ...whether or not you identify a key informant, it is unrealistic to assume that you can maintain a completely neutral stance in the development of relationships in your setting...you must ask yourself whether you have gained acceptance from all of those involved, and what exactly that acceptance might mean. (Mason, 1996, p. 67)

As a summary of this debate and also as an optimum observer distance, Patton (1980, p. 121) states that: "enter into the world. Observe and wonder; experience and reflect. To understand a world you must become part of that world while at the same time remaining separate, a part of and apart from". In line with this debate about the researcher's degree of involvement in the observation setting, first of all, "observation is always selective. It needs a chosen object, a definite task, an interest, a point of view, a problem...It presupposes interests, points of view and problems" (Cohen & Cohen, 1980, p. 266). The participation of the researcher in this specific and task based process is categorized and labeled with different names. Spradley (1980) puts it into a continuum

ranging from passive participant observation to complete participation observation. Between the two ends of the continuum are two other levels of participation named as active participant observation and moderate participant observation. As the names of the types of observation suggest, they are categorized according to the involvement level of the observer in the setting with the participants. Considering the nature of the present study, the type of 'passive participant observation', which is also named as 'nonparticipant observation' type, is used. To start with, the aim of using observation technique in this study is to investigate how the aspects related to mediation theory are taking place in the ordinary nature of post-graduate programs of ELT department at a state university. While the actual use of these aspects are examined, the best way for the position of the observer is to stay passive and not actively participate in the classroom interactions and not have a role to play other than observer (Spradley, 1980). The logic behind it is to find maximum time to note down the mediation aspects taking place in the classes and to be flexible in the selection of the focus of the observation which would not be possible with other types of observation due to the requirements of the participation.

There are advantages and disadvantages of using minimum involvement in the setting as an observer. Lynch especially brings the time and flexibility advantages forward by stating that:

The advantage of this passive participant approach, besides being easier to negotiate, is that it gives the observer maximum time and flexibility in deciding what to observe. The observer can spend as much time as he wants getting a general, holistic feel for the setting, and then focus on a particular behavior suggested as critical by that preliminary observation period. The observer also has more flexibility with how he chooses to observe, being able to move from the rear of the classroom to a spot near a particular

student table as the focus of the observation changes, for example. (Lynch, 1996, p. 122)

On the other hand, even though the participants usually become used to the observer's presence in the observation scene in time, the possibility of not being able to capture the participants' point of view and the participants' feeling of uncomfortableness may be the disadvantages of using this type of observation (Lynch, 1996). This disadvantage is handled in the present study (see the *reliability and validity issues* section).

The observation data were gathered through the use of field notes jotted down on an observation schedule. Two practical rules have been suggested for making field notes (Silverman, 2000, p. 140):

- Record what we can see as well as what we hear,
- Expand field notes beyond the immediate observations.

All the field notes were appropriately expanded and written down on separate sheets of paper just after the observations in this study. Despite of the practical use of field notes, the problems related with the use of them are also mentioned. For example, Silverman (2000, p. 126) stated that: "you are stuck with the form in which you made them at the time and that your readers will only have access to how you recorded events". He also provided two possible solutions for these problems: "following strict conventions in writing field notes; and adhering to a consistent theoretical orientation" (Silverman, 2000, p. 126). In terms of these theoretical orientations, Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 73) emphasize the neutrality in writing field notes by stating: "the qualitative researcher's field notes contain what has been seen and heard by the researcher, without interpretation". The problems related to the analysis of the field notes are also associated with the saying "every way of seeing is also a way of not

seeing” (Burke, 1935, p. 70), which means the focus on certain points may cause the observer not to see what is happening beyond that specific point.

In terms of the instrument used in the observation, Lynch states that:

It should be noted that the more structured and tally- or counting-oriented are the observation instruments, the less naturalistic is the information they provide. Such instruments may be able to tell us how often something occurred, but they will not always give us a clear idea of how it occurred...In fact most naturalistic researchers would generally eschew the use of any form of structured observation. (Lynch, 1996, p. 110)

In the light of the arguments proposed above, the present study makes use of a standardized form that acts as a guide with open ended note taking in the observations.

The form that is used during the observations of the study which is created by the researcher is named as the ‘observation schedule’ (Appendix C). It includes the code given to the academic of that class, name and duration of the course, the program and the number of the students. The twelve aspects of mediation are put into columns. Necessary space is provided for the columns of evidence and frequency. The researcher is supposed to write the sentences or the behaviors of the academics or the students showing one aspect of the mediation theory in the evidence column and the frequency of the occurrence of that aspect in the class in the frequency column, which would be eliminated later on according to pilot study results.

The formation of the observation form and the pilot study carried out with the aim of testing the applicability and reliability of the observation schedule which was planned to be used for the main study will be presented below (see *pilot study of the observation form*).

**2.3.2. Personal semi-structured interview question form.** A second major type of data collection method used by qualitative researchers is interviewing. “Interviewing allows the researcher to gain insights into others’ perspectives about the phenomena under study; it is particularly useful for ascertaining respondents’ thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and retrospective accounts of events” (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p. 134). In the tradition of qualitative approach, “interviewing is usually intended to refer to in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing” (Mason, 1996, p. 38). It can be inferred from this explanation that there are different types of interviews depending on how structured it is.

Nunan and Bailey (2008) categorize interview types by placing them on a continuum in terms of their formality. This continuum ranges from unstructured through semi-structured to structured. According to their classification, “the structured interview is like a questionnaire that is orally rather than in writing. The researcher normally works with one person at a time, asking him or her questions and recording the person’s answers” (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 313). This type of interviews has a set of questions prepared beforehand. The possibility of comparing results across the participants is the advantage of using structured interviews. However, in semi-structured interviews, the main aim of the researcher is to “have a general idea of how he or she wants the interview to unfold and may even have a set of prepared questions” (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 313). Dowsett states that:

Semi-structured interview is quite extraordinary-the interactions are incredibly rich and the data indicate that you can produce extraordinary evidence about life than you don’t get in structured interviews or questionnaire methodology. It is not the only technique that will produce rich information about social relationships but it does give you access to social relationships in a quite profound way. (Dowsett, 1986, p. 53)

The questions can serve as a point of departure for the interview in this type of interview and the researchers are not constrained by them. At the end of the continuum is the



unstructured interview in which the interview will develop according to the agenda of the interviewee rather than the agenda of the interviewer. The difference between a semi-structured interview and an unstructured interview is that the researcher focuses on his/her plan more in the former one. "Because of its flexibility, the semi-structured interview is preferred by many researchers" (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 313).

The general characteristics of less structured interviews are stated by Mason (1996, p. 38):

- A relatively informal style, for example with the appearance of a conversation or discussion rather than a formal question and answer format,
- A thematic, topic-centered, biographical or narrative approach, for example where the researcher does not have a structured list of questions, but does usually have a range of topics, themes or issues which s/he wishes to cover,
- The assumption that data are generated via the interaction, because either the interviewee(s), or the interaction itself, are the data sources. (Mason, 1996, p. 38)

Qualitative interviewing which mostly refers to semi-structured or loosely structured interviews in Mason's words (1996) has some guiding themes. First of all, successful qualitative interviewing requires an understanding of culture. "Culture affects what is said and how the interview is heard and understood" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 19). Rubin and Rubin also mention about "interviewers' non-neutral participant position, the purpose of interviewing which is to hear and understand what the interviewees think and to give them public voice" (1995, p. 19).

Taking all this information into consideration, the present study makes use of personal semi-structured interviews with the academics teaching in master and doctorate programs in the ELT department. First of all, the reason to use interview with the academic participants is

that it makes it possible for the researcher to gain insights related to their perspectives about the theory of mediation and its aspects. In addition, “it is the best method for ascertaining their real thoughts, perceptions and feelings”, as put forward by Goodwin and Goodwin (1996, p. 134), in relation to mediation theory, possible sources of using its aspects and the roles they play in these programs. When it comes to decide on the type of interview with the academics, it can be claimed that semi-structured interview type fits best for the purpose of this study. Although there is a purpose of comparing the personal responses of the academics which requires using structured interviews, looking from a broader perspective shows that semi-structured one is more compatible with the objectives of this research. To start with, the researcher has the set of questions to ask during the personal interviews; however, they serve as the guide for the interaction. The main directive element during the interviews is the interaction itself. Also, in the case of this study, observations take place before the interviews. For this reason, the questions related to what happened in the observations were asked to the academics as well which required a more flexible approach. A metaphorical explanation was provided by Rubin and Rubin for the design of a qualitative interview study:

Designing a qualitative interview study is like planning a vacation. You have an overall idea of what you want to see and do, but you are not locked into a fixed itinerary. You allow sufficient flexibility to explore what you see along the way. You know which guidebooks and maps to take but are not sure what parts of each will prove useful. You change plans as new adventures entice you, but you keep the final destination in mind.  
(Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 42)

Being inspired from this metaphorical explanation, it can be said for the present study that the vacation is researcher’s questioning the academics about their perceptions and thoughts related to theory of mediation and its twelve aspects and their role in using these aspects in the master and doctorate programs, however, the researcher is not locked into fixed questions.

The researcher has certain questions to ask as the guidebook or map to reach his final objective, but it is also possible that the responses of the academics shift the direction of the interaction.

It should be kept in mind that “qualitative interviewing design is flexible, iterative and continuous, rather than prepared in advance and locked in stone” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 43). It is also important in interviews that as a researcher, you ensure that the responses are detailed and deep enough. “Depth means getting a thoughtful answer based on considerable evidence as well as getting full consideration of a topic from diverse points of view” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 76). Especially with the aim of going deeper, “an interview is built up from three kinds of questions: main questions, probes, and follow-up questions” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 145). Apart from the main questions which serve as a guide in the present study, “a probe in interviewing is an interview tool used to go deeper into the interview responses” (Patton, 1990, p. 238). Maykut and Morehouse also state the importance of using probes in the interviews (1994, p. 95): “since the purpose of the qualitative research interview is to gain a deep understanding of the interviewee’s experience and perspective, using probes effectively is an important qualitative research skill”.

In the light of this information, a semi-structured personal interview protocol (Appendix A) was prepared including questions related to twelve aspects of the mediation theory. It starts with personal questions, such as age, gender, the experience as a language academic in both master and doctorate programs. This interview protocol includes 14 questions involving the role the academics play in these programs and the potential sources of using these mediation theory aspects in their classes additionally to the twelve aspects of mediation theory. Questions were prepared by taking the fact that academics may not know the aspects of mediation theory into account by avoiding direct questions like “how do use significance?”. Instead, indirectness was preferred for the preparation of the questions. Also, the questions

were prepared with the awareness that the students are adults and their educators are the educators of adults. Therefore, instead of using words like ‘teaching’, words like ‘guiding’ or ‘encouraging’ were preferred for suitability. A pilot study was carried out with the objective of testing the questions in the semi-structured personal interviews whether they elicit the necessary data to answer the research questions in the main study or not (see *pilot study of the personal semi-structured interview questions*).

**2.3.3. Focus group interview question form.** Basically, focus-group interview, also known as group interview, is defined as “a group conversation with a purpose” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 104). Though it has been mentioned in the section above that interviewing is categorized according to formality, it is also grouped according to the number of people involved. As its name suggests, “focus group interview is a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher” (Morgan, 1997, p. 6). “In terms of the number of people involved, in a typical focus-group interview, the qualitative researcher brings together a relatively small group of people, typically six to eight or six to twelve” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 140) “to find out what they think, feel or know about the researcher’s focus of inquiry” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 104). However, there is no single best number, but outside limits appear to be no fewer than four and generally no more than twelve (Krueger, 1988; Morgan, 1988). Briefly, the purpose of doing a group interview is to bring several different perspectives into contact (Morgan, 1988).

The important point in focus-group interviews is that the interaction taking place between the interviewer and the participants is controlled by the interviewer. At this point, “the term ‘focus’ highlights the fact that the researcher guides and focuses the discussion rather than letting informants take the interview in any direction that they wish” (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 315). This type of interviewing not only allows the researcher to control the flow of interaction but also allows him/her to gather the respondents' ideas coming up as a

result of the discussion among themselves. Majority of the research experts consider this fact as an advantage of focus-group interviewing because "in a well-conducted group interview participants have an opportunity to listen to each other's contributions, which may spark new insights or help them develop their ideas more clearly" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 104) and "the informants can stimulate and be stimulated by each other. The researcher may thereby elicit a richer data set than if he or she is conducting individual interviews" (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 315).

Beyond the theoretical information related to focus-group interviews, in terms of implementation, the researcher needs to create a comfortable atmosphere so that people are willing to talk in front of one another. The suggestions of Rubin and Rubin about the focus-group interviews are below:

The researcher should take the role of a moderator, allow folk time to greet one another, create a social break in the middle, let the participants feel that they are contributing to professional project and pays special attention to the relationships between members of the interview to ensure that people do not step all over each other. (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 140)

In addition, it is suggested that "the longer the participants remain silent in a group, the harder it will be for them to contribute later" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 109). For this reason, the researcher's responsibility is to foster a positive atmosphere that encourages involvement in the focus-group interview. Taking the suggestions provided above, first of all, the researcher of the present study introduced his role as the moderator of the discussion to the respondents. The right to speak was shared equally in order not to keep individuals silent and the objectives of the study were explained to the participants in advance so that they could feel that they contributed an important project.

In the light of this information, the current research study makes use of focus-group interviews so as to gather data from the students of both doctorate and master programs of the department of ELT. The main concern of the researcher in using this data gathering method is to let the students listen to each others' ideas related to the theory of mediation, its twelve aspects and their academics' views and actions in and out of the master and doctorate program classes with regard to the theory of mediation which allows them to be stimulated by each other and to inspire new ideas. In line with this concern of the researcher, Rubin and Rubin (1995, p. 140) put forward: "in focus-groups, the goal is to let people spark off of one another, suggesting dimensions and nuances of the original problem that any one individual might not have thought of". They (1995, p. 140) also stated that: "sometimes a totally different understanding of a problem emerges from the group discussion" which constitutes the rationale behind preferring this specific method for the data gathering from two student groups in the present research.

An interviewing guide is often a useful tool for the researcher to use in the group interviewing situation (Patton, 1990). Therefore, a total of 14 questions were prepared to take as a basis for the focus-group interviews (Appendix B). This focus-group interview protocol starts with questions related to students' personal information, such as gender, age, department of graduation and their programs. The questions planned to be asked during the interviews included questions related to how the academics in both master and doctorate programs implement the twelve aspects of the theory of mediation, students' own ideas about the implementation of them and the importance of these specific mediation theory aspects. In addition, students' preference and evaluation of mediation theory aspects, academics' role in the classes and the potential sources of academics' use of these aspects in and out of the classes were questioned as well. As it was explained in the section of personal interview questions above, the questions about the twelve aspects of the mediation theory were asked

indirectly by taking the fact into account that the students may not be knowledgeable about these aspects and the theory itself. A pilot study was conducted to consider how much the questions work suitably to answer the research questions of the main study (*see pilot study of the focus-group interview questions*).

## 2.4.The Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out with the aim of testing the applicability of the instruments which were planned to be used for the main study. The tested instruments for the pilot study were the questions used in semi-structured personal interviews, the questions used in the focus-group interviews, and the observation form used during the classroom observations. In order to decrease the subjectivity of coding in observation forms, inter-rater reliability was also checked during the pilot study.

**2.4.1. The pilot study of the observation form.** The pilot study designed specifically to test the applicability and reliability of the observation schedule was conducted during the spring term of 2013-2014 academic year in the doctorate and master programs of ELT department of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey. One class from doctorate program and one class from master program were chosen randomly for the observation. Each class was observed for four times by the researcher.

Table 4

### *Personal Information of the Participants in the Pilot Study*

<b>Personal Information</b>	<b>Academics</b>	
	T1	T2
Codes	T1	T2
Gender	male	male
Age	38	32
Experience in ELT department	10 years	1 year
Experience in ELT master program	2 years	1 year
Experience in ELT doctorate program	2 years	No experience

As shown in Table 4 above, the participants were coded by the researcher. The codes were given according to the groups they belong to. For instance, the participants from the academic group got 'T' and the numbers were added next to their codes such as 'T1' and 'T2'. According to the personal information, T2 does not teach at doctorate level. He has only one class with the master group during the 2013-2014 academic year Spring Semester. He also did not have experience with the doctorate students before due to the fact that he had just one year experience in the ELT department when this pilot study was conducted. However, the other academic coded as 'T1' teaches both at master and doctorate groups.

The class of T1 (Intercultural Communication) was three hours a week during the Spring Semester of 2013-2014 academic year with the doctorate group students. Only two students were registered for this class due to some personal reasons of other students. No video-recording took place during the observation phase of this class, instead classroom observation schedules were used by the researcher to note the aspects related to mediation theory during the classes. Students were required to write a full research paper till the end of the semester for this class, thus they had some one-to-one 'feedback sessions' with the academic in some weeks. The classes were run with a lot of sharing among students and the academic due to the small number of students with a friendly atmosphere. Discussions were led by the student responsible for the presentation of that class. The academic himself took the role of the presenter sometimes as well. The observation of the classes of T1 took for four weeks.

The class T2 (Educational Change) taught during the same semester was three hours a week with the master group students. Depending on the attendance of the students each week, approximately ten students joined the class every week. During the observation of the classes, video-recording was not used. Observation forms were used during the classes and the mediation theory related sentences, words, behaviors of students and academics were taken



notes by the researcher. Depending on their plan prepared beforehand, students had some 'self-study weeks' in which they focused on their researches they need to write for the end of this class. Each week two students made presentations about the topic in the plan. The students copied the issues of the related journal and they presented the main parts of the articles took part in that issue. The observation of the classes of T2 took for four weeks.

The pilot study was designed with two main concerns. The first one was to check whether the data gathered from the classroom observations elicited the aimed information from the participants related to twelve aspects of mediation theory or not. Also the usability of the instrument prepared for the class observations was tested. The second objective of the pilot study was about one of the major problems of qualitative studies, which is reliability in coding.

The classroom observations for the pilot study of this research lasted four weeks. Each class was observed for four times by the researcher. An observation schedule was used on which the researcher took the necessary notes during the observations. In order to decrease the subjectivity and establish inter-coder reliability for the coding of the observation data, a portion (25%) of the data were coded by a second coder as suggested by Mackey and Gass (2005). Four observation forms for each academic with a total of eight observation forms were ready for the pilot study and two of them were randomly selected to be coded by the researcher. All the notes taken by the researcher on these observation forms were taken on a blank sheet of paper and then the second rater was required to put the notes under the correct mediation aspect heading.

Following these two concerns, two research questions were created which were listed below:

- 1.) Is the observation schedule applicable for the classroom observations of the main study?

2.) Do the evaluations of 2 different coders establish the coder reliability for the classroom observation data?

In terms of the suitability evaluation of the observation schedule used during the classroom observations, it can be said that the column named as 'frequency' which was planned to be used for counting the occurrence of mediation aspects was found to be unnecessary because the researcher did not count the frequency. The important point for the observer is to take notes about the evidences showing mediation theory aspects during observations. It was understood that the main concern is not the frequency of occurrence of mediation aspects but the evidences showing their appearance. Therefore, 'frequency' column was removed from the observation schedule. In addition, the back side of the observation schedule and an extra blank sheet of paper were decided to be used for the observations in the main study for open-ended note taking.

In terms of reliability, "regardless of the choice researchers make from wide range of different types of data coding that are possible, establishing coder reliability is a crucial part of the process" (Mackey & Gass, 2005 p. 242). As the second research question of the pilot study is about checking the inter-rater reliability for the classroom observation data, a second coder was required to put the notes taken by the researcher during the classroom observations under the names of twelve mediation theory aspects. In order to begin this process, both researchers were given the notes taken by the researcher on two different pages with numbers. Another page including the information about twelve mediation aspects was given to the researchers as well in order to make what each mediation aspect means clear for the researchers. As explained before, the classes of T1 and T2 were observed four times during the semester. The suggestion of Mackey and Gass was taken into consideration about how to select the data for inter-rater reliability. It was stated that: "the researcher may semi-randomly select a portion of the data (say 25%) and have it coded by a second rater" (Mackey & Gass,

2005, p. 245). Thus, one observation form from each class with a total of two observation forms were evaluated by two independent researchers. Excluding the details, twelve notes for the class of T2 and seven notes for the class of T1 were in the list to be coded. In order to evaluate the inter-rater reliability, simple percentage agreement was calculated by examining the ratio of all coding agreements over the total number of coding decisions made by the coders (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The table below illustrates the notes taken during the course of T2 and how the two independent raters evaluated those notes in terms of twelve mediation theory aspects.

Table 5

*The Inter-rater Reliability Check 1*

<b>Participant code: T2 -28.02.2014-</b>	<b>Evaluation of</b>			
<b>Notes taken during the course</b>	<b>Rater 1</b>		<b>Rater 2</b>	
While talking about 'meaning of educational change', the presenter says: "the criteria are very important".	Significance		Significance	
Academic: "All three aspects of change are crucial and necessary".	Significance		Significance	
Academic: "You can have a research on 'investigating subjective meaning on change in school of foreign languages', you can organize it after this term maybe".	Control	of	Purpose	
	own behavior		beyond	here
			and now	
While presenting the first article, the student says: "I think the research questions here can be beneficial for our future researches".	Purpose		Purpose	
	beyond	here	beyond	here
	and now		and now	
Academic: "The second article will help you if you deal with the educational policy change".	Purpose		Purpose	
	beyond	here	beyond	here
	and now		and now	
Academic: "Can we apply the fifth article in our context?"	Goal setting		Purpose	
			beyond	here
			and now	
Academic: "Maybe we can make similar researches in our private schools".	Purpose		Purpose	
	beyond	here	beyond	here
	and now		and now	
Academic states for the suggestions of articles: "our educational reforms can be researched".	Goal setting		Goal setting	
Academic: "Try to get some topics while your friends are presenting such as:	Goal setting		Goal setting	

*Table 5 (continued)*

you can ask your school principal these 4 criteria to learn how ready he is for change".

Academic: "Out of education, what changes have you ever experienced?"	Awareness of change	Awareness of change
Academic: "The results of the researches in educational change should be shared with other schools."	Sharing	Sharing
Academic: "Tell me what have you experienced in your life? What are the changes in terms of education?" Students gave examples such as: "we used to use overhead projectors, I used to teach at primary school but now I teach at university."	Individuality	Individuality

As it can be seen in the table above, there are a total of twelve notes related to twelve mediation theory aspects taken during the observation of the class of T2. Out of twelve evaluations of two independent raters, only two notes were not decided in the same way between the two raters which makes 83.3 % agreement.

The same procedure was followed with the notes taken in the class of T1. The table below shows the notes taken in that specific class and the evaluations of two independent raters in terms of twelve mediation theory aspects.

Table 6

*The Inter-rater Reliability Check 2*

Participant code: T1 - 27.02.2014-	Evaluations of	
	Rater 1	Rater 2
<b>Notes taken during the course</b>		
Academic: "It's a very raw topic (intercultural interaction competence) so you can focus on it in your studies."	Purpose beyond here and now	Purpose beyond here and now
When the academic gives example he makes it sure that it is understood by 2 learners. For instance he explained Oxford's language learning strategies.	Shared intention	Shared intention
Academic: "When using questionnaires you can't understand exactly if the participant believes so or not, you need to observe, interview to understand better."	Challenge	Goal setting
The academic asks challenging questions for almost all slides of PowerPoint presentation. For example: "what's the umbrella term for all these data	Challenge	Challenge

*Table 6 (continued)*

collection ways, interview, and questionnaire? Which one seems to be more natural, 'non-specialized everyday talk' or specific occasions? What makes it more informal?"

This class is just with 2 learners, one is presenting and the other is contributing, so we can see a lot of sharing.	Sharing	Sharing
Academic: "What's validity for you? Please tell me what it means to you."	Individuality	Individuality
Academic: "What do you understand from 'random selection' personally?"	Individuality	Individuality

As shown in the table above, the disagreement between the raters can only be seen in just one of the notes which makes the agreement percentage between the raters 85.7%. When the total number of evaluations (19) and the disagreement number between the two independent raters (3) are taken into consideration, the agreement percentage becomes 84.2% which is acceptable according to the suggestion of Trumbull in terms of establishing inter-rater reliability in qualitative data coding who states that: "compare your coding to that of the second coder and strive for a percentage agreement between 80-90%...Once this level is met, coder reliability will be established and data will not be considered to be subjective" (2005, p. 121-122).

#### **2.4.2. The pilot study of the personal semi-structured interview question form.**

The semi-structured personal interviews were pilot tested with two academics whose classes were also observed during the 2013-2014 Spring term. The personal information of these academics coded as 'T1' and 'T2' and the relevant information about the courses they ran in the doctorate and master programs was provided above. After the observations, semi-structured personal interviews were conducted with the two academic participants which took 24 minutes for 'T1' and 21 minutes for T2. The video-recorded interviews were transcribed.

The pilot study was designed with only one main concern that is to check whether the data gathered from personal semi-structured interviews with the academics teaching at master and doctorate groups elicit the aimed information from the participants related to twelve

aspects of mediation theory or not. In order to shed light on this problem, the pilot study aimed to answer the following research question:

- Do the responses of the academics in the interviews elicit the necessary information to comment on the twelve aspects of mediation theory, their sources of use and the roles academics play?

Two personal semi structured interviews were conducted with the academics (T1 and T2) and they were transcribed. T2 preferred to use his mother tongue (Turkish) during the interview. The interview with T1 was in English. Originally there were 14 questions prepared for the academics following the personal information, such as gender, age and experience in teaching. The first 12 questions aimed to reveal some information about how the twelve aspects of mediation theory, such as 'shared intention', 'purpose beyond here and now' or 'challenge' were used in master and doctorate classes from the perspective of the academics. As T2 was just teaching at master group, no questions were asked related to doctorate group to him. Academics were also questioned about their roles in the post-graduate classes and the potential sources of using these mediation aspects in their classes. Because of the fact that this was a semi-structured interview, the questions prepared beforehand took different forms and some extra prompts, questions and explanations were provided by the researcher during the interviews. Some randomly selected sample responses of the participants and their evaluations are provided below:

For the seventh question which is about 'challenge', the academics were questioned about what kinds of task they use in their classes. The responses of both academics showed that they try to force students by giving challenging tasks. As an answer to this question T1 stated that: "if you are simply focusing on simple activities, if there is no challenge, there will

be no learning.” It can be understood that 'challenge', which is one of the mediation theory aspects, is commonly employed in both master and doctorate classes.

The question related to 'a belief in positive outcomes' focused on the problems all students face. The academics were reminded about the time limit, economical problems and work load of the students and they were questioned about whether they encourage students about having a positive attitude toward the master or doctorate programs when they get stuck or not. T2 claimed that he encourages master students by giving example from his personal education life. He stated that:

I give example from myself, I also did my PhD, every week I left at 10 and be there at 8 and plus I had 4-6 classes per term, for this reason in terms of metacognitive strategies I try to guide them about how to plan or how they can use the time management most efficiently during the class because, we don't see each other out of class. We just talk about a task out of the class, but during the class when they say like “we can't catch up with...” I give examples from myself and try to explain it.

From the students' perspective in terms of seeing a real model in front of them may really be effective in coming over some negative thoughts that they have about their learning or the program. T1 also agreed with T2 in terms of encouraging learners to overcome problems. By considering this as a responsibility of a lecturer, he stated that:

As lecturers we need to show our learners how to overcome the problems, actually these are the strategies they can apply while learning something, so we need to show several strategies because strategies may be different for each learner so they should have a rich strategy bank and with reference to the problems they need to select the most appropriate strategy for their tasks, or their problem and then choose it and administer appropriately.

When the academics are questioned about the 'a sense of competence' aspect of the mediation theory, T1 and T2 showed different reactions. T1 mostly criticized himself for not giving positive reinforcement. He stated that: "I do not give positive reinforcement; instead I focus on identifying the mistake or the weak points in assignments because if I do not indicate anything then I think that I don't do my job". Although T1 criticized himself in terms of this aspect, T2 put forward a suggestion about what to do to improve the sense of competence in learners at the post-graduate level. He stated that: "maybe I can make them work in groups of 2 or 3 so that they can feel confident". In his response to this question, he also criticized himself for not putting this suggestion into action in his master classes.

The question related to the sources and reasons of using different mediation aspects in their post-graduate level classes received similar responses from different perspectives from academic participants. While T1 considered his own experiences as a post-graduate student as the most important reason, T2 stated the techniques and what his academics did during the PhD process as the most important source for using above mentioned mediation aspects. It was interesting to realize that T1 showed empathy with his students because he stated that: "I was a MA student, I experienced some problems specifically related to statistics, so with reference to my problems I try to show the problems they might encounter and try to show how to solve these problems". However, T2 brought the style of his post-graduate level academics into the forefront by stating that: "my answer to this question is 'craft model', what we have seen from our teachers...I think about what my teachers did or the techniques our teacher applied during PhD process, I take them into consideration and make a synthesis".

As a general evaluation of the responses provided by the two academics, it can be understood that the questions asked during the personal semi-structured interviews with the help of modifications, prompts and some explanations during the interviews received the expected answers. The academics were also asked about their general evaluation of the



questions at the end of the interviews. No change was suggested which made it clear that the use of the instrument prepared by the researcher for the semi-structured personal interviews is suitable for the main study.

**2.4.3. The pilot study of the focus-group interview question form.** Two focus group interviews were conducted with the participation of two students from each group, namely students from master and doctorate programs. The personal information of the participants of two separate focus group interviews is provided in the table below:

Table 7

*Personal Information of the Participants in the Pilot Study*

Personal Information	Students			
	Master		Doctorate	
Program	M1	M2	D1	D2
Codes	M1	M2	D1	D2
Age	23	27	29	35
Department of graduation (undergraduate)	ELT	ELT	ELT	ELT

The participants were coded by taking the first letter of their programs and a number. For instance, a student from master group took the code of 'M1', and another student from the doctorate group was coded as 'D2'. They all graduated from the ELT departments. The focus group interviews with master group students and doctorate group students lasted 19 minutes and 18 minutes respectively.

The pilot study conducted for the focus group interviews aimed to ensure that the prepared questions are understandable from the students' point of view and they elicit the necessary information for the main study. This pilot study tries to find answer to the following research question:

- Do the responses of the students in the focus group interviews elicit the necessary information to comment on the implementation of twelve aspects of mediation theory, academics' sources of using them, and the roles they play?

As the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> research questions of the main study are related to the views of master and doctorate students in the ELT department in terms of the importance of mediation aspects for them and the potential difference between academics' and their views related to these aspects, two focus group interviews were planned with master and doctorate group students separately to find answers to these questions.

During the classroom observation phase, both master and doctorate students were not informed about the topic of observation in order not to create any bias. Following personal interviews with the academics, focus group interviews were conducted with master group students and doctorate group students. The focus group interviews with both master and doctorate students were conducted in Turkish according to the preferences of the students. The sampling was based on the voluntariness of the students. Two participants from each group took part in focus group interviews voluntarily. The instrument (Appendix B) including the questions prepared for the students was used during the focus group interviews. Students' answers about randomly chosen mediation aspects are provided below to observe the suitability and understandability of the questions.

While questioning the 'challenge' aspect of the mediation theory, first of all, the students were asked about the tasks they receive. The students from both groups mentioned about a common task which is a research paper they need to write. While mentioning about the kinds of task, M2 stated that: "we write a research for almost all of the classes, we also have article analysis". The students from the doctorate group also emphasized the presentation they need to make during the classes. D1 stated that: "instead of exams, we generally have research study and presentation tasks at the PhD level". When the level of challenge was questioned, the master students seemed to be pleased with it, because M2 stated that: "I think the challenge level is good, I enjoy while doing it and it also challenges us". Doctorate students seemed to be satisfied with the challenge level of the tasks according to their

responses, as D1 stated that: “I think these are the expected and normal tasks for this program”. Finally when the students were asked about their general evaluation of the tasks given and their suggestions related to them, although the master students were pleased with the level of challenge in tasks; doctorate students mostly mentioned about meaningful tasks instead of challenging ones as their expectation. A realistic criticism was made by D1 by stating that: “the tasks change from class to class. Some tasks are not meaningful I guess”. In terms of the wish to have challenging tasks in their program, master students were very willing to have challenging tasks because they think they cannot improve without challenging tasks. To support their claims, M1 stated that: “if the tasks are easy, they will be the ones we already know, so we prefer challenging tasks”. With a similar reason in mind, M2 also stated that: “I think if they don’t use challenging tasks, our existing potential can’t show up.” However, considering and complaining about the time limit and work load of themselves, doctorate students preferred not challenging tasks in their program. D1 stated that: “realistically speaking from a student’s perspective, I would prefer not very challenging tasks”.

The question about 'a belief in positive outcomes' aspect of mediation yielded interesting findings. When the students were questioned about whether academics encourage them to find a solution to any problem when they get stuck, both master and doctorate group students agreed on that fact that if they consulted, they would do it. For instance, M2 stated that: “I think if we contacted them personally, they would do it, but even extending the deadline when we say 'we are very busy' is an example for this question. But no direct encouragement in the class”. Doctorate students also mentioned about academics’ lack of time and not having this kind of culture in the program as the possible reasons of not having encouragement from the academics’ side. One of the interesting statements was provided by D2 who stated that: “we don’t have such a dialogue with the teachers. Generally we try to

solve these problems personally. Sometimes we try to solve these problems by sharing with friends”. It can be understood that sharing problems with peers is more common among doctorate group.

In terms of 'a sense of competence', students were questioned about academics' effort to make them feel confident and competent. First of all, students from both groups evaluated the efforts positively. D1 explained it by stating: “obviously they have a positive attitude. They evaluate everything we put forward positively”. When they were asked about whether they need an effort from the academics' side to make them feel confident, they stressed that they need it for motivation. D2 stated that: “the process in the PhD program is long, during this process we would like to hear that we are good to be motivated, because we lose motivation from time to time. Their positive attitude would encourage us.” With a similar perspective D1 also stated that “I think all students would like to hear that his idea or success mean something for teachers”. The responses of the participants from doctorate group obviously show that they need a sense of competence and they expect some kind of effort from the academics on this case.

When the potential sources why the academics use several mediation theory aspects in postgraduate level were questioned, although mostly both group students agreed on 'personal educational experiences', some more alternatives were created by doctorate students. For instance, D2 stated that: “their individual differences and personalities can be effective. Also the school's general policy or culture can be effective.” Another potential source was stated by D1: “I think the group of students is also important.”

In terms of general evaluation of the questions used for focus group interviews, it can be understood that questions were easily understood and responded by the students just with some minor explanations and modifications during the interviews. It was clear after examining the responses of the participants in the focus group interviews that it is possible to

answer the 4<sup>th</sup> research question of the main study by describing the students' views on the importance of mediation aspects and; make comparisons with the academics' responses in the personal interviews to answer the 5<sup>th</sup> research question of the main study. As a result, the evaluation of the focus group interviews can be concluded that the instrument prepared can be used without any change.

## **2.5. Reliability and Validity Issues**

Patton (2002) suggests that validity and reliability are two important concepts that every researcher should take into consideration while designing a study, analyzing results, and judging the quality of the study. Although the researchers named validity and reliability in different ways in the qualitative tradition according to their typology, they are basically known as “the truth interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers” (Hammersley, 1990, p. 57); and “the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions” (Hammersley, 1990, p. 57) respectively.

However, the perception of the researchers related to validity and reliability in qualitative research differs significantly. Researchers used different terminologies in their typologies (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to name validity and reliability. They also provided techniques for assessing and increasing the validity and reliability in qualitative tradition. Though they used different concepts, basically they refer to 'trustworthiness' which involves both terms.

Establishing trustworthiness in the present study is one of the major objectives of the researcher as in all qualitative researches. In order to ensure trustworthiness, nine procedures were put forward by Creswell and Miller (2000). These procedures are triangulation, disconfirming evidence, researcher reflectivity, member checking, prolonged engagement, collaboration, the audit trial, thick and rich description, and peer debriefing. The explanation

of these procedures and the endeavor to establish trustworthiness in the present study are provided below.

### *Triangulation*

Triangulation is a term introduced by Webb et al. (1966) and developed further by Denzin (1970, 1978) referring to the “gathering and reconciling of data from several sources and/or from different data gathering techniques” (Lynch, 1996, p. 59). Triangulation is treated as a validation exercise because it is assumed that replication of the findings by different methods decreases the measurement biases (Bloor, 1997). “In this process, the main attempt is to get a true fix on situation by combining different ways of looking at it or different findings” (Silverman, 2000, p. 177). Taking the Denzin’s typology as the base, Cohen and Manion (1994) identified six types of triangulation including time triangulation, space triangulation, combined levels of triangulation, theoretical triangulation, investigator triangulation, methodological triangulation. Similarly, four types of triangulation were also cited in the literature, namely, triangulation across data sources, theories, methods and among different investigators (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Creswell, 2007).

In this research, data, method and investigator triangulations were used. This study made use of a combination of the observational field notes, interview transcripts and related documents to accomplish data triangulation. Additionally, the data were gathered from different participant groups (academics, students of master and doctorate programs). A certain portion of the observation data were coded by an independent researcher which constituted the investigator triangulation. Furthermore, different methods of data collection were employed such as observation, personal interviews, focus-group interviews and document collecting. Observation data and interview data were collected in and out of the class respectively in different times which makes it possible to claim that space and time triangulation took place in the present study as well. In addition, involving different

perspectives, such as academics and students, on a specific topic allowed the researcher to have perspective triangulation in the present study.

### *Researcher reflexivity*

“This is the process whereby researchers report on personal beliefs, values and biases that may shape their inquiry” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). During this trustworthiness establishment procedure, "the researcher describes his/her beliefs and biases about the study to allow readers to understand their positions, and then to bracket or suspend those researcher biases as the study proceeds" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). The detailed explanation of the roles the researcher played in the present study and the beliefs and biases are provided in the sections related to reliability and validity of observation, interviews and ethics and insider issues sections below.

### *Prolonged engagement*

This validity increasing process is defined as “the immersion of the evaluator in the evaluation setting, establishing rapport and trust with program participants in order to understand their perceptions” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 233-43 cited in Lynch, 1996, p. 57). Carspecken (1996, p. 88) claims that with the help of this process, "a great deal of time is spent at the research setting and the participants of the study get used to the researcher's existence in the research setting and they would most probably act as if the researcher were not present".

In the present study, the researcher had an advantage of knowing most of the participants in advance (see *Ethics and Insider Issues*). Hence, the rapport and trust were already established with the doctorate students and the academics. However, spending almost all two semesters with the academics, master and doctorate students in and out of the classes

allowed the researcher to be and behave like a part of the classes which made it possible for the participants to act as if the researcher were not present.

### *Collaboration*

Collaboration means "the participants are involved in the study as co-researchers or in less formal arrangements" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 128). In this research, the academic participants kindly stated in the beginning of the study that they can accept the researcher in their classes as an observer and they can spend their valuable time for the personal interviews. The aim of the researcher's existence in the classes as an observer in both programs was also explained to the students. They exerted effort to provide richer data by talking about classes during the breaks and in focus-group interviews. An excellent collaboration was established during the process of data gathering both for the pilot and the main study.

### *Member checking*

Member checking refers to "the repeated checking (done formally or informally) of developing constructions, or evaluation findings, with the members of the evaluation setting who provided the data from which those constructions were drawn" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 233-43 cited in Lynch, 1996, p. 57). It is also known as "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility known as the internal validity in the quantitative research tradition" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 314). The researcher provided participants with the interview transcriptions and the field notes written during observations. The misunderstandings were made clear by the participants so that the researcher could change them. The researcher received the approval of using the notes and the answers from the participants.

Regarding member checking, a similar method is put forward called respondent validation. Respondent validation suggests that we should go back to the subjects with our tentative results and refine them in the light of our subjects' reactions (Reason & Rowan,



1981) which is quite similar to member checking. However, as a counter argument for this, Fielding and Fielding (1986) suggest that participants cannot comment on their actions and “such feedback cannot be taken as direct validation or refutation of the observer’s inferences. Rather such processes of so-called validation should be treated as yet another source of data and insight” (Fielding & Fielding, 1986, p. 43). Although the validation or the constant inclusiveness of the participants in the qualitative researches receives different reactions, it is a significant part of the data.

### *Thick and rich description*

Providing rich and thick description of the program or the research area in the qualitative researches helps researchers to establish transferability, which refers to external validity in the quantitative tradition. It is known as the provision of “an extensive and careful description of the time, the place, the context, the culture (Geertz, 1972, p. 241) "from which the evaluation findings and hypotheses were drawn" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 233-43 cited in Lynch, 1996, p. 57). In the present study, the participants, the setting, the data gathering methods and procedures and all the related details were explained in detail in the respective sections so that the reader can easily understand all the procedures in the research design and it can be redone in a different or similar setting or context.

### *Peer debriefing*

"Peer debriefing is an extensive discussion between the evaluator and a disinterested peer concerning the evaluation of the findings, conclusions and tentative hypothesis" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 233-43 cited in Lynch, 1996, p. 57). In this study, the researcher received feedback over time during the process of an entire study from a PhD student studying in the same department. She also played the role of an independent coder in coding the observational data.

**2.5.1. Reliability and validity in observations.** "In studies that collect data through observational procedures, a validity concern is whether the data collected represent the reality of the classroom" (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 277). However, representing the reality as if the researcher were not present is not as easy as it looks. Researchers' level of being involved in the observation setting is a major concern in establishing a reliable and valid observation setting and data. The advantages and disadvantages of the observation types are provided in the observation section above.

In this study, a passive-participant observation type is used. It is criticized as a relatively distanced observation which may fail to reflect the participants' views from their point of view. "Another criticism about this type of observation is the obtrusive role of the researcher which may be destroying the validity and reliability of the data" (Lynch, 1996, p. 122), even though the participants will usually, with time, become used to the observer's presence. Regardless of the type of observation, observers in the classes have the risk of playing the role of an obtrusive observer. "An obtrusive observer's presence may be felt in the classroom to the extent that the events observed cannot be said to be fully representative of the class in its typical behavior, and therefore the observation data may have limited validity". (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 187).

The type of the observation is closely related to the term known as 'observer's paradox' (Labov, 1972). This term refers to the influence of the observer's existence in the setting and possibility of the Hawthorne effect, which may occur when learners perform better due to positive feelings at being included in a study. Observers should look for the ways through which they may have less influence on the learning setting and the learners. "Another less obtrusive option is participant observation, by which researchers are members of the group they are observing. Although the participant observation can limit the effect of observer's

paradox, it can also be difficult to both observe and participate" (Mackey and Gass, 2005, p. 176).

It would be much easier to be less obtrusive if the true participant observation were chosen as the type of observation. In this type, the problem of gaining entry to the setting, having a legitimate role in the setting, and gathering observational data from an insider's point of view are already solved (Spradley, 1980). However, as Spradley (1980) points out, this insider's knowledge of the setting can also pose problems for naturalistic evaluation because it may prevent the observer from seeing and recording events within the setting from perspectives other than that of his or her own participant role.

In order to reflect the real atmosphere of the classes and fully represent the academics' and the students' behaviors, some techniques were made use of by taking the suggestions mentioned above into consideration. First of all, before this study was designed, the researcher had already known the students in the doctorate program and the academics teaching at both master and doctorate programs. The students in the master program became used to the presence of the researcher in their classes in the first two weeks of the pilot study data gathering period in which no field notes were taken specifically. The researcher's aim was to eliminate the feeling of being observed in the participants. Thus, he played the role of a regular participant of both programs just by not attending the activities or discussions actively in the classes. The risk of being an obtrusive observer in the classroom was eliminated in this way.

Additionally, reflecting the classes from the point of the participants is difficult in passive participant observation type. In order to take up this challenge primarily through the process of prolonged engagement, the researcher spent as much time as he could with the participants both to make his 'observer researcher' status become less prominent and to enter the lives of the participants to understand their own ways of viewing the world of the

observation setting. During this process, “the task is one of listening hard and keenly observing what is going on among people in a given situation or organization or culture in an effort to more deeply understand it and them” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 69). Besides, the researcher himself was a member of both master and doctorate program in the same department which allowed him to understand the participants’ point of view more easily despite having a passive participant observer role. In this way the researcher employed the role of both insider and outsider in the present study as stated in the suggestion of Patton (1990, p. 128): “the challenge is to combine participation and observation so as to become capable of understanding the program (setting and participants) as an insider while describing the program for outsider”.

As a final point about observations, Spradley’s (1980) suggestions help to systematize fieldnotes and thus improve their reliability:

1. Short notes made at a time,
2. Expanded notes made as soon as possible after each field session,
3. A fieldwork journal to record problems and ideas that arise during each stage of fieldwork,
4. A provisional running record of analysis and interpretation.

Taking these suggestions into account, the fieldnotes taken during each observation session were written down on separate sheets of paper the following day. The notes included the aspects that should be questioned in both personal and focus-group interviews as well.

Another problem related to observation is the establishment of the viability of the observations. "One procedure for doing so is to calculate inter-observer (or inter-coder) agreement" (Nunan & Bailey, 2008, p. 277). This process involves randomly choosing a certain part of the data and working on the same video recording or any kind of data gathered during observations. It is also possible to have two observers present in the setting. However,

in order not to destroy the normal flow of the classrooms which may affect the validity and reliability of the observational data, it was not preferred for the present study. The agreement between the two independent researchers was 84.2%. The details about the inter-coder reliability were provided in the pilot study findings of the observations.

**2.5.2. Reliability and validity in personal and focus-group interviews.** Instead of reliability and validity, Rubin and Rubin (1995, p. 85) mention 'credibility' in personal or focus-group interviews. The credibility is judged by the study's transparency, consistency-coherence, and communicability.

"A transparent report allows the reader to assess the intellectual strengths and weaknesses, the biases, and the conscientiousness of the interviewer" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 85). First of all, the original audio records should be kept so that the participants and the readers of the study can read or play back. The transcriptions of each interview are prepared without including pauses and any other nonverbal indicators which are not used in this study. Also, member checking was done by getting the verification of all the participants joined the interviews before using the data gathered in their interviews for the findings to increase transparency.

Rubin and Rubin (1995, p. 87) state that: "a credible final report should show that the researcher checked out ideas and responses that appeared to be inconsistent. You show that you examined themes in one interview for coherence with the themes presented in others." This does not mean that the inconsistencies among the themes, individuals or the cases are totally removed. The main objective is to understand why they occur because it is already an expectation that people can have different understandings of the same event. One suggestion of Rubin and Rubin (1995, p. 88) to check this level of coherence is to ask for responses that are deeper and more detailed. In the present study, probes were made use of to go deeper in the responses of the participants especially when there was not a sufficient response or a kind

of misunderstanding. It is also possible that the same individual responds in an inconsistent fashion in the personal or focus group interview. However, such a case did not happen in the present study.

Theoretically, communicability of the interview resembles the thick and rich description of the setting or the program mentioned above. Rubin and Rubin (1995, p. 91) state that: “the portrait of the research arena that you present should feel real to the participants and to readers of your research report”. Researchers and the readers of the research should easily find rich details about the setting and the participants. "Together with all these aspects, providing interviewees’ first hand experiences increase how well the research communicates" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 91). Acknowledging the importance of this fact, the researcher paid special attention to gather the first hand experiences of both students and the academics in relation with the aspects of the mediation theory. They were questioned to exemplify the responses with the events taking place in or out of the classes in the program.

To sum up, Rubin and Rubin (1995) summarize the standards through which qualitative interviewing studies increase their credibility: “research that is designed to garner lots of evidence; that is vivid, detailed, and transparent; that is careful and well documented; that is coherent and consistent is going to be convincing” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 91).

**2.5.3. Ethics and insider issues.** In qualitative research, researchers are the major factor and they find whatever they want to find (Johnson, 1997). From a similar point of view, Weber (1946) suggests that all research is contaminated to some extent by the values of the researcher. Researchers have always pondered over how to decrease their effect on the results by eliminating their values especially in the qualitative research tradition due to its open-ended and less structured nature.

In order to be successful in this respect in the present study, the researcher showed ultimate attention to the ethical and trustworthiness issues of the study. However, there were some points which seem to be both advantage and disadvantage for the researcher. First of all, he was an 'insider' for this research setting due to some reasons. He was the doctorate student of three academics he had personal interviews with. The researcher had already known the remaining two academics with whom he also had interviews because of spending time at the same faculty for more than 2 years as a post-graduate student. In addition, one of the academics is the thesis advisor of the researcher and another academic is a member of the thesis monitoring committee of the researcher. Before this study was planned, the researcher had classes with all the doctorate students which allowed him to know all the doctorate students in advance.

From this perspective, on the one hand, being an insider was an advantage for the researcher in terms of getting verbal approval of both the academics and the students for observations and the interviews. It is important to obtain the permission of the instructor to observe the class well in advance of the scheduled observations. "This is not only a professional courtesy, but may also help the instructor to lessen any impact of the observation on lesson planning and implementation" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 188). Thus, the verbal approvals of all academics were received before the observation period. The formal document allowing the researcher to observe the master and doctorate classes and to have interviews with the participants was also received from the institute of educational sciences. Especially the researcher made it clear for all participants that the results of the analysis would be confidential and anonymous.

On the other hand, being an insider created a dilemma for the researcher in terms of the extent of the information the participants should have related to the objectives of the study. "Both qualitative and quantitative researchers studying human subjects ponder over the

dilemma of wanting to give full information to subjects but not ‘contaminating’ their research by informing subjects too specifically about the research questions to be studied” (Silverman, 2000, p. 200). As the doctorate students and the academics were already knowledgeable about the aspects of the theory of mediation, in this sense, in order not to affect the normal behaviors or flow of discussion taking place in the classes, the participants were not informed totally clearly about the research questions of the present study. Therefore, participants were just informed that there were no right or wrong answers or behaviors in the class and the researcher was not testing or assessing their knowledge or practice so that both the academics and the students could behave as if the researcher were not there.

Students of master program with whom the researcher did not have contact before the research were also informed the same way. The academics’ introducing the researcher in the classes also played an important role in gaining their trust. Additionally, they got used to the researcher in a couple of weeks due to the time spent together.

Another concern from the ethical perspective was respecting the individual rights of the participants. It may be possible for the reader of this study to determine the owner of the statement provided in the findings despite the coding of the participants. For this reason, the researcher did not use some specific information provided by the participants which may reveal the name of the academics or the students.

Taking all these facts into account, the researcher paid special attention to the participants’ privacy and confidentiality of the responses who provided a great deal of assistance, help and support during the data gathering process of the present study.

## **2.6. The Research Setting and the Program Specifications**

The setting where this research was conducted is the education faculty of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Turkey. This university offers undergraduate and post-graduate



programs in the department of ELT. In order to have a rich understanding of master and doctorate programs, the details will be provided below.

First of all, students applying to an MA program should have undergraduate diplomas from related disciplines, have required scores from the related parts of Academic Personnel and Post-graduate Education Entrance Exam, be successful in the interview and written exam administered by the department, and have a score of at least 85 from the Foreign Language Proficiency Examination, or an equivalent score from TOEFL/ IELTS or Proficiency Exam conducted by School of Foreign Languages (<http://ebs.comu.edu.tr/default.aspx>).

Students who have the chance to join this master program need to take a minimum of seven courses, one seminar course and write a thesis. The program has the objectives of educating experts who are skilled at research studies by means of following the innovations in the particular field, educating individuals who are able to think critically and reflectively, educating individuals who are creative, and good at using the intercultural communication strategies consequently and increasing the quantity and quality of research studies both in national and international areas through raising linguistic and cultural awareness (<http://ebs.comu.edu.tr/default.aspx>). Students have courses, such as Advanced Research Methods, Language Teaching Methodology, Sociolinguistic Issues in Second Language Acquisition, Language Teaching and Educational Psychology, Teaching English to Young Learners, Theories of Second Language Acquisition, Principles of Testing and Evaluation, Cross Cultural Communication and Language Teaching, Perspectives in Applied Linguistics, Statistics in English Language Teaching. Some of these courses are elective and students have chance to select them according to their program. Students who successfully complete the program will be specialist in English Language Teaching and they are awarded the degree of Master of Arts in this specific department. Every year this program admits approximately ten students in January and August with a total of twenty students in one academic year. The

courses are taught by eight academics (1 professor, 3 associate professor doctors, 4 assistant professor doctors) in this program.

The doctorate program in English language teaching department admits approximately 7-10 students both for Spring and Fall terms depending on the number of students enrolled. Students who want to apply the doctorate program need to have M.A. degree from related disciplines, have required scores from the related parts of Academic Personnel and Post-graduate Education Entrance Exam conducted by Student Selection and Placement Center, be successful in the interview and written exam administered by the department, and have a score of at least 90 from the Foreign Language Proficiency Examination, conducted or an equivalent score from TOEFL/ IELTS (<http://ebs.comu.edu.tr/default.aspx>).

Students in this program need to take a minimum of seven courses and defend a doctoral thesis. The program has certain outcomes, such as building upon students' competencies acquired in the MA program, developing advanced level analytical and critical thinking skills combined with research skills and advancing students' knowledge and expertise in the field to the highest point where they can come up with unique contributions to the discipline, grasping the relationships between the fields concerned with the discipline of English Language Teaching and produce original and distinctive studies by using their expertise in the analysis, synthesis and critical evaluation of new and complicated ideas and propositions. Students are also expected to evaluate and apply the new knowledge and trends into the ELT field through a systematic approach, contribute to the progress of an original work, conduct critical analysis, gain high-level skills and strategies in conducting research studies and applying the appropriate research methods in ELT. In addition, the program has the expectation from students to produce and present a research article in the field to be published in national/international journals or create an original work contributing to the field, discuss and lead the issues in the related field, use English to communicate, discuss and

negotiate both in written and oral form with peers/colleagues at an advanced level of proficiency, ideally native-like, and finally contribute to the transition of the community to an information society and its sustainability process by introducing scientific, technological, social or cultural improvements in the ELT field (<http://ebs.comu.edu.tr/default.aspx>).

The doctorate program of ELT department offers courses, such as the Philosophy of Educational Research, Fundamental Issues in Foreign Language Teacher Education, English Language Teaching Program Evaluation, Current Trends in Second Language Acquisition Research, Classroom Research, Field Work in Applied Linguistics, English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes in Language Teaching, Discourse Analysis in the Language Classroom, Diversity in Language Teaching and Intercultural Communication. The students who successfully complete program are awarded the degree of PhD in ELT.

The data for the present study were gathered by means of observations of the classes in master and doctorate programs and the interviews held with both academics and the students in these programs. The descriptions of the participants and the procedure of data collection are provided below.

## **2.7. The Research Participants**

"In qualitative research, sampling takes a form quite different from anything probabilistic or non probabilistic. Describing samples in qualitative endeavors are non-representative, small in number and purposeful" (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p. 29). In qualitative researches, the researchers mostly prefer narrative descriptions of the phenomena rather statistical information by employing a small group of participants. The main aim is to provide as much information as possible about the individual or phenomena under study. Therefore, "sample size is not a prerequisite" (Trumbull, 2005, p. 104). Thus, "the main objective is mostly to gain deep understanding of some phenomenon experienced by a

carefully selected group of people" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 56) rather than to make generalizations.

"The strategy espoused for the sample selection depends upon the focus of inquiry and the researcher's judgment as to which approach will yield the clearest understanding of the phenomena under study" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 56). According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), many researchers prefer purposive sampling methods and they try to make use of the setting and individuals there depending on the likelihood of observing the processes being studied.

In terms of sample selection, this study employed convenience sampling. "In convenience sampling, which is also called accessible or accidental, the researcher uses as subject persons who are convenient and readily available" (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p. 28). The plan of this study required the researcher to observe the setting almost two educational terms and to conduct interviews with all the academics and the students in the department of ELT. Hence, as Bogdan and Biklen (1992) suggest, some practical concerns also had to be kept in mind. For example, the distance to the site, the ease of access or of gaining entry to do research in the site were all important factors in conducting this research. Therefore, "selecting readily available subjects via a convenience strategy was efficient, saving time and money" (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p. 116) for the present study. However, this sampling strategy is not just cost and time efficient but also it serves for the purposes of this research by investigating the voluntarily joined participants according to the research questions.

In terms of determining the sample size Maykut and Morehouse, (1994, p. 62) state that: "we cannot decide a priori how many people or settings we must include in our study in order to understand the phenomenon of interest". They also mention about the saturation point in gathering information which means that when this point is reached we can be assured that

we have conducted a thorough study (1994). From a more specific perspective they state that: “in terms of sample for group interviews, we highly recommend a smaller groups that are more likely to ensure that everyone will be able to part of the discussion and large enough groups that will contribute to diversity in perspective” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 106). Basically, the decision about whom to include in the study should be based on experienced and knowledgeable experts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The participants of the main study are the academics of master and doctorate students working as academics at the faculty of education and the current students of master and doctorate programs of the department of ELT at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University. The personal information of the academic participants is provided below.

Table 8

*Personal Information of the Academic Participants in the Main Study*

Participant Codes	Gender	Age	Experience			Teaching
			ELT department	ELT Master program	ELT Doctorate Program	
T1	Female	41	11 years	9 years	6 years	Fundamental Issues In Foreign Language Teacher Education (doctorate)
T2	Female	44	12 years	12 years	6 years	Beyond The Borders Of Language Teaching Methodology (master), English for Specific Purposes (doctorate)
T3	Male	35	3 years	3 years	No experience	Second Language Acquisition (master), Language Teaching and Educational Psychology (master),
T4	Male	32	1 year	1 year	No experience	Teaching English to Young Learners (master)

The personal information of the master and doctorate student participants is provided below.

Table 9

*Personal Information of the Master Student Participants in the Main Study*

<b>Participant codes</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Department of graduation (undergraduate)</b>
<b>M1</b>	23	ELT
<b>M2</b>	24	ELT
<b>M3</b>	27	ELT
<b>M4</b>	28	ELT

Table 10

*Personal Information of the Doctorate Student Participants in the Main Study*

<b>Participant codes</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Department of graduation (Undergraduate)</b>	<b>Department of graduation (Master)</b>
<b>D1</b>	31	ELT	ELT
<b>D2</b>	30	ELT	ELT
<b>D3</b>	39	ELT	ELT
<b>D4</b>	31	ELT	MBA: master of business administration
<b>D5</b>	29	ELT	Teaching Turkish as a foreign language
<b>D6</b>	34	ELT	ELT

Rubin and Rubin (1995, p. 73) mention about 'completeness' criteria of the qualitative sampling by stating that: "you choose people who are knowledgeable about the subject and talk with them until what you hear provides an overall sense of the meaning of a concept, theme, or process". For this reason, in this study the concept of the aspects of theory of mediation were investigated from the various perspectives ranging from academics with less experience and academics with more experiences on post-graduate teaching as well as students with various backgrounds from both master and doctorate programs. In addition, "what is important is not how many people you talk to, but whether the answers work" (Rubin

& Rubin, 1995, p. 73). To sum up, in order to gather sufficient data from participants, personal interviews were conducted with four academics; two focus group interviews were conducted with four master students and six doctorate students respectively. Additionally, six different classes of four academics were observed in two educational terms.

## 2.8. Data Collection Procedure

The data for the present study were gathered from mainly three sources, observations, personal interviews, and focus-group interviews. The sequence of data gathering was also important in order not to create any bias especially on the academic participants. For this reason, the classes were observed first. The timeline of the observations for the main study is provided below.

Table 11

*The Timeline of the Observations for the Main Study*

Academic	Name of the class	Program	Date	Total number of classes observed
T1	Fundamental Issues In Foreign Language Teacher Education	Doctorate	25.09.2014- 21.11.2014	15
T2	English for Specific Purposes	Doctorate	21.02.2014- 07.03.2014	9
T2	Beyond The Borders of Language Teaching Methodology	Master	25.09.2014- 20.11.2014	18
T3	Second Language Acquisition	Master	21.02.2014- 20.03.2014	12
T3	Language Teaching and Educational Psychology	Master	10.10.2014- 21.11.2014	12
T4	Teaching English to Young Learners	Master	10.10.2014- 20.11.2014	12

As illustrated in the table above, two doctorate classes of two different academics were observed. In addition, four master program classes of three different academics were also observed to gather data for the main study. During the observations, the researcher did not

clearly state the objectives of this research to the academics and the students in order not to destroy their original way of behaving. However, T1 and T2 were already knowledgeable about the study and its details due to the conditions in which this study was planned (see *Ethics and Insider Issues*). No video-taping was used during the observations of the classes because of its distracting effect on the nature of the students and the academics.

Following observations, personal and focus-group interviews were conducted in the present study. The personal semi-structured interviews with T1, T2, T3, and T4 took 64, 52, 28, 21 minutes respectively. The personal interviews were conducted in academics' offices in their free time. Focus-group interviews were conducted in 28 minutes both with master and doctorate students in their classrooms. The researcher paid special attention that the student participants felt comfortable to express their views. Thus, before starting the focus-group interviews, students were informed that their answers would be confidential. The students who took part in the pilot study focus-group interviews did not take part in the main study. Except for the personal interview with T4 and the focus-group interviews with master and doctorate students, all interviews were conducted in English and they were all audio-recorded and transcribed.

The documents were gathered from academics who prepared course plans for their classes. Together with course plans, the researcher also collected significant information about the profile of master and doctorate ELT programs from the website of <http://ebs.comu.edu.tr/default.aspx> in order to provide a rich description.

## **2.9. Analysis**

The process the researchers follow for the analysis of the qualitative data is completely different for the quantitative researchers though the major concerns are the accuracy of the findings and the correct interpretation of the data for both of them (Creswell, 1998).



According to critics, much quantitative research leads to the use of a set of ad hoc procedures to define, count and analyze the variables. On the basis of this critique, “qualitative researchers have preferred to describe how, in everyday life, we actually go about defining, counting and analyzing” (Silverman, 2000, p. 5).

Considering the major data gathering techniques, namely observation and the interviews, the data analysis in qualitative tradition is “fundamentally a nonmathematical analytical procedure that involves examining the meaning of people’s words and actions” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 121). However, participants’ words and actions are not analyzed in a random way just by presenting them as they uttered. Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe three approaches to analyzing qualitative data varying along a continuum ranging from a low level of interpretation and abstraction engaged in by the researcher, to a high level of interpretation and abstraction required for theory building (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). In the first one, the researcher presents data without any analysis and interpretation whereas in the second one, “the researcher is mostly concerned with accurately describing what she or he has understood, reconstructing the data into a ‘recognizable reality’ for the people who have participated in the study with some selection and interpretation” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 122). The last one including the notion of grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is “inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents” (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 23). This approach to data analysis, the development of theory, requires the highest level of interpretation and abstraction from the data in order to arrive at the organizing concepts and tenets of a theory to explain the phenomenon of interest.

What was employed for the analysis of the data in the present study is closer to the second type of data analysis which involves the careful selection and interpretation of the researcher together with the main objective of accurate description of the phenomenon. This type of analysis is basically known as ‘descriptive’ analysis. However, Belenky (1992) and

her colleagues referred to their approach as 'interpretive-descriptive'. In 'interpretive-descriptive' analysis, though the primary objective is the description of the phenomenon under investigation, it is also possible to build theory in data analysis. As it was explained above (see *Selection of the Research Design*), the strategy of inquiry in the present study is "phenomenological research, which includes identifying the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants" (Creswell, 2003, p. 12). In this research, the researcher is concerned with the lived experiences of the academics and the students studying in master and doctorate programs of ELT department from the perspective of the theory of mediation. The researcher does not only clearly express the lived experiences of the participants but also adds his interpretation by combining several data gathered from sources. Therefore, 'interpretive-descriptive' analysis technique serves best for the purposes of this study.

The data in the present study came in words rather than numbers. In this situation, Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 21) suggest that "data analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification". According to their perspective, "data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming... 'raw' data" (1984, p. 21). Data reduction involves making decisions about which data chunks will provide your initial focus. "Data display is an organized assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action taking" (1984, p. 21). It involves assembling your data into displays such as matrices, graphs, networks and charts which clarify the main directions of your analysis. "Conclusion drawing means beginning to decide what things mean, noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows and propositions" (1984, p. 22). These steps were followed in the present study from beginning to the end as well. First of all, the data were put into initial analysis in which the repetitions and irrelevant parts were removed. The responses of the

academics and students in the interviews and their actions in the observations were put together in table format to ease the data management. In this way, the researcher selected, eliminated the irrelevant parts and made them simple to use for the data analysis by using data reduction and display. Concerning the conclusion drawing or verification, the researcher triangulated the sources of data, namely observation field notes, personal semi-structured interviews and focus-group interviews.

The interview transcriptions and the field notes of the observations were coded in order to label the data. "Coding is the process of grouping interviewees' responses into categories that bring together the similar ideas, concepts, or themes you have discovered, or steps or stages in a process" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 238). The codes used for the participants were already provided above in the research participants section. The codes used for the aspects of the theory of mediation are provided below.

Table 12

*Coding of Mediation Theory Aspects*

<b>Mediation theory aspects</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Significance	MA1
Purpose beyond the here and now	MA2
Shared intention	MA3
A sense of competence	MA4
Control of own behavior	MA5
Goal setting	MA6
Challenge	MA7
Awareness of change	MA8
A belief in positive outcomes	MA9
Sharing	MA10
Individuality	MA11
A sense of belonging	MA12

## **Chapter 3: Findings**

### **3. Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of this study. The findings are revealed under the research questions. Data analysis in qualitative research tradition is "an ongoing research activity" as Maykut and Morehouse suggested (1994, p. 46). It means, compared to the quantitative approach in which the researcher gathers data and puts into statistical analysis, in qualitative researches "there is no particular moment when data analysis begins" (Stake, 1995, p. 71). Therefore, the analysis commonly starts during the data collection procedure and continues till the end of the analysis.

#### **3.1. Academics' Use of Mediation Theory Aspects**

The data analysis in this study started with the observation period when the researcher wrote down the field notes. While writing the field notes, the researcher was selecting the words and expressions that fall into the mediation theory aspects' categories in the observation form. Following this step, repetitions or unnecessary parts were removed both in the field notes and the transcripts of the interviews. Thus, what is called as data reduction from the perspective of Miles and Huberman (1984) was already put into action. For the data display, the data related to twelve aspects of the mediation theory were put into separate tables. The conclusion step involved the triangulation in which the researcher used all data gathered from observations, personal semi-structured interviews, focus-group interviews and documents to answer the research questions of the study. Below are the research questions and the findings of the present study.

*R. Q. 1. What do the academics do as mediators in doctorate and master programs of ELT department?*

The first research question was about how and how often academics used the aspects of the theory of mediation in their master and doctorate classes which would reveal the activities academics did as a mediator. Six classes of four different academics were observed in order to collect data for this question (see *Data Collection Procedure*). The total number of observed classes and the observed number of mediation theory aspects are illustrated below.

Table 13

*Academics' Use of Mediation Theory Aspects*

Mediation Theory Aspects	Academics								tnmta
	T1		T2		T3		T4		
	<i>f</i>	tnco	<i>f</i>	tnco	<i>f</i>	tnco	<i>f</i>	tnco	
MA1	3	15	26	27	17	24	3	12	49
MA2	0	15	8	27	8	24	16	12	32
MA3	3	15	52	27	18	24	5	12	78
MA4	3	15	20	27	4	24	2	12	29
MA5	0	15	6	27	1	24	0	12	7
MA6	2	15	15	27	5	24	3	12	25
MA7	3	15	11	27	12	24	2	12	28
MA8	0	15	5	27	3	24	2	12	10
MA9	3	15	9	27	5	24	3	12	20
MA10	1	15	33	27	3	24	5	12	44
MA11	12	15	20	27	8	24	7	12	47
MA12	0	15	5	27	2	24	0	12	7
Total	30	15	210	27	86	24	48	12	374

tnco: Total number of classes observed

tnmta: Total number of observed Mediation Theory Aspects

The table above showed the total number of classes observed for each academic, the number of observed mediation theory aspects for each academic, and the total number of observed mediation theory aspects separately. According to the findings presented above, far and away the most commonly used mediation theory aspect was 'shared intention' (MA3) among the academics. It was followed by 'significance' (MA1), 'individuality' (MA11), and 'sharing' (MA10) respectively. On the other hand, two mediation aspects, 'control of own behavior' (MA5) and 'a sense of belonging' (MA12) took the last row in the list showing how

often they were used. 'Awareness of change' (MA8) and 'a belief in positive outcomes' (MA9) were also not very commonly used aspects by the academics.

Although the major aim of this study is to present how the mediation theory aspects are used by the academics irrespective of the number showing how often they used them, the table above also illustrated the popularity of the theory of mediation aspects on case by case for each academic separately. At this point, it should not be ignored that the number of the use of mediation theory aspects in classes presented here has nothing to do with the success or failure of the academic or the class. First, T2 is the academic who used the mediation aspects by far the most followed by T3 and T4 respectively. On the other hand, T1 used the least number of mediation aspects among the academics.

Table 14

*Individual Analysis of Academics in Using Mediation Theory Aspects*

<b>Teacher educators</b>	<b>Popular aspects</b>	<b>Unpopular aspects</b>
<b>T1</b>	1. Individuality (MA11)	1. Control of own behavior (MA5) 2. A sense of belonging (MA12) 3. Awareness of change (MA8)
<b>T2</b>	1. Shared intention (MA3) 2. Sharing (MA10) 3. Significance (MA1)	1. Awareness of change (MA8) 2. A sense of belonging (MA12) 3. Control of own behavior (MA5)
<b>T3</b>	1. Shared intention (MA3) 2. Sharing (MA10) 3. Challenge (MA7)	1. Awareness of change (MA8) 2. A sense of belonging (MA12) 3. Control of own behavior (MA5)
<b>T4</b>	1. Purpose beyond the here and now (MA2) 2. Individuality (MA11)	1. Control of own behavior (MA5) 2. A sense of belonging (MA12)

As illustrated above in the table, individual analyses showed that the most commonly used mediation theory aspect for T2 was 'shared intention' which was followed by 'sharing' and 'significance'. On the contrary, the least preferred aspects were 'awareness of change' and 'a sense of belonging'. 'Control of own behavior' aspect was also not a commonly used mediation aspect for T2. 'Shared intention' coded as 'MA3' was used 52 times in 27 observations by T2. During the observations, it was realized that she paid special attention to have a shared understanding with the learners. Very often she questioned students whether they understood or not to have a shared intention. She also wanted students to check the appropriateness of her ideas in the class. The sample expressions used by T2 are presented in the table below:

Table 15

*Sample Expressions of 'Shared Intention'*

<b>The expression</b>	<b>The date</b>
Do you think I am clear?	30.10.2014
Do you think we are done with the post method term definitions?	30.10.2014
Do you think the figure in the book is understandable?	28.02.2014
Are you with me?	25.09.2014
Do you understand my point here guys?	23.10.2014
Do you understand the point I'm trying to make here?	20.11.2014
I think we have finished the first round, right? (just before moving on to the next round of discussion)	09.10.2014
Correct me if I am wrong, what's the starting point of action research?	30.10.2014
Can we say that we have a general understanding of what we have talked about so far?	28.02.2014

The shared intention was not just questioning the learners whether they understood a point or not for T2, rather it was a struggle to make the decisions together with the students in the class. In order to make all the group members pleased and to have a shared understanding, she used several expressions. Some of them are presented below.

Table 16

*Sample Expressions of 'Shared Intention'*

<b>The expression</b>	<b>The date</b>
I'm gonna give you a short summary of the book that you don't have then we will discuss about it, is that OK?	07.03.2014
If you want now we can move on to our topic today which is language systems.	07.03.2014
If you would like we can start by discussing the answers with the person sitting next to you or we can start discussing altogether, which one would you like?	20.11.2014
Through negotiation with you, we are going to discuss about what we are going to focus in this class, EAP or ESP.	21.02.2014
If you would like, we can have some amendments on course program.	21.02.2014
Now we can decide together and write down on the program the due dates for the submission of tasks.	21.02.2014
If you want, we can pull the proposal deadline back in our course program, we can simply shift the date written on program, I will give you one to one tutorial about it.	21.02.2014
If you would like to moderate the classes please tell me so we can design it accordingly.	21.02.2014
Would you like to discuss in pairs or 3s?	23.10.2014

T2 used mediation theory aspects of 'sharing' coded as 'MA10' and 'significance' coded as 'MA1' very commonly in her classes as well. The aspect of 'sharing' is basically the effort of the teacher to make the learners feel that they are a part of the group and they can share their ideas without hesitation. The group or pair discussions T2 organized in almost all her classes showed that she paid special attention to the importance of this aspect. She brought papers including some tasks on which the learners can work in pairs or groups of three or four students. In some classes, she wrote questions on small papers and asked students to take a paper and answer it on that paper, then visit other students and get answers of other questions from other people (mingling activity, 09.10.2014). She also wanted learners to be in groups of three, discuss the answers in this group first, and then when she said 'move', groups moved to other group and discussed other questions (09.10.2014). What was remarkable during these group discussions she organized was her involvement in the groups separately. For example, in one of group works, she talked about what they would be talking about in this class, she wanted students to be in groups of two or three and gave each group



papers on which the questions were written. She wanted them to discuss. She joined each group one by one and expressed her ideas. She wanted group members to visit other group members and gather the lacking point (23.10.2014).

‘Significance’ coded as ‘MA1’ was also a popular mediation theory aspect for T2. Significance is used to express the importance of the topic or the task so that the learners can better understand the importance and the value of it. In order to express the importance of the topic, article or the expression of an author, she generally used words such as “important, crucial, wonderful and basic”. The sample expressions used in the classes by T2 are presented below in table:

Table 17

*Sample Expressions of ‘Sharing’ and ‘Significance’*

Sharing (MA10)		Significance (MA1)	
The expression	The date	The expression	The date
I will read your papers personally but I want you to share your opinions in class. Let’s learn from others.	06.11.2014	This is very important, let me just remind you again that these have a foundation in positivistic school.	06.11.2014
You can share your answers with your friends sitting next to you.	06.11.2014	Everybody, keep this in mind! If we talk about Frankfurt school, we need to know Max Horkheimer.	06.11.2014
All together we can have a genre analysis rather than having individually.	21.02.2014	The article we will discuss about is so important that when you read it you will cover everything related to ESP.	07.03.2014
You don’t need to read all articles written in program, we can share and each person introduces one article to the others, so we can create synergy here	21.02.2014	I told you this last week but I want to emphasize it one more time: beliefs are the most important thing for shaping teachers’ and learners’ behaviors	30.10.2014
Come on everybody, I want everyone to contribute to this	23.10.2014	Please be careful and don’t forget that everything behind these, there is science.	09.10.2014
As a result of our group discussions here, as far as I understand we have a common ground.	06.11.2014	Don’t forget!! What’s the question ‘school of linguistics’ try to answer?	09.10.2014

‘A sense of belonging’ (MA12), ‘awareness of change’ (MA8) and ‘control of own behavior’ (MA5) were the least preferred mediation theory aspects for T2. MA12 and MA8 were used 5 times and MA5 was just observed 6 times in 27 observed classes. Although ‘a sense of belonging’ was used scarcely in her classes, some expressions represented this aspect. For example, she stated: “we have harmony in this group.” (06.11.2014) when she had joined the groups’ discussions respectively and saw that more or less all groups had the same ideas related to aspects in paper. In addition, when there were newcomers in the class, she told students to start the discussion so that the newcomers could understand what they did last week (09.10.2014). As another example, she preferred to stay in the class during the breaks to talk about the problems related to bachelor cycle of ELT departments in Turkey (23.10.2014). In all these instances, T2 made an effort to make the learners believe that they belong to a certain harmonious group.

‘Awareness of change’ was another scarcely used mediation theory aspect for T2. She tried to show that the learners’ understanding would change as they read more. In one of the classes, she stated that: “If you read a lot, you will understand the synthesis, you will understand that nothing is coincidental and you will see the connections” (09.10.2014). Similarly, she suggested reading to emerge the awareness of change: “You will realize that you will have broadened horizon by looking at all issues of a journal” (21.02.2014). She was also pleased to get the response of a student indicating that she was aware that she was changing: “actually I didn’t have enough information about critical pedagogy or critical theory, but now I have” (20.11.2014).

T3 was observed 24 times and he was observed to use the aspects of mediation theory popularly as well. T3’s use of these aspects resembled to that of T2 except for the use of ‘challenge’ (MA7). It is the third popular mediation theory aspect in the list of T3. Apart from that, the most and the least popular aspects of T3 showed similarity to those of T2.

‘Shared intention’ coded as ‘MA3’, ‘significance’ coded as ‘MA1’, ‘challenge’ coded as (MA7) were the most commonly used aspects for T3. He often used MA3 in such a way that students either needed to accept or ask for clarification. For example, he generally started explanation with a question such as “Any questions about ‘types of feedback?’” (06.03.2014). These types of question were commonly followed by an expression similar to “I think you are all familiar with them, such as recasts, explicit correction, and elicitation.” (06.03.2014). In these situations, he tried to have a shared intention with the students by questioning them about whether they remember the topic or they needed more clarification. Some sample expressions he provided in order to have shared intention are illustrated in the table below:

Table 18

*Sample Expressions of ‘Shared Intention’*

<b>The expression</b>	<b>The date</b>
I think we have covered and understood all these terms (types of feedback) right?	06.03.2014
Is it clear? I think we are all familiar with these terms.	10.10.2014
You will all remember that in behaviorist psychology, they avoided all the things in brain because we can’t observe them.	20.03.2014

The next popular aspects were MA1 and MA7 respectively for T3. He expressed the significance of the topic or the task by stating the importance of it. He generally used ‘challenge’ aspect by stating the difficulty of the task or the subject. Some sample expressions of these aspects were provided below in table:

Table 19

*Sample Expressions of ‘Significance’ and ‘Challenge’*

<b>Significance (MA1)</b>		<b>Challenge (MA7)</b>	
<b>The expression</b>	<b>The date</b>	<b>The expression</b>	<b>The date</b>
It is important to understand that not all the errors are because of L1 in L2 learning	06.03.2014	Designing a new and original research is very difficult but for the end of this term you can make a replication of a study.	06.03.2014
It is very important to know that neurolinguistics is related to	10.10.2014	It’s not easy to explain how variation occurs in language learning.	06.03.2014

*Table 19 (continued)*


---

biological system and what part of the brain is responsible for which function			
Your learners need to be psychologically ready to learn otherwise they can't learn, this is why humanistic psychology is very important.	20.03.2014	In chapter 3, there will be some challenging constructs, it can be hard for you, and you can't understand just with one reading, you need to go in deeper.	10.10.2014
Today we will look at some critical terms in SLA processing like explicit and implicit learning.	24.10.2014	We can be lost in the ambiguity of the results of age studies related to language acquisition which makes it a challenging subject.	27.02.2014
If you just google this term 'implicit vocabulary learning' you will find hundreds of papers, it is a popular term now.	24.10.2014		
Today we will talk about another important construct for language learning 'age'.	27.02.2014		

---

MA8, MA12, MA10 and MA5 were the least popular mediation theory aspects for T3. 'Control of own behavior' (MA5) was used just one time when T3 answered one student's question related to the research paper they needed to write at the end of the term. He stated that: "You can decide about what you will research in this month, read and cover everything about it. Next month you can gather data and in May you can write it" (06.03.2014). Instead of delivering the research topics or providing some options, he asked learners to come up with a research topic and read about it to make them control their own choice of research topic. In order to establish the feeling that the students have a 'sense of belonging' (MA12), T3 did not have a direct effort. However, in some classes he stated some expressions such as "we are in a group, please feel free to join the discussion" (20.02.2014). Though not very commonly, T3 also tried to make the learners believe that they would change if they read more about the topics. He stated that: "Read a lot about your research topic, don't forget it. When you read more you will be more knowledgeable about this class too so you will realize that you feel

better here in class” (06.03.2014). He also used this aspect when he claimed that: “Now we are putting the pieces together for example: today we focus on 'age', towards the end of the semester your ideas and knowledge will change” (27.02.2014). As a final point, T3 did not put much emphasis on ‘sharing’ (MA10). In terms of this aspect, he wanted learners to share ideas among themselves by stating that: “you can give new research ideas to each other” (06.03.2014).

T4 was the academic who used ‘purpose beyond the here and now’ (MA2) and ‘individuality’ (MA11) as the most popular mediation theory aspects. It was interesting to observe that commonly used mediation aspects of T4 did not show similarity to other academics except for the popular use of MA11 by T1. T4 specifically emphasized the use of ‘purpose beyond the here and now’ by encouraging learners to use what they learned in their future studies. He also paid special attention to the individual responses and ideas of the learners in the classes. Some sample expressions used in the classes of T4 regarding these aspects are provided in the table below:

Table 20

*Sample Expressions of ‘Purpose Beyond the Here and Now’ and ‘Individuality’*

<i>Purpose beyond the here and now (MA2)</i>		<i>Individuality (MA11)</i>	
<b>The expression</b>	<b>The date</b>	<b>The expression</b>	<b>The date</b>
We learned 'stratified random sampling' and 'illustrative case study' in this class. Maybe we can use it somewhere in our studies.	06.11.2014	What comes to your mind when I say “triangulation?”	07.03.2014
You can find maybe some potential relationships with becoming union member and ELT.	07.03.2014	Let’s start with what discipline problems you have in your classes because you are all teachers and how do you deal with? You can share your personal experiences.	07.03.2014
Learning culture of vocational school can be researched.	07.03.2014		
This class will be a good class to get an insight for your PhD studies later on. It will be very valuable for us.	10.10.2014	Tell me what you have experienced in your life. What are the changes in terms of education?	28.02.2014
There is a lack of research into the	10.10.2014		

*Table 20 (continued)*

influence of teacher education on teacher self-efficacy beliefs, we can think of our own context and conduct a study on this because there is a lack there.

T1 was the academic who used ‘individuality’ (MA11) as the most; ‘control of own behavior’ (MA5), ‘sense of belonging’ (MA12), ‘awareness of change’ (MA8) and ‘purpose beyond the here and now’ (MA2) as the least preferred mediation theory aspects. How MA11 was used in the classes of T1 was exemplified in the table below:

Table 21

*Sample Expressions of ‘Individuality’*

<b>The expressions</b>	<b>The date</b>
Are you an experienced teacher? What do you think about your teaching experience?	06.11.2014
What does support knowledge include? What do you think personally?	06.11.2014
Please think of your own experiences, if you don’t have, think about potential situations that may happen.	09.10.2014
How would you do this in your own classes? How would you deal with it?	09.10.2014
Can you use for example humanistic approaches in your classes?	25.09.2014
Are you all autonomous learners?	25.09.2014
I especially pay special attention to your own experiences; please use them in your presentations	30.10.2014

**3.1.1. Sources of using mediation theory aspects.** As it was presented above, academics used some of the aspects of mediation theory more often than the others. It is obvious that whether academics use these aspects or not stems from some reasons.

*R. Q. 1.1. What are the sources (educational background, beliefs, personal feelings, etc.) of using mediation theory aspects for the academics?*

In order to find out these sources and find answer to the research question provided above, academics were questioned about the possible sources of using these aspects in their classes during personal semi-structured interviews. The table below presents the sources they uttered during the interviews.

Table 22

*Sources of Using Mediation Theory Aspects*

Academics	Sources
<i>T1</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous educational background</li> <li>• Her own reading</li> <li>• Her own research</li> <li>• Her personality</li> <li>• Personal and professional experiences</li> </ul>
<i>T2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her past experiences</li> <li>• Her own philosophy of life</li> <li>• Her experiences in master and doctorate groups (change in time)</li> </ul>
<i>T3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• His own teachers during his post-graduate studies</li> <li>• What he has learned in terms of educational practice and pedagogical practice</li> <li>• His experiences with different students and classes</li> </ul>
<i>T4</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What his teachers did or the techniques his teacher applied during PhD process</li> </ul>

T1 got her previous educational background to number one in the chart. She specifically emphasized the impact of her PhD thesis advisor on her way of teaching and using these aspects. She stated that:

I am kind of modeling my own supervisor in some aspects, because she was actually in her own manner, in her own context, she was actually a very good one. But however, I tend to be more open and more approachable in contrast with her. So, in a way I have taken the good parts of her because she was actually quite punctual, I mean regarding the feedback giving and getting process and she was actually devoting time and so on during the tutorials and things like that. But however I am trying to be more approachable right which means I am more flexible.

It is obvious that she models her advisor, but she is also aware that she has her own style. However, she also mentions about her own reading and researches in shaping the way

she teaches or guides the students in doctorate and master classes. As a final remark related to this point, she considers her personality as an important factor. She explains her personality in her own words: “I think personality has big influence on it because I am quite direct and deliberate and explicit in that manner”. Thus, in the case of T1, it can be deduced that her educational background in which significant role was played by her PhD thesis advisor, her personality, the researches she conducted, the reading she did on teaching and learning and all the professional experience she had so far were the factors affecting her use of mediation theory aspects, thereby forming her own teaching style in master and doctorate classes.

Despite slight differences from T1, T2 also considered her past experiences, her own philosophy of life and the experiences she had in both master and doctorate classes as the important factors in using mediation theory aspects. She emphasized the lacking points she realized during her past educational experiences and tried to fill in those gaps. She stated that:

Basically, when I’m trying to be the person, academic person, the instructor I am, I think my past experiences play a major role there, the sources like what has been and what hasn’t been done to me, what has been done to me that really worked or what hasn’t been done to me that really didn’t work, but sometimes it became an asset by the way, I mean it has not been done to me for example my tasks. I give tasks to my students but they never gave feedback to me, but I somehow developed more critical stance, so the way I survived became an asset for me, so both positive and negative experiences probably shaped the role that I play now here.

In addition to the past experiences and her struggle to compensate the lacking parts in her educational background, she also puts emphasis on her experience as a academic and how those experiences shaped her philosophy of life.

You change in time as well. Because you have dissertation advisory, you find yourself lacking in terms of this and then if you are willing, you compensate for those lacking



points... I'd like my students to be better than me, to start their academic career somewhere which is far further than the place that I started, so I want better English language educators. So, it's a kind of a philosophy in my opinion... We can say that my past experiences have evolved me in to the person I am now, they have helped me in shaping my personal philosophy..Especially my philosophy is the product of my life experience what I have been through, what I have done.

T2 considered her life experiences including the time spent as a language teacher, language academic, thesis advisory for doctorate and master students as the important factors shaping her philosophy which eventually affected the way she used the aspects of mediation theory.

Similar to the sources T1 stated, T3 also highlighted his own teachers during post-graduate studies as the important factors formulating the way he used the aspects of mediation theory. Apart from teachers, the experience he had as a language academic and the knowledge he learned were also other sources of using these aspects. He stated that:

The first reason is, maybe, my own teachers during my post-graduate studies. I model them and also as a student you have certain expectations from the teacher and also what we have learned in terms of educational practice and pedagogical practice, so what's good or what's bad for teaching, our content and pedagogical knowledge and also our experiences with different students and classes, so what increases the student motivation, what increases the quality of instructions etc. So, we have certain intuitions about what is good and bad or what's better let's say for our students' learning, so these are I think all mixed and blended.

Supporting the ideas of T3 and T1, T4 also considered his PhD teachers as the most important factors shaping the way he teaches. Instead of modeling just one teacher, he claimed to make a synthesis of all his teachers.

**3.1.2. The academics' perspectives of having a mediator role.** In this study, academics were also questioned about the roles they play in doctorate and master classes. The differences in the role they play, if any, between these two programs were also investigated. However, T3 and T4 had not taught in the doctorate program till the interviews were conducted. Thus, the difference in the roles they played from their perspective was not possible to be investigated.

*R. Q. 1.2. What are the academics' perspectives of having a mediator role in doctorate and master programs?*

Table 23

*The Roles Academics Play in Doctorate and Master Classes*

<b>Academic</b>	<b>Roles</b>
<b>T1</b>	'a colleague', 'a supervisor', 'a facilitator', 'guide', 'leader'
<b>T2</b>	'an experienced person', 'a transition person'
<b>T3</b>	'a moderator'
<b>T4</b>	'a facilitator', 'a mentor', 'a guide'

To start with, T1 identified the roles she plays in doctorate classes as 'a colleague', 'a facilitator', 'a supervisor', 'a guide', and 'a leader'. She also claims that basically the role she plays in doctorate and master classes does not change, rather the degree or the intensity of the role changes.

Actually, especially with the PhD students I am not a teacher or I am not the person who is delivering the subject matter. I am rather like an older and more experienced colleague. Yes, it is a very cliché term but facilitating learning. Obviously, I am also trying to be supportive. I do work as obviously perhaps the biggest role, supervision,

supervising, and editing especially in the writing up phase during thesis writing. I am also a guide and a model in a way. I am also a part of the group because I enjoy doing things together with them I mean being a part of the pair work or group work. I do act as a part of that group, and I can be the leader of the group as well. I am also the captain right, and responsible for the cruise I mean metaphorically speaking...with the PhD I am more flexible, I act more like a colleague, they are my colleagues anyway, but I feel more like a part of the group because they are mature obviously.

It is obvious that she, specifically with the doctorate group, considers herself as a member of the group enjoying the unity, sharing of knowledge and discussion in the class. She also does not relinquish the traditional teacher authority by stating the roles such as 'leader'. However, this authority cannot be considered as in the traditional way of teacher-centered approaches. The leadership comes from the knowledge she has and automatically she takes the role of a leader of the group in some occasions. Additionally, she feels closer to the students in the doctorate group due to the age and maturity of the students in this group. Therefore, she can be more flexible and act as a colleague in the class.

T2 was the academic who considered herself as an experienced colleague for the students. She expressed that she mediates the students' learning with her experiences. In terms of the difference the roles she plays in master and doctorate programs, she puts emphasis on the 'feeling of worth', which means the effort she puts should be worth doing it, because most of the master students do not continue their post-graduate studies. She metaphorically explained it:

I'm a kind of somebody who has been there, and somebody who has done it, somebody who has personal ideas about how these things might be done. I'm the person who has the experience and I'm trying to open up a gate for these students, I think I'm a transition person. I have some information and my course content is a kind

of a highway but I'm there on the highway and students are simply passing in cars and if my highway has several sub roads, they are going to open up and they are going to feel themselves much more knowledgeable, they are gonna start thinking of things they have never thought existed or they have never noticed before, Come to me and I'm gonna open you a gate, a door and the door leads to a lot more to what you have learnt before.

In terms of the role she plays in master group, the degree of the transition person role changes. She stated that:

In the masters group this is a feeling of worth in other words, I'm going to invest time, intellectual effort there, is it really worth this kind of an effort? Because most of them do not really continue their doctorate program degrees, so what does it mean? They are gonna simply stop after they complete their theses, they are going to continue working as a teacher, so I'm not overdoing it, let's say in my masters group, because some of them might be academic people some of them might not, well if our roads cross again in doctorate program there I can play my role putting much more emphasis on it. Let's say the degree of playing the role of a transition person changes, I can say that I'm a little bit stingy in terms of my effort in the master program, but in the doctorate programs no.

T3 defines his role as a moderator. He generally prefers to give the control of the class to the student who has the responsibility of presenting and leading the discussion of a certain topic, and he takes the role of a moderator. In this role, he adds his comments, asks some challenging questions to raise the interest of the students and guide learners. In his own words, he explained his role:

I usually act like a moderator. The presenter has some ideas to present about the content, but usually I just interrupt, raise questions, insert some comments, and guide

the students. So, I try to facilitate their learning, this might be called as mediator, I'm actually another person who is supporting the presenter and maybe making introductions, summarizing the content at the end, so that I control whether everything is going right, whether students actually grasped ideas, theories, etc.

T4 also classified his roles in the master program as 'a facilitator', 'a mentor' and, 'a guide'. Similar to other academics, he also prefers to have a presenter in his class who determined the flow of knowledge and discussion. He facilitates, and guides in this process.

### **3.2. The Academics' Evaluation of Mediation Theory Aspects**

The first research question was based on how academics actually used the mediation theory aspects in their classes. The second research question focuses on the perceptions of academics related to how they consider these aspects regarding the importance or use of it in classes.

*R. Q. 2. How do the academics in doctorate and master programs of ELT department consider the different aspects of mediation to promote learning?*

In order to find answer to this question, academics were questioned in personal semi-structured interviews about each aspect of mediation theory. Academics' perspectives will be revealed under the subheadings of each aspect.

**3.2.1. Significance (MA1).** Concerning significance aspect of the mediation theory, academics were basically questioned about two important issues: whether they related the learning task with their learners' practices to make them see the personal relevance and value of the learning task and whether they explicitly stated the importance of the topic or the task in the class.

T1 specifically emphasized relating the task with learners' practices. Especially, mentioning about her personal experiences and getting insight of her students' personal experiences regarding the topic or the task is directly related to her teaching style and

methodology in her own words. She stated that: “I explicitly ask questions, such as ‘what do you do?’, ‘do you do this and that?’, ‘have you experienced such a thing?’ and so on. And I do talk about my experiences, especially the interesting and surprising ones”. According to T1, the degree of sharing the personal experiences in order to relate it to learners’ personal practices depends on the course and the topic. She stated that:

It depends on the course as well. If it is a teacher education course, or the issues in teacher education, so therefore the topic and the course itself requires that kind of sharing or collaboration with the students. My students who are also teachers, and some of them are also engaged in teacher education, so they are all practitioners and I am as well, just being in different levels, so why not bridging theory and practice? The course itself is about bridging theory and practice, so I cannot actually take out one of these components because the course itself is about skills.

Rather than stating the importance of one topic or the task in the class specifically, T1 prefers her learners to see the relationships which is related to the synthesis of the topics. She considers all topics provided in the course content as important. Therefore, she stated that:

Rather than stating this is important or this is more important, I want them to see the relations explicitly, I want them to articulate the potential relations or relevance and difference explicitly not just about theory but regarding the practices as well.

Considering it from a different angle, T2 thinks that what they do in master and doctorate classes may not overlap with what the students do in their daily practices due to the academic nature of these programs. However, this does not block her from relating the tasks with the learners’ practices. She explains it with an example:

For example, if they are gonna do a needs analysis which is one of the tasks in my ESP program, I say ‘don’t go out of your institution’, if your institution allows you to

do something like this, just walk around and ask questions around. Are there any ESP programs running in your institution? What can you do under the roof of your own institution? So, what I'm trying to do is that they have to and should see the relevance of what we are doing here academically to their own work setting at the same time but this is not my primary concern I must say.

Despite stating that what they do in master and doctorate programs are basically academic in nature and may not be relevant to what the learners do in their own institutions as instructors, she also shows the difference between these two programs. She stated that:

The way I perceive my students' status especially in the doctorate program, I don't really consider them as teachers anymore, because doctorate program has a very different purpose in my opinion, I mean it is not something to be done for fun, but master program students might have different opinions or what they expect out of the degree of the master program, but doctorate program is different, because you can work as an academic person. So for this reason in my eyes they are no longer teachers. I see them as candidate academic people. For this reason that's why it's secondary in my opinion the relevance of what we do in tasks and their working places.

It can be deduced that she has higher expectations from the learners of doctorate program because she considers them as future academics. Therefore, rather than relating the tasks and topics to their practices, she expects more academic approach from them. In terms of stating the significance of the tasks and the topics explicitly, except for the reactions which stems from the human nature, she thinks she does not do it in the doctorate program. She explains it metaphorically:

You are in the market and you are selling your product, this is very natural that you put value to your tasks, but for the doctorate program I don't enhance that kind of

selling metaphorically speaking, but for the master program yes, I can easily say that I'm putting value on it as well. There is always a part we discuss what they do in their classes or what they experience as learners or teachers or the general circumstances in Turkey, so when I give them a task or a study to examine, investigate autonomy, I think I'm implicitly putting a value on it: 'look its really something major'.

T3 puts emphasis on relating the learning task with the learners' practices to make them see the personal relevance and value of the learning task as well. He states that he specifically asks questions such as 'how do you use this?' or 'do you have such learners?' when there is some pedagogical aspect or some implications for the classroom in order to make it simpler and take the subject out of abstraction. He also emphasized the motivational effect of it by stating:

As a teacher, of course I realize this actually, when you ask such a real life question, you know they just wake up and ok yes..I mean attention and participation is more active when you relate the topic to real life situations, when you relate these theoretical aspects to classroom life.

He also considers stating the significance of the task and the topic as important. He thinks, in case of not doing it, students may skip this as unimportant information. Therefore, he tries to clearly state which parts, which theories, which concepts are more important for their profession and for the field.

T4 states the importance of the relevance of the topic in relating it to the personal practices of the learners. For instance, he states that students in the master program working at primary schools can easily integrate what they learnt in 'teaching English to young learners' class. Additionally, he considers the importance of explicitly stating the significance of the task or the topic. He stated that:



Generally I emphasize the important points during the class, while they are presenting, on some important points I also support them, I think it is important to state the importance of the topic because, of course all topics are important, but there are some topics that can be applied to real life situations, so they are more important for us.

**3.2.2. Purpose beyond the here and now (MA2).** For the mediation theory aspect of ‘purpose beyond the here and now’, the investigation in the semi-structured personal interviews was based on whether the academics try to make the learners be aware of the more general value of the task which means that what they have learnt will be necessary for the next steps.

T1 defines her role as showing the relevance of the topic with others and being critical especially in the doctorate program. Therefore, she states that she explicitly relates the future topics and the previous ones with the current topic because it is actually a building up process in her own words.

T2 stresses the importance of the aspect of ‘purpose beyond the here and now’ especially for the doctorate program because she thinks that the students in this program are a part of the academic life and have better opportunities to conduct studies or write dissertations. Therefore, she stated that:

I’m not putting a lot of extraordinary importance on it in the masters program, however in the doctorate program yes, because this is the idea I think they are gonna do certain studies and they are gonna prepare a dissertation so I think whenever you start talking about a topic I’m trying to give them idea that ‘oh well this might be worth studying, investigating’, so probably I have this internal drive for the students to see that it might really worth as a topic of investigation for their future dissertations or any other academic studies so that’s what I’m trying to do, open up a gate, if any interesting or challenging ideas come from the students, I usually say well this is

worth studying, so I usually put emphasis on like ‘waoww that’s a good thing’, so in a way I’m encouraging and motivating students. I think I have that kind of a major understanding for my doctorate students.

T3 also gives extra information or suggestions about how to relate one topic to another. However, according to him, post-graduate learners already know what they need to study and how they relate it to future studies. Thus, he does not give very detailed and clear instructions related to this aspect.

T4 puts special emphasis on this aspect. He states that his suggestions for further studies in the classes are important for the learners. He stated that:

It is important, for example students did their tasks and analyzed the articles about ‘educational change’ then synthesized them about what is commonly studied and for example suggestions for Turkey case, so I suggest them what they can study in Turkish case, how they can do it, what can be applicable in this context.

**3.2.3. Shared intention (MA3).** In order to examine academics’ views regarding ‘shared intention’ aspect of the mediation theory, they were questioned about the way they present their tasks in master and doctorate classes, whether they have due dates for the tasks, how they make sure that their instruction and intention is understood and reciprocated, their reactions when their instructions are not understood and the importance of having a common understanding with the students in these programs.

In terms of the way of presenting tasks, T1 draws attention to the importance of providing students with a course content in the very beginning of the term. Through this course content document, students can understand when and how to make presentations, exams, tasks, proposal submissions. She stated that: “I do have the course content, a detailed one, and I have my expectations. But obviously I need to repeat myself later when necessary

just before they give the presentations or just before they do the tasks”. Depending on the students’ effort, she states that she can be flexible about the dates of submission of the tasks. However, especially in the doctorate group, she claims that she does not give tasks anymore. She stated that:

If I think that the student needs some more time and if the writing needs more time, I might be flexible, but it depends on the students. If I think he or she is giving the effort, yes I would; but if I think that that person is not working at all, I would not be, so it depends on the individuals as well. So I am not very that strict.

Concerning the idea of establishing a shared intention in the class with the students, she thinks she is able to understand whether she has shared understanding with the learners or not through her experience. Direct questions, monitoring faces and behavior of the students, expectation of confirmation are the strategies she uses to have shared intention in the class. She gets directness to number one in the chart by stating that:

I think the direct questions and answers or direct feedback is working more effectively, just asking for example ‘is it clear?’ or ‘are you fine?’, ‘do you want to ask something?’ and when I ask them that kind of questions, generally few of them or at least one person would ask me a question. Sometimes it is not a direct question, it is more like a confirmation such as ‘am I right?’. ‘We are going to do this and that, is that right’, ‘is that what you mean?’, or ‘is that what you say?’. So I think directness is working, direct questions and direct feedback are working better with me.

In the case of misunderstandings, she expects a reaction from students because they are adults. However, if she feels the need to be clear, she either repeats or shows a sample from the previous years. As a result, she shows ultimate attention to having a shared intention

in the class with the students especially on the topics, evaluation and the timing. She summarizes the important points in her statement:

Firstly the themes and topics, the assessment or the evaluation and the timing, they need to be aware of these issues. But of course if there are other issues, we do talk and discuss. It doesn't have to be in classroom, but it might be outside the classroom or during the tutorials or it could be just coffee time or free time talking or it could be through the internet via e-mail and so on. It could be in small groups or individual, so it depends actually. The communication is important, communication with the students.

T2 prefers writing the details related to the task on the paper she delivers and also explains it orally in the class. However, when there is a necessity or when she forgets to write on the task an important point by mistake, she feels the need to elaborate on it orally.

When you write the task your expectations may not be clear, I mean you simply give students what they are to do, but your expectation as a teacher may not be very evident for example you generally put word limits there but sometimes these expectations are not really very explicit so when I think that task, sometimes actually I realize while I am doing explanations for example I say 'oh my god I simply skipped this' and then I start elaborating on my expectations as well.

She also states that she changes her tasks from one year to another except for some central tasks such as the task of 'learner autonomy'. Through these changes, she realizes the lacking parts in her explanations which allows her to correct them. She has due dates for the tasks given. It is obvious that she observes herself and tries to correct all her mistakes for the next group. She explains her style as a developing style in terms of giving instructions.

When the students cannot understand the instruction, she claims that she repeats and elaborates on her explanations. However, from a different perspective, she thinks that students need to understand the instructions themselves.

I can easily say that I'm not very generous about it, this might be a funny idea though but my other students survived, this is my idea, they should survive as well, it's a kind of a challenge because, they are not undergraduate students they are graduate students, they are capable of doing a lot of things that's why they are there anyway, so for this reason I'm not very generous in terms of showing good examples but if I really feel that they are really stuck and they are not going to be able to do it, the standards that I put there and then I show the good examples but most of the time I simply elaborate and make longer explanations.

In terms of negotiating the course plan and having a shared intention through interaction with the students, she thinks that she is flexible because the students in these programs are mature and they may have their own ideas which can easily be forgotten by the academic. She states that:

This is a graduate program of course there are things that we can do together but basically my role as an instructor is to open up gates in front of students, it's not like putting students in casts ok I have got a content and this content is 'the content', we are not gonna step out of it..that kind of thing, I don't have that kind of an approach because I do believe that students should develop by looking at different things and these different things may easily lay out, out of that content that I draw up, so for this reason I always allow my students a chance to negotiate to change actually but frankly only a few times my students usually come up with new ideas out of the syllabus that I

draw up... so that's why I always allow my students to have a say in the content or the syllabus of the program.

T3 also presents a course outline in the beginning of the term which includes the details related to the class. If he gives another task which is not on this course content, he usually prepares a worksheet in which everything is written including some guiding questions, limitations, some of the questions that the students will ask. He presents the due dates and page limits in these documents.

He checks whether students understand the instructions or not by asking direct questions. When they cannot understand the instructions, he makes them simpler and he gives extra examples. To have a shared intention in the classroom with the learners is also important for T3. He states that:

I have something in my mind that they should be achieving, but if I'm not giving this image, this aim in my mind, I mean sharing this correctly, then of course their expectations will be different. So, I will be disappointed. To prevent this, I usually try to describe what my expectations are. So, I try to give some concrete and simple examples and I try to describe and I also ask some questions so that they should be able to read my intention. In the end we should be on the same glass in terms of what we expect from the course, from the task.

T4 emphasized the significance of negotiating the course outline together with the learners. Thus, in his classes he has the students in the center.

In master program, 'educational change' is a new course, in semester holiday I planned what we can do in weeks and how we can do it. I mostly decide the content with the students, I choose many topics, for example if we have 16 weeks, I choose around 20-22 topics, so they choose the ones which they think will be beneficial for themselves so we create the syllabus together, I also add like 'self-study' or 'library

work' weeks so that they can feel a little bit relaxed and they can study themselves, so I have students centered syllabus design.

In terms of having a shared intention, he not only decides the content together with the students but also he asks clarifying questions to make it sure that students understand all the instructions. In the case of misunderstandings, he prefers repeating his explanations and showing a good example of it.

I want the students to clarify the task to check whether they understood or not, for example 'so what will we do'? If I planned it before and I have a ready example of it, I prefer to show it, like 'look we will do it like this', because we made an article analysis before, I said 'I want something like this' to my students this term by showing a sample.

**3.2.4. A sense of competence (MA4).** As a student, becoming a successful student is not easy in doctorate and master programs. Therefore, it is possible to have moments in this long process when students cannot write a research paper, present a topic or write the thesis. Concerning 'a sense of competence' aspect of the mediation theory, academics were asked questions about how they try to make their learners become self-confident.

T1 highlighted the individual or group tutorials in serving for the purpose of making learners become self-confident. The tutorials in her classes are not compulsory, but students commonly prefer to get in order to see their mistakes. Together with these tutorials where students have the chance of getting one-to-one or small group feedback, students also get appreciation in T1's classes as a comment of their work. She believes in the power of the appreciation in the class because she personally experienced it. T1 does this on purpose to strengthen their self-confidence and motivation in these programs. She stated that:

When I was a student, I wanted to hear that kind of appreciation, I did not have that kind of appreciation for example like ‘ok that was a good job, I really liked it, that was a good idea’. I do it when there is a new idea for example. Yes, I want to appreciate time, effort and especially the creativity and I do tell them. I think it would boost their confidence which might serve as a model for the others as well. So they would actually learn and get the insights from the previous students. They want to be appreciated so I try not be so harsh, especially with the PhD students because they are already teachers so I need to be more careful.

T2, looking from a different perspective, emphasizes the importance of the effort of the students and the relationship between the student and the academic in master and doctorate programs as the key factors determining her struggle in trying to make the learners self-confident. Basically, she considers students’ becoming self-confident important. However, the student selection system for these programs requires them just to look at average points and some test scores of the students. Therefore, as academics, they do not really have a clear understanding of their students’ capabilities as academic people or academic thinking. She states the possibility of having students in the programs who cannot meet their expectations.

Sometimes unfortunately what you have from the students, their intellectual and academic capacity can be lower than your expectations, unfortunately this might not be a very good approach, but sometimes when I feel that what I’m trying to do is way beyond what they are capable of intellectually and academically, I’m a little bit reserved, so I don’t really encourage too much but some students are really very bright, it’s worth making that investment, because when you are giving that encouragement for example through academic papers they write because you give feedback to the students, and sometimes I spend hours to give feedback to my learners



because they deserve it I believe, they have the intellectual and academic capacity, they are gonna walk through a direction, they are gonna become academic people for sure that's how I feel.

Although when she feels that the students in these programs cannot meet their expectations, she can be reserved and stingy in encouraging them, on the other hand when she feels that the student is successful, she supports that student by giving longer feedback or offering to write a paper for a conference together. She calls this effort as investment in student.

T3 also encourages students to have a higher self-confidence. He compares undergraduate and master and doctorate students in terms of their need for encouragement. He states that, regardless of the program, all students need some booster, some encouragement to feel that they can do it. He tries to make it come true by stating that the students are already knowledgeable about the topics.

I say for example 'you all know these things', 'in practice you are all doing these things', but this is the theoretical part so you are experienced about whatever we talk, the only thing you have to do is to try to understand these theoretical aspects and relate them to your own practices as teachers, so whatever you are doing is actually something very simple, you can do it, and actually you should be able to do it as a graduate student, later you will do PhD etc.'. 'So these are the necessary steps for your future life, and if you are here, yes you can do it, kind of attitude, so you have this background.'

T4 came up with an idea for encouraging students to have better self-confidence in these programs depending on his own experience as a master student. He suggested 'from easy to difficult' approach and group work as methods.

Maybe we can make it from easy to difficult or maybe I can make them work in groups of 2 or 3 so that they can feel confident. Although this is my first year in master classes and I always made the students work individually, I think that when they work in pairs or groups instead of being alone, it would be more helpful for them because they would motivate each other or when one of them gets stuck, the other one can support.

**3.2.5. Control of own behavior (MA5).** In order to investigate the use and perceptions of the academics regarding ‘control of own behavior’, they were questioned whether they guide learners to use the necessary skills and strategies to control and regulate students’ own learning. The main point is the academics’ attempt to make them autonomous learners.

T1 does not think that she teaches specific strategies to make them autonomous learners, rather she becomes a model for them. She considers her way of behaving in the discussions she leads or the feedback she provides are the sources for the learners.

T2 considers this kind of effort as the responsibility of the supervisors. If she is not the supervisor of a student, she states that she does not have much control of her/his learning or studies. Therefore, generally she does not guide learners to use the necessary skills and strategies to control and regulate their own learning. It becomes possible only if they have a close relationship as a student and supervisor.

T3 thinks that most of the students in the doctorate and master programs already have the ability to control and regulate their own learning. They are mature enough to have this ability. Therefore, he does not give such specific instructions for individual students in class. If there is a need, he states that they do it in one-to-one out of class sessions.

In terms of this aspect, T4 makes more obvious efforts compared to other academics. He claims that he helps students in reaching the library databases or some online books which allow them to study on their own.

Students sometimes ask about how to access the library database, I help them, they ask about the websites for books, I knew some of them so I offered them, but of course the most important thing is to learn how to learn, now they know how to teach and during the process of master and doctorate they will be open to learning, so I try to guide them how to learn, how to self-study.

**3.2.6. Goal setting (MA6).** Academics were questioned whether they allow the students in doctorate and master program to set their own realistic goals and pursue them. T1 states that she allows them to design their own researches, presentations or choose their own topics. However, she plays the role of a controller who puts the plans in the doable framework. She stated that:

Sometimes they are so ambitious so they might feel like they can solve many problems about teacher education and teaching English and so on which is not realistic but hopeful, joyful, but it would not work. So I limit their topic, research area, research questions or maybe that research instrument is not proper for that stuff. Actually I try to shape and modify their perspective. Otherwise they are generally too big, too passionate which I do appreciate but it is not doable, it is not practical.

T2 divides the goals of the students into two: personal and content related goals. If the students' goal is to discuss a specific topic and put it in the course content, she is very open to it. However, in terms of personal goals there is not enough contact which would allow her to know their targets. Therefore, she considers students' personal goals as their responsibilities.

Unfortunately, we cannot really develop really close relations with our students, it's very formal in most of the cases, for example we don't know really where they come

from, who they are, what their background is etc. I have very little information about my students. So they are students and I'm their instructor that is the formal relationship, but in terms of course content yes. There is always this space, but in terms of their own personal goals if they share these with me, if they feel that they confident with me and open up their personal ideas, definitely I give advice, tell them where to go what to do...otherwise personal goals...No I don't go into that territory.

Both T3 and T4 agree on the idea that setting the goals is the responsibility of the learners and they do not have special effort in it. Similar to T2, they also allow the learners to join the discussion of forming the course content.

**3.2.7. Challenge (MA7).** For the mediation theory aspect of 'challenge', academics were questioned in terms of their own evaluation of the tasks they use in doctorate and master programs, the level of challenge of these tasks, and if they use, the reason of using challenging tasks in these programs.

T1 emphasizes the importance of relevance of the task with the topic and the course itself. She specifically wants the learners to see the relations. She considers conducting a research as the challenging task in her classes. However, she tries to ease the process for the students.

In terms of the level of challenge, she considers what students are actually doing as challenging not just because of the research topic or the process but rather the circumstances they are in, such as being a teacher or travelling for long periods. Above all, they are going to write a thesis after the course period. Thus, they need to be knowledgeable about the research process.

I want them to read about the topic. It could be about universal issues about in and out of Turkey so which can be a challenge because they are actually practitioners, they are actually busy people and they are also travelling from their own cities. So, the learning

process, reading, thinking about practices, being critical, finding the relations are challenging issues. After the course period, they will be in research phase, so therefore I am trying to prepare them for that phase.

T2 puts emphasis on research writing task and also article reading. She considers these two tasks as the indispensable part of the doctorate and master programs. She also diagnoses why students mostly find her tasks quite hard. It is because students are not ready for that task and also the time limitation they have for each task. However, she is aware of the fact that students in both programs cannot do the tasks in exactly the way she asks for. Therefore, she requires students to do their bests, and when she realizes this effort, she ignores some drawbacks in the papers.

I think the biggest problem why they find my tasks challenging not because my tasks are challenging because level of readiness is not up to the task. What do I do? I basically lower my expectations, this is what I do, I tell 'do your best and I'm going to overlook certain drawbacks in your papers'. Most of my students would be happier, for example my masters group, if my master class is the second term because they would have been prepared in terms of research and doing small scale researches, then the second term they would be doing my kind of tasks easier, but for my doctorate students I think I'm pretty insensitive right? But let me just say I don't have impossibly high standards, I don't share this maybe with my students but I have this kind of 'fifty fifty-do your best and I'm going to do my best' kind of thing.

She also focuses on the team spirit of the academics having classes in both programs. They communicate about the tasks they give and they balance the level of challenge. She accepts that students need to do a lot of tasks, but she also considers it as the part of becoming an academic person. She especially emphasizes the significance of article reading.

They have to read the book chapters or articles and they have to write the reactions to it, I think article reading is a very central issue in doctorate and master program. Probably my demands about article reading is due to this kind of perception of my own, article reading opens up new gates for the students that's what I believe anyway... but in terms of research based tasks I think they are challenging in terms of time constraints number one, I don't think I'm sensitive to be honest, I mean students have a lot of other tasks and I'm not the only teacher they are writing research paper for, but then again sometimes I ask my friends and if I hear that my colleagues are not doing research based tasks, I specifically put emphasis on it because to me a master or doctorate program cannot be run without research especially doctorate program. They have to do a lot of small scale but doable of course in terms of time in terms of effort because they are going to be academic people.

T3 generally gives presentation of the topics and a research paper as the tasks. The main objective is to consolidate the topics they study in the classroom. He thinks that the tasks are challenging not because of the external reasons but because most of the time the topic is new to them in master program.

Some of these tasks are new for these students, so they are somehow challenged and they come to me and we talk about them and they are relieved after learning about the details, yes they are still challenging but they can do it, but it requires some effort and that's what I say to the students so you can do this but it requires some effort.

According to T4, the challenging task for the master group is writing a research paper. However, his main objective is to let the learners fully grasp the topic. Therefore, he does not want learners to conduct a research in all his classes.

**3.2.8. Awareness of change (MA8).** Academics were also questioned about the changes students experience and whether they try to let the learners develop an ability to

recognize, monitor and assess the changes in themselves in the period of doctorate and master programs.

T1 focuses on the issue of maturation in students. She realizes that students change in this long process. She thinks that the best way to understand the changes students experience is their direct confession. She states that she has experienced it in her classes several times.

T2 generally realizes the changes students have as a result of a group discussion at the end of each course. She specifically asks about their personal evaluation of the class orally. She thinks that students express their ideas frankly. Students generally come up with new ideas or they criticize the tasks or the time spent on a particular topic. Therefore, she finds it quite useful. However, she considers doing it written as well.

T3 explicitly states that he does not try to let the learners develop an ability to recognize, monitor and assess the changes in themselves. Hence, he has not questioned students whether they see such changes in themselves or not.

T4 starts each class with a feedback session in which they discuss about what they have discussed last week. He aims to measure the changes in students in this way.

We have a feedback session every week at the very beginning of each class about what we talked about last week. So I can say that by having these feedback sessions I aim to measure what kind of changes occurred on students. Students become aware of the topic, for example in what fields I can make a research, or what I can research in my case, so a considerable awareness occurs among students about these.

**3.2.9. A belief in positive outcomes (MA9).** ‘A belief in positive outcomes’ aspect of mediation theory is an important aspect for the context of post-graduate studies because of several different reasons, such as problems learners experience, lack of research knowledge or experience or time limitations. Academics’ perspectives in terms of this aspect were gathered

as a response to the question of whether they encourage their learners to believe that there is always a solution to any problem when they get stuck in their learning to meet the requirements of these programs.

T1 particularly focuses on the trust between the students and herself. She states that she can be flexible or she is ready to help the students if there is an important problem and if they personally share with her. However, she emphasizes the trust issue because she is also aware of the fact that the students may misuse it.

If there is a reasonable problem and if they share with me, yes I do. But if I think that the certain particular students are not putting much effort, I think I might not. But if I think that despite effort, there are still some problems beyond his or her control, I would be quite flexible. They might also have something in their schools such as conducting exams and so on, or they might be sent to a meeting, if there is that kind of an issue, if they are ill, I am talking about serious illnesses, yea I would, but it depends on the trust issue, I mean 'can I depend on that person?', like that.

T2 does not have a special interest in understanding the problems students have unless students come and talk to her. She states that she can be flexible in terms of the task submission deadlines and any other problems. However, the way students approach identifies the way she approaches the students in this manner.

This is adult education as I said before it's very difficult to know what kinds of problem they are having if they do not tell you anything. But if they drop a mail talking about their problems, I always give that room and I can be flexible.

T3 also considers himself as a flexible academic in terms of the problems students may have. Especially, when students come and talk about their problems, he states that he tries to relieve and offer some encouragement as positive feedback.



T4 prefers talking about the difficulties he experienced during his doctorate program in order to show students that they can overcome the specific problem they have. Additionally, he tries to guide them about how to plan or how they can use the time management most efficiently.

**3.2.10. Sharing (MA10).** How the academics encourage sharing in and out of the doctorate and master classes was investigated during the semi-structured personal interviews conducted with the academics as well.

T1 encourages students to have an understanding of sharing in doctorate program by having different sharing activities, such as pair work, joint presentations, and article writing. She emphasizes the importance of the friendships during the doctorate programs for future collaboration.

We do sometimes have pair work, sometimes I want them to discuss an issue with a partner. Sometimes, depending on the number of students, there might be joint presentations or joint proposals. I told them that which I believe in that PhD is a friendship and it is very important because they are mature enough, they are already practitioners, they have similar goals and responsibilities. Therefore I told them, even after the courses or even when you graduate, just work with each other because actually PhD friendship or the partnership who are also your own colleagues, they need to keep communication, which is also about future collaboration, for future partnership.

T2 also supports the idea of sharing in the classes. She especially focuses on this aspect in the master program. The reason to use group works or group discussions in her classes is to encourage all participants to speak and check whether they read the necessary sections. Moreover, she believes in the positive effect of student-student interaction rather than teacher-student interaction. Therefore, she puts students in group discussions and joins

those groups to add her ideas. However, she criticizes the number of students enrolled in recent years.

The past groups frequently over numbered, in the early years of the doctorate program and also the masters program we had fewer number of students four, five etc. So most of the time having a small discussion and then turning it to a teacher-students interaction was beneficial, but now the groups are larger, so I don't think that its beneficial to do it as teacher to students because number one there are always silent students, and in my opinion if somebody is in the master or doctorate program they don't have the luxury to be silent in the group. They have to voice their ideas, at least I have to understand that through their discussions among their friends ok they have read it, they have analyzed it, they have certain evaluations in their mind, after all they are going to be academic people and this is a preparation stage, if they are not evaluating or analyzing how will they be doing it later in their dissertations or in their future lives?

T3 also agrees with other academics in terms of having a cooperation in master classes. He thinks that it is generally more beneficial for students to work in pairs or in a group especially for the challenging tasks such as writing a research paper. He also thinks that if students cannot handle these tasks alone, they develop negative attitudes toward the class and the program. Therefore, it is much better to let them get help from each other by sharing.

T4 had a small group of students last term in master program. This experience made him believe that working in the group helps all group members. He stated that with that collaboration, they had three end products at the end of the term.

**3.2.11. Individuality (MA11).** In terms of 'individuality', academics were questioned about their effort to develop a sense that the learners can think and feel different from others in the class. T1 emphasizes asking about first hand experiences of the students in terms of this

aspect. She thinks asking questions about how they handle a problem or they teach a certain aspect of grammar encourages them to think that they are different from other students.

T2 considers students' expressions of their ideas in the classes as a chance of reflecting their own way of thinking. She tries to value students' ideas because she thinks they are generally over 30 year of age and they have wonderful background as teachers. Therefore, what they say individually in the class is important for T2.

T3 also gives students a freedom of expressing their ideas in the classes. He states that these ideas may be in line with the book or can be counter arguments. He also presents his ideas by starting with 'I personally agree or disagree'.

T4 criticizes himself in this respect because of not showing specifically individual mistakes. He thinks that he generally supports the good ideas or presentations of the students, however he does not criticize the lacking parts.

**3.2.12. A sense of belonging (MA12).** Academics were questioned about their effort to create a sense of belonging in their post-graduate classes. T1 considers this as a natural product of being a master or doctorate student. She thinks that students need to feel and behave like a group to survive during these programs. However, rather than doing it explicitly, she thinks it happens implicitly.

I think they all have their favorite friends, which seems to be quite natural. Yes they do work together and I am aware of that. I think the course itself or the program itself bounds everybody together I mean the students, you know it is kind of glue. You know they all need to survive in a way in the program, and they need to collaborate to pass because they need to learn from each other. It is kind of a natural process but obviously I told them to work together in the future as well. Then they would have collaboration and corporation which is a very good thing.

T2 thinks that she does not have a direct contribution to creating a sense of belongingness in these programs because of lack of time. However, she realizes that it happens naturally. As T1 states, she also thinks that students need to come together and feel like a group in order to be successful and pass.

T3 states that he has a specific aim to have a sense of belongingness in the master program in order to have motivated students, and in order to create a better learning atmosphere in the eyes of the students.

Out of class we talk to each other, I give feedback, sometimes when we have free time we can have a cup of tea and have some talk, so I think it helps them to feel a member of this community as a department or as a class, and I think they don't have problems in terms of this belongingness issue.

T4 considers belongingness from a broader perspective. He thinks that students in the master program feel that they belong to the master students' group. However, he does not think that students have a specific sense of belongingness to the group they study with in master program.

### **3.3. The Differences between Perceptions and Actual Practices of Academics**

For the first two research questions, the actual practice of the academics in terms of using mediation aspects in their doctorate and master classes and their perceptions of how they use them were presented above. For the question provided below, the difference, if any, between the actual practice of the academics and their perceptions of mediation theory aspects will be presented.

*R. Q. 3. Do the academics' perceptions about the importance of different aspects of mediation differ from their actual practice in doctorate and master programs of ELT department?*

First of all, how the academics put the aspects of mediation theory into action does not differ much from their perceptions related to these aspects. It was obvious for most of the aspects that when the academics emphasized the importance of it, they were observed to use it somehow in their classes. However, some differences were also found. Below are the mismatches between the actual practices in the classes and the academics' perceptions gathered through semi-structured personal interviews. The mediation theory aspects about which there was no difference between the actual practices in the classes and the academics' perceptions were not listed here.

***Purpose beyond the here and now (MA2)***

T1 claims that she always explicitly relates the future and previous topics with the current ones in her classes. However, such an example was not observed in her classes. However, it should not be forgotten that students are very active in the discussions in her classes. Thus, most of the time the relations between the future or past topics with the current ones are established by the students in their individual or joint presentations.

***Shared Intention (MA3)***

In terms of having a shared intention with the students in the classes, T2 claims that she shows a good example of a task from the previous years so that the students can understand how they will do the task when they are stuck. It is clear that she does this when there is a serious problem in understanding how to write the task. However, although students could not understand exactly how they should write the task and they asked some questions related to it in some of the observed classes, she did not prefer showing a good example from the previous years. This might be related to her idea provided below:

I can easily say that I'm not very generous about it, this might be a funny idea though but my other students survived, this is my idea, they should survive as well, it's a kind

of a challenge because, they are not undergraduate students they are graduate students, they are capable of doing a lot of things that's why they are there anyway.

It is also possible to claim that the incomprehension level of the students might not have reached the serious level that would require showing a good example according to her own evaluation.

#### ***Control of own behavior (MA5)***

In terms of this aspect, though there was no obvious example or statement showing the use of this aspect, T1 played the role of a model deliberately to show how they should guide themselves in order to regulate their learning. Therefore, despite no explicit statement directing learners to guide themselves to learn, she chose the most effective way by modeling.

#### ***Awareness of change (MA8)***

Although T1's statements were not considered as an example of this aspect in the observations, students explicitly stated the changes they experienced without prompt of T1. Thus, 'awareness of change' took place in T1's classes despite lack of reinforcement from T1. T3 claimed that he did not try to let the learners understand that they change during this program. However, in his classes he was observed to use expressions such as "Read a lot about your research topic, don't forget it. When you read more you will be more knowledgeable about this class too so you will realize that you feel better here in class" (06.03.2014) or "First this chapter may seem to be complex for you especially for the newcomers but in time it will be easier for you, don't worry" (10.10.2014). Therefore, maybe not very often, but without noticing he uses this aspect in his classes.

### **3.4. Students' Evaluation of Mediation Theory Aspects**

So far the result have been presented from the perspectives of academics. However, the important role of the students in master and doctorate classes cannot be denied. Therefore,

two focus group interviews were conducted with master and doctorate students in order to gather their perspectives in terms of mediation theory aspects and their use in their programs.

*R. Q. 4. How do the doctorate and master students of ELT department consider the different aspects of mediation as they experience them?*

**3.4.1. Significance (MA1).** Firstly, master students obviously pay attention to their academics' efforts to relate the learning task with their practices to see the personal relevance and value of the learning task. In terms of explicitly stating the importance of a specific topic, master students consider that they need this kind of information in order to value a topic. M3 states that: "Well, it is important because their perspective is broader, we do not possess all knowledge, we are learning step by step, so I think their stating explicitly that something is important will help us in the future studies". Secondly, master students mostly think that academics' statement of importance about a topic is guiding for them. However, they also ask for a concrete example showing the significance of that particular topic.

Doctorate students, on the other hand, consider that whether the academics' relating the learning task with their practices depends on the course and their practices. For instance, D1 and D5 give examples in which task-daily practice relationship is very high, D1: "Yes, for example we have it a lot in T1's class", D5: "Yes it is already related to teaching, so it is related to our practices".

From a broader perspective, the doctorate students agree on the fact that their tasks and what they learn and discuss in their classes are in relation with their daily practices. However, there are some counter ideas as well.

D4: If you mean the effects of what we learn here during classes on our active teaching life, I think I am negative. I tried to deduce on my own but mostly it did not

work. So there is not a good match I guess. But T1's class was more beneficial in terms of this.

The overall idea among the doctorate students is that ELT is a very broad term; therefore it eventually touches upon their daily practices somehow. Additionally, similar to the responses of the master students, doctorate students also consider their academics' explicitly stating the importance of a specific topic as guiding.

D5: I think by this way they let us know the current developments in our field of study. For example they may say 'this has been the most commonly studied topic recently' or they can say 'it is currently a hot issue' or 'it is a unique topic' or 'there is a need for research in this area'.

Academics' views and how they present them are very important in shaping the doctorate students' decisions. One student exemplified it from his own experience: D1: "For example what teacher mentioned about service learning took my attention and I researched it and now I am trying to base my thesis on it".

**3.4.2. Purpose beyond the here and now (MA2).** Master students think that especially T2 and T4 use this mediation theory aspect in their classes. They consider it as a kind of guide and help for themselves. In this respect M3 states that: "Yes, they generally do it. T2 does, T4 also states like 'this is a good subject for research; your point of view may be like this'".

According to doctorate students, use of this aspect in the classes has both positive and negative effects. They think that it is important because it is guiding for them. However at the same time, an opposite idea was provided as well:



D2: I think it is too idealistic, I mean when you try to do it, you actually block learning thoroughly and deeply. I mean when you think it will affect my all life and I need to cover everything, sometimes the result is not very positive.

**3.4.3. Shared Intention (MA3).** Concerning the aspect of ‘shared intention’, master students were questioned about their academics’ way of explaining their tasks, the ideal way of presenting tasks, how the instruction and intention is understood by the students, what they do in case of a misunderstanding and the importance of shared intention in the classes.

Students claim that academics mostly provide their task explanations in a written form and then support it with oral explanation. They consider T2’s explanation as the most detailed one. M4 states that: “T2 gives the most detailed one because the paper she gave us in the beginning of the term included every detail”. The details include the due dates, the word limit, the sources, and all the necessary information related to the preparation of the paper. Students also think that T2 is always ready to change in terms of her style in presenting tasks. When they do not understand clearly, T2 states that she needs to explain better to be much clearer for the next term.

Students in the master program generally ask directly when there is a misunderstanding in tasks. They think that academics understand this from their writings. Supporting this idea M4 states that: “Generally after they read our tasks or papers, during giving feedback they understand it”.

Regarding the presentation of the tasks, students expect to get written instructions supported by oral explanations in order not to have any misunderstanding. In addition, timing is another concern for the students. Complaining about the time constraint, M3 states that: “I think the date of the task should be given in advance as well in order to schedule our program better”.

Doctorate students claim that the academics generally prefer giving the instructions while presenting the tasks. The written form is generally in the course content paper format. D2 explains the form of contents academics provide: “Actually they generally give us a course content which includes what kind of tasks they expect, how many tasks there will be during that course”. However, students also have some criticisms about the presentation of the tasks. They complain about the randomness and that only some academics provide it. D1 criticizes how the tasks are presented by comparing it with his previous experiences: “Actually when I compare it with what I had in my master program, here it is quite random, without plan, it is not clear. Examples are not provided. What is expected is sometimes not clear”. However, according to D5, it depends on the academics individually: “Actually it depends on the teacher. While some of them give more details about tasks and provide examples, but some of them just write it on the course content roughly in general terms”.

In addition, students claim that they sometimes do not have a shared understanding with the teachers in terms of tasks because they do not present an example of a good task or the one representing their expectations. D1 states that: “For example, there is a general style that they expect and because they don’t give us an example, what we propose is sometimes rejected”.

Students claim that all academics have due dates for the tasks and they only understand that something is not clearly understood when they read the students’ papers. Students generally try to solve the problems by asking questions to each other. D5 explains it: “We also ask each other. I mean generally when we don’t understand; firstly we ask each other to check whether just I did not understand or someone else as well”. It can be seen that students have a kind of hesitation to ask directly to the teacher. Therefore, they prefer peer check first.

**3.4.4. A Sense of Competence (MA4).** Students in the master program are well aware of their potential and they believe that they can achieve well what is required from them in this program. When they were questioned in terms of their academics' effort to make students become self-confident, they think that they do not get individual support from academics in this respect. It is interesting that students are mostly aware of the expectations of the academics and they do not expect help from them. M3 emphasizes the expectations of the academics by stating that: "I think they think that only the ones who can overcome this problem should come to this program". Similarly M4 thinks that they are adults and they do not need support in this respect in the eyes of academics: "Yes, most probably because they think that we graduated from an undergraduate program and we already have teaching profession".

However, although they are adults and they are teachers, they still consider themselves as students and it will never change as long as they are students. As a natural reaction of feeling like a student, they evaluate academics' individual feedback in the classroom among the group members as both positive and negative.

M2: I think, in one sense it decreases the self-confidence of others who are not named. If she tells my name but doesn't name my friend's name, it can be a disadvantage for my friend. I mean psychologically. Because not everyone can understand it the same way.

M3: Yes, the others may feel like they will not be able to do the following tasks.

Students in the master program prefer getting feedback individually instead of hearing academics' comments in a group atmosphere. For instance, M2 states that: "I think it can be better if it is done individually".

M1: Showing our pros and cons is important, but individually, not in a group. Actually showing our lacking parts is a way of strengthening our self-confidence. But when your name is told in a group, then you can understand like ‘ok my friend can do it but I cannot’.

Doctorate students are also aware of the fact that they are graduate students and they do not need extra support from teachers to be motivated. In terms of individual support, they criticize about feedback process.

D2: I think the feedback issue is a little weak. We mostly don’t get written or oral feedback about our studies. For example we submitted a proposal but we did not get any feedback about it. Personally speaking, there were not clear explanations in the feedbacks I got, so I couldn’t understand how it can guide me. I got feedback one time from T2 and it was the best one for me.

Regarding academics’ support to make learners self-confident, students think that they all have internal motivation in this program. Only D3 expressed his experience in this respect: “Actually it happened to me. I failed from one class. I talked to a teacher and I got support from him when I lost my motivation. I mean it worked on me”.

**3.4.5. Control of own behavior (MA5).** In terms of controlling their own learning and regulating it, students in the master program were questioned about being autonomous learners and their academics’ efforts for it. Master students mostly think that they are not autonomous enough due to several reasons and they need assistance.

M1: Especially in terms of what is more important or valuable, we don’t know because we don’t have enough knowledge yet. Or from my point of view, I lack in some points. For example I was abroad when my friends in undergraduate degree

studied research class, so I didn't study it. And now I feel the lack of it. And in this respect I need a pioneer or a guide at this point.

Concerning academics' efforts to guide learners to use the necessary skills and strategies to control and regulate their own learning, students think that it depends on the academic. Especially, T2 suggests extra readings and suggests some revisions on their research papers which they find beneficial.

Doctorate students, on the other hand, think that they are already controlling their own learning and academics do not have impact on their becoming autonomous learners. D2 suggests that: "I think they (academics) already consider that we have high readiness level in terms of this". They consider being autonomous as a must in the doctorate program.

**3.4.6. Goal Setting (MA6).** In terms of 'goal setting', the students of master and doctorate programs agree on the belief that they follow the goals of the teachers because they are already set. They complain about the time limitation. They just meet in the class for a limited time and start the classes. However, especially for T2's classes, students are pleased with the course plan which means they would not want to add their own goals or interests into her plan because it already covers everything.

M2: I think we follow teachers' goals. Because the classes are generally set and chosen, so we don't have the right to choose. So for the course period, I need to do what is required from those classes, but during the thesis period in terms of choosing a topic, it will be more personal.

M3: Some classes are very well planned really, for example T2's class.

**3.4.7. Challenge (MA7).** Concerning the level of challenge of the tasks in the master program, students are mostly pleased. However, they complain about the intensity of the classes and the time limitation.

M3: Actually the intensity of classes is challenging for us. Maybe we can't concentrate on each class well enough, it would be much better, if there were fewer burdens on us. For example, instead of making 4 presentations, if we make just 2, we can make better presentations. Personally speaking, many times I don't pay much attention to the tasks or presentations I prepare if I have more than what I can do in one week.

In addition, master students also think that there are some overlaps between the courses. It is not very common, but sometimes they discuss about a previously discussed topic in another class which makes it useless according to their evaluation. Rather than complaining about the challenge level of the tasks, students think that they need longer period of time for the tasks generally.

M2: Maybe it is ideal, but just the time is not enough. Because we need to do certain things in our work as well, of course this is our responsibility but at least when I put myself in their shoes, I would say 'ok I can give two weeks for this task instead of giving just one week'. So the time can be longer for tasks.

Doctorate students claim that they mostly get research tasks in their classes and they are generally based on their creativity. In terms of the lacking parts, they complain about the lack of guidance and feedback. T2's tasks are found to be the most challenging tasks among doctorate students. They are also pleased with the challenge level of the tasks in the doctorate program.

D4: Feedback is problematic. I pay special attention to feedback because it will be my job. For example, when I write a research paper or a task, I want to learn where I make mistakes instead of just getting mark or grade. That is why it is very important.

D1: I think if there is more and better guidance, it can be more challenging, but in the present situation it is ideal I guess.

**3.4.8. Awareness of change (MA8).** Students were also questioned about whether they realize the changes in themselves. Master students think that this program brings in a new perspective. They value T2's class in terms of this.

Doctorate students believe that they have changed as well. They think that their practice in their own institutions also change. They claim that being a doctorate student in this department also changes the way other people's behaviors toward them.

D5: I think your conversations with your colleagues change as well. For example, I observe an increase in the conversations I make with the assistant professors or associated professors or professors in my own institution as a person who is studying at an ELT doctorate program.

D1: Yes it is certain that there is an academic progress.

D3: It is also effective in my classes, for example, I use what I learn from T1's class in my classes, so it is also a change.

**3.4.9. A belief in positive outcomes (MA9).** In master and doctorate programs, students have many problems, such as travelling long time or lacking knowledge in conducting researches. Students were questioned about the roles academics play in the process of overcoming these problems. Students in both programs have not received any kind of individual help from academics in these programs. However, they also state that if they shared their problem, they would receive help. Students do not seem to be troubled with the lack of individual support because they are aware of the fact that they are considered to be mature enough by the academics to solve the problems.

M2: I think we don't have such an expectation. Their way of behaving is certain I guess. It is like 'you do it for yourself', or maybe there is not sincerity between us as we had in undergraduate degree. For example, when we were undergraduate students, we could

easily go to our teacher and talk about our problems but here teachers have already other classes and other works and it is not possible to find them individually. And if you want to get idea from them, then how much do they know you? So I think it is limited.

M3: I think teachers have the idea that only the ones who can survive should go on.

It is also obvious that students complain about the busy timetables of the academics and they also accept that they do not share their problems with the academics as they used to do in their undergraduate programs.

**3.4.10. Sharing (MA10).** In terms of 'sharing', students were questioned about their preferences. In both programs, most of the students do not live in the same cities. Therefore, it becomes not possible for them to work together out of the class. Additionally, when the task is to write, students mostly prefer working alone.

M1: I support working together to understand the topic better, but the process of writing is more personal I guess. But in order to understand a topic, I prefer working with a small group of friends and learning from them instead of reading alone.

**3.4.11. Individuality (MA11).** Concerning 'individuality', students in master program think that academics behave equally to themselves and they think that there is no time allocated to individual development. Students from both programs claim that they can express their own ideas in the classes independently. Doctorate students think that academics consider them as a team rather than individuals.

**3.4.12. A sense of belonging (MA12).** Students in both programs were also questioned about whether they have a good classroom atmosphere in their programs and whether the academics try to create a sense of belonging in their classes. Firstly, students in both programs express that they feel like a part of a group in their programs. They also consider this feeling as very important due to several reasons. For instance, M3 suggests that “I think yes, because



if you have that feeling you want to come to class”. From another perspective, D4 considers that it is important for students success “when there is a harmony, we have better results. I mean we have a cooperative atmosphere”. D6 also expresses the feeling of a student in a class in which there is a high level of belonging feeling “you feel yourself calm for example when you are making a presentation. You don’t feel the threat that they will criticize you. You feel that they are my friends and they will consider what’s best for me”.

Master students think that academics have a friendly mood toward them. However, they also claim that there has not been a particular effort of the academics in order to create a sense of belonging in their programs due to the time limit of the teachers. M1 states that: “we also need to say that they don’t have time for it. But we didn’t experience such an effort from the teachers’ side”.

Doctorate students think that there is a great deal of respect among the students and between the students and the teachers. They claim that they have the feeling of belonging especially in T1’s classes. On the other hand, there are not many opportunities for the doctorate students to meet out of the classes. They generally have communication via e-mail. However, they are pleased with the group they are in. D4 describes the atmosphere in their group by stating that: “I think we have a very good group dynamics here, everyone reads a lot and of course you read a lot in order not to fall behind”.

### **3.5. The Differences between the Views of Students and Academics Regarding**

#### **Mediation Theory Aspects**

Academics' and doctorate and master program students' perspectives related to the different aspects of mediation theory aspects have already been provided as answers of research questions two and four respectively. For the last research question of this study, the views of students from both doctorate and master programs and the views of academics will be compared to each other.

*R. Q. 5. Are there any differences between the students' (doctorate and master) and academics' views about the different aspects of mediation?*

**3.5.1. Significance (MA1).** 'Significance' aspect of the mediation theory has been evaluated from two perspectives: the explicit declaration of the significance of the topic or the task, and the relation of the topics with the students' daily practices. First of all, all the academics agree on the fact that they need to explicitly state the importance of the topic in their master and doctorate classes. However, in terms of relating the topic and the task with the students' daily practices, T2 provides a different point of view. She considers that what students do in these programs may not be similar to their daily practices due to the academic nature of these programs. However, instead of asking students whether they have experienced specific topics in their working places, she mostly suggests students to conduct their researches in their own institutions which is the way she integrates academic nature of the programs and the students' daily practices.

As a response to academics' perspective, students of both master and doctorate programs agree on the idea that academics' explicit statement of the importance of a specific topic is guiding for them. They believe that academics' perspective is broader. Therefore, they need a guidance in relation to the importance of the topic.

Regarding the relationship between the topics discussed in master and doctorate programs and the students' daily teaching practices, especially doctorate students claim that the power of this relationship depends on the course and its topics. They also claim that, for this specific reason, T1's class is more beneficial for them both because of the course itself and the academic's particular interest in integrating the topics with their practices. Thus, there are not significant differences in respect to 'significance' between the views of the students and the academics.

**3.5.2. Purpose beyond the here and now (MA2).** 'Purpose beyond the here and now' is an aspect of mediation theory, which focuses on the more general value of the topics for the students rather than the value of the topic for that present class. Regarding this aspect, there are differences between the students' and academics' views. Differences also exist among the academics themselves. Despite the importance T1, T2, and T4 attach to the relation of the topics with the future ones and showing the value of a specific topic for the future studies, T3 thinks that post-graduate learners are well equipped enough in this respect. Therefore, he does not feel the need to state explicitly the future value of a particular topic.

In terms of students' views, both master and doctorate students consider this aspect as guiding. They feel that academics should guide them by showing the future value of the topic. However, although most of the academics pay special attention to this aspect, a counter idea was provided by doctorate students as well which suggests that if academics focus too much on showing the future relevance of a particular topic and if the students stay too much focused on the future value of the topic, it may block a thorough and deep learning.

**3.5.3. Shared Intention (MA3).** Basically, 'shared intention' is about whether there is a common understanding between the students and the academics in the classes. Thus, students and the academics are questioned regarding the elements formulating this common understanding such as the instructions, the tasks or the due dates for the tasks.

Concerning the differences between the students and the academics in terms of this aspect, firstly, though all academics present a written course content in the beginning of the term, students consider some of them as inelaborate. Students claim that some of the course contents such as the ones prepared by T1 or T2 include all the details related to the preparation of the tasks, all the evaluation details, the word limitation, and timing. However, some of them are not well organized. They claim that they receive oral explanation before they write their tasks.

There is one important difference between the views of the students and the academics. Although academics feel confident because of presenting a course content paper in the beginning of the term, students claim that without examining a good example of that particular task, it is not possible to reach the level academics picture in their minds. It can be claimed that the preparedness level of even the doctorate students may not be academically good enough to understand the expectation of the academics. On the other hand, T2 expects all students to understand the instructions. She argues that her previous students have been successful in understanding and writing up all the tasks. Hence, she has high expectations for all post-graduate students. Therefore, presenting a good example from the previous years may be a solution for the obstacle in having a shared understanding between the students and the academics.

In the case of misunderstanding of the instructions, master and doctorate student try to have a peer check first because they are hesitant to ask directly to the academics. It is due to their shyness which creates the feeling that they are the only one who cannot understand in the eyes of the academics. However, although most of them claim that they expect a direct question from the students in the case of an understanding problem, some of them such as T1, asks direct questions and monitors faces and behaviors of the students to understand whether there is a problem or not. The difference between the academics and the students in the case of misunderstanding of the tasks and the solution of this problem stems from two opposite ideas. One is that academics consider the students as adults, and therefore expect them to ask directly when they do not understand. The second problem is that students think that they will lose favor with the academics if they ask directly.

Another difference between the academics and the students appears in the content formulating process of the course. Although academics have a desire to receive suggestions of the students to discuss in the classes, generally students do not suggest any topic to talk about.

The reason is that probably the students are not knowledgeable enough in the beginning of the classes and during the term they are too busy to think of another interesting topic to discuss. However, almost all the academics allow their students to have a say in the content or the syllabus of the program. The possible solution may be presenting students the possible topics that can be discussed during the term and giving the students a chance to select among those. This strategy has been used by T4 in his 'Educational Change' class and it has been successful.

**3.5.4. A sense of competence (MA4).** The aspect of 'a sense of competence' is related to academics' effort to make the learners feel self-confident. There are differences from students' and academics' point of views. First, students in both programs feel confident enough to be successful in these programs. Therefore, they think they do not need any support from their academics in this case. On the contrary, especially T1, T3, and T4 try to encourage students to have a high self-confidence. They explicitly appreciate students' efforts in the class or when they have a problem, they try to help them to solve it in individual or group tutorials. The difference arises from the fact that while students consider themselves as adults who can solve their own problems, though they feel that they do not need, academics try to encourage them in their studies in this respect. However, T2 has a different perspective from other academics regarding this aspect. She bases the criteria identifying how much she will help learners to feel self-confident on the relationship between the academic and the student and also on the students' efforts. If she sees a serious effort from the students' side, she writes longer feedback or encourages that student to write a paper together. However, if the student has the intellectual capacity, but does not study well enough, then she does not see the reason to invest in that student.

Moreover, students especially in the master program do not prefer receiving oral feedback in the classroom. They claim that their self-confidence decreases when they do not get positive feedback among other students.

**3.5.5. Control of own behavior (MA5).** Students and the academics have different perspectives in terms of 'control of own behavior' aspect of the mediation theory, which is about controlling and regulating one's own learning.

Almost all academics have different views regarding this aspect. While T1 tries to be a model for the learners, T2 considers this as the responsibility of just the supervisors. T3 also does not do anything special in order to make learners more autonomous because he thinks post-graduate students should already have this ability. Only T4 claims that he helps students in this respect by showing students how to reach library databases or providing books.

Students from master and doctorate programs also differ from each other in this respect. Master students think that they need assistance from academics, whereas doctorate students claim that academics do not have impact on their becoming autonomous learners because they consider this aspect as a prerequisite for a doctorate student.

**3.5.6. Goal setting (MA6).** For the 'goal setting' aspect, students and the academics agree on the fact that it is students' responsibility to set their own personal goals for their studies. Academics play the role of a controller or modifier in terms of shaping their goals to make them more doable.

On the other hand, academics are very open about the content shaping perspectives of the students. However, there are not many suggestions coming from students in this respect as presented above. Also, students consider some course contents so satisfying that they think there is no need for a change such as the one provided by T2.

**3.5.7. Challenge (MA7).** 'Challenge' aspect represents the level of difficulty of the tasks prepared by the academics, the reasons of using challenging tasks, and the general evaluation of the tasks in doctorate and master programs.

Both the academics and the students are aware of the time limitation of the tasks. Research paper writing and dense article reading are considered to be the most challenging tasks for both programs. The difference appears between the views of T1 and T2 in terms of what makes the tasks challenging. T1 thinks that the reason why the tasks seem to be challenging for the students is that they have other responsibilities in their life and long period of travelling, whereas T2 considers students' lack of research knowledge as the source of this idea.

Although students mostly complain about the intensity of the classes and the time limitation, they are mostly pleased with the challenge level of the tasks. However, they have a different perspective claiming that there is a lack of feedback and guidance. Especially, doctorate students think that it is better for them to receive feedback on their tasks than getting a good mark. However, they think that the feedback they receive from the academics is not enough.

**3.5.8. Awareness of change (MA8).** Whether students in master and doctorate programs have experienced any kind of change has been questioned to find an answer for the 'awareness of change' aspect of the mediation theory. There are not many differences between the students' and the academics' views regarding this aspect.

Although they do not mention what kind of changes they have experienced, master students believe that this program provides a new perspective for them. On the other hand, doctorate students have a more thorough understanding for this. They claim that even the way other people communicate with them together with their practices in their own institutions have changed.

Academics mostly realize the changes the students have been experiencing through direct confessions, group or individual discussions in the beginning or the end of the classes. Despite a lack of explicit effort from the teachers' side in order to let the students recognize, monitor, and assess the changes in themselves in the period of doctorate and master programs, they claim that the changes in students are due to maturation.

**3.5.9. A belief in positive outcomes (MA9).** In terms of 'a belief in positive outcomes' aspect of the mediation theory, the main idea is the fact that students have many problems during long course period and whether they get any help from academics when they get stuck.

First, students in both programs have not experienced such big problems that would cause them to get individual or group support from the academics. However, the students in both programs claim that if they needed, teachers would help them. According to the academics, trust is the most important issue in helping any student.

Second, students are well aware of the busy timetables of the academics. Therefore, even if they need, they know that they cannot communicate with the academics. Students in both programs also know that they are considered to be mature enough by their academics to deal with any problems. Hence, they do not have such an expectation.

**3.5.10. Sharing (MA10).** 'Sharing' aspect has been questioned by asking academics how they encourage collaboration in and out of the classes and asking students about their preferences related to sharing. All academics support encouraging sharing in their classes due to different reasons, such as letting the silent learners speak more, in order not to create negative attitudes toward research if they cannot write alone or just because of the importance of having a friendship from these programs. On the other hand, the preferences of students in terms of sharing aspect vary. To start with, most of the students come from different cities which makes it impossible to work together out of the classes. Additionally, their preferences



mostly depend on the kind of task. Students prefer discussing together to reading alone, but they also prefer working alone when the task is to write.

**3.5.11. Individuality (MA11).** Concerning ‘individuality’ aspect, students and academics have been questioned about how much student individuality is supported in doctorate and master programs. Academics think that they give the chance to express their ideas in the classes in discussions and also in their presentations. Students are also aware that they have the chance to express themselves in the classes. There is not a difference between the views of the students and the academics.

**3.5.12. A sense of belonging (MA12).** ‘A sense of belongingness’ is related to the feeling of being a part of the group in the classes. Students have been questioned about how much they feel this feeling and their academics’ efforts to create this feeling. Academics have also been questioned about what they do to encourage students to feel the belongingness to their programs.

Students in both programs claim that they feel very comfortable and they feel that this belongingness to their programs without receiving any specific help or support from their teachers. They also think that having this feeling is crucial for success. However, academics’ point of view is different. They claim that they do not try explicitly to have better classroom atmosphere in their classes because of lack of time, but they think that students naturally need to have this feeling in order to survive in their programs. They think that if students do not feel that they belong to their groups, it cannot be possible for students to be successful.

## **Chapter 4: Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions**

### **4. Introduction**

This chapter presents a summary of the findings to draw conclusions, a discussion of the findings in the light of the related literature, pedagogical implications of the study, and some suggestions for further researches.

#### **4.1. Conclusion and Discussion**

This study started with the research problems of unsatisfactory number of researches investigating the nature of post-graduate programs of ELT department in Turkey's context and the perceptions and practices of academics and students in these programs regarding the role of mediator and twelve aspects of mediation theory of Feuerstein. Taking into account these research problems, five main research questions were answered. These questions investigated the perceptions and actual practices of academics and the students in master and doctorate programs regarding the aspects of mediation theory together with sources of using these aspects in and out of the classes and the potential differences both between the students' and the academics' views and the perceptions and actual practices of academics in relation with the theory of mediation.

In the light of the first research question, the activities teacher educators did in their master and doctorate classes were observed. The main aim was to find out how and how often teacher educators used the aspects of the theory of mediation in ELT post-graduate programs. The findings for this research question revealed the fact that the most commonly used mediation theory aspect in these programs was 'shared intention', which is also called 'intentionality and reciprocity' by Feuerstein. It basically represents the idea that teachers should make their intention clear for the learners to be understood and reciprocated especially during the presentation of the tasks. For this specific mediation aspect, Williams and Burden

present (1997, p. 71) that: “it is essential to ensure that learners understand exactly what is required of them, and that they are both able and willing to attempt it, so that they will approach the task in a focused and self-directed way”. Though all mediation theory aspects are of capital importance for the success of the students in post-graduate programs in this specific department, it was not a coincidence to find out the use of 'shared intention' as the most popular one for all academics. In master and doctorate programs of ELT department, adults are trained. In adult education, it is of primary importance that learners have the same understanding for both the specific tasks in the classes and the long term targets with the academics. Without this shared intention, adult learners may not be willing to learn and concentrate on the tasks they are supposed to do and eventually it may result in drop-outs due to not being able to understand exactly what is required of them.

Apart from shared intention, other popular mediation theory aspects were 'significance', 'individuality', and 'sharing' according to the observation results. Significance refers to teachers' effort to “make learners aware of the significance of the learning task so that they can see the value of it to them personally and in a broader cultural context” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 69). The popular use of this aspect showed how much academics paid attention to the teacher role of 'guide'. The reason is that although the students in these programs are adults and know much more about the topics compared to undergraduate students, they still need guidance in terms of the popular topics, how they will benefit from the subjects they study, and also the important points in those subjects. Therefore, 'significance' aspect was crucial for guidance. Other popular mediation theory aspects were 'individuality' and 'sharing'. Though they sound like poles apart, they support each other. While 'sharing' represents co-operation among learners, 'individuality' is related with growing awareness of one's own unique place in the class or society. While supporting the presentation of learners' individual unique ideas in the classes, academics help learners

understand that each learner is unique and problems can only be solved through the co-operation among learners and learning can only be enriched in this way.

In contrast to the popular mediation aspects, 'control of own behavior' and 'a sense of belonging' did not take place so commonly in the observed classes. While the former means ability to control and regulate learners' own learning, thinking and actions, the latter is about feeling of belonging to a community and a culture at school. Though it is not a must to use all twelve aspects of the theory of mediation in classes for the academics, the reason of low popularity of these two aspects may be academics' presupposition that adult learners already have them. In addition, hectic academic life of the academics may be another factor of not using the aspect of 'a sense of belonging' which may be implemented through social activities in and out of the school environment. When the results are compared with those of Brown's study (2002), some major differences can be seen. Although the context and the data collection procedure are different from the present study, the results of Brown's study (2002) are of vital importance for the current research. The teachers working at French university non-specialist English language classrooms considered and applied 'shared intention' in their classes most. This finding is in accordance with the results of the present research. Other aspect which was practiced actively was 'purpose beyond the here and now'. According to the results, the parameter of 'sharing' was not used popularly in their classes. However, the parameter of 'sharing' was among the most popular four mediation theory aspects in this research. An important difference can also be observed in the aspect of 'control of own behavior'. Although it was one of the least actively practiced aspect by the academics in this study, it was considered very important by the participants in Brown's study (2002).

First of all, observation of the classes are necessary in order to receive more realistic data about the use of mediation theory aspects. Questionnaire results may not represent exactly what those teachers would do in real classroom atmosphere. However, it is quite

possible to see 'shared intention' aspect as the most actively used mediation theory aspect irrespective of the context of the study due to the need of a common understanding between the teacher and the students. Therefore, it is not surprising to observe this parameter as the leading one in both studies. The interesting point in comparison of the results of this study is the aspect of 'control of own behavior'. Although both studies were conducted in tertiary level, the use of 'control of own behavior' was much more common in Brown's study. It is a commonly known fact that students' control of their own learning improves with the level of education. Therefore, the academics' reason to use this aspect less actively in the present study may be the fact that they consider that the students already have the capacity to control and regulate their own learning in post-graduate level which provides no reason to practice it in the classes.

Individual evaluation of academics provided interesting results about the use of mediation theory aspects in their post-graduate classes. Among the academics whose classes were observed, T2 was the academic who used highest number of mediation theory aspects in her observed classes. T3, T4, and T1 followed her regarding the number of use of these aspects. However, as it was explained in the findings section, the number of the mediation theory aspects does not represent the success or the failure of those classes.

There were similarities and differences in the popularity of the use of mediation theory aspects. However, the reasons of neither the similarities nor the differences can be grouped under exact categories. For instance, there was a remarkable difference between T4 and T1 in terms of use of 'purpose beyond the here and now' (MA2) which was the most popular aspect for T4; and the least popular aspect for T1. However, although 'individuality' (MA11) was not popular for T2 and T3, it was used as one of the most popular mediation theory aspects by T1 and T4. In addition, T2 and T3 showed similarities in using 'shared intention' (MA3) and 'sharing' (MA10) as the most popular mediation aspect. Almost all the academics did not use

‘control of own behavior’ (MA5), ‘sense of belonging’ (MA12), and ‘awareness of change’ (MA8) popularly in their classes.

As a result of all these similarities and differences in the use of mediation theory aspects in post-graduate classes of four academics, it can be concluded that no single factor, such as academics’ age or experience in teaching in post-graduate programs was dominant in determining the use of these aspects. For instance, T1 and T2 have almost equal experience in teaching both in undergraduate and post-graduate programs, however they had very different choices in using mediation theory aspects in the classes. T3 and T2 were observed to use very similar mediation theory aspects, though T3 did not have any experience in teaching at doctorate programs, however T2 had around 6 years of experience. Therefore, these varying mediation theory aspect choices of academics can give us the idea that, despite some major similarities and differences, all academics had their own unique ways of playing the mediator role in doctorate and master programs of ELT department depending on the requirements of their classes and their teaching styles.

Apart from the academics’ activities as a mediator, academics were also questioned in personal semi-structured interviews about the potential sources of using these mediation theory aspects and the roles they played in their master and doctorate program classes. Although they explained in different expressions, basically the academics’ sources of using mediation theory aspects resembled each other. It can be deduced that the most effective factor is the role played by their teachers, especially their thesis advisors, during their PhD period and the experiences they had as a language academic. In one sense, it may be concluded from this finding that the role of mediator is teachable. All academics explicitly stated the positive influences of their PhD teachers on the role they play in their own post-graduate classes and also the mediation theory aspect use. Therefore, it is obvious that

modeling teachers is an important technique for language academics to use different mediation theory aspects in their own classes.

It can also be deduced from the responses of the academics that the more experience the academics had in post-graduate programs, the more they made use of it. For instance, T1 and T2, who had more post-graduate program teaching experience compared to others, emphasized the importance of their own personal and professional experiences in these programs in using mediation theory aspects. Additionally, the research, the reading academics made, their personality, and their own philosophy of life were also other important determinants of using these aspects.

In terms of the roles academics played in their classes, they mostly considered themselves a colleague, an experienced person, a guide, a facilitator and a moderator. It was obvious that they did not consider themselves the teacher who just simply delivered the subject. On the contrary, they mostly felt themselves a more experienced colleague who could guide and moderate their learning in order to facilitate their learning in the post-graduate programs.

Following the sources of using mediation theory aspects, academics' and students' perspectives regarding the different aspects of mediation to promote learning were also investigated during the personal semi-structured and focus-group interviews. The following research questions provided not only answers for the similarities and differences between the academics' and students' perspectives of the mediation theory aspects but also the differences between academics' actual practices in post-graduate classes and verbal explanations of their perspectives regarding these aspects.

The aspect of 'significance' was investigated by questioning the academics and their students about their effort to relate the tasks with learners' practices and how they state the significance of the topic in their classes. To start with, all academics except for T2 pay special

attention to relating the task with learners' practices. The reason why T2 does not do it specifically is the academic nature of the activities taking place in her post-graduate classes. She thinks that the academic nature of these activities may not be parallel with learners' daily teaching activities even though they are teachers of adults or young learners. On the other hand, for other academics, mentioning about their own personal experiences of using that specific subject or asking students about their practices regarding that aspect in their classes are the two important strategies used for relating the tasks with learners' daily teaching practices depending on the course and the topic. However, it is obvious that academics working with doctorate students have higher expectations from these students than the master students. This situation allows T1 and T2 to move their expectations from simply hoping the students to understand the link between post-graduate classes and their daily practices to developing more academic approach about the topics discussed in these classes.

From students' perspective, academics' relating the learning task with their practices depends on the course and their practices. They have broad range of classes in these programs and these classes have some elements that are used by the students in their teaching practices. Especially doctorate students favored 'Fundamental Issues in Foreign Language Teacher Education' class over other doctorate program classes because of its relation with their daily teaching activities.

Besides, it is interesting to find out that the academics with less experience in post-graduate programs (T3, T4) specifically tend to state the importance of one topic or the task in the classes. On the other hand, more experienced academics (T1, T2) are more concerned with showing the relationships of all topics to let the learners reach the synthesis of the topics. The experience of the academics may play a vital role in understanding the reactions of the learners in adult education. Therefore, less experienced academics may not be able to understand the reactions as easily as the experienced ones which required them to consider the



importance of explicitly stating the significance of the task or the topic. Although it can lose its effect when frequently uttered, stating the significance of the task and the topic may help learners skip unimportant information and focus on more specific parts of theories or concepts. As a result, “the teacher’s role is to help learners to perceive how the activity is of value to them” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 70). Whether the academic does it or not in post-graduate classes depend on several factors, such as the expectations from the student group or the experience of the teachers in these programs.

In terms of explicit declaration of the significance of a specific topic, both master and doctorate students agree on the fact that they require this information from the academics because this information plays the role of a guide for them. Statement of the importance of a topic may help learners select the topics suitable for a paper, or their thesis. Regardless of the level of the students, it is a common student reaction to pay more attention to the topics that are emphasized by the teachers. Therefore, even adult learners pay more attention to these topics by taking more notes, reading more researches about it, and conducting researches on it. It can be deduced from students’ views that academics’ simple declaration of the significance of a topic in master and doctorate classes may help learners as a guide in finding the topics for their researches by easing the process of searching for a research topic.

The second mediation theory aspect was ‘purpose beyond the here and now’, which is defined as “learners’ being aware of the way in which the learning experience will have wider relevance to them beyond the immediate time and place” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 71). The perspectives of the academics differ greatly on this aspect depending on their evaluation of post-graduate students. While T2 and T4 specifically mention that they put special emphasis on showing the relation between the current and future topics, according to T3, post-graduate students already have this skill and there is no need for explicit instruction and explanation for this. As it can be seen, the view of the academic in post-graduate programs

about the students may determine the way they organize their classes and the specific details they emphasize in these plans. Suggestions for further researches about the topic being discussed in the classes or academics' indication of a simple relation between the constructs may be very exciting for especially the doctorate students. It was realized during the observations that students were nervous about finding a subject for their dissertations. This aspect together with the aspect of 'significance' may play an important role in helping learners eliminate their worries regarding dissertation topic search as well.

As a response to the academics' views, both master and doctorate students consider the use of this aspect as guiding in their classes. As it was mentioned above for 'significance' aspect, 'purpose beyond the here and now' also plays an important role in showing the learners the relationships among the current, past, and the future topics. The construction of the relationships between the topics and the suggestions of the academics regarding subject search for their dissertations and papers are invaluable for the learners due to the lack of expertise in the field of ELT. On the other hand, doctorate students think that academics' effort for the use of this aspect can be too idealistic which means that continuous attempt to find relationships between the topics and the effort to make the current learning experience relevant for beyond the immediate time and place can be a handicap for the learners for a thorough learning. For this reason, when students' and academics' views are taken into consideration, it can be deduced that the optimum use of this aspect can be guiding for the learners. However, too much of it may result in students' loss of concentration for the present topic.

The views of the academics and the students concerning 'significance', and 'purpose beyond the here and now' show some similarities and differences compared to the results of other studies. For instance, Xiongyong et al. (2012), who evaluated the EFL teachers' roles from the perspective of mediation in China, found out that teachers did not employ

‘significance’ and ‘purpose beyond the here and now’. In addition, in Chang’s study (2004), in which the college English teachers’ and students’ perceptions about the different features of Feuerstein’s mediated learning experience (MLE) in Taiwan were investigated, these two aspects were among the least important mediation theory aspects according to the students. In contrast, in Brown’s study (2002), ‘purpose beyond the here and now’ was one of the most actively practiced parameters. According to the results, depending on the culture the study was conducted in and the individuals’ views, the use of mediation theory aspects differed.

The next mediation aspect was ‘shared intention’, which basically refers to mutual agreement or understanding between the academics and the students in post-graduate program context. This mutual understanding may occur in the presentation of the tasks or the due dates for the tasks. It was interesting to receive similar responses from all academics regarding this aspect. All academics claimed to provide a course content to make it easier for the learners to understand what they expected in the tasks, presentations, and the discussions during the classes. However, especially doctorate students criticized some of the academics for the inadequate details about the tasks provided in the course contents. In addition, students expect to see the good examples of the tasks written by other students in previous years which clearly represent academics’ expectations concerning that task. In this way, it may be possible to eliminate the worries of students about meeting the expectations of the academics.

In order to ease the process for the students, they also claimed to be understanding for the due dates of the tasks. In addition, although more experienced academics claimed to understand students’ lack of comprehension of the task in the classes, they expected students to verbalize it, because they considered them as mature adults. This does not mean that they did not provided any explanations for the students. However, academics’ high expectations from post-graduate students may create a lack of shared intention problem in these programs, because adult learners are more in tendency to be passive in case of a misunderstanding.

While master students prefer to ask more direct questions when they do not understand; doctorate students try to solve the problem by asking questions to each other. They think academics may lose their trust in themselves if they state the misunderstanding. In order to solve this problem, students should reflect themselves more clearly and academics should accept the fact that adult learners may have problems about understanding the instructions and tasks in post-graduate programs.

Moreover, although there were not considerable differences between what the academics stated about mediation theory aspects in the interviews and their observed actual practices regarding these aspects, there was a mismatch about 'shared intention' aspect. All academics mentioned about providing sample tasks written by other students in the previous terms. However, no sample task was provided to the students in the observed classes. One reason may be the high academic skill expectations of the academics from the learners which means they expect learners in this level to be capable enough to survive with the provided instructions. They do not want to elaborate it more to make it simpler, because previous students were able to understand them. However, the other possibility is that there was not a case requiring providing an example for the students according to the academics' point of view.

'Shared intention' received considerable attention according to the results of the previous studies as well. Both in the study of Xiongyong et al. (2012), and the study of Brown (2002) investigating to what degree mediation takes place in French university non-specialist English language classrooms, 'shared intention' was found to be employed and it was considered as important by the teachers in their classes. The results showed similarity to those of the present research which reveals the fact regardless of the culture and the level of the students, being understood by the students and having a mutual understanding with the students are the important points for the teachers.

According to Brown (2002, p. 5) “people who feel competent may perform better than those who do not, irrespective of their real level of knowledge”. Therefore, ‘a sense of competence’ aspect of mediation theory was assumed to be actively used in the post-graduate classes where students may have some problems about feeling confident. All academics claimed to do this to make the learners more self-confident in their classes in different ways, such as by explicit appreciation in the class, and individual or group tutorials. From students’ perspective, they think that they do not need any help from academics in this respect because they are mostly aware of the expectations of the academics and they think they do not need extra support from teachers to be motivated and self-confident. However, when they were questioned about the kind of support they would like to receive, students preferred individual feedback. They also criticized academics in terms of lack of feedback as a response to their tasks.

For academics, students’ effort was an important factor in determining the academics’ level of encouragement to make learners feel self-confident. From a different perspective, changing a negative self-image settled in learners’ mind is very problematic for the teachers. This situation is harder for the adult education, because the students in this level are generally more withdrawn once they cannot succeed. Although this aspect was not observed to be used very actively compared to other aspects by the academics, it was not totally ignored. This aspect was the most important mediation theory aspect for the Taiwanese teachers teaching English at a college (Chang, 2004). Even though it was not the most popularly used aspect by the academics in the present study, the results were almost similar. In both studies, ‘a sense of competence’ aspect of mediation theory was perceived as an important parameter of being a mediator in the classes.

Except for T4, all academics did not prefer to use ‘control of own behavior’ aspect in their post-graduate classes due to some reasons. This aspect is related to the academics’

attempt to make students autonomous learners. However, academics mostly think that the students in this level should already have the capability of controlling their own behavior and learning. In addition, this attempt requires a great deal of time. Therefore, academics claimed that unless there is a supervisor-student connection, it is not possible to transfer this into practice. On the contrary, T1 claimed to use this aspect simply by becoming a model in her classes. It is an indirect use of this aspect. Despite the low frequency of occurrence of this parameter in post-graduate programs of ELT department, findings regarding ‘control of own behavior’ in the study of Xiongyong et al. (2012) showed that Chinese teacher preferred to use this aspect.

There are differences between the views of doctorate and master students for the use of this mediation theory as well. While master students consider themselves lacking in having the features of an autonomous learner, doctorate students think that they cannot be successful in this program unless they are autonomous learners. It is obvious that master students’ expectation of assistance regarding the use of this aspect was not met in master program.

From another perspective, “in language learning, many learners do not feel that they are in control of their learning” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 73). In adult education where a lot of assistance is needed about research skills, learners may not be knowledgeable about how to gather information, report the results, or write a paper. Therefore, bearing the possibility of this lack into consideration, academics may try to foster the understanding of regulation and control of behavior in adult learners in the very beginning of the programs.

In terms of ‘goal setting’ aspect, all academics agreed on the fact that they allowed learners to participate the process of shaping the course content which means students had the chance to set their own goals in this respect. However, students’ responses showed that they were passive in this process and the goals were already set for them. The mismatch between the academics’ and the students’ views stems from the fact that although students had the

chance to contribute to the formation of the course content, they were not knowledgeable in the beginning of the term. Therefore, they did not have any suggestions regarding the goals of the courses. In order to solve this problem, all planned course contents may be provided online for the students before the terms start. In this way, students may have a general idea about the possible topics of the course and they may add more options for the final versions of the content. It is of crucial importance because Williams and Burden (1997, p. 74) claim that “learners need to set their own goals instead of following what teachers set for them because an absence of goals can lead to aimlessness and a lack of any sense of direction”. Supporting this statement, van Werkhoven (1990) also suggests that children who set their own goals in any learning activity are more likely to achieve those goals than ones that are set for them. These suggestions show that students’ participation in the formation of the course content in master and doctorate classes is an important factor in making the learners become a part of that class and in making the learners more successful.

However, academics were not active in terms of forming students’ personal goals. They were just effective in shaping and modifying students’ perspectives during the planning phase of their presentation and researches. Students cannot have discussions with the academics regarding their future personal goals because of the limited time both the academics and the students have.

Williams and Burden (1997, p. 75) state that: "if we want learners to become absorbed in the tasks we set them, it is important to provide an appropriate challenge as well as helping the learners to plan appropriate strategies to meet these challenges". In the case of the present study, almost all academics agreed on the fact that writing a research paper is the most challenging task in both programs. The reasons differ according to academics. For instance, while the reason for T1 was students’ having hard situations, such as being a teacher or travelling for long periods, it was students’ not being ready for that task and also the time

limitation they had for each task for T2. The important point mentioned by T2 was the collaboration among the academics in providing tasks for the students. They try to balance the level of challenge of the tasks. Students' responses about the level of challenge of the tasks in both programs showed their satisfaction. The confounding fact between the academics' and the students' responses is that despite the collaboration of the academics concerning the tasks, students' claims show that there are some overlaps among the course contents of different classes. Therefore, stronger collaboration is needed among the academics during the course contents' planning phase. Otherwise, students may become disinterested because of discussing the same topics over and over in different classes. Students also complain about the limited time allocated for each task, the intensity of the course contents, lack of guidance, and feedback.

Concerning 'awareness of change', both the academics and the students agree that there is an academic progress. Students in both programs mostly express their academic development directly when they realize it. It is interesting to find out doctorate students' realization of changes related to society and human relations. Therefore, it can be deduced that doctorate program helps students to be positioned in a higher place in the eyes of the students' colleagues and the people around them. Despite the importance of this aspect, 'awareness of change' was chosen as the least important mediation theory aspect according to the results of Chang's study (2004). However, when the nature of the context of the present study is considered, it is possible to expect that students are aware of the changes taking place throughout the long process. The first reason is that students are adults and they know their current capabilities. When these capabilities develop, they can easily realize. Thus, it is possible that they do not need any academics' effort to realize it. This fact may explain the possible reason of low use of this aspect in the present study.



In terms of 'a belief in positive outcomes', academics focus on two constructs: trust between the students and the academics and students' initiative to express their problems. It is also obvious that there is limited academic-student communication regarding personal problems of the students. Academics are ready to help the learners if they trust the students and only if the students initiate the conversation. On the other hand, students think that academics are too busy to tackle with their personal problems. In addition, even if they have problems, they think it is a kind of embarrassing situation for them to share it with the academics. It may show that they are not mature enough. This fact stops them sharing the personal problems with the academics. From this view point, it can be understood that mediation theory parameters' use depends heavily on the age group of the learners. Adult learners, as in the case of this study, may have closer relationships with the academics. On the other hand, they are more withdrawn in terms of sharing problems.

For the aspect of 'sharing', academics mostly try to encourage friendship in their classes by providing pair or group works. They have the idea that students can learn better from each other. Students' choices about working together, on the other hand, depends on the kind of activity. They prefer working alone in writing activities, whereas they prefer sharing and discussing about topics in a group rather than reading alone.

Although Williams and Burden (1997) claim that working in pairs or in groups brings success to young and adult learners, the parameter of 'sharing' is considered and implemented as the least important parameter of mediation by the teachers working at university in English language classrooms according to the results of Brown's study (2002). However, as in the case of this study, the use of 'sharing' aspect in post-graduate programs is popular. The reasons may be diverse, such as the need of cooperation among students to be successful. Academics' realization of the right use of this aspect may help learners in these programs.

Concerning ‘individuality’ aspect, academics mostly try to let each learner in the classroom participate somehow by sharing their own experiences as a teacher or a researcher, by asking their ideas about topic, or by giving them a chance to present a specific topic in their own way. Students in both programs agree with the academics that they can express their own ideas independently. However, doctorate students’ claim showed that they were considered as a team rather than individuals by academics. The busy timetables of the academics do not give them the chance to take care of each student’s individual development. Students are also aware of the limited time. Therefore, they do not have the expectation of receiving individual tutorials from all academics. This mediation theory aspect was also the least important parameter for the students according to the findings of Chang’s study (2004), which was also conducted in university context. Thus, it can be deduced that young adults already have the realization of their own uniqueness and individuality without teachers’ effort and they do not expect from their teachers more than expressing their ideas individually in the classes.

The last mediation theory aspect was ‘a sense of belonging’, which refers to feeling of belonging to a community and a culture. From academics’ perspective, the feeling of belonging to the group of people you are studying with happens naturally and implicitly for their students in post-graduate programs despite lack of their effort in this respect due to the busy timetable. However, the impetus for the students to be a part of the group is the need to survive and become a successful student according to the academics. Students agreed with the academics in this respect. In both master and doctorate programs, students feel like a part of a group in their programs and they also know the importance of this feeling to be successful in these programs, to be comfortable in the classes, and to enjoy being a post-graduate student. The students’ perspectives found in Chang’s study (2004) are in accordance with those of the students in the present study in having this aspect in their classes. However, Brown (2002, p.

7) also considers this feature of mediation as the most difficult parameters of Feuerstein to adapt to the area of language learning. Therefore, it can be claimed that though the implementation of this aspect is not easy due to its time consuming nature and the possible high number of the students in the classes, students are already aware of the significance of it. Thus, it occurs naturally without any specific effort of the teachers.

## **4.2. Implications**

**4.2.1. Implications for academics.** The results of this study serve to remind us that the use of mediation theory aspects in this specific post-graduate ELT program is idiosyncratic from the academics' perspective despite the similarities. Observation results showed that 'shared intention' was the most commonly used mediation theory aspect for the academics in these programs. It was mostly preferred by the academics to check the appropriateness of their ideas, to check whether students understood the topic or not, or to make the decisions together with the students. The main point was to have a shared understanding in the classes with the students. One of the strategies academics used in order to have this understanding was providing a course content form in the beginning of the term. However, students considered that some of these course contents lacked necessary details about writing a research paper or preparing the presentations academics asked for. The reason was the high expectation of the academics from the students in post-graduate programs. They did not feel the need of providing every little detail as students needed in these papers. However, students in both programs mentioned about the need of good examples of tasks written by previous students. Thus, academics should include every detail in their course contents, such as the aims and the objectives of the class, schedule of the topics with the dates, the possible sources of these topics where students can read for each week, the tasks and the required style of these tasks, the word limitation, timing (including draft control and final version control dates), assessment and evaluation procedure. The good examples of these tasks written by previous

students can also be provided in these course content forms. A better and more organized alternative of providing previous students' works may be exhibiting them in a library or in a classroom where students can reach and take from. It is also possible that academics upload these examples on their personal websites for the easy access of students. In this way, the mismatch between the expectations of the academics and the students regarding the tasks can be eliminated.

Establishing shared intention in post-graduate programs is very important from another perspective which is more related to academics' expectations from the students of these programs. Academics mostly agree that students can understand the required design of the tasks easily. On the other hand, students have worries concerning the request of clarification about the tasks from academics. These worries stem from the view of the students that if they express their lack of understanding, they cannot fulfill high expectations of the academics. In order to find a solution for this problem, academics may state that students can easily consult themselves about the tasks individually or among the other students

With regard to 'significance' aspect, there was a negative correlation between the frequency of academics' statement of the significance of the topic and their experience in teaching in post-graduate programs. Though students benefit from the explicit declaration of the significance of the topics, students also claim that they sometimes underestimate the importance of the topics that were not referred as significant by the academics. Thus, establishing the balance in this respect is an important responsibility of the academics.

The results concerning 'purpose beyond here and now' along with 'significance' aspect showed that learners in post-graduate programs in ELT department needed assistance from academics for dissertation topic search. When they do not receive this help from the academics, they get lost in the vast area of ELT. Hence, understanding the importance of the

use of these aspects is crucial for the academics for guiding them with respect to their interests and skills.

In terms of 'a sense of competence', students preferred receiving individual feedback from the academics. Receiving negative feedback among group friends demoralized them. In addition, students complained about the lack of feedback for each task. Therefore, academics should prefer individual feedback and they should provide feedback for almost all possible tasks for the students in their classes.

Regarding 'challenge' aspect, though academics claim that they cooperate with one another about the tasks and the content of the classes, students in both programs complain about discussing the same topics in different classes which decreases the interest of the students and demotivate them. For this reason, all the academics should discuss about course contents of each class before the classes start. Similar topics can be eliminated or replaced with another possible one. Therefore, more cooperation in this respect is needed in ELT post-graduate program.

Another conclusion drawn from the results of the present study regarding the sources of using mediation theory aspects for academics was that the role of mediator is teachable. The reason behind this is that all the academics claimed that the main reason why they used mediation theory aspects was the effect of their teachers and their thesis advisors during their PhD period. This means that academics try to imitate their PhD academics by integrating their own worldviews, philosophies, and personal experiences as a teacher. In addition, academics mostly consider themselves as more experienced colleagues of the students who can guide and moderate the classes. Taking all these view into consideration, the current students who are the candidates to be future academics in the field of ELT are most likely to imitate their thesis advisors or other academics in terms of the use of mediation theory aspects. Therefore, all the academics should be aware of the fact that they are role models for the students who

will eventually shape Turkey's English language education. They should be more open to use the aspects necessary for them to reinforce the use of those specific aspects and academics' mediator role.

**4.2.2. Implications for institutional practices.** It was also obvious from the responses of both academics and students that students could only find the chance of discussing about their personal goals and have closer relationships with the academics after they chose their thesis supervisors at the end of the first term of the course period. However, after the course period, students and their thesis supervisors mostly cannot meet as often as desired due to time limitation of both sides. The close relationship students have during the thesis period with their supervisors may help learners improve themselves. However, they cannot use this chance because they do not spend time with thesis supervisors as much as they do during the course period. In order to maximize this chance of the students, institutions should allow students to choose their thesis supervisors at the very beginning of the course period. By this means, students may benefit from the expertise, experience, and, the knowledge of their thesis supervisors hundred percent during all periods of master or doctorate programs. On the other hand, in order to put this change into practice, students should either have personal interviews with the academics to get their approval or academics' curricula vitae should be updated regularly so that the students can read and understand whose research interests are closer to those of themselves before they start the course period. In this way, students may have the chance of having closer relationships with the academics through which students may be better guided in terms of research skills, interests, and academic knowledge.

Another mediation theory aspect which is related to students' having closer relationships with the academics and among themselves is 'a sense of belonging'. According to the results, the students in both programs feel a sense of belonging to these programs because of fear of failure. There may be some social activities or events in these programs in

order to change the reason of having a sense of belonging from students' fear of failure to pleasure of being together with other students or academics. Besides, organization of congresses or conferences, a group work of article writing, or presenting a research paper at a conference may be effective ways of enhancing students' sense of belonging in these programs.

According to the findings of the present study, the main problem of not using mediation theory aspects or partial use of them stems from the limited time of academics in master and doctorate programs in ELT department. The busy timetables of academics include classes from ELT undergraduate program, ELT master and doctorate programs, and administrative works. Therefore, academics mostly can neither find enough time to give personal feedbacks to the tasks nor spend time for personal goal settings of the students. In order to solve the time problem, academics may have classes just in master and doctorate programs. By this way, they may have longer time for thesis supervision, task feedbacks, or personal development of the students.

**4.2.3. Implications for post-graduate students.** The results also showed that students should be more willing to ask questions directly to academics in case of a lack of understanding in order to have a shared understanding in the classes. Apart from this, the findings of this study allow the future and current academics to know the views of the students in post-graduate programs regarding how, when, and where exactly they can use mediation theory aspects more effectively in their classes. Especially the students in both programs are in tendency to keep their critiques secret even though they are allowed to express their views because of the power distance. Thus, the results can be used by the current academics in reformulating their ways of organizing the classes and how they put the mediator role into practice, and by future academics in getting the insights of using mediation theory aspects in the most effective way.

### 4.3. Suggestions for Further Research

Firstly, the suggestions for further researches draw in part from aspects related to the limitations of the current research. The first suggestion is related to the first limitation of the present study which is lack of generalization of the results to all the institutions and individuals. As previously mentioned, the findings are limited to the selected cases in Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Faculty of Education, post-graduate programs (doctorate and master) of ELT department. Therefore, due to the case study nature of this study, generalizability of the results was not the main concern. However, in case of a general mediation theory use examination in post-graduate programs in ELT departments, a quantitative nationwide investigation of post-graduate programs in this specific field is needed for generalizable findings which can be supported by some qualitative methods, such as observations or interviews.

Apart from this, this study was carried out with adult participants in the post-graduate education context. It can also be recommended that researchers gather data from primary, secondary, and university education contexts to make a comparison in Turkish context. This would provide the answer for the significance of the students' age and the atmosphere of the context in the use of mediation theory aspects. Moreover, the same methodology can be used with the same age group who have different purposes. For instance, adults in a language course and their teachers who have no academic concern can be investigated in this respect which would eventually reveal the role of academic nature and targets in the use of mediation theory aspects.

Secondly, one of the focal points of this research was the source of the use of mediation theory aspects for the academics. However, the investigation in this study was carried out by questioning the academics about the sources of all mediation theory aspects



rather than individual examination of each aspect. Thus, many researchers may agree that a better way to understand the reason and source for the use of each mediation theory aspect is to ask this question for each individual aspect. While personal experiences of the academics may be effective for the use of 'significance', it may be possible to observe that their academics or their personality is the factor shaping the use of 'control of own behavior' aspect. For this reason, further research is needed to examine the sources of using each mediation theory aspect separately.

Another possible suggestion for the future researchers is related to the students' success in post-graduate programs in ELT departments. This study mostly dealt with how mediation theory was put into action by the academics in these programs together with the views of the students. As an example, current study investigated whether academics state the significance of the topics or not and how they provide the 'significance' aspect in their classes. The results provided no information about the role of the use of significance aspect on students' success. A comprehensive investigation of the mediation theory aspects regarding their role in the students' success in all levels of education is recommended for the future researchers.

Finally, taking the view of Chang (2004) into consideration who suggested that participants' home culture was important in the selection of mediated learning experiences, it can also be recommended that researchers investigate the use of mediation theory aspects cross-culturally. In this way, it may be possible to understand whether culture plays a significant role in the use of these aspects or not.

## References

- Adelman, C., Jenkins, D., & Kemmis, S. (1976). Rethinking case study: Notes from the second Cambridge conference. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 6 (3), 139-150.
- Adler, P. A., & Adler, P. (1994). Observational Techniques. In N. K. Denzin & YS. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 377-392). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Belenky, M. F. (1992). "Bringing balance to the classroom or workplace" paper presented at the Wisconsin Women's Studies Conference, Preconference Workshop, Green Bay, WI.
- Blagg, N. (1991). *Can we teach intelligence?* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bloor, M. (1997). Techniques of validation in qualitative research: a critical commentary. In Miller, G. & Dingwall, R. (Eds.), *Context and method in qualitative research*, London: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Brown, N. D. (2002). Mediated learning and foreign language acquisition, *ASp*, 35-36, 167-182. Retrieved from <http://asp.revues.org/1651> (15.05.2014).
- Burden, R. L. (1987). Fuerstein's instrumental enrichment program: Important issues in research and evaluation. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 11, 3-16.
- Burke, K. (1935). *Permanence and change*. New York: New Republic.
- Carspecken, P. F. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: a theoretical and practical guide*. New York: Routledge.

- Chambers, G. N. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: a theoretical and practical guide*. London: Routledge.
- Chang, C-W. (2004). An investigation into teachers mediation with junior college students learning English in Taiwan. *Journal of National Hsin Chu Teachers College*, 1, 97-135.
- Cherryholmes, C. H. (1992). Notes on pragmatism and scientific realism. *Educational Researcher*, 14, 13–17.
- Cohen, L. & Manion, L. (1994). *Research Methods in Education*. London: Routledge.
- Cohen, J. M. & Cohen, M. J. (1980). *The Penguin Dictionary of modern quotations (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. London: Penguin.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method approaches (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39 (3), 124-131.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: Sage.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Youngs, P. (2002). Defining “highly qualified teachers”: What does “scientifically-based research” actually tells us? *Education Researcher*, 31(9), 13-25.

- Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.) (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological Mmethods*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The research act*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Dowsett, G. (1986). Interaction in the semi-structured interview. In M. Emery (Eds.) *Qualitative research* (pp. 50-56). Canberra: Australian Association of Adult Education.
- Ellis, G. & Sinclair, B. (1989). *Learning to learn English: A course in learner training*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.
- Erikson, E. H. (1963). *Childhood and society*. New York: Norton.
- Eun, B. & Hye-S. L. (2009). A sociocultural view of language learning: The importance of meaning-based instruction. *Test Canada Journal/ Revue Test du Canada*, 27 (1), 13-26.
- Falik, L. (2001a). Changing children's behavior. Focusing on the "E" in Mediated Learning Experience. [http:// www.icelp.org](http://www.icelp.org). (accessed 14 January 2015).
- Falik, L. (2001b). Using Mediated Learning Experience parameters to change childrens' behavior: Techniques for parents and childcare providers. [http:// www.icelp.org](http://www.icelp.org). (accessed 14 January 2015).
- Feuerstein, R. (2008). Conductive education and structural cognitive modifiability. *RACE*, 7 (1), 5-8.

- Feuerstein, R., Klein, P. S. & Tannenbaum, A. J. (1991). *Mediated learning experience. Theoretical, psychological and learning implications*. England: Freund Publishing House Ltd.
- Feuerstein, R. & Feuerstein, F. (1991). Mediated learning experience: A theoretical review. In R. Feuerstein, P. S. Klein; & A. J. Tannenbaum (Eds.), *Mediated learning experience: Theoretical, psychosocial and learning implications* (pp. 3–51). London: Freud Publishing House.
- Feuerstein, R. (1990). The theory of structural cognitive modifiability. In B. Presseisen (Eds.), *Learning and thinking styles: Classroom interaction* (pp. 68-134). Washington, DC: National Education Association.
- Feuerstein, R., Hoffmann, M. B., Jensen, M. R. & Rand, Y. (1985). Instrumental enrichment: An intervention program for structural cognitive modifiability: theory and practice. In J. W. Segal (Eds.), *Thinking and learning skills: Relating instruction to research* (pp. 43–82). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Feuerstein, R. (1980). *Instrumental enrichment*. Baltimore: University Park Press.
- Fraser, J. D. C. (2006). Mediation of learning. In M. Niemann and R. B. Monyai (Eds.), *The educator as mediator of learning* (pp.1–21). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Fielding, N. & Fielding, J. (1986). *Linking data*. London: Sage.
- Geertz, C. (1972). *The interpretation of culture*. New York: Basic Books.
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goldhaber, D., & Brewer, D. (2000). Does teacher certification matter? High school teacher certification status and student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 22 (2), 129-145.

- Goodwin, L. W. & Goodwin, L. D. (1996). *Understanding quantitative and qualitative research in early childhood education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Greene, M. (1997). The lived world, literature and education. In D. Vandenberg (Eds.), *Phenomenology & education discourse* (pp. 169-190). Johannesburg: Heinemann.
- Grosser, M. & De Waal, E. (2008). Recentering the teacher: from transmitter of knowledge to mediator of learning. *Education as Change*, 12 (2), 41–57.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Guba, E. G. (1990). The alternative paradigm dialog. In E. G. Guba (Eds.) *The paradigm dialog* (pp. 17-30). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hammersley, M. (2000). *Taking sides in social research*. London: Routledge.
- Hammersley, M. (1992). *What's wrong with ethnography? Methodological explorations*. London: Routledge.
- Hammersley, M. (1990). *Reading ethnographic research: a critical guide*. London: Longman.
- Hassaskhah, J. (2011). Feuerstein's theory of mediation and its impact on EFL teachers' sense of efficacy. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 5(7), 89-113.
- Haywood, H. C. (2003). Mediation within a Neo-Piagetian framework. *Journal of Cognitive Education and Psychology*, 3(1) 54-70.
- Human-Vogel, S. & Bouwer, C. (2005). Creating a complex learning environment for the mediation of knowledge construction in diverse educational setting. *South African Journal of Education*, 25(4), 229–238.

- Johnson, R. B. (1997). Examining the validity structure of qualitative research. *Education*, 118, 282-292.
- Kanatlar, A. Z. (1996). *An evaluation of the M.A: TEFL program at Bilkent University* (Unpublished master's thesis). Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey.
- Kaplan, P. S. (1990). *Educational psychology for tomorrow's teacher*. St Paul, MN: West.
- Kemmis, S., & Wilkinson, M. (1998). Participatory action research and the study of practice. In B. Atweh, S. Kemmis, & P. Weeks (Eds.), *Action research in practice: Partnerships for social justice in education* (pp. 21–36). New York: Routledge.
- Kırmızı, Ö. (2011). *An evaluation of M.A. ELT programs in Turkey* (Unpublished PhD thesis). Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey.
- Koru, S. & Akesson, J. (2011). Türkiye'nin İngilizce Açığı. *Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları Araştırma Vakfı*. Retrieved from [http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1329722803-6.Turkiye\\_nin\\_Ingilizce\\_Acigi.pdf](http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1329722803-6.Turkiye_nin_Ingilizce_Acigi.pdf)
- Kozulin, A., Gindis, B., Ageyev, V., & Miller, S. (Eds.). (2003). *Vygotsky's educational theory in cultural context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kozulin, A. (1994). Cognitive revolution in learning: Piaget and Vygotsky. In J. N. Mangieri & C. C. Block (Eds.), *Creating powerful thinking in teachers and students: Diverse perspectives* (pp. 269-287). Fort worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.
- Kozulin, A. (1991). *Mediated learning and education: Vygotsky and Feuerstein*. Philadelphia, PA: Research for Better Schools.
- Kozulin, A. (1990). *Vygotsky's psychology: A biography of ideas*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Krueger, R. A. (1988). *Focus groups: a practical guide for applied research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Introducing sociocultural theory. In J. P. Lantolf (Eds.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In Y. S. Lincoln & Guba, E. G. (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 163-188). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lynch, K. B. (1996). *Language program evaluation theory and practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mackey, A. & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research methodology and design*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Mason, J. (1996). *Qualitative researching*. London: Sage.
- Maykut, P. & Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning qualitative research: A philosophic and practical guide*. London: Falmer Press.
- Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco: Jossey- Bass.
- Mertens, D. M.. (1998). *Research methods in education and psychology: integrating diversity with quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miles, M. & Huberman, A. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis*. London: Sage.
- Miller, M. B. (2003). The meaning of mediation: discussion of varying perspectives. *Journal of Cognitive Education and Psychology*, 3 (1), 82-89.



- Minick, N. (1987). The development of Vygotsky's thought: an introduction. In R. Rieber & A. Carton (Eds.), *The collected works of L.S. Vygotsky* (pp. 17-36). New York: Plenum Press.
- Morgan, D. (2007). Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained: methodological implications of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1 (1), 48-76.
- Morgan, D. (1997). *Focus groups as a qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Morgan, D. L. (1988). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Morse, J. M. (1991). Approaches to qualitative-quantitative methodological triangulation. *Nursing Research*, 40 (1), 120-123.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ngidi, D. P. (2012). Educators' understanding of the mediation role in the classroom. *Africa Education Review*, 9 (2), 344-359.
- Nieswiadomy, R. M. (1993). *Foundations of nursing research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Norwalk, CT: Appleton & Lange.
- Nunan, D. & Bailey, K.M. (2008). *Exploring second language classroom research: A comprehensive guide*. Boston: Heinle.
- Nyborg, M. (1993). *Pedagogy. The study of how to provide optimum conditions of learning for persons who may differ widely in prerequisites for learning*. Haugesund: Nordisk undervisningsforlag, Norway.

- Palincsar, A. S. (1998). Social constructivist perspectives on teaching and learning. In J. T. Spence, J. M. Darley, & D. J. Foss (Eds.), *Annual review of psychology* (pp. 345-375). Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.
- Paris, S. G., Byrnes, J. P., & Paris, A. H. (2001). Constructing theories, identities, and actions of self-regulated learners. In B. J. Zimmerman & D. H. Schunk (Eds.), *Self-regulated learning and academic achievement: theoretical perspectives (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*, (pp. 252-287). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Patton, M. Q. (1980). *Qualitative evaluation methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Peacock, M. (2009). The evaluation of foreign-language-teacher education programmes. *Language Teaching Research*, 13, 259-278.
- Phillips, D. (1997). How, why, what, when, and where: Perspectives on constructivism and education. *Issues in Education: Contributions from Educational Psychology*, 3, 151-194.
- Phillips, D. C., & Burbules, N. C. (2000). *Postpositivism and educational research*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Presseisen, B. Z. & Kozulin, A. (1992). Mediated learning- The contributions of Vygotsky and Feuerstein theory and practice, A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

- Rahimi, A. & Soheila, T. (2010). Mediating Iranian Efl learners: private speech and scaffolding in reading comprehension. *Linguistic and Literary Broad Research and Innovation*, 1 (2), 56-71.
- Reason, P. & Rowan, J. (1981). *Human inquiry: a sourcebook of new paradigm research*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Rubin J. H. & Rubin S. I. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing, the art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Savell, J. M., Twohig, P. T. & Rackford, D. L. (1986). Empirical status of Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment techniques as a method of teaching thinking skills. *Review of Educational Research*, 56, 381-409.
- Seng, A. S. H., Pou, L. K. H. & Tan, O. S. (2003). *Mediated learning experience with children*. Singapore: McGraw-Hill.
- Sharron, H. & Coulter, M. (1994). *Changing children's minds: Feuerstein's revolution in the teaching of intelligence*. Birmingham: The Sharron Publishing Company.
- Silverman, D. (2000). *Doing qualitative research, a practical handbook*. London: Sage.
- Slife, B. D. & Williams. R. N. (1995). *What's behind the research? Discovering hidden assumptions in the behavioral sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stenhouse, L. (1985). Case study methods. In T. Husen and T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education (1<sup>st</sup> ed.)* (pp. 640–646). Oxford: Pergamon.

- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sun, J. F. (2005). *Evaluation on EFL teachers' roles from the perspective of social constructivism* (Unpublished master's thesis). Henan Normal University, China.
- Tetnowski, J. & Damico, J. (2001). A demonstration of the advantages of qualitative methodologies in stuttering research. *Journal of Fluency Disorders*, 26, 17–42.
- Tezel, K. V. (2006). *A study of an American University master's program in TESOL: multiple perspectives in program evaluation* (Unpublished master's thesis). METU, Ankara, Turkey.
- Trumbull, M. (2005). Qualitative research methods. In George R. Taylor (Eds.), *Integrating quantitative and qualitative methods in research (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*(pp. 101-126). Oxford: University Press of America.
- Van Werkhoven, W. (1990). The attunement strategy and spelling problems . In A. Van der Ley & K. J. Kappers (Eds.), *Dyslexia '90*. Lisse: Swets and Zeitlinger.
- Vosniadou, S., Ioannides, C., Dimitrakopoulou, A., & Papademetriou, E. (2001). Designing learning environments to promote conceptual change in science. *Learning and Instruction*, 11, 381–419.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1987). Thinking and speech. In R. Rieber & A. Carton (Eds.), *The collected works of L.S. Vygotsky* (pp. 39-285). New York: Plenum Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological process*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (Original work published in 1930-33).

- Webb, E. J, D.T. Campbell, R. D. S. & Sechrest, L. (1966). *Unobtrusive measures in social sciences*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Weber, M. (1946). The social psychology of the religions. In C. W. Mills & H. H. Gerth (Eds.), *From Max Weber: essays in sociology* (pp. 267-301). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Welman, J. C., & Kruger, S. J. (1999). *Research methodology for the business and administrative sciences*. Johannesburg, South Africa: International Thompson.
- Williams, M. & Burden, R. L. (1997). *Psychology for language teachers: A social constructivist approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Woolfolk, A. E. (2004). *Educational psychology (9<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Pearson.
- Xiongyong, C. (2012). Cognition of mediation among secondary school EFL teachers in China. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3 (14), 233-244.
- Xiongyong, C., Samuel, M. & Hua, H. (2012). Evaluation on EFL teacher roles from the perspective of mediation: case studies of China's secondary school classroom practices. *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(1), 117-134.
- Yavuz, A. (2003). *Notions of reflection and reflective teaching in a particular ELT department in Turkey: reflections and implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis). University of Nottingham, United Kingdom.
- Yavuz, A. & Topkaya, Z. E. (2013). Academics' evaluation of the English language teaching program: A Turkish case. *Novitas-royal (research on youth and language)*, 7(1), 64-83.

Yin, R. K. (1993). *Applications of case study research. Applied social research series.*  
London: Sage.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Semi Structured Interview Questions for Teachers

#### Personal Information

1. Male:  Female:

2. Age:

3. How long have you been working as a language academic?

1 year or less:  2-5 years:  6-10 years:  More than 10 years:

4. How long have you been instructing in the ELT Masters programme?

1 year or less:  2-5 years:  6-10 years:  More than 10 years:

5. How long have you been instructing in the ELT Doctorate programme?

1 year or less:  2-5 years:  6-10 years:  More than 10 years:

#### Interview Questions

1. (Shared intention) How do you generally give your instructions while presenting a task? (oral-written-in detail-do you have due dates?) Does it change according to the class? How do you make sure that your instruction and intention is understood and reciprocated? (try to read from their facial expressions-you ask directly?) What do you do when you see that they don't understand the instructions? What is important in this process for you and why?
2. (Significance) Do you try to relate the learning task with your learners' practices to make the learners see the personal relevance and value of the learning task? If you do, how do you do it? Why? Is it important to state explicitly the importance or the value of certain tasks and activities to your students?
3. (Purpose beyond the here and now) Do you try to make the learners be aware of the more general value of the task which means that what they have learnt will be necessary for the next steps? If you do, how do you do it? Why?

4. (A sense of competence) Do you try to make your learners become self-confident? If you do, how do you do it? Why do you choose that particular strategy/strategies to make them believe that they are competent learners?
5. (Control of own behavior) Do you guide learners to use the necessary skills and strategies to control and regulate their own learning? How do you do it?
6. (Goal-setting) Do you allow students to set their own realistic goals and pursue them? If yes, how do you do it? What would be the importance of it?
7. (Challenge) What kind of tasks do you give in your classes? Do you give challenging tasks in your classes? If yes, why do you use them? How often do you provide your students with complex tasks to encourage their intellectual curiosity and creativity?
8. (Awareness of change) Do you try to let the learners develop an ability to recognize, monitor and assess the changes in themselves? What kind of changes do they recognize (personal, academic, and social)? How do you do it? Why?
9. (A belief in positive outcomes) Do you encourage your learners to believe that there is always a solution to any problem when they get stuck in their learning? How do you do it? Why?
10. (Sharing) Do you encourage your learners to work collaboratively? If you do, how do you do it? Why?
11. (Individuality) Do you guide learners to develop a sense that they can think and feel different from others by growing awareness of one's own unique place and contribution individually? If yes, how do you do it? Why?
12. (A sense of belonging) Do you try to create a sense of belonging in your classes? If yes, how do you do it?
13. What teacher role do you play in your classes? Does it change according to the class or the students?



14. What are the sources (your personal feelings, educational background) and reasons of having mediation aspects (all mentioned above such as making the subject significant, sharing the same intention, making them feel competent or creating sharing atmosphere in the class) in your classes? What mediation aspect is more important for you? What source is more important for you?

## **Appendix B: Focus Group Interview Questions for Students**

### **Part 1: Personal Information**

1. Male:  Female:

2. Age:

3. Department of graduation (undergraduate):

4.) (This is ONLY for PhD students) Department of graduation (master):

5.) Your program: Master:  PhD:

6.) Now I am in course period  thesis period

### **Questions of focus group interview**

1. (Shared intention) How do your teachers generally give instructions while presenting a task (oral-written-in detail-do you have due dates?)? How does he/she make sure that his/her instruction and intention is understood and reciprocated? (try to read from your facial expressions-they ask you directly?) What do you do when you don't understand the instructions? What is important in this process for you and why? How should it be?
2. (Significance) Do your teachers try to relate the learning task with your practices to make you see the personal relevance and value of the learning task? If yes, how do they do it? How should it be? Do you think it is important that teachers tell you why you are to do a particular activity?
3. (Purpose beyond the here and now) Do your teachers try to make you be aware of the more general value of the task which means that what you have learnt will be necessary for the next steps? If yes, how do they do it? Why?

4. (A sense of competence) Do you believe you can achieve well what is required from you in this program? Do your teachers try to make students become self-confident (successful)? If they do, how do they do it? Why do they choose that particular strategy/strategies to make you believe that you are competent learners?
5. (Control of own behavior) Can you control your own learning and regulate it well or do you need assistance from teachers? Do your teachers guide learners to use the necessary skills and strategies to control and regulate students' own learning? How do they do it?
6. (Awareness of change) Can you realize when you are getting academically, socially or personally better in your classes? Do you think your teacher guides you to know when your performance in classes is getting better? Do you think teachers guide and show the ways of checking your own progress?
7. (Challenge) What kind of tasks do your teachers give in their classes? What is your general evaluation of the tasks given? Are they challenging enough? Are they meaningful enough? Do you prefer having challenging tasks in your classes?
8. (Individuality) Do your teachers guide you to develop a sense that you can think and feel different from others by growing awareness of your own unique place and contribution individually? Can you express your own ideas in the classes? If yes, do you think it is important?
9. (Goal-setting) Can you set your own realistic goals? If yes, can you follow them individually? Do your teachers allow students to set their own realistic goals and pursue them?
10. (A belief in positive outcomes) Do your teachers encourage you to believe that there is always a solution to any problem when/if you get stuck in your learning? How do they do it? How should it be?

11. (Sharing) Do you prefer working individually or in co-operation in or out of the class? Why? Do your teachers encourage learners to work collaboratively? If they do, how do they do it?
12. (A sense of belonging) Is it important to be a part of a group? Do you feel like a part of a group in this program? Do your teachers create a sense of belonging in your classes?
13. What teacher role do your teachers play in your classes? Do you think it changes according to the class or the students?
14. What do you think about the potential sources (their personal feelings, educational background) and reasons of your teachers' using mediation aspects (all mentioned above such as making the subject significant, sharing the same intention, making them feel competent or creating sharing atmosphere in the class) in your classes? What mediation aspect is more important for you and for your teachers? What source can be more important for them?

### Appendix C: Sample Observation Schedule

Participant Code:	
Course:	
Duration:	
Recorded/non-recorded:	
PhD or Master Program :	
Number of students:	
<b>Mediated Learning Experience Features</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Significance	
Purpose beyond the here and now	
Shared intention	
A sense of competence	
Control of own behavior	
Goal-setting	
Challenge	
Awareness of change	
A belief in positive outcomes	
Sharing	
Individuality	
A sense of belonging	