

Reasons that Cause Attrition and Retention among English Language Teachers in a Developing Country

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Abstract

According to the literature, foreign language teacher attrition and retention (FLTAR) have been studied less, the studies on FLTAR have been made in developed countries more, and these studies have generally focused on the reasons of FLTAR. Therefore, the present study aimed to find out the reason(s) that may cause attrition and retention among foreign language teachers (i.e., English language teachers [EL]) in a developing country (i.e., Turkey). 100 Turkish EL teachers participated in this qualitative study. The data collected through a semi-structured written interview were content analyzed. According to the findings, there were three main groups of EL teachers with four or five sub-groups formed depending on the participants' year of teaching experience: the ones who wanted to stay in the job, who wanted to leave the job, and who both wanted to leave and stay in the job. The findings also showed that the participants wanted to stay in the job and/or leave it for several reasons such as passion for teaching, working conditions, and learning something new, which is significant to know because understanding what may cause EL teacher attrition and retention can help sustain teacher quality in English language teaching.

Keywords: *English language teachers, teacher attrition, teacher retention, Turkey*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the practitioners of educational reforms and policies in the classroom and can make any education system effective and efficient through their instructional practices, beliefs, and thoughts. Therefore, working with qualified teachers at schools is significant for delivering effective education, but it may not be that easy to sustain so because teachers may leave their jobs in any stage of their teaching careers, which is known as attrition that can cause negative consequences for students' performance and the organization of schools such as the loss of knowhow. Thus, it is significant to investigate the reasons for teachers' attrition and retention. Teacher attrition and retention can be considered as an educational issue that "refers to the need to prevent good teachers from leaving the job for the wrong reasons" (Kelchtermans, 2017, p. 965). As the definition shows, teacher retention can allow schools and educational systems to have good teachers, so good teachers can help them to reach the planned academic goals and

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objectives, to improve students' performance, and to maintain a positive school atmosphere. Yet, teacher attrition can be a threat to schools and education systems by preventing them from having such positive impacts of good teachers on them and students. Thus, understanding the reasons for teacher attrition and retention becomes essential.

Reasons for teacher attrition and retention

There are lots of studies on the reasons for teacher attrition and retention conducted in developed countries such as USA, England, Israel and the Netherlands with early career teachers, veteran teachers or teachers with varying teaching experiences (Cohen, 2009; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Clayton & Schoonmaker, 2007; Day & Gu, 2009; Den Brok, Wubbels & Van Tartwijk, 2017; Gallant & Riley, 2017; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Glazer, 2018; Gu, 2014; Kelchtemans, 2017; Mansfield, Beltman & Price, 2014; Mason & Poyatos Matas, 2015; Newberry & Allsop, 2017; Peters & Pearce, 2012; Smith & Ulvik, 2017; Tobing, 2016; Towers & Maguire, 2017; Tricarico, Jacopbs & Yendol-Happey, 2015; Wilhelm, Dewhurst-Savellis & Parker, 2000; Yinon & Orland-Barak, 2017). According to these studies, teachers can be under the effect(s) of several factors when they decide to leave the job or stay in the job. They could be affected by (a) the relationships with other teachers, administrators and students, (b) the administrations of their schools, and (c) other school-related issues including school location, performance, culture, organizational structure, policies, salary, sources, and facilities. Besides, students can affect them in deciding whether to leave the job or stay in the job through their behaviors, social and emotional problems, socio-economic background, diversity, assessment, and feedback. Also, teacher-related factors (e.g. age, health, passion for teaching, belonging to the profession, personality, teaching philosophies, autonomy, balancing work and private life, workloads, and accountability) can cause teachers to leave the job or stay in the job. Feelings at schools, professional development, knowledge and skills, concern for children, satisfaction of their profession and the lack of alternatives can have a direct effect on them when they decide to stay in the job or leave the job. In addition, work ethic, mentors, holiday, job status in society, and national educational policies and reforms can affect their leaving or staying in the job.

Reasons for foreign language teacher attrition and retention

Compared to previous studies on teacher attrition and retention, there are very few studies having investigated FLTAR. Nearly all of these studies have been conducted in developed countries such as England and America with the teachers with different teaching experiences (Brown, 2001; Ewart, 2009; Mason, 2017; Mason & Poyatos Matas, 2016; Swanson, 2010, 2012; Swanson & Huff, 2010; Tupy, 2017; Wilkerson, 2000). According to these studies, several factors (e.g., their workload, personality, administration, and relationships with other teachers and with administration, and the value and place of foreign language education at their schools) affect FLTAR. Teacher education, field expertise, value, and belonging can also result in foreign language teacher attrition. In addition, their efficacy of teaching languages and the similarity of their skills, knowledge and abilities with the job can lead to attrition among foreign language teachers.

The case of Turkey in terms of (foreign language) teacher attrition and retention

Unlike the studies aforementioned, FLTAR has not been studied a lot in Turkey. Several studies have been made with Turkish prospective teachers at different departments to measure their intention of being a teacher (Çakmak & Kayabaşı, 2017; Çermik, Doğan & Şahin 2010; Külekçi, 2013; Yurdakal, 2019). According to the findings of these studies, they have chosen teaching as a career for several reasons such as the positive status given to teaching in society, the satisfaction of teaching, personality, skills, and abilities. Besides, their preferences are

affected by being employed much more easily as a teacher, their willingness to work with children, and being a role model for students. In addition, they have been attracted by more flexible vacation times, the encouragement of their parents, friends, and teachers, and by the economic and living conditions of Turkey as being a teacher is secure and stable from these perspectives.

As the studies are reviewed, it is clear that there is a need for more research on FLTAR to find out and understand why foreign language teachers with varying degrees of teaching experiences want to leave their jobs or stay in their jobs in different countries, especially in the developing countries. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to find out the reason(s) that may cause FLTAR in a developing country (i.e. Turkey) by focusing on EL teachers due to the working context of the researchers. Accordingly, the study tries to answer the following research questions:

1. What is/are the reason(s) that may cause EL teacher retention?
2. What is/are the reason(s) that may lead to EL teacher attrition?

In addition to these research questions, one more research question was added after the data analysis since the findings indicated that there was another group of the participants who wanted both to stay in the job and to leave the job in addition to the ones who wanted to stay in the job and the ones who wanted to leave the job. This research question is as follows:

3. What is/are the reason(s) that may cause both EL teacher attrition and retention?

METHODS

Research design

Qualitative research enables researchers to explore an issue related to human beings because it helps them understand and find out the meanings given to the issue, so researchers can have a complex, elaborated, and detailed understanding of the issue (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Teacher attrition and retention are closely related to human beings considering their effects on the individuals and societies. Thus, qualitative research can provide a detailed and complex understanding of this human issue by enabling researchers to understand and have the meanings ascribed to it. As a result, the present study was designed as a qualitative study.

Participants

100 Turkish EL teachers (23 males and 77 females) participated in the research. Their ages ranged from 22 to 60. 21 participants had 1-5 years of teaching experience, 35 participants 6-10 years of experience, 23 participants 11-15 years of experience, eight participants 16-20 years of experience, and thirteen participants 21 and more years of experience.

Data collection tool

The data was collected through a semi-structured written interview which is composed of two sections. The first section is about the demographic information of the participants (i.e. their genders, ages, bachelors' degrees and teaching experiences). The second section includes two statements given below to identify whether the participants wanted to leave the job or stay in the job and what may be the reason(s) for their preferences.

- (1) I want to stay in the education sector as an English language teacher until I retire because ...
- (2) I want to leave the job and work in a different sector because ...

Data analysis

The collected data were content analyzed. The researchers derived codes from the data. Next, they developed themes from the codes and categorized the codes based on the similarities and

differences between them under the themes. Later, they organized the codes and themes without adding their comments. They interpreted their findings and did not conflict with the data description in their interpretation in the final step of the framework.

Trustworthiness of the study

Two strategies were used to make this qualitative study trustworthy. Firstly, the researchers content-analyzed the data individually. Then, they came together, compared their content analyses with each other and talked about the similarities and differences in their analyses as Lincoln and Guba (1985) mentioned. Besides, the findings were supported with different excerpts from the data because according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the thick description of the data can indicate that the content analysis of the data reflects what is found out in the data, but not the researchers' own ideas or comments.

RESULTS

The results of the present study indicated that there were three main groups which were sub-grouped according to the participants' years of teaching experience because the reasons for the participants' desire to stay in the job and/or leave the job showed similarities and differences depending on the years of teaching experience of the participants. Table 1 shows these main groups with their sub-groups.

Table 1. The Main Groups with the Sub-groups

Main Groups	<i>N</i>	Sub-groups	<i>N</i>
The EL teachers who wanted to stay in the job until they retired	62	Participants with 1-5 years of teaching experience	14
		Participants with 6-10 years of teaching experience	18
		Participants with 11-15 years of teaching experience	17
		Participants with 16-20 years of teaching experience	4
		Participants with 21 and more years of teaching experience	9
The EL teachers who wanted to leave the job and work in a different sector	17	Participants with 1-5 years of teaching experience	5
		Participants with 6-10 years of teaching experience	8
		Participants with 11-15 years of teaching experience	2
		Participants with 16-20 years of teaching experience	2

The EL teachers who both wanted to stay in the job and leave the job	21	Participants with 1-5 years of teaching experience	2
		Participants with 6-10 years of teaching experience	8
		Participants with 11-15 years of teaching experience	5
		Participants with 16-20 years of teaching experience	2
		Participants with 21 and more years of teaching experience	4

As Table 1 indicates, there are five sub-groups in the first and third main groups, while there are four sub-groups in the second main group. In addition, the codes derived from the data were categorized under three themes which are (a) reasons that may cause retention among EL teachers, (b) reasons that may cause attrition among EL teachers, and (c) reasons that may cause both attrition and retention among EL teachers. The findings were presented according to these themes in order.

Reasons that may cause retention among EL teachers

The codes under this theme are organized according to the participants' years of teaching experience and are given in Table 2.

Table 2. The Codes under the Theme "Reasons That May Cause Retention among EL Teachers"

Theme	Main Group	Sub-groups	Codes
Reasons that may cause retention among EL teachers	The EL teachers who wanted to stay in the job until they retired	Participants with 1-5 years of teaching experience	The passion for teaching Helping to improve students Being valued and satisfied Teaching's becoming part of the personality Checking personal achievement Colleagues
		Participants with 6-10 years of teaching experience	The passion for teaching Improving oneself through learning Helping to improve students Lack of job opportunities Insurance
		Participants with 11-15 years of teaching experience	Passion for teaching Feeling good Feeling competent because of their experience

	Helping to improve students
	Concern for students
	Learning something new
	Work schedule
Participants with 16-20 years of teaching experience	The passion for teaching Learning something new Feeling satisfied
Participants with 21 and more years of teaching experience	Passion for teaching Feeling competent

As understood from Table 2, each code serves as a reason that may cause EL teachers to stay in the job. The reasons are explained according to the participants' years of teaching experience respectively.

Teachers with 1-5 years of teaching experience

Eleven participants wanted to go on their teaching careers because of *their passion for teaching*. The quotations below clearly show this.

Participant 6: "I love this job... I do my job fondly."

Participant 7: "I love working with my children."

Helping to improve students was another reason for the desire of five participants who wanted to stay in the job - these five participants included the ones who stated one more reason why they wanted to go on their teaching career. For example, participant 10 said "I like helping my students develop themselves" and participant 11 stated "I like the feeling of touching young individuals' lives and helping them develop themselves not only in terms of their English levels, but also in many different ways."

Being valued and satisfied was the reason for participant 1 to want to stay in the job as he mentioned "I feel satisfied with my work. I feel that I am considered an important part of the team." For participant 4, teaching *became a part of his personality*, so he did not want to leave the job. *Checking personal achievement* made participant 2 want to stay in the job, while *colleagues* led to the desire of participant 6 to stay in the job.

Teachers with 6-10 years of teaching experience

Nine participants wanted to pursue their teaching career due to *their passion for teaching*. The excerpts below support this.

Participant 25: "I love my job. I love teaching and being with my students."

Participant 28: "It (teaching) is what/how I acknowledge myself. I love what I do and I want to keep on my career."

Seven participants including the ones explaining more than one reason wanted to stay in the profession because of *improving themselves through learning*. For instance, participant 15 explained "It is a great opportunity to have a chance to learn something everyday... Developing ourselves in order to meet the needs of our students is an invaluable advantage for us."

Helping to improve students was one of the other reasons why three participants did not want to leave the job as illustrated by participant 18 who said "being able to touch the lives of so many people is a priceless feeling for me." Also, the *lack of job opportunities* made two participants want to go on teaching, while *insurance* was the reason for the desire of participant 31 to stay in the job.

Teachers with 11-15 years of teaching experience

Passion for teaching caused nine participants to want to stay in the job as understood from participants 34, 39, 45 and 46 who said “I love teaching.” Four participants including the ones who reported a few reasons for their desire to stay in the job wanted to go on their teaching careers in view of their *feeling good* when they taught. For example, participant 37 stated “I feel good in the class and I like the class atmosphere,” and participant 41 reported “...I feel better when I am in classroom with my students and see them trying to learn what I show.” Six participants including the ones who explained some reasons why they wanted to stay in the job reported that they did not want to leave the job since they *felt competent because of their experience* in their job as shown in the quotation below:

Participant 44: “... as I gain experience, I become a better language teacher.”

Three participants explaining a few reasons for their desire to stay in the job also wanted to pursue their teaching careers because of *helping to improve students* as indicated by participant 40 who told “Teaching is important to me because I am happy to help my students learn something new.” *Concern for students, learning something new, and work schedule* were also the other reasons for participants 32, 35 and 42 who wanted to stay in the job.

Teachers with 16-20 years of teaching experience

Two participants wanted to pursue their teaching careers since they had the *passion for teaching* as understood from participant 47 who said, “I love teaching” and participant 48 who reported “I love my job.” *Learning something new* was the other reason for participant 47 to stay in the profession. Three participants including participant 48 *felt satisfied* when teaching, so they did not want to leave the job. To illustrate, participant 49 explained “this profession is the one that makes me satisfied.”

Teachers with 21 and more years of teaching experience

Passion for teaching was the reason for the desire of six participants to stay in the job as illustrated by participant 53 who said, “I love teaching.” In addition, four participants including the participants who also mentioned one more reason did not want to leave the job since they *felt competent* in teaching as shown by participant 51 who mentioned “... this (teaching) is something I do very well” and participant 52 who stated “... this (teaching) is what I know best.”

Reasons that may cause attrition among EL teachers

The codes under this theme are organized depending on the years of teaching experience of the participants and are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The Codes under the Theme “Reasons That May Cause Attrition among EL Teachers”

Theme	Main Group	Sub-groups	Codes
Reasons that may cause attrition among EL teachers	The EL teachers who wanted to leave the job and work in a different sector	Participants with 1-5 years of teaching experience	Having different future plans Not wanting to do the same thing for years
		Participants with 6-10 years of teaching experience	Teaching English’s not being able to improve them personally Having different future plans

	Conflict between the teaching philosophy and the way English is taught
	Earning more money
	Discovering new motivations to do something new
Participants with 11-15 years of teaching experience	Disappointment and not being valued The nature of teaching English
Participants with 16-20 years of teaching experience	Working conditions and payment Not being appreciated and finding teaching boring

The codes in Table 3 serve as the reasons that may cause EL teachers to leave the job. These reasons are explained based on the sub-groups given in Table 3.

Teachers with 1-5 years of teaching experience

Four participants wanted to leave the job because they *had different future plans* in which teaching English was not included. The excerpt below clearly shows this.

Participant 61: “I want to carry out on my academic research and be an academician.”

The last participant in this group *did not want to do the same thing for years*, so he wanted to leave.

Teachers with 6-10 years of teaching experience

Three participants wanted to work in a different field because they did not think teaching general English *could improve them personally* as understood from the quotation below:

Participant 65: “I don’t want to teach general English till the rest of my life. I want to improve myself...”

Participant 66: “I would like to do something more in my life at some point. I can think of being a researcher for some time... so that I can improve myself and contribute to the field... I love my job and I love teaching profession itself; however, it is really difficult to improve myself professionally by working/doing that job.”

Having different future plans caused two participants not to want to stay in the field because participant 70 mentioned “I have other plans & dreams in my mind,” and participant 71 told “I want to explore new places and experience new fields in the future.” Besides, participant 68 did not want to go on being an English language teacher because of the *conflict between her teaching philosophy and the way English is taught* since she explained “... the path we (educators – teachers) are expected to follow when it comes to teaching a foreign language makes it very hard to achieve the aim of teaching a language.” Participant 69 wanted to leave the job because of *earning more money* as she said “... Although I like my job and I do my best to help my students to learn English effectively, I prefer having a more well-paid job.” *Discovering new motivations to do something new* might cause participant 72 not to want to stay in the job since she said “... When I realize that I have other motivations other than teaching, I’ll leave this profession although I’m passionate about teaching.”

Teachers with 11-15 years of teaching experience

Disappointment and not being valued might lead to the desire of one participant not to go on her career as a teacher as the excerpt below points out:

Participant 73: “Most of the time I don’t feel like what I am doing and what kind of a teacher I have become match with my hopes/dreams/goals that I had when I first started teaching. ... Yes, I want to leave the profession and work in a field where I can use my skills and experience and feel valued.”

The other participant wanted to leave the job because of *the nature of teaching English*. She found teaching English repetitive and tiring as she told “... teaching English is repetitive and after a while it is tiring.”

Teachers with 16-20 years of teaching experience

One participant wanted to change her job because of the *working conditions* and *payment*. Another one wanted to do so due to *not being appreciated* and *finding teaching boring* as his statement below demonstrates:

Participant 76: “I think I have some over qualifications that are not appreciated in this profession and also teaching is boring...”

Reasons that may cause both attrition and retention among EL teachers

The codes under this theme are organized based on the participants’ years of teaching experience and are showed in Table 4.

Table 4. The Codes under the Theme “Reasons That May Cause Both Attrition and Retention among EL Teachers”

Theme	Main Group	Sub-groups	Codes
Reasons that may cause both attrition and retention among EL teachers	The EL teachers who both wanted to stay in the job and leave the job	Participants with 1-5 years of teaching experience	The opportunity to learn and feel fulfilled (R*) Enjoying teaching and trusting her colleagues (R) Lack of connection with students (A*) The relationship with administration (A)
		Participants with 6-10 years of teaching experience	Passion for teaching (R) Being used to teaching (R) Working conditions (R) Helping to improve students (R) Being able to have an opportunity to work in a different job (A) Working conditions (A) Burnout (A)
		Participants with 11-15 years of teaching experience	Self-development (R) Being trained in this area (R) Concern for students (R) Not losing job gains (R) The repetitive nature of teaching English (A) Salary (A) desire to explore herself (A)

Participants with 16-20 years of teaching experience	Being experienced in teaching (R) Passion for teaching (R) Salary (A) Not balancing work and private life (A)
Participants with 21 and more years of teaching experience	Passion for teaching (R) Being used to teaching (R) Being experienced (R) Salary (A) Working conditions (A) The need to improve oneself (A)

* R stands for retention, and A stands for attrition.

The codes in Table 4 serve as the reasons that may cause EL teacher to want to both leave the job and stay in the job. Since these reasons have been mentioned as the causes that may lead to attrition and retention among EL teachers, R and A have been added to each reason to show which reason is related to retention and which one is related to attrition. These reasons are mentioned according to the order of the sub-groups in Table 4.

Teachers with 1-5 years of teaching experience

One participant wanted to stay in the field because of *the opportunity to learn and feel fulfilled* as she said "... it is a continuous learning process and I find it fulfilling to share knowledge, experiences." Yet, she also wanted to leave the job because of the *lack of connection with students* as she stated "... Not being able to connect with students because of heavy curriculum and pacing." The other participant wanted to stay because she *enjoyed teaching and trusted her colleagues*, but *the relationship with the administration* might have a direct effect on her desire to leave due to her negative experiences in her previous workplace.

Teachers with 6-10 years of teaching experience

The reason for six participants to want to stay in the job was their *passion for teaching*. For example, participant 84 told "I love teaching and working with young people," and participant 85 reported "I love what I do. I love interacting with younger minds." *Being used to teaching* was the reason for the desire of participant 80 to stay in the job as she mentioned "... that's what I have done for 10 years." *Working conditions and helping to improve students* made participant 82 want to continue working as a teacher because she said "... it [being an English teacher] is a satisfying job in terms of seeing people flourish with the things you teach. Working environment is usually calm and organized."

Four participants also wanted to leave the job because of *being able to have an opportunity to work in a different job*. To exemplify, participant 83 explained "I love animals and if I encounter the opportunity of having my own farm with lots of animals, I won't miss it." Three participants also did not want to stay in the job owing to the *working conditions* including *salary, better rights, and administration*. For instance, participant 84 said "... people earn better, and they have better rights (e.g. holiday, accommodation, private insurance, etc.)". *Burnout* was the reason for participant 82 to want to leave the job.

Teachers with 11-15 years of teaching experience

Participants 89 and 91 wanted to stay in the job for their *self-development*, and participant 90 wanted to stay because of *being trained in this area*. Participant 93 wanted to go on teaching because of her *concern for her students*, while participant 95 wanted to stay because of *not*

losing her job gains as she stated "... embarking on a new profession is hard work which you have to start from scratch."

Two of these participants also wanted to leave the job because of *the repetitive nature of teaching English* as understood from participant 95 who told "... teaching English for more than 15 years tend to repeat itself." Besides them, two participants did not want to stay because of their *salary* as participant 90 stated "... I want to make more money." Her *desire to explore herself* was the reason why participant 93 wanted to leave in the job.

Teachers with 16-20 years of teaching experience

Participant 94 wanted to stay in the job because of *being experienced in teaching*, but he also wanted to leave due to his *salary*. Participant 96 wanted to go on his career as an EL teacher because of his *passion for teaching*, but he also wanted to leave because of *not balancing his work and private life* as he stated, "I keep bringing work home and it interferes with my life."

Teachers with 21 and more years of teaching experience

Two participants wanted to go on their careers as EL teachers because they had the *passion for teaching* as understood from participant 98 who said, "I love my job (teaching)." *Being used to teaching* was the reason for participant 90 to stay in the job. *Being experienced* was the reason for the desire of participant 99 to stay since she stated "... Having a sound base of job expertise. Accumulation of knowledge base in the field and wanting to use it."

On the other hand, two participants also wanted to leave because of the *salary*, while one participant wanted to leave due to *working conditions*. Participant 100 also wanted to leave the job owing *her need to improve herself*.

DISCUSSION

The common reason that may cause retention among EL teachers is the passion for teaching. It may be one of the reasons for them to be an EL teacher as mentioned in the literature (Çermik et al., 2010; Çakmak & Kayabaşı, 2017; Külekçi, 2013). It may motivate them to go on their careers as EL teachers until they retire. Helping to improve students is a common reason for the desire of EL teachers with 1-5, 6-10 and 11-15 years of experience to stay in the job as this situation can help them fulfil the sense of meaningfulness (Yinon & Orland-Barak, 2017) and feel satisfied (Newberry & Allsop, 2017). Improving themselves through teaching can cause EL teachers with 6-10, 11-15 and 16-20 years of experience to want to stay in the job since they would like to invest in their professional development to become effective EL teachers and to help students learn better. As years of teaching experience increase, feelings such as being satisfied at schools have become a significant reason that may lead to retention among EL teachers with 11-15, 16-20 and 21 and more years of experience as mentioned in the literature (Gallant & Riley, 2017; Glazer, 2018; Yinon & Orland-Barak, 2017) because EL teachers' self-confidence in their teaching skills increases, and they probably start to consider themselves as good EL teachers as they become more experienced. Colleagues, the lack of job options, work schedule, and insurance can be other reasons that may cause retention among EL teachers, which is in line with the literature (Clayton & Schoonmaker, 2007; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Gu 2014; Kelchtemans, 2017; Mansfield et al., 2014; Newberry & Allsop, 2017; Towers & Maguire, 2017; Wilhelm et al., 2000), but they are not among common reasons compared to the reviewed studies. It may be because EL teachers prefer focusing on the joy of teaching though they encounter problems such as the lack of administrative support or salary which they may not overcome on their own.

Having different plans for future is a common reason for the desire of EL teachers with 1-5 and 6-10 years of teaching experience to leave the job. Such teachers may have chosen teaching

as a career because of their parents, friends, relatives or teachers or of finding a job easily after graduation (Çakmak & Kayabaşı, 2017; Çermik et al., 2010; Yurdakal, 2019). These reasons may cause them not to want to stay in the job when they have the opportunity to make their future plans come true. Unlike the ones who want to stay in the profession, working conditions, salary, and the conflict between one's teaching philosophy and the way a language is taught may have a direct effect on the desire of EL teachers with 6-10, 11-15 and 16-20 years of teaching experience to leave the job as these reasons cause attrition in the developed countries (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond 2019; Gallant & Riley, 2017; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Glazer, 2018; Newberry & Allsop, 2017; Towers & Maguire, 2017; Wilhelm et al., 2000). These participants may have chosen teaching owing to the economic and living conditions of Turkey, their parents' encouragement, and being easily employed after graduation. Thus, they may need something to be motivated at schools. Because of the same reasons, feeling valued, being satisfied, and feeling appreciated at schools can become important for such teachers to go on their teaching career. Yet, when they do not feel so, they may want to leave the job. Besides, teaching general English may not provide opportunities to improve oneself though EL teachers with different years of teaching experience may want it because professional development can hold teachers at schools. This may cause them to feel disappointed and demotivated to teach or find teaching boring, so they may want to leave.

Passion for teaching is a common reason that may cause EL teachers with 1-5, 6-10, 16-20 and 21 and more years of teaching experience who want to leave and stay in the field to want to stay in the job. It may be one reason for them to become EL teachers. Being trained in EL teaching for EL teachers with 6-10 years of teaching experience, being experienced for EL teachers with 16-20 and 21 and more years of teaching experience, and being used to teaching for EL teachers with 6-10 and 21 and more years of teaching experience may help these teachers to feel secure since they may believe teaching experience and training can help them become better EL teachers, so they want to stay in the job. Opportunities to learn and improve oneself can make teaching motivating for EL teachers with 1-5 and 11-15 years of teaching experience because professional development opportunities can attract teachers to stay in the job (Mason & Poyatos Matas, 2015; Wilhelm et al., 2000). Feeling of being fulfilled for EL teachers with 1-5 years of teaching experience and contributing to students' learning for EL teachers with 6-10 years of teaching experience may help these teachers feel valued at schools, so they want to stay in the job. On the other hand, administration may be a reason why EL teachers with 1-5 and 6-10 years of teaching experience want to leave the job as supported by the literature (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Glazer, 2018; Day & Gu, 2009; Gallant & Riley, 2017; Mason, 2017; Mason & Poyatos Matas, 2015, 2016; Towers & Maguire, 2017) because they may not have a good relation with their administrators or find the administrative support as sufficient as they expected. Salary is a common reason that may cause attrition among EL teachers with 6-10, 11-15, 16-20 and 21 and more years of teaching experience as reported in the literature (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond 2019; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Glazer, 2018; Wilhelm et al., 2000) because having economical concerns may make teaching less motivating for them. Working conditions are another reason for EL teachers with 1-5, 16-20 and 21 and more years of teaching experience to want to leave the job because they may affect the balance between work and private life negatively (Day & Gu, 2009; Den Brok et al., 2017; Glazer, 2018; Gallant & Riley 2017; Mansfield et al., 2014; Newberry & Allsop, 2017; Towers & Maguire, 2017) and reduce the interaction with students. The opportunity to work in a different field for EL teachers with 6-10 years of teaching experience and the need to improve or explore oneself for the EL teachers with 11-15 and 21 and more years of teaching experience are the reasons that may lead to attrition among them as personal plans can be very effective in job-related careers.

CONCLUSION

Attrition and retention are two significant measures for the sustainability of an organization's human resources, which is correlated with organizational know-how. This vital experience is very much related to its survival. This means that it is one of those factors to be focused on when the success of the organization is evaluated.

The current study investigated the reasons that may cause attrition and retention among EL teachers in Turkey. The findings of the study show that the reasons that may lead to EL teacher attrition and retention are similar to the reasons reported for teacher attrition and retention in general in the literature. The findings also indicate that these reasons can be country specific. Understanding the reasons that may affect the desire of EL teachers to stay in the job and leave the job in a developing country such as Turkey can help improve the quality of EL education at schools by employing and keeping qualified EL teachers at work in educational institutions through eliminating or minimizing the attrition reasons mentioned in the study.

However, this study is limited to Turkey, so its results cannot be generalized. Yet, future studies can be conducted about the reasons that may cause attrition and retention with EL teachers in other developing countries by following the methodology of this study. Thus, a better understanding of the reasons that may lead to EL teacher attrition and retention in developing countries can be obtained, precautions can be taken to minimize or avoid attrition reasons, and the quality in EL education can be maintained.

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