

CASES OF EFL TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TOWARDS EDUCATIONAL INSPECTION IN TURKEY: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstract

The inspection program is a crucial element of the education system and has a significant role in improving education quality. In Turkey, there may be a need for reform in the education inspection program to upgrade an efficient inspection. The Ministry of Education (MoNE) does not employ inspectors anymore. The duties of inspectors are undertaken by school principals or vice-principals. Along with the fact, the school principals are not trained for inspection and may not have the proficiency/educational/operational background to perform these duties. The current study explored the role of education inspection currently performed by school principals. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews and field notes. The participants of the study were English teachers from different institutions and learners from a high school. The findings revealed that teachers and students have different suggestions regarding educational inspection. There are often inconsistencies in inspection, teachers are observed and may not receive post-observation feedback. Branch expertise of inspectors is needed to offer better insight into teaching. The student participants offered that the teachers should be observed by inspectors on their effective use of engaging teaching methods and trained accordingly. Besides, students described inequalities regarding education in Turkey and offered that inspection practices should bring equity in educational settings. This study offers some implications for MoNE and school principals.

Keywords: English Language teaching, social and school context, inspection, educational quality, learning conditions.

INTRODUCTION

According to the Regulation for Chairmanship of Guidance and Supervision of the Turkish MoNE and Education Supervisors, published in 2014 in Turkey, the course supervisory task was abolished during the course (Yeşil & Kış, 2015). The teacher's audit during the course was given to the responsibility of the school principals. However, it has been observed that school principals are more interested in the bureaucratic aspects of management. They may carry out less work or nothing at all, on evaluation, program development and teacher development. Evaluation of teacher's performance was seen as a way to ameliorate the efficient teaching of the teacher by pinpointing the teacher's inadequacies and consolidate his/her teaching (Taylor & Tyler, 2012). Inspection is one of the crucial aspects of providing high educational quality (Taut & Rakoczy, 2016). Even though inspectors receive rigorous training to be a mentor for teachers, they cannot inspect or coach them. Conversely, in Turkey, coaching and inspection are the duties of school principals who do not have received any training to help teachers. That is a paradox in education and school principals are responsible for everything in their schools with a possible heavy workload. Thus; this study aims to fill the gap in the literature by exploring the dispositions of EFL learners and teachers towards inspection and determine

whether school principals or inspectors would serve better for teachers in their self-development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Background

Education inspection has been a way of teacher development in some countries. According to the OECD (2013) report, some countries have a proportionately impoverished evaluation structure and cannot sufficiently take advantage of school assessments, teacher assessments and feedback. For instance, one third or more of teachers in European countries, such as Ireland, Portugal, and Austria, have not been assessed in the last five years. Similarly, most teachers in Italy, Spain, and Portugal have failed to benefit from teacher evaluation and feedback. According to the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS-2013) report, in terms of teacher performance evaluation and feedback situation, Turkey is not an exception. Just as in European countries, the vast majority of teachers in Turkey have not been given feedback or appraisal yet in the last five years (e.g less than one-tenth of the teachers have received evaluation and feedback). Aydın (2014) notes that in the face of rapid change, expertise and skills learned in schools cannot be kept up to date. This phenomenon involves constant self-renewal in the teaching of all occupations. Management and supervision with an oppressive view of the past prevented teachers and students from being happy with the work they do (Kapusuzoglu, 2008). This might be one of the reasons why inspection by inspectors was abolished. Teacher monitoring and development have become increasingly important both in Turkey and worldwide. However, the current models may not be as successful as anticipated to facilitate the process. The discussions on practices focus mainly on audit staff and institutions, cooperation with teachers and the communications process of supervisors (Yaman, 2009). Supervisory skills are discussed in Gürsoy and Damar's (2011) study and they found out that 11% of the participants in their study report to have read the information in the booklet of faculty-school cooperation, which proves that CTs have limited awareness regarding their roles. Supervisory skills as discussed by Gürsoy and Damar (2011) study require special training and commitment. Supervising teachers is a form of making them reflective practitioners (Yeşilbursa, 2011). The process of supervision also requires pre-teaching conferences as offered by İstifçi (2011) but the availability of time of pre-conference meetings is not described in the literature for the inspection of school managers.

Turkish 2023 Vision Document and reforms in the inspection

Educators require reform in inspection practices; hence, importance is attached to supervision and inspection 2023 Vision Document. The 2023 Vision document was prepared by the MoNE which attempts to describe the plan for improvement over the next three years in Turkey. One of the objectives of the 2023 vision is to bring about equality and equity among schools. One way of achieving equality among public-funded schools should be having similar procedures in all schools (Taut & Rakoczy, 2016). However, incessant parents' complaints and news on the media signal the vastly different educational practices among the schools based on the pure judgement of the school principals. Also, school principals do not

have a chance to communicate with inspectors and they may not have the chance to receive feedback from inspectors in terms of teacher coaching.

The need for a new inspection system

Hall and Sivesind (2015) emphasize the need to reform the inspection system, explain new inspection system-relevant paradigms, and note that the inspection system should be focused on process assessment instead of product evaluation. From the date they offered the reform, no considerable changes have been observed, and the role of inspectors has been limited to following up the complaints of the stakeholders. Kocabaş and Demir (2009) underline that the current inspection system does not have objective criteria for inspecting and there are inconsistent practices between inspectors, and they point out that the results of the inspection are not used for performance improvement of the inspected personnel.

Klein (2000) offers that education inspectors are not attaining inspection roles because of having many different duties. Also, it is stated that the scope of duties of education inspectors is extensive and ambiguous, and this problem decreases the effectiveness of education inspectors (Kayıkçı & Şarlak, 2013). According to the Turkish Province's Administration Regulation (1949) article number 9/g, Governor of the Province has the authority to assign education inspectors for several duties and education inspectors' being bounded to both the Provincial Directorate of National Education and the Governor of the Provinces are another issue for education inspectors (Kayıkçı & Şarlak, 2013).

The issues in inspection

The problems of inspection system related to investigations were determined and it was identified that inspectors may need to tackle innominate and needless petitions, and it is added that the responsibilities of education inspectors are demanding. Their autonomy is very restricted so that they have to get permission for investigation and inquisition separately (Beyhan, 2009). Beyhan (2009) also states that education inspectors are meddled by local administrators or political groups during the investigation processes. These problems make education inspectors' investigation and inquisition duties difficult and sometimes they cannot make decisions objectively. Although they are trained in teacher development and are being educated in their master and PhD studies, they cannot help the teachers to tackle their problems in the current education practices.

There are studies conducted by minority schools about the inspection in Turkey. However, to the researcher's knowledge, no prior studies have been conducted on the inspection with the views of English teachers and learners and the literature lacks research written in English, thus making it harder to be available to the scientific/academic community concerning inspection in schools comparing inspection by inspectors versus inspection by school managers. Thus, this study is driven by the following questions to fill the void:

RQ1. What do EFL teachers think about current or previous inspection practices by the school principals or inspectors?

RQ2. What do EFL teachers' preferences for inspection of their classes and their schools?

RQ3. What are the suggestions of EFL learners regarding the inspection practices of inspection in their current and previous schools?

The main query of the article is to seek how the inspection conducted by managers are perceived by English teachers and students. The author has chosen the EFL (English as Foreign Language) learners and teachers as there is a repeated discontentedness about the efficiency of English language lessons which may serve as justification for the current study.

METHOD

Research Design

The qualitative research design was employed in the current research. In the current participant-reported narrative research, the data were collected from three different resources and presented in a synthesis. The data were analysed, and the tools are explained below.

Data Collection Methods

Sergiovanni ve Starrat (2002) describes inspection as a multi-dimensional model and including many stakeholders, so to gather substantial data, the researcher used three data collection methods. Besides, in order to have rigorous research, the following research questions were composed of which the interview questions are driven.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Narrative research has been claimed to be the best qualitative approach for capturing detailed stories of life experiences of either single individuals or small groups (Ary et al, 2018 p.470) Narrative approaches acknowledge the role of people as the primary author of their stories and focus on an exploration of “thick descriptions” that shape people’s life-career stories. Subsequently, the inquiry will attend to participants’ unique preferences, skills and knowledge about their teaching careers and inspection memories. Therefore, facilitating storytelling by making narrative inquiry enhances the possibility of finding a voice. An “empathic” qualitative exploratory multiple case study method was used to generate “experience-near” data that was culturally and contextually pertinent to the participants (Stead et al., 2011, p. 107). Interviews emphasizing the storytelling nature of participants are regarded as one of the primary tools of data collection. The following questions adopted from Uyar (2015) were asked in the interviews with teachers:

As an English teacher;

- 1) What is your opinion about current regulations concerning the Turkish educational inspection system (novice teachers, complaints etc)?
- 2) What are the main problems of the Turkish Educational Inspection System as you experience it?
- 3) What kind of problems do you face while being inspected by school managers?
- 4) What do you think about the organizational structure of the Turkish educational inspection system?
- 5) What do you expect from a new regulation concerning the Turkish educational inspection system? What kind of feedback should inspectors or school principals provide?
- 6) Do you think inspectors from the same branches should inspect teachers? An English teacher inspecting an English teacher or not necessary?

7) Do you have any other ideas to add to the contribution of inspection in education?

Focus Group Interviews

The second data collection instrument of the study was the focus group interviews. This kind of interview is “suitable for cases when the researcher has a good enough overview of the phenomenon or domain in question and can develop broad questions about the topic in advance but does not want to use ready-made response categories that would limit the depth and breadth of the respondent's story” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 136). The focus group was established voluntarily. The number of learners who participated in the focus group interviews was 10 in both schools. The interviews were conducted in the 2019-2020 Spring Term. The medium of communication of the interview was English, participants rarely switched to L1. The duration of each interview took about an hour. Conducting focus group interviews is economical in terms of time, also for topics that people know little about, is preferable to generate ideas. A timekeeper was used to provide each learner to have equal chances to speak, and each student is given paper to write notes on the issues they do not have time to speak about.

Field Notes

The field notes (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018) provided background information for the researcher to map onto the data obtained from interviews. The field notes were recorded by the researcher himself and helped to gain an emic perspective into the phenomenon. In each interview, field notes were recorded, and they improved the questions that are used in the interviews.

Data Analysis

First, all the semi-structured interviews and the focus group interviews with students were transcribed. Then the data were analyzed utilizing inductive analysis as the themes from the raw data emerged through repeated reading and comparison. The researcher firstly analyzed the written data through the open coding approach. *Open Coding* includes labelling concepts, defining, and developing categories based on their properties and dimensions. Then, they grouped the data reducing the number of categories by combining similar themes into broader categories. The researcher also conducted the data analysis procedure and had the themes reviewed by a colleague who is an expert in the field.

Trustworthiness

To secure trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the researcher adopted four criteria: credibility is assured by the time devoted to data collection, the researcher held online meetings with each participant; transferability is attained by providing a thick description of the Turkish inspection context; dependability and confirmability are provided by documenting the research procedures including procedures of data collection, analysis, and interpretations as well as coding and thematization. The researcher finally asked the participants to read the content of the analysis for their consent/validation, i.e., member-checking.

Participants

Participants are six English teachers from different cities of Turkey, and they were found by convenient sampling to represent different regions and fifteen high school students that joined the focus group interviews. Due to convenience sampling, one male teacher and five females joined the study and were interviewed online. In the student group, there were six females and nine males. The focus group interviews were held in one school due to official permission procedures and the beginning of the initial curfews. All the students were studying in the same school; however, their families were living in different cities in Turkey. Some brief information about the participant English teachers were provided below to understand their teaching context better.

Cecily P1

She has been working as an English teacher since 2013. An inspector visited her, and the inspector gave her very detailed feedback on her performance and the inspector decided on her promotion to be a full-time teacher. She believes that the inspection is necessary because it somehow regulates our documentation in her school there are 120 teachers and 60 of them are hourly paid and there are 2500 students in her school. She believes there should be inspectors who can provide face to face feedback to the teachers. Besides, she believes that inspectors from other branches can visit the schools for the inspection of documents such as lesson plans parents' meetings and the workflow of the management. She also believes that peer observation will be very useful. She was visited by her school principals who didn't know much about English language teaching, but her managers could understand the interaction patterns, so she felt quite positive about to experience and he was in a good relationship with every teacher and provided some feedback to teachers. For her, inspection is necessary and (beneficialx3) In the past, the inspectors visited the classes and asked some questions to students in public which was stress-provoking.

Müge P2

She has been teaching for 25 years and she believes that everybody in schools needs some professional development and expertise. She has prepared 4 Erasmus plus projects this year, she reports that her school manager visits her classes, but he can't offer any useful feedback he just checks if her pacing is in line with the curriculum and other English teachers the word *inspector* doesn't sound appealing for anybody some better terms like coach or mentor should be introduced. Some issues are problematic in her school such as students whose parents are in jail and there are a lot of students from disadvantaged families and single-parent families and they lost their motivation to study in the COVID19 pandemic. She believes in the importance of the Erasmus+ and E-twinning projects for developing the students. For her, school principals' inspection is not useful. She also believes the best inspector is students and our conscience, she is very dedicated to her job, she attributes her dedication to not having children.

Ahmet P3

He is a state school teacher in Konya. He has been teaching for twelve years. He thinks the inspectors or school managers cannot function entirely, preferably the head of teacher unions or school principals conduct an educational inspection in their own way. He is desperate about the inconsistencies in different cities and he is not hopeful that a sudden change in the

inspection system will yield fruitful results soon. He thinks the pillars of educational inspection should be clear to everyone and the education stakeholders need to be informed in advance, so they know how to be ready for the inspection.

Sarah P4

She is a state school teacher working in Malatya city. She thinks peer observation will be an effective tool for improvement. Also, she added that the views of the students should be taken into consideration while evaluating the teacher. She thinks the school principals perceive the noise from classes as misbehaviour and undisciplined students, but actually, they need to be inquisitive about whether the students have learned anything or not.

Ebbie P5

She has been teaching for seven years in Istanbul secondary school setting. She was inspected every three months by the director of the school. There are no specific criteria or guidelines for evaluation. The impression created by management is that they can lose their job at any time. She thinks inspection should be an end to improving the teaching performance because she did not know her strong and weak points. It could have been better if the inspector has a friendlier approach. We are never informed about the inspection in advance. Hence, coordinators can come anytime. Peer observation should be fostered in institutions as well. She thinks that some of the inspectors should be assessment experts, the others should be experts on materials development. An inspector cannot be an expert in all of the areas. She thinks new regulations can be initiated in the private sector regarding workload.

Hatice P6

She is an English teacher with more than twenty years of experience. She is the vice-principal of her school in Bursa and for other schools, she sometimes works as an inspector. She says she is responsible for everything from absent students to broken drain pipes. Therefore, she has no time for inspection. She believes it is same in other schools as well.

Table 1: *The teaching experience and responsibilities of participants.*

Names	Teaching Experience (years)	Position	Responsible for
Cecily	7	Vice-principal of a secondary public school, FL teacher	Give feedback to hourly-paid teachers who are not teachers
Müge	25	English teacher and Erasmus coordinator	Head of Erasmus projects
Ahmet	12	English teacher	Head of English department
Sarah	13	English teacher in a high school	Inspected by school principals.
Ebbie	7	English teacher at secondary school	Been observed on many occasions
Hatice	20	ELF teacher, part time inspector, vice principal	She inspects some school when asked

Participating Students

The students were studying in a prestigious boarding state high school of İstanbul, six of them are from other cities of Turkey staying in the hostel of the school. They are aged between 15 to 18. There were 2 females and 8 males in the focus group meeting. They are keen on their academic life and to be a student there, they got 495 out of 500 in the high school entrance exam.

Setting

This study was conducted in a public-school context mainly with EFL learners and teachers in Turkey. Teachers are from the various cities of Turkey and the students are from a boarding public school in İstanbul. All teachers have some experience in inspection of EFL classes. The setting is also mixed as there are cases in which the inspection is held by inspectors or school principals and in some others, no inspection activity was done.

FINDINGS

Many themes were revealed as a result of the content analysis and they are presented according to their frequency, in an order of importance. The mostly narrated topic was the inconsistencies, the theme was a consideration for both learners and English teachers. The themes and sample data are given in table 2.

Table2: *The emerging themes and sample data from participants.*

Frequencies	Sample Data
5.1 Inconsistencies in the inspection f:9	<i>The inspection and the marks we received from the school principals when we were candidate teachers, depended on the relationship you have with him, it is not objective. P2</i>
5.2 Lack of post-lesson feedback from the principals f:9	<i>I am observed and inspected by the director of my school at a private high prep school setting. After the observations, we get little or insufficient feedback so we are left in thoughts whether we will be fired or given a low mark. The meetings with the inspector or director should include an appreciation or acknowledgement of merits and some action points to improve and follow up next time. P5</i>
5.3 Branch expertise of educational inspectors or principals. f:7	<i>In K-12 schools, for the check of the lesson plans and other documents, educational supervisor from any expertise or branch may visit the teacher and provide feedback. The educational inspectors for us must be English teacher; otherwise, they may perceive the group work activities as noise. The post-observation meetings should be like an exchange of ideas P4</i>
5.4 Not using engaging teaching methods f:5	<i>To boost the quality of education, the teachers should take tests every five years and update their knowledge, maybe take a remedial course or something. That way they can engage with their learners and enhance their learning. P.(Student)10</i>

<p>5.5 Inequality and need for equity f:5</p>	<p><i>The schools are vastly different in terms of their physical and infrastructural facilities, plus in many courses, there are a lot of topics to cover, which makes public school students disadvantaged. In private schools, we used to solve tests in P.E and Art lessons and become a student here but we might be disadvantaged in the high school entrance exam. P.(Student)9.</i></p>
<p>Peer mentoring as a form of CPD on the teaching. f:3</p>	<p><i>Peer mentoring works for English teachers because we love PD activities, there should be only observation like a mirror and offering ideas. While using peer mentoring, we can consult the inspectors in some cases and that will be beneficialP4</i></p>

Inconsistencies in the inspection

After the content analysis, it was found that all the participants are in consensus on the serviceability of inspection. Along with that, some themes emerged as above. The first theme was *inconsistencies in the inspection*.

The participants narrated: *I was inspected by an inspector from the headquarters of MoNE and he was polite and constructive whereas, the local inspectors were not helpful and visionary in their inspection practice (P1).*

Similarly, another participant said: *The inspection and the marks we receive from the school principals when we were candidate teachers, depended on the relationship you have with him, it is not objective (P2).*

It is remarkable to find that the appraisal of the principals during candidate teacher years are more important for them as they are judged by the principal only. However, we learn that some schools provide peer mentors to help hourly-paid teachers and some do not. The teacher participant four narrated: *The teacher who needs the most inspection is the hourly paid teachers who are not graduates of teaching departments and we have sixty teachers like that. As a project a full-time teacher visits their classes to give them feedback, it is a kind of critical friend relationship.* Similar findings regarding inconsistencies are presented in Puskulluoğlu et. al (2019).

The students also have inferences about the inspection and inconsistent practices from their secondary school days.

One of the students stated: *The inspection should be a collective practice, not only the teachers but also the parents, students, even the cleaners might be asked about the school so we will have a better school, the food in the canteen and the boarding school needs to inspect as well. In my previous school, my classes have never been observed by the principal (P Student 3).*

In our previous schools, we have seen different applications of inspection. Honestly, I think the inspection strengthens the quality. When an inspector or principal observe a teacher, he teaches in a far better way. To this end, I am in favour of inspection (P Student 7).

As indicated in the focus group interviews by the students, some inspectors or principals inspect the classroom, whereas, in some others, there is not inspection practice. The

inconsistency of inspection practices was also marked in a study by Yildirim (2013) who found that a majority of teachers labelled supervisors as “frightening” and “controlling.” Some teachers even labelled supervisors as “ineffective,” “inconsistent,” and “criticizing.” On the other hand, other words used to describe supervisors included “guiding” and “developing” (p. 116). The varied attributions may be a result of discrepancies in their inspection. As an addition to the suggested above, teachers were concerned with the *objectivity* of the school principals conveying:

I was the favourite of the manager (P4).

The biased and political decision for the managers (P2).

a threat to teachers’ freedom and we have to resign ourselves to him (P2).

Some teachers also stated that they have not been inspected for the last five years and they love being uninspected. However, the help of an able teacher would be of help for teachers who have just started their careers.

Lack of post-lesson feedback from the principals

The second theme that was brought up by 5 participant teachers is *the lack of post-lesson feedback*. Some teachers are observed, and no-follow up meeting is held.

Participant 5 reported: *I am observed and inspected by the director of my school at a high school prep school setting. After the observations, we get little or insufficient feedback so we are left in thoughts whether we will be fired or given a low mark. The meetings with the inspector or director should include an appreciation or acknowledgement of merits and some action points to improve and follow up next time (P5).*

The issue of not offering feedback after observations might stem from lack of time or the school principal may not feel comfortable in giving the feedback. In a more recent review of the studies examining professional development for language teachers, collaboration is reported as the favoured professional development (henceforth, PD) activity in Middle Eastern and Asian countries as collegial feedback creates a non-threatening and sheltered environment for teachers’ professional development (Çınarbaş & Hoş, 2018). Another vice-director English teacher conveyed: *In my school, the school principal is often out in ceremonies, meetings etc and as the vice-director, I coordinate the internal work in the school, none of us has time for delivering feedback (P6).*

As the statements offer, school principals may not have time, or may not have mentor skills.

5.3 Branch expertise of educational inspectors or principals.

The third theme was the *branch expertise of the educational inspectors*. To define clearly, an English teacher is inspected by an English teacher inspector with whom they share the metalanguage, specific teaching methods and mindset.

Some attendees conveyed the following: *In K-12 schools, for the check of the lesson plans and other documents, educational supervisors from any expertise or branch may visit the teacher and provide feedback. The educational inspectors for us must be an English teacher; otherwise, they may perceive the group work activities as noise. The post-observation meetings should be like an exchange of ideas (P4).*

In Erasmus projects, I observe that each educator has one expertise, but in Turkey, we do everything regardless of our prowess. Inspectors should behave us as colleagues and be English teachers the inspections should be developmental, not judgmental. Also, educational

supervisors should have resilience, emotional intelligence, intrinsic motivation. Instead of an inspector, they may be named as mentor or coach (P3).

In Turkey, successful students often attend *projects schools* in which teachers are chosen by the school principals and there are no prescribed guidelines to guide the selection.

The students were concerned regarding the issues and said: *For the project high school (Where remarkably successful students attend) the school principals choose the teachers, but the school principals cannot be expert on English per se, so more objective guidelines are needed in this regard. All projects school teachers are not engaging as they are only chosen beyond their expertise (P6).*

The findings above are in conformity with Baxter (2017) and the expertise in different inspectors is expected.

Not using engaging teaching methods

Another finding from the focus group interviews, some teachers do *not use engaging teaching methods* therefore, they need to be observed and improved.

Hence, they recounted: *I am in the twelfth grade, I have witnessed remarkable history and literature teachers who use drama, dialogic teaching, projects, think-pair-share and so on. All teachers need to be monitored and inspired to be improved by the inspectors (P3).*

The current theme is raised by students as they want more engaging teachers and they think inspectors could help them to flourish, however, some issues are above the control of the inspectors.

Another student continued: *We always start learning English from the very beginning level, if English teachers use engaging and effective methods and they are trained, we will not have to start from the beginning all the time (P9).*

To boost the quality of education, the teachers should take tests every five years and update their knowledge, maybe take a remedial course or something. That way they can engage with their learners and enhance their learning (P10).

The extracts above imply a call for development in all teachers working in state schools. However, teachers' willingness is the key factor in this respect. The English teachers often may be eager to develop, in the interviews they testified:

If somebody observes me and provides feedback, all English teachers would be happy as we are open to these kinds of improvement chances (P6).

I think the inspectors who visited my classes were a real gentleman, they provided me with handy feedback (P1).

The reason that students are offering teachers should be guided in using engaging teaching methods is they have 8 hours of instruction every day and they want to have professional teachers. As Borg (2015) intimated job-embeddedness (CPD is situated in schools and classroom) is required for all teachers so job-embedded inspection may be offered by MoNE for all branches as a way of self-improvement and professionalism. Another way of CPD, as debated by Dikilitaş & Griffiths (2017) teacher may learn to conduct action research in their classes and use it as a tool for self-improvement and problem-solving.

Inequality and need for equity

As a response to research question three (What are the views and suggestions of EFL learners regarding the inspection practices of inspection in their current and previous schools?), the matter of *inequality and the need for equity* in education is raised by the students which need the action of inspectors. The students were concerned with the marks given by private school teachers.

They narrated:

The English lessons and exams in private schools should be inspected because I remember sitting tests out of 110/100 and everybody was graded on high marks (P5).

The schools are vastly different in terms of their physical and infrastructural facilities, plus in many courses, there are a lot to topics cover, which makes public school students disadvantaged. In private schools, we used to solve tests in P.E and Art lessons and become a student here but we might be disadvantaged in the high school entrance exam (P9). Hence, the students in the current study believed that the schools' facilities should be equal, and the inspectors should also have a role in providing equality. Another student continued talking about his previous school experiences:

I studied in a small-town public school, to be a student in the school in the city centre, we were given remarkably high marks in our last year, the marks given by teachers should be inspected by inspectors or school principals. While trying to achieve equal chances, students are facing unfair assessment practices (P3).

The participants are now students at a well-known high school in İstanbul, they struggled a lot to be a student in their current institutions now. They offer that everything in the school should not be at the discretion of the principals.

They need to be inspected as well, they clarified: *The school principals set the tone of their schools, in my school in Ardahan, the school principal prohibited all the mock-exams, whereas the next year, in my school in Çorlu, we had to buy resource books which are designated by school and teachers. These resources undoubtedly helped to become successful. Everything is decided by school principals now and they should be inspected by inspectors (P8).*

Different assessment practices are reported to cause inequalities. In a similar vein, an English teacher narrated the differences among schools in the interviews under the theme of *inequality and need for equity*.

A teacher participant narrated: *I sometimes become an on-duty teacher in the boarding school where the students from my vocational school and a project school live together. They are different. There is a yawning gap among the schools and the inspectors should try to establish standard evaluation practices in all schools (P3).*

Although there are initiatives in Turkey to provide equality in school such as the implementation of EBA (Education Information Network) proved to enhance the academic achievement of students and bring equity in preparation for high stakes test (Korkmaz & Kadirhan, 2020) such as university entrance test. Formative assessment practises and marks given by the teachers are still effective in the final grading of the high school entrance exam marks. In the highly competitive environment of the high school entrance exam (Karanfil, 2020), the marks should be investigated by an external member, because principals might be in favour of high marks for their students.

Peer mentoring as a form of CPD on the teaching.

Last but not least, all the participant teachers are in favour of peer mentoring as well as inspection in their school as long as they do not assign marks to their peers, the system may work well. A teacher with a peer-mentoring background conveyed: *Peer mentoring definitely works for English teachers because we love PD activities, there should be only observation like a mirror and offering ideas. While using peer mentoring, we can consult the inspectors in some cases and that will be beneficial. Two years ago, I observed the class of an hourly-paid religion teacher and marked her performance 80 out of 100 depending on the criteria I was given. She never spoke to me again (P4).*

All in all, there are inconsistencies in the inspection as there are no clear guidelines, lack of feedback is needed as an appraisal from the inspector, and teachers want to receive feedback from English teacher colleagues with whom they share a common understanding. Students prominent offers to educational inspection is that teachers need to be inspected on their use of engaging methods, and inspectors should work on providing equity in opportunities, assessment.

DISCUSSION

Development means change, but it is a “gradual and difficult process for teachers” which requires systematic and continuous efforts with regular feedback (Guskey, 2002, p. 386). In Yıldırım’s (2013) study, the inspectors were described as ineffective and inconsistent. In a similar vein, Demirtaş (2011) found that among the themes that were constituted from the metaphors that teachers developed about their principals, the major ones were the negative themes of “inconsistency and unreliability” and “a figure of authority and fear.” Under the authority subtheme, the metaphors lion, shepherd, army commander, dictatorial manager, proprietor, and boss/employer were used. Because of negative attributions to inspectors, school inspections are possibly being done by school principals. It seems teachers may not be satisfied with the inspection both from inspectors and managers. Although the participant teachers and students all believe in its beneficial stance, they cannot clearly describe how the inspection could cultivate education quality.

Turkey’s education system is not without problems. We have many hourly-paid teachers from non-teaching departments. Full-time novice teachers and hourly-paid teachers should be provided with mentors in their schools within a job-embedded context. A compromise of having peer mentors or school-based mentoring (Schenk et al., 2020) by school teacher counsellors from the school will be the solution in lieu of having no inspection. In line with the findings regarding the lack of feedback, in a more recent review of the studies examining professional development for language teachers, it is unveiled that the language used in feedback which is the greater part of the dialogue appears to be a determining factor in the success of any mentor-mentee relationship highlighting the importance of the distinction between authoritative and facilitative types of intervention (Yürekli, 2013). The findings from the teachers and students may cultivate facilitative dialogic feedback rather than authoritative feedback. In many countries, including Turkey, teachers do not receive sufficient feedback on their performance (OECD, 2009). It is initially thought, the feedback of the principal who observes the teacher for a long time will be more beneficial than the inspector with whom

they meet once, but the current situation signalise teachers do not receive any feedback on their performance at all.

Maya and Kaçar (2018) found that school principals generally have a positive approach to performance evaluation which upgrades them to teacher-evaluator role, but the views of teachers to principal evaluation is mostly negative because even if they observe the class or conducted one-to-one PD meetings with the teacher, they do not have time to conduct, Therefore, they will not be able to have an honest dialogue and make most of the post-conference stage after watching the teacher teaching (Jones, 2009). The issue might be nation-wise as in Jones (2009) where Turkish teachers and supervisors are reported to need some specific supervisory skills to observe classrooms and give constructive feedback. The current requirement for principals to have supervision roles at the MoNE schools to join 5 half-day theoretical training and become a school inspector. Although being an education supervisor requires advanced skills that are required such as collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving for powerful communication (Schleicher, 2012), the current system does not offer any training in the mentioned areas.

For changes (formative) and accountability (summary) purposes, teacher evaluation results may be used by inspectors. The right balance must be achieved in teacher assessment and the ties between progress and accountability functions must be identified (OECD, 2013). An attempt at these two roles may be problematic in a single evaluation (CDE, 2015). Taking into account the use of summative purposes in performance assessment should not be permitted to impede the teacher's professional growth, but formative assessment techniques should be used to enhance the teachers' capabilities. To sum up, as the teachers and learners signify, inspection practices ought to be carried out with a view to PD for teachers.

Regarding limitations, first, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in COVID-19 pandemic via Zoom, face to face interviews may have yielded richer data second, while in-depth interviewing is considered to be the main method for collecting data in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002), there are some constraints in this regard. The research described the perspectives of the participants in order to investigate their mentorship experiences. Nevertheless, they cannot say precisely what they do not know about the inspection.

CONCLUSION

The educational inspection may be a vital position in providing quality. Every participant in the current study was in the agreement on the necessity of inspection which may be conducted without advance notification. The inspectors that are working now are the graduates of Educational Management and Inspection departments in Turkey and they sometimes conduct research on their expertise. As they perform the inspection, mentoring, counselling duties, they become more capable in their jobs. As the qualitative data in the current study suggested, the presence of inspectors or mentors were appreciated by the teachers and the government should continue hiring inspectors, train and specialize them instead of assigning the duty to school managers who have not received any training on giving feedback that may be an emotional process at times. The inspectors need to be trained on giving effective post-conference feedback and there is a need for inspectors who can only inspect on their branches, as each lesson stipulates unique teaching techniques and code of conduct. The participating

teachers reported the existence of better faculty and cooperating teacher communication in the last two years due to clear guidelines on how to use the clinical supervision method (Gürsoy et. al, 2016) in the pre-service teacher education context. By the same token, inconsistencies of education supervision might be solved via defining procedures to in-service teachers and school principals and avoiding subjective judgements.

The literature posits that the relationship between mentors and inspectors is Socratic dialogue alike. It should base on mutual trust, respect, and rapport (Farrell, 2018). As noted by Gün (2018) feedback language is of great importance; i.e., how mentors give feedback on mentees' performances as teachers. The feedback, in that sense, is essential in any work attempting to investigate mentoring as a teacher training or improving activity. Lindahl and Baecher (2016) proposed that supervisors or inspector must review the overall evaluation and the feedback procedures with the supervisee beforehand to avoid misunderstanding that may occur during the process. To this end, informing the teacher before the inspection about the feedback procedures will decrease the anxiety in the teacher, they will be informed about what to expect. As a recommendation that as practiced in candidate teachers in the first two years in the public schools in Turkey, the in-service teachers need to get accustomed to formative ways such as keeping a teaching portfolio or on-going peer assessment. In the performance assessment, the evaluation of teachers in the same branch (or peer review) should be preferred to that of teachers in different branches. To this end, peer-cooperation may solve the problems in teacher education in the future. Another suggestion is that inspection of English teachers should be handled by English teacher inspectors and general document control checks could be done by any inspectors. In theory, the school principals should monitor in-service teachers, but they have to deal with everything at school, so they experience such a busy schedule. According to participants they conduct lesson inspections as part of formality, but the developmental feedback is often missing.

Small steps are being taken in the Turkish education system in language teacher development such as 2023 Vision meetings and the inspection system should be updated either by giving sufficient training to school principals or going back to having local inspectors to provide feedback for teachers. Getting feedback as in CELTA or TESOL courses is key to PD which may be achieved with inspectors who are back to what they used to do. As the findings suggest from the learners, inspectors should have a role in providing equality in schools and increase the teacher quality at the public schools.

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