

ÇUKUROVA UNIVERSITY
THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

**EXPLORING EFFECTS OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IN ENHANCING
TEACHERS' DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS**

MERAL ŞEKER

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

ADANA,2007

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MERAL ŞEKER

ADVISOR: Asst. Prof. RANA YILDIRIM

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

ADANA,2007

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We certify that this dissertation is satisfactory for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ÖZET

İŞBİRLİĞİNE DAYALI ÖĞRENMENİN ÇOCUKLARA İNGİLİZCE EĞİTİMİ VEREN ÖĞRETMENLERİN GELİŞİMİ ÜZERİNE ETKİLERİ

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Erken yaşta yabancı dil eğitiminin daha etkili olacağı kanısıyla, Türk Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı yabancı dil öğretiminin devlet okullarında 1997 itibariyle 4. sınıf seviyesinde verilmesine karar vermiştir. Ancak, bu seviyedeki yabancı dil eğitiminin öncelikle pilot okullarda uygulamaya geçildiği birçok ülkeden farklı olarak, Türkiye’de bu geçiş oldukça hızlı gerçekleşmiş, ve bu da müfredat düzenleyenlere, öğretmenlere ve öğrencilere birçok sorunu beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Yıldırım ve Şeker’in (2004) yapmış olduğu çalışma, bu alanda eğitim veren öğretmenlerin çocuklara yabancı dil eğitimiyle ilgili teorik ve uygulama düzeyinde daha etkin bir gelişim göstermeleri için hizmetiçi eğitim programlarına ihtiyaç duyduğunu göstermiştir. Burada sunulan çalışma ise, bu tür bir eğitimin “öğretmenlerin yeni bilgileri kişisel yapılar şeklinde edinmelerine” ve konum odaklı grup tartışmalarıyla bu alandaki bilgi ve becerilerini arttırmaya olanak sağlayacak türde olması gerektiğini öne sürmektedir. Çalışma böyle bir eğitim için “işbirliğine dayalı öğrenme model”ini önermektedir. Bu çalışmadaki katılımcılar, devlet okullarında çalışan 3 İngilizce öğretmeninden oluşmaktadır. Araştırmacı bu çalışmada topluluğun bir üyesi olarak içerden ve araştırmacı olarak dışardan dahil olarak katılımcı-gözlemci rolündedir. Veriler, üçlü yöntem kullanarak, Repertory Grid, öğretmen günlükleri, ve sekiz ay devam eden haftalık toplantıların ses kayıtlarından elde edilmiştir. Çalışmanın kapsamının ve sonuçlarının bu seviyedeki öğretmen eğitim programlarına önemli katkılarda bulunacağı savunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çocuk Öğrenciler, Öğretmen Eğitimi, Çocuklara İngilizce Öğretimi, Konum Odaklı Öğrenme, İşbirliğine Dayalı Öğrenme.

ABSTRACT

EXPLORING EFFECTS OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IN ENHANCING TEACHERS' DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS

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Ph.D. Thesis, English Language Teaching Department

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Acting on the belief that the earlier children start to learn a foreign language the better, the Turkish Ministry of Education lowered the compulsory introduction of English to grade 4 in 1997. However, unlike many countries where foreign language education for young learners was first applied in pilot schools, Turkey encountered a very fast change in nature. This immediate change caused many problems for curriculum planners, educators, and for learners. The study conducted by Yıldırım and Şeker (2004) aimed to specify the problems faced at this level of education. The results revealed that there is a critical need for enhanced scheme of in-service teacher training for teachers' development of awareness of children's language learning at both theoretical and practical level. In this study, it is suggested that the scheme for such training must assist teachers to "perceive (and acquire) knowledge as personally constructed meaning" (Wilson, 1996, p.6) through participation in situated tasks, discussions, and reflection and to help them extend their knowledge and skills in teaching English to young learners. With these in mind, the study suggests an approach to teacher training referred as 'collaborative learning model'. The participants of this study were three English teachers teaching grade 4 at public primary schools. The researcher acted as a participant observer, referring "to the role of the researcher as an insider in regard to being part of the community and as an outsider as a researcher" (Yıldırım, 2001). The data was collected using a triangulated approach in which Repertory-Grid, journals, and audiorecordings of the weekly meetings held for eight months were used. The findings are meant to make available specific proposals for directions in which this level of teacher education can move.

Key Words: Young learners, teacher training, Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL), situated learning, collaboration.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

With the beginning of the new millennium, it is now an indubitable fact that the spread of English language has changed the world's language ecology. As Burchfield (1985) puts it, English has become a *lingua franca*. It has a dominant position in science, technology, medicine, and computers; in research, books, and periodicals; in youth culture and sport; in education systems as the most widely learnt foreign language (Phillipson, 1992). According to 1989-1990 British Council Annual Report, an estimated 100.000 new teachers of English were needed for 30 million learners in 1990s (Ellis, 2000). The amount has doubled when we come to 2005. As a result of this, an explosion was witnessed in the field of foreign language teaching, i.e. English.

The reason for the increased demand for English was multidimensional. The most important reason is globalization, which has become the key concept in politics, economics, and sociology of the world. It accelerated the need for a shared language, namely English, for global market. Another striking reason for Ferguson (1983) is the modern use of computers. For him, when the amount of information needed to be processed came to exceed human capabilities, computers took the control. And when the need for global communication came to exceed the limits set by language barriers, English usage was accelerated; and this transformed the existing patterns of international communication. As this global change created a huge demand for English speaking people and for teachers of the language, it affected many education systems in the world.

Almost simultaneously, by the beginning of 1970s, a new theory emerged. The belief that the earlier children start to learn a foreign language the better started to gain popularity. The result of Penfield's (1965) neurophysics studies with young children indicated that children's brains were more open to language improvement. This belief was also supported by many researchers later on (e.g. Lenneberg, 1967; Krashen, 1981; Cummins & Swain, 1986). From the biological perspective, Lenneberg (1967) proposes that since the functional distribution of the two hemispheres of the brain is not specified before puberty, both right and left hemispheres can contribute to language acquisition

during this ‘critical age’ (termed by Lenneberg, 1967). Lenneberg (1967), thus, defines this stage to be the phase which provides the ultimate conditions for language learning.

Acting on the belief that children learn a foreign language easier and better, and that English is a vital means of communication to establish good relations with all nations in the world and to be able to keep up with scientific innovations, The Turkish Ministry of Education lowered the compulsory introduction of English to grade 4 (9 year olds) with the introduction of Eight-year Obligatory Primary Education Program in 1997 (Tebliğler Dergisi, 1997). Under the effect of the efforts spent to join European Union, teaching English has been supported at all grades of Turkish National Education System. According to Obligatory Primary Education Program, children between the ages 6-14 must attend public schools. In their first five years of schooling, they have a primary class teacher who delivers most of the curriculum. Only few subjects; such as English, Music, Physical Training, and Religion are taught through subject specialists (MEB, 1997).

For English teaching, the curriculum prepared by Ministry of Education for primary schools have aimed to make learners know and speak English at intermediate level as they graduate. The general objectives, as stated in English Language Teaching Program, are as follows:

- 1- To make students become aware of different languages
- 2- To make students recognize different sound systems
- 3- To make students understand the intonation and pronunciation of a foreign language
- 4- To make students be able to use a foreign language accurately
- 5- To make students be able to use a foreign language in daily life
- 6- To make students understand the dialogues they hear appropriate to their level
- 7- To make students understand the dialogues they read
- 8- To make students write words and sentences in a foreign language
- 9- To make students motivated to learn a foreign language
- 10- To make students willing to communicate in a foreign language

(Kocaoluk and Kocaoluk, 2001, p.332)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The implementation of the new teaching program has led to many problems. Although the goal was to create a generation who were able to speak English fluently as they graduated from high schools, it is clear that the objectives have not been fully achieved (Mersinligil, 2002). From the quantitative perspective, the incapacity and insufficiency of the physical conditions in schools have prevented not only language education but also the education in general. As cited from 2002 Ministry of Education Report by Mersinligil (2002), in 2001-2002 education term there were 9521 schools but only 10.573 teachers in the Adana region. There have been also many substructural deficiencies such as inappropriate curriculum, lack of application of contemporary teaching methods, lack of materials and technological devices, large classes, inadequate teaching hours (only two hours per week), and inefficient physical conditions (Özdemir, 1999). These insufficient numbers and inefficient materials and technological aids in schools signal that the necessary physical conditions are far from reached.

From the qualitative perspective, as it is understood from the general objectives stated in English Language Teaching Program of The Ministry of Education, foreign language learning is seen mostly at cognitive and behavioral level. Nevertheless, Oğuz (1999) states that second language learning for young learners (thereafter YLs) should be presented and evaluated audiovisually. Also, Cameron (2001) asserts that new language should be introduced orally and understood orally and aurally by children since they can not benefit from formal grammar. Similarly, Halliwell (1996) identifies two sorts of goals that language programs or syllabuses should entail: content goals and attitude goals. While content goals are concerned with the elements of language and ways in which they are used, attitude goals are directed towards children's having pleasure and confidence in exploring the language and a willing to have a go and a want to communicate. Yet, the latter kind of objectives has not been given higher priority, if not completely ignored, in the program used in Turkey.

Another reason for the failure was that unlike many other countries such as England, Italy, Poland, and Hungary where foreign language education for YLs first applied in pilot schools, Turkey has faced a very fast change in nature (Mersinligil, 2002). As the program began to be implemented in public and private primary schools, teachers who are not educated specifically for teaching English to young learners found themselves in the position of teaching at this. Until 1998, the pre-service teacher

education for foreign language teachers provided by the education faculties did not include courses specific to teaching YLs.

Okan and Sofu (1998) conducted a study to define the situation from the educators' perspective. The interviews held by school administrators and English teachers from 20 public schools reveal some of the problems experienced in schools. According to them, public primary schools were not prepared for foreign language teaching at this level. Another problem was that English teachers were not specifically trained for this level, thus, they face many difficulties in teaching. It is also stated that English teachers for this level needed urgent teacher training support. They have also claimed that there was a need for reform in programs of Education Faculties in order to provide qualified English teachers to overcome the challenges faced at this level of foreign language teaching.

Similar findings were obtained from the study conducted by Yıldırım and Şeker (2004). To explore English teachers' perceptions on teaching English to young learners (thereafter TEYL), 82 teachers from 36 state primary schools were administered an open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire included questions concerning their views about the difference between teaching YLs and older learners, the most remarkable characteristics and skills YLs bring to the classroom, their priorities and methodology in teaching, the materials and activities used, their approach to the assessment and classroom management, the language of classroom instruction, and their overall attitude towards TEYL.

The findings from the qualitative data reveal that despite having a positive attitude towards teaching YLs and becoming aware of the fact that teaching YLs is different from teaching older learners, the majority of teachers seem not to apply the teaching practices appropriate for YLs. To put differently, the methods commonly used by the teachers are those developed for general English as a foreign language (EFL) methodology. This implies that they are not fully equipped with necessary skills to meet such a challenge. Vale and Feunteun (1995) note that the teaching approach for children is necessarily different, and thus, teachers of children should know that many of the techniques and attitudes for children seem to conflict with general EFL methodology.

After 1998, with a view to deal with the problem of teacher education for YLs, new reforms were introduced for Education Faculties with the corporation of The Ministry of Education and High Education Council of Turkey (YÖK). The main aim of these reforms was to provide qualified teachers for the new system (Güncer, 2002).

Accordingly, a separate course devoted to working with young children was incorporated into the curriculum of pre-service teacher education programs. The aim of this course is to make student-teachers aware of the differences between EFL Teaching and TEYL. The course includes both theoretical framework for children's way of thinking and learning and the methodological considerations for teaching children English.

As stated earlier, however, before 1998, the English teachers graduating from the same faculties had not had the chance of taking such a course (Özdemir, 1999). To compensate for this, The Turkish Ministry of Education has established the In-service Training Office in 1994. According to the announcement published in The Official Gazette on April 8, 1995, the aims of the program are as follows:

- a) To help members of The Ministry of Education, who have completed pre-service education programs, adjust themselves to the new Turkish Education System
- b) To help members have a common sense of the aims and principles of Turkish Education System, and to establish standardization in their applications
- c) To compensate for their professional deficiencies in regard to their pre-service education
- d) To inform members of the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that innovations bring
- e) To improve members' efficiency and understanding
- f) To help willing and skillful members have the chance for promotions in upper positions
- g) To give complete education to members who have different educational backgrounds
- h) To provide unity in interpreting Turkish National Education Policy
- i) To provide unity in application of educational principles and techniques
- j) To support the development of the education system. (Tebliğler Dergisi, 2417, 1994).

An overall look at the aims indicates that they are mostly directed toward providing standardized education instead of focusing on the quality of this kind of in-service training. The application of in-service training is under the control of local Education Institutions (Tebliğler Dergisi, 2417, 1994). That is, each regional education institution determines the in-service training program to be held that year and

implements the program by assigning the education inspectors to train teachers working for Ministry of Education. As later to be seen, this application has led to many further problems.

In this respect, there have been many in-service training programs for the teachers of YLs in almost every region of Turkey. However, as the study conducted by Yıldırım and Şeker (2004) indicates, teachers who have participated in such training programs find those programs rather boring and time-consuming instead of being fruitful or problem-solving. The empirical data gained from the research revealed that only 16 out of 82 teachers had the opportunity to take special education geared to working with YLs at either pre-service or in-service level. While 36 stated a need for training, 30 were found not to be so willing to participate in such training. The reasons they put forward for such reluctance were the density of theoretical knowledge embodied in in-service training, the mismatch between the theory given in the training and the actual teaching context, their perception of in-service training as an obligation imposed by the Ministry rather than a voluntary task for professional development.

Moving from the findings of the research conducted, it is clear that, among many other problems, there is a critical need to enhance the scheme for in service teacher training in order for teachers' development of awareness of children's learning at both theoretical and practical level. The scheme for such training must be highly sophisticated to meet the constraints as stated above. In other words, as opposed to traditional teacher training programs in which "knowledge is viewed as content to be transmitted, and then instruction is probably seen as a product to be delivered" (Wilson, 1996, p.6), we hypothesize that a teacher training scheme which assists teachers to "perceive (and acquire) knowledge as personally constructed meaning" (Wilson, 1996, p.6) through participation in situated tasks, discussions, and reflection would be effective in finding out solutions to the problems they face. With these in mind, this study refers to such approach to teacher training as 'collaborative learning model'.

1.3 Aim of the Study

Based on the discussion above, the purpose of this research is to explore primary school English teachers' knowledge in TEYL (4th grade, 10 year olds) and to assist them to extend their knowledge and skills through the collaborative learning model. The scope of the study and its contribution is meant to make specific proposals for directions in which this level of teacher education can move.

1.4 Research Questions

This study aims to find answers to the following questions:

- 1- What are the teachers' constructs of TEYL before participating in collaborative learning process?
- 2- What impact does collaborative learning have on teachers' perceptions of TEYL?
- 3- To what extent and in what specific areas of TEYL is collaborative learning helpful?
- 4- Is there any change in teachers' constructs of teaching YLs after their participation in collaborative learning process?
- 5- Is there a commonality among the participant teachers in their construing effective English teacher of YLs?
- 6- Does the teachers' involvement in collaborative learning process produce any effect on their students' opinions and feelings about learning English?

1.5 Operational Definitions

Young Learner

The term 'young learner' used in this study comprises the learners between the ages of seven to twelve as defined by Slattery & Willis (2001) who differentiate between this group and the very young learners (aged from three to six). The characteristics of this group of learners are explained as follows:

Children who;

- can read and write in their own language,
- understand the difference between the real and the imagery,
- can plan and organize how best to carry out an activity,
- can work with others and learn from others,

- can be reliable and take responsibility for class activities and routines (Slattery & Willis, 2001, p. 5).

Collaborative Teacher Learning

In this study, the term collaborative teacher learning is used in reference to teachers' engagement in joint inquiry about teaching as a means of improving practice. Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, and Beckingham (2004) explains collaborative teacher learning as follows:

Groups of teachers work together locally, within schools, or peripherally, for example, in meetings separate from immediate practice, to develop new ways of teaching. Individually or collectively, teachers try out new ideas in classrooms and monitor the success of their efforts. They come together to review their instruction, talk about outcomes, and critically reflect on their teaching (p.437).

Construct

Construct is defined as “a person’s classification of his/her personal observations or experience of the world” (Repgrid 2 Manual, 1993, p. 6). In our study, the term is used to refer to the participant teachers’ personal observations of the aspects related to TEYL.

1.6 Overview of the Thesis

In the first chapter of the study, a brief synopsis of TEYL development in Turkey is given. Within this frame, YLs teacher training program applied in Turkish universities and the public school application of the curriculum prepared by The Ministry of Education are discussed. The aim of the study and research questions are presented with respect to the problems identified by the studies conducted in Turkey.

The second chapter presents the theoretical background to the collaborative learning model proposed in the study. General approaches to learning and teaching in general are presented in chronological order. Following that, the approaches to teacher education and their implications to teacher training programs in behavioristic, informationist, constructivist, and social constructivist views are discussed. After presenting the limitations of each approach, the study explains situated learning theory as

an alternative to teacher training. The related theories, such as Communities of Practice and Legitimate Peripheral Participation are discussed. As an underlying method, Collaborative learning and its implication to teacher training is discussed.

The third chapter is devoted to the methodological considerations and the research procedure of the study. In this chapter, the participants are presented. Also, the role of the researcher as the participant observer is explained. Following this, the procedure of the application of the collaborative model and the data collection is explained. Since the research was carried out in two phases, the steps of each phase are schematized and explained. The tools utilized to collect the data and information about the data analysis is also given.

In the fourth chapter, the analysis of the data gathered from Rep-grids, interviews, journals and students' accounts are presented. The analysis results of the data from the participant teachers are presented in a separate section for each. There are also other sections displaying the results of participants' views on collaboration and students' attitudes toward English learning and their teachers. The findings are discussed in terms of their relevancy to TEYL literature.

The fifth chapter discusses the findings in relation to the aim of the study and research questions. Some implications for the application of the model and suggestions for further studies are given at the end of this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses educational theories and their implications for teacher training programs in chronological order. Firstly, learning and teaching approaches based on behavioristic learning theory are presented. After introducing its applications in teacher education, the chapter then discusses the criticisms and drawbacks of the behavioristic teacher education approaches. The next section covers learning and teaching approaches of cognitivist theory and their influence on teacher education programs. As cognitivist theory has been viewed from two different bases, namely informationist and constructivist, both perspectives are analyzed under different headings. After introducing the learning and teaching approaches of each theory, their implications to teacher training, along with their drawbacks and criticisms, are also discussed. Lastly, the social interactionist (also called social constructivist) approach to teaching and learning is included with its implications for teacher training.

2.1 Professional Development

As a fundamental issue, teacher education has generated considerable discussion in language education literature. Although there is no general consensus on the conceptual foundation of the field and the ultimate knowledge base, the dynamic in research is being increasingly viewed from a developmental perspective. Unlike teacher education in the past, which was largely based on traditions, modified and adapted by the craft wisdom of the teacher education, it currently draws on a variety of disciplinary sources, such as linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and education with a major influence from national policies that acclaim the importance of high quality professional training (Richards, 1998).

Since the study of human kind requires different methodological foundations from those appropriate to the natural sciences (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992), there have been numerous theoretical bases for teaching in education. Teachers have been compared to scientists, to managers, to laborers, and to crafts persons (Darling – Hammond., 1995) with each embodying a different understanding of the essential knowledge and skills

teachers need. As a result of the improvements in other fields, such comparisons have been made and teacher education approaches have been adopted accordingly. The following sections discuss the importance of teacher thinking and how transformation in this thinking perceived in different teaching and learning approaches. Following this, each approach in relation to learning, the teaching view they propose, and their implications to professional development, particularly to teacher training programs, are presented.

2.1.1 Teacher Thinking and Transformation

Teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning guide their planning and decision making in the classroom. Beliefs are defined as personal constructs that can provide an understanding of a teacher's practice (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). Some beliefs of teachers may belong to a belief system that is a part of the everyday philosophy but still may have an impact on their lives outside the classroom. Many beliefs about teaching, however, may relate specifically to classroom practice and may develop only in context of classroom teaching (Dunne, 1993). Schulman (1987) relates these beliefs to the category of general pedagogical knowledge referred as general beliefs about teaching and learning. Whether they are general or specific, teachers' beliefs strongly affect any decision made by teacher (Harste, Woodward, and Burke, 1984). Pajares (1992) pointed out that few would argue that the beliefs teachers hold, influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect their behaviour in the classroom.

It has become an accepted idea that teachers' beliefs plays an important role in shaping teachers' characteristic patterns of instructional behaviour (Thompson, 1992). Therefore, the main motive in developing theories and approaches to teacher training has been to achieve some type of change in teachers' teaching skills. According to Freeman (1989), however, change does not necessarily mean doing things differently. It can be in awareness, which serves as the initiator for other changes. Therefore, change is not necessarily immediate or complete; but it may occur overtime. Similarly, Vonk (1991) agrees that change in teachers thinking is not always an easy task to achieve. As he puts it:

At certain moments a coherent set of changes occur in teachers' thinking about the profession and their conduct. These changes are both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Such a development,

however, is not a simple, spontaneous process; it is rather the outcome of a complex interaction between the individuals and the various environments in which they are participating. (p. 64).

Whichever the approach is, the nature of change in teachers' beliefs has been the key term in the field of second language teacher education. However, teacher change is very complex and multifaceted; and it comprises many things including knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, understanding, self-awareness, and teaching practices (Richards, Gallo, and Renadya, 1999).

In order to achieve any change in teachers' beliefs, it is necessary to elicit their implicit beliefs first. However, beliefs themselves are unobservable until translated into practice (Dunne, 1993); and "the extent to which teachers' behaviors are influenced by their theoretical orientations has been difficult to demonstrate" (Deford, 1985). As noted by many researchers (e.g. Zeichner and Liston, 1987), student-teachers, for example, have definite teaching and learning beliefs even when they enter a training course, but they often fail to articulate these.

The underlying assumption for changing teachers' beliefs differs in different approaches to teacher education. Behavioristic approaches, for instance, aimed to alter teachers' behaviors, whereas cognitivist approaches sought for a change in teachers' thinking. Constructivist theories view the construction of personal theories as the central task for teachers. These personal theories are often resistant to change and serve the core reference for teachers whenever they are in the act of acquiring new knowledge (Roberts, 1998).

From a constructivist perspective, Holt – Reynolds (2000) considers knowledge "created rather than received, mediated by discourse rather than transferred by teacher talk, explored and transformed rather than remembered as a uniform set of positivistic ideas" (p.124). In her case study on constructivist pedagogies and prospective teachers' beliefs about the role of a teacher, she presents a sample teacher facing models of constructivist pedagogies. She focuses on the issue of a special "concept" a teacher is supposed to set out to teach. Holt-Reynolds'(2000) findings revealed that for some prospective teachers constructivist pedagogies are only "a means for avoiding a confrontation with perceived personal inability as a knower" (p.29). She claims that teachers need to understand the underlying theories of the practical, useful teaching strategies. Hence, they seem to be impatient with and ignorant of these theories. Holt-

Reynolds (2000) concludes by emphasizing that in teacher education the power of the role of a teacher should be underlined and teachers' awareness of critical questions about what students learn throughout particular activities and how teachers' process to ensure this learning should be triggered.

Zohar (1999) supports Holt-Reynolds stating that courses which prepare teachers for instruction of higher order thinking should previously target the issue of declarative metacognitive knowledge of thinking skills. Zohar (1999) defines metacognition as the knowledge of an individual and the control of the own cognitive system of an individual.

On the other hand, social constructivist approaches define teacher transformation as perspective transformation where becoming critically aware of the personal theories and their relationships by integrating experience and own personal history (Diamond, 1991). As Salmon (1988) explains:

...to teach should mean to offer what is personally meaningful. And teaching comes to have personal meaning only if one has reflected deeply on one's own journey so far through life. That entails struggling to see how one's own experience is encompassed by what one understands. You are yourself, in some sense, what you teach. (p.37).

Roberts (1998) highlights the importance of social context for individual's sense of a need for change. For him, school culture has a powerful influence on personal change. Thus, a school should adopt a policy that encourages teacher participation and responsibility sharing tends to support dialogue and collaboration. He warns against individualistic policies in that they weaken the ability of the group and are very costly for teachers. In such a climate, teachers will share the burden and responsibility and start to learn from collaborative group and other resources. However, this kind of learning will be still mediated by their personal theories. "This suggests that while dialogue is critically important in teachers' development, it needs to be complemented by their uncovering and assessing their current routines and ways of seeing" (p.229). Moving from this assumption, Roberts (1998) suggests two general in-service teacher training strategies: 1. focusing on communication within the school and strengthening its capacity for self-development; 2. integrating off-site and on-site work to allow teachers share their classroom concerns with colleagues.

Jackson (1992) also emphasizes the importance of social context in helping teachers change. For him, teachers should collaborate where they tell each other how to teach, improve conditions under which they work, relieve each other of psychological discomfort and come to a broader and richer understanding of what they do. In line with this assumption, Richards et al. (1999) identifies the benefits of collaboration in teacher change. Accordingly, conversations and sharing sessions with colleagues trigger off new ideas providing new ways to handle a task. Discussions held in the collaborating group lead to the discovery and adoption of better teaching methods. From the psychological perspective, collaborators encourage each other by praising and motivating. To achieve this outcome, Richards et al. (1999) recommend that teachers should be given the opportunity to participate in teacher development courses at which they can reflect on their beliefs through many means such as narratives, discussion, review of student feedback. Teachers should be encouraged to monitor how their own beliefs and practices change through activities like journal writing or case studies.

In conclusion, as the collaborative learning model proposed in this study suggest, teachers should be given the opportunity to reflect on their ideas and to be aware of their own teaching beliefs in order for any change to occur. Similar to what is acknowledged in this study, Diamond (1991) reports that the transformation in learning to teach starts with the exploration and articulation of the personal beliefs of teachers. Any inquiry directed towards understanding these processes must entail teachers' personal contexts, their convictions, and their own personal questions. In parallel with this assumption, this research started by determining teachers' personal theories about teaching YLs, then tried to help teachers achieve transformation to some degree in their understanding and practicing TEYL.

2.1.2 Behavioristic Approaches to Professional Development

Positivist principles that underlie behavioristic approaches were first derived from science by Auguste Comte (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). Positivism is based on assumptions that are apprehended by the senses and manifested in experience. Once hypotheses are set, they are refuted or verified by a comparison between their deductive consequences and the results of observation and experiments. If they are verified by scientific methods, these sociological or educational assumptions become established laws. On account of these principles; behaviorist theories derive the principles and laws of learning and teaching from controlled experimentation and determination or

prediction of learning behavior. Considering learning and teaching context, the learner is viewed as a ready made system and his/her external behaviors can be observed objectively. Optimum knowledge is taught by finding variables of which behavior is a function. As a result, laws of teaching and derivative principles are established (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992).

In the light of this behavioristic teaching and learning assumption, traditional models of primary and secondary teaching systems are very similar throughout the world. The components that comprise the basic structure of models are: “academic preparation in the subjects or disciplines that the student is to reach; theoretical foundations of professional education, such as courses in philosophy, history, sociology and psychology of education; and the student practicum or teaching in some form of internship” (Diamond, 1991, p.8). Richards (1990) proposes a similar classification to the study of teaching in terms of its directly observable characteristics. Looking at only what teachers *do* in the classroom, they were evaluated according to how they matched the profiles of good teachers derived from the opinions of experts. However, there was no evidence that teachers’ having these characteristics were actually successful in bringing about higher levels of learning in their pupils (Peterson & Walberg, 1979; Ornstein and Hunkins, 1988).

In respect to teacher preparation, the goal is to impart the repertoire of strategies (e.g., control of question patterns and wait-time) employed by the teacher as competencies to teachers-in-preparation. In 1960s, this view was very popular and was referred as *performance – or competency – based teacher education* (CBTE). Viewing teaching as a kind of technology, the approach assumes that the effective teacher differs from the ineffective one primarily by having command of a larger repertoire of competencies – skills, abilities, knowledge and so forth – that contribute to effective teaching (Richards, 1990).

In the context of pre-service teacher education, according to Joyce and Clift (1984), CBTE segmented the acts of effective teachers and then applied system approaches so that the effective teachers were used as models to train beginning teachers.

Beginning teachers should be trained by university scholars who are themselves concerned primarily with what takes place in classrooms and who are also skilled teachers. A united sequence of experiences should

be promoted that gradually inducts beginning professionals by teaching some of the early skills of teaching (Joyce and Clift, 1984, p.9).

As Diamond (1991) explains, CBTE requires teachers to acquire some competencies to perform certain tasks. These competencies are determined in relation to three general areas: their knowledge, teaching behavior, and pupils' payoff-knowledge.

However, these traditional approaches to teacher education are surrounded by numerous critics, because of their limited philosophical and knowledge base. Popkewitz, Tabachnick, and Zeichner (1979), for instance, mention the difficulty in attempting such behavioristic approaches to teacher education stemming from the underlying empirical – analytic model of most educational research. For them, such an approach sees the purpose of inquiry as the discovery of a deductive system of propositions or scientific laws to be used to predict and control teaching and learning. Also Richards (1990) notes that effective teaching cannot be described only in terms of low-inference skills or competencies; rather, higher level categories are also necessary to a theory of teaching.

Concerning in-service teacher education, CBTE research aims to identify empirical links between teaching behaviors and increments in student outcomes and to enshrine the laws governing such pedagogical acts by identifying these competencies. Yet, as Diamond (1991) puts it, “such process – product or research a development approaches are unable to come to grips with the fundamental intentionality or distinctive viewpoints of teachers’ (p.10). Popkewitz et al. (1979) criticize CBTE research as providing no theory out of the accumulation of all the discrete behavioristic data since mastering and pursuing the craft of teaching goes far beyond repetitions and routines. It was also criticized in assuming that the repertoire of behaviors to be mastered was to be analyzed to specify less complex components to be taught by direct instruction and practice with corrective feedback.

From a human developmentalist perspective, teachers are acknowledged as uniquely intentional persons rather than as merely programmable objects. CBTE clearly does not serve teachers and their epistemologies. Teachers are deprived of power precisely by putting the production and distribution of knowledge about teaching into the hands of politicians and researchers who set the criteria of teacher competence and

performance. Teachers' personal knowledge and purposes are ignored and they are held accountable to those of others. The delineation of specific behavioral objectives, prior to or early in a teacher – learning sequence, assumes that the teacher as learner is inert and passive, that there is a stable body of knowledge and of skills and that there are fixed approaches to learning (Popkewitz, 1979, p.10).

The craft model also is an example to the models derived from behavioristic approaches to learning and teaching (Wallace, 1991). Until the end of the Second World War in 1945, teaching practice was traditionally in such a way that an experienced professional practitioner (i.e. “craft”) taught his/her techniques and the trainee learned by imitating the expert and by following his/her instructions and advice. Following this process, the craft was passed on expertise from generation to generation. The following representation displays the simplicity of the model:

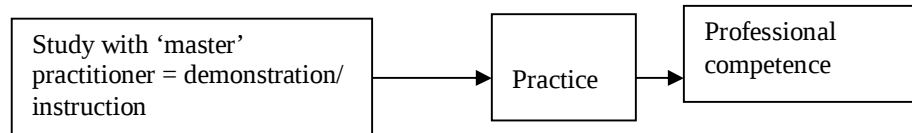


Figure 2.1. The craft model of professional education adapted from Wallace (1991)

Wallace (1991) summarizes the process; ‘The master teacher told the students what to do, showed them how to do it and the students imitated the master’ (p.6). The model was criticized by Stones and Morris (1972) among many other educators as being very static and not being appropriate to the contemporary society’s dynamics. Wallace (1991) also states that “good teaching is an undeniably complex activity, and there is no guarantee that it will ever be fully predictable in a logical way according to scientific principles (Wallace, 1991, p.7).

2.1.3 Cognitive Approaches to Professional Development

By the early 1970s, as a reaction to behaviorist learning and teaching theories, cognitive theories that focus on the human mind emerged. Behaviorists assume that the development consists of an accumulation of knowledge which enters our brain via senses leading us to solve new problems by learning new behaviors accumulated in our memory. On the other hand, cognitive psychologists propose that some knowledge is inherited and existing knowledge is continuously changed by the individual to master the problems of our environment (Zuber – Skerritt, 1992). Focusing on the process of knowing and learning, Bruner (1975) believes that new material is acquired more easily and retained better if it is related to the learner's previous knowledge and concepts. For him, cognition and knowing is a process consisting three simultaneous processes: acquisition of new information or the replacement of old knowledge, transformation of information in a new situation, and evaluation appraisal of the manner in which the information has been used (Bruner, 1975).

Considering the learning process, the learners are seen active participants using various mental strategies to sort out the system of the task to be learned. They are required to use their minds to observe, think, categorize and hypothesize, and eventually to work out how the material to be learned operates (Williams & Burden, 1997).

However, there is a clear distinction in the investigations about human thought. At one extreme are information theorists who have drawn the analogy of the brain as a highly complex computer and who seek to explain its workings in terms of rules and models of how different aspects of learning take place. At the other extreme there is the so-called constructivist approach, mainly concerned with ways in which individuals come to make their own sense of the world (Williams & Burden, 1997). The following sections deal with each of movement in detail with specific reference to teachers' professional development.

2.1.3.1 Information Processing Theory

Information processing theorists are mainly concerned how learners take in information, process it and act upon it. Accordingly, factors such as attention, perception and memory become the focus of their work (Williams and Burden, 1997). Via constructing models or scripts, Williams and Burden (1997) try to find how human mind works in order to be able to predict the kind of mental processes necessary for

effective learning and to determine precisely how and where any malfunctioning occurs in case of any learning difficulties. The model developed by Atkinson and Shiffrin (1986), for instance, describes the memory process in terms of a sensory register. In this model, stimuli are initially recorded for a brief amount of times; and if attention is given to them, they are passed to short-term (or working) memory lasting no longer than thirty seconds. Due to its short capacity, information processing theorists suggest to break down complex material into related 'chunks' before consigning these to the long – term memory store. At this stage, 'rehearsal', usually in form of single repetition or association of meaning to what is to be remembered, can be effective.

Aside from learning and teaching models, information processing theorists have significant place in education psychology in that they have emphasized the importance of cognitive processes and set the concept of meaning at the heart of such processes (Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1986).

Considering teacher education, in 1980s, information theorists have put forward *The Applied Science Model*. "This model derives its authority from the achievements of empirical science, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries, and it focuses on information in learning to teach. Within this framework, practical knowledge of anything is simply a matter of relating the most appropriate means to whatever objectives have been decided on" (Wallace, 1991, p.8). In other words, trainees use scientific knowledge to achieve certain clearly defined objectives. The schematization of the applied science model is shown in Figure 2.2:

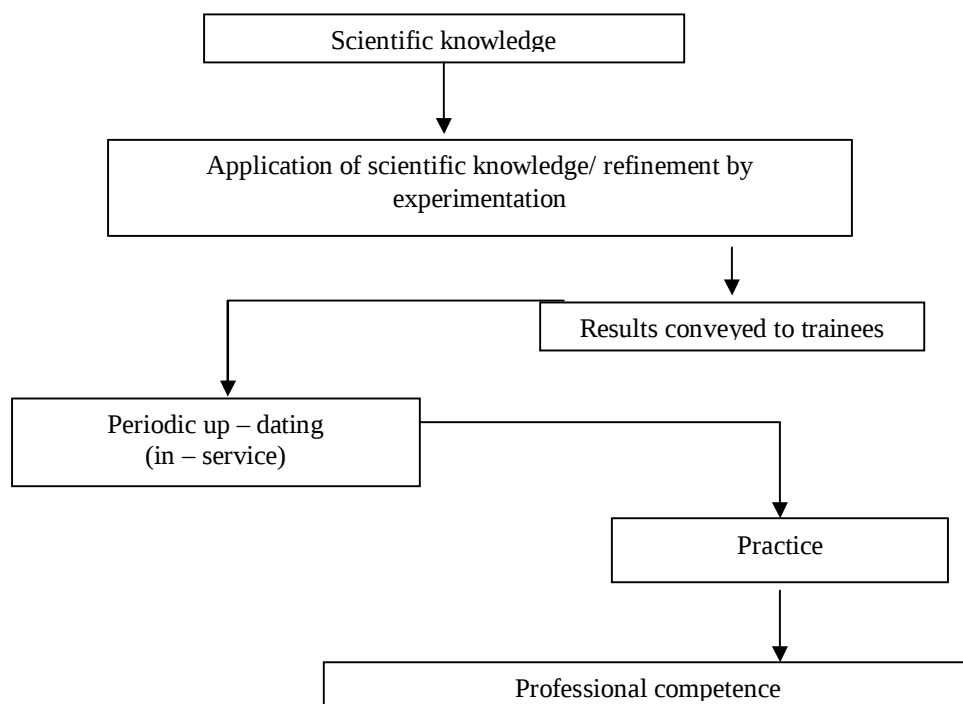


Figure 2.2: Applied science model adapted from Wallace (1991)

Wallace (1991) defines the model as one-way and explains:

The findings of scientific knowledge and experimentation are conveyed to the trainee by those who are experts in the relevant areas. Thus, trainee teachers who are concerned with maintaining discipline might receive instruction from a psychologist on what has been discovered about behavior modification. It is up to the trainees to put the conclusions, from these scientific findings into practice. If the trainees fail, it is perhaps they have not understood the findings properly, or because they have not properly applied the findings, or whatever (p.9).

Although many writers reject unscientific approaches to teacher education and argue that teaching problems can only be solved by the application of empirical science (Stones and Morris, 1972), the problems in teacher education have not been solved. One of the problems with information processing approaches is that they place little or no emphasis upon the ways in which individuals seek to bring a sense of personal meaning to their worlds (Williams & Burden, 1997). Also, being rather more mechanistic, these approaches neglect dynamic views of intelligence that enables teachers, particularly language teachers to see that all learners are capable of learning a language. By putting

great emphasis on the knowledge to be transmitted, they are far from being learner-centered. This is where constructivist approaches come to the scene.

2.1.3.2 Constructivist Approaches

In the other extreme of cognitive developmental psychology, there are constructivist theories, where the focus is on the complete, purposeful person, as an active and creative agent in his/her own right, not simply as a responder to stimuli. The learning assumption underlying the theory is that our present constructs or interpretations of the universe are subject to revision or replacement. That is, people understand themselves and their environment, and anticipate future events by constructing tentative models or personal theories and by evaluating these theories against personal criteria as to whether the prediction and control of events have been successful or not (Zuber – Skerritt, 1992). As a dominant figure in constructivist movement Piaget (1974) has written extensively about the constructive nature of the learning process. In this work, rather than accepting learning as the accumulation of facts (i.e. information processing approaches) or the development of skills (i.e. behaviorist theories), the main underlying assumption is that people are actively involved from birth in constructive personal meaning from their experiences (Piaget, 1974).

One of the profound pioneers of the constructivist movement is Kelly (1955). His personal-construct theory indicates that people carry out their own personal experiments, construct hypotheses and actively seek to confirm or disconfirm them. These personal theories or constructs are rather like templates which people place over their impressions of any new events or persons with which they come into contact, in order to establish some kind of reasonable ‘fit’ (Kelly, 1955, p.27). He has developed his theory in terms of a fundamental postulate elaborated by eleven corollaries:

1. *Construction Corollary*: A person anticipates events by construing their replications.
2. *Individuality Corollary*: Persons differ from each other in their constructions of events.
3. *Organization Corollary*: Each person characteristically evolves for his convenience in anticipating events, a construction system embracing ordinal relationships between constructs.

4. *Dichotomy Corollary*: A person's construction system is composed of a finite number of dichotomous constructs.
5. *Choice Corollary*: A person chooses for himself that alternative in a dichotomized construct through which he anticipates the greater possibility for extension and definition of his system.
6. *Range Corollary*: A construct is convenient for the anticipation of a finite range of events only.
7. *Experience Corollary*: A person's construction system varies as he successively construes the replications of events.
8. *Modulation Corollary*: The variation in a person's construct system is limited by the permeability of the constructs within whose ranges of convenience the variants lie.
9. *Fragmentation Corollary*: A person may successively employ a variety of construction subsystems which are inferentially in compatible with each other.
10. *Commonality Corollary*: To the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his psychological processes are similar to those of the other person.
11. *Sociality Corollary*: To the extent that one person construes the construction processes of another, he may play a role in a social process involving the other person (Adapted from Roberts, 1998).

As for personal constructs of professionals, the theory highlights interaction between the individual and the environment as an experiential cycle in which people develop their personal construct system. Constructs are personally defined on the basis of individual and personal experience. Thus, teacher thinking is also perceived as a development of interaction with their environment, inside and outside the educational establishment. Although similarities may emerge, the construct systems of teachers are established basically through the process of individual past histories. Therefore, in spite of having features common to all, every educational situation has its unique characteristics and the divergence is likely the case (Ben-Peretz, 1984a).

According to professional development programs based on Kelly's personal Construct Theory, individuals should be encouraged to search for their ideas as hypotheses open to refutation (Ben-Peretz, 1984a). Since the interrelationship of personal constructs is crucial in teacher thinking, Pope (1993) proposes to use Kelly's approach to assist teachers in identifying their own personal implicit theories of

teaching and learning, which may later serve to reduce the gap between theory and practice in education. Thus, he recommends that research instruments and data processing procedures developed on the basis of the theory of personal construct to be able to identify and change teachers' personal constructs related to teaching and learning. Pope (1993) has drawn some implications of Kelly's theories for teacher learning. These implications postulate that:

- the world is real but individuals vary in their perception of it,
- an individual's conception of the real world has integrity for that individual,
- teachers use personally pre-existing theories to explain and plan their teaching,
- teachers test these theories for fruitfulness and modify them in the light of such testing (Pope, 1993, p.20-21).

Ben-Peretz (1984a) claims that investigating teacher thinking on the basis of personal construct theory may have practical implications so as to make people aware of their own construing patterns and processes that play important part in convincing them to change or to learn. Hence, he suggests teachers participate in the research, workshops and exercises where their personal constructs are identified and planned as a part of their professional training and development. For such a process, Ben-Peretz (1984a) proposes some theoretical insights to be gained by using Kelly's theory of personal constructs such as "knowledge about a variety of cognitive maps of personal construct systems of teachers with different background characteristics, understanding of the development of personal construct systems of teachers through the experiential cycle of teaching, and definitions of characteristics of the teaching profession based on a distinction between professional versus non-professional components of the personal construct systems of teachers" (p.106).

Ben-Peretz (1984a) states that Kelly's theory offers an interesting approach to the study of teacher thinking. He lists the benefits that teacher education and professional development programs can give. First of all, teachers' awareness to their own implicit theories would enable them to be more reflective in their professional decision making. Moreover, teachers would be able to analyze their own thinking about curriculum materials, old and new, and their modes of curriculum interpretation would be enriched and more complex, yielding more of the educational potential of these materials. Last but not least, in-service teachers education programs, focusing on personal constructs, would seem appropriate in case, such as; implementation of innovative curricula, matching curriculum materials to the needs of diverse pupil populations, and

identification of curricular trends as expressed in curriculum materials (Ben-Peretz, 1984a).

In constructivist teacher education programs, trainees are viewed as creating an inner representation of the world of teaching as they encounter it (Diamond, 1991). “The accumulated representation provides them with a past and a future and all their actions are influenced by and performed within their body of expectations. They interpret what they perceive at any given moment by relating it to their past experiences and then respond to it in the light of that interpretation” (Diamond, 1991, p.12). McIntyre (1980) views teacher preparation as being more complex than skills training:

Both material skills and direct instruction are defined only in terms of high-influence variables... If this is generally the case, its implication for teacher educators is that we cannot hope to train student teachers; whatever one’s criteria of effectiveness, the components of effective teaching cannot be spelt out in operational terms, but are crucially dependent on the teacher’s qualities. (p.14).

Diamond (1991) mentions the need for extending constructivist approaches to teacher education field. He states that, “as a shift in world view, or preferred way of perceiving reality, it involves the active, engaged, and personal making and unmaking of a set of hypotheses so that a ‘web of meaning’ or personal construct system is elaborated or extended. Into every act of such fundamental expansion or re-cognizing of understanding, there enters a passionate contribution of the person knowing of what is known” (p.16). This coefficient is a vital component of learner’s knowledge. For him, this kind of interpersonal communicative interactions produce inner speech leading for developing new levels in the organization and restructuring of consciousness (Diamond, 1991).

In line with the constructivist approaches to teacher training, many studies have been conducted in the field of both pre-service and in-service teacher education to search and ultimately change teachers personal constructs about lesson planning (Clark & Yinger, 1987), curriculum and curriculum materials (Connely and Ben-Peretz, 1982; Ben-Peretz, 1984b), and teaching methodology (Sendan, 1995). The study conducted by Ben-Peretz (1984b), for instance, aimed to explore teacher thinking about curriculum

materials. The results of their findings showed significant differences between groups revealing that experienced teachers produce more constructs related to teaching strategies and learning tasks in comparison to inexperienced teachers. According to them, the result clearly indicated that past experiences played a crucial role in construing teaching strategies.

Another study which adopted constructivist theory as conceptual framework to explore teacher thinking was conducted by Sendan (1995). At the end of one-year longitudinal study, he found conceptual and structural changes in student teachers thinking. While the content of personal theories on teaching English showed limited change, the structural change was notably significant. He concludes that: "... [the] study highlights the dynamic nature of personal theories, and thus conflicts with the research proposing stability of personal theories throughout professional training." (p.242).

The action research carried out by Yumru (2000) suggests valuable implications to teacher learning. The findings of her study show that student-teachers learn best through personal experience and interaction with others in cooperative environment. Yumru (2000) also notes that teachers' perceptions are open to change and they gain new perspectives on practice rather than on being told what to do by outsiders. One of the other studies with similar aim was conducted by İlin (2003) to explore the effect of supervisory feedback on student-teachers' teaching perceptions. As a result of the interviews, observations and the repertory grid applications, significant content and structural changes were observed in students' perceptions of teaching English. This also indicates that the personal theories that students have are dynamic in nature and can be re-construed as a result of interaction with others.

However, many researchers have criticized constructivist approaches as being inadequate in explaining human thinking and development. Roberts (1998), for example, states that although constructivism provides a path to understand personal change, it tends to exclude some significant aspects of human learning. Bell and Gilbert (1996) point out that constructivist approach almost ignores affective aspects of learning, culture and power in the classroom. The most important criticism that constructivism has received is its abstracting the person from its sociocultural environment and focusing on his/her inner processes to understand human thinking. As Roberts (1998) puts it, "an adequate approach to language teacher education should consider cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, and given the social nature of teaching, language teacher education must also address the social dimensions of

experience and learning” (p.28). He, thus, suggests a broader social constructivist framework that “admits social aspects of teacher work and learning, and recognizes the dynamic interaction between personal change and social circumstances” (p.28). For him, teacher’s beliefs develop in complex interaction with his or her professional experiences. This approach to teacher development is called as ‘social interactionist approach’.

2.1.4 Social Interactionist Approaches

Due to the social nature of language, the implications for language teacher and teacher education programs of taking a social interactionist perspective have recently begun to emerge (e.g. Schinke-Liano, 1993; Appel and Lantolf, 1994; Donato and McCormick, 1994). Considering the issue with the integration of Piagetian view that from the time of their birth children learn independently by exploring their environment, and the behaviorist view that adults are entirely responsible for shaping children’s learning by the judicious use of rewards and punishments, social interactionists maintain that children are born into a social world, and learning occurs through interaction with other people. Vygotsky, one of the fundamental pioneers in social interactionist theory, has many valuable considerations on second language learning and teaching. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes that by means of language that culture is transmitted, thinking develops and learning occurs. Having an essentially holistic view to education, Vygotsky rejects the view that the material to be learned can be broken down into small subcomponents and taught as discrete items and skills. Instead, meaning is central aspect in any unit of study which is to be presented in all its complexity (Huitt, 2003).

Williams and Burden (1997) present a social interactionist model of teaching and learning process deriving from: a) *cognitive approaches* emphasizing the importance of what the learner brings to any learning situation as an active meaning-maker and problem-solver; b) *humanistic approaches* emphasizing the development of the whole person in educational settings; c) *social interactionist* approaches emphasizing the dynamic nature of the interplay between teachers, learners, tasks, and providing a view of learning as arising from interactions with others.

In line with the social constructivist approach, ‘Perspective Transformation in Teacher Education’ considers meaning making as a reservoir of interpretation patterns that are individually generated and collectively transmitted both in pre- and in-service

education (Diamond, 1991). According to this model, the actions of people are supported and integrated as a meaningful whole. As Diamond (1991) puts it “the provision of alternative viewpoints, differing interpretations and criticism are essential to encounter and may be provided by narrative experience, sharing and dialogue” (p.15). In this respect, Merizow (1981) presents a theory of education which posits three generic forms of knowledge or learning domains:

- 1- *the technical domain* for academic knowledge and task related competence,
- 2- *the social domain* for interpersonal understanding and communication,
- 3- *the emancipatory domain* for perspective or meaning transformation.

With the help of these domains, teachers can interpret the ways that they and others know and construct meanings and also interact. This approach to teacher education seeks to help both beginning and experienced teachers to gain access to their unique and alternative meaning perspectives from which to interpret reality (Merizow, 1981). The interpersonal and the representational incorporate the teacher into the process of knowledge production. The perspective transformation theory to teacher development mainly aims to provide teachers with a fuller and richer understanding of teaching which enhances their abilities to deal with personal and professional difficulties. This is accomplished by widening their sphere of personal agency and by helping them confront social problems. This approach to teacher education also focuses on questions of individual purpose and tries to understand beyond knowledge, which is achieved through the continual reaching out to fresh versions of teaching and learning. Diamond (1991) summarizes the need for perspective transformation approach in teacher education programs:

To the extent that teachers can change their constructs, they can free themselves from domination by limited constructs and open up new possibilities or perspective for the solution of problems. The process of revising constructs in the light of experience defines such learning. The teacher whose previous convictions encompass a broad perspective, and which are cast in terms of principles rather than rules, has a much better chance of discovering those alternatives, which may lead eventually to his or her emancipation. Teacher education construed as perspective transformation involves teachers in

reconstruction in revising their intellectual structures and attaining a new balance (p.18).

Zeichner, Tabchnick and Densmore (1987) conducted a study with four novice teachers aiming to describe the interaction between personal theories and school culture in three interdependent levels: classroom level, institutional level and outside the school. They found that teachers learned through interaction with pupils in the classroom by implicitly confirming certain values and denying others. The teachers' development was also affected at institutional level through the enactment of social norms. As for the influence from outside the school, they found social impacts, such as material resources on teachers' practical classroom options. They concluded that; "The nature of the practical experience from which each teacher constructs her knowledge is intimately affected by external conditions and social policy (Zeichner et al., 1987, p.39).

In regard to in-service teacher training, Roberts (1998) highlights the importance of social context for an individual's sense of a need for change. For him, school culture has a powerful influence on personal and curricular change. Thus, a school should adopt a policy that encourages teacher participation and responsibility in sharing tends to support dialogue and collaboration. He warns against individualistic policies in that they weaken the ability of the group and are very costly for teachers. In such a climate, teachers will share the burden and responsibility and start to learn from the collaborative group and other resources. However, this kind of learning will be still mediated by their personal theories. "This suggests that while dialogue is critically important in teachers' development, it needs to be complemented by their uncovering and assessing their current routines and ways of seeing" (p.229). Moving from this assumption, Roberts (1998) suggests two general in-service teacher training strategies: 1. focusing on communication within the school and strengthening its capacity for self-development; 2. integrating off-site and on-site work to allow teachers share their classroom concerns with colleagues.

Social constructivist theory to teacher professional development forms the basis of the collaborative learning model proposed in this study. Thus, the following section presents the theoretical framework underlying the collaborative training model proposed in the study. First, constructivist learning and teaching approaches are discussed in reference to Piagetian view and Kelly's Personal Construct Theory. Then, the social constructivist approach, which emerged as to compensate for the lack of social aspect in

constructivist approaches is discussed. As the main underlying theory of the model, situated learning theory as derived from social constructivist view is explained. In this respect, the related assumptions such as Brown, Collins and Duguid's Cognitive Apprenticeship; Lave and Wenger's Community of Practice, Legitimate Peripheral Participation (thereafter LPP) and their respective implications to professional and teacher development are presented.

2.2 Situated Learning Theory

2.2.1 Constructivism versus Social Constructivism

By the early 1990s the Piagetian constructivist reign on the individual learner, as the essential unit of instruction was slowly changed by the switch in research toward 'situated learning' where sociocultural dimensions play crucial role in explaining concepts of learning. The ideas in situated learning are originally grounded in dialectical materialist, cultural-historical theory of activity (Roth & Lee, 2006). As they explain:

The concept of action (such as learning) rides on a dialectic of individual and collective, each of which presupposes the other: an individual concretely realizes an action, the possibility of which exists at a collective (generalized) level. What the individual does define and has repercussions for the collective such as in affirming what are legitimate or illegitimate practices. Similarly, the absence of higher-order social structures renders all actions by individuals meaningless and decontextualized. (Roth & Lee, p.28)

Based on the same assumptions, constructivist theories view the learner as an active initiator and personal knowledge constructor who actively constructs new concepts on the basis of his/her prior knowledge and experiences (Piaget, 1972; in Jarvela & Niemivirta, 1999). However, Piagetian constructivist theories have been criticized in their separating knowledge from the situations in which it is learned and used (e.g. Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989, Roth & Lee, 2006, etc.). Born as an attempt against radical constructivist perspective, the social-constructivist, or social-interactionist, view to learning and teaching perceives knowledge as situated in context and culture (Jarvela & Niemivirta, 1999). That is, knowledge is constructed and communicated through culture and social institutions where both the individual and the

environment are significant in the learning process. In this respect, the activities of the person and the environment are parts of a mutually constructed whole in situated cognition. Rather than being static, the process of learning is viewed as interactivist, relational, dialectical and /or transactional (Hung & Der-Thanq, 2001). “Meanings are perceived as inseparable from interpretation, and knowledge is linked to the relations of which it is a product. In other words, knowledge is not just a mental state; rather, it is an experienced relation of things, and it has no meaning outside of such relations” (p.4). Thus, Hung and Der-Thanq (2001) point out that learning should occur in a context where rich situational and activity-practice circumstances allow learners to have the opportunity for interactional and dialectical ‘struggles’ in cognition with outsiders.

2.2.2 Vygotskian Approach to Learning and Teaching

Vygotsky (1981), one of the pioneers of situated learning theory, states that “it is through others that we develop into ourselves” (p.161). In his studies, he focused on the dialectical relationship in explaining the meaning of the environment for a child and the child’s relationship with the various aspects of the environment. Although these assumptions are not totally new, they provide grounding to situated cognition. In explaining the development of learning, Vygotsky (1981) focuses on the very process by which higher forms are established through dialectical movements of giving and receiving knowledge. For him, as a result of such process, the learner develops an individual awareness which is unique to his/her own experience, and in essence, common to the community.

With the intention to assess the educative potential of children, Vygotsky has put forward the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) to describe children’s cognitive growth on the basis of individual child. While attempting to link the social and individual levels of cognition, he has also posited the ‘Genetic Law of Cultural Development’. Vygotsky (1981) claims that humans are capable of mastering their actions and even themselves from the outside through symbolic, cultural systems within which meanings are embedded. “Through social interaction and communication through mediated tools, there is a form of metacognitive self-regulation of behavior through reflection in action. Through such a process internalization and learning occurs” (Hung and Der-Thanq, 2001, p.6).

ZPD is defined as “the distance between the actual development 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” (Ohta, 2005, p. 505). As it is highlighted in the definition, adult guidance is essential in child development. This kind of assistance is called ‘scaffolding’. The idea undergirding scaffolded learning is that children progress from actions they can accomplish entirely by themselves as individuals to more complex cognitive tasks only through the guidance and coaching of more capable others like adults, peers, parents, and teachers (Simons, Young and Gibson, 2000). According to Vygotskian view, for children, learning occurs through social interactions with others and the environment, and thus, it proceeds from external action to internal activity. When children are incapable of performing tasks within the stipulated ZPD, they start to mimic or model mature activity, behaviors, and actions of experts, adults, or more capable peers (Hung and Nichani, 2002). While more capable individuals engage in the processes of modeling, learners engage in mirroring the actions provided within particular activity contexts (Hung, 1999). Hung and Nichani (2002) perceive such a process as a form of division of labor (expert-learner) performed under specific norms or rules of working (modeling-mirroring).

Considering the social formation of the mind, Vygotsky (1981) theoritized the social in connection with the psychological under the General Genetic Law of Cultural Development. As Vygotsky (1981) explains it:

Any function in the child’s cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First, it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. This is equally true with regard to voluntary attention, logical memory, and formation of concepts, and the development of volition. We may consider this position as a law in the sense of word, but it goes without saying that internalization transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions. Social relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships. (p.163).

The theory brings the social and the individual together within the ZPD setting. In this setting, the speech is considered as a psychological tool which has a mediational function that enables the historical transition from natural to culturally mediated forms of behavior (Hung and Nichani, 2002). These forms of behavior have their roots in social interaction where more than one individual is involved through using their speech as a psychological tool. The process of transition starts when “the individual participated in social activity mediated by speech, by psychological tools that others use to influence his or her behavior and that he or she uses to influence the behavior of others. Subsequently, the individual begins to apply to himself the same forms of behavior that were initially applied to him by others” (Hung & Nichani, 2002, p.173). As a result, meanings, tools, and goals relate the individual and the social world where all formed in the sociocultural context (Hung & Nichani, 2002).

The concept of ZPD has various implications for classroom teaching. Ohta (2005), for instance, has adapted ZPD definition to suit adult second language developmental context. He defines it as; “The ZPD is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by individual linguistic production and the level of potential development as determined through language produced collaboratively with a teacher or peer” (p.9). Among the many advantages it brings to the language teaching classroom, ZPD may also support developing language proficiency in out-of-classroom learning settings: such as practicing with exchange partners, at conversation tables, or at more advanced levels, by using the second language to talk to friends and colleagues.

Vygotsky (1978) states: "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals." (p57). In the context of teacher training, the implication of ZPD, as Huitt (2003) suggests, is that teachers should be provided with a learning environment where they can interact with each other (i.e. the interpsychological process) and then internalize these interaction (i.e. the intrapsychological process). Here, they should be assisted with more experienced teachers who are ready to support and coach teachers' development.

The suggested internalizing process at cognitive level is dealt with in detail in the following section.

2.2.3 Situated Cognition

Situated learning theory is not entirely new. It goes back to John Dewey's ideas which state that learning develops from experience and social interaction. Lave and Wenger (1991) have further developed Dewey's ideas and defined learning as the acquisition of certain forms of knowledge, placed in specific social relationships – situations of co-participation. For Lave (1996), learning is the function of the activity, context and culture in which it occurs; that is, it is situated. Lave (1996) contrasts this type of learning with traditional classroom activities which involve knowledge often presented in an abstract form and out of context. Social interaction is a critical component of situated learning. Learners become involved in a 'community of practice' embodying certain beliefs and behaviors to be acquired. As beginners move from the periphery of this community to its center, they become more active and engaged within the culture and assume the role of expert or 'old timer' (Lave, 1996).

In classical theories, learning takes place in the individual mind which acquires mastery over processes of reasoning and description, by internalizing and manipulating structures. On the contrary, Lave and Wenger (1991) locate learning in the processes of co-participation, rather than individual's mind. For them "learning is mediated by the differences of perspectives among the co-participants. It is the community, or at least those participating in the learning context, who 'learn' under this definition. "Learning is, as it was, distributed among co-participants, not a one – person act" (p. 15). According to classical structural analysis, aspects of behavior are explained by preexisting, 'underlying' systems. Here, understanding is viewed as coming down to recognizing and implementing instances of structure, filling them in with an overlay of situational particulars, and relating them to a 'context' (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Understanding is an individual action, involving the mental representations of the individual and arises out of the mental operations of a subject on objective structures. However, for Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory, learning is not located in the acquisition of structure, but in the increased access of learners to participating roles in expert performances. They view learning as a special type of social practice. As McDermott (in Smith, 1999) puts it:

- *Learning is in the relationship between people:*

Learning traditionally gets measured as on the assumption that it is a possession of individuals that can be found inside their heads. Learning is in the relationship between people. Learning is in the conditions that bring people together and organize a point of contact that allows for particular pieces of information to take relevance. Without the points of contact, without the system of relevancy, there is no learning, and there is little memory. Learning does not belong to individual persons, but to the various conversations of which they are a part.

- *Educators work so that people can become participants in communities of practice:*

They need to explore with people in communities how all may participate to the full. There is a strong link here with the long – standing concern among informal educator for association.

- *There is an intimate connection between knowledge and activity:*

Learning is a part of daily living. Problem solving and learning from experience become central processes. (p.2-3).

According to situated learning theory, as Clancey (1995) explains, every idea and human action is a generalization which is adopted to the ongoing environment since what people see and do arise together. Thus, thinking is physical skill. As people create names for things, shuffle around sentences in a paragraph, and interpret what any statement means, every step is controlled not by reinstantiated grammars or previously constructed plans, but adaptively reCOORDINATED from previous ways of seeing, talking and moving. In other words, the theory claims that knowledge is not a thing or set of description or collection of facts and rules. Rather, human knowledge is a capacity to coordinate and sequence behavior and to adapt dynamically to changing circumstances. “Because knowledge is not a thing or set of descriptions, we do not learn by transferring facts and rules from one head to another. Understanding how *learning is a process of conceiving an activity*, and activities are inherently social, puts emphasis on improving learning addressing issues of membership, participation in a community, and identity” (Clancey, 1995, p. 50).

Since it considers the social aspect of learning as crucial, Lave and Wenger's (1991) idea of learning in communities of practice (also referred as community of learners) has received a great deal of interest. The following section gives information about this theory in detail.

2.2.4 Communities of Practice

The idea that learning involves an in-depth process of participation in a community of practice, has gained significant ground in a wide range of fields in recent years. Smith (2003) states that we are generally involved in a number of communities of practice – whether at work, school, home or civic interests. In some groups we are core members, in others we are more at the margins. In all these groups, we interact with each other and with the world turning our relations accordingly. That is, we learn. For Wenger (1999) the characteristics of such communities of practice vary. While some may have names, some may not. They can be formal organizations, or informal. However they are, members are brought together by joining in common activities and by “what they have learned through their mutual engagement in these activities” (p.57). The only characteristic which is common to all types of communities of practice is its involving a shared practice. Wenger (1999) puts forward three dimensions to define a community of practice: First, as the answer to the question of what it is about: its joint enterprise as understood and continually renegotiated by its members. Second, he explains how it functions as the mutual engagement that binds members together into a social entity. Third, the capability it has produced is the shared repertoire of communal resources (routines, sensibilities, artifacts, vocabulary, styles, etc.) that members have developed over time.

For Lave and Wenger (1991), a community of practice involves much more than the technical knowledge or skill associated with undertaking some task. Members are involved in a set of relationships over time and communities develop around things that matter to people. “For a community of practice to function, it needs to generate and appropriate a shared repertoire of ideas, commitments and memories. It also needs to develop various resources such as tool, documents, routines, vocabulary, and symbols that in some way carry the accumulated knowledge of the community” (Smith, 2003, p.3). Smith (1999) also emphasizes the importance of identity, learning to speak, act and improvise in ways that make sense in the community. He contrasts this way of thinking with learning as internalization: “Learning as increasing participation in communities of

practice concerns the whole person acting in the world. The focus is on the ways in which learning is an evolving, continuously renewed set of relations” (p.2).

Clancey (1995) identifies learning according to the theory of situated cognition as being constantly integrated with the individual’s identity and participation, the production of persons-in-activity. Learning constitutes an evolving membership and capability to participate in different forms of activities by being the means of reproduction and development of communities of practice. As Clancey (1995) interprets, the strongest effect is not in “how to teach” but in “how to change” a social system. Formal education that teaches theory more effectively is not sufficient. Instead change must be understood within the trends and resources available for the activity.

The application of community of practice to any learning setting brings a number of strengths “in terms of: a) authentic goal directed activities, b) access to guidance -both close assistance from experts and distant observing and listening to other workers and the physical environment-, and c) everyday engagement in problem solving which leads to indexing and internal reinforcement” (Hung and Nichani, 2002, p.199). Hung and Nichani (2002) have listed the characteristics of communities of practice that educators can bring into classroom:

1. Work and learning are social activities.
2. The knowledge that gets passed around in these communities is not limited to the sort of explicit information that can be catalogued in curriculum materials. Quite often, it takes the form of implicit or tacit knowledge.
3. Much of the expertise one seeks to develop in a group of learners usually resides in some or all of the group members themselves. The way to find out what is worth teaching is to study master performers.
4. Collaboration between experts and students can be an on-going process where knowledge construction can be fostered. There should be opportunities for students to model the actions of the practitioners in the context of real activity structures in the communities of practices.
5. Learners should participate in doing tasks mediated by artifacts similar to those of used by practitioner or mature individuals within the community of practice.
6. Students should work together in small groups to solve authentic problems in project collaboration with other students and more capable individuals where interactions and transactions within stipulated zones of proximal development can be established.

Teachers are models, coaches or facilitators to the different groups of students, pointing them to the appropriate directions, questioning their formulations, and resolving their conflicts within the context of their transactions. (p.181).

Clancey (1995) presents the analytic framework of the community of practice: “*Knowledge* is ability to participate in a community of practice. *Learning* is becoming a member of a community of practice. *Tools* facilitate interaction in a community of practice” (p.53). For Clancey (1995), community of practice is a way of describing any group of people who work together to accomplish some activity, usually involving some collaboration between individuals with different roles and experience.

In sum, situated learning theory from the Vygotskian view perceives learning as developing an individual awareness unique to the individual’s own experiences, yet common to the community, through dialectical movements beginning from the processes of giving and receiving knowledge in the social, which is called ‘community of practice’. It is the prime context within which we work out common sense through mutual engagement and produce practice through negotiation of meaning as a recovery process with the constant potential for continuing, rediscovery or reproducing the old in the new (Hung and Nichani, 2002). The following section deals with how communities of practice as framework are used in the fields of professional development.

2.2.5 Communities of Practice in Professional Development

The notion community of practice has been used to analyze learning and development both at the individual and at the collective level. Its origins lies in the dialectical relation of individual and collective, which, in a sense, is consistent with Vygotsky’s dual historical perspective that demands explaining the mediation of individual life by society (Roth and Lee, 2006). According to dialectic philosophy “human nature is not an abstraction inherent in each single individual; in reality, it is ensemble of societal relations” (Marks and Engels, 1878 in Roth and Lee, 2006, p.30). For them, a society consists of overlapping communities in which the individual becomes an individual and social subject by relating to and in union. With increased production, development of social relations, divisions of labor, the individual has become a partial function in the collective production of conditions.

Considering today’s learning and teaching contexts, there have been many adaptations of the concept of community of practice (e.g. Lave and Wenger, 1991; Salomon, 1993; Wilson, 1996). The aim is to provide learning situations where learners

work collaboratively together on authentic problems by interacting and exchanging ideas. “This view emphasizes the significance of a communication environment: the aim is to create the kind of a community of learners that enhances the construction of new knowledge and skills instead of just trying to manage already acquired knowledge” (Jarvela and Niemivirta, 1999, p.59). The motive underlying situated learning idea in communities of practice is to enable the individual apply his/her knowledge to situations outside the school in authentic and complex contexts.

Hung and Der-Thanq (2001) propose four principles that undergird communities of practice and Vygotskian thought. These are:

- 1- *Situatedness*: When learning is embedded in rich situations and social constructive acts where meanings can be made sense in the contexts of application and use, learners pick up both implicit and explicit knowledge (Brown and Duguid, 1991).
- 2- *Commonality*: It is important to have a valid reason for participants to work together in a way that makes sense to them – such as shared interests and problems that require joint effort. It also includes a common set of genres, signs, tools, and speech acts understood by members in the community (Lave and Wenger, 1991).
- 3- *Interdependency*: Participants can interact based on varied needs, expertise (knowledge and skills), perspectives, and opinions. Thus, the structure in a community should leverage on different demands of the participants in the community.
- 4- *Infrastructure*: In sustaining and vibrant communities, there is a need for a supporting infrastructure where participants are clear as to the processes in engaging in any activity. Such a structure enables participants to be structurally dependent on each other. (Hung and Der-Thanq, 2001, p. 7).

In their study, Hung and Der-Thanq (2001) used such community-oriented web-based e-learning environments to illustrate the learning principles mentioned above. These principles are parallel to the principles of the collaborative learning model proposed in this study. Their relevance is discussed in the next section.

Similarly, the study conducted by Richardson (1999) aimed to explore the nature of professional knowledge and the process of professional learning through an

integration of theory with practice in the workplace. As a result of her study, Richardson (1999) has identified important influences of situated cognition and situated learning on physiotherapy practice. “The important day-to-day and minute-to-minute social exchanges in the workplace mould physiotherapy practitioners towards an acceptance of certain values and assumptions” (p.469). She schematizes situated learning within community of practice as shown in Figure 1.:

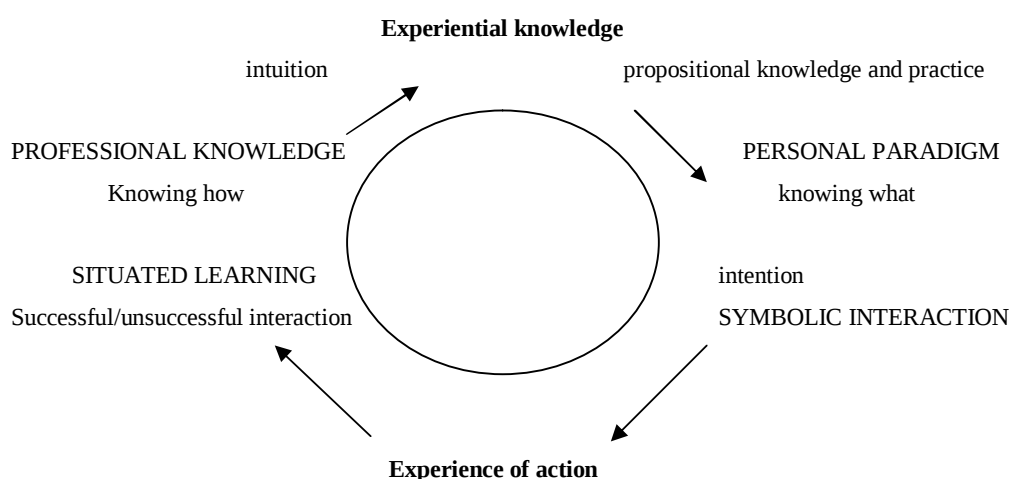


Figure 2.3. Wheel of Professional Development adapted from Richardson (1999)

Richardson (1999) recommends educators to use situated learning principles to enable learners acquire knowledge through repeated and recurrent experiences which contain rich contextual clues for professional action. For her, guided participation to appreciate the contextual detail of events can provide the scaffolding cues. “Ensuring a ‘situated cognition’ of the important features of healthcare events and the task of physiotherapy within them will help students to differentiate the sources of professional knowledge and to realize that the processes which naturally underpin development of their own professional knowledge are the same in all settings” (Richardson, 1999, p.473).

2.2.6 Communities of Practice in Teacher Education

Regarding teacher development context, situated learning approaches have recently gained popularity both in literature and in practice. In contrast to behavioral and cognitive approaches, situated approaches consider teacher development as building on the personal and the professional meanings that teachers develop in their work (Sawyer, 2002). It views knowledge as an inseparable phenomenon from the contexts and activities in which it is developed. As Sawyer (2002) indicates:

As teachers work together, their interactions focused on instruction with a problem orientation and grounded in the specific contexts of the classroom increase the likelihood of teacher learning and classroom improvement. Contexts important to situated teacher development also include the teacher's class and students, her personal narrative (beliefs, history, expectations), her questions about practice, relationship(s) with her subject matter, interactions with peers and administrators, opportunities for the growth of new perspectives, and interactions with the broader policy context. (p.735).

As a result of these situated interactions, teachers develop a grounded knowledge which includes personal system of knowledge, skills, attitudes about work and building of a subjective educational theory. Through the new experiences teachers gain, they can adjust their personal educational theory, which may lead to changes in their teaching practice. For Sawyer (2002), this kind of process creates an interaction between the individuals and their cultural context, creating a dynamic between teachers' subjective educational theories and histories and the complex cultural contexts they work in. This interaction is crucial in that teachers generally work in their individual classrooms isolated from the rest of the community, and thus, they are not able to interact with their peers, share knowledge and reflect on issues related to their work. Enabling teachers work meaningfully with other members of the community can lead to development of social networks that promote learning. Sawyer (2002) characterizes this type of learning as distributed knowledge "in which thinking, knowing, and learning are distributed across people and their environments" (p.735). In such a network, teachers share expertise and have the opportunity to gain new knowledge and critique their existing knowledge. During this process, collaboration supports teachers' internalization of new

meanings via the use of common language and development of new perspectives and habits of reflection which often arises in collaboration with others before becoming internalized (Sawyer, 2002).

Brown et al. (1989), have further developed the situated learning theory including the idea of cognitive apprenticeship. Emphasizing the need for a new epistemology for learning which includes active perception over concepts and representations, they view learning as a part of an authentic activity as similar to developing skills on the job. “Cognitive apprenticeship supports learning in a domain by enabling students to acquire, develop and use cognitive tools in authentic domain activity. Learning, both outside and inside school, advances through collaborative social interaction and the social construction of knowledge” (Brown et al., 1989, p.39). For them, learning is indistinct from acting since it is a continuous life-long process resulting from acting in situations. The tools used in learning help learners to build a rich implicit understanding of the world. Because tools and the way they are used reflect the particular accumulated in sights of communities, it is not possible to use a tool appropriately without understanding the community or culture in which it is used.

Atkinson (1997) outlines that “cognitive apprenticeship is based on the notion that all significant human activity is highly situated in real-world contexts- and that complex cognitive skills are therefore ultimately learned in high-context, inherently motivating situations in which the skills themselves are organically bound up with the activity being learned and its community of expert users” (p.118).

Considering instructional models based on cognitive apprenticeship, Atkinson (1997) refers to three main steps: modeling, coaching, and fading. Here, modeling includes early repetitive demonstration of complex, holistic, and goal-centered activities which are not decontextualized or broken-down for ease of learning and teaching, but situated in their actual contexts of use. In short, modeling is model-based input by trainees. Coaching is trainees’ experiences of teaching practice. It includes teachers’ or peers’ active monitoring. Fading, as the final step, involves the process where overt modeling replaced by analysis of the perceived needs of increasingly independent trainees in their teaching practice. It concerns the gradual discontinuation of expert guidance as the student-apprentice internalizes the skills and norms of knowledgeable performance (Hockly, 2000).

Collins, Brown and Newman (1989) explains this sequence of activities as follows:

... the apprentice repeatedly observes the master executing (or modeling) the target process, which usually involves some different but interrelated subskills. The apprentice then attempts to execute the process with guidance and help from the master (i.e. coaching). A key aspect of coaching is the provision of scaffolding, which is the support, in the form of reminders and help, which the apprentice requires to approximate the execution of the entire composite of skills. Once the learner has a grasp of the target skill, the master reduces (or fades) his participation, providing only limited hints refinement, and feedback to the learner who practices by successively approximating smooth execution of the whole skill. (p.456)

In teacher training context, cognitive apprenticeship requires expert teachers to model and guide novice teachers, which in a sense is similar to the training scheme in behavioristic approach. The input comes from outsider and the trainee is expected to internalize this outside input and establish new teaching behaviours accordingly (Hockly, 2000). However, as it is discussed in the previous sections, such a scheme of teacher training is not satisfactory in fulfilling the necessary skills and competencies that teachers need. This led the researchers to search for broader views to teacher training schemes.

For example, Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger and Beckingham (2004) advocate more collaborative in-service professional development models against traditional models which include top-down approach to transfer knowledge to be translated into action. They criticize traditional behaviorist and cognitivist models as being expert-driven and designed to convey procedural skills. However, for them, teaching is an intellectual activity that requires complex, contextualized decision-making. Thus, teachers should be supported to work in collaborative groups to reconstruct their professional knowledge. Butler et al. (2004) describe the system of such a group as follows:

Groups of teachers and/or researchers work together locally, within schools, or peripherally, for example, in meeting separate from immediate practice, to develop new ways of teaching. Individually or

collectively, teachers try out new ideas in classrooms and monitor the success of their efforts. They come together to review their instruction, talk about outcomes, and critically reflect on their teaching. Over time, within collaborative problem-solving groups, teachers develop a shared language for talking about teaching and co-construct knowledge within a discourse community. (p.437).

For them, such a process will enable pre-service or in-service teachers to take on partial but meaningful roles in schools on the way to becoming full participants while constructing knowledgeable skill through reflection-on-action (as termed by Schön, 1987). Especially the new comer teachers are likely to become motivated to shape their learning processes. The notion underlying this type of professional learning is parallel to the theory of LPP developed by Lave and Wenger (1991), which is discussed in the following section.

2.2.7 Legitimate Peripheral Participation

Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest LPP as the key feature of practice in many learning activities. They illustrate their theory on observations of five different apprenticeships: Yucatec midwives, Var and Gola tailors, Navy quartermasters, butchers, and reformed alcoholics in Alcoholics Anonymous. In each of them, people must first join communities and learn at the periphery. As they become more competent, they move more to the center of the particular community. Therefore, learning is seen as a process of social participation. And the nature of the situation has a significant effect on the process.

Learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and ... the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community. "Legitimate Peripheral Participation" provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and oldtimers, and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice. This social process, includes, indeed it

subsumes, the learning of knowledgeable skills (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.29).

Viewing learning as an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice, they characterize it as legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice. For them, LPP is an analytical viewpoint on learning, a way of understanding learning. It is not a pedagogical strategy or a teaching technique. They explain each item in the rubric as:

The form that the legitimacy of participation takes is a defining characteristic of ways of belonging, and is therefore not only a crucial condition for learning, but a constitutive element of its content. Similarly, with regard to ‘peripherality’ there may well be no such simple thing as ‘central participation’ in a community of practice. Peripherality suggests that there are multiple, varied, more- or less-engaged and inclusive ways of being located in the fields of participation defined by a community. Peripheral participation is about being located in the social world (p.35-6).

In short, it is legitimate because all parties accept the position of unqualified people as potential members of the community of practice. It is peripheral because learners move from outside to the inside of the community. It involves participation because it is through doing knowledge that learners acquire it. Knowledge is situated within practices of the community of practice, rather than something which exists out there in books. The model rejects the separation of training and learning from practice and suggests distortion of knowledge within a curriculum graded from easy to difficult training is inimical to learning. Instead of changing the person, the model emphasizes the importance of engaging learners in practice via circulation of information among peers (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), it is not so much that learners acquire structures or models to understand the world; but they participate in frameworks that have structure. So, the question should be what kinds of social engagements provide the proper context for learning to take place. Learning involves participation in a community of practice. Participation “refers not just to local events of engagement in

certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the *practices* of social communities and constructing *identities* in relation to these communities” (Wenger, 1999). As Owen (2000) puts it, Lave and Wenger’s model of community of practice of LPP provides a framework for considering the continuing professional development of teachers and the initial professional development of teachers in a ‘reflective environment’ which is focused on practice. Continued experience and reflexive action also foster professional development. Teacher education, which is a matter of life-long learning, should encompass such a view (Owen, 2000).

Owen (2000) talks about the need to support communities of practice and LPP with new approaches supported by technology. He mentions about the REM project which was a Telematics Application Program Project of the European Commission DGXIII from 1996 to 1999. The project developed a learning environment which supports collaborative and constructive learning. It involved real tasks with other learners across the Internet. The characteristics of the forms of learning were solving real group identified problems based on evidence of existing good practice, learning in a situated and professional context, learning through conversation, using technology which provided synchronous interaction, and involving collaboration with others (Owen, 2000).

The results of the application of the project in postgraduate initial teacher training courses implicate that a course design needs to be placed in both the social and cultural context of the learner and the host institution. And the discourse between the learners, tutors, and other actors should be put at the centre of the design process (Owen, 2000). Support for reflection, developing alternatives, conceptualization, experimentation and experience is also needed. Therefore, he suggests that a situated vision of professional development around the development of communities of practice should be supported in any learning environment.

This way of approaching learning is something more than simply learning by doing or experiential learning. LPP involves being full participants in the world and in generating meaning. As Lave and Wenger (1991) put it, “for newcomers, the purpose is not to learn *from* talk as a substitute for legitimate peripheral participation; it is to learn *to* talk as a key to legitimate peripheral participation” (p.109). They have explored four concepts considering any learning environment where LPP takes place: *person*, *activity*, *knowing*, and *social world*. Here, the person is viewed to be transformed into a

practitioner or from a newcomer into an old-timer “whose changing knowledge, skill, and discourse are part of a developing identity- in short, a member of a community of practice” (p.122). LPP in community of practice moving in a centripetal direction, motivated by its location in practice is motivated by participation and by newcomers’ desires to become full practitioners. Another key concept is knowing which is inherent in the growth and transformation of identities. “It is located in relations among practitioners, their practice, the artifacts of that practice, and the social organization and political economy of community of practice” (p.122). The social world as including all three concepts is dialectically constituted in social practices in the process of reproduction, transformation, and change (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Under the influence of these four concepts, Lave and Wenger (1991) summarize optimum learning:

Rather than learning by replicating the performances of others or by acquiring knowledge transmitted in instruction, we suggest that learning occurs through centripetal participation in the learning curriculum of the ambient community. Because the place of knowledge is within a community of practice, questions of learning must be addressed within the developmental cycles of that community. (p.100).

Lave and Wenger’s (1991) theory of LPP in community of practice sees learners both at micro and macro level as being in the context of their individual world and the social world they live in. The degree of participation determines the individual’s learning. Instead of abstract rule learning, the learner is involved in real situations and tries to solve the problems through interactions with others in the community and through conceptualizing and re-conceptualizing. This approach to learning has valuable implications for teacher education field in both pre- and in-service teacher training programs.

At the heart of all these implications of situated learning approaches (e.g. Communities of Practice, LPP) to teacher education, collaborative learning receives a central place. Therefore, the following section presents a detailed review of collaboration and its impacts on situated learning environments.

2.3 Collaborative Learning

The main idea underlying the collaborative learning model, as the name suggests, is to promote teacher learning via collaborating and negotiating meaning. The term collaboration is used in the sense as defined by Friend and Cook (1990) as “interpersonal collaboration is a style of direct interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal” (p.5.) From a social constructionist perspective, as learners share background knowledge and participate in collaborative and cooperative activities, they build knowledge as a group. In Vygotskian sense, collaborative learning environment which support sharing, negotiating, and constructing knowledge promote effective learning (Maddux, Johnson, and Willis, 1997).

In traditional professional development approaches, such as behavioristic or cognitivist, teaching profession is often described as highly individualistic where decision making is isolated and problem solving via collaboration with peers is limited. Teachers are expected to remain current with the evolving learning theories and to integrate research with practice (Collins, 1998). They are dependent upon input from outside experts. The assumption is that researchers convey new principles to teachers and teachers implement research findings (Butler et al., 2004). The teacher training models based on these approaches view teachers as technicians who can achieve implementation of instructional principles. These models are often comprised of expert-driven, top-down workshops which are designed to convey procedural skills (Butler et al., 2004).

In recent discussions of professional development, however, traditional approaches are criticized for their lack of impact on classroom practices (e.g. Burbank and Kauchak, 2003; Butler et al., 2004; Erickson, Brandes, Mitchell, and Mitchell, 2005). As Burbank & Kauchak (2003) summarize:

Traditional research often fails to influence classroom teachers due to its inaccessibility its lack of relevancy, and the tendency for its findings to be perceived as either inconsistent or contradictory. The majority of research provided to teachers follows a scientific model where the process of gathering evidence is based upon rigid, formal rules of science, a way of generating knowledge that many educators, including teachers, are currently questioning. (p. 500).

The passive role imposed upon teachers prevents them from participating in active interpretive processes that examine the complex contexts of classrooms. Instead, teachers are to make distinctions between formalized and practical knowledge in surface level, which has often led to false or deficient implementations (Borko and Putnam, 1998).

With the aim of finding solutions to fulfill the gap between researchers and teachers, Butler et al. (2004) investigated the relationship between teachers' learning and shifts in their professional practices. Their findings emerged out of a 2-year collaborative research partnership in which researchers and teachers worked together to situate new instructional principles within classrooms. As a result of their study, Butler et al. (2004) documented that teachers reflected on practice, constructed new knowledge about teaching and made positive instructional shifts. Nonetheless, it was also noted that introductory in-service workshops which were done in their study were not enough to effect deep-rooted changes in classroom practice. They suggested ongoing opportunities to co-construct knowledge and revise conceptual frameworks through reflection on experience.

Another study geared towards exploring the impact of collaboration between teachers and teacher educators was conducted by Erickson et al. (2005). In search for the long-term sustainability and the success of these partnerships, they also aimed to provide further insight into the maintenance of professional development communities. As a result of their longitudinal study, Erickson et al. (2005) claimed that such a collaborative partnership created a fruitful and enjoyable learning environment that yielded functional and purposeful knowledge for all of the participants. Moving from their findings, Erickson et al. (2005) outline the features that represent collaborative model of professional development:

1. The school personnel must be involved at the very beginning of the project in negotiating the nature and the structure of the group.
2. The project must meet real and existing needs of all participants.
3. There is a need to sustain collaborative inquiry over a number of years.
4. There must be strong agreement from both school and teacher educators on the purposes and any underlying theoretical perspectives of the project. It is important that all participants hold or develop a similar perspective on learning.

5. The group must meet regularly (preferably once a week) and the chair of the meetings should maintain a close liaison with both school and university participants.
6. The group membership should be voluntary and flexible, yet overall group stability is an important characteristic.
7. The participants must be aware and sensitive to the different roles that are important to nurturing and maintenance functions of collaborative groups and recognize that each participant's role may change over time.
8. There must be some provision of resources for the group although these are primarily in the area of arranging sufficient and common blocks of time to attend regular meetings (p.794).

However, these alternative collaborative teacher training models fail in assisting teachers in developing strategies for collaborative research. In this study, it is proposed that the educational community should encourage teachers to be actively involved in their own professional development. In order to achieve sustainability and increased efficiency, teachers' learning communities should involve collaborative action research (termed by Burbank & Kauchak, 2003). That is, teachers should be the decision makers in finding solutions to their contemporary classroom problems. They should act as producers of knowledge who recognize their own role in professional development. Therefore, the collaborative learning community in this study did not entail any teacher educator or an outsider expert. Instead, teachers were expected to make every decision for their own professional improvement and to make shifts according to their needs and reflections on the collaborative training process.

The following chapter introduces the collaborative learning community formed for this research and presents information about the phases carried out during collaborative learning process.

2.4 Young Language Learners

2.4.1 How Children Think and Learn

The studies on children thinking and learning go back to 1950s. Piaget (1972), mainly concerned with how children function in the environment surrounding them and its influences on their mental development, formed the conception that thought is internalized action. As continually interacting with the world around them, children have to be active and constructive in order to understand the world. As a result of this active involvement learning occurs. Thus, knowledge is not imitated or in-born, rather it is actively constructed by the child. Children are active sense-makers, constructing their own knowledge from working with objects and ideas. Activities such as play, imitation, and problem-solving triggers trigger the transition from physical to mental activity. Thought derives from action, action is internalized, or carried out mentally in the imagination, and in this way thinking develops (Cameron, 2001).

In his theory of child learning, Piaget (1972) posits that all children pass through some stages before they construct the ability to perceive, reason, and understand. Initially infants' movements are reflex responses. However, when the baby starts to use different means toward a common goal, this indicates the emergence of practical intelligence. Thus, for Piaget (1972), teaching can only influence the course of the intellectual development if the child is ready to assimilate it. The concept of 'readiness' has many implications for the design of curricula and for timing formal instruction. It entails that children be taught when they are ready to assimilate the material being taught; otherwise no transition from physical activity to mental operation occurs (Wood, 1988).

Vygotsky's (1987) theory of child learning, on the other hand, differs from Piaget's in respect to the emphasis his theory places on language and on other people in the environment of the child. It entails the role of communication, social interaction, and instruction in determining intellectual development of a child. Language, particularly, plays an important role in the formation of intelligence. "The development of the child's first language in the second year of life is held to generate a fundamental shift in cognitive development. Language provides the child with a new tool, opens up new opportunities for doing things and for organizing information through the use of words as symbols (Cameron, 2001, p.5). While Piagetian view perceives the child as an active learner alone in the world of objects, in Vygotskian view, the child is an active

learner in a world full of other people with which he or she interacts and thus learns. (Cameron, 2001).

The implication of this theory to language learning is that a teacher should try to mediate what next it is the child can learn. As the underlying theory, ZPD postulates that learning starts by interacting with an adult, then, shifts away from reliance on others to independent action and thinking. Thus, similar to parents who often know what help is needed next in their children; teachers should manage to apply this strategy in both lesson planning and in their talk to pupils.

Holding a cognitivist approach to children thinking and learning, Bruner (1986) integrates Piaget's and Vygotsky's views to form a new understanding. He emphasizes the importance both of biology and evolution on human intelligence and of the way in which language and social interaction are involved. This view for children development is grounded in the language information theory. Learning involves the search for pattern, regularity, and predictability. Instruction serves to assist children in the formation and discovery of such patterns and rules (Wood, 1988).

'Scaffolding' is the term introduced by Bruner (1986) to refer to the help given to a child by an adult, usually a talk that supports a child in carrying out an activity. It can be helpful when applied to language teaching in the notion of teachers help in tasks that children are not capable of doing yet. Cameron (2001) explain the process of scaffolding in classrooms as follows:

When they focus on some part of a task or the language they want to use, children may not be able to keep in mind the larger task or communicative aim because of limits to their attention capacity.

Between them, teacher and pupils manage the whole task, but the way in which the parts and aspects are divided up varies with age and experience. The teacher does most of the managing of joint engagement on a task (p.9).

Having looked at how children think and learn, Sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 present information about the characteristics of young learners and the implications of these characteristics for the nature of pedagogy for YLs.

2.4.2 Characteristics of Young Language Learners

From the day the children are born, they begin to acquire skills and knowledge which will equip them as an adult. They exhibit a full range of emotions and cognitive abilities to grasp meaning (Pollard, 1996).

Brumfit (1991) explains the characteristics of children when learning in general:

Young learners are only just beginning their schooling. As a group they are potentially more differentiated than secondary or adult learners, for they are closer to their varied home cultures, and new to the conformity increasingly imposed across cultural groupings by the scope. They tend to be keen and enthusiastic learners, without the inhibitions which older children sometimes bring to their schooling. Their learning can be closely linked with their development of ideas and concepts, because it is so close to their initial experience of formal schooling. They need physical movement and activity as much as stimulation for their thinking, and the closer together these can be, the better. (p. 5)

When it comes to language learning at the age of 5 or 6, young children do not come to the language classroom empty-handed. They have well-established set of instincts, skills, and characteristics that help them to learn another language (Halliwell, 1992). Halliwell (1992) identifies the skills that children bring to language learning situation as children “are already very good at interpreting meaning without necessarily understanding the individual words; already have great skills in using limited language creatively; frequently learn indirectly rather than directly; take great pleasure in finding and creating fun in what they do; have a ready imagination; above all take great delight in talking” (p. 3).

In the light of the theories postulated by researchers, educators have tried to shape methodology appropriate for TEYL. Independent of the underlying perspective (i.e. biological or social interactional) theories of child development claim that the nature of foreign language learning in childhood differs from that of adults’. Children who have an early start develop and maintain advantages in some, but not all, areas of language skills. Cameron (2001) lists the learning principles for children foreign language learning as “Children actively try to construct meaning, and need space for language growth. Language in use carries cues to meaning that may not be noticed.

Development can be seen as internalizing from social interaction. Children's foreign language learning depends on what they experience".

For many researchers and educators, children seem to be better language learners than adults (Halliwell, 1992, Pollard, 1996, Brumfit, 1991). As stated by Brumfit (1991), the main reasons are first, the brain is more adaptable before puberty than after, and that acquisition of languages is possible without self-consciousness at an early age. Also, children have fewer negative attitudes to foreign languages and cultures adults, and that consequently they are better motivated than adults. Another reason is that children's language learning is more closely integrated with real communication because it depends more on the immediate physical environment than does adult language. Since children devote vast quantities of time to language learning, compared with adults, they are better because they do more of it.

The studies conducted by many educators and researchers reveal that young learners have many other advantages in learning foreign languages. These advantages can be summarized as follows:

- 1- Young learners' affective and socio-cultural resilience makes them feel the integrative motivation more demandingly than adults who have already gone through a process of acceptance of cultural models and prejudices. In that sense, language teaching to young learners can serve as an instrument of intercultural construction if focused on the attitudinal component (Schumann, 1978; Brown, 1980; Krashen, 1982).
- 2- "Young children do not come to the language classroom empty-handed. They bring an already well-established set of instincts, skills and characteristics which will help them to learn another language" (Halliwell, 1992, p.3).
- 3- They have a ready imagination and great skill in using limited language creatively (Halliwell, 1992).
- 4- They are very good at interpreting meaning without necessarily understanding the individual words and they take great delight in talking. (Halliwell, 1992).
- 5- Younger learners may be more proficient in the long run, particularly in the area of oral communication (Krashen, 1982; Harley, 1998).
- 6- Children who begin a foreign language at an early level seem to benefit intellectually and to be more culturally aware (Freudenstein, 1990).

Nonetheless, there are also some disadvantages of young learners in language learning. Teaching foreign languages needs much more time compared to that of adults (Harley and Singleton in Brumfit, 1991). According to Scott and Ytreberg (1997), young learners seldom admit that they do not know something rather they pretend to understand, or they understand in their own terms. Also, they cannot decide for themselves what to learn; thus they are not aware of their needs. Moreover, they rely on the spoken word as well as the physical world to understand the meaning, which makes them incapable of understanding abstract concepts.

Another disadvantage stated by Scott and Ytreberg (1997) is teachers' having to include movement and plenty of audio-visual materials to provide constant motivation in children for learning. For them, children can easily lose their motivation when they are bored with the activities that do not involve any fun.

However, the notion that children are different learners than adults, requiring a specific approach to the subjects on the school curriculum, is a new one historically. Therefore, the teaching of children has been concentrated on the transmission of information, leading to a need for a broad outline of teaching foreign languages to young learners.

The research has suggested some foundations for primary language education. Freudenstein (1990), for instance, suggests that language awareness, where children develop positive attitudes toward languages in general, is more desirable in the early ages than language learning. Similarly, Brewster, Ellis & Girard (1992) make the following points: Advantage can be taken of certain aptitudes children have in order to start teaching a foreign language at primary school. Whatever else may be achieved, the main concern is to prepare the ground so that the most can be made of the teaching which will be received in primary school. Early learning of a non mother-tongue language must be integrated into other teaching in the primary school.

Similarly, Halliwell (1992) also states that teachers can help children to make the language theirs by giving priority to fostering a positive attitude towards the language they are learning. This can be done by: "basing your teaching approaches on the natural capacities and instincts children bring to the classroom; developing a positive response to languages and to language learning (attitude goals) as well as to what they learn (content goals); and making sure that you set up various forms of *real language use* as part of the *process* of learning, and not just as the intended *product*. (Halliwell, 1992, p. 9)

Most syllabuses or language programs identify two sorts of goals: content goals and attitude goals. Content goals are concerned with the elements of language and ways in which they are used (Halliwell, 1992). However, good syllabuses are not only just concerned with content, but also with another very significant aspect: attitude goals. To attain those goals, children should have pleasure and confidence in exploring language, willingness to 'have a go' and a want to communicate (Halliwell, 1992). In other words, in addition to having goals which are concerned with actual language elements, we should also have goals which relate to the kind of learning experiences we set up, the relationships, and the atmosphere of the language classroom.

Primary language work, therefore, should not lose sight of the content goals but should at the same time give clear priority to promoting the attitudes and responses like confidence and risk taking. After all, if risk taking, confidence and general goodwill towards language learning, is not established at this early stage, young learners will have difficulty in their later language learning process.

As a conclusion, teachers of young learners should be aware of the diverse characteristics of young learners compared to those of adults. Thus, a foreign language program for young learners should evolve these aspects thoroughly. And also, teachers of young learners should be equipped with teaching theories and their implications specified for young learners.

2.4.3 The Nature of Pedagogy for Young Learners

Given the basic characteristics of young learners, it may be useful to consider two models of classroom practice held to exert the greatest influence on the development of pedagogy for young learners: one is the classical English Foreign Language (EFL) practice model and the other one is the mainstream primary practice model.

EFL is characterized by a presentation and practice model, developed largely with adults and focusing on questions of language and communication. Mainstream primary practice, on the other hand, comprises a less structured conception of language, more appropriate to the educational needs of children focusing on questions of curriculum content and cognitive development (Brewster, 1991). Table 2.1 outlines these two teaching models:

Table 2.1 A Comparison of Two Methodological Models for TEYL (Adapted from Brewster, 1991).

	Classical EFL	Mainstream primary practice
Models of language and syllabus design	1 Syllabus tends to be mainly linguistic and mainly structural/functional	Syllabus is oriented to topic and concept rather than language.
	2 The model of language relies mainly on the categories of structure, function and skill, listening, speaking, reading and writing.	Skills categories are applied within topics. Language categories which might be used to set objectives within tasks are discourse, function, structure and lexis.
	3 Teaching objectives are usually framed and tasks set in terms of one or more of these categories.	Topics are selected for their potential for exploring aspects of the curriculum, e.g. maths, environmental studies. Tasks will often foster the development of study skills such as survey skills or collecting and recording data in investigations.
Models of language acquisition	4 Teacher control of the input is important. The input is dominated by an ordered sequence of language items. Spoken language is acquired by a combination of form-orientated practice (repetition) and meaning-orientated practice (communication).	The teacher creates a learning environment which facilitates language acquisition and communication. This is achieved through enquiry which generates opportunities for small group work, and teacher-pupil communication.
	5 Tasks are often shaped in order to generate discourse in which specific items determined by a syllabus are used. Listening, reading and writing skills are also acquired via a combination of form-orientated and process/communication-orientated activities.	The teacher provides contextual support (e.g. pictures, matrices) and support at different levels of language for skills development. This support aims to provide access to tasks for learners with varying levels of cognitive and linguistic ability.

Model of classroom practice	6 The work of the classroom is orientated towards language/communication practice. Oral work often takes the form of specified stages: presentation of new language, controlled practice and communicative practice, often but not necessarily in that order. Reading, writing and listening activities are often subordinated in their purpose to the linguistic/communicative orientation of oral work.	Learners explore topics through a sequence of problem-solving and research tasks. Final products and the audience for those products are important both for motivation and the learners' attention to language use. The teacher intervenes in the selection and sequencing of tasks, task design and group composition. He/She may model language, shape and correct pupils' discourse and offer support at an individual's level of language ability.
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Moving from these two pedagogic models for teacher training, there are some certain qualifications that young learner language teachers should possess. Brewster (1991) lists these as: *choose* an appropriate topic (curricular or otherwise) and derive from it a set of learning tasks which pursue subject matter and cognitive objectives appropriate to a given age group; *plan* these activities in sequence, taking into account both whole class and small group forms of organization and a variety of both language and study skills; *analyze* the language demands of these activities in terms of discourse, skills, functions, structures, lexis, pronunciation; *analyze* the language needs of the pupils using the same kinds of category; *match* these demands and needs in such a way as to pinpoint what the main language problems of the lesson are going to be; *modify* activities which may be linguistically too exacting; provide language support where necessary, for example 'scaffolding' in the form of rehearsal of useful language and strategies through judicious use of conventional controlled practice involving visuals, games, dialogues and so on; *develop* an understanding of language processes in talk, listening, reading and writing; *develop* a wide repertoire of activity types for skills work and match these to specific text types, for example recognize different text types such as narrative, description or instructions, and know which kinds of comprehension activity (sequencing, filling in a chart, labeling a picture) 'fit' the text.

In conclusion, teaching a foreign language to young learners requires different approaches and different methodology from those of adults'. This brings about the

essential point that as teachers' role has greatly expanded, a young learner teacher education program should be directed to embroder teachers with specific teaching theories and skills in TEYL. Practical applications of these skills are to employ divergent strategies for different culture, regions and even different classes. With this in mind, the present study aims to develop a training scheme for teachers who have not received such an education and in need of support to cope with the constraints in TEYL.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological considerations and the research procedure of the study. After giving information about the participant teachers, the role of the researcher as the participant observer is explained. Following this, the procedure of the application of the collaborative model and the data collection is reported. Since the research was carried out in two phases, the steps of each phase are schematized and explained. Presenting the tools utilized to collect the data, information about the data analysis is given.

3.1 Research Design

The aim of this research is to explore primary school English teachers' knowledge in TEYL and to assist them in extending their knowledge and skills through the collaborative learning model. Considering its scope and aim, the study was designed as a longitudinal case study. Following Yin (1984), the term 'case study' used in this study is defined as stated below:

"A case study is an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13).

Based on this definition, this study investigates the role of the collaborative learning model in enhancing the English teachers' awareness of TEYL. The investigation concerns their perceptions of TEYL while they are in the act of teaching. It is longitudinal as the research itself is comprised of two phases which lasted roughly eight months. Within this period, the researcher worked with three teachers of YLs with a view to specifying the effect of the collaborative learning model by employing several qualitative data collection tools.

3.1.1 Participants

Three teachers teaching grade 4 at public primary schools participated in this study. The sample was chosen on the basis of purposeful random sampling where “a small sample size is chosen for in-depth qualitative study” (Patton, 1990, p. 179). The participants were all female in their late 20s. They all worked in public primary schools in the same region, namely Yüreğir, with similar student profiles and taught English to 4th graders. They were all willing to participate and contribute to a longitudinal study. In the previous study conducted by Yıldırım and Şeker (2004), they all stated their need for further development in their profession, specifically in TEYL.

The names used in this study to refer to the participant teachers are not their real names, but pseudo names as Aslı, Bilge, and Didem. Table 3.1 displays the characteristics of the participants:

Table 3.1. The Characteristics of the Participants

Participants	Age	Gender	Graduation	Experience in Teaching	Experience in Teaching YLs
Didem	28	Female	ELT	5	3
Aslı	29	Female	Linguistics	6	3
Bilge	27	Female	English Philology	3	3

The sample was homogenous in respect to age, gender, teaching experience in general (from 3 to 6) and in respect to teaching English to YLs (all 3 years). When selecting this sample, Infrastructure Principle proposed by Hung & Der-Thanq (2001) was considered. According to this principle, in forming such communities of practice it is necessary for participants to be structurally dependent on each other to be able to support the process. They should be clear in engaging in any activity and have a motivation to go. Since the sample in this study was homogeneous in many respects, it is believed to enhance the collaboration and increase the shared interests between participants.

3.2 Data Collection Procedure

Based on the purpose and focus of the study, the research was carried out in two phases. The phases accommodated both data collection and implementation of the collaborative learning model. The first phase (see Table 3.2 below) served the purpose of raising teachers' awareness of TEYL. In this phase, the participants came together once a week and held discussions on the readings they had already done. As one of the principles proposed by Hung and Der-Thanq (2001) when working in communities of practice, Situatedness was aimed to be one of the important motives in this specific collaborative work (see p.33). As Brown and Duguid (1991) notes, when teachers can make sense of the situations that they are involved in, they will be able to pick up both implicit and explicit knowledge more easily. Therefore, in order to enable teachers work on issues relevant to their teaching practices, the reading sources concerned the topics relevant to teaching YLs such as characteristics and skills of YLs, the way they think and learn, methodology, materials and activities, and classroom management. The reading list was adapted from the materials used in the online distance teacher education course on TEYL designed and delivered by the University of Maryland, Baltimore County in 2004 (see Appendix 1 for the Reading List and Sources).

The discussions, in which the participants were supposed to share and contribute to each other's reconceptualizations of the themes relevant to TEYL, were recorded for the purpose of obtaining data about their perceptions and the existence of any potential change in these perceptions. In this phase of the research, the participants were also asked to record their experiences of such a collaborative learning process in their journals.

To inform the participants about the process they were to go through, an orientation meeting was organized at the beginning of the term. In this meeting, the participants met and talked about the teaching experiences they had in their schools. Also, the researcher negotiated the purpose and the schedule of the research, and the further steps to be taken.

Table 3.2. The First Phase of the Research

1st PHASE				
PURPOSE	ACTION	DATA COLLECTION TOOLS	DATA ACQUIRED	DATA ANALYSIS
Identifying Teachers' Initial Perceptions of TEYL	Utilizing Rep-Grid	1- Rep-Grid (prior to launching the collaborative learning sessions)	Teachers' Initial Perceptions	Rep-Grid Manual (Focus)
Raising Awareness of TEYL	Weekly Sessions of Discussions and Reflections on the Readings on TEYL	2- Audio-Recordings of Sessions	Gradual Development of Teachers' Knowledge and Potential Change in Their Perceptions	Content Analysis
		3- Journals		
Identifying Students' Opinions and Feelings about English Learning	Having Students Write Their Opinions and Feelings About Their English Lessons	Written Accounts	Students' Opinions and Feelings about English Lessons	Content Analysis and Descriptive Statistics

The second phase was practical in nature as compared to the first phase. The participants had the opportunity to put the knowledge gained in the first phase of the research into classroom practice. To do this, the participants again held weekly meetings in which they discussed such issues as to their teaching contexts as in the first phase. The nature of collaboration they were involved in is presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3. The Second Phase of the Research

2 nd PHASE				
PURPOSE	ACTION	DATA COLLECTION TOOLS	DATA ACQUIRED	DATA ANALYSIS
Enhancing the Effectiveness in Classroom Applications	1- Weekly Sessions of Brainstorming and Preparing Lesson Plans and Materials	1- Audio-Recordings of Sessions 2- Journals	1- Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Applications	Content Analysis
	2- Application in Classrooms		2- Gradual Development of Teachers' Skills in TEYL	
	3- Weekly Discussions and Reflections			
Identifying Students' Opinions and Feelings about English Learning	Having Students Write Their Opinions and Feelings About Their English Lessons	Written Accounts	Students' Opinions and Feelings about English Lessons	Content Analysis and Descriptive Statistics
Identifying Teachers' Final Perceptions of TEYL	Utilizing Rep-Grid	Rep-Grid (after completing the collaborative learning sessions)	Teachers' Final Perceptions	Rep-Grid Manual (Focus and Exchange)

In the first meeting of the second phase, the participants were informed about the procedure to be followed during the term. Also, they selected topics for common lesson plans and negotiated the methodology for applying them, the skills to be covered, and the possible materials and activities to be used (see Appendix 2 for a sample Lesson Plan). Following Hung and Der-Thanq's (2001) Interdependency Principle, one of the four principles that undergird communities of practice and Vygotskian thought (1981), the participant teachers were asked to choose their topics and activities as well as the materials in order to give them the opportunity to interact their varied needs. Moreover, as the Commonality Principle proposes (Hung & Der-Thanq, 2001), it is important to have a valid reason to work together on shared demands and problems that require joint effort (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

The second week, they came together to prepare their first common lesson. First, they developed and communicated ideas as to how to teach a particular language item in the syllabus. Then they prepared a common lesson plan to be applied in their classrooms. They worked collaboratively and decided on every step including the skills and vocabulary items to be taught, the activities to be employed and the materials to be utilized. Timing and classroom arrangement were also discussed. Deciding on the general framework of the lesson, the plan was written and a material pack for each

teacher was prepared. All the discussions were recorded in order to acquire data about the individual teacher's opinions and suggestions during the meetings.

The following week, the participants met to exchange their experiences and to express their comments about the lesson they had applied. They talked about how their lessons proceeded and reflected on their actions in the class. They were also encouraged to give feedback about their students' reactions to the lessons. In addition to the audio-recordings in the reflection meetings, participants were asked to record their own individual reflections and opinions about the lessons to their journals. The following week participants came together again to prepare the next lesson plan according to the general consensus and the feedback. The same procedure was followed for all four lesson plans. The meeting in the final week served only for teachers' comments and reflections on both the second phase and on the whole process they had gone through. They were also required to write their opinions about the whole process on their journals.

The procedure followed in the second phase and the topics chosen for the common lesson plans are presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4. The Procedure for the Second Phase

Date	Activity	Topic of the Lesson	Data Collection Tool
27.02.2006	Negotiating the procedure to be followed and the topics to be chosen for lesson applications	-	Audio-recordings
07.03.2006	Preparation of the 1 st Lesson Plan	"Parts of Our School" (There is/are Statements, Yes-No Questions)	Audio-recordings
14.03.2006	Reflecting on the 1 st Lesson	-	-Audio-recordings -Journals
21.03.2006	Preparation of the 2 nd Lesson Plan	"Where is the cat?" (Questions with 'where', prepositions: in, on, under, between)	Audio-recordings
28.03.2006	Reflecting on the 2 nd Lesson	-	-Audio-recordings -Journals
05.04.2006	Preparation of the 3 rd Lesson Plan	"The bird is small" (Teaching Adjectives, Revision of Personal Pronouns and Yes-No Questions)	Audio-recordings
12.05.2006	Reflecting on the 3 rd Lesson	-	-Audio-recordings -Journals
25.04.2006	Preparation of the 4 th Lesson Plan	"Can a bird fly?" (Teaching Ability 'can')	Audio-recordings
03.05.2006	Reflecting on the 4 th Lesson	-	-Audio-recordings -Journals
10.05.2006	Reflecting on the Whole Process	-	-Audio-recordings -Journals

3.2.1 Researcher's Role

Considering the scope of the study and its aim as to gain naturalistic data from collaborative group discussions, the researcher acted as a “participant observer”. Following Yıldırım (2001), the term ‘participant observer’ is used to refer to the role of the researcher as an insider in regard to being part of the teachers’ community and as an outsider as a researcher. This kind of data collection method compensates for ‘the circumstances of being in or around an on-going social setting for the purpose of making a qualitative analysis of that setting’ (Lofland, 1971). As for Denzin (1978), participant observation is a strategy which simultaneously combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation, and introspection.

Arguments in favor of this method imply the reliance on first-hand information, high face validity of data, and reliance on relatively simple and inexpensive methods (Jorgensen, 1993). Via this straightforward technique, the researcher is presumed to gain understanding of the participants from a deeper level. From the phenomenological perspective, Bruyn (1966, in Jorgensen, 1993) outlines that the participant observer is able to find out the meaning of the experiences of the group being studied from many different perspectives within the group. Also, through systematic observation and recordings, the data gathered by this method is empirically more valuable. Thus, it is proposed that participant observation is particularly appropriate to studies of interpersonal group processes, such as in this study.

As for objectivity principle in data collection, Erickson (1986) perceives participant observation as a method of data collection as progressive problems solving where issues of sampling, hypothesis generation and hypothesis testing procedures are operated simultaneously. Also important to this study, Erickson (1986) stresses the importance of maintaining trust between the participants and the observer by involving the participants directly in the research as collaborators. As Erickson (1986) puts it:

Knowing the ways in which the event that occurs face to face fits into the web of influences within the setting and its wider environments (including the total society in which the setting resides) can be crucially important in helping the researcher to come to an interpretive understanding of the immediately local organization of interaction within the event, or to an interpretive understanding of the significance

of the event's having happened in a particular way rather than some other possible ways. (p. 145).

Thus, on the basis of all mentioned above, the data collection procedure of this study was designed as a long-term participant observation in order to be able to gather reliable data from the collaborating English teachers of YLs and to be able to interpret the data in a closer sense to participants' perceptions and personal value commitments.

3.2.2 Data Collection Tools

Based on the purpose and the research questions of the study, the data was collected using a 'triangulated approach'. The purpose of this was to identify the impact of the collaborative learning model on enhancing the teachers' knowledge and skills in TEYL through several windows "with the strengths of one method compensating for the limitation of another" (McCarty, 1987, p.236).

The term 'triangulation' was first used by anthropologists to suggest that at least two perspectives are necessary if an accurate picture of a particular phenomenon is to be obtained (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). As for Brannen (1992), "the notion of triangulation is drawn from the idea of 'multiple operationism' which suggests that the validity of findings and the degree of confidence in them will be enhanced by the deployment of more than one approach to data collection (p.63).

This kind of data collection methodology has been used by many researchers (e.g. Yumru, 2000; Yıldırım, 2001) to enhance the credibility and the objectivity of the data and to guarantee accuracy of the research considering many different perspectives. For Allwright and Bailey (1991) collaboration with the participants of the study can ensure a variety of perspectives on the situation being investigated. Based on these assumptions and considering the nature and the purpose of the study, 'methodological triangulation' (termed by Denzin, 1978) was determined to be the data collection design. This type of triangulation refers to using different methods (e.g. analysis of transcripts, observation, self-report surveys, journals, etc.) for data collection. Parallel to this description, the data used in our study were collected through several tools which are reported in the following section. Namely, these tools are audio-recordings of weekly discussions, participants' journals, and repertory grids, and students' written accounts.

a. Repertory Grid:

The method used to elicit teachers' beliefs and opinions about teaching YLs was repertory grid analysis from George Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Psychology. This procedure was first used in psycho-therapy to research the biography structuring and guiding a person's subjective judgments on the reality of teaching. It has been widely used in teacher education as a means of accessing the implicit beliefs of student teachers (e.g. Diamond, 1991; Sendan, 1995; Hopper, 2003) and in-service teachers (Yumru, 2000; İlin, 2003). As Boeree (2006) puts it "role construct repertory test is not a test in the traditional sense at all, it is a diagnostic, self-discovery, and research tool that has actually become more famous than the rest of his [George Kelly] theory" (p.3).

Kelly's Personal Construct Psychology mainly proposes constructive alternativism theory which states that reality is subject to many alternative constructions. Thus, a person is allowed to probe the personal meaning of phenomena- the multiple meanings people can have of the same phenomenon (Hopper, 2003). However, personal constructs are not viewed as 'cognitive' but regarded in a more holistic orientation, which views behavior, thought, and emotion as the result of a process that involves the construction of meaning (Feixas and Saul, 2000).

Within this model;

- the individual creates his or her own ways of seeing the world in which he lives; the world does not create them for him,
- (s)he builds constructs and tries them on for size,
- the constructs are sometimes organized into systems, group of constructs which embody subordinate and superordinate relationships,
- the same events can often be viewed in the light of two or more systems, yet the events do not belong to any system, and
- the individual's practical systems have particular foci and limited ranges of convenience (Kelly, 1955).

The Rep-Grid was utilized to identify the teachers' perceptions of TEYL prior to their involvement in collaborative learning process, and following their involvement to specify the potential changes in their perceptions. The grid creates a basic number pattern of ordinal ratings of elements on dichotomous constructs. The elements come from a pool of elements with which participants are familiar during their experiences at

the public schools they have been working. The constructs are bipolar descriptors, which are produced by participants from comparisons of elements (i.e. different teachers).

Elicitation Procedure:

In order to help participants choose their elements, they were asked to think of nine teachers, three of whom are effective (e1, e2, e3), three who are typical (t1, t2, t3), and three who are ineffective (i1, i2, i3). Since the names of teachers representing the elements were not important for the aim of the study and since it would restrict participants' comments, they were asked to code teachers from the most effective to the least effective teachers. They were suggested to note the names down on a separate sheet of paper to help them remember while completing the grid.

Constructs which "were identified as concrete/observable teaching behaviors and/or teacher characteristics that were important and meaningful to the participants" (Sendan, 1995, p.94) were elicited one by one through randomly grouping of elements. That is, the participants were asked to choose three elements out of nine (e.g. e1, t1, i1) and mark them on the 'triads' column in their grid forms. Then, they were asked which of the two teachers were similar in terms of TEYL and which teacher differed from other two in that respect. The construct which was similar for two teachers was recorded on 'Similarity (emergent) Pole' in their forms, and the different constructs were noted on 'Contrast (implicit) Pole'. The constructs recorded on the same line to the similarity and contrast poles do not have to state totally contrasting themes. Rather, they are meant to represent the emergent and implicit constructs of the participants on the teaching behavior they state.

Following the completion of each construct line, another group of three teachers were chosen and the same procedure was employed. The researcher assisted the participants in random grouping in order for probing more constructs to emerge. This procedure was repeated until the participants could not offer any other constructs and started to repeat the constructs they had already stated.

After the element and construct elicitation processes, the participants were required to rate each element on the basis of every single construct. For this phase, the Rating Scale Method (Sendan, 1995) was used. Accordingly, the participants were supposed to rate each of the elements compared to each of the constructs using 1 to 5 rating scale as to define the position of each element in relation to each pole. In the scaling, "1" indicates the closest position to the emergent (similarity) pole, "3" the mid-

point, and “5” to the implicit (contrast) pole. The reason for having participants complete the rating scale after the element and construct elicitation processes was to minimize the complexity of the instructions given to the participants.

Following the rating phase, the participants were to rate themselves as teachers of YLs on the “self as teacher” column and their ideal teacher on the “ideal self as teacher” column on the grid form. The rating of “self” and “ideal” elements was done on the same constructs considered for other nine teachers. This phase was employed to be able to determine the participant teachers’ perceptions about themselves as a teacher in relation to the other elements they had included and also to be able to elicit their perceptions English teacher of young learner they would like to be in the future.

As the last step of completing the grid form, the participants were asked to check all the constructs they had recorded and to choose the five most important constructs among them. They were required to order them to the ‘rank-order part’ in the grid form from the most important one to the least. At this phase, participants were also allowed to make any desired modifications in the constructs.

The same procedure was employed in the second administration of the grid at the end of the year. After each administration, participants were individually interviewed. The reason for the follow-up interviews was two-fold: first to provide clarifications for any ambiguous constructs, and second, to enable them to make any modifications in their construct elicitation or rank-order scale. They were also asked to state their reasons for choosing the five constructs they had indicated as the most important ones. The second follow-up interview conducted after the second administration of the grid at the end of the year served an additional purpose. At the end of this interview, each participant was given both the first and the second grids they completed and was requested to compare them regarding the constructs included, the ratings done for self and ideal, and the constructs included to the rank order. If the participants stated that the grids were somehow different, they were asked to give their opinions about the reasons for such changes.

b. Journals:

In order to find out participant teachers’ feelings and opinions about collaborative learning process, they were asked to keep journals during both phases of the research. In this study, the term ‘journal’ is used to refer to a type of diary “... written to be read as

public documents- albeit possibly, by a restricted readership of collaborator-researchers” (Wallace, 1998, p.62).

Gaining data from participants’ journals has been a widely used data collection tool in qualitative research designs. In addition to providing reliable and an in-side look data, journals provide the research with many other advantages. As Carr and Kemmis (1986) states; “Keeping a journal helps participants to become reflexive spectators who reflect on their actions and transform their ideas and their future action in the light of reflection” (p.173). For them, keeping a journal enriches the study by providing critical perspectives and creates conditions for participants to consider their own interests. If this is done on a continuous basis, it helps the researcher find out participants’ personal accounts of observations, feelings, reactions, interpretations, reflections, hypotheses, and explanations (Elliott, 1992).

c. Audio-Recordings of Weekly Sessions:

During both phases, the participants met once a week and shared their opinions. In the first phase, they were expected to reflect on the readings they have done, whereas in the second phase, they were supposed to share their experiences from the classroom applications. These discussions were recorded and analyzed to explore the gradual effect of collaborative learning on participants’ perceptions and classroom applications.

d. Students’ Written Accounts:

At the end of two phases of the research, the students of participant teachers were asked to write their opinions and feelings about English lessons and their teachers. The same procedure was followed for the students whose teachers were not involved in the collaborative process, and the results were compared. The non-participant teachers also delivered the same topics in their English lessons as the participant teachers. The main aim here was to shed light on the possible differences in the attitudes of students from both groups toward English teachers and lessons.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data gathered from Repertory Grids was analyzed utilizing Focus and Exchange analyses of the Repertory Grid computer program package (Rep-Grid Manual, 1993). FOCUS analysis provided the relationship among the constructs and the elements recorded on the grid. At the end of these analyses, the obtained constructs of the

participants were sorted out into a linear order in such a way that the closest constructs were grouped together and hierarchically arranged. As a result of analysis, if constructs are linked at 80 % cut off point, this indicates that the participant perceives a connection between the constructs in either synergistic or negating fashion. In case of two constructs are linked, this forms a pair. When more than two constructs are linked then we have a cluster. The match level between or among constructs can be loose or strong depending on the ratings of the participant. The higher the match level is, the stronger is the connection between the constructs. Exchange analysis, on the other hand, displayed only the same constructs in the first and second grids with the implication of the differences in their ratings. This allowed us to find if the participant had only different constructs at the end of the year or the same constructs with different ratings. Displaying the element links, Exchange analysis showed the links among the elements indicating the place of self and ideal. This gave the researcher the chance of comparing the positions of self and ideal elements in the groupings done in both grids.

The journals were thought to provide data as to the participants' opinions about collaborative learning as well as any potential change in their perceptions of TEYL. The exploratory data acquired from the journals were thought to supplement the data provided from Rep-Grid and the audio recordings of discussions. To analyze the data gathered from participant teachers' weekly discussions and journals, content analysis was conducted to specify emergent patterns and themes relevant to participants' conceptualization of TEYL. Content analysis is a technique that can be used to analyze qualitative data. The coding and clustering method used in this specific study to make sense of the data collected was the one described by Miles and Huberman (1994). For Miles and Huberman (1994) this technique is analyzing a set of field notes to "dissect them meaningfully while keeping the relations between the parts intact" (p.16). Here, the researcher codes the data by marking chunks of the text with similar topics or information with the same label. He or she chooses some representative words or phrases while coding. Then, these codes are clustered in order to sort the information effectively.

As for the students' written accounts, the data analysis involved descriptive statistics. The frequencies of the students' responses from both groups were calculated separately to be able to compare the results. The responses given to each question are presented in a separate table in the following chapter.

The next chapter displays the results of the data gathered. In the first section, the results for each participant are presented. Following three cases, the analysis of the

participant teachers' opinions on collaborative learning experience they had is presented. The last section of the chapter comprises the analysis of the students' attitudes toward learning English.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analyses of the data gathered from the Rep-grids, interviews, journals, and student accounts. The data gathered from the Repertory Grids was analyzed utilizing the Focus and Exchange analyses of the Repertory Grid computer program package (Rep-Grid Manual, 1993). The data gathered from participant teachers' weekly discussions and journals was analyzed using content analysis conducted so as to specify emergent patterns and themes relevant to the participants' conceptualization of TEYL. The last two sections cover the results of the participants' views on collaboration and students' attitudes toward English learning and their teachers. The frequencies of the students' responses in written accounts were calculated using descriptive statistics. The findings are discussed in relation to their relevancy to the aim of the study.

4.1 Case 1: Aslı

Aslı is an English Language teacher working at public primary school in the Yüreğir district in Adana. She has a degree in Linguistics. She had not taken any specific training for teaching YLs before her involvement in this study. In spite of her six-year experience in EFL with teenagers and three-year experience with YLs, she expressed that she had many problems in teaching YLs and participated in the study voluntarily.

The school she worked is Efendi Halil State Primary School in Yüreğir. The school has 24 classrooms, with approximately 35 students in each. There is no language teaching laboratory or any other facility for language teaching in the school. The materials that English teachers used consisted only an overhead projector and two tape-recorders. The students were generally from families in middle and lower socio-economic levels. Most of them did not have any opportunity to take any courses outside the school regarding language learning. The other English teacher working in the same

school was graduate of ELT department. She also did not have any specific education for teaching YLs.

4.1.1 The Content and Structure of Aslı's Personal Theories at the Beginning of the Study

The FOCUS analysis of Aslı's grid at the beginning of the collaborative training process displays 13 constructs and 11 elements. Figure 1. shows the links formed at 80 % cut-off points.

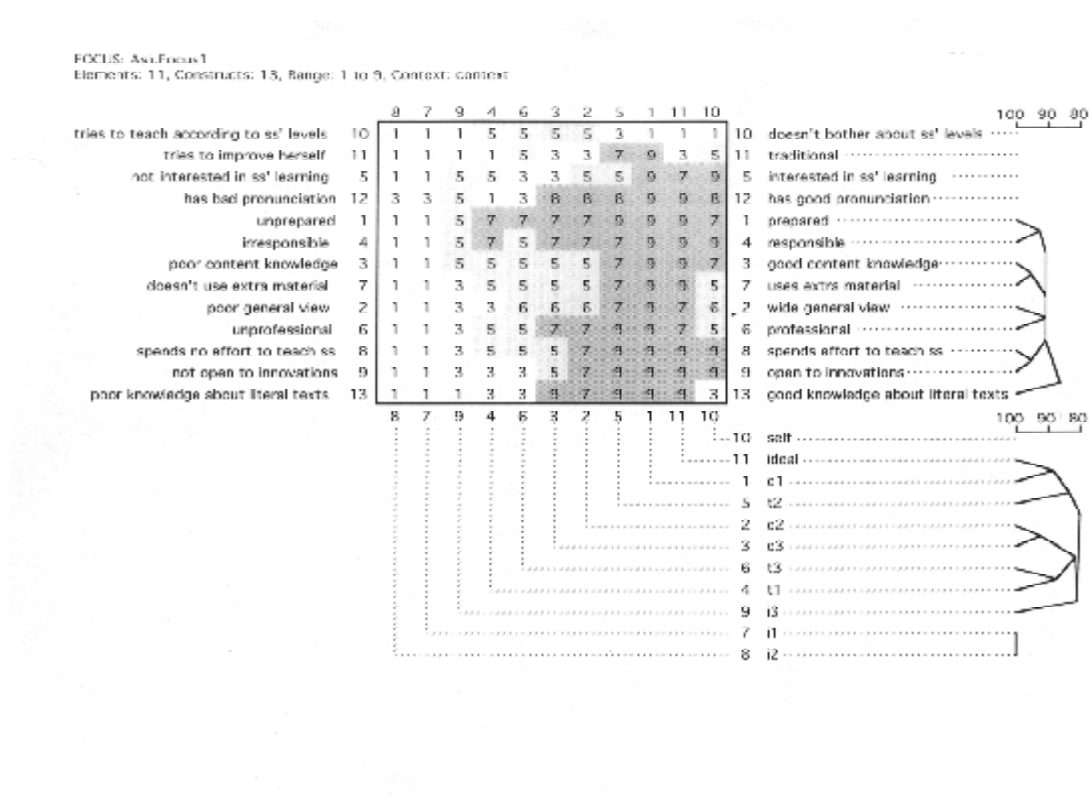


Figure 4.1. Aslı's 1st FOCUS Grid

Construct Links

The analysis of Aslı's grid reveals a large cluster consisting of four pairs and a single construct and four isolated constructs with 11 elements and 13 constructs in total. *Prepared* (C1) and *responsible* (C4) form a pair at 93 % match level. This shows Aslı believes that if a teacher of YLs is responsible, s/he will also be prepared.

Good content knowledge (C3) and *uses extra material* (C7) constitute a pair at 95 % match level and are subordinated by *wide general view* (C2) at 94 % match level.

Here, having good content knowledge necessitates using extra materials; and having these two characteristics depends on having wide general view. In her follow-up interview after the first application of Rep Grid, she has explained the reason for its importance:

Extract 4.1.

A teacher should have a wide general world view because in our lessons we sometimes need to make some explanations about the topic we are talking about to make students interested. So, we can use all the information we have about, let's say, food, plants, places, or even politics. By the help of this general knowledge, a teacher can easily differentiate among topics, too. (1st Phase / 1st Follow-up Interview).

Another pair is formed by constructs *spends effort to teach Ss* (C8) and *open to innovations* (C9) at 95 % match level. This pair is subordinated by *professional* (C6) with association at 91 % match level. Again here, Aslı thinks that if a teacher *spends effort to teach his/her students*, s/he is *open to innovations*, which both correspond to be a professional. *Good knowledge about literal texts* (C13) superordinates these three constructs at 85 % match level. So, having all these three characteristics, YLs teacher also *has good knowledge about literal texts*. The relationship that Aslı has attached to these four constructs is interesting, because for her, YLs teacher is *open to innovations* and *spends effort to teach his/her students* provided that s/he has *good knowledge about literal texts*. *Doesn't bother about Ss' levels* (C10), *traditional* (C11), *interested in Ss' learning* (C5), and *has good pronunciation* (C12) are the isolated constructs at this level (80 % cut-off point). This shows that Aslı had not attached any meaning to these constructs although she stated them as distinguishing properties of an effective YLs English teacher. However, later in her follow-up interview, she explained the reason for the need for good pronunciation:

Extract 4.2:

Our students take us as models in every aspect. Especially children are very fast at imitating. So, if a teacher has bad pronunciation, his or her students will imitate that bad pronunciation, too. (1st Phase / 1st Follow-up Interview).

This extract shows that Aslı was aware of the effect of teachers especially for YLs. Also, she identified young learners as fast imitators. Lobo (2003) also states that YLs are able to pick up new sounds accurately since they are great imitators. While in further stages, learners have great difficulty in producing the sounds that do not exist in their first language, children find pleasure in repeating sentences, words and in imitating sounds. Thus, it is highly advisable that teaching to YLs take this issue into account (Lobo, 2003). However, since it is isolated, this construct may indicate that she was not still able to form a clear basis for this assumption and related it to other teaching behaviors.

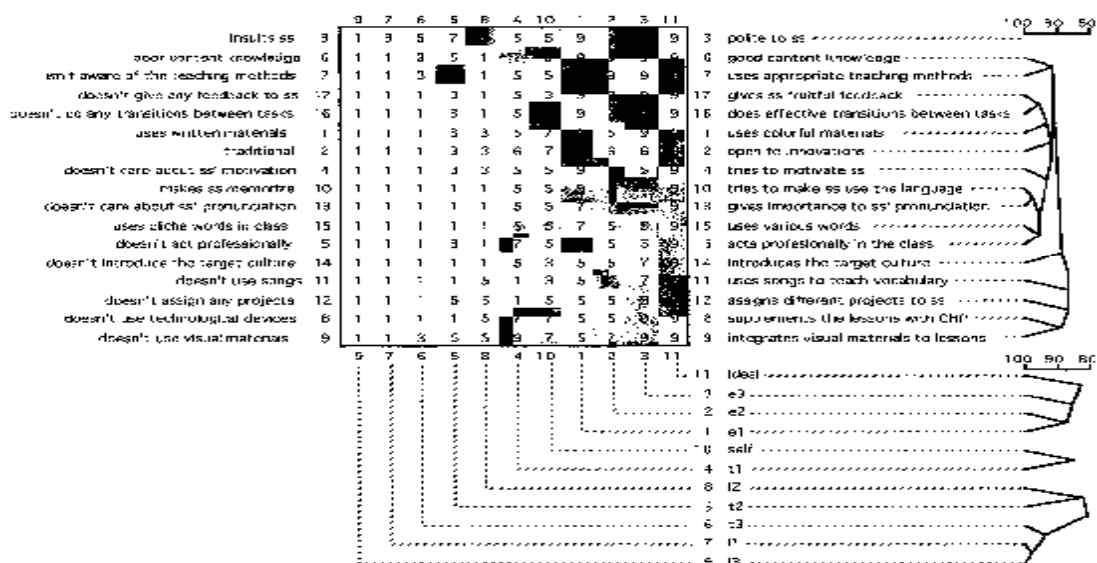
Element Links

In the element links, e1 and Ideal form a pair at 89 % match level. t2 subordinates this pair at 83 % match level. This indicates that according to Aslı e1 is very close to ideal young learner teacher; however, t2 is not as typical, but it is closer to ideal teacher than the others. e2 and e3 constitute another cluster at 94 % match level. This means that for Aslı, these two teachers are very similar. t3 and t1, forming another pair with 90 % match level, and are related to the second pair. i1 and i2 are identical teachers for Aslı since they form a pair at 100 % match level. i3 is separated from the other teachers; yet s/he subordinates i1 and i2 at 75 % match level. So, we can accept that i3 is not as ineffective as other two teachers. Self is seen as separated from the rest of teachers. Aslı views herself as closer to ineffective teachers, since Self subordinates the last cluster at 72 % match level.

The element links of Aslı's grid shows that she did not have a clear view of effective, typical, and ineffective teachers. In general, the results may lead us to think that Aslı did not think that she was an effective young learner teacher, but she could not place herself close to any specific group of teachers.

4.1.2 The Content and Structure of Aslı's Personal Theories at the End of the Study

Aslı's grid at the end of the year comprises 17 constructs and 11 elements. The FOCUS analysis illustrated in Figure 2 displays the construct and element trees drawn at 80 % cut-off point.



Construct Links

According to the FOCUS analysis of Aslı's second grid, there are two clusters and a pair attached to the larger cluster. The pair at the top of the grid consists of two constructs, *good content knowledge* (C6) and *uses appropriate teaching methods* (C7) associated at 90 % match level. Both of the constructs were also rank ordered among her five important constructs. So, for Aslı, having a good content knowledge brings along with the skill of using appropriate teaching methods. In her first grid, she had associated having good content knowledge with using extra materials and with having wide general view. This reveals that Aslı has not changed the construct itself (C6), but has associated it with another construct (C7), which is more related to young learner language teaching practice. This result is the indication of a structural change that Aslı has gone through during the learning process. In the weekly meetings, she has mentioned about children's desire to be always active in class. Slattery and Willis (2001) advise YLs teachers to get advantage of this feature by applying Total Physical Response (TPR) technique. They describe TPR as the technique in which children listen and follow a whole sequence of instructions, doing what teacher says. It is also a good way of using English communicatively in class. While the teacher tells students what to do by using clear pronunciation, natural intonation and gestures where necessary,

children enjoy doing the actions after listening carefully to the instructions. While acting, children understand because the movement and language are associated (Slattery & Willis, 2001).

The first cluster is a tight cluster related to the high association level among the constructs and comprises nine constructs (C17, C16, C1, C2, C4, C10, C13, C15, and C5). *Gives Ss fruitful feedback* (C17) and *does effective transitions between tasks* (C16) form a pair at 94 % match level. The latter construct was also ranked among her five important constructs. These two constructs have been newly added to Aslı's repertoire. As a result of the learning process, Aslı has experienced a content change in her personal theories regarding effective YLs English teaching. Although in her first grid at the beginning of the term she had not stated anything related to giving feedback or effective transitions, at the end of the term she has started to think that they are necessary for effective YLs teaching. Halliwell (1996) mentions the need for teachers to check understanding without drawing their attention that they are doing so. For her, teachers should do it by watching children's faces or the way they are sitting, or more obviously by the fact that they are not doing what we are expecting. In such cases, teachers need to rephrase the words or show them again what they mean before the temporary lack of understanding becomes critical. Parallel to what Halliwell (1996) proposes, Aslı stated the reason for the change in her perception:

Extract 4.3.

I realized that I was not aware of the importance of sequencing the parts of my lessons. As we discussed it in our meetings and planned the lessons by deciding on sequence and transitions beforehand, I had the chance to see the difference it made in my teaching. Transitions are really very important. In sample lessons I applied, I realized that my students were able to follow what was going on more easily. That kept them involved in lesson. And also, I could follow them and give them feedback more easily. (2nd Phase / Final Meeting)

The constructs *uses colorful materials* (C1) and *open to innovations* (C2) subordinate this pair at 90 % and 91 % match levels. Using colorful materials was also listed among five important constructs. In fact, in her diary she also stressed the importance of using variety of colorful materials:

Extract 4.4.

I think this week's topic was the most fruitful one for me. I realized that I had forgotten that I taught English to YLs and the importance of colorful materials for effective teaching. These tools increase students' participation and create positive feelings toward English. (1st Phase/ 6th Week's Diary).

Lobo (2003) also highlights the importance of using colorful and various materials. He states that since YLs are very receptive at that stage, they welcome whatever the teacher presents them. Unlike older learners, they are open to new ideas and materials, so novelty in terms of materials used in class will arise curiosity and interest. However, he warns YLs teachers to choose only those that are adequate for each particular class situation. This was of crucial importance in this study. In the second phase, participants tried to make lesson plans and choose materials and activities considering their specific classroom situations. According to Aslı, this enhanced the feasibility of the plans she applied.

It is possible to speculate from the result that the teacher who gives fruitful feedback and does effective transitions between tasks is most likely to use colorful materials and to be open to innovations. In fact, being open to innovations is the second construct which has been consistent in her first and second grids. So, for Aslı, to be a good young learner teacher necessitates being open to innovations in the field.

The analysis displays two pairs within the same cluster. The first pair includes *tries to make Ss use the language* (C10) and *gives importance to Ss' pronunciation* (C13) linked at 97 % match level. As for Krashen (1982) the only way of acquiring a language is receiving comprehensible input. Therefore, for him, teaching activities should be designed to supply the child with an enjoyable and easy to understand input. Learners need to be involved in social interactions where they have to use the language they are learning with others in authentic communication settings. When meaning is constructed as interlocutors work together to understand each other, learners can receive comprehensible language input. Aslı was also aware of this kind of input for young learners. She put it as follows:

Extract 4.5.

In the way I used to teach my students, students were just trying to memorize some language items. And there was nothing for recycling. Now, I try to speak a lot in the class and use the language communicatively. I start to use variety of activities to make them practice new items and repeat what they have learned. It really makes difference. (2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

According to her, the collaborative training affected her to change her teaching style. For instance, an article she has read has changed her opinion about teaching pronunciation:

Extract 4.6.

So far, I was not aware of using the phonics to make students learn the way of voicing the words. After reading this article [Slattery & Willis, 2001] I understand that it is a useful demonstration for children to form the relationship between letters and sounds. I am definitely going to use the activity “Listen & Do”. (1st Phase/4th Week’s Diary).

This highly associated pair is linked to another pair which contains *uses various words* (C15) and *acts professionally in class* (C5). The two constructs are linked at 93 % match level. For her, having students exposed to various words used by teacher is a characteristic of a professional teacher. If a teacher is professional and uses various words, he/she also gives importance to students’ pronunciation and tries to make students live the language.

Tries to motivate Ss (C4) subordinates these two pairs at 91 % match level. It is also her most important construct in her rank order list. As a result, it can be inferred from the links that a teacher who wants to motivate students should make them use the language in class by giving importance to pronunciation, by using various words and by acting professionally in class. Also, in her diary, she explained ways to increase students’ motivation in detail:

Extract 4.7.

Before participating in this study, I used to teach students using real objects as materials. But, they did not work so well. In the second phase of this study, we started to use pictures, flashcards, and transparencies in our lessons. They immediately took students' attention and motivated them. As a result, they learnt more easily. It was especially effective in teaching vocabulary. I realized that if they are made motivated by various materials, they do not forget words easily. (2nd Phase / Final Diary).

Motivating students is one of the most important aspects in TEYL. As Cameron (2001) states, if the teacher wants children to talk meaningfully in class, the first thing to do is to give children something they want to talk about. Therefore, the teacher should adjust tasks, topics, and materials so that they relate to pupils' interests.

The last cluster, which is looser compared to the first one, contains five constructs. Within the only pair, *supplements the lessons with OHP* (C8) and *integrates visual materials to lessons* (C9) has 88 % association level. Both of the constructs are about using materials and support *uses colorful materials* (C1). It seems that she has repeated the same concept within different constructs and related each to different other constructs within her frame of an effective YLs teacher. Both in the weekly meetings and in her diaries, she has repeatedly stated the importance of using an OHP and colorful materials. In one of her anecdotes, she described her first experience with OHP in class.

Extract 4.8.

Before this lesson, I had never used OHP in my classes. I used to supplement the lessons with real objects. I was a little bit tense before entering the class, not knowing what to expect from students. But, after I finished doing exercises with transparencies, I was really glad of the result. All of the students, including the one with mental disability, participated in the activities. They were so motivated that they couldn't stop standing the whole lesson. They also learnt the new words very quickly. I still check the words to see if they have forgotten them, but they can still give correct answers. I think this lesson made a great effect on my students' motivation. They said they always wanted the lessons with OHP and liked it very much. (2nd Phase / 2nd Week's Diary)

Using OHP and visual materials are subordinated by *assigning different projects to Ss* (C12) and by *using songs to teach vocabulary* (C11) at 87 % match level. The association among constructs 11, 12, 8, and 9 implies that Aslı believes young learner teacher needs to use various materials, activities, and tasks. She further explained her idea in the weekly meetings as follows:

Extract 4.9.

I loved the activities and games in the articles. Among them, “Twenty Questions”, “Memory Game” are the most feasible ones for my classes. I knew I was going to learn practical things in this training. I am definitely going to use them. My teaching will be much more fruitful (*1st Phase / 4th Meeting*).

The idea that Aslı expressed of making YLs involved in different activities in order to make the lessons more fruitful has been highly supported in TEYL literature. For instance, Halliwell (1996) states that “If we accept the role of the imagination in children’s lives, we can see that it provides another very powerful stimulus for real language use. We need to find ways of building on this factor in the language classroom, too. ... When they are involved in enjoyable activities, through their sense of fun and play, the children are living the language for real” (p.7).

Introduces the target culture (C14) subordinates both of the last two clusters at 88 % match level. So, for her, introducing the culture is important in language teaching and can be achieved by using different materials and activities as well as by being open to innovations and making students use the language in classroom. In the weekly meetings, she stated the importance of introducing the culture through different tasks several times.

Extract 4.10.

Using stories help them [students] to get to know the rest of the world. I think they also have to know about the target language’s culture. I did not know how to give it. There was generally no extra time for it. But now, I learned that using stories or songs will do the work (*1st Phase / 6th Meeting*).

The only isolated construct is being polite to Ss (C3). The reason for its being not linked to any other construct may be the others’ being directly related to classroom

methodology and teaching application. Being polite is a feature related to a teacher's attitude toward students and to his/her social relationship with students.

The overall analysis of the grid clearly shows that the collaborative process helped the transformation of Asli's ideas about effective language teacher of YLs. In her first grid, before participating to the collaborative learning process, her constructs were rather too general EFL requirements (e.g. *spends effort to teach Ss* (C8), *professional* (C6), *interested in Ss' learning* (C5), etc.). Instead of expressing specific qualifications, as she did in her second grid, she had listed wide concepts about general language teaching. This may imply that, at first she knew she had to be a good language teacher, but she had no specific ideas about the features or skills necessary for this.

At the end of the term, she expressed that the collaborative training helped her in finding out how a young learner language teacher should be equipped for an effective teaching to happen. As she put it:

Extract 4.11.

Maybe because of being graduate of Linguistics, I had not known so much about the activities, materials, or techniques that should be used in young learner classes. However, by the help of this study, I have learned many games and activities to motivate students. I learned how I can transform boring lessons to enjoyable and effective ones. (1st Phase / Final Diary)

Element Links

The element links of Asli's grid display three separated clusters. The first cluster consists of effective teachers (e1, e2, e3) and ideal self as teacher. E1 and e2 constitute a pair at 86 % match level and is subordinated by e3 at 85 % and by ideal at 82 % match level. The second cluster has only one pair. Self and t1 are associated at 81 % match level. Asli grouped effective teachers in one cluster and separated them from self, typical and ineffective teachers. In her first grid, she had viewed self as isolated from the rest and associated ideal both to e1 and to t2. That may mean that at the beginning, she could define herself neither as effective nor as typical. However, at the end of the term, she has started to think that she is typical young learner teacher. Thus, her view about self as a teacher has changed.

The last cluster includes t2, t3, i1, i2, and i3. i2 and t2 constitute a pair at 81 % match level. The other pair consists of i1 and i3 linked at 98 % match level and

subordinated by t3 at 96 % association level. For her, i1 and i3 are very similar teachers and have many common qualifications with t3. The clear distinction among clusters and her groupings may indicate that she has gained a clearer insight to distinguish effective teachers from typical and ineffective teachers, but is still unclear about typical and ineffective teachers. She also had a clearer opinion about herself, which is viewed as typical in her second grid. This is an indication of some kind of professional maturation. Her experience over the past year made her realize her strengths and weaknesses as a language teacher. At the end of the term, she stated that she believed that she needed further professional development. She also noted this view in one of the weekly meetings:

Extract 4.12.

I want to add that, especially after joining this study, I realized that I was far away from all these things. I feel ashamed of the things I was doing before. I really think I will use these activities in my future teaching. But, I think I need more practice. (1st Phase / 3rd Meeting).

4.1.3 Changes Observed Between the Beginning and End of the Study

Content

Aslı's grid reveals great content change. In her first grid at the beginning of the term, she had 13 constructs. However, toward the end of the year, she excluded 11 constructs and added 15 new constructs. She was also aware of this change.

The constructs she had at the beginning of the term were rather too general statements about TEYL (e.g. interested in Ss' learning (C5), prepared (C1), responsible (C4), etc.). On the other hand, at the end of the collaborative training term, she came up with more specific constructs that were directly related to TEYL (e.g. uses songs to teach vocabulary (C11), uses colorful materials (C1), assigns different projects (C12), integrates visual materials to lessons (C9), etc.). For her, the reason for construing these ideas was the process she experienced:

Extract 4.13.

I learned many different techniques from my colleagues and the readings. I also learned what kind of materials should be used in teaching YLs. (2nd Phase / Final Diary)

It appears that for Aslı, the collaborative learning process helped her by raising awareness of TEYL.

Structure

The structural changes reported are based on Exchange analysis of two grids obtained from Aslı at the beginning and at the end of the collaborative training period at 80 % cut-off point. The construct consensus between the two grids is 100.0 % and the element consensus is 36.4 %. This indicates that Aslı has reorganized the structure of these constructs. And she has also gone through a process of reorganizing of some of her elements.

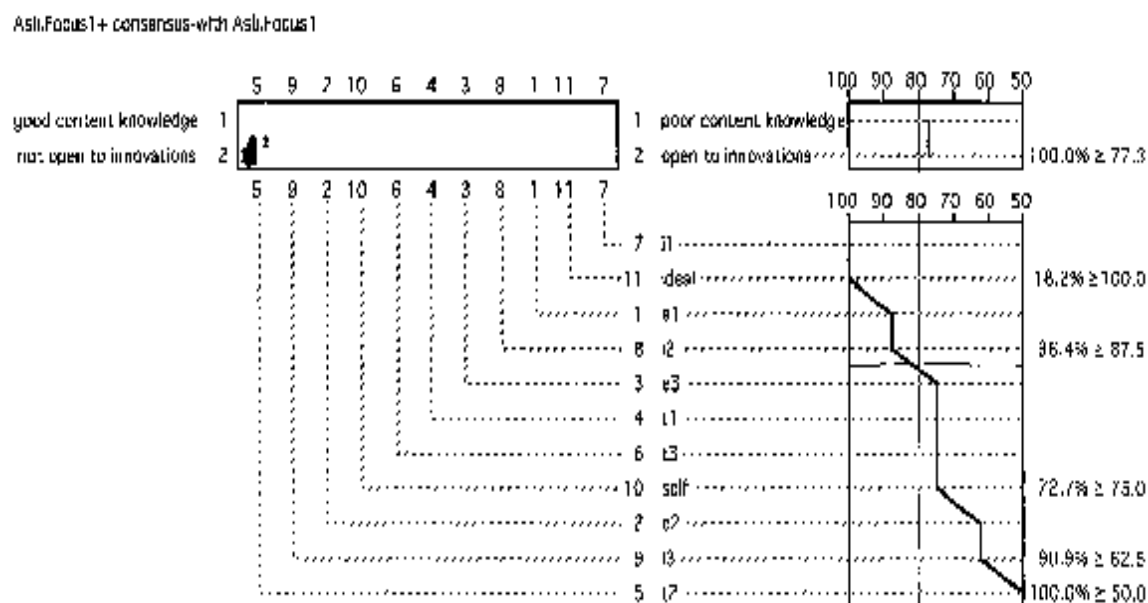


Figure 4.3 The Exchange Analysis of Aslı's Two Grids

Since Aslı changed almost all of her constructs in her second grid, she had only two constructs that were consistent: *poor content knowledge* (C1) and *open to innovations* (C2). Both of these constructs had gone through structural change at 77.3 % cut-off point. That means the meanings she attached to these constructs totally changed.

As Figure 4.3. displays, one third of her elements show structural change at 87.5 % cut-off point. The elements structurally changed are i1 and ideal (100.0 %), e1 and i2 (87.5 %). In her first grid, self and e1 formed a pair; that is, she viewed her ideal self very similar to e1. But, at the end of the year, the meanings she attached to e1 and ideal changed.

The change that occurred in ideal was of a great significance since ideal represents the parameters upon which she evaluated teaching. As there were significant changes in these parameters through the end of the learning phase, it can be claimed that her view of an effective YLs English teacher became totally different by the end of the term. The evaluation of other teachers and self as a teacher will be greatly affected by this reconstruction.

Although there was no significant change in her evaluation about self, she, to some extent, placed herself differently at the end of the term. In her first grid, self was isolated, implying no shared features with other teachers. However, at the end of the term, self and t1 (one of her typical teachers) formed a pair at 81 % match level, indicating common qualifications. This may suggest that she started to believe that she was a moderate teacher of YLs and thus needed improvement. This view was also supported in her diary:

Extract 4.14.

I noticed that before participating this study, I thought I knew almost everything about teaching. But now, I realize that it is an endless ocean. No teacher can reach the end. I am somewhere in the middle. (1st Phase / Final Diary).

From Aslı's first and second grid Focus analyses and from the Exchange analysis, it can be inferred that by the end of the process collaborative process, there were considerable changes in the way she construed effective young learner teaching. She changed most of her constructs and the way she evaluated YLs teachers and herself as a teacher. According to her, this change was largely due to the collaborative learning process she experienced.

4.2 Case 2: Bilge

Bilge is an English teacher with three years of experience with YLs. She worked in public primary school in the Yüreğir region in Adana. She had the same profile of students as the other participant teachers. She graduated from the English Philology Department and had not received any training geared specifically toward TEYL. In a previous study conducted by Yıldırım and Şeker (2004), she stated the challenges she faced teaching YLs and expressed her need for assistance. Thus, she was willing to participate in the study.

At the time the study conducted, Bilge was working in Gazeteci Adem Yavuz State Primary School in Yüreğir. The school has 18 classrooms, with approximately 30 students in each. Similar to other participants' schools, there was no language teaching laboratory or any other facility for language teaching. It had an overhead projector and two tape-recorders that could be used in English lessons. The students were generally from families in middle and lower socio-economic levels. They did not have any opportunity to take any courses outside the school regarding language learning. The other English teacher working in the same school was graduate of Philology department and did not receive any specific education for teaching YLs.

4.2.1 The Content and Structure of Bilge's Personal Theories at the Beginning of the Study

Bilge's grid data consists of 9 constructs and 11 elements. Bilge's FOCUS grid shown in Figure 1. presents the constructs and element trees drawn at 80 % cut off point.

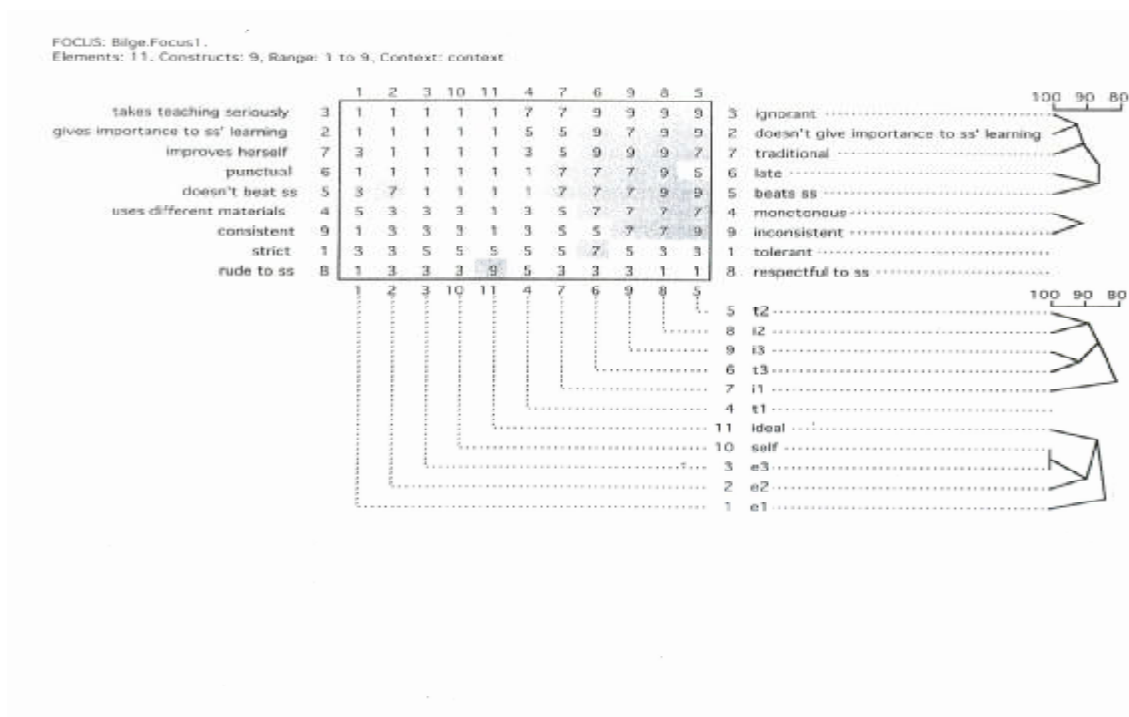


Figure 4.4. Bilge's 1st Focus Grid

Construct Links

The construct links have formed one main cluster and one pair. In the cluster, the first pair, *takes teaching seriously* (C3) and *gives importance to students' learning* (C2) are the most closely associated constructs at 93 % match level. Another construct, *improves herself* (C7) subordinates this pair at 91 % match level. In fact, C2 and C7 are among her five most important rank ordered constructs. In one of the weekly meetings, she stated this view:

Extract 4.15.

A teacher should be open to innovations in the field. S/he should always be in search for improvement. S/he should try to use different methods and materials. S/he should bring everything s/he learns to the class. (1st Phase / 1st Follow-up Interview).

The associations described above may indicate that, for Bilge, an effective YL teacher takes teaching seriously and gives importance to students' learning. This kind of teacher also improves herself. Linked to these constructs, there is another pair consisting of *punctual* (C6) and *does not beat students* (C5) which associate at 88 %

match level. Thus, Bilge appeared to believe becoming an effective YL teacher necessitates not only taking teaching seriously, giving importance to students' learning and improving oneself but also being punctual to class and not beating students. For Halliwell (1996), in order to have an effective teaching, a teacher of YLs has to consider the learning characteristics of children. She lists the significant learning features that young learners bring with to the foreign language learning classroom:

- YLs are already very good at interpreting meaning without necessarily understanding the individual words,
- They have great skill in using limited language creatively,
- They frequently learn indirectly rather than directly,
- They take great pleasure in finding and creating fun in what they do,
- They have a ready imagination,
- Above all, they take great delight in talking. (p.3).

Although Bilge stated that students learning is of high importance for teachers, at the beginning of the first phase, she associated this construct with the constructs which were general themes related to teaching routines (e.g. being punctual or not beating students, etc.).

Another high association in the pair (at 90% match level) is between the constructs *uses different materials* (C4) and *consistent* (C9). Both of these constructs are among her five most important rank ordered constructs. Therefore, Bilge seems to construe that an effective YL teacher not only is consistent, but also uses different materials in the classroom. After few weeks following the application of the first grid, Bilge expressed the importance of considering students' age and interest when deciding on materials:

Extract 5.16.

When choosing materials for our classes, we should consider our students' age, interest and needs. Especially, real objects and pictures can be enjoyable for children. (1st Phase / 2nd Meeting).

There are also two constructs *tolerant* (C1) and *respectful to students* (C8) isolated from the other constructs. Although it seems that Bilge cannot associate these

constructs with any other construct, C1 is rank ordered as her one of the most important constructs. Thus, we speculate that Bilge may have construed these constructs (C1 and C8) as personal qualities that may be found in some teachers, but cannot necessarily associate them with features of an effective YL teacher.

A further look at Bilge's constructs prior to her involvement in the collaborative process shows that they seem to apply to any other teacher rather than to YLs English teacher in particular. This indicates that Bilge did not have a clear perception of the skills and teaching behaviors that English teachers of YLs should possess.

Element Links

When we look at the element links in Bilge's grid, we see two main clusters. In the first cluster, while t2 and i2 associate at 88 % match level, i3 and t3 are related at 90 % match level. i1 is also linked to these associated pairs at 80 % match level. This suggests that at the beginning of the study, Bilge does not have a clear cut distinction between her typical and ineffective YL teachers.

On the other hand, effective teachers, self, and ideal are grouped under the same (second) cluster. Therefore, we may assume that Bilge has clearer views concerning the qualities of effective YL teachers than those of typical and ineffective ones. Within this cluster, self and e3 associate at 100 % match level. e2 (88 % match level), ideal (83 % match level) and e1 (81 % match level) are also linked to self and e3. Thus, Bilge appears to perceive herself as being identical to one of her effective teachers. We, then, may state that Bilge would likely reject any attempts in further professional development since she considers herself as similar to the ideal and even the same as one of her most effective YL teachers.

4.2.2 The Content and Structure of Bilge's Personal Theories at the End of the Study

At the end of the term, Bilge's grid data comprised of 15 constructs and 11 elements at 80 % cut-off points.

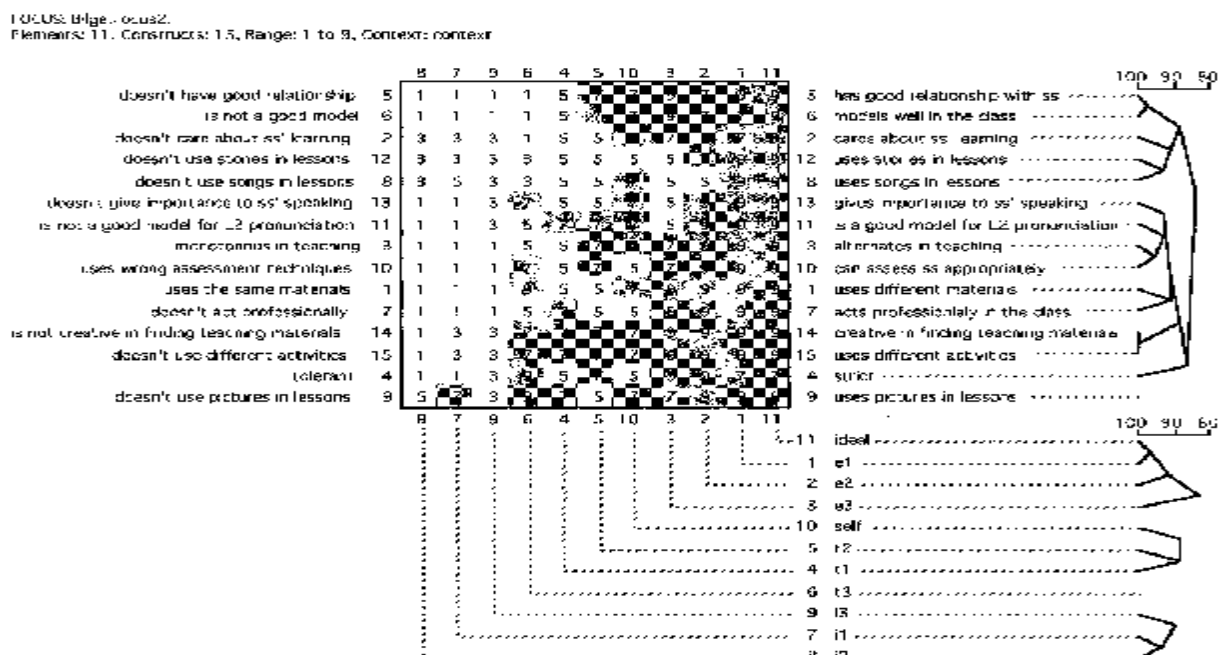


Figure 4.5. Bilge's 2nd Focus Grid

The FOCUS analysis of Bilge's second grid produced two main clusters, both linked to each other at 83 % match level. The first cluster at the top of the grid consists of 5 constructs (C5, C6, C2, C12, and C8). *Has good relationship with ss* (C5) and *models well in the class* (C6) form a pair at 98 % association level. This indicates, for Bilge, that a teacher who has good relationship with students also models well. Both of these constructs were also ranked among her most important constructs in her rank order. She also stated the importance of having good relationship and modeling well in class in the weekly meetings:

Extract 4.17.

I agree with the article that the most effective technique is to respond to all our students' questions and comments in English. In that, we show them [students] that we are listening and that they should try and say more in English. (1st Phase / 6th Meeting).

The advantages of teacher's using the target language in classroom have also been acknowledged by many researchers (e.g. Krashen; 1982; Halliwell, 1996). For them, real language usage in class contributes to language learning by encouraging children to trust their instinct to predict meaning. Moreover, the comprehensible input provided by teacher also gives children the opportunity for indirect learning, which children are best at. While not necessarily concentrating on learning, young learners can perceive language learning as something that is used for real purposes not just for exercises or other classroom tasks.

The other pair within this cluster comprises *uses stories in lessons* (C12) and *uses songs in lessons* (C8) linked at 93 % match level. C12 was also among her most important constructs in the rank order. In her diary, she reflected her opinion as follows:

Extract 4.18.

I think stories are motivating for young learners even in their mother tongue. Sometimes my students act like a character in a story they know in Turkish. If I use stories in English, they can learn rhymes and some expressions subconsciously. They can also improve their pronunciation. (1st Phase / 5th Week Diary).

In addition to motivating children, stories also provide rich opportunities for learning vocabulary indirectly. As Cameron (2001) puts it "Words encountered in stories are heard in linguistic and discourse contexts, so that important grammatical and collocational information is available about words. Moreover, the plot and characters of a story are likely to form a thematic organization for many of the words, thus assisting understanding and learning" (p.91). Another advantage of using stories in YLs classes has been pointed out by Wright (2002). For him, stories offer a major and constant source of language experience. They are motivating, rich in language experience and inexpensive. Moreover, listening and reading stories and responding to them through

speaking, writing, drama, and art develops a sense of sharing and collaborating. Stories help to build up the crucial sense of being skillful communicators (Wright, 2002).

This pair is subordinated by *cares about ss' learning* (C2) linked at 91 % match level. For Bilge, a teacher who uses songs is one who also uses stories, and thus cares about his or her students' learning. In other words, to be able to make students learn the language, a teacher has to use songs and stories in class. In her first grid, she had a similar construct (i.e. *gives importance to students' learning* (C2)). However, it was associated to general classroom routines. At the end of the process, as Figure 5 displays, she has linked her idea to more specific foreign language teaching techniques for YLs such as using stories and songs in lessons. That may indicate that she has developed a clearer view about what giving importance to children's learning really means in her underlying representation. As she explained in her diary, using different tasks and activities like songs and stories can also extend students' concentration span and motivate them.

Extract 4.19.

Young learners are willing to learn foreign languages. So, they accept whatever you give them. But, they can not concentrate for a long time. They can easily get bored or loose their attention. Therefore, as teachers, we should use different activities to keep them involved and motivated. By using songs, games, or stories, we can make them willing to participate. And I think, they can enjoy the lessons more. (1st Phase / 3rd Week Diary).

With this statement, Bilge pointed out to the fact that children love games and motivating activities. Halliwell (1996) explains how to make use of this characteristic of children. For her, children are able to use limited language resources creatively to communicate. If they are urged, or motivated, to communicate, they find some way of expressing themselves. The desire to communicate encourages them to construct language actively for themselves. Halliwell (1996) advises to use games for creating such desire. As Halliwell (1996) states, the desire to communicate also ties in with children's aptitude for indirect learning.

The other cluster involves 10 constructs linked to each other at 89 % match level. *Alternates in teaching* (C3) and *can assess ss appropriately* (C10) forms a pair at 97 % match level. As indicated by Lobo (2003), and by many other educators (e.g.

Halliwell, 1996; Cameron, 2001, Vale and Feunteun, 1995) children cannot concentrate for a long time. Thus, the materials and activities presented in YLs classes have to be varied and changed often within one class. Differentiation help children to be attentive for a longer time overcoming their short concentration span. For Bilge, alternation should be both in teaching and in the way students are assessed. In her diary, she explained it as follows:

Extract 4.20.

To assess children effectively, I think we should assess all their abilities by observing the children's progress. But in my school, the classes are very crowded, which makes observation difficult sometimes. So, sometimes I try to use quizzes or assign them projects for assessment. I know they are not enough. Maybe, I should observe them more. (1st Phase / 8th Week Diary).

Assessing young learners has formed the basis of many debates in the field. For Vygotsky (1981), teachers can not get a true assessment of a child's ability without providing any help. He suggests that what a child can do with the help of others helps us to predict the next stage by providing a better way of assessment. Cameron (2001) highlights the importance of avoiding traditional tests in YLs classes. Instead, evaluating a child's ability within his or her classroom context in relation to his or her environment can provide the most fruitful assessment. Pavlou (2004) warns YLs teachers against using tests that damage the motivating atmosphere in class and children's positive attitudes toward learning English. He suggests that assessment should be carried out in a way that protects positive atmospheres and attitudes. To do this, teachers should utilize assessment methods that focus on students' progress rather than one-time-productions as are expected in traditional test techniques. Portfolios, peer and group assessments, out-of-class projects are among the assessment techniques proposed by Pavlou (2004) for YLs classes.

This pair is subordinated by *is a good model for L2 pronunciation* (C11) at 92 % match level and by *gives importance to ss' speaking* (C13) at 91 % match level. This suggests that alternating in teaching should include speaking activities and tasks. Teacher's exposing students to the target language by modeling pronunciation is called "caretaker talk" by Slattery and Willis (2001). They draw similarities between the caretaker's or parents' talk to children in their mother tongue and teacher's classroom

talk in foreign language. Since young learners only acquire the language they hear around them, they listen to their teacher as their new caretaker, try to make sense of what is said and sound like the people they listen to. Therefore, teachers need to provide as many opportunities as they can expose students to the sound, rhythm, and flow of the newly learned language (Slattery & Willis, 2001). Bilge also indicated the importance of teacher's modeling in the class as a speaker of the target language.

Extract 4.21.

Teachers should speak English as much as they can because children imitate teachers. They need to hear the language before they start to speak. They can also deduce the meanings of some words or phrases from context. Maybe, it is better if we can also use gestures and body language, too. (1st Phase / 2nd Week Diary).

Parallel to what Bilge stated, Halliwell (1996) has pointed out to the importance of using gestures and body language in YLs classes. For her, a language teacher should know the qualities of children to build on them. For example, knowing that children are able to grasp meaning without necessarily understanding individual words, a teacher can assist teaching with intonation, gestures, facial expressions, and body language to help students learn the unknown words or phrases. Thus, for Halliwell (1996), a teacher should support students' learning by making full use of gestures and demonstrations.

Within the same cluster, another pair consists of *uses different materials* (C1) and *acts professionally in the class* (C7) associated at 92 % match level. So, for her, using different materials is a sign of being professional in class. Bilge has stated using different materials as her most important construct in her rank order. During the meetings, she frequently expressed her opinion.

Extract 4.22.

I think a teacher should enrich her teaching by using as many different materials as she can. Since visual materials are very important for young learner, we should use them frequently. Otherwise, our lessons will be very monotonous for learners and for us. If we are creative in finding different materials, we can transform our lessons to more enjoyable ones. (2nd Grid / Follow-up Interview).

This view is also subordinated by the last pair which comprises of *creative in finding materials* (C14) and *uses different activities* (C15) linked at 100 % match level. That is, for her, a teacher who uses different activities in teaching is the one who is always creative in finding materials. Being able to use different activities was also listed among her five important constructs. This idea has been highly supported in TEYL. As Halliwell (1996) states, using interesting tasks and activities which are more than language exercises will provide children opportunities for using real language and let their subconscious mind work on the processing of language while their conscious mind is involved in completing the task. She suggests game-like activities to provide occasions for this kind of indirect learning.

Tolerant (C4) subordinates the whole cluster at 89 % match level. According to Bilge, being strict is necessary to be a good young learner teacher. She included this construct in both grids. In the follow-up interview, she explained this opinion as follows:

Extract 4.23.

A teacher should sometimes tolerate students. She should listen to them and be always in search for students' problems. This is necessary for establishing good relations with students. At this age, they really need it. You should make them feel you are their friend. (1st Grid / Follow-up Interview).

The only isolated construct is *uses pictures in lessons* (C9). Although it is also about teaching application in class and thus should have been linked to choice of materials, activities, and tasks, she has not associated it to others. This may imply that she has not developed a clear picture about the necessity of using pictures in class.

When compared to her first grid results, Bilge excluded most of her constructs, which were either too general or not related to TEYL. At the end of the term, she replaced most of them with more specific and TEYL related constructs. She seemed to have a clearer view about some considerations in TEYL. She expressed the change as follows:

Extract 4.24.

It is clear that these meetings and readings have improved us very much. When I taught English in the past, I was very bored; and so were my students. I had

difficulty in teaching YLs, that's why I liked more to teach older learners. But now, I started to like teaching YLs. My students enjoy it, too. Now I use games, songs, and different materials like flashcards, posters to make my lessons even more enjoyable. (2nd Phase / Final Diary).

Element Links

The analysis of Bilge's second grid reveals three main clusters in her element links. The first cluster includes ideal, e1, e2, and e3. Ideal and e1 form a pair at 96 % match level and are subordinated by e2 at 92 % and by e3 at 82 % association level. Bilge has grouped her ideal and effective teachers in one cluster and has separated them from other teachers. In her first grid, the same elements were also grouped in one cluster including self among them. However, here her view of self forms another cluster with t1 and t2. t1 and t2 are linked at 85 % match level and subordinated by self at 85 % match level. This suggests that she doesn't view herself as an effective young learner teacher anymore. But rather, she thinks that she shares more characteristics with typical teachers. She expressed this opinion in the weekly meetings as exemplified in the following:

Extract 4.25.

... because I see the truth now. I can criticize myself as YLs teacher. I am sure I am going to be better next year. I still don't think I a competent enough, I am going to study and search more. I am going to revise the things we have covered here, and search more on the internet. I mean, I really realized that I am not so efficient in teaching. Before participating to this activity, I thought I was a better teacher compared to many other teachers. I was thinking that I was on the right track doing the right things. But I learned even more important things here. I want to thank you for helping me to see that teaching is endless and needs to be always in search. (2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

This result may indicate that she started to think that she was not competent as a young learner language teacher and needed further development in TEYL.

t3 stands as an isolated element. She did not attach it to any others, indicating no common features among them. And the last cluster includes i1, i2, and i3. i1 and i2 form a pair at 94 % match level, which is subordinated by i3 at 91 % association level.

She viewed all ineffective teachers as being similar and having no commonality with effective and typical teachers or with her ideal self.

4.2.3 Changes Observed Between the Beginning and End of the Study

Content

The changes in the content of Bilge's two grids were noteworthy. She has excluded six of her constructs in her first grid (*ignorant* (C3), *traditional* (C7), *late* (C6), *beats ss* (C5), *inconsistent* (C9), and *respectful to ss* (C8)). These were mostly not directly related to TEYL. In her second grid, on the other hand, she incorporated 12 additional constructs in her repertoire. The newly added constructs reveal a raise in her awareness about the features of a effective English teacher of YLs (e.g. *Uses stories in lessons* (C12), *uses songs in lessons* (C8), *alternates in teaching* (C3), *uses different materials* (C1), *uses pictures in lessons* (C9) etc.). This result clearly shows that she developed a new perspective for language teaching of YLs at the end of the term. In the interview, she also indicated that she gained a new insight and stressed the positive influence she had from the collaborative learning process.

Extract 4.26.

This process has contributed to my development a lot. Now I feel like I have a wider perspective. I mean, not the general things, but how you give your lessons is important for me now. I have learned, for example, the importance of establishing good relations with students. My priorities have changed totally. (2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

Structure

The Exchange Analysis

The Exchange analysis of Bilge's first and second grids shows that the construct consensus between the two grids is 70.5 %, and the element consensus is 75.0 %. 1 out of Bilge's 3 consistent constructs showed significant change at 80 % cut-off point. For the elements, the significant change is observed for 4 elements at 80 % cut-off point.

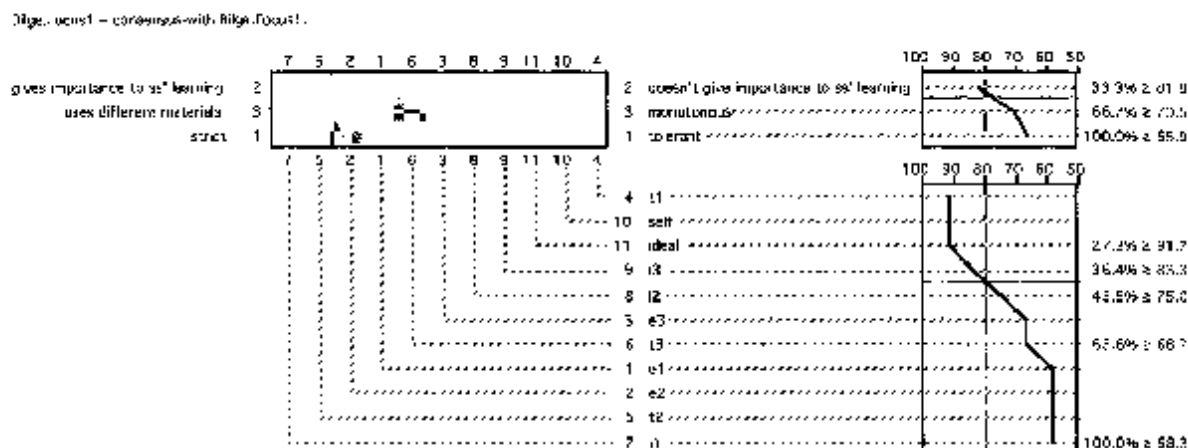


Figure 4.6. The Exchange Analysis of Bilge's Two Grids

According to the analysis, three of Bilge's constructs did not change in her both grids. However, only one of them went through significant structural change (*doesn't give importance to ss' learning* (C2)). In her first grid, this construct had formed a pair with *ignorant* (C3) at a very high association level (93 %). This relationship indicated that although she was aware of the importance of students' learning and believed that a teacher shouldn't be ignorant about it, she could not state the exact requirements for this to happen. In her second grid, on the other hand, she attached other constructs that indicate specific aspects of giving importance to students' learning (e.g. *uses stories in lessons* (C12), *uses songs in lessons* (C8)). She explained her reasons for this change:

Extract 4.27.

When I told my students they were going to listen to a story, they were very happy and excited. While I was telling the story, they all listened silently. They missed some parts, but they caught some phrases and repeated them. It was fun for them. I wouldn't think of any other way of making the lesson more enjoyable and effective. I really regret not trying it before. (2nd Phase / 4th Lesson Diary).

The most significant change in Bilge's grids was in the way she viewed herself and ideal self as a young learner teacher. In her grid at the beginning of the term, she had included ideal self and three effective teachers in one group. Moreover, self was identical to e3 (100 % match level). That indicated that she accepted herself as a teacher to have very similar qualifications to her ideal and to other effective teachers. This view

left very little room for a desire of professional development. Contrarily, in her grid at the end of the collaborative learning process, effective teachers and ideal were grouped isolated from typical and ineffective teachers and also from self. Self was in the group of typical teachers. According to her, beside learning many new insights and reflecting on her ideas, the collaborative learning process she participated made her realize that there is no final level in teaching that any teacher could reach.

The other two elements that have gone through structural change were t1 and i3. In her first grid, t1 was isolated. But later, she has associated it to t2 and self. i3, which formed a pair with t3 in her first grid, is associated to other ineffective teachers in her second grid. When asked for the reason for such a change, she explained her opinion as follows:

Extract 4.28.

I feel I am not monotonous anymore. Now I understand I was like that before. I search more now. I give more importance to preparing my lessons and materials. In the past, the exams and especially teaching grammar were very important for me. But now, I realize that the most important thing is how you give your lesson in a more enjoyable way. I enjoy the lessons more now. (2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

The overall evaluation of Bilge's first and second grids and the Exchange analysis clearly shows a change in her conceptual framework of TEYL. At the end of the process, she seemed to have gained new insights for language teaching practice. Maybe more importantly, she became aware of her weaknesses as a teacher and of the reasons for them. She also stated that the most important thing she learned from this experience was that a language teacher should always be in search of innovations.

4.3 Case 3: Didem

Didem worked at a public primary school as English teacher in Yüreğir as well. She had the same period of teaching experience as other teachers, 3 years. She had her degree in ELT. However, she did not study any courses devoted specifically for teaching YLs. She also found teaching YLs very demanding and expressed the need for such training. Her students were from the same region as the other participant teachers, so they had similar profiles. She also volunteered to participate in the study.

The name of her school was Sarıçam State Primary School in Yüreğir district in Adana. It was more crowded compared to other participant teachers' schools. It had 54 classrooms with approximately 40 students in each. There were three other English teachers working at the same school. The other English teacher whose students' written accounts were analyzed was a graduate of ELT department. Yet, she did not have any training specifically for YLs. The school provided many rooms for educational facilities such as sports, music, or drawing. However, there were not any rooms to be used for English classes. There was only one overhead projector in the school which was in the science laboratory. Teachers who needed to use it had to take his or her students to the science lab since it was not allowed to remove the overhead projector outside the lab. There were two tape-recorders that could be used in lessons. Most of the students were from families of lower or middle socio-economic levels. Some of the students had the opportunity to take private courses outside the school. However, none of the students in the participant teacher's class had any English course outside the school.

4.3.1 The Content and Structure of Didem's Personal Theories at the Beginning of the Study

The FOCUS analysis of Didem's first grid comprised 12 constructs and 11 elements associated at 80 % cut-off point.

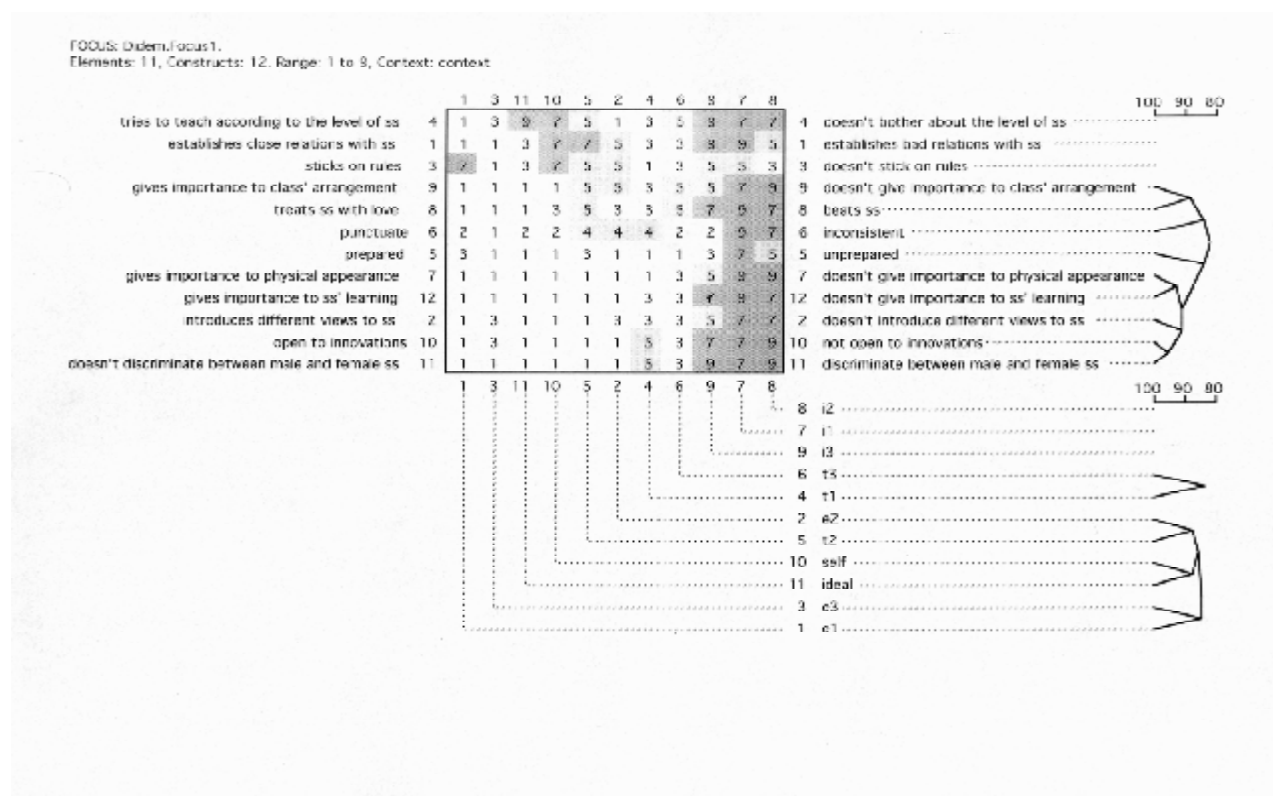


Figure 4.7. Didem's 1st Focus Grid

Construct Links

In the FOCUS analysis of Didem's grid, there are 11 elements and 12 constructs producing two clusters, one tight cluster consisting of five constructs and one loose cluster consisting of a pair and two constructs attached to this pair at 84 % match level. The most associated constructs in the first main cluster are *gives importance to class' arrangement* (C9) and *treats ss with love* (C8) with association at 84 % match level. For Didem, if YLs teachers ignore classroom arrangement, they can not have good relations with students. This cluster is subordinated by constructs *punctuate* (C6) at 81 % and by *prepared* (C5) at 80 % match level. This indicates that, according to Didem, a teacher who gives importance to classroom arrangement and who treats students with love is at the same time punctual and prepared for the lessons. The ideas that Didem had linked together before participating to the collaborative process did not seem to have common

grounds. Some of them were related to institutional routines (e.g. classroom arrangement or being punctual) while another one, treating students with love, was related to teacher's attitude toward his or her student. However, these are all individually important features in effective YLs teaching. For example, Cameron (2001) highlights the importance of being prepared for their lessons. For Cameron (2001), preparation help teachers to produce tasks and activities for extended talk, rehearsal of words and phrases, and many types of language activities that make sense to the child as meaningful language practice. Since YLs need language input in shorter but more frequent bursts, a teacher should model a kind of language use to listen to and to notice. Thus, YLs teachers should be able to provide plentiful opportunities for repeated listening and for saying the words and phrases, which include recycling previously, introduced words in varied contexts. They should also be able to support with feedback on production to improve fluency and accuracy.

In the second cluster, there are two different related construct pairs.

Discriminates between male and female ss (C10) and *open to innovations* (C9) are closely related and associate at 96 % match level. So, being open to innovations prevents gender discrimination. Also, constructs *doesn't give importance to physical appearance* (C6) and *doesn't give importance to ss' learning* (C11) are related with association at 93 % match level. So for her, giving importance to students learning depends on giving importance to physical appearance. The existence of these two characteristics necessitates *introducing different views to ss* (C1), which subordinates this pair at 90 % match level. The pair is subordinated by *beats ss* (C7) at 88 % match level. That means, she perceived a connection between giving importance to students' learning and physical appearance. If a teacher does not introduce different views to students, s/he probably beats students.

Doesn't bother about the level of ss (C3), *sticks on rules* (C2), *establishes bad relations with ss* (C1) are the isolated constructs that have not been attached any meaning in this grid. As a result, it may be inferred from the general analysis of the constructs that Didem has not been able to develop an appropriate scheme for the characteristics of an effective young learner teacher.

The general themes in Didem's constructs indicate that she did not have any specific conception geared specifically towards young learner teaching experience at the beginning of the study. Furthermore, although she stated many problems she was facing

during YLs teaching, she was resistant to find any solutions to them via this study. She kept this opinion during few weeks, which is exemplified below:

Extract 4.29.

I know nothing about children's pedagogy. I cannot decide on teaching level. I keep asking myself "Why can't they learn?" "What's wrong?" After three years, I still ask the same questions. I don't understand how they can learn. So, I can't find solutions. I am still stuck at this point. (1st Phase / 4th Week).

Element Links

In the element links of Didem, we see one large cluster consisting of four pairs, a separate pair, and three isolated elements (ineffective teachers). i1, i2 and i3 form the isolated elements. While t1 and t3 associate at 84 % match level, t2 is separate and forms another pair with e2 with 85 % match level. This indicates that t2 is not as typical as other two typical teachers, but s/he is closer to one of the effective teachers (e2). e3 and e1 form another pair at 80 % match level. The important result here is the high similarity stated by Didem between self and ideal. Self is very close to Ideal and they associate at 85 % match level. That is, Didem thinks that she is close to her ideal teacher. This is not a desired result since it indicates that Didem does not think that she is in need of any further professional development. In the first meeting after the first application of rep grid, she expressed some kind of resistance to change claiming that the conditions she had were not appropriate for such kind of teaching:

Extract 4.30.

I agree with some suggestions in the articles. But generally, it is too difficult to apply all the techniques and methods to our classes. It is difficult to control the class and organize the setting in two hours a week. It is true that YLs are curious, but in some cases a new material makes a chaos in class. It is hard to put them together. (1st Phase / 1st Meeting).

The last three groups (e2-t2, self-ideal, e3-e1) displays association at 82 % and 80 % match level. This means, these pairs have commonalities among them. The match level of the association between ineffective young learner teachers and typical, effective teachers – also self and ideal – is less than 80 %. This indicates that, for Didem, the

difference between these groups is very big and ineffective teachers should develop themselves.

4.3.2 The Content and Structure of Didem's Personal Theories at the End of the Study

The FOCUS analysis of Didem's second grid comprised 14 constructs and 11 elements at 80 % cut-off point.

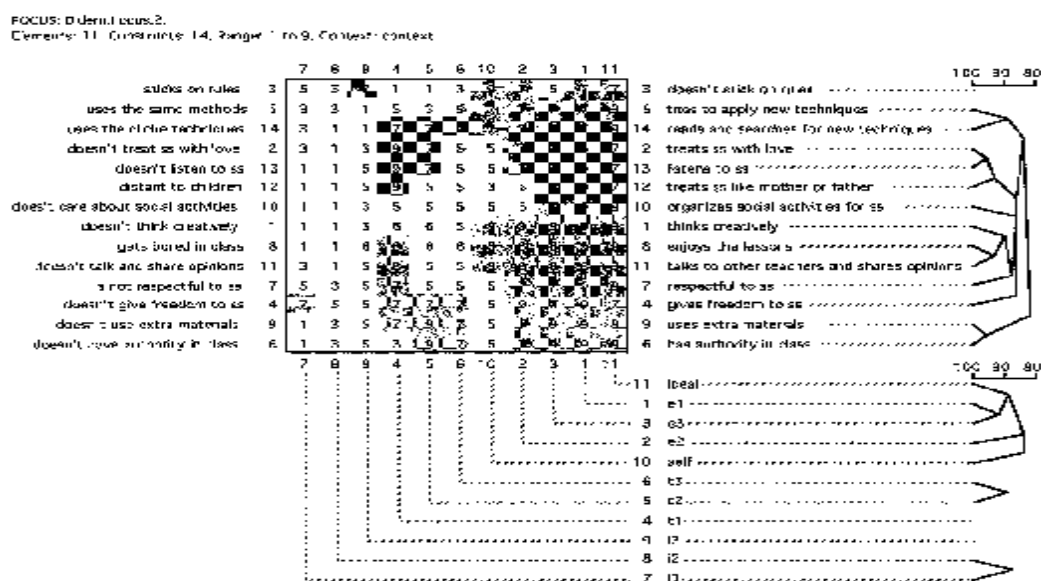


Figure 4.8. Didem's 2nd Focus Grid

Constructs

The analysis reveals two clusters consisting of four and five constructs and two pairs attached to these two clusters at 87 % and 94 % match levels. The first pair at the top of the grid includes *tries to apply new techniques* (C5) and *reads and searches for new techniques* (C14) at 87 % match level. This pair is linked to other clusters at 82 % match level. Both of the constructs represent the same opinion. For her, a good language teacher is the one who is always in search for innovations in the field.

The second cluster comprises four constructs: *treats ss with love* (C2) and *listens to ss* (C13) form a pair at 97 % match level. *Treats ss like mother or father* (C12) subordinates this pair at 94 % match level. All three constructs are about a teacher's attitude toward his or her students. For Didem, a YLs teacher should be especially

careful about the way he or she treats students. In her journal, she stated that a teacher's attitude toward her students would be reflected in students' proficiency.

Extract 4.31.

Participating to this study helped me to find ways to tolerate disorder and misbehaviors in the class. This helped me to establish better relation with students and gave me courage to apply new techniques and activities. It certainly had positive effect on students' learning. Now, they enjoy the lessons more and participate more. (2nd Phase / Final Diary).

The construct *organizes social activities for ss* (C10) subordinates both clusters at 86 % match level. This indicates that, according to Didem, a teacher who has positive attitudes toward his or her students is likely to provide opportunities for social growth and to give importance to developing good relationships with their outside world.

The next cluster consists of five constructs. The only pair is formed by *enjoys the lessons* (C8) and *talks to other teachers and shares opinions* (C11) linked at 94 % match level. Enjoying the lessons was also cited as one of her most important five constructs. The reason for adding construct 11, according to her, is the experience she had during the term and the benefits she gained. Although she seemed rather hopeless about finding solutions to her problems at the beginning of the study, by the end of the second term, she stated that she had learned from colleagues:

Extract 4.32.

I have learned new games and songs from my colleagues. I used them and they worked. Now, I try to create new games. It has been very creative for my teaching. I realize that I should behave like an actress not like a teacher in class. (2nd Phase / 3rd Meeting).

In regard to creating games and activities appropriate to one's own class, Cameron (2001) states that children try to construct meaning from what adults tell them or want them to do. And when their limited world knowledge is encountered, there emerges the need for teachers of YLs to adapt classroom activities to the children's point of view to help them make sense of new language. This kind of adaptation is very crucial in providing rich language experiences for children. In that:

There are important links between what and how children are taught, and what they learn. Within the ZPD, the broader and richer the language experience that is provided for children, the more they are likely to learn. Foreign language lessons often provide all or most of a child's experience of the language in use; if we want children to develop certain language skills, we need to ensure they have experiences in lessons that will build those skills. The activities that happen in classrooms create a kind of 'environment' for learning and, as such, offer different kinds of opportunities for language learning. (p. 19).

Since she indicated that the discussions she had with colleagues during the collaborative training process helped her to become creative, she added another new construct to her repertoire at the end of the study. *Thinks creatively* (C1) is linked to the pair at 89 % match level. In the follow up interviews, she explained this construct. *Respectful to ss* (C7) subordinates this pair at 85 % match level.

Another subordinating construct is *gives freedom to ss* (C4) linked at 82 % match level. Both of these subordinating constructs are related to teacher's behavior. They were also listed among important constructs in the rank order. For her, a YLs teacher should respect students by giving them freedom in class. Thus, he or she will be able to encourage students' creativity. She thinks such an atmosphere is crucial for learners of that age.

The last cluster consists of only one pair. *Uses extra materials* (C9) and *has authority in class* (C6) are linked at 96 % match level. Although the two ideas do not seem related to be associated as one pair, she explained the relation as in the following:

Extract 4.33.

We became aware of the importance of using various activities and materials in this study. And also, we learned how to manage the class while applying them. Before this process, I just wanted my students to stay silently in their places because they were very noisy when they stood up and became active. But now, I

learned how to organize them even when they are active. (1st Phase / Final Meeting).

This shows that, through the end of the first term, Didem partly overcame her resistance to change and accepted that the new ideas she was learning could be useful. From the extract, it is clear that her reasons for not wanting to change her teaching style had been the fear of being inadequate in managing the class while using different materials and activities.

The only isolated construct is *doesn't stick on rules* (C3). This may indicate that Didem still did not have a clear meaning attached to being dependent on rules as a teacher nor she related it to her other constructs.

Although Didem changed many of her old constructs at the end of the term, most of them were not still directly related to TEYL and do not suggest specific ideas about it. They are general opinions about appropriate behaviors of any teacher. This may indicate that, in spite of some kind of change in her TEYL perception, which was more obvious in her statements in the weekly meetings and her journal, she still did not have a clear web of ideas about YLs teaching.

Element Links

In the element links of Didem's second grid, there are one large cluster, two pairs and two isolated constructs. The cluster at the top has e1, e2, e3, ideal, and self. e1 and e3 form a pair at 92 % match level and are subordinated by ideal (88 %), by e2 (83 %), and by self (82 %). This suggests that, for her, effective teachers have common characteristics among themselves and her ideal. She has also included herself as a young learner teacher among the effective teachers. This may indicate that she believes she is a good young learner teacher. If this is the case, she may have thought that there was no need for further professional development. The case was very similar in her first grid. At the beginning of the term, she has associated herself to her ideal teacher at a very high match level (85 %). Although she stated that she faces many problems in teaching English to young learners, she does not believe that developing professionally can provide any solution to her problems. Instead, she believes that the infrastructural and institutional conditions have to improve.

The other pair contains t3 and t2 associated at 87 % match level. t1 stands as an isolated element. i1 and i2 form the last pair at 85 % match level. i3 is also another isolated element. It can be inferred from this result that Didem has not distinguished clearly among ineffective and typical teachers.

4.3.3 Changes Observed Between the Beginning and End of the Study

Content

The comparison of Didem first and second grids reveals a great deal of content change. Didem has excluded 10 constructs in her first grid (C4, C1, C9, C6, C5, C7, C12, C2, C10, and C11) and replaced them with 12 new constructs (C5, C14, C13, C12, C10, C1, C8, C11, C7, C4, C9, and C6). However, these new constructs that Didem has incorporated still do not represent important young learner teaching considerations. They are about rather classroom management skills (e.g. C6, C3, C4) and teacher's attitudes toward students (e.g. C2, C13, C12). She only added few constructs about teaching applications of a good YLs teacher (e.g. C5, C14, C9, and C1). Although she claimed that she gained some practical insights by the help of collaborative training (Extract 5.33), she stated her fear of applying the new techniques and activities because of the disorder she faced in her classes:

Extract 4.34.

In the second term, it was very helpful to organize the meetings to prepare lesson plans. In the first term, the articles we read were not meaningful enough to apply in our classrooms. But coming together and discussing those articles helped us to apply new things in our classes. We prepared the lessons according to our specific conditions like timing, students' proficiency level, available equipments and syllabus. Not only my students but also I enjoyed the lessons. (2nd Phase / Final Diary).

However, she added that those applications were rather tiring and demanding for her.

Extract 4.35.

The lessons we applied in the second term were really effective. But they were so difficult for me because my classrooms are crowded and my students were too energetic in the lessons. Especially if there was a game that day, there was noise. I felt exhausted after the lessons. (2nd Phase / Final Diary).

Structure

The Exchange analysis of Didem's first and second grids reveals that the construct consensus between the two grids is 68.2 % and the element consensus is 75.0 %. Out of 12 constructs in the first phase and 14 constructs in the second phase, only two constructs were consistent and only one of them shows significant structural change.

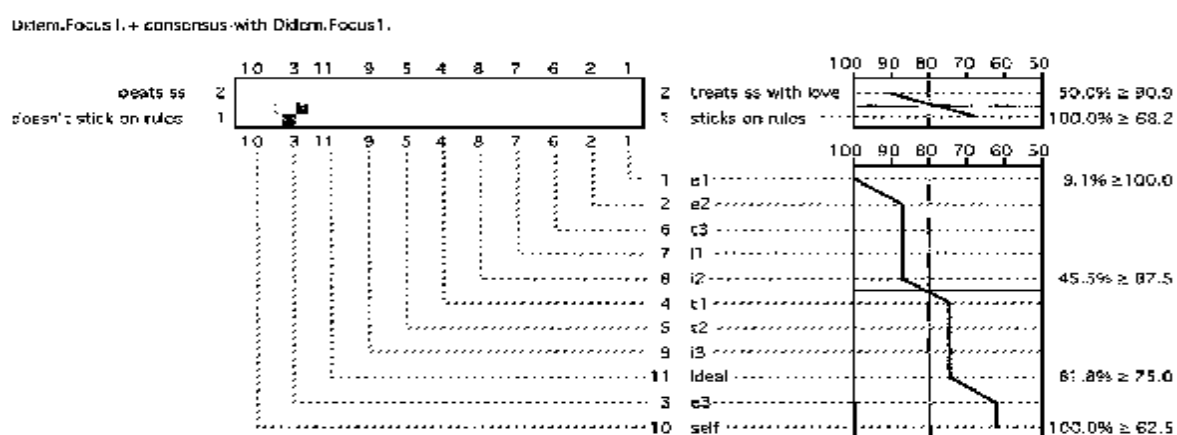


Figure 4.9. The Exchange Analysis of Didem's Two Grids

The Exchange analysis of Didem's first and second grids show that Didem has changed the content of most of her constructs regarding effective YLs English teaching. The only consistent constructs were *treats ss with love* (C2) and *sticks on rules* (C1). In the light of the Exchange analysis, the significant structural change is observed in *treats ss with love* (C2) at 50 % cut-off point. In her first grid, this construct was linked to giving importance to classroom arrangement. When she was asked about the relation

between them in the follow-up interview, she could not state any clear relationship. That showed she was not sure about both of the clusters and the meanings she attached to them. However, in her second grid, she has excluded the construct about classroom management. Treating students with love forms a pair with listening to students and is associated with treating students like mother or father. That shows that she has developed a more detailed and clear opinions about teacher's behaviors toward students. The other consistent construct, being stick on rules is still an isolated constructs in the second grid. She is still does not have a clear opinion about it although she still insists on its being important for a young learner language teacher.

According to the Exchange analysis, 5 of Didem's elements have gone through significant structural change: e1 (100.0 %), and e2, t3, i1, i2 (87.5 %). In her first grid, i1 and i2 were isolated. In the second grid, they form a pair. While e1 was associated with e3 and e2 with t2 in her first grid, they are in the group of effective teachers, ideal and self in the second grid. At the beginning of the term, she had not made clear associations among any teachers. But, at the end of the term, she has associated all the effective teachers and self. However, she has not still developed clear links among typical and ineffective teachers. That's why t1 and i3 stand as isolated elements in the second grid.

Considering her view of self, the results do not indicate significant changes. At the beginning of the term, Didem had viewed herself as similar to her ideal young learner teacher forming a pair at a very high level. At the end of the term, the focus analysis indicates that she still considers herself as sharing similar characteristics with her ideal self and effective teachers. This may imply that she still accepts herself as an effective YLs teacher and sees little need for improvement. However, Didem stated that she benefited from the training she went through several times in the weekly meetings.

Extract 4.36.

We even shared materials, this was very important. While preparing the sample plans, we discussed how to prepare them in the light of what we had been reading and sharing. Therefore, I think, we came up with wonderful lessons and various materials. We created our own materials. But of course, these should be developed. They are still open to improvement. (2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

As it is indicated in Extract 5.36, Didem was aware that the process was helpful. However, she did not reflect these views on the grids. This may suggest that she was still in the process of reconstruing effective YLs teaching. At the end of the collaborative training year, it is clear that she was aware of potential improvements she could make, but was afraid of transforming into a totally new teacher and leaving out all her routines. She also expressed that she believed in future years she would improve more.

Extract 4.37.

I think we learned a lot, and mostly via trials and errors, which is very important for development. Next year is going to be more fruitful as a result of the things we learned and shared because, this term, we learned and tried to apply things at the same time. Sometimes, there were things that I couldn't totally understand. There were things that I could figure out after some time. The theories we learned in the first term was not the things we always heard, they were necessary and important. At the end of the second term, they seem even more meaningful to me. I am sure next year they will help me more, and I will be able to help my students more. (2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

In sum, Didem's view of effective teachers changed, but her ideas about self and her ideal teacher, which she associated highly with effective teachers, remained unchanged. This could be interpreted as inconsistency in her understanding of effective teaching and self as an English teacher of YLs.

4.4 The Commonality among the Participants

The Socio analysis provides to compare and contrast the constructions among a group of teacher by measuring the overlaps between each teacher-pair. This helps to determine "who construes what most like whom" (Diamond, 1991, p.79). As the commonality corollary of Kelly's personal construct theory assumes, it is essential and usual that individuals have areas of shared meaning among them (Diamond, 1991). In this study, the Socio analysis is done to determine the commonality among three participant teachers both at the beginning and at the end of the collaborative learning process.

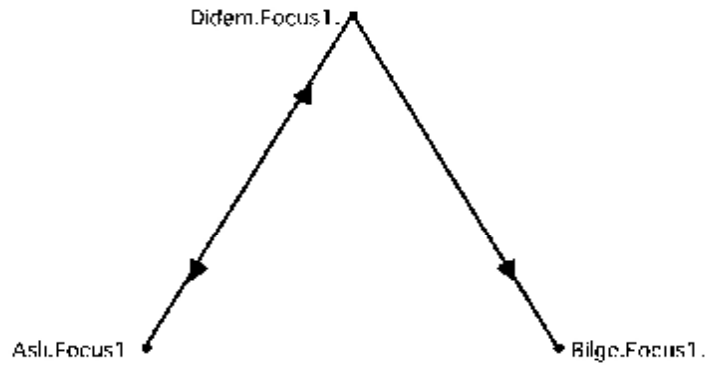


Figure 4.10. The Socio Analysis at the Beginning of the Study.

The Socio analysis of the participants' first grids shows few correspondences in their element associations. Besides their not having so many constructs about what it is like to become young learner teacher, the commonality of the construing elements between the participants seems very weak. The arrow from Didem to Asli demonstrates two-way correspondence between the pair. That is, they share common rating associations in their grids. The only one-way correspondence is seen from Didem to Bilge. It is clear from the socio-net that the participants have rated the elements very differently and that they do not share a lot of commonalities in their construing TEYL.

As a result of the Socio analysis of the participants' final grids, the following results were acquired.

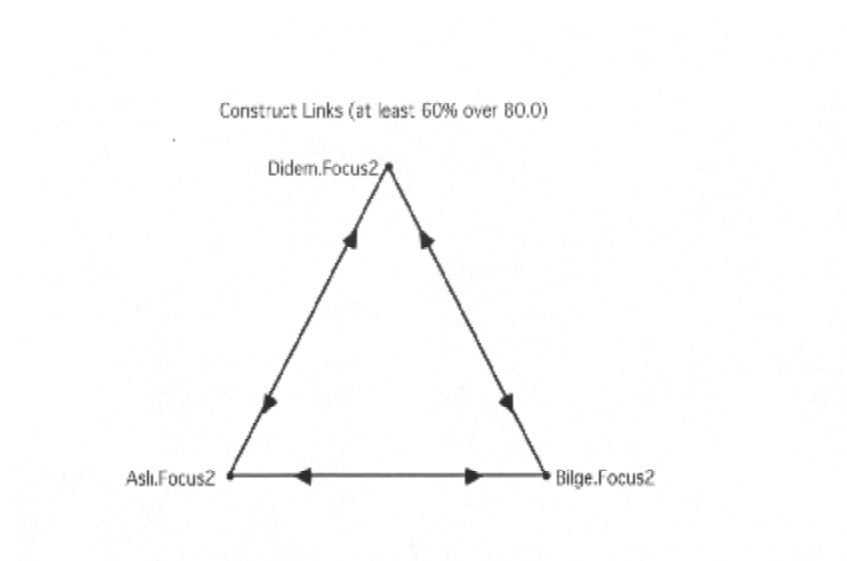


Figure 4.11. The Socio Analysis at the End of the Study

The socio analysis of participants' final grids at the end of the collaborative process shows more correspondences in their element associations. Three arrows demonstrate two-way correspondence between each pair. After the participants experienced some kind of transformation in the number of constructs and their representations regarding the effective YLs teacher, the commonality of the construing elements among the participants were much stronger at the end of the collaborative learning process. This indicates that participants construed effective YLs teacher similarly at the end of the collaborative process. This may imply that having read the same sources, interacted with one another and shared opinions, participants came up with similar perceptions at the end of the process. This outcome may imply that when the participant teachers tried to construe their perceptions of TEYL, they were influenced from the materials they studied and from the other teachers in their learning community; and thus benefited from the collaborative learning process in similar ways.

From the overall results of Rep-grid analyses it is clear that participant teachers did not transform to totally different and better YLs teachers. However, it is also an obvious result that all participants started to question their teaching; and at the end of the collaborative process, they were able to voice their weaknesses with the effort of searching for alternative solutions.

4.5 Teachers' Opinions and Feelings about the Collaborative Learning Process

The teacher training model proposed in this study suggests an alternative to teachers' learning via collaborating and sharing. Participant teachers who worked together reported substantial improvements in themselves and their students. In addition to professional development, they suggested the improvement in their perception of self as a English teacher of YLs and developed a sense of team with an increased motivation.

The content analysis of the weekly meetings' scripts and participants' weekly journals revealed many themes regarding what they gained as a result of having gone through the collaborative training experience. The emerging themes have been classified under two main headings: professional and personal, social and psychological themes. Table 5.1 displays participants' professional gains. The term methodology is defined as "a specific set of procedures more or less compatible with an approach" (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p.8). In this specific study, it refers to the teaching style the participant teachers used to deliver their lessons. The term technique, on the other hand,

refers to “a very specific type of learning activity used in one or more methods (e.g. using colored rods of varying lengths to cue and facilitate language practice)” (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p.8).

Table 4.1. Themes Regarding Teachers’ Professional Gains

Professional				
Methodology & Techniques		Materials	Tasks & Activities	Syllabus
1. Teaching YLs	13. Miming	1. Using Pictures	1. Using Stories	1. Modifying the Institutional Syllabus
2. Using TPR	14. Making Transitions	2. Using Posters	2. Using Games	2. Modifying the Course book
3. Lesson Planning	15. Using Body-Language	3. Using Flashcards	3. Using Songs	3. Teaching Culture
4. Communicative Teaching	16. Organizing Group and Pair Work	4. Using OHP	4. Using Chants	
5. Teaching 4 Skills	17. Using Gestures	5. Using Visual Aids	5. Role-Playing	
6. Teaching Grammar	18. Recasting		6. Coloring	
7. Teaching Vocabulary	19. Recycling		7. Drawing	
8. Teaching Pronunciation	20. Differentiation		8. Assigning Projects	
9. Error Correction	21. Getting & Giving Feedback		9. Using Portfolios	
10. Giving Homework			10. Using Projects	
11. Assessment				
12. Mirroring				

During the process, participants frequently stated that the collaborative learning phase they experienced helped them in improving their methodological awareness and in differentiating the techniques, materials, activities and the tasks they used. It was also supportive in analyzing the syllabus they were applying in a more critical way and in modifying it where necessary. Specifically, they stated that by the help of the readings and discussions they did, they became aware of the main characteristics of young learners and the most appropriate methodology to be used in classes. The following extract from Aslı indicates this awareness:

Extract 4.38:

I have become aware of the difference between teaching YLs and OLs. I learned their characteristics and learning styles. This knowledge will help me to establish stronger teaching methodology for my classes. (Aslı / 1st Phase / Final Meeting).

As for Didem, the readings they had helped them to increase their awareness of young learners learning styles:

Extract 4.39:

When I teach them how to build a sentence, they could not do it. They became confused. But, when we practice fixed expressions or, I don't know, like dialogues, they understand better. I agree with the writer in that children have the ability to grasp meaning from the whole. They can not focus on isolated items. (Didem / 1st Phase / 2nd Meeting).

In her journal following the 3rd weekly meeting, Bilge noted what getting to know YLs meant to her:

Extract 4.40:

It is true that topics we choose should be familiar to children. We have to take their age into consideration. And, YLs need to know they have achieved something worthwhile and need to feel successful when using English. (Bilge / 1st Phase / 3rd Week Journal).

The participants also expressed the change in their construing different aspects of TEYL such as teaching four skills, lesson planning, assessment, assigning homework, etc. The following extract exemplifies Bilge's opinion about the transformation she felt in her general TEYL perception:

Extract 4.41:

In the past, I did not use to assign different projects, posters or homework. But now, I do. They enjoy it very much and I can see that they learn better. Now, English lessons are very special for my students. (Bilge / 2nd Phase / Final Diary).

According to Didem, assessing her learners improved to a more effective and enjoyable style:

Extract 4.42:

As the article says, we should assess our students using different tasks. Pavlou says take-home tasks are especially helpful for mixed ability classes. This kind of tasks allows them to perform according to what they have. For example, my students liked the word project. When they hear it, they shout “woooooow”. As if they were going to do something very sophisticated and interesting. They became more motivated for sure. (Didem / 1st Phase / 9th Meeting).

Another extract from Aslı briefly indicates the transformation she had:

Extract 4.43:

I learnt what to teach where and how. I also learnt how to create my own materials. I did not know many. (Aslı / 1st Phase / Final Meeting).

Regarding the appropriate techniques for YLs classes, participants noted the gains they had. For instance, Aslı stated that she learned how to provide effective recasting and retelling:

Extract 4.44:

I realized that I had been very impatient in recasting and retelling. I saw that I gave the Turkish translation immediately. And also, I did not use to have any writing activities. I thought it would be too difficult to apply in YLs classes. But, after we tried them in one-word and then two words stage, I saw that it worked pretty well. I had never thought that I could do it. (Aslı / 1st Phase / Final Meeting).

Learning the importance of using body language and gestures in YLs classes was another gaining that participants stated:

Extract 4.45:

This year I see that my students enjoy learning English, especially when I use body language. It makes them keep awake and listen more carefully because they can follow me more easily. And now, there is always action in my classes. (Bilge / 2nd Phase / Final Diary).

One of the most striking changes was in teachers opinions about differentiation which can be achieved by drawing on a variety of methods, activities and materials in order to meet individual learners' needs. However, this does not necessarily mean that learners should be introduced each topic in different ways to meet all the learning styles of the group at the same time. Rather, teachers should make sure that they match different learning styles on occasions throughout the session (Meador, 1997).

The participants stated that they started to use different techniques to teach language items. By the help of this, Aslı claimed that she noticed she could get feedback from students on the items they studied in the class.

Extract 4.46:

I was really very monotonous before this training. I only followed the course book. I can see it clearly now. But now, While I was trying these activities, I noticed that my class started to be somewhere active and enjoyable. I know it also increases students' motivation to the lesson. I can get more feedback now. Actually, I don't remember getting any feedback from my students before. Now, I see that I can transform lesson to enjoyable sessions with many different techniques. (Aslı / 2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

As Meador (1997) puts it, differentiation can be achieved Researchers in the field of TEYL strongly advice using TPR as a technique in YLs classes. After reading articles on TPR, participants agreed that it may also be an effective tool for them:

Extract 4.47:

Since YLs like action when learning, I think TPR is very appropriate for them. They act as teacher directs them. They become active and see the usage of the language and understand immediately. I wonder why I haven't used it before. (Bilge / 1st Phase / 2nd Meeting).

The increased awareness in using materials appropriate for YLs was frequently mentioned by the participants. Additional to learning which materials to be used, they also reflected on classroom applications where different types of materials were used.

Extract 4.48:

In previous years, my students used to start to a new education term with high motivation to learn English. They were always very enthusiastic at the beginning. But, every year, through the end, they were losing their enthusiasm because the lessons seemed boring not extraordinary anymore. But this year, it was not the case. They were motivated till the end of the year. Each lesson they were very excited about the materials I was going to bring to the class. When they saw the OHP, or pictures or flashcards in my hand, they couldn't keep screaming and jumping. However, it is going to be more challenging for me now because I have to prepare different pictures or transparencies for each lesson. (Bilge / 2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

Bilge reflected on her first OHP application in class as follows:

Extract 4.49:

It was an enjoyable and very interesting activity for my students and for me. I had not used transparencies in my lessons with children before. Students were very excited. And almost all of the students participated. It gave me a great satisfaction. (Bilge / 2nd Phase / 1st Lesson Diary).

The following extract clearly indicates the attitudes of students towards the pictures used in Bilge's class:

Extract 4.50:

I applied all the activities and students liked them a lot. They especially liked the pictures and wanted more. When I told them that was all, they were really upset. (Bilge / 2nd Phase / 2nd Meeting)

Didem reflected similarly on using pictures in her class. She claimed that it was a very motivating and fruitful lesson.

Extract 4.51:

I introduced the adjectives with pictures. Students got excited and they looked to the colorful pictures and listened very carefully. They easily learned the new words. It had never been so quick for them. I think giving extra material makes them feel good and special. They were very happy working together. I am excited about next week because I don't know whether they will remember the adjectives or not. (Didem / 2nd Phase / 3rd Week Diary).

In the sample lesson plan for teaching ability can, participants used flashcards to teach animals. Aslı's reflection on the lesson was as following:

Extract 4.52:

Introducing animals via flashcards was fun for students and for me. I also mimed the animals while showing the cards. Then, children started to mime like as I changed the cards. It was really fun for all of us. (Aslı / 2nd Phase / 8th Week).

There has been a considerable amount of research on children's way of perceiving the world and language learning styles (e.g. Halliwell, 1996; Meador, 1997; Krause, 2004). The implications of these studies point to the need of using variety of creative, active, and authentic activities and tasks in YLs classes to promote effective learning. Through the end of the first phase, participants were able to maintain a new perspective about using different enjoyable activities and tasks to modify and strengthen their teaching:

Extract 4.53:

What I enjoyed learning most were the different activities we learned about. They are really useful. I started to use them in my classes. I think I managed the first step. (Bilge / 1st Phase / 7th Meeting).

Sometimes, they mentioned modifying some newly learned activities to make them more enjoyable for their students:

Extract 4.54:

I think we can get students act the stories in class. Each one can choose a character and act it in class. They can prepare it as theatric sketches. I am sure they will be more motivated to read the story this way. (Bilge / 1st Phase / 6th Meeting).

After applying some different activities in the sample lessons, participants reflections were very positive. They stated that they were going to use different activities like games and songs more and try to integrate them to their lessons.

Extract 4.55:

Before participating to this study, I had never heard or applied any of the games, songs or techniques that we learned in this group. Now, I have learned many games and songs and also how to integrate them to my teaching. (Aslı / 2nd Phase / Final Diary).

Extract 4.56:

The articles and the book have led me to use games in my classes. I liked the book more. The book has also included the real transcripts of the lessons where these games applied. It has really been very supportive in trying games in my classes. (Didem / 1st Phase / 9th Meeting).

As for assigning different projects to students, Didem stated the following:

Extract 4.57:

I agree with the article that giving projects is very important. Even using the word “project” makes my students excited and eager for anything. Sometimes it can be a good idea to assign projects as group work. (Didem / 1st Phase / 8th Meeting).

In addition of learning many techniques, tasks, activities, and materials, participants noted that this process made them aware that teaching culture should also be considered in YLs classes.

Extract 4.58:

I agree with the article that culture is important. Learning another language is a kind of bridge to learn other cultures. Even YLs are aware that English belongs to a different culture. Therefore, we shouldn't skip that point. We should try to mix the cultures in the examples we give. For example, if we are talking about "hamburgers", we should also mention about "kebab" to make them aware of the differences. (Didem / 1st Phase / 6th Meeting).

Friend and Cook (1990) claim that one of the benefits of teacher collaboration is the increased opportunity for teachers to interact on instructional issues. For them, teachers who collaborate are more likely to discuss areas of the curriculum they have difficulty in teaching. The participants in this study also reported that they have become more critical about the syllabus they apply. The following extract from Bilge indicates this:

Extract 4.59:

Our syllabus is overloaded and two hours per week is not enough to cover it all. So, it is impossible to teach everything in it. Maybe, it is also not necessary. We should make changes in the syllabus. We don't have to teach everything in it and only the things in it. (Bilge / 1st Phase / 6th Meeting).

In addition to professional gains that participants had, they also reported that it was a very fruitful process in regard to personal, social and psychological support they received. Table 4.2. displays themes regarding these gains.

Table 4.2. Themes Regarding Personal, Social and Psychological Gains.

Personal	Social	Psychological
1. Becoming Creative 2. Becoming Reflective 3. Becoming Flexible 4. Becoming a Researcher 5. Increased Awareness 6. Reconstructing 7. Transforming 8. Getting Familiar with Students 9. Becoming Familiar with TEYL Terminology	1. Developing Group Identity 2. Sharing and Learning from Each Other 3. Meeting New People 4. Exchanging Ideas 5. Developing a Sense of Team Work 6. Establishing Good relations with YLs 7. Being Able to Do Effective Interactions	1. Self motivation 2. Developing Trust 3. Becoming Tolerant 4. Relief Resulting from Problem Sharing 5. Desire for Improvement 6. Feeling of Equal / Safe 7. Enjoying Learning / Teaching 8. Praising Oneself 9. Keeping Enthusiasm 10. Developing Positive Attitudes toward Students (YLs) 11. Feeling of Satisfaction as a Teacher

Participants have noted that they have become a more creative, reflective and flexible teacher with an increased awareness of their professions as English teachers of YLs. According to them, this transformation led them to be a researcher-teacher, as Aslı expressed:

Extract 4.60:

For the first time in my teaching experience, I began to search for the reasons of my failures and for solutions to improve my students' success. We did not only share our problems but also tried to put something into practice. And at the end, I really think we have come up with many solutions. (Aslı / 2nd Phase / Final Diary).

As Bilge stated, the reason for this change was mainly due to the readings they had:

Extract 4.61:

I must say that the discussions we have had in these meetings and the articles and the book we have read have changed me a lot. I have learned lots of

activities, chants, and games. I am totally different from last year. (Bilge / 2nd Phase / Final Diary).

The reason for Didem, on the other hand, was the discussions and sharing they had in the weekly meetings:

Extract 4.62:

Sharing my thoughts has improved my way of thinking. I can look from different perspectives now. Now I believe that we can't improve if we don't try new things. We have tried and observed what we can do. I think this was the first step for me to start thinking creatively about what is possible for YLs. (Didem / 2nd Phase / Final Diary).

She also explained the change she experienced as becoming more reflective by the help of the group discussions:

Extract 4.63:

The reflections we did in our diaries and in the meetings helped me check myself and think on the actions I took. I was able to observe myself as a teacher. I think it is very important. (Didem / 2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

The case study conducted by Maddux et al. (1997) shows a parallel outcome of the collaborative learning. In their study, they formed small groups of students who had a common goal. These groups shared their ideas in an interactive web page designed for them. The findings suggest that the active exchange of ideas increases interest among the participants and promotes critical thinking. The following extract from Aslı exemplifies one of the reflections she did on her teaching reading and writing in YLs classes. It seems that Aslı was reconstructing her perception about effective teaching:

Extract 4.64:

I focus on reading very much. And I just realized that I had been skipping the writing parts. I think, maybe, we can begin with reading and then go on with writing as follow-up activity. I mostly want my students to focus on meaning, so I don't consider pronouncing new words because I always run out of time. I can

also do something about it. And I don't know why, I have a dilemma about something; I think that students have to understand everything in passage. But it doesn't work that way. (Aslı / 1st Phase / 5th Week Meeting)

They found themselves to be more creative compared to their previous teaching practices as well:

Extract 4.65:

The things we read and discussed in the first term improved my knowledge about teaching YLs. But, the lesson plans we applied in the second term and the reflections we made helped me to be more creative in finding materials for more effective teaching. After all these experiences, I can't go back using my previous methods and techniques in my classes. (Aslı / 2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

Regarding their social identity, participants mentioned about some specific positive changes. For them, the collaborative process helped them to develop a group identity with colleagues.

Extract 4.66:

This has been the most fruitful experience in my teaching. I liked the idea of being a group. I wouldn't like to be the only one in the study. Since we were a group, we shared many things and learned from each other. (Aslı / 1st Phase / Final Meeting).

The extract from Bilge exemplifies one of their interactions where they asked each other for opinions:

Extract 4.67:

I don't know any children's song. Do you know any simple ones for YLs? The songs I know are very long and difficult. They are for older learners. (Bilge / 1st Phase / 2nd Week Meeting)

As a group, they claimed that they learned from each other by sharing their thoughts and experiences. The extract from Didem also indicates the attitudes of other teachers in her school towards such a collaborative learning:

Extract 4.68:

Reading about new activities and approaches for teaching YLs were very helpful; but, applying these new methods in our classes was even more helpful and meaningful. Talking and sharing improved our style, way of thinking and teaching. I told my colleagues at school about this study. They liked the idea very much. I also showed them the lesson plans we have been applying. They thought it would be very useful to apply the songs and games and use the materials in their classrooms. They appreciated what we have been doing and suggested to come together as English teachers working at the same school to prepare such common plans with material packs. This way, we can save time and effort to prepare each lesson. Also, we have the same problems, so we can solve them together by the help of each one's contribution. (Didem / 2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

According to Didem, the most fruitful thing about this process was the reflections they did after readings. Exchanging ideas helped them to learn about others' opinions.

Extract 4.69:

It is the first time I have ever participated in such a group work for my teaching. I can say that I have learned and realized many new things from readings, discussions and reflections. Discussing ideas in a group after reading the articles helped all of us to learn about new opinions. It has been really productive and creative . (Didem / 1st Phase / Final Diary).

One of the most important thing mentioned by the participants was the effect of this collaborative process on their class atmosphere. For Ashi, for example, after her participation she started to establish better relations with her students and get more feedback.

Extract 4.70:

I was monotonous before. I used to follow the book, and that was all. Now, since my lessons are different, my students enjoy them more and they are more motivated. I can get more feedback from them now. I think they love me more, and see me somehow closer. (Aslı / 2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

Before participating to this training, participants frequently mentioned about problems they had in teaching YLs. Most of the time, they seemed demotivated for teaching and pessimistic about finding any solutions. However, after the sharing they had in weekly meetings, the first emerging idea was that they realized they were not alone. This realization gave them a kind of relief; as expressed in the extracts below:

Extract 4.71:

One of the nicest things I have experienced in this training is meeting with other teachers and sharing our problems. I used to think that it was only me to blame for all problems I faced during my teaching YLs. After the discussions we had, I felt relieved because others also had similar problems. (Aslı / 2nd Phase / Final Diary).

As a result of finding other teachers having similar problems, they started not to blame themselves as being inadequate in teaching YLs. Rather, they began to express their individual problems and search for solutions.

Extract 4.72:

I realized that the teachers I have studied with over the weeks had the same problems. In past, I thought I couldn't teach perfectly. Now, I learned how to overcome prejudices about teaching English. (Bilge / 1st Phase / 8th Meeting).

After few weeks in the first term, participants seemed to motivate themselves and each other; as stated by Didem:

Extract 4.73:

It is nice to see that I am not alone in being inadequate for teaching YLs. As I discussed with my friends in the meetings and read from this article, we can

create our own techniques to our specific problems. (Didem / 1st phase / 6th Week Diary).

After overcoming some prejudices about themselves and their students, participants found more courage to try out new techniques and activities in their classes. Didem, as it was clear in her first rep grid analysis, was very afraid of losing control in class. She thought she wouldn't be able to manage her class if she applied new activities. However, towards the end of the first term, she overcame this fear and became more tolerant of disorder in class. She noted the change as follows:

Extract 4.74:

The process I have gone through helped me to find ways to tolerate disorder in classroom and gave me courage to apply new activities in class. (Didem / 1st Phase / Final Diary).

Another theme was about getting more satisfaction as a teacher. For Aslı, since her students did not lose their enthusiasm until the end of the term and participate more, she enjoyed teaching them more:

Extract 4.75:

Last year, my students started the term with high motivation for learning English. But, towards the end, they lost enthusiasm. It was the same in the previous year. Their grades went down and down towards the end. But this year, they have been always motivated and eager. They want more and more. And I know they have learned more because their grades are also high. I checked the results with other classes and found that my students' grades are higher. This really made me happy. I feel somehow successful. (Aslı / 2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

Similarly, the study conducted by Inger (1993) reports higher motivation among teachers after participating in collaborative learning process. In the study, vocational and academic teachers collaborated to improve teaching conditions of their schools. At the end of the collaboration, teachers commented that they gained respect for what the other teachers were doing and the problems they had. As a result, they could reinforce

one another's applications. They became more enthusiastic after realizing the differences and similarities among them.

For Didem, the feeling of being equal in the process of learning and having no authority made them built trust among each other and learn more.

Extract 4.76:

There was no authority. Everyone in the group was equal. What we did was sharing. And it really helped me overcome the feeling of incompetent. We learned a lot of things in the first phase. When compared to other in-service training programs, the theories we learned were not unnecessary. When we practiced and discussed in the second term, I could be more flexible in finding solutions and giving suggestions. After the applications this term, the theories we learned seem more meaningful to me. (Didem / 2nd Phase / Final Meeting).

As it is displayed in tables and exemplified in the extracts from participants, it is clear that participant teachers benefited from the collaborative teacher learning process in various ways. The emerging themes show that they improved their awareness in YLs teaching in general. They also created a sense of team work by supporting each other and sharing their ideas. At the end of the second term of the process, they were of the opinion that they transformed to a more creative and reflective YLs teachers. They overcame their bias about YLs teaching and became more motivated to improve themselves. In contrast to the beginning feeling of being lonely and incompetent, they started to courage themselves and others in the group to find practical solutions to their specific problems. At the end of the term, they seemed more motivated and satisfied with the job they were doing.

4.6 Some Additional Observations from the Second Phase of the Research

The findings of the study revealed that the collaborative learning process provided many benefits and positive outcomes for the participant teachers. However, there are also findings showing that the process did not seem to help the teachers overcome the constraints exerted by their working conditions. Such constraints as not having enough time to apply some activities, having to catch up with an overloaded syllabus, having crowded classes, students' being used to traditional methods and materials, and lack of materials and physical conditions manifested themselves

particularly in teachers' implementation of the lesson plans they had prepared in the second phase of the research. Evidence regarding these constraints was acquired from the audio-recordings of the weekly meetings in which participants prepared lesson plans and reflected on those plans after their classroom applications as well as from the researcher's own observations."

When deciding on the activities and tasks to include in the lesson plans, participants were observed not to be certain whether it would fit their own class. Although they liked the example activities and tasks presented in the readings they did, they were reluctant to adapt some of them to their classes since they thought they were not appropriate for their students' level. The extract from Didem below exemplifies this:

Extract 4.77:

These activities are really nice, but I do not think that I can use them in my class. My students are not familiar with these kinds of activities. (2nd Phase / 2nd Meeting).

Participant teachers were also found to become hesitant to introduce new types of activities to their classes. Since their students were mostly used to mechanical exercises such as matching and filling in the blanks, sometimes they felt frustrated to adapt themselves to the new style introduced by their teachers. Regarding this Bilge said the following:

Extract 4.78:

When I told my students that they were going to learn a story, they were really very willing. But, when they noticed that the story was in English, they became confused and did not like the idea. Although they participated during the lesson and said that they liked the lesson at the end, I think they need time to get used to this new style. (2nd Phase / 2nd Meeting).

Also, there were frequent complaints of teachers about having crowded classes and limited hours of English per week. Thus, these obstacles sometimes made it difficult for the participants to feel free in deciding on the activities they would like to use in their classes. As, for example, Aslı stated:

Extract 4.79:

If I apply these story activities, I will not have time to cover all the other items in the syllabus. Since my class is very crowded, I would need at least two hours to work on this story; and that would mean I would have to wait one more week to work on the next item in the syllabus.

Another challenge that teachers faced was the lack of equipments in their schools. Therefore, it was sometimes difficult for them to utilize the materials they had decided to. Reflecting on one of the lessons she did, Didem, for instance, clearly stated her frustration with struggling to access to an overhead projector in the following manner:

Extract 4.80:

For that lesson, I had to use the OHP, but we do not have one in every classroom. We only have one in the science lab and we are not allowed to move it out of the lab. So, I wanted to do the lesson in the lab and sent the students there. It was just a chaos for me and also for students. The students quarreled about seats and made terrible noise. It took me so long to settle them down. That's why I could not cover all the items in the plan. But I still noticed that students were having fun and that it was a different lesson for them. If we had the right equipment in the classrooms, or at least a language lab, it would be much easier to use different activities. (2nd Phase / 4th Meeting).

Drawing on the findings presented above, it should be noted that in case of applying similar schemes of teacher learning and development, teachers' collaborative efforts should receive institutional support to reach the best results possible.

4.7 Comparison of the Attitudes of Participant and Non-Participant Teachers' Students toward Learning English

This chapter discusses the findings of the qualitative data gathered from students in order to answer the last research question of this study, which is directed toward comparing the students' attitudes toward their English lessons and learning English in general. The purpose of identifying students' attitudes toward English learning was to

explore the impact of teachers' collaboration on their classroom atmosphere and on their students. As Halliwell (1996) puts it, in teaching language to YLs, curriculum planners and educators have to consider two main sorts of goals: content goals and attitude goals. While content goals are concerned with the language elements and how the learners put them together in order to use them, attitude goals relate to the kind of learning experiences teachers maintain and the relationships and the atmosphere of the language classroom. Halliwell (1996) lists the crucial attitude goals that any syllabus or teaching practice should consider:

- pleasure and confidence in exploring the language,
- willingness to "have a go",
- the children should want and dare to communicate. (p.10).

In order to fulfill these goals, a teacher should take the following steps:

- base his or her teaching approaches on the natural capacities and instincts children bring to the classroom,
- develop a positive response to languages and to language learning (attitude goals) as well as to what they learn (content goals),
- make sure that you set up various forms of real language use as part of the process of learning, not just as the intended product. (Halliwell, 1996, p.9).

The data was gathered from six classes at 4th grades. Three of the classes were taught English during the time of the study by the participant teachers. The other three classes were taught by other English teachers who did not participate in the study but worked at the same schools with the participant teachers. Also, these teachers had no specific TEYL education.

The students from both groups (i.e. the 4th graders of participant teachers and the 4th graders of non-participant teachers) were asked 3 questions concerning their opinions about English lessons. These questions are:

1. Do you like English lessons? Why? Why not?
2. Do you like your English teacher? Why? Why not?
3. Do you find English learning easy or difficult? Why?

In order to avoid any potential difficulty the students might encounter in understanding and answering, the questions were asked in Turkish. Students were given

25 minutes to answer the questions. Also, they were informed that they were not going to be graded for their answers, so that they could write their sincere opinions.

The answers were analyzed and displayed separately for each question and for each group. Table 4.3. shows the frequency of the answers given to the first question by the participant teachers' students. The number of the students in this group was 94 in total.

Table 4.3: Students' Attitudes of Participant Teachers toward English Lessons

I like English lessons Total:89			I don't like English lessons Total:5		
Reasons why they like English		F	Reasons why they don't like English		f
1	It is enjoyable	45	1	Sometimes I get confused	3
2	Our teacher teaches well	35	2	My friends make noise in lessons	2
3	It is very easy	21	3	We have only two hours a week	2
4	I want to learn a foreign language	19	4	English is difficult	1
5	I want to talk to foreigners	18	5	It is Christians' language	1
6	It is necessary to have a good job	17	6	It is difficult to spell	1
7	It develops our general knowledge	8	7	It is difficult to pronounce	1
8	I love my teacher	7			
9	Speaking English is very enjoyable	6			
10	I am successful at it	5			
11	I understand the lessons	4			
12	We study with flashcards and OHP	3			
13	We learn many songs	3			
14	I study willingly	2			
15	Everyone should learn English	2			
16	English lessons are like riddles	1			
Total Reasons Provided		196	Total Reasons Provided		11

Almost all of the students (94.6 %) stated that they like English lessons. Students provided 196 responses and 16 different reasons for their answer. The most frequent reason provided by the participant teachers' students was their finding the lessons enjoyable (f=45). During the sample lessons they applied, participant teachers noticed the enjoyment of their students during the lessons. The following extract from Aslı reflecting on her first lesson application exemplifies this:

Extract 4.81:

Using those pictures was very effective. When I announced that it was going to be a race, they became very excited. It was good to see them so excited and motivated. I don't know how well they have learned, but the lesson was very good. Even the laziest students participated and they all enjoyed themselves. (Aslı / 2nd Phase / 2nd Meeting).

Their teacher's teaching well was the second frequent response (f=35). Also, they found English very easy (f=21) and necessary to have a good job (f=17). 19 students stated that they want to learn a foreign language to speak to foreigners (f=18). For some students, the reasons were studying English with different materials like flashcards and OHP (f=39) and with songs (f=3). Thus, for some others, speaking English is enjoyable (f=6). Learning songs in the lessons was the reason for three students.

Parallel to the findings, Çakır (1999) also stresses the importance of using songs, chants, and games in YLs classes. For him, these kinds of teaching tools have innumerable virtues. As he lists them:

- they are wonderful means of teaching real language,
 - play and music are a source of motivation, interest, and enjoyment,
 - games, including musical ones, constitute a context for language use for children, They become themselves when they play or sing.
 - Music and rhythm make it much easier to imitate and remember language than words which are just spoken.
 - They contain words and expressions of high frequency and offer repetition.
- (p.1).

Songs and games also contribute to socialization and help to develop an aesthetic taste while engendering pleasure. In this sense, they provide wonderful opportunities both for teachers and for children (Çakır, 1999).

There were only 5 (5.1 %) students who stated that they did not like English. out of the 11 responses, the main reason proposed was sometimes getting confused (f=3). For 2 students, other students made noise in the class, so they did not understand what was going on in the lessons. Having only two hours of English per week was another reason provided. Since English is not an orthographic language like Turkish, students also mentioned about the difficulty of pronouncing and spelling the English words (f=2). Only one student seemed to be prejudiced against English learning because of his religious identity.

The overall analysis of the responses indicates that students of the participant teachers liked English lessons since they found the lessons enjoyable and effectively taught. The usage of different materials and activities also affected students in developing positive attitudes toward the lessons. Even two of the students who stated

they did not like English, complained about the limited hours of lessons per week. They expressed the difficulty they had in pronouncing and spelling the words.

The students of non-participant teachers at the same schools were also asked the same questions. The number of these students was 91 in total. Table 4.4 displays the frequency of the responses given.

Table 4.4. Students' Attitudes of Non-Participant Teachers toward English Lessons

I like English lessons Total:70			I don't like English lessons Total:21		
Reasons why they like English		F	Reasons why they don't like English		f
1	Lessons are enjoyable	31	1	Lessons are difficult	9
2	I want to learn a foreign language	18	2	I don't understand the lessons	5
3	It is necessary to talk to foreigners	17	3	Reading in English is difficult	3
4	Lessons are easy	14	4	Writing in English is difficult	3
5	My teacher teaches well	11	5	Learning English is tiring	3
6	I love my teacher	8	6	It is useless	2
7	It is necessary to have a good job	6	7	There is too much homework	2
8	Lessons are like game	4	8	Lessons are boring	2
9	We learn new information	3	9	I get low marks	2
10	We don't have too much homework	3	10	I don't like to learn English	1
11	I understand the lessons	3			
12	I get high marks	2			
13	I like the worksheets	1			
Total Reasons Provided		121	Total Reasons Provided		32

Most of the students in this group also stated that they liked English lessons (76.9 %). In 121 responses given, 13 different reasons emerged. The reason for most of the students was finding the lessons enjoyable (f=31). Similar to the students in other group, they stated the desire for communicating in a foreign language (f=18) to foreigners (f=17). For some, their teacher taught well (f=11), so lessons were easy (f=14). Six of the students expressed the necessity of speaking English in finding a good job. Another reason was that students found English lessons like game (f=4). Some students, on the other hand, liked English lessons since they were not assigned too much homework (f=3). Also, getting high marks was the reason given by two students.

Less number of students expressed their dislikes toward English lessons (23 %). For almost half of these students the reason was finding the lessons difficult (f=9). So, as five of them noted, they did not understand the lessons. Two of the students found English learning as an unnecessary task. They also found reading (f=3) and writing (f=3) difficult.

The majority of the students of the non-participant teachers also liked English. However, the percentage was lower than the participants' students (94.6 % to 76.9 %). When the reasons provided for liking the lessons are compared, it is clear that students from both groups found English lessons enjoyable. They both expressed their desire to communicate with foreigners in English. Also, students from both groups seemed aware of the need of a foreign language for having a good job in the future. Nevertheless, the other reasons differ in two groups. The students of the participant teachers mentioned the materials and activities used in their lessons in a positive way. However, the other reasons provided by non-participant teachers' students were having less homework, getting high marks, or liking the worksheets. Comparing the number of the responses and their differences, it may also be inferred that the participant teachers' students expressed their positive feelings or dislike in a more detailed and definite ways commenting specifically on the activities and materials introduced in their English classes.

Students from both groups were asked for opinions of their English teachers. The responses and the reasons are displayed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5. Students' Attitudes of Participant Teachers toward Their English Teachers

I like my English teacher			I don't like my English teacher		
		Total:90			Total:4
Reasons why they like their teacher		f	Reasons why they don't like their teacher		f
1	She teaches well	57	1	She asks difficult questions	3
2	She never gets angry	32	2	Sometimes she doesn't come to class	3
3	She spends effort to teach us	16	3	Sometimes she gets angry	2
4	She loves us	15	4	She doesn't give much homework	2
5	She teaches songs to us	10	5	She doesn't teach everything in the book	1
6	She makes lessons fun	9			
7	She uses interesting materials	9			
8	She teaches in an enjoyable way	7			
9	She teaches different things to us	7			
10	She uses OHP	4			
11	She does different activities	4			
12	She makes us love English	4			
13	She lets us play games	4			
14	She uses pictures	3			
15	She is beautiful	3			
16	She teaches riddles	2			
17	She is very patient	2			
18	She is tolerant	1			
19	She trusts us	1			
Total Reasons Provided		180	Total Reasons Provided		11

The high majority of the participants' students (95.7 %) stated that they liked their English teachers. Out of the 180 reasons suggested, the main reason for them was the teacher's teaching well (f=57). From the other responses, her being tolerant (f=32), spending effort to teach them (f=16), teaching songs (f=10), making the lessons fun (f=9) enjoyable (f=7) by using different materials (f=9) like OHP (f=4) or pictures (f=3) and by introducing different activities (f=4) like games (f=4) affected students' positive attitudes. This should indicate that both the materials used and the activities like games or plays are essential part of teaching in YLs classes; thus, they should not be treated as time fillers or rewards (Vale and Feunteun, 1995). The feeling of trust (f=1) and tolerance (f=1) were contributed to establishing positive feelings toward the teacher as well.

In the discussions following the sample lesson application, the participant teachers also seemed aware of the students' high motivation. For example, after the application of the first lesson in which colorful pictures were used to teach new vocabulary, Bilge noted that:

Extract 4.82:

I applied all the activities and students loved them. They loved the pictures and wanted more. When I told them those were all, they were really upset. The lesson was just perfect. (Bilge / 2nd Phase / 2nd Meeting).

Only four students (4.2 %) stated that they did not like their teachers. The reasons for them were asking difficult questions (f=3), getting angry (f=2), not coming to class sometimes (f=3), and giving too much homework (f=2). One student complained about teacher's not covering every item in their course book. Since students were used to study only the items in the book, this student seemed to resist omitting some parts in the course book.

From the responses given to the second question, it is clear that the majority of the participant teachers' students liked their teachers. The reasons provided indicate that both the teachers' attitudes toward the students and their way of carrying their lessons were influential in students' developing positive attitudes. The responses also stress the positive effect of the materials and the activities used by the teachers.

The opinions of the students of non-participant teachers are displayed in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6. Students' Attitudes of Non-Participant Teachers toward Their English Teachers

I like my English teacher			I don't like my English teacher		
		Total:83			Total:8
Reasons why they like their teacher		f	Reasons why they don't like their teacher		f
1	She teaches well	42	1	She is always nervous	3
2	She never gets angry	27	2	She gets angry to us	3
3	She treats us gently	25	3	She speaks English	2
4	She is beautiful	8	4	She is a bad teacher	2
5	She spends effort to teach us	8	5	She makes us get bored	2
6	She dresses beautifully	5			
7	She loves us	4			
8	She helps us	3			
9	She doesn't discriminate	3			
10	She doesn't beat us	2			
11	She gives little homework	2			
12	She always smiles	2			
13	She lets us play games in class	2			
14	She wants us to be successful	1			
15	She is strict	1			
16	She is honest	1			
Total Reasons Provided		136	Total Reasons Provided		12

83 students out of 91 (91.2 %) stated they liked their English teachers providing 136 reasons in total. Similar to the other group, the most frequent reason was their teacher's teaching well ($f=42$). Her never getting angry ($f=27$) and her treating kindly ($f=25$) were other reasons with high frequencies. Also, her spending effort to teach them ($f=8$) was among the reasons. The teachers' physical appearance seemed to have influenced the students. Some students pointed to their teacher's being beautiful ($f=8$) or dressing in a nice way ($f=5$) to be the reasons for liking them. Not discriminating among students ($f=3$) or not beating them ($f=2$) were also provided to be other reasons. For two students, the reason was teacher's letting them play games in class. The teachers' personalities like being strict ($f=1$) or honest ($f=1$) were among the other reasons.

Very low percentage of students (8.7 %) responded in negative way to this question. The main reason for not liking their teachers was her being angry ($f=3$) or

nervous ($f=3$). The teachers' speaking English in class was the cause for two students for not liking her. For others, the teacher was a bad teacher ($f=2$) and made her students get bored in lessons ($f=2$).

The overall evaluation indicates that the majority of the non-participant teachers' students also liked their English teachers. However, comparing the reasons given from both groups, there are some quantitative and qualitative differences. First, the number of reasons provided by participants' students was higher ($f=180$ to 136). Moreover, from the qualitative perspective, these reasons were related to teachers' practices in class like making the lessons fun and enjoyable by using different materials and activities. The reasons provided by other students were mostly related to teachers' personal and physical characteristics and their attitudes toward their students. Therefore, it can be inferred that the students of participant teachers noticed their teachers' efforts and different applications in class, and thus, evaluated their teachers accordingly. The students in the other group, on the other hand, evaluated their teachers according to routines and classroom behaviors of the teachers.

Students were asked whether they found English learning easy or difficult. The frequency of responses and the reasons given from both groups are shown in Table 4.5. and 4.7.

Table 4.7: Students' Opinions of Participant Teachers about Easiness of English Lessons

I find English lessons easy Total:89			I find English lessons difficult Total:4		Sometimes easy, sometimes difficult Total:2	
Reasons		f	Reasons		f	
1	My teacher teaches well	23	I get bad marks	2	Spelling is difficult	1
2	Lessons are enjoyable	14	I don't understand	1	We have only two hours a week	1
3	I study regularly	13	I can't read in English	1		
4	Learning English is easy	11	It is not our native language	1		
5	We learn with OHP	4				
6	Lessons are funny	3				
Total Reasons Provided		68	Total Reasons Provided		5	Total Reasons Provided 2

The majority of the students from participant teachers' classes expressed that English learning was easy for them (94.6 %). Their teachers' teaching well ($f=23$) and the lessons being enjoyable ($f=14$) were the most frequent reasons. Studying regularly ($f=13$) and learning English with OHP ($f=4$) were effective in finding it easy. For three students, the reason was having fun in English lessons.

Only four students found English lessons difficult and for two of them, sometimes difficult and sometimes easy. The most important cause for this was getting bad marks ($f=2$). Not being able to read in English or not being able to spell it was the reason for one student for each. One student stated that having only two hours per week made lessons more difficult.

As a result, most of the students of the participant teachers found English learning easy since they were taught in an enjoyable way. Only for a very little majority of students (6.3 %) learning was difficult.

Table 4.8: Students' Opinions of Non-Participant Teachers about Easiness of English Lessons

I find English lessons easy Total:48			I find English lessons difficult Total:31		Sometimes easy, sometimes difficult Total:11	
Reasons	f		Reasons	f	Reasons	f
1 My teacher teaches well	14		I don't understand	9	If we study hard, it is easy	6
2 Lessons are enjoyable	5		Spelling is difficult	7	If we play games, it is easy	2
3 I want to learn English	4		Pronunciation is difficult	6		
4 Words are easy	3		It is a different language	4		
5 We do lots of exercises	3		It is the first time we learn it	2		
Total Reasons Provided	29		Total Reasons Provided	28	Total Reasons Provided	8

Around half of the students of non-participant teachers stated that they found English learning easy (52.7 %). The reasons were similar to those provided by students in the other group. Their teachers' teaching well ($f=14$) and the lessons being enjoyable ($f=5$) were the most frequent ones. Also, some students expressed their desire to learn as the cause ($f=4$). For some others, English words' being easy ($f=3$) or doing many exercises ($f=3$) made learning easier for them.

However, there is a significant difference in the percentage of students from both groups who find English learning difficult. While 6.3 % of the students of participant teachers found English learning difficult or sometimes difficult, the percentage for non-participant teachers' students is 46.1 %. That means, almost half of the students had difficulty in learning English. The main reason expressed by the students was not understanding it ($f=9$) since it is a different language from Turkish ($f=4$). Again here, spelling ($f=7$) and pronunciation ($f=6$) were mentioned among the most important reasons. For some students, it is easy if they studied ($f=6$) or if they played games ($f=2$).

The analysis implies that non-participant teachers' students found English learning more difficult when compared to those of participant teachers'. The general evaluation of the responses given to the three questions indicates that the students of the participant teachers enjoyed English lessons more because of the different teaching applications they received, and this helped them perceive English learning as an easy and enjoyable task. On the other hand, although the students of other teachers liked English lessons and their teachers, almost half of them still found learning more difficult. There were few responses provided by these students about the styles they were taught or the materials and activities used in English lessons. Moreover, the reasons expressed for finding lessons enjoyable differed for both groups. While non-participant teachers' students stated their teachers' physical appearance or behaviors as reasons, the students in the other group more frequently mentioned the classroom activities and the materials used. Therefore, this result may indicate that teachers' differentiating among the activities and the materials used in the class and making the lessons more fun for YLs affected students in developing positive attitudes toward learning English.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.0. Introduction

The previous chapter presented the results of the data analysis and discussed the findings in the light of the collaborative model proposed in the study. The purpose of this chapter is to present the conclusions derived from the data findings. Section 5.1 below aims to evaluate the research questions investigated in this study with a view to assessing the extent to which the suggested model is beneficial for teacher development in TEYL. Section 5.2 presents the implications that the study has provided together with the recommendations for further study. Section 5.3 finally deals with the limitations of the study.

5.1 Evaluation of the Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to explore primary school English teachers' knowledge in TEYL and to assist them to extend their knowledge and skills through the collaborative learning model. Specifically, the study aimed to find answers to the following questions:

1. What were the teachers' constructs of TEYL before participating in collaborative learning process?
2. What impact does collaborative learning have on teachers' perceptions of TEYL?
3. To what extent and in what specific areas of TEYL is collaborative learning helpful?
4. Was there any change in teachers' constructs of teaching YLs after their participation in collaborative learning process?
5. Is there a commonality among the participant teachers in their construing effective English teacher of YLs?
6. Does the teachers' involvement in the collaborative learning process produce any effect on their students' opinions and feelings about learning English?

The teacher learning model suggested in this study is referred to as ‘collaborative learning model’. The rationale behind the model is based on the situated learning approach, which views teacher development as building on personal and professional meanings with the help of the new experiences gained in community of practice (termed by Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Similar to the outline of the collaborative model proposed by Erickson et al. (2005), in our study, participant teachers and the researcher (acting as a participant observer) formed a learning community in which they worked together for 8 months. During this process, they came together once a week to discuss the readings they had done, prepare sample lesson plans for their classes, reflect on their classroom and personal experiences, and to comment on the learning process they were involved in. The learning community formed in this study departed from the model proposed by Erickson et al. (2005) in two aspects. First, participants in this study did not have any support from their institutions. And second, there was also no liaison between the participants and an outside expert.

Discussions between the teachers were recorded in order to gather the qualitative data for the study. In addition to audio-recordings of the weekly meetings, journals, in which participants recorded their opinions and feelings about each meeting and out the collaborative process, supported the evaluation of the findings. To reveal participants’ personal constructs about TEYL, they were given Repertory Grid at the beginning and at the end of the learning process. The results of each grid were analyzed and then compared to identify the changes in participants’ perceptions on teaching English to YLs effectively.

The rep grids were used at the beginning and at the end of the process and analyzed to elicit data for the research questions geared toward identifying participants’ initial and final perceptions of TEYL (Research Questions 1 and 4). As for their initial perceptions, the study revealed that teachers’ perceptions of teaching English to YLs were not far from those of teaching English to the students at any level. Put differently, most of the constructs elicited were not specific to teaching English to YLs. Although the collaborative learning process had different results for each participant, the overall results concerning the teachers’ perceptions at the end of the study indicated that participant teachers had some transformation in their teaching beliefs. Such transformation concerned their improved perceptions various areas of TEYL ranging

from classroom methodology, materials and sources, assessment to needed adaptations in syllabus.

To recapitulate, before participating in the collaborative learning process, the participants' statements were not specific considerations of TEYL and were rather general statements about EFL. Aslı, for example, was concerned mainly about teacher's general knowledge and content knowledge. In evaluating an English teacher of YLs and herself, Aslı could not discriminate between effective, typical, and ineffective teachers. However, at the end of the collaborative learning process, there were considerable changes in the way she construed effective young learner teaching. She changed most of her constructs and the way she evaluated the teachers of YLs and herself as a teacher. At the end of the process, she seemed to have developed an awareness of effective young learner teaching both at theoretical and at practical level. The findings showed that, this change was largely due to the collaborative learning process she experienced.

As for the second participant, Bilge, the change was more dramatic. At the end of the collaborative process, there were considerable changes in Bilge's understanding of effective young learner teaching. The significant content change in the second grid indicated that the parameters of an effective English teacher of YLs had been reconstructed. With the new conceptual framework, Bilge seemed to have gained new insights for classroom teaching. Besides having a clearer distinction among three different groups of teachers, she also viewed herself differently. Although she perceived herself as identical to the most effective teacher at the beginning of the study, the second grid revealed a great change in this perception. At the end of the collaborative process, she placed herself among typical teachers, which indicated that she started to believe she needed further development of her teaching skills. The significant change in her ideal teacher was a clear indication of the change in parameters of an effective English teacher of YLs. As Sendan and Roberts (1998) state, any change in structure is the result of reorganization of each individual's system of constructs. Since she had changed the underlying parameters, it is likely to expect her to have significant changes in her perceptions of other teachers, including herself. Therefore, it can be claimed that the process Bilge had experienced helped her reorganize her constructs related to young learner teaching, and accordingly, evaluate herself and other teachers differently. This eventually led to her becoming aware of her weaknesses and expressing the need for further professional development.

The findings also presented a significant transformation in Didem's teaching beliefs. At the beginning of the learning process, she expressed a clear resistance to change in spite of the many problems she stated regarding her teaching experience with children. For her, the reasons for the problems were mainly related to institutional and sub-structural deficiencies. However, at the end of the process, she seemed to have partly overcome her resistance to change and accepted some new ideas she had been exposed to as alternatives to her teaching. Despite the fact that in her journal and in her interviews she had often stated the contribution of the collaborative process on her perception of young learner teaching and named the characteristics of effective teachers of YLs, she did not reflect them in her grids. This may suggest that she was still in the process of reconstruction while struggling with the fear of transforming into a totally new teacher by leaving out all her routines. The transformation that Didem had experienced is a very important result in this study in that promoting changes in teacher behavior is complicated because of the dilemma participants usually have between the newly learned items and the existing teaching theories (Johnston, 1988).

As for the commonality among the participant teachers regarding the effective YLs teacher, the commonality of the construing elements among the participants were much stronger at the end of the collaborative learning process. This outcome may imply that the collaborative learning process the participant teachers were involved led teachers to come up with similar constructs regarding TEYL. The findings revealed that the participant teachers were influenced from the materials they studied and from the other teachers in their learning community; and thus benefited from the collaborative learning process in similar ways.

The other two research questions (Question 2 and 3) were geared toward exploring whether or not the collaborative learning process had any impact on teachers' classroom practices. The findings indicate that in addition to the changes in the participants' views of an effective English teacher of YLs, they were also found to have benefited from the collaborative learning process in various ways. As many educators highlight its importance in professional development (e.g. Richardson, 1999; Hung & Der-Thanq, 2001; Sawyer, 2002), creating interaction between teachers and their social environment and enabling teachers integrate theory into practice by the help of situated tasks give teachers the opportunity to gain new knowledge and critique their existing beliefs. At the end of the study, the emerging themes from the weekly interviews and participants' weekly journals show that they improved their awareness of TEYL. At the

end of the second phase of the collaborative process, they were found to have transformed in several ways: professionally and personally, psychologically and socially.

Regarding the professional insights that participants gained, many themes, techniques, materials, tasks, and activities related to young learner teaching methodology were elicited. Findings also revealed that the process was supportive for the teachers in analyzing the syllabus they were applying in a more critical way and in modifying it where necessary. Moreover, many themes related to the main characteristics of young learners were elicited. This was specifically important in enabling the participant teachers identify any shortcomings in their teaching.

Another important change observed by participants was in their personalities. They became more creative, reflective, and flexible teachers with increased awareness of their professions as a result of the collaborative process. For them, this experience has led them to be researcher-teachers who are more familiar with their students needs.

In addition to the change in their personalities, the findings also revealed that this kind of learning supported them psychologically. During the first stages of the collaborative process, participants frequently mentioned being demotivated for teaching and pessimistic about finding any solutions to their problems. After realizing that other teachers also had similar problems and that they were not alone, they stopped blaming themselves for being inadequate in teaching YLs. As a result of this relief, they began to express their individual problems more easily and try to search for solutions. At this point, the readings they had done and the follow-up discussions were reported to have assisted them in finding solutions.

Regarding their social identity, data findings proved evidence as to some specific positive changes. The collaborative process proved to help them to develop a group identity with colleagues. Contrary to traditional in-service trainings, the collaborative learning process was found by the teachers to give them the opportunity to share experiences, to motivate and support each other, and to learn from one another with a view to making their own decisions regarding teaching. This finding of the research is clearly consistent with the findings of previous studies (Burbank & Kauchak, 2003, Erickson, 2005) in that teachers should be encouraged to be actively involved in their professional development and become decision makers of their own learning.

Another research question of this study was geared towards identifying students' attitudes toward English learning as a result of teachers' participation in collaborative

learning process (Question 5). In order to gain the required data, the students of teachers from both group (participant and non-participant) were asked to express their opinions about English lessons and their teachers by providing reasons. They were also asked whether they found learning English easy or difficult.

The findings showed that the students of the participant teachers enjoy English lessons more when compared to those of non-participant teachers'. On the other hand, although non-participant teachers' students liked English lessons and their teachers, almost half of them still found learning English rather difficult. Another difference was observed in the number of reasons provided for liking or disliking the lessons. There were more detailed responses provided by participant teachers' students. Moreover, the content of the reasons mentioned for finding lessons enjoyable differed for both groups. While non-participant teachers' students stated their teachers' physical appearance or behaviors as reasons, the students in the other group more frequently mentioned the classroom activities and the materials used. Therefore, this result may indicate that teachers' differentiating among the activities and the materials used in the class and making the lessons more fun for YLs affected students in developing positive attitudes toward learning English. This finding supports the idea proposed by Halliwell (1996). She suggests that when teaching YLs, teachers should give priority to attitude goals to achieve better results at the end of teaching. To do this, English teachers of YLs should utilize differentiation of activities and teaching methodology by integrating colorful materials and fun into their lessons.

In conclusion, this study clearly showed that the the collaborative teacher learning model contributed to the enterprise of TEYL in many respects. It enabled the teachers participated: to extend their perceptions and skills regarding TEYL, to have the chance to learn with and from one another voluntarily in an intimate and sharing atmosphere, which is often missing in many traditional in-service teacher training programs, to become more concerned, reflective and responsible teachers as far as the problems they face in teaching concerned, and to create a more different classroom where the students have positive attitudes toward learning English, which is a prerequisite in teaching YLs and one of the main reasons for starting teaching English at an early age in the present context.

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5.2 Implications and Recommendations for Further Study

This study has provided several implications for teachers themselves, school authorities, and the Ministry of National Education in Turkey. The study showed that it is possible for teachers to continue learning in small informal groupings. Thus, the administrative bodies in schools must encourage teacher learning accordingly. To do this, teachers should be viewed not only as teaching agents standing in classrooms, but rather as teacher researchers and learners in their attempts to find solutions for and alternative ways in teaching.

Drawing on this conceptualization, teachers' teaching load should be decreased with a view to permitting them enough time to collaborate and cooperate with colleagues. This collaboration could be formalized by the school administration i.e. holding regular weekly meetings. Put differently, the teachers in the same school can be encouraged to hold regular weekly or monthly meetings where they can discuss their problems related to teaching and students behaviors and produce solutions for potential problems.

The same can also be applied to the teachers working in different schools in the same region with similar student profiles. A room in one of the schools can be chosen as the working office where teachers can come together, exchange ideas, learn, and contribute to each other's learning. Such initiations of teachers should also be supported by the Ministry of National Education. The Ministry of Education and school administrations should support the accommodation of the collaborative learning model reported in this study in the schools as a means to strengthen the existing in-service teacher learning schemes.

We acknowledge the fact that the feasibility of applying such a model is not easy. However, considering the favorable results acquired in this study, we strongly believe that this research could be a starting point to support teachers' ongoing learning and development process when they are in act of teaching and that the application of such model would help decrease the amount of finance, time and labor force invested in the enterprise of in-service teacher training schemes.

We recommend that further studies should be conducted with a larger sample of teachers to have more reliable results. Such studies should also consider the effects of collaborative learning model on students' learning in terms of language proficiency.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The study aimed to explore the effects of collaborative learning model on teachers' developing awareness and skills of TEYL. However, generalization of the results to the whole population of English teachers of YLs is beyond the scope of this study. The study was a longitudinal case study in which only three teachers were involved. Thus, we are reassured by the fact that the gains participants had at the end of the collaborative learning may not produce the same results for other samples.

Furthermore, as the teachers participated in this study were working in different public primary schools, it was not possible to observe their lessons because of logistical constraints. If the participant teachers had been observed in their classroom environments, particularly in the second phase of the research, it would have been possible to gain a wider range of data that might help to gain in-depth results of teachers' classroom behaviors and also of students' attitudes toward lessons.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Reading List

1st Week: *Charecteristics of Young Learners & Materials to Be Used*

- 1- “*Materials in the Classroom with Children*” by Lobo, M. J. (2003)
- 2- “*English for Primary Teachers*”, Chapter 1, by Slattery, M. and Willis, J. (2001)

2nd Week :*Teaching Grammar to Young Learners*

- 1- “*English for Primary Teachers*”, Chapter 2 & 3, by Slattery, M. and Willis, J. (2001)

3rd Week: *Teaching Speaking to Young Learners*

- 1- “*English for Primary Teachers*”, Chapter 4 & 5, by Slattery, M. and Willis, J. (2001)
- 2- “*Musical Activities for Young learners of EFL*”, by Çakır, A. (1999)
- 3- “*Introduction to Children’s Jazz Chants Old and New*”, by Graham, C. (2002)

4th Week: *Teaching Reading and Writing to Young Learners*

- 1- “*English for Primary Teachers*”, Chapter 6 & 7, by Slattery, M. and Willis, J. (2001)

5th Week: *Using Stories*

- 1- “*English for Primary Teachers*”, Chapter 8 & 9, by Slattery, M. and Willis, J. (2001)
- 2- “*Why Stories?*”, by Wright, A. (2002)

6th Week: *Effective Lesson Planning*

- 1- “*How to Make Drills More Exciting by Using Pictures?*”, by Dimpere, I. (1996)
- 2- “*Planning a Lesson for Children*”, by Krause, A. (2004)
- 3- “*Lesson Ideas*”, by Wright, A. (2003)

7th Week: *Building a Communicative Classroom*

- 1- “*English for Primary Teachers*”, Chapter 10, by Slattery, M. and Willis, J. (2001)

8th Week: *Assessing Young Learners*

- 1- “*Assessing Young learners*”, by Pavlou, P. (2004)
- 2- “*Pupils’ Profiles*”, by by Dimpere, I. (2000)

APPENDIX 2

Sample Lesson Plan Adapted from Yıldırım (2004)

Title of lesson	The Animal Show
Student Profile	10 year-olds, 5 th grade in the primary school, novice –mid in listening and speaking, and novice-high in reading and writing according to ACTFL.
Skills to be emphasized	Listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
Content	Structures: I can...I can't...Can you...? Vocabulary: lion, rabbit, parrot, kangaroo, monkey, bird, fish, dog, snake-jump, wriggle, run fast, fly, do a star jump, touch your toes, cross your eyes, snap your fingers, sing, wink, dance, whistle, stand on one's head, swim.
Objectives	By the end of the lesson, students should be able to -learn new vocabulary about animals and use them in speaking and writing; -ask and answer questions using “can”; -understand a listening text and respond to this by acting, miming and answering related questions; -speak and write about animals using “can”; -speak and write about their own abilities using “can.” (Excellent objectives. Very well-written!)
Materials	Flashcards (animals) and slips of paper.
Source	-The story text has been adapted (with modifications as to the format, title, and language) from “Story Magic 1” by S. House & K. Scott. 2003. Macmillan. -The flashcards have been taken from www.eslkidstuff.com
Warm-up	Pre-listening stage Explain the students that it is the story time, and they are going to listen to a story of the animals in the forest. To activate their schema and get them ready for the story they are about to hear, introduce them to the new vocabulary about animals. -Hold up the flashcards of the animals and ask: <i>What's this?</i> When students cannot supply the answer, tell them <i>it's a (lion)</i> . -Hold up the flashcards again and encourage students to call out the names. -Show the cards again. This time say: <i>I like (lion)</i> and ask <i>Do you like (lion)?</i> -Hand out the cards. Ask students to ask each other questions about the cards and answer the questions after you model the interaction. S1: <i>What is this?</i> S2: <i>It is a (rabbit)</i> .

S1: *Do you like rabbit?* S2: *Yes, I do./ No, I don't.*

Vocabulary game

- Pin the flashcards around the classroom, and tell students that you are going to play a game.
- Use the flashcards from this lesson and from previous lessons so as to provide a good range of words to practice.
- Play "I spy" by clapping the syllables.
- T: I spy a word with...(clap twice). Students guess the word.
- S1: Dog. T: No. S2: Rabbit. T: Yes. Good.
- The student who guesses correctly can start the next round. (Nice prep for presentation.)

Presentation

Story-telling to introducing the new language structure and vocabulary (Can-cannot-Can you...?/ jump, wriggle, run fast, fly) in context.

The first telling of the story:

- Tell students that they will now hear the story. Say: *Let's listen to the story about an animal show. Watch and listen to me very carefully.*
- Tell the story at a slow pace by holding up the flashcards one at a time.
- Point to each animal as they speak and mime actions for what each animal can do: Jumping, wriggling, running fast, and flying.
- Use your intonation appropriately to make the meaning comprehensible.

Prediction

- While telling the story, make students predict to keep them listening actively and interact with the listening text. To do this:
- Pause after each line of the question asked by the lion and wait for students' answer.

Lion: ...Snake?, What about you, rabbit? Can you wriggle, parrot?

...the winner is... (Who is the winner?)

- Help students find the appropriate verb. To do this, mime the action for the verbs, e.g., pause after *...what about you, rabbit?* Wait. If students cannot give the answer, mime "running fast" and get them predict.
- (Good activities for keeping students engaged.)

The second telling of the story: TPR

- Retell the story, but this time stop after each line of the dialogue part.
- Encourage students to join in with the dialogue. To do this, divide the class into four characters, the kangaroo, snake, rabbit, and parrot. Take the role of the lion. In groups they recite the dialogue with you as the judge.
- Encourage students to recite the dialogue miming in character.

Practice

Checking comprehension: oral practice of asking and answering questions with “can”

- Say let's remember the story. Ask questions concerning what each animal can and cannot do, e.g. T: Can the snake fly? S1: No, it can't.
- Repeat this process with all the animals in the story.
- Hold up the flashcards from previous lessons and ask about these animals. Use the verbs students are familiar with. *Can a cat sing? Can a dog skip?*
- To make it more fun, ask some funny questions such as Can a kangaroo make a cake? Can a cow go to the cinema?
- Encourage them to give their reasons why they think “no” (If needed elicit their answers in L1).

Oral practice of the structure through personalization 1. TPR (Can you actions):

- Ask students what they can and can't do.
- First, use the verbs from the story.
- Write the verbs, jump, wriggle, run fast, fly and speak English on the board.
- Ask: T: *Can you fly? Yes, Ayşe?*
Ayşe: *No, I can't.*
T: *Can you speak English?*
Ayşe: *Yes, I can.*
T: *Wonderful.*
T: *Who can run very fast?*
Ss: *Me.*
T: *OK. ...(call*

Out the name of a specific student). Come and show us, please.

Oral and reading practice of the structure through Personalization 2: TPR

- Then, add some other verbs to those from the story (do a star jump, touch your toes, cross your eyes, snap your fingers, sing, wink, dance, whistle, stand on one's head, swim, etc.), write them on separate slips of paper and put them in a bag.
- Call a student to the front and ask him to take a slip of paper from the bag and read it silently.
- Tell the rest of the class to guess what the verb is by asking questions. S1: Can you (swim)? S2: No. S3: Can you (dance)? S2: (dances) Yes.

Practicing the structure through reading and writing.

Read the riddle and match:

- Hand out each student a paper including pictures of four animals and riddles illustrating what each animal is saying
- Explain that they should read the riddles and decide which animal is speaking.
- Read the first one out and do it as an example if needed.

Write your own riddle:

- Pin the flashcards (not those used in the matching activity) on the board.
- Point to the animals and ask: *What's this?* SS: *A cat. A snake.*
- Students write the riddles following the same format as in the riddles that students have read before. Monitor the class helping with spelling.
- Ask for volunteers to read their riddles out. The rest of the class should listen and guess which animal is speaking.

MATERIALS for the 4th Lesson:**Story: The Animal Show**

This is a story about animals. Today is the animal show in the forest. In the show are a lion, kangaroo, snake, rabbit, and parrot. Lion, the king of the forest, is the judge.

Lion: All animals, welcome to the show. Let's see now. What can you do? Kangaroo?

Kangaroo: I can jump.

Lion: Mmm. Very good. Snake?

Snake: I can wriggle.

Lion: Good. What about you, rabbit?

Rabbit: I can run very fast.

Lion: Oh, excellent. Can you wriggle, parrot?

Parrot: No, I can't.

Lion: Can you run very fast?

Parrot: No, I can't. I can't wriggle and I can't run very fast. But I can fly and I CAN SPEAK English. **Hello, how are you?**

Lion: Wow! Now it is time to announce the winner. And the winner is... the parrot!

Animals: Hurray! Well done, our friend.

Lion: Well done, parrot.

Parrot: Thank you. I am very happy.

Riddle Sheet

A: I've got legs. I haven't got arms. I can run. I can't fly. Who am I?

Number:1:Dog

B: I haven't got arms and I haven't got legs. I can swim. I can't run. Who am I?

Number:...

C: I've got arms. I've got legs. I can't fly. I can climb up the trees. Who am I?

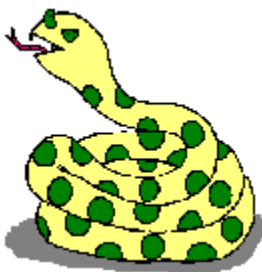
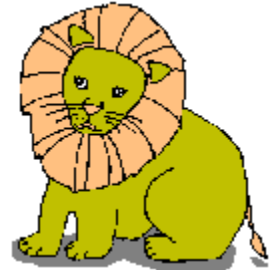
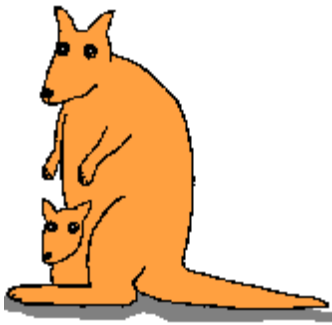
Number:...

D: I haven't got arms but I have got legs. I can fly. I can't swim. Who am I?

Number:...

**1****2****3****4**

Flashcards of the animals in the story



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Papers Presented

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1. "The Effects of Language Attitudes in Second Language Learning: Focus on Teachers" Conference on Linguistics and Language Teaching, METU, Ankara, 1999.
2. "*Acquisition of Anaphora by English Learners of Turkish Adults*" 2nd International Postgraduate Conference on Linguistics and Language Teaching, METU, Ankara, 2004, (Joint Paper)
3. "*An Investigation into Turkish Teachers' Awareness of Teaching English to Young Learners*", The First International Language Learning Conference 2004 (ILLC), University Sains, Malaysia, 2004, (Joint Paper)
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b. National Conferences

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