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**Experienced EFL Teachers' Personal Theories of Good
Teaching: A PCT-based Investigation**

by

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in ELT and Applied Linguistics**

University of Warwick, Centre for English Language Teacher Education

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Dedicated to my mother Fatma and father Hacı...

Table of contents

List of figures and tables	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
Declaration	x
Abstract	xi
List of abbreviations	xii
Transcription conventions	xii
0. Introduction	1
1. Literature review	5
1.1 Introduction	5
1.2 The knowledge base of English language teacher education	5
1.2.1 Introduction	5
1.2.2 How has research informed approaches to ELTE?	6
1.2.3 In search of a knowledge base for ELTE	7
1.3 Previous research into teacher cognition	11
1.3.1 Pre-service teachers	12
1.3.2 Novice teachers	18
1.3.3 Experienced teachers	25
1.3.3.1 Studies of ‘expert’ experienced teachers	26
1.3.3.2 Insights from research in the field of ELTE	31
1.3.3.3 Insights from research in the field of general education	40
1.4 The need for further research	45
2. Theoretical framework	48
2.1 Introduction	48
2.2 The persisting terminology problem in teacher thinking research	48

2.3	Personal practical knowledge	51
2.4	Personal construct theory (PCT): a theory of personality	55
2.5	Personal theories	64
2.6	Research questions	66
3.	Methodology	68
3.1	Introduction	68
3.2	The constructivist paradigm	68
3.3	Validity and reliability	70
3.4	Ethical considerations	74
3.5	Overview of data collection instruments	75
3.5.1	Repertory grid interview	75
3.5.2	Semi-structured follow-up interview	80
3.5.3	Observation field notes	81
3.5.5	Stimulated recall interview	82
3.6	The pilot and main studies	83
3.6.1	The context and the participants	83
3.6.2	The design	87
3.6.3	Repertory grid interviews	89
3.6.3.1	Rep-grid 1	89
3.6.3.2	Rep-grid 2	92
3.6.4	Semi-structured follow-up interviews	94
3.6.5	Observation field notes	95
3.6.6	Stimulated recall interviews	97
3.7	Data management and analysis	100
3.7.1	Data management	100
3.7.2	Methods of analysis	101
3.7.2.1	Analysis of constructs	101
3.7.2.2	Content analysis	104
3.7.3	Writing up	107

4.	Personal theories of good teaching: Teachers as persons	110
4.1	Introduction	110
4.2	Teachers' profiles and core constructs	111
4.2.1	Gün	112
4.2.2	Serkan	116
4.2.3	İlayda	121
4.2.4	Mine	126
4.3	Summary and discussion	130
5.	Personal theories of good teaching: Professional development and relationships and roles	132
5.1	Introduction	132
5.2	Professional development	132
5.2.1	Overall themes	134
5.2.2	Collaboration with colleagues	134
5.2.3	Training	135
5.2.4	Learning something new everyday	136
5.2.5	Personal attributes	138
5.2.6	Building on experience	139
5.2.7	Constraints and opportunities	141
5.2.8	Summary and discussion	141
5.3	Relationships and roles	143
5.3.1	Overall themes	143
5.3.2	Students	144
5.3.3	Parents	149
5.3.4	Colleagues	150
5.3.5	Summary and discussion	152

6.	Personal theories of good teaching: Classroom practices	154
6.1	Introduction	154
6.2	Shared themes for classroom practice and pedagogy	155
6.2.1	Overall themes	155
6.2.2	Implement syllabus goals according to students' needs	157
6.2.3	Facilitate learning for students	158
6.2.4	Enhance target language use in the classroom	158
6.2.5	Monitor self	159
6.2.6	Promote intercultural awareness and prevent cultural degeneration	159
6.3	Teachers' constructs for classroom practice and pedagogy	160
6.3.1	Elicited elements: 'Classroom activities that I do'	160
6.3.2	Gün	163
6.3.3	Serkan	168
6.3.4	İlayda	172
6.3.5	Mine	177
6.4	Summary and discussion	180
7.	Personal theories in practice	184
7.1	Introduction	184
7.2	Perceived constraints, and responses to them	184
7.2.1	Constraints, as revealed prior to stimulated recall	185
7.2.2	Responses to 'Syllabus' as constraint	185
7.2.3	Responses to 'Students' problems in speaking' as constraint	187
7.2.4	Responses to individual constraints	190
7.3	'Good practices' according to teachers	194
7.3.1	Gün	195
7.3.2	Serkan	198
7.3.3	İlayda	200
7.3.4	Mine	204
7.4	Summary and discussion	207

8.	Overall discussion	212
8.1	Introduction	212
8.2	The contents of experienced teachers' personal theories	212
8.3	The nature of experienced teachers' personal theories	215
8.4	The congruence of theory and practice	220
8.5	Experienced teachers' development	224
9.	Conclusion	228
9.1	Introduction	228
9.2	The knowledge base of ELTE revisited	228
9.3	Limitations of the study and directions for future research	231
9.4	Theory–practice dissonance: concluding reflections	234
	References	237
	Appendices	249
Appendix 2.4	Definitions of key terms of PCT	250
Appendix 3.3	Criteria checklist for data analysis and interpretation	253
Appendix 3.5.1	Demonstrative rep-grid transcript sample	254
Appendix 3.6.3	Samples of interview data – rep-grids 1 and 2, follow-up and stimulated recall interview – transcripts of Gün	256
Appendix 3.6.4	Semi-structured follow-up questions asked to all teachers	267
Appendix 3.7.2.1	Initial content analysis table for all eight participants	268
Appendix 3.7.2.2	Refined content analysis table for the four participants included at the writing up stage	272
Appendix 4.2.1	Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of Gün's constructs in the context of 'Significant others'	276
Appendix 4.2.2	Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of Serkan's constructs in the context of 'Significant others'	278
Appendix 4.2.3	Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of İlayda's constructs in the context of 'Significant others'	280

Appendix 4.2.4	Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of Mine's constructs in the context of 'Significant others'	282
Appendix 6.3.2	Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of Gün's constructs in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do'	284
Appendix 6.3.3	Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of Serkan's constructs in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do'	286
Appendix 6.3.4	Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of İlayda's constructs in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do'	288
Appendix 6.3.5	Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of Mine's constructs in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do'	290
Appendix 7.1	Individual follow-up interview questions for Gün, Serkan, Mine and İlayda	292

List of figures and tables

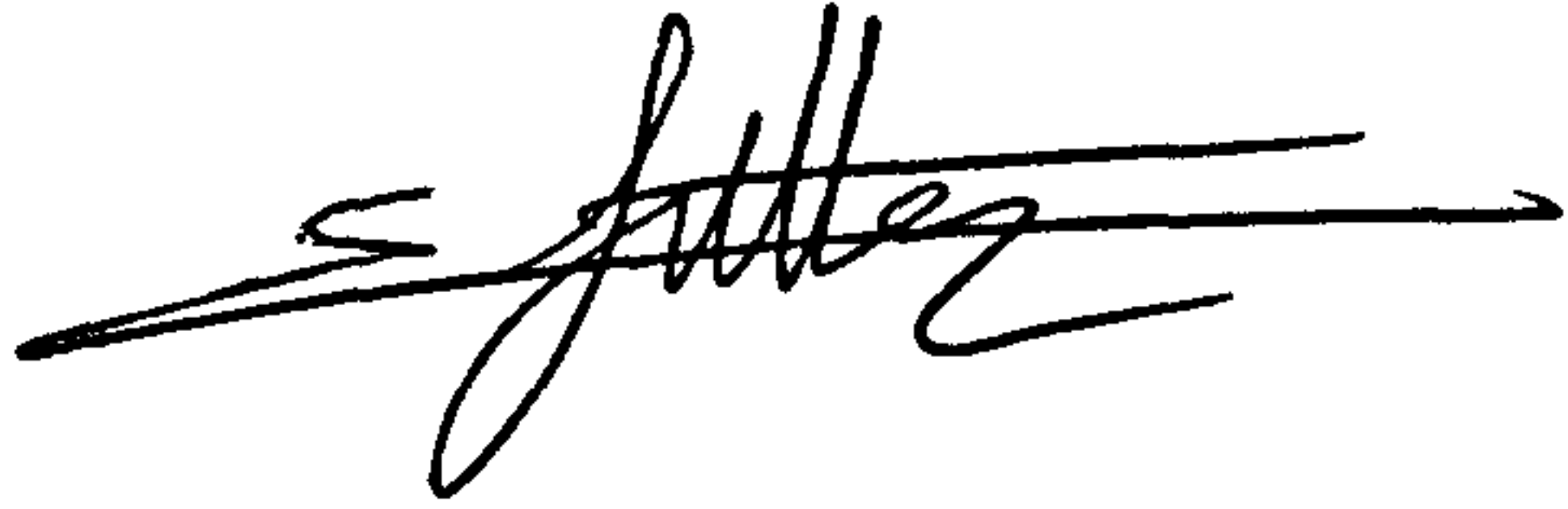
Figure 3.5.1	Example of a completed grid	80
Table 4.2.1	Gün's constructs in the 'Significant others' context	112
Table 4.2.2	Serkan's constructs in the 'Significant others' context	116
Table 4.2.3	İlayda's constructs in the 'Significant others' context	121
Table 4.2.4	Mine's constructs in the 'Significant others' context	126
Table 5.2.1	Themes from content analysis (1): Professional Development	133
Table 5.3.1	Themes from content analysis (2): Relationships and roles	143
Table 6.2.1	Themes from content analysis (3): Classroom practice and pedagogy	155
Table 6.3.1	Teachers' classroom activities elicited during Rep-grid 2	160
Table 6.3.2	Gün's constructs in the 'Classroom activities that I do' context	163
Table 6.3.3	Serkan's constructs in the 'Classroom activities that I do' context	168
Table 6.3.4	İlayda's constructs in the 'Classroom activities that I do' context	172
Table 6.3.5	Mine's constructs in the 'Classroom activities that I do context'	177

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Declaration

I declare that the present thesis has been researched and composed by myself and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or professional qualification.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. J. J. J.', written over a horizontal line.

Abstract

The importance of understanding teachers' cognition has been frequently stressed in connection with an ongoing debate regarding the need for a new knowledge base in English language teacher education. However, as is indicated in Chapter One of the present thesis, there has so far been relatively little actual research into teachers' cognition in the field of ELT, and the majority of studies have focused on pre-service and novice, rather than experienced teachers. Research into experienced teachers has tended to rest on the questionable assumption that characteristics of 'experts' can be identified and their knowledge prescribed to novices. Additionally, most studies have been carried out in ESL contexts, not the secondary school EFL contexts in which most teachers of English in the world work.

This justifies the focus in the present study on identifying experienced (but not necessarily 'expert') teachers' personal theories of good teaching in an EFL secondary school context in Turkey. Both the contents and the overall nature (structure and sources) of such teachers' theories are investigated, as is the extent to which their classroom practices are congruent with their theories. The study adopts a Personal Construct Theory (PCT) perspective which is justified and explained in Chapter Two, and employs repertory-grid and follow-up interviews, and stimulated recall interviews based on video-recordings of lessons (as explained in Chapter Three). Four teachers, whose years of experience range from eleven to twenty-five years, are particularly focused upon.

Findings are presented and discussed in four chapters, which focus, respectively, on: participants' core constructs relating to 'Significant others' in their past and present experience (Chapter Four); shared views (as revealed by content analysis) relating to professional development, and roles and relationships (Chapter Five); both shared views and individual constructs relating specifically to classroom practice and pedagogy (Chapter Six); and, finally, how the participants' personal theories are put into practice and situational constraints are perceived (Chapter Seven).

In Chapter Eight I discuss how the personal theories of the participants in this study appear relatively unaffected by formal theories of teaching and learning but *are* particularly informed by core constructs which have moral and affective significance. These core constructs have deep roots in participants' personal biographies, and they have, to varying extents, developed ways of mediating them into their practice. This process is explained with reference to PCT, and original findings are also offered regarding the overall structure of teacher cognition and the way teachers respond differently to common constraints. The thesis ends (Chapter Nine) with a summary of implications and limitations of the study, suggestions for future research, and final reflections on theory–practice dissonance.

List of abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used frequently in the thesis:

EFL: English as a foreign language

ELT: English language teaching

ELTE: English language teacher education

ESL: English as a second language

PCT: Personal Construct Theory (The Theory of Personal Constructs)

Rep-grid : Repertory grid interview

Rep-grid 1: First repertory grid interview

Rep-grid 2: Second repertory grid interview

Transcription conventions

The following symbols are used frequently in the interview extracts presented in the thesis:

‘...’: indicates pauses

‘[]’: indicates explanations, notes and so on which I wrote down during and immediately after the interview

‘[...]’: indicates omitted material

INTRODUCTION

This study explores experienced EFL teachers' personal theories of good teaching in Turkey. My interest in teacher thinking initially developed while I was myself a secondary school EFL teacher in Turkey six years ago and it was further strengthened during my MA studies in the UK. My own 'novice' teaching experience, when I often felt that there was something which prevented me from acting appropriately in the classroom, can be an example to illustrate the need for the recent moves among language teacher educators to re-conceptualise the knowledge base of their work (Freeman and Johnson 1998). My feeling sometimes stemmed from the heavy content load that I had to teach within a given time. From another point of view, my students had diverse needs, which were often difficult to address. Knowledge acquired during my university teacher training course had not always been helpful, since there was often a separation between how I interpreted theory and the realities of practice. This dissonance gave me a lot of discomfort and often led me to question my efficiency as a teacher. Being the only English teacher in my institution, I had little opportunity to discuss how I felt with other colleagues and, for this reason, I believe I made little progress during my two years of teaching in a secondary school. My own situation, although it cannot be taken as representative of other contexts which have their own unique characteristics, has, I now realise, many similarities to the survival situation other novice teachers are reported to find themselves in, struggling to come to terms with constraints that they were not aware of during their initial training (Fuller and Bown 1975, Lortie 1975, Zeichner, Tabachnick and Densmore 1987, Albelushi 2003).

Thus, when the Turkish Ministry of Education offered teachers of all subjects the chance to undertake postgraduate studies overseas as part of the recent reforms implemented in teacher education faculties (Çakıroğlu and Çakıroğlu 2003), I seized the opportunity and came to the UK initially to do an MA degree. My experiences during the MA course made me more aware and strengthened my view that the theory–practice dilemma I had experienced while teaching in Turkey originated from the inadequacies of my initial training as well as my lack of awareness. I believe that even giving a minimum amount of support to teachers-in-training to help them realise what is awaiting them in reality, and asking them how they would feel about it, might

enable them to feel stronger in their careers. This is something I came to feel was lacking in my own initial training. Other dissatisfactions are voiced by Freeman (1989: 27):

Language teacher education has become increasingly fragmented and unfocused. Based on a kaleidoscope of elements from many different disciplines, efforts to educate individuals as language teachers often lack a coherent, commonly accepted foundation. In its place, teacher educators and teacher education programs substitute their own individual rationales, based on pedagogical assumptions or research, or function in a vacuum, assuming – yet never articulating – the bases from which they work.

Accordingly, Çakıroğlu and Çakıroğlu (2003) assert that currently teacher education programmes in Turkey have been undergoing substantial changes to make their programme contents more relevant to the local needs of teachers. They criticise those faculties which adopt ideas developed elsewhere without considering how to modify them to make the knowledge base meaningful to student teachers. This view is shared within (English language) teacher education in general and, currently, there is an ongoing debate about what should constitute a sound knowledge base for teacher education programmes both to address local needs and to establish links with contexts elsewhere for learning from one another's concerns (Freeman 2002, Çakıroğlu and Çakıroğlu 2003). Within the context of this debate, there is one thing that teachers, educators and researchers seem to agree on: understanding teachers' own thinking about their profession will make an important contribution. "Teachers' thoughts, perceptions, beliefs and experiences are all aspects of teachers' culture which we need to know about and be aware of as a key factor in education" (Cortazzi 1993: 1). However, over the last three or more decades since a concern with teachers' thinking came to prominence in the general education field, it has continued to be relatively rare for studies in the field of ELT to present findings about the world of teaching as teachers themselves see it, and there is a big gap to be filled, especially with regard to teachers in secondary school EFL contexts (Borg 2003).

Therefore, I see it as a worthy pursuit in a good cause to focus on experienced EFL teachers' thinking and to elicit their personal theories of good teaching, in the belief that the findings will be useful for re-conceptualising the knowledge base of English

language teacher education in a teacher-focused way. To this end, I aim to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are experienced EFL teachers' personal theories of good teaching?
 - 1a. What are the *contents* of experienced EFL teachers' personal theories of good teaching?
 - 1b. What is the *nature* of experienced EFL teachers' personal theories of good teaching?
2. To what extent are experienced EFL teachers' classroom practices congruent with their personal theories of good teaching?

I shall start to justify the need to explore the questions above in Chapter 1, where I discuss recent changes in perceptions of teacher cognition, and why this area has become a major focus for teacher educators in constructing a new knowledge base for training programmes. In this chapter, I also review previous research on the thinking of pre-service, novice and experienced teachers (considered separately), and I shall highlight how little research has been done to investigate experienced EFL teachers' cognition. I shall also argue that the relatively little research which has been done is still far from informing us fully about the ways teachers' think about their teaching in the field of ELT, compared to how teachers are depicted as whole persons in the field of general education.

In Chapter 2, I address the terminology problem which arises when researching teachers' thinking, uncovering the origins of some very influential studies in the process. I move on to justify and explain my own theoretical framework, Personal Construct Theory (Kelly 1955), partly by showing its similarities to the frameworks informing these influential previous studies. At the end of this chapter I state my own research questions.

In Chapter 3, I set out to show how I developed my methodology, and data collection and analysis methods. Here, I also describe the context and the participants in greater detail, and the pilot and main study procedures.

Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 are devoted to findings which answer the research questions. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present and discuss findings from repertory grid and follow-up interviews. The data from these interviews were analysed for evidence both of personal constructs and of shared conceptions or concerns, thus providing insights

into both the contents and the structure of experienced teachers' theories. Chapter 7 is different, in that it attempts to provide answers to Research Question 2 regarding the extent to which stated personal theories are in congruence or otherwise with practice. The findings from stimulated recall interviews will be presented in this chapter.

I discuss my findings in Chapter 8, continuing to draw insights for this discussion from Personal Construct Theory. Finally, I return in Chapter 9 (Conclusion) to the problem of the knowledge base for ELTE, while devoting this last chapter also to reflecting on the limitations of the study and highlighting possible areas for further research.

CHAPTER ONE

Literature review

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter I begin by establishing a context for the present investigation of experienced EFL teachers' cognition within current debates regarding the knowledge base of English language teacher education. I indicate in section 1.2 why 'teacher cognition' is an important area to research, and I identify, in general terms, some gaps which seem to exist in knowledge in this area. In section 1.3, I move on to review previous research into the cognition of pre-service, novice and experienced teachers, with a view to establishing more concretely the focus of and directions for the present study. I end with a summary of needs for further research and a preliminary definition of my own research aims (1.4).

1.2 The knowledge base of English language teacher education

1.2.1 Introduction

There is an ongoing debate regarding what should constitute the knowledge base of English language teacher education (henceforth, 'ELTE') (Freeman 2002). One of the factors which should be taken into account, it is widely agreed, is the thinking of teachers themselves. Research, mostly in the general field of education, has brought new perspectives about (prospective) language teachers which the previous behaviouristic paradigm could not adequately provide: rather than "reducing the complexities of teaching learning situations into a few manageable research variables" (Halkes and Olson 1984: 1), researchers now view teachers as employing highly complex cognitive processes. Below, developments over the last three decades which have contributed to this recognition of the importance of teacher cognition in teacher

development and education are first considered briefly (1.2.2); then, the current debate on the knowledge base of ELTE will be considered in more detail (1.2.3).

1.2.2 How has research informed approaches to ELTE?

Research has influenced ELTE in the last three decades towards a recognition that teachers are not passive recipients of approved norms of classroom behaviour but instead are active agents who have responsibility for their own teaching (Carter 1990, Borko and Putnam 1996, Murphy 2000, Pope 2000, Borg 2003). The 1970s can be seen as a turning point because teachers' personal perspectives regarding their practices have come in for much attention since then (Clark and Yinger 1977, Freeman 2002).

In the mid-1970s a new line of research in the general education field put greater emphasis on teachers' thinking and socialisation (Freeman 2002), and this became a widely acknowledged although – in the field of ELTE – still relatively under-researched area of concern in the 1980s and the 1990s. Teachers began to be seen as people who think and are capable of making sound decisions by combining their knowledge of context and theories of learning and teaching, with Lortie's (1975) study *The School Teacher: A Sociological Study* being important in setting off this new direction. Lortie emphasised the significance of the personal history and prior experiences of teachers in a social context, and research into teachers' cognition began to involve attempts to understand their previous experiences as students because these influence their behaviour. A focus on teachers' values and beliefs (Pajares 1992) brought the need to look for different methodologies of research. The behaviouristic paradigm was no longer considered useful since it did not help in identifying what occurred in teachers' minds, and a new interpretative approach had to be adopted: "It was a challenge of *where* to look as well as one of *how* to look" (Freeman 2002: 5).

Olson (1980) explored 'teacher constructs', Elbaz (1983) introduced the concept of 'practical knowledge', Clandinin (1986) investigated 'teachers' images', Schulman (1987) coined the terms 'pedagogical knowledge' and 'pedagogical reasoning', and Sendan (1995) looked at 'personal theories'. Such studies have shown that teachers anticipate events and construct and re-construct their practices in situations on the basis of what they already know and believe. These studies have also suggested that

teachers should be made aware of their beliefs, values, attitudes and personal theories in order to reshape them to live up to the challenges of the teaching profession because “the knowledge and beliefs that prospective and experienced teachers hold serve as filters through which their learning takes place” (Borko and Putnam 1996: 675). Thus, whereas in the past teachers’ prior experiences and personal theories were neglected, recent work places an emphasis on personal differences in the interpretation of events and calls for the knowledge base of teacher education to be related to teachers’ perceptions (e.g. Bell and Gilbert 1996).

In addition to the above, teachers are no longer viewed as if they are working in a vacuum. Not only are their theories and perceptions increasingly considered to be at the core of teacher education but also, as Lortie (1975) points out, teachers are affected by the context they work in. Various studies have shown that school culture is an important factor that imposes norms on teachers’ behaviour and challenges teachers’ already existing personal theories (Sikes, Measor and Woods 1985, Clandinin 1986, Zeichner, Tabachnick and Densmore 1987, Butt, Raymond, McCue and Yamagishi 1992, Flores 2001).

In ELTE, also, research into teacher cognition has shown that language teachers’ beliefs about language learning, subject matter, curriculum implementation, classroom management, students and the role of the teacher are influential in their success and development as teachers (Richards and Lockhart 1994, Bailey and Nunan 1996, Freeman and Richards 1996, Woods 1996, Richards 1998). The (still limited) research which has been carried out in ELTE has contributed towards an understanding of why English teachers do what they do, how they respond to the content of training programmes, what kinds of experience they undergo once they become teachers and how pedagogical knowledge evolves and under what circumstances (Borg 2003). It is now commonly believed that findings from such work will assist ELTE curriculum developers and teacher educators to base their interventions on where teachers ‘are at’, as well as helping teachers to re-examine their existing perceptions of language teaching.

1.2.3 In search of a knowledge base for ELTE

The developments outlined above have contributed to the current search for a new knowledge base for general teacher education (Shulman 1987), and within ELTE

(Freeman and Johnson 1998). However, this search is not an easy one. Where are the sources for a knowledge base likely to be found, if there can be *one* base at all?

[T]he actual and potential sources for a knowledge base are so plentiful that our question should not be, Is there really much one needs to know in order to teach? Rather, it should express our wonder at how the extensive knowledge of teaching can be learned at all during the brief period allotted to teacher preparation.

(Shulman 1987: 7)

Shulman (*ibid.*) argues that teachers' knowing is in essence a dialogical process between interconnected categories (content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge), fed by four major sources: scholarship in content disciplines, educational materials and structures, formal educational schools of thought, and the wisdom of practice itself, which Shulman (*ibid.*: 11) defines as "the maxims that guide (or provide reflective rationalization for) the practices of able teachers". This last source is the focus of my own present research, partly because it remains "the least codified of all" (*ibid.*) of the four major sources, and thus:

One of the more important tasks for the research community is to work with practitioners to develop codified representations of the practical pedagogical wisdom of able teachers. (*ibid.*)

I shall return to the notion of 'able teachers' in section 1.3.3.1 below, where I offer a critique of studies of expertise in teaching. However, what we should retain from Shulman's point of view is that the idea of documenting teachers' own perceptions about their practice in order to incorporate these into training programmes and make them more widely known among practitioners is one which entered the field of general teacher education some years ago (see also Hargreaves 1979, Olson 1980, 1981, Elbaz 1983, Sikes, Measor and Woods 1985, Clandinin 1986, Calderhead 1987, 1988, Zeichner et al. 1987, Chard 1988, Merret and Wheldall 1990, Butt et al. 1992, Tann 1993, Bell and Gilbert 1996, Freeman and Johnson 1998) .

Responding to the same challenge in the field of ELTE, Breen (1991) has studied teachers' 'implicit theories', Sendan (1995) 'personal theories', Woods (1996) 'BAK'

(beliefs-assumptions-knowledge), Richards (1996, 1998) 'teachers' maxims', Borg (1998) 'personal pedagogical systems', Gatbonton (1999) 'pedagogical knowledge', Breen et al. (2001) 'teachers' principles', and Gahin (2001) and others 'teacher beliefs'. Unfortunately, however, research in ELTE focusing on teachers' cognition is still relatively rare compared to research into, for example, second language acquisition. Thus, Freeman and Johnson (1998: 397) maintain that "research on language teacher education has been noticeably missing from the professional discourse" and point out that only 9% of the articles published in *TESOL Quarterly* between 1980 and 1997 focused on teacher preparation. Indeed, Borg in his (2003) review article on language teacher cognition identified only 64 studies published between 1976 and 2002 in the electronic and manual searches he carried out (although, as he says, such research gathered momentum in the second half of the 1990s).

In the field of general education this is not the case to the same degree and there have been a great number of studies with the primary focus on teachers. It is, in fact, partly due to the findings from these studies that the ELTE community has come to focus on teachers as thinking individuals and started to search for a more appropriate knowledge base for teacher education (Freeman and Johnson 1998, Johnston and Goettsch 2000, Freeman 2002).

Thus, Freeman (2002) draws mainly on research outside the field of ELTE in his call for teacher education programmes to recognize the influence of teachers' cognition and prior learning experiences. The same goes for his argument that pre-service training cannot be adequate on its own to prepare future teachers without bringing them together with experienced teachers through mentoring and networking to share and learn from their context-specific experiences. Similarly, Golombek (1998) also advocates the importance of teachers' experiential knowledge in language teaching and suggests looking at the stories told by teachers. Teachers' stories are assumed to reveal affective as well as cognitive aspects of personal practical knowledge, and Golombek suggests fostering reflection on such stories.

Although some (e.g. Carter and Doyle 1987, Johnston and Goettsch 2000) argue that content knowledge should not be neglected within the shift towards greater acknowledgement of teacher thinking, Johnson (1996) has emphasised that theory – in its current form – tends to remain irrelevant to practice in ELTE programmes. She questions the appropriateness of viewing knowledge as being constructed rationally

and holding true for all contexts. Instead, she refers to Kessels and Korthagen's (1996: 775, as cited by Johnson) notion of knowledge as perceptual, whereby "*phronesis*, practical wisdom, or perceptual knowledge, uses rules only as summaries and guides" (Kessels and Korthagen 2001: 27, italics in original). Schlessman (1997) criticised Johnson's argument for the way it set up an unhelpful dichotomy between theory and practice and could negatively influence the development of teachers as intellectual professionals; however, Johnson (1997) responded by restating her case that formal theory as constructed by researchers cannot be interpreted and understood in the same way by the recipients of this knowledge, and that a dichotomy between theory and practice is fostered by the ways in which scientific subject matter knowledge is presented to language teachers.

In a similar fashion, this time in the field of general education, Verloop, Driel and Meijer (2001) state that a perceived theory–practice gap does exist, especially according to the participants in pre-service education. Pre-service students are said to find the knowledge of their more experienced colleagues in their practice teaching schools more relevant than the formal theories provided by their training programmes (Russell 1988). Verloop et al. (2001: 442-3) argue that teaching should be understood within its own context:

The most challenging question with respect to teacher professionalism is no longer how we can best provide teachers with insights developed elsewhere, but how the process of "dialogue with the situation" takes place in a teaching context, which insights are developed in this context, and how these insights relate to insights from other sources.

Another important point made by Verloop et al. (ibid.) regards the relevance of research on teacher knowledge to educational innovations. They discuss the increasing consensus that teachers' cognitions are central to the successful implementation of innovations intended for any context. The authors also call for more research into teachers' cognition because, as "insight into teacher knowledge is still lacking, the first step needs to be an investigation of this component of the knowledge base of teaching" (p. 445).

Finally, Borg (2003: 106) observes that the studies which have focused on teachers' cognition in ELTE do not provide an even representation of the different contexts in which English is taught:

Much research has been conducted with native speaker teachers working with small groups of motivated adult learners studying in universities or private institutions. In contrast, we have minimal insight into state school settings (primary and secondary) where languages are taught by non-native teachers to large classes of learners who, particularly in the case of English, may not be studying the language voluntarily. Investigations of such settings, then, are another priority.

To summarise what has been discussed so far, the following points emerge as important in justifying the present study:

1. There appears to be a consensus among researchers and practitioners in the field of ELTE that a knowledge base needs to be sought partly through investigation of teachers' own cognition, including their beliefs, attitudes, values, personal theories, and practical wisdom, because these are the filters through which teachers rationalise their practices and also evaluate the appropriateness of the formal theories they learn against the requirements of their own contexts.
2. The commonly perceived need to focus on teachers' cognition does not mean that subject-specific theoretical knowledge development should be overlooked.
3. More research still needs to be done to investigate teachers' cognition. Currently, there is a relative lack of research in the field of ELTE, and, more specifically, in relation to non-native speaker teachers in EFL state school contexts.

1.3 Previous research into teacher cognition

Following on from section 1.2, it is important to provide a more comprehensive review of research that has been carried out into teacher cognition, including that in

the field of general education, in order to provide a firm grounding for the present study. The focus of my study is on the cognition of experienced teachers; however, this is a relatively under-explored area, and so insights gained from previous research into pre-service and novice teachers (reviewed under 1.3.1 and 1.3.2, respectively) will inform the study, along with insights from the research which has been carried out into experienced teachers (1.3.3).

1.3.1 Pre-service teachers

Research into the thinking of pre-service teachers has looked mainly at the sources of their developing theories of teaching. The sources which have been identified include: apprenticeship of observation, personal history, constraints in the teaching practicum, and training contents. Because of these different variables that student-teachers have to make sense of while developing their teaching identities, it has been found that their knowledge also grows in different directions. The sources of influence revealed in studies of pre-service teachers are likely to continue to be important when it comes to understanding the thinking of novice and experienced teachers. It is particularly important to note that pre-service training itself tends to be revealed as having a relatively weak effect in shaping pre-service teachers' theories of teaching compared to other sources of influence.

In a particularly influential study, Zeichner, Tabchnick and Densmore (1987) set out to examine the influence of individual, institutional and cultural sources on the development of student-teachers' craft knowledge, which they conceptualised as "a mixture of theories, beliefs, and values about the teachers' role and about the dynamics of teaching and learning" (p. 21).

They focus on what they term teachers' 'perspectives', which "are expressed in the behaviour of teachers as well as in the language teachers use to talk about their work" (p. 32). Their methodology involved administration of a belief inventory to a group of 40 elementary trainee teachers followed by in-depth interviews and observations with 13 trainees.

Their findings firstly showed that, overall, student-teachers entered the programme with already established perceptions about teaching derived from their personal histories, including their apprenticeship of observation, and in most cases their existing perceptions were solidified rather than altered by the end of the course.

However, the training programme was effective in helping students recognise which of their existing perceptions they were not confident about putting into practice by providing them with a realistic perception of the work of teaching, against which they could evaluate their theories.

Regarding the influence of personal history, as previously investigated by Zeichner et al., Bodycott, in a more recent (1997) study, looked at its influence on pre-service language teachers' thinking in a cross-cultural context in Singapore. He examined the students' personal views of language teaching and learning through repertory grid interviews. Among the sources of influence on pre-service teachers in this cross-cultural context, mothers were the biggest source of influence on the image of the ideal teacher because they are the principal care-givers and the years of schooling had helped trainees' core views to become solidified.

In addition to confirming the importance of sources of influence including earlier schooling identified by Zeichner et al., Goodman (1988) argues that pre-service teachers are mostly occupied with classroom management and control when they are engaged in teaching practice, and that this conflicts with their images of teacher as a facilitator of learning. The student-teachers in her study felt a lack of control at the institutional level in making decisions, and this was partly the reason for the conflict they experienced between letting students grow and disciplining them.

Goodman investigated elementary student-teachers' practical philosophies of teaching, namely the perspectives and images which guide their practices. Images in her study were defined, following Clandinin (1986), as experientially bounded and interpretive. Interviews with 12 pre-service teachers revealed two major perspectives that they thought important: "Teaching as a problem of control", and "Teaching as the facilitation of children's growth" (p. 124). These common perspectives suggested a homogeneous philosophy of teaching shared by all the participants; however, their guiding images were varied and the shared images differed, too, in the way they were interpreted by the pre-service teachers.

In this connection, in the field of ELTE, the ways in which pre-service teachers' thinking can differ is also demonstrated by Richards, Ho and Giblin (1996), who show how participants' theories influenced self-evaluations of their work in an RSA/UCLES Certificate in TEFLA programme in Hong Kong. Five teachers participated in audio-recorded discussions following teaching practice sessions and provided written self-reports. Three different categories emerged from analyses to

represent theories held by the pre-service teachers: a teacher-centred theory, a student-centred theory, and a curriculum-centred theory. All of the five teachers said that these three perspectives were referred to while planning and teaching their lessons, however at varying levels of intensity. The authors conclude that there was a dialogical process between the requirements of the programme and what participants individually believed good teaching was.

Some studies have found links between the various perspectives which pre-service teachers bring to training programmes and the decisions they make while teaching. Different sources of influence that create teachers' perspectives of teaching can therefore be seen to find their way into classrooms.

Calderhead and Robson (1991) investigated pre-service primary teachers' images about teaching, learning, learners, school-based practice, their expectations, and themselves as teachers. They assumed that images students had formed earlier around these issues influenced the way they formed new images during training. They found that the images held by students varied according to schooling experiences they had had, and were held at different levels of intensity. Some images were derived from episodic experiences; some were from more abstract ideas. They also found that the images held were rigid and resistant to change.

A more recent study was carried out in Hong Kong by Tsang (2004) with pre-service non-native ESL teachers. Tsang reports similar findings to Calderhead and Robson's (*ibid.*) in the sense that the practical knowledge that pre-service students refer to in their pre-active, interactive and post-active decision-making in the classroom contain their previously formed maxims (theories, beliefs) in addition to the maxims they develop during their training and after delivering their lessons. Tsang's study was based on stimulated recall interviews where student-teachers reflected on their on-the-spot decisions. At this stage they did not refer to the majority of the maxims they had articulated during earlier interviews, but some of the maxims which were employed stemmed from earlier sources of influence such as their own language learning experiences and respected teachers as well as maxims they had acquired in training.

Both of the studies above indicate that it is hard for student-teachers to access newly-acquired practical knowledge during teaching because they lack experience and support structures like established routines (Berliner 1987), as distinct from experienced teachers. This will be further examined under 'Experienced teachers'

(1.3.3) below. However, student-teachers' practical knowledge as it is already held is rich and varied, having been nurtured over the years with various sources of influence, and it continues to develop dynamically through interaction with the training programme and the teaching practicum.

Although Zeichner et al. (1987) and subsequent studies have highlighted the weak influence of training on the development of pre-service teachers' personal theories, finding that their beliefs remain largely unchanged, there are studies which show the opposite. Researchers who are interested in teachers' career stages suggest that student-teachers are not aware of the realities of the teaching practicum until they get involved in it. Albelushi (2003) confirms that student-teachers go through two distinct stages of development during their training in a four year programme: "The no teaching concerns phase" and "The early teaching concerns phase" (pp. 149-50), with the border between them corresponding to the beginning of teaching practice. This might be a possible explanation for training in some contexts appearing to fail to influence trainees' perceptions. Kagan (1992) states that this is an unresolved issue and suggests that we should examine closely the kinds of knowledge developed within pre-service training programmes.

In one reaction against the notion that pre-service training is ineffective, Almarza (1996) carried out case studies of four student-teachers in a PGCE programme in the UK over a nine-month period. She attempted to find out how student-teachers' knowledge about language teaching developed with respect to their pre-training, during training and post-training experiences. All of the four trainees were able to articulate their established views of language learning through recollection of how they were taught at school and what they experienced in natural contexts where the language (French) was spoken. Overall, Almarza found that, although the course had been effective in enhancing a collective pedagogy at the time of training, trainees left the course "with different kinds of knowledge about the dynamics of teaching and learning languages" (p. 69). She concludes, like most of the studies reviewed in this section, that student-teachers' pre-training knowledge should be taken into account, since this acts as a filter and interacts with the formal theories of teaching that are presented to them in training programmes. Her study shows that, given the opportunity, pre-service teachers are able to reflect on what they bring into the training environment and that the pedagogy recommended in the training programme was interpreted in various ways by the trainees. However, her study does not provide

enough evidence against the view that training programmes cannot alter student-teachers' beliefs fundamentally.

Abdullah-Sani, (2000) carried out a study with EFL teacher trainees at an institution in Malaysia and looked at the formation of beliefs throughout the course, prior to teaching practice, during teaching practice and in the first year of teaching. She considered how beliefs informed student-teachers' practice and how these beliefs changed over time. She found that "students enter a teaching programme with knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning... [and] think about teacher behaviour and make judgements" (ibid: 245). These judgements were not always appropriate, but this showed that students reflected on their past experiences, taking their previous teachers as models. In the long run, "beliefs that developed in this way become powerful through the process of reflection and reinforcement" (ibid.).

However, some research points out that reflection does not always materialise as hoped for by trainers. Tann (1993) elicited pre-service primary teachers' personal theories in the first year of their course. Pre-service students were encouraged to unearth their assumptions and beliefs through engaging in a reflective cycle regarding the lessons they planned, taught and evaluated. The analysis of students' portfolios revealed that initially trainees were not able to reflect in a balanced way. They were too occupied with classroom control (those who taught juniors, in particular) and at first blamed their students, and then blamed themselves. What went wrong was very much emphasised, but solutions could not be found. Gradually they found a balance and were able to see the reasons for their failures and correct them. Students found it very hard to articulate their personal theories and tutors needed to constantly probe them by asking "Why?". They also found it hard to change their existing beliefs and more experienced colleagues helped by showing them alternatives. Furthermore, they lacked the language for systematically articulating their personal theories. Tann concludes that these issues have to be addressed in training programmes if students are to be successfully engaged in reflection.

On the other hand, Cabaroğlu and Roberts (2000) disagree with the view that student-teachers' beliefs necessarily remain unchanged after interventions take place in training programmes. They argue that this could be because such programmes fail to systematically develop reflective abilities in student-teachers. They followed 20 PGCE modern languages students over a nine-month period to trace their belief development in learning and teaching foreign languages. The course was designed

specifically to promote reflection and self-evaluation. Open-ended interviews, classroom observation and stimulated recall data did reveal changes in the content of beliefs held. Among the 20 students only one student's belief content remained unchanged and a wide variety of different kinds of belief development process were identified. The authors, on the basis of their findings, state that pre-service courses should, in their own right, be considered as a variable in student-teachers' belief development and more opportunities should be provided to students to confront their existing beliefs and self-manage their learning.

To sum up, the following points emerge to bear in mind as the literature review proceeds and this study progresses:

1. Pre-service teachers enter training programmes with initial conceptualisations about the teaching profession, in most cases having made up their minds about the kind of teacher they want to be (Zeichner et al. 1987).
2. These initial conceptualisations stem from the sources of influence of personal biography and schooling ('apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie, 1975)).
3. Training contents and the teaching practicum activate early learning influences (images and beliefs held) and might solidify, add to, challenge or modify those initial conceptualisations (Cabaroğlu and Roberts 2000); however, they cannot alter them fundamentally (Almarza 1996).
4. Pre-service teachers' practical knowledge, apart from being strongly related to these early sources of influence, is expressed in various ways by the trainees and is not always readily accessible to student-teachers at the time of teaching practice. New sources of influence – training programme content and the teaching practicum – also find expression in pre-service teachers' practical knowledge, although compared to the early sources of influence their effect is less (Calderhead and Robson 1991, Tsang 2004).
5. In this connection, research into teachers' career stages (Albelushi 2003) has shown that pre-service teachers might be relatively uninfluenced by their training programme content for the reason that they are not concerned with teaching until "the pedagogic reality is upon the student, and this allows little room for true preparation or reflection" (ibid: 150).
6. Alternatively, it might be that training programmes themselves need to put more effort into organising their content to accommodate pre-service teachers'

existing theories about teaching (Kagan 1992, Almarza 1996, Cabaroğlu and Roberts 2000).

7. Research shows that to understand the rationale behind pre-service teachers' behaviour one must unearth their guiding images or personal theories since behaviour on its own does not indicate the different ways in which student-teachers give meaning to teaching (Goodman 1988).

1.3.2 Novice teachers

The studies reviewed in this section approach novice teachers' thinking and socialisation from two major viewpoints (as conceptualised by Knowles 1992: 100). Firstly, a number of studies will be reviewed which investigate the effects of training and/or the influence of school and classroom experiences on beginning teachers' learning. The emotions, tensions and preoccupations identified as characteristic of novices in some studies contrast with the highly developed cognitive skills identified in others. Research adopting a second major viewpoint will then be reviewed. This research highlights novices' overall biographies, seen as important in influencing how they give meaning to the input from initial training and to their work context. These studies can provide explanations for the apparently contradictory findings of researchers who focus more narrowly on experiences during and after training.

The emotional side of teachers' experiences during their novice years is well-illustrated in a recent (2003) study by Ria, Sève, Saury, Theureau and Durand, who argue that the construction of knowledge by teachers as they learn to teach embodies feelings as well as cognitive processes. They invited two novice PE teachers to describe their emotions during their third month of teaching, asking them to rate their emotional state while watching videos of their lessons, and to further elaborate on their concerns during interviews. Ria et al. (ibid.) found that the emotional distress which can be experienced by novices is a result of preoccupations such as sticking to their lesson plan and controlling students (findings which have been confirmed in an EFL context by Abdullah-Sani (2000)). Novices are attached to their lesson plans because they feel secure if they can minimise the unpredictability of events in their lessons. In reality, however, they cannot always stick to their plans, and this gives rise to a lot of discomfort. As Ria et al. (2003) suggest, viewing new experiences in the light of past emotions might further distress beginning teachers, condemning them to

a vicious cycle unless they can consciously understand the causes underlying their situation.

Golombek's (1998) study provides further support for this viewpoint, identifying an "instructional tension" (p. 452) experienced by two novice ESL teachers. The tension was created by conflicting demands arising from their conceptualisations of the school context, subject matter, and students. Both of the teachers held personalised practical knowledge in the form of images which embodied moral, affective and consequential implications for them. They became emotional and distressed when these interrelated layers of practical knowledge did not merge successfully in their lessons. Their mentors had expectations of them which did not always match their values, but which had to be taken into account to meet the consequential implications of students' success in tests. Golombek found that, at this stage, novices could not come up with effective strategies to resolve their dilemmas apart from attempting to abide by the principles they derived from images formed on the basis of their past experiences as learners.

In an earlier study, Busher, Clarke and Taggart (1987) also described the tensions experienced by novices, in this case in secondary school classrooms in the UK. Novices believed that they were constrained by the norms and expectations of their working environment. Busher et al. give specific examples based on observation and interviews to show that novices develop theories about teaching at the interpersonal level. Defining relationships and roles seems to be very important for beginning teachers to feel they can teach their subject. They do so by taking into account what is expected of them in the school, but at the same time they often have to deal with a dissonance between what they believe they should be doing as teachers and what they are expected to do. Busher et al. suggest that ideas about how to teach subject matter are formed long before novices meet real pupils in the classroom and that they might fail, as a consequence, to recognise the different learning styles their pupils have. Thus, they blame themselves as ineffective teachers and attempt to solve the problem by working harder to transmit knowledge into pupils' heads. The novice teachers in this study reflected that their training had been inadequate for understanding individual student characteristics and effective classroom management tactics. They learn routines largely by themselves, tending to be left to their own devices as to how to meet expectations in their schools.

The above studies illustrate how novices may find it a struggle to define useful strategies and routines to meet the requirements of their context, as well as finding it emotionally disturbing to attempt to deal with constraints on implementation of their practical knowledge in a way which matches their values and beliefs. This process is stressful and painful (Albelushi 2003), and, as we shall now see, not all novices end the process with their previously valued theories intact.

While the studies reviewed above offer what we might call ‘snapshots’ of the preoccupations of novice teachers, an important longitudinal study carried out by Zeichner et al. (1987) – already partially reported in 1.3.1 above – provides detailed insights into how the initial socialisation process ‘ends up’ for novice teachers (in this case in elementary schools). Thirteen student-teachers were tracked, after their training ended, into their novice year of teaching, with a view to investigating how the teaching perspectives they finished the training programme with were altered overall; there was also a particular focus in this study on the sources of influence on any altered perspectives, with particular attention being paid to the influence of institutional factors.

In-depth interview and classroom observation data were combined in a series of four case studies. To explain the changes the four teachers went through, Zeichner et al. adopted Lacey’s (1977) model of socialisation strategies used by beginning teachers with regard to the school environment. There are three major orientations in this model, as explained by Sikes, Measor and Woods (1985: 12):

1. Strategic compliance, in which an individual complies with a senior’s definition of the situation, but holds private reservations.
2. Internalized adjustment, in which the individual complies but changes [his or her] own views to believe it is for the best.
3. Strategic redefinition, in which the individual seeks to change the situation.

In their study, Zeichner et al. (1987) found that two novice teachers went through internalised adjustment and two novice teachers went through strategic redefinition, one successfully and one unsuccessfully (thus, they add the notions of ‘successful’ and ‘unsuccessful’ strategic redefinition to Lacey’s model).

A more recent study by Abdullah-Sani (2000) has similarly shown that novice EFL teachers shift their emphasis regarding areas of concern as they socialise into their schools. Each novice had to respond to problems unique to their own situation and, in most cases; they were left to their own devices to solve their problems. Abdullah-Sani found that novice EFL teachers were confident about the knowledge and skills they acquired during their training and were at times critical of the practices of their more experienced colleagues. However, they expressed the need to be supported and acknowledged by these colleagues regarding their classroom practices. The school culture was an important variable in positively or negatively influencing novices' emotional state and in validating or invalidating their pre-existing theories of teaching.

These studies show the important influence of the institutional context in the development of teachers' theories about their work, and Zeichner et al. (1987) and Abdullah-Sani (2000) also highlight the effects of supervision and the degree of support given by the principal on the development of novice teachers' perspectives. They concur that, regardless of the training they have undergone, novices accommodate themselves in their schools in relation both to what is expected of them and to what they originally believe good teaching to be.

While the studies reviewed so far present a common picture of novices undergoing an emotionally exhausting stage when they might fail to effectively implement the contents of their training programme and their own theories of teaching, a few other studies emphasize 'sophisticated' aspects of novice teacher thinking. For example, Wilson, Shulman and Richert (1987) set out to investigate novices' subject matter knowledge and the sources of this knowledge, whether this knowledge was transformed during initial training, and how it was represented in classroom teaching. This was a two-year longitudinal study – 21 pre-service secondary teachers were trained during the first year and 12 of them were followed into their classrooms in the second year. Wilson et al. question earlier research findings (such as those of Fuller and Bown 1975) which claim that novices are mostly concerned with survival in their first year of teaching rather than thinking systematically about their practices. They argue that effective teachers do not simply operate in response to intuition or personal understanding of subject matter, that the cognitive processes of the novice teachers in their study were complex and varied, and that they evaluated their practices to transform subject matter knowledge for their students' understanding. However, it

needs to be recognized that the novices in this study had undergone one year of purposeful training and two years of ongoing data collection. The design of the study itself was very reflective by nature and might have constituted a powerful influence on novices' cognition in this particular context. Wilson et al. do not report any specific individual or institutional constraints, although such constraints are well-documented in other studies (for example, Lortie 1975; Sikes, Measor and Woods 1985; Zeichner et al. 1987). The authors' argument that novice teachers tend to be misrepresented as being concerned with survival might itself be misleading, and should be evaluated carefully with contextual considerations in mind. This does not, however, take away from the overall value of the portrayal by Wilson et al. of novice teachers' sophisticated ways of pedagogical reasoning *when the conditions are right* (my emphasis). Their study shows an ideal which can be taken into account in the design of teacher education programmes.

Burn, Hagger, Mutton and Everton (2000) have, like Wilson et al. (1987), traced the transition to sophisticated ways of thinking in novice teachers, by which they mean awareness of the complexity of the teaching profession. Participants in their study were questioned about the decisions they took before and during each lesson, and their evaluations of what had happened in the lessons showed that they were aware of the complex demands of teaching. As distinct from Wilson et al. (1987), they relate these findings to the consequences of recent changes in their training programme, which had incorporated a reflective element.

On the other hand, a study carried out by Richards and Pennington (1998) in Hong Kong with five novice EFL teachers did not find the pedagogical reasoning process to be as sophisticated as Wilson et al. (1987) and Burn et al. (2000) argue it is. They report on the situational constraints which transpired when novices went to teach in real classrooms and conclude that the training programme had not changed novice teachers' maxims acquired prior to their training through apprenticeship of observation, and that the communicative maxims acquired as a result of their training in TESOL were not reinforced. They tried very hard to personalise topics by relating them to students' own lives, but, overall, they gave in to the constraints, in different ways depending on their own proficiency in the language and how they themselves had learnt the target language previously. These differences among teachers are not reported on in detail, but it is clear from the study that, once out of the safe environment of the training programme, novices have to personally struggle and give

their own meaning to teaching by engaging in negotiation with the various constraints they encounter. These constraints stem from the very same culture and society they themselves had been educated in, and for this reason they revert to this experience in responding to constraints. In this context, then, the training programme failed to have a substantial impact on novices' existing beliefs or prepare them adequately for what was lying ahead of them in the real teaching context.

As we have begun to see, personal biography has been indicated as a significant influence on beginning teachers' evolving theories of teaching, considering the lonely and isolated situation they tend to find themselves in in their work context, as shown above. Thus, Knowles (1992) set out to examine the formative experiences of pre-service and novice teachers under the assumption that the ways they make sense of teaching and classroom practice are to a certain extent influenced by their early learning experiences.

The main aim of Knowles' case study research was to identify the links between student-teachers' biographies and their classroom practices, with special attention to the coping strategies they used. Coping strategies are "the ways in which the teachers sought to make life comfortable in the classroom when faced with difficult situations" (p. 114). Knowles found that biography had a strong effect on student and novice teachers' decisions in the classroom, especially when they were confronted by problem situations. Formal training did not seem to have a strong influence on teachers' actions, and even though some of the strategies they employed were not good teaching strategies according to those teachers themselves, to address their immediate problem they reverted to the ways they had been taught as pupils. Teacher role identity, as Knowles calls it, is formed through "childhood experiences", "teacher role models", "teaching experiences", "significant people" and "significant prior experiences" (p. 127). Knowles (1992) argues that these sources of influence have a strong bearing on how pre-service and novice teachers internalise training input:

What was taken from the university [...] were those viewpoints and orientations to practice in the classroom that were congruent with previously held images of teachers' work and that provided reinforcement and validation of their positions (p. 133).

More recently, Marsh (2002), in her biographical case study of a novice elementary school teacher ('Ms. Nicholi'), has shown how the identities of this teacher evolved through the stages of her teacher education programme and in the elementary school in which she taught, relating this also to aspects of her personal life. This study shows that teaching is a socially negotiated phenomenon grounded within a teachers' biography. Ms. Nicholi's teaching identities were constructed and reconstructed as she moved from one context to the other, and aspects of her personal life affected the way she conceptualised the content of her training programme and taught in school.

Finally, an even more recent study (Albelushi 2003), carried out with female Omani EFL teachers, also provides strong evidence that novices' biographies influence the degree to which they feel committed to and satisfied by their profession. In this study, the unique characteristics of the Omani context are highlighted, and gender and the role of women in the society are shown to have significant effects on women EFL teachers' job satisfaction and teaching identity. Women teachers chose to become teachers for different reasons, but with one thing in common: to conform to their expected role in society. Thus, some teachers chose teaching not because they liked it as a career but because it was the most appropriate choice for a woman who wanted to work. For those who chose teaching because they liked it, the novitiate phase was not as painful as for the others who had chosen teaching for reasons of job security or as a result of external encouragement. The study also supports the findings of previous research that the novitiate phase of teaching is characterised by a struggle for survival, reality shock and discovery. Albelushi confirms that beginning teachers are preoccupied with maintaining classroom order and discipline and implementing their lesson plans effectively for students' successful learning. She states that most of the ideas novices draw upon comes from their own prior experiences as learners, due to the inefficient teaching practice they undergo during training. At this critical point the school ethos and more experienced colleagues become very important in providing a smooth transition for novices as they test their previously held theories about teaching against the reality of their classrooms.

To sum up, research carried out with beginning teachers both in the general field of education and (although the amount of research is limited) in relation to English language teaching shows that:

1. The concerns of researchers working with pre-service teachers (see 1.3.1) continue to be shared by researchers working with novice teachers in that training programmes are generally shown to fail to challenge or alter beginning teachers' former theories of teaching (e.g. Zeichner et al. 1987, Richards and Pennington 1998).
2. Apprenticeship of observation, influence of significant others and other aspects of personal life histories find their ways into neophytes' classroom practices when they are faced with unpredictable events during teaching (Knowles 1992); these formative experiences also influence general philosophies about teaching (Marsh 2002) and novices' satisfaction from and commitment to their profession (Albelushi 2003).
3. *When the conditions are right*, some research has shown that beginning teachers employ highly complex cognitive thinking pre-, during and post-instruction and engage in a pedagogical reasoning process (Wilson et al. 1987, Burn et al. 2000) to transform subject matter knowledge for their students' level of understanding. However, this is contradicted by other findings which claim that novices are concerned mostly with classroom management and control and implementing their own lesson plans (Busher et al. 1987, Abdullah-Sani 2000, Ria et al. 2003).
4. Most of the studies reviewed above support the notion that neophytes go through a stage of survival and discovery in idiosyncratic and isolated ways, and that lack of support at the institutional level rubs salt into their wounds (Zeichner et al. 1987, Golombek 1998, Richards and Pennington 1998, Flores 2001, Albelushi 2003).
5. The effects of novices' biography combined with this lack of support, and, indeed, isolation from other colleagues can hinder novices' pedagogical knowledge and skills development and might serve as a possible explanation for the contradictory findings of research (Kagan 1992) regarding the sophisticated/unsophisticated aspects of novice teacher socialisation.

1.3.3 Experienced teachers

There are two major distinctions I make in this section while reviewing previous research into experienced teachers' cognition. One research tradition treats

experienced teachers' cognition from a cognitive schema processing model, without considering teachers' underlying personal theories, the context of teaching or constraints (e.g. Berliner 1987, Westerman 1991). Such studies treat teacher knowledge as accessible and identifiable in terms of discrete categories and tend to focus on 'expert' experienced teachers to identify their behaviours and compare them with novice or 'non-expert' teachers. This is not the focus of the present study. However, I shall briefly review some of these studies and the fundamental implications their approach to teacher cognition has for teachers, in particular since expert teacher studies have found their way into the field of ELTE with slight modifications of their underlying assumptions (Mok 1994, Tsui 2003). I need to show how my own study is different from such studies in my conceptualisation of experienced teachers (1.3.3.1). The second research tradition takes into account teachers' biographies and beliefs, but in the field of ELTE (1.3.3.2), research is often limited to ESL classroom situations only (e.g. Bailey and Nunan 1996, Freeman and Richards 1996, Woods 1996, Breen et al. 2001). Such studies do not represent the concerns of the majority of English teachers around the world, firstly because the teachers are chosen, in most cases, on the basis of their proven merits, secondly because ESL rather than secondary school EFL is investigated, and, thirdly, because classroom decision-making is the only or major focus, with teachers' lives outside the classroom context not being considered. On the other hand, in the field of general education (e.g. Clandinin 1985, 1986, Goodson 1992, Sikes 1992), the way experienced teachers think is revealed more comprehensively and in greater complexity (1.3.3.3), in the majority of cases with constraints and context being better considered. These two fields of inquiry into teachers' cognition also differ in terms of the range and variety of teachers' beliefs examined.

1.3.3.1 Studies of 'expert' experienced teachers

This kind of study is mainly concerned with identifying successful teaching behaviour in relation to successful student learning (Berliner 1987, Westerman 1991) or in relation to successful intake and implementation of the content of training programmes and associated belief formation and change (Mok 1994, Tsui 2003).

For example, Berliner (1987) investigated experienced teachers' metacognitive thinking about their students and their classrooms in the belief that experienced

teachers had more sophisticated ways of conceptualising teaching and their students' needs compared to novices. Experienced teachers differed from novices mainly in terms of prioritising what they needed to consider in a classroom they were entering for the first time. Berliner draws similarities between expert teachers and experts from fields such as chess and asserts that by looking at the characteristics of expert teachers it is possible to come up with a list of effective teaching behaviours that will lead to desirable outcomes. His definition of expertise emphasises the value of reflection on experience and he urges teacher educators to promote such reflection.

In Westerman's (1991) study, expert and novice teachers' decision-making was compared, with a focus on lesson planning and implementation. The expert teachers were selected for this study on the basis of the extent to which their teaching matched the researcher's criteria (those who implemented an integrated curriculum, promoted reflection and were oriented towards problem-solving in teaching). They each had more than five years of teaching experience. Westerman found that for expert teachers, stages of decision-making (pre-active, interactive, post-active) are not separate entities, but interrelated to each other. They have highly developed mental representations of the curriculum, student characteristics, and subject matter. They are more flexible than novices and consider different possibilities that might occur during teaching. During their teaching they can respond to different situations by recalling instances from their memory. Westerman concludes that expert teachers have schemas that are complex and rich in terms of different teaching situations and learners' needs, compared to novice teachers' schemas, which are more limited in pedagogical and content knowledge. He suggests on this basis that student-teachers should be exposed to an integrated schema of teacher decision-making processes which takes into account student characteristics and the interpretive and reflective skills that expert teachers possess.

However, neither Berliner's nor Westerman's study gives insights into how expert teachers have come to possess such skills. What kinds of experiences that they have gone through have made this highly complex cognitive ability possible for them? Just as expert teachers take into account different student characteristics and link new learning to their students' prior learning, surely teacher educators should also pay attention to trainees' prior learning before prescribing to them the skills possessed by experts.

In the field of ELTE the findings of 'expert teacher' studies are interpreted in a slightly different way, taking up the emphasis on 'reflection' which Berliner (1987, 2001) identified as the major characteristic of expertise. The concept of reflection, which is well established in ELTE, is promoted by trainers in the hope that they can enhance the development of expertise. This is partly due to the recognition that teachers' beliefs influence how they respond to the contents of training programmes, and reflection is given an important role in enabling teachers to identify their own weaknesses and improve them with their own agency. And in some, though presumably not most cases reflection might also be incorporated into training programmes "to eliminate any detrimental trainee beliefs before they start teaching" (Peacock 2001: 177).

Mok (1994) presents a case study comparison of experienced (4 to 6 years) and inexperienced ESL teachers to identify their immediate concerns and changes in their perceptions over time during and after a postgraduate training course. Through reflective writing by teachers and individual interviews, common areas of concern were identified as follows: teacher's self-concept, attitudes, teaching strategies, materials used, and expectations of learners. For example, regarding the role of the teacher all teachers agreed that teachers should be 'helpers', but experienced teachers also mentioned the need to respect students and their needs and to help them to understand the target culture. In terms of teaching strategies, experienced teachers seemed to have a much broader repertoire in their pedagogical knowledge systems. However, regardless of how experienced the teachers were, they revealed beliefs which were in conflict with the theories presented to them in their training programme. Mok states that reflective practice should be encouraged as teachers' own previous learning and teaching experiences pose obstacles for training programmes. However, Mok does not provide enough detail regarding the conflicting beliefs of experienced teachers that do not reflect the content offered by the training programme. How do we know that their existing beliefs should be changed through reflection and what works best in their own context? The assumption that teachers might have beliefs which run counter to the contents of training programmes and which therefore should be changed should itself be examined critically. As Berliner (2001) himself admits in a later review of studies on expertise in teaching, no two teaching and learning situations are the same and context is an important factor in how teachers make decisions.

In this connection, Leinhardt (1988) showed how an expert teacher (with twenty years of experience) utilised situated knowledge (as opposed to 'principled, context free knowledge' (p. 146)) in the selection and use of examples of early mathematics topics in primary school. The teacher still remembered what her own teacher did to teach her subtraction when she was a 7-year-old primary school pupil, and she taught her 7-year-olds in the same way. Leinhardt argues that, in the development of expert teacher knowledge, the way teachers integrate knowledge gained from various sources and suit this to specific situations should be recognised.

A more recent and comprehensive study of the development of expertise in ESL teachers in Hong Kong was carried out by Tsui (2003) with four teachers. The expert teacher had eight, two competent teachers had five and one novice teacher had one year of teaching experience. The expert teacher was identified as such by her course tutors, principal, colleagues, students, other teachers who were members of an on-line discussion forum and Tsui herself, having known her for five years.

Tsui approaches the development of expertise in a slightly different manner from Westerman (1991) and Berliner (1987), interpreting the implications of previous research in an eclectic way and selecting the appropriate criteria for defining expertise as reflection, conscious deliberation, and situated knowledge use and construction. She also reviews studies of teachers' prior learning experiences and beliefs.

Tsui places a strong emphasis on the process of construction of knowledge through deliberate and conscious reflection on experience for the development of expertise. The expert teacher in her study depicts these characteristics. However, it does not become clear as the study unfolds how Tsui positions teachers' beliefs and prior learning experiences in relation to the characteristics that expert teachers are said to possess. If we closely examine the biographical data Tsui presents in the earlier chapters of her work, we can assume – although this is not made explicit – that certain conditions should be present in a teacher's environment to enable development of the characteristics of the expert teacher in this study, who clearly had a background which prepared her for teaching in a much stronger way than her other colleagues in the same school. Tsui does not comment on this, and no critical analysis is undertaken of the differences in the experiences these four teachers had previously undergone and how these experiences had come to be utilised.

Tsui (*ibid.*) states that many non-expert experienced teachers do not improve at all, no matter how many years they teach, because they lack the ability to learn from their

experiences. She argues that such teachers work to cope with, not to learn from the problems they encounter in teaching. However, she does not describe the underlying thinking – the implicit theories – of the teachers in her study that makes it possible or not for them to learn from experience. If we accept Tsui's point of view, we would be invalidating the struggle many teachers of English around the world are having under constraints and other sources of influence that were not present or acknowledged in the context of Tsui's study.

To sum up, emphasis is placed in 'expertise studies' on the must-have ability to consciously reflect on professional learning experiences; however, how to go about this, and how this ability develops, is a matter which remains largely unaddressed. Additionally, emphasising expert teacher over other teachers' behaviour seems to deny teachers' own agency to find out for themselves what works best for them in their own contexts. As Edge and Richards (1998: 569) put it with regard to the implementation of 'best practice' within ELTE:

In a world where teacher educators struggle every day with the complexities and conundrums of the educative process, the talismanic power of sanctified product represents a threat to our developmental well-being.

In this connection we also find support in Elbaz's (1991: 8) statement that:

The ordinary teacher is the silent subject who has not always been given a position as subject in our discourse. I am not arguing that we should cease to look for the extraordinary or abandon the pursuit of excellence in teaching, only that we give up our predefined notions of what it might be. In looking at ordinary classrooms, sooner or later something extraordinary happens; something moves us to feel appreciation, respect, anger. These reactions are personal, but they are grounded in our understanding of teaching as a practice within a social setting, of the values we believe it should foster, of the traditions we want to see preserved. And these can be formulated and subjected to dialogue, among ourselves and within teachers. In this process we uncover and give legitimacy to the extraordinary within the ordinary.

However, as we shall see, even since this call in 1991, most of the studies within ELTE which claim to research experienced teachers (mainly their decision-making processes in isolation from their biographies) have tended to recruit their 'subjects'

from among those recognised as effective teachers, those who hold postgraduate qualifications, and those who teach in ESL contexts at universities or in adult teaching programmes, not from among ordinary secondary school teachers in EFL settings.

1.3.3.2 Insights from research in the field of ELTE

In the field of ELTE, most research into experienced teachers has been primarily concerned with such teachers' decision-making processes, whereby tacitly held theories interact with unexpected happenings in the classroom and lead teachers to modify their pre-active decisions during the interactive phase. For example, Bailey (1996) worked with seven experienced teachers who were teaching on an intensive ESL programme to explore their reasons for departing from their lesson plans. Teachers held MA degrees and were regarded as skilled teachers in their context. Participants' lesson plans were collected in advance, and observations and audio recordings formed the basis for post-lesson interviews. Bailey found that in-class decisions to depart from lesson plans (termed by her 'interactive decision-making') were not arbitrary, but were guided by a number of principles. One of these, for example, was 'serve the common good'. When an unpredicted problem for an individual student arises in the classroom, the teacher might choose to deal with it if she or he perceives the matter as of wider relevance to the class members. Bailey concluded that these principles were in congruence with the teachers' general learner-centred philosophy of teaching. She does not generalise the categories of principles to other contexts since she states that each context will push teachers to reconstruct their experiences in various ways. However, she highlights the successful reconstruction of the evolving classroom interaction by these experienced teachers. She argues that this is made possible by experienced teachers' rich and complex repertoires of successful teaching routines and strategies. These routines and strategies, Bailey maintains, minimise the risk for experienced teachers to depart from their lesson plans as distinct from inexperienced teachers. However, her study does not provide insights into how these skilled teachers have come to develop their routines, strategies and principles.

Similarly, Ulichny (1996) presents findings of an ethnographic investigation of an ESL reading teacher (with 8 years' experience) and her classroom in a college in the

US over a term to highlight an experienced teacher's underlying beliefs about 'moment-to-moment' decisions relating to students' performance. Ulichny also explored the changes that took place in this teacher's decisions over the course of data collection. The teacher was very motivated to excel in her profession and was considered a very effective teacher by colleagues and students. She had a learner-centred philosophy of teaching in which she emphasised the authenticity of instructional materials and scaffolding students to take into account different learner characteristics, and extended this to her out of class interactions with her students, too. She raised her doubts about the congruence of her general philosophy of teaching with what was expected from her in the course she was to teach, but she took her task very seriously because she felt her students and herself shared something in common, seeing both herself and her overseas students as prone to be marginalised by the system in the world of academia. Previously, when she was a student, her working-class background had left her unprepared for the presentation skills and assertiveness needed to succeed academically, and she still felt an outsider at the university, and was very critical and unsure of her practices.

Ulichny states that the teacher expressed discomfort when she realised she seemed to be doing too much of the work in class herself due to her implicit belief that students were not able to comprehend some of the texts. She recognised this as a negative influence on students' performance and learning, however she could not help herself and her behaviour remained unchanged. Her own biography was very influential on this particular belief underlying this behaviour that she needed to help students.

Ulichny concludes that understanding teachers' classroom decisions is far more complex than it seems on the surface and the sources (biography, students, teacher's perception of students, syllabus, and other constraints) which leave their mark implicitly on teachers' interactive decisions should be carefully examined.

Another example of unplanned changes in lesson plans is reported by Smith (1996) who set out to investigate the relationship between experienced (minimum 8 years overall and minimum 3 years in this teaching context) ESL teachers' pedagogical decisions and L2 theory, teacher beliefs and contextual factors. Curricular guidelines provided by the institutions were not perceived as obstacles by teachers and some teachers said that they were only "vaguely aware" (p. 210) of those guidelines. Teachers did not treat them as prescriptions to be followed step by step. For this

particular context this might be true, however it might be suggested that in state school EFL contexts where there is extensive government control over what teachers do, findings would be likely to be different.

Teachers' identified beliefs were congruent with how they interpreted L2 learning theory and how they designed curriculum and tasks. Those who saw grammar and accuracy as the primary focus of instruction planned accordingly and those who favoured meaning and fluency planned tasks in this format. However, teachers were eclectic in their use of either accuracy or fluency focused activities because their accumulated experience of what works in the classroom over the years guided their implementation of the tasks they planned. Smith reacts against the notion that teachers make do with what is inherent in their classrooms rather than working on problems consciously, and she presents this finding as contradictory to previous studies.

Smith concludes that experienced teachers' beliefs regarding L2 theories are consistent with their practices at the macro level, however at the interactive decision stage teachers adopt an eclectic combination of both process and product oriented methods of teaching according to their previous experiences of what works best and their perceptions of students' momentary needs.

In an earlier study Johnson (1992) focused on the relationship between teachers' theoretical beliefs and their classroom practices as also studied by Smith (1996). Johnson worked with 30 experienced (5.6 years average) ESL literacy teachers for the first phase of the study where the teachers' theoretical orientations were identified based on the categories of rule-based, skill-based and function-based theories of teaching in ELT. Their beliefs were also explored and Johnson found that all of the teachers reflected either one, or a combination of two, or a combination of all of the three theoretical orientations consistent with their stated beliefs about language teaching and learning. Johnson further selected three teachers who reflected each of the theories dominantly and found that the dominant theoretical orientations to teaching were also in congruence with teachers' practices, which also reflected their beliefs.

A more recent study by Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood and Son (2004) similarly looked at one experienced language teacher's practical theory of communicative language teaching. Interviews and stimulated recall sessions revealed a practical theory congruent with the principles of CLT. Furthermore, some components of the teacher's practical theory derived from general teaching ideas, not directly from CLT

theory. There were no components identified as in dissonance with CLT principles within this teacher's practical theory.

However, the findings of studies such as those mentioned above (Johnson 1992, Smith 1996 and Mangubhai et al. 2004) cannot, as Johnson (1992) also maintains, be generalised without further research because there are also studies that show experienced ESL/EFL teachers' beliefs do not always match what they do in the classroom (Ulichny 1996, Burns 1996, Borg 1998).

Burns (1996) researched experienced (years of experience not specified) teachers' instructional decision-making with 6 ESL teachers of adult immigrants in Australia. She found that teachers' thinking is organised at interconnecting contextual levels: the institutional culture creates cognitive frameworks for thinking about particular classrooms, and the personal philosophies of thinking, attitudes, beliefs and expectations of the teachers shape overall planning, including selection of content and forms of interaction which teachers believe to be useful for their classrooms. The context of the study made it possible to identify such characteristics because, although the nine teachers were very experienced, they were relatively inexperienced (three to eighteen months) in teaching beginner level classes. The decision to create a beginners' class was taken by the institution and the teachers did not have much say in this. All of the teachers had to modify their pre-existing experiential knowledge to suit it to the beginners' level and it felt to them as if they were starting teaching from scratch.

Burns (ibid.) states that the thinking and beliefs that teachers draw upon seem to be highly influential, but are usually unconscious and implicit. Regardless of the fact that personal philosophies of thinking are implicit, they affect the nature of classroom interaction, teacher and student roles, opportunities for learning, lesson plans, and so on. Burns did not collect any biographical information, but she states that teachers have their own personal theories of good teaching and sometimes there might be contradictions within these theories when teachers are faced with new situations.

Burns (1996) concludes that "Personalised theories for practice, then, should be considered not as adjuncts or ancillaries to classroom behaviour but as the motivating conceptual frameworks shaping what teachers do when they teach" (p. 175).

In this connection, Borg (1998) carried out an in-depth study in an EFL context with an experienced teacher whose personal pedagogical system as revealed in grammar teaching was influenced by a variety of factors, including past training as

well as language learning experiences. The teacher Borg reports on had 15 years of EFL teaching experience, held TEFL certificate and diploma level qualifications and taught adult learners.

The teacher credited his initial training experiences for his understanding of inductive and learner-centred teaching methods. By observing his tutors' skilled methodological practices he firmly established a belief in the value of inductive teaching of languages. He actually followed these principles early in his career very rigidly and avoided any explicit teaching of grammar (which he had been exposed to as a learner) until he became aware of the concept of learning styles in his further training. Then, it seems, he began to refer more to learners' mother tongue and incorporate form-focused activities, on the basis partly of what had worked for him in his own language learning experiences.

Borg argues that formal training can, as in this case, have a significant impact on teachers' pedagogical systems, although there are other aspects of experience which need to be taken into account to explain their complexity. Borg (1998) did not note any situational constraints, but he acknowledges their existence in other EFL contexts where teachers work in relatively controlled institutions and calls for further research into the pedagogical beliefs of teachers in such situations.

Personalised theories and teachers' pedagogical thoughts have also been investigated from the point of view of the extent to which they are shared among a group of teachers.

A study by Gatbonton (1999) explored 7 ESL experienced (10 years) teachers' pedagogical thoughts in the classroom through stimulated recall. Gatbonton identified six dominant categories of pedagogical thought shared by all of these teachers: 'handling the language items', 'factoring in students' contributions', 'determining the contents of teaching', 'facilitating the instructional focus', 'building rapport' and 'monitoring students' progress'. She concludes that this might be an indication that there is a common pedagogical culture among teachers. However, other studies of experienced ESL teachers' cognition also reveal significant individual differences in terms of the range of beliefs and pedagogical behaviour.

Breen (1991) conducted a study to understand why teachers do what they do in the classroom with 106 experienced (7 years average) ESL/EFL teachers who were students of a postgraduate programme. The experimental study was designed to elicit

views of the teacher, learner, and an observer to account for the teaching techniques utilised by teachers and the perceived reasons behind these techniques.

Analyses of data from teachers, observers and students respectively yielded different reasons for the same technique, and the same reason was linked to different techniques. There was not a significant agreement on most of these among the participants and Breen argues that this shows the salience of personal interpretations of and justifications for a given situation. Teachers' implicit theories led them to apply various sets of reasons to identified techniques. However, Breen did identify seven major shared pedagogic concerns (principles) across the whole group. These fell under three categories: focus on the learners, focus on the subject matter and focus on the teacher. He treated these as "expressions of informants' implicit theories" (p. 227) and wanted to see whether there was a pattern in the way the teachers gave priority to these major shared areas. He found a shared pattern of priority given to student cognitive needs and teachers' focus on language usage. We are not informed though about the relevance of teachers' experience to this conclusion apart from the connections with the theories of ELT they had been exposed to.

Another study which refers to the teachers' personalised theories at the outset was carried out by Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver and Thwaite (2001). They focused on 18 experienced (average 11.5 years) ESL teachers' pedagogic principles which they assumed were shaped by their experiential personal theories. Personal theories were defined as implicit and deeply held and were seen to operate context-independently "about language, [or] about the educational process" (p. 472). Pedagogic principles, Breen et al. argue, serve as mediators between teachers' personal theories and their actual classroom practices. Although they acknowledge the salience of personal theories at the beginning of their article, in their study, Breen et al. were mainly interested in whether teachers functioning in the same context held a collective pedagogy of language learning and teaching. Thus, they set out to identify principles and practices. Experienced ESL teachers were found to draw upon a personal configuration of pedagogic principles. They successfully combined several practices to form a single cluster of practices to account for one principle. To a certain degree, the same practice also related to more than one principle. Teachers differed among themselves in that they held personal repertoires of tried out and favoured practices and they had different principles that they attributed their own meanings to. Teachers

also had core principles and practices which were revealed in the way they prioritised these. Breen et al. state that these core principles and practices might be the hardest to change. Teachers also gave different meanings to shared principles. For example, teachers teaching adults and those who taught children revealed different practices for the shared principle 'taking account of individual differences between students'. Those whose concerns were common used similar practices. Furthermore, teachers shared some practices such as group work. However, a shared practice did not always link with a shared principle. For those who taught adult learners, the practice of group work implied providing students with chances for consolidation whereas teachers of children linked this with their concern for socialisation of students among each other.

Breen et al. conclude that this diversity shows a collective pedagogy among these teachers whereby each of them believed in the value of having a specific, personal repertoire of principles to guide them in their practices. "The present study strongly suggests that, within the framework of a certain broader collective pedagogy, experience generates individual variation in pedagogy" (p. 498). However, it remains to be explored what kind of experiences lead or do not lead to the formation, reframing or exclusion of a set of practices and principles, and for what reasons. Nor do the authors make any attempt to uncover the underlying personal theories that they say are important at the beginning of their report. Thirdly, it should be noted that the common principles and practices identified are highlighted by Breen et al. as perhaps resulting from these teachers' exposure to certain theoretical and pedagogical ideas about language learning and teaching prevalent in the field of ELT. This only remains as a weak assertion as they did not collect any data regarding the sources of teachers' pedagogic principles. Accordingly, they conclude their study by emphasising the individual variations and limit the notion of teachers having a collective pedagogy to a very broad framework. They provide no explanation of the role teachers' personal experience played in their findings, either. This study is nevertheless informative for insights into how teachers' principles and practices are held and used (Elbaz 1983). This issue is explored also by Woods (1991, 1996), reviewed below.

Woods (1991, 1996) reports on eight experienced ESL teachers' instructional decisions in relation to their beliefs, in the context of a Canadian university. The study was longitudinal and the teachers were chosen on the basis of their teaching excellence as recognised by their superiors. They were involved in developing the

curriculum for a new course which they also taught on and which was the context of data collection.

According to Woods (1991, 1996), beliefs influence to a great extent a teacher's evaluations and assumptions of the context of teaching and interact with the theoretical knowledge they possess. He states that teachers in his study (1991) held beliefs congruent with their instructional decisions and held them in a hierarchically organised system. Certain beliefs were subordinate to other core beliefs and these subordinate beliefs sometimes conflicted with each other although they were linked to a more super-ordinate belief at a higher level. When two beliefs were not necessarily linked with each other, but simply were conflicting in a dilemma situation, the teachers tackled this problem by prioritising. Woods exemplifies this with interview accounts of two teachers. Teacher A held the belief that 'students should feel a sense of accomplishment' at a higher super-ordinate level. At a lower level two beliefs linked to this higher level one. One belief was that the teacher favoured simplifying the texts for students' level of understanding. Another belief was expressed regarding integrated teaching of reading and writing skills, however how this was in congruence with her beliefs that things should be made simple and that students should feel a sense of achievement was not apparent initially. This became clear when the teacher explained how she personally saw integrated reading and writing in her own mind as parallel to each other belonging to the same whole, but not necessarily having to be taught at the same time.

Teachers interpreted the curriculum in different ways. Woods (1991) found orientations in varying degrees between the extremes of curriculum-based and student-based teaching, and linear/holistic presentation of the lesson content. He reasons that the differences stem from teachers' beliefs and assumptions about language learning and teaching.

Woods also found that teachers' beliefs did not remain static over the course of the study and they evolved as they learnt more about the new course. Naturally teachers had to modify their existing beliefs to meet the demands of a totally new course no matter how experienced they were before (see Burns 1996, reviewed above).

The 1991 study was later developed into a comprehensive book (1996) where Woods coined the term BAK (beliefs-assumptions-knowledge), which he defines as:

a construct analogous to the notion of schema, but emphasizing the notion that beliefs, assumptions and knowledge are included. [...] Like schemata, BAK networks are structured in the sense that knowledge, assumptions and beliefs can be posited in terms of interrelated propositions, in which certain propositions presuppose others.

(Woods 1996: 196)

In his 1996 study, Woods has a section on the influences on teachers' BAK. Among these he counts 'early language learning experiences', 'early teaching experiences and teacher education' and 'later language learning and teaching experiences overseas' for one teacher as identified throughout his study. He argues that there are problems in distinguishing the elements of BAK from one another and that perhaps it is better to see BAK as an integrated model of teacher knowledge construction and use.

In terms of teachers' knowledge construction and use Johnston and Goettsch (2000) investigated experienced ESL teachers' knowledge base for language teacher education curriculum design. Johnston and Goettsch focused on grammar (since it is the main subject matter knowledge) and utilised Shulman's (1987) framework for teachers' pedagogical reasoning, identifying the knowledge base for experienced ESL teachers as comprising of content knowledge (the source of teacher knowledge), pedagogical content knowledge (types of grammar explanation), and knowledge of learners (how teachers perceived their learners). They conclude that these categories of teachers' knowledge base are integrated and should be treated holistically since teachers' education and professional experience were the major sources of their content knowledge and these sources also influenced how they construed their learners and how they taught the subject matter.

However, we should also add to the sources of influence identified by Woods (1996) and by Johnston and Goettsch (2000) 'the non-language learning and teaching related experiences in a teacher's biography' as is acknowledged by studies in the field of general education that have been reviewed so far in sections 1.3.1, 1.3.2, and as was revealed in Ulichny's (1996) study reviewed above.

As an addition and exception to the relatively technical and cognitive dimensions of experienced teachers' thinking highlighted in the ELTE studies reviewed so far, a

more recent study (Albelushi 2003) in an EFL context brings insights into teachers' relationships with their students and colleagues as they become more experienced, and also mentions some constraints. Albelushi states that in the Omani context at least, as teachers become more experienced they emotionally disengage themselves from their students. Age and marital status have a role in this. This does not mean that their students are less important for experienced teachers, but they do not depend on them emotionally any more. In addition, they seek for a more collegial atmosphere where they talk about each other in social terms. Collegiality does not necessarily evolve in terms of professional learning, but it involves close feelings between colleagues who share for example, motherhood. However, it is not always plain sailing as experienced teachers in this context also complained about how they were constrained in terms of learning from each other.

1.3.3.3 Insights from research in the field of general education

In the field of general education, researchers approach experienced (as opposed to 'expert') teachers' thinking more comprehensively than in the field of ELT, where the emphasis is mostly on evaluation of the implementation of certain methods and innovations, and on the teacher 'in the classroom in the decision-making process'. Researchers in the field of general education have shown that teachers' lives are not limited to classrooms and institutions only, but, as a whole person, a teacher brings her/his own personality, upbringing, private life and emotions to the classroom (see Ben-Peretz 1995).

Goodson (1992) argues that researchers need to consider including data on teachers' personal lives when they report their findings. Often teachers make references to their own lives and philosophies while responding to questions during research: "This I take to be prima face evidence that teachers themselves judge such issues to be of major importance" (p. 114). Therefore, Goodson calls for a balanced consideration of both teachers' practices and the sources of influence on their practices through providing the personal context in which those two aspects are intertwined.

In this connection, Clandinin (1986) worked with primary school teachers regarding their personal experiences in order to understand the role of experience in formulating teachers' images and, hence, part of their personal practical knowledge.

She looked at the links of images to experience by distinguishing images as an occurrence in imagination and images as an occurrence in memory. She found that images resulting from experience were based in memory and these shaped imagination-based images that have not yet been experienced. And these experiences go beyond the professional training and learning contexts to the very being of teachers as persons.

For example, one of the teachers Stephanie (12 years' experience) had an image 'classroom as home' where everybody interacted and collaborated with one another. This image was assumed to stem from her professional experience, her professional training, her own school experience, and her private life. She wanted to experience the emotional social aspects of her private life in her school or professional environment and therefore felt this desire to create a lively classroom (p. 132). Clandinin (1986) argues that teachers' whole life and professional experience might be central to the decisions they make and two teachers' ways of seeing things might be completely different under the same situation as a result of prior life history.

Similarly, Raymond, Butt and Towsend (1992) investigated the components of teacher development through autobiographical case studies of experienced teachers in various subjects. The major elements they identified as having an impact on the way teachers develop professionally throughout their careers were prior-to-training learning experiences. They argue that formal training (initial or in-service) and teaching (after becoming a teacher) are evaluated and given meaning based on dispositions derived from early learning experiences. Even experienced teachers, they claim, draw upon these sources of influence because these are the elements that make the unique amalgam of self for each teacher and which stays as part of their teaching identity throughout. They "act as lifelong references [...] even when these grounds are shaken by later classroom experiences" (p. 150).

As positive factors for professional development, Raymond et al. identify collegiality and working collaboratively. However, they point out the necessity of encouraging external motivational structures for a collegial atmosphere within an institution. They state that teachers' implicit and private dispositions of teaching or sometimes their personalities might prevent them from voluntarily collaborating with each other. On the other hand, they report that those who experienced a collaborative atmosphere found it very beneficial and emotionally supportive.

These are important insights that the field of ELTE has begun to take into account (Bailey and Nunan 1996, Freeman and Richards 1996). However, ELTE by the nature of its establishment has not yet evolved beyond exporting methodologies and approaches from the centre to the periphery (Holliday 1994). The fact that experienced teachers, in particular, respond to top-down innovations in a critical manner has yet to be documented adequately in ELTE, but is shown below. The studies below also provide further justification for my earlier critique of studies of expertise in section 1.2.3.1.

Huberman (1992) worked with Swiss teachers at various stages of their careers. He found that experienced teachers who stayed away from huge innovations and reforms and who focused on their own classroom-level experiments displayed more satisfaction. They were able to invest their effort in getting to know different pupil groups, and developing materials and assessment procedures for their context. They wanted to develop routines and were more likely to be satisfied in their career later on. Although they were experienced teachers, they responded to a questionnaire about mastery of teaching components by stating that they had not mastered all of those components. Huberman states that “a large number of experienced teachers are having trouble with aspects of their work which they themselves acknowledge to be the central ones” (p. 133). He calls for letting teachers ‘tinker’ within their own capacity and at their own pace for effective teacher learning and development.

Similarly, Sikes (1992) considers teachers’ aims and goals as significant factors in influencing their perceptions and experiences of their occupation. She states that teachers often seek to work in places which provide them with the opportunity to be in congruence with their own values and perceptions that influence their aims and goals.

Sikes places the focus on experienced teachers who are in their late 30s and 40s. She draws on teachers’ life-cycle research previously carried out with experienced teachers and considers the findings which show the possible routes experienced teachers might take in response to imposed change. Some experienced teachers who hold strong ideas about their practices might carry on as if nothing happened. And this might create divisions and frictions in a school community between teachers who are in favour of change and those who are not, especially if a new person is brought in. In most cases it is said to be the older and more experienced and influential people who take up opposing views to the newcomer(s). On other occasions experienced teachers

might just leave the occupation if there are no promotional opportunities, or they shift the balance they give to their work and focus on other areas in their lives. If the imposed change is likely to provide chances for promotion, this might motivate some teachers. Teachers who are motivated like this can alter their theories to make sense of the change. In situations where experienced teachers' already established ways of doing things in their classrooms are challenged such as having to use new technology or methods, they may show resistance and try to either overtly or covertly (depending on students' benefits) sabotage innovations.

Sikes concludes that the nature of the change being imposed is an important factor determining how it should be introduced. She states that even changes aiming to improve the existing situation for better educational purposes will be perceived as threatening by experienced teachers because they will feel their professional experience, which has developed over the years (and which they highly value), is being overlooked by policy makers:

Imposed change carries official authority which challenges professional experience, judgement and expertise. This challenge is likely to be viewed with greater disfavour by older teachers who have some experientially-based confidence that they are the ones best qualified to make professional decisions. (p. 49)

This kind of resistance to innovations might involve teachers' emotions, as documented by Clandinin (1986, reviewed further above), and a recent ELTE study reported by Golombek and Johnson (2004) provides insights into the 'mediational space' which narratives can create. These can enable teachers to articulate dissonances in their emotions and to engage in a dialogue to reconstruct their teaching principles in a cognitively congruent way so that emotional dissonances can also be restored. The authors argue that teachers do not simply adopt expert knowledge, but they interpret it on the basis of their perceived need for cognitive and emotional equilibrium. Thus, they call for partnership and collaboration between teacher educators and their trainees to bring out affective dimensions of teachers' knowing because these affective dimensions influence professional development as well as perceptions with regard to change.

To sum up, my own research into experienced EFL teachers' cognition has to take into account that they bring with them to the classroom their own concerns and priorities stemming from their lived experience from all areas of life, and the meaning they give to teaching should be understood through their own constructs that reflect the teacher as a whole person, not just a figure whose life starts and ends in the classroom.

To conclude this summary of previous research into experienced teachers' cognition, the insights gained for the current study are as follows:

1. Overall, experienced (ESL/EFL) teachers have highly developed ways of thinking about, evaluating and learning from their practices (Berliner 1987, Westerman 1991, Woods 1996, Borg 1998, Breen et al. 2001, Tsui 2003).
2. Experienced ESL teachers' decision-making is complex, varied and rich, being based on their on-going evaluations of and interactions with the curriculum, students and materials (Bailey 1996, Smith 1996, Burns 1996, Breen 1991).
3. Experienced ESL teachers' practices might reflect theoretical orientations to teaching in congruence with their beliefs (Johnson 1992, Smith 1996).
4. However, no matter how experienced ESL/EFL teachers are, their practices are not always in congruence with their beliefs (Burns 1996, Ulichny 1996, Borg 1998).
5. It is said that experienced ESL/EFL teachers have their own personal understanding of teaching and they have personal theories (Breen 1991, Johnston and Goettsch 2000, Breen et al. 2001); however the studies recognising this are limited in their focus to the 'teacher in the classroom' and identify principles but not the underlying personal theories these are said to be governed by.
6. Experienced ESL teachers might share a body of theories and principles (Gatbonton 1999, Breen 1991, Breen et al. 2001). There are also significant individual differences between them (Breen 1991, Breen et al. 2001, Woods 1991, 1996).
7. Experienced (ESL/EFL) teachers' personal theories are rooted in their biographies that contain their previous (language) learning experiences

(Woods 1996, Borg 1998) and make up their whole personality (Clandinin 1986, Ulichny 1996, Goodson 1992, Knowles 1992). For this reason when an imposed change occurs, they tend to reject it unless they are convinced that the change does not invalidate their own identities (Sikes 1992).

8. As they become more experienced, EFL teachers' relationships with significant others in their context may evolve in the light of the new experiences in their lives (Albelushi 2003).
9. The affective dimensions of experienced teachers' knowing influence the ways in which they can improve themselves further and perceive expert knowledge, and influence how they teach in the classroom (Clandinin 1986, Golombek and Johnson 2004) .
10. Overall, relatively little research has been carried out into experienced as opposed to pre-service and novice teachers' thinking to take into account their previous learning experiences, biographies and how they develop in terms of their experience. In EFL contexts, there is a big gap that needs to be filled not only in terms of this, but also in relation to teachers' cognition overall. To my knowledge, there has not been any research undertaken with secondary school EFL teachers in this respect.

1.4 The need for further research

When we take into account the literature reviewed in this chapter, we can clearly see that more insights are needed into how experienced ESL/EFL teachers conceptualise teaching. There is not yet a general consensus on what should constitute a knowledge base for ELTE because research in this area is quite new (Freeman 2002), but there is a consensus that understanding teacher cognition is crucial within this debate. And this study, by focusing on experienced teachers' cognition in an EFL context, is likely to make a valuable contribution for the following reasons in particular:

Firstly, there is a stark contrast between how researchers approach pre-service and novice ESL/EFL teachers' cognition and the cognition of experienced teachers. Researchers have attempted to understand pre-service and novice teachers of English by taking into account their personality as well as their professional learning experience. Experienced teachers, on the other hand, have tended to be either treated

as experts or their knowledge construction and use are documented mostly by looking at the decision-oriented aspects of their cognition. In both cases, the focus tends to be on drawing implications for initial teacher education programmes or for the development of effective teaching skills. Instead there is a need to describe experienced EFL/ESL teachers' theories in their own terms.

As well as delivering a body of experienced or expert knowledge to pre-service teachers, training programmes should also look for ways to identify the underlying cognitive processes of experienced teachers to enable better use of knowledge in practice. Pre-service teacher education, in particular, might be greatly enhanced if the cognitive processes of experienced teachers could be communicated to trainees for their own consideration and evaluation. Especially, trainees could have the opportunity of scrutinising the differing or similar perceptions of more experienced colleagues working in contexts and under constraints similar to those they will themselves face. This could give more self-confidence to novice teachers when they first start teaching.

In this connection, there is also a need to focus on what might be termed 'ordinary' (not 'expert') experienced teachers as research participants, avoiding the kind of prejudgement as to what 'good teaching' entails which has characterised the studies of expertise reviewed in section 1.3.3.1 above by instead focusing on good teaching as defined by participants themselves.

Additionally, the contexts that the majority of studies have been undertaken in are in ESL countries. They are not state school language classrooms, either. It is perhaps due to this focus that the well-documented constraints on pre-service and novice teachers do not seem to be of relevance to researchers working with experienced teachers in the field of ELTE, although there is a body of literature on this phenomenon in the field of general teacher education (e.g. Sikes, Measor and Woods 1985). A study of state secondary school EFL teachers would be more representative of the bulk of English teaching in the world and would make a significant contribution to the growing body of literature in the field. There is a particular need to investigate whether experienced secondary school teachers' practices are congruent with their ideals, given the constraints that might be expected on their practice.

In addition, biographical sources of influence on experienced teachers beyond simply previous language learning experiences have yet to be documented comprehensively in the field of ELTE.

Finally, although it is acknowledged that experienced (ESL/EFL) teachers' cognition is complex, to this day the research efforts undertaken have not succeeded in uncovering the underlying systems of teachers' cognition comprehensively due to the methodologies and theoretical frameworks adopted. A theoretically better-founded framework and methodology could provide more insights into the complex nature of teachers' cognition.

In general terms, then, I intend to investigate the contents and nature (including structure and biographical sources) of experienced EFL teachers' cognition, and to see to what extent their ideas about good practice are reflected in their actual practice. In order to specify these aims further, I need, in the next chapter, to explain the theoretical framework which will inform the study and to explain in detail what it is that I want to explore within experienced EFL teachers' cognition.

CHAPTER TWO

Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to explain and justify the theoretical framework for my study, and to explain associated terminology. First, I highlight the problem that a wide variety of terms have been used to describe teacher knowledge and thinking (2.2) before discussing one commonly used term, ‘personal practical knowledge’ and showing how this can be linked to Kelly’s (1955) Personal Construct Theory (PCT), which I adopt as a theoretical framework for the present study (2.3). I then explain PCT in greater detail (2.4) before providing a PCT-based definition of the term ‘personal theory’ which I employ in the study (2.5). This enables me (in 2.6) to frame my research questions, in connection with the research needs identified at the end of Chapter One.

2.2 The persisting terminology problem in teacher cognition research

As Borg (2003: 81) states, the term ‘teacher cognition’ can be used to refer to “what teachers know, believe, and think”. However, different researchers highlight different aspects of teacher cognition, and there are problems of different uses of terminology, as highlighted by Pajares (1992).

Pajares (1992) criticises the findings of teacher cognition research as being far from forming a general framework on the basis of which people can debate and solve problems, mainly for the reason that such research involves too many ‘messy constructs’. This problem still persists (see Borg 2003: 83). As we have seen in Chapter One, different researchers tend to use different terms and various research designs when exploring the issues. Terms, Pajares (1992: 309) suggests,

travel in disguise and often under alias – attitudes, values, judgements, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems,

preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertoires of understanding, and social strategy, to name but a few that can be found in the literature.

Pajares (1992) asserts that a major dilemma is how to distinguish where knowledge ends and beliefs take over in teachers' thinking, and this is one reason for the wide range of terms above. Often teachers are said to be predisposed to action as a result of their beliefs, not merely their knowledge, and it is widely accepted that what teachers know is not always the same as what they believe (Woods 1996). Thus, several attempts have been made to differentiate between the characteristics of beliefs and knowledge systems or to come up with alternative terms in this connection. For Verloop et al. (2001: 446), beliefs can be roughly construed as referring to "personal values, attitudes, and ideologies", while knowledge refers to "a teacher's more factual propositions". Furthermore, "attitudes differ from beliefs in that they are evaluative and subjective in nature. Attitudes about a particular object or behaviour can be the sum of many beliefs – both positive and negative" (Kennedy 1996: 110).

In the end, though, trying to distinguish teachers' knowledge from their beliefs or attitudes is very problematic because it is too difficult to determine where one begins and the other ends (see Abelson 1979, Eraut 1985, Pajares 1992, Abdullah-Sani 2000). Instead of attempting to do so, then, some researchers have developed systems which embrace them both. Woods' (1996) attempt is one example. He brought together beliefs, assumptions and knowledge (BAK) as interrelated sets of thoughts which guide teachers' actions. Richards (1996) is another researcher who made an attempt to capture teachers' cognition in a relatively global way. He coined the term 'teachers' maxims', which he defined as

outcomes of teachers' evolving theories of teaching. They are personal working principles which reflect teachers' individual philosophies of teaching, developed from their experience of teaching and learning, their teacher education experiences, and from their own personal beliefs and value systems. (p. 293)

Viewing teacher thinking in terms of 'personal constructs', as we shall see in 2.4 below, is another way to move beyond dichotomies between beliefs and knowledge,

and at the same time to acknowledge that teachers are ‘whole persons’ in other ways too. Indeed, approaches to research in this area can differ, as Clandinin and Connelly (1987) point out, in the extent to which they acknowledge “‘the personal, that is the what, why and wherefore of *individual* pedagogic action” (p. 487, italics in original) and recognize aesthetic, moral and emotional as well as cognitive dimensions of teacher thought (p. 499).

In their own attempt to address the terminology problem, Clandinin and Connelly (1987) reviewed twelve studies which researched teacher thinking, comparing their epistemological positions, their methodologies and their conceptualisations of the composition of teacher thought. In advance of Pajares (1992), they argued that:

the theoretically borrowed languages, and the various theoretical origins and corresponding differences in theoretical language tend to divide the field, making researchers sceptical of using and cross-referencing one another’s ideas .(p. 498)

It seems paradoxical, then, that rather than building on the three studies in their review which, they admit, *do* share theoretical origins, they preferred to propose their own new term, ‘personal practical knowledge’, a term which has subsequently become very influential. The three studies in question (Olson 1981, Pope and Scott 1984, Munby 1983) had all been informed by Kelly’s (1955) Personal Construct Theory, and it is probably true to say that teacher thinking research was very much influenced by Kelly’s work in the early stages. The proceedings of the first symposium of the International Study Association on Teacher Thinking (Halkes and Olson 1984), for example, contained a number of studies adopting a Kellyan perspective, studies which Connelly and Clandinin must have been aware of since they had a (1984) contribution in the same volume. See also Taylor 1979 for another example of previous PCT-based work in the field of education.

The popularity of the conception of ‘personal practical knowledge’ since the mid-1980s has meant that a PCT-based study, these days, may seem marginal to the mainstream of research in teacher thinking. However, I want to show that this is not the case (in 2.3 below), by looking in more depth at the notion of ‘personal practical knowledge’ and where it came from. I wish to show, in other words, that I am not adding to the terminology problem in teacher cognition research by adopting a

completely new and unfamiliar framework, but instead that my study will have relevance to mainstream research in teacher cognition.

2.3 Personal practical knowledge

I hope to show here that Connelly and Clandinin's (1987) preferred term, 'personal practical knowledge' has more in common with PCT than they or others since have acknowledged. In order to do so, I need to look at the immediate origins of 'personal practical knowledge' in the seminal work of Elbaz (1983). As we shall see, Elbaz was much clearer than Connelly and Clandinin in her acknowledgement of links with Kelly's (1955) PCT.

In developing her ideas on personal practical knowledge, Clandinin (1986) acknowledged clearly the sources of this in 'practical knowledge' and 'images' as discussed earlier by Elbaz (1983):

Elbaz's work on practical knowledge opens the way for looking at knowledge as experiential, embodied and based on the narrative of experience. The present research builds on Elbaz's (1983) account of practical knowledge. Elbaz offered the constructs of image, practical principle and rule to give an account of the structure of practical knowledge; the construct of orientation is offered to define how practical knowledge is held.

(Clandinin 1986: 19)

Clandinin (1985) emphasised the 'personal orientation' to practical knowledge that Elbaz had identified, and merged these two terms to coin 'personal practical knowledge',

which is imbued with all the experiences that make up a person's being. Its meaning is derived from, and understood in terms of, a person's experiential history, both professional and personal.

(Clandinin 1985: 362)

Clandinin did not, in her (1985, 1986) studies, give any acknowledgement of the influence of Kelly's work on Elbaz's 'practical knowledge', nor on the notion of 'personal orientation', both of which she claims to build on.

When we turn to Elbaz's own (1983) work, however, the influence of Kelly (1955) becomes clearer. To start with practical knowledge, Elbaz clarifies that she coined this term to celebrate the everyday struggle of teachers to actively engage in and anticipate their contexts as whole persons (p. 5):

I have chosen to use the term 'practical knowledge' because it focuses attention on the action and decision-oriented nature of the teacher's situation, and construes her knowledge as a function, in part, of her response to that situation.

Among the five orientations Elbaz used to explain how practical knowledge was held and used, 'practical knowledge as personal' was one of them, and in this area Kelly's influence is explicitly acknowledged via the following reference to his work:

The notion of the teacher's perspective is not to be understood narrowly. It encompasses not only intellectual belief, but also perception, feeling, values, purpose and commitment. This breadth of perspective which underlies knowledge is captured in psychological theories which emphasize the individual's "construct system" [here there is a footnote reference to Kelly 1955]. Such theories show that the search for knowledge is motivated by the entire range of human feeling, need and desire, and by the perspectives, points of view, system of constructs, which are elaborated to deal with the world. To characterize knowledge in general, and teacher's practical knowledge in particular, in this way is [...] to emphasize the active, constructive and purposive nature of mind and of knowledge. (p. 17)

It seems clear from this reference that the *personal* dimension of practical knowledge which Clandinin (1985, 1986) particularly highlights has its roots in – or at least a deep relationship with – Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory, as interpreted by Elbaz (1983).

Regarding, also, the structure of practical knowledge, Elbaz provides further insights which are taken on by Clandinin with little modification. For Elbaz, 'rules of practice', 'practical principles' and 'images' are the interrelated components or levels

of practical knowledge. These terms reflect the relationship between teachers' experience and personal factors. A *rule of practice* is a straightforward, brief statement of how to act in a specific situation such as error correction or in a broader context such as testing, giving homework, or starting and ending a lesson. A *practical principle* is more comprehensive and provides the guiding rationale behind statements of rules of practice. For example, a teacher who, as a rule of practice, does not correct students' errors while they are speaking might justify this on the grounds that pupils will be inhibited, become conscious of their grammar mistakes and not be happy in the classroom anymore. It is said that practical principles bear the stamp of past experiences on them and, although the situations might change and teachers might come up with various rules of practices over time, their guiding principles tend to be consistent with their images (see also Breen et al. 2001). *Images* are said to govern both rules of practice and practical principles; they are highly implicit and embedded in the personal ways a "teacher's feelings, values, needs and beliefs" (Elbaz 1983: 134) are combined.

Clandinin (1986: 166) particularly emphasizes the power of images:

Images, as components of personal practical knowledge, are the coalescence of a person's personal private and professional experience. Image is a way of organizing and reorganizing past experience, both in reflection and as the image finds expression in practice *and* as a perspective from which new experience is taken. Image is a personal, meta-level, organizing concept in personal practical knowledge in that it embodies a person's experience; finds expression in practice; and is the perspective from which new experience is taken.

This seems very similar to Kelly's (1955) explanation of personal constructs, in particular 'core constructs', that is, "*those by which [a person] maintains his identity and existence*" (Kelly 1955: 482, italics in original). Clandinin (1985, 1986) states that images held by teachers are often resistant to change, and that they have "moral, emotional and personal" (Clandinin 1985: 379) consequences for the future anticipations people make. For example, when Stephanie, an experienced teacher, was talking about her governing image of 'classroom as home', Clandinin (1985, 1986) found that she felt very uncomfortable when asked to elaborate on it more and even tried to rename it at one point with the conviction that she was perhaps wrong. But

after a moment of hesitation, she went on to describe this image as she had originally articulated it. If she altered it, she would have had to invalidate all of her practices in her classroom that she had been carrying out for years. Her classroom was another home for her to the extent that some of the activities that she did with her students found their way to her own home in her private life such as creating a vegetable garden.

How Clandinin (1985, 1986) views images and the 'personal' dimension of 'personal practical knowledge' seems very similar to the way Kelly (1955) states that when our core constructs are challenged, we feel threat because this means we are being invalidated as persons.

This brings us, then, to Kelly and the Theory of Personal Constructs which I have decided to adopt for the present study. Like Elbaz (1983, as cited above), Kelly highlights the agency of persons in struggling to anticipate and control their environment through construct systems which are continuously evolving:

the successive revelation of events invites the person to place new constructions upon them whenever something unexpected happens. Otherwise one's anticipations would become less and less realistic. The succession of events in the course of time continually subjects a person's construction system to a validation process. The constructions one places upon events are working hypotheses, which are about to be put to the test of experience. As one's anticipations or hypotheses are successfully revised in the light of the unfolding sequence of events, the construction system undergoes a progressive evolution. The person reconstrues. This is experience.

(Kelly 1955: 72)

And he states the importance of re-constructing experience to be able to successfully re-organise our construct systems:

The person who merely stands agog at each emerging event may experience a series of interesting surprises, but if he makes no attempt to discover the recurrent themes, his experience does not amount to much. It is when man

begins to see the orderliness in a sequence of events that he begins to experience them. (p. 74)

To sum up, in this section I have attempted to show how the idea of ‘personal practical knowledge’ originated and have discussed, in broad terms, how this idea can be linked to Kelly’s work. It seems plausible to suggest that the images, practical principles and rules of practice that make up the structure of personal practical knowledge (Clandinin 1986) can alternatively be seen in terms of constructs, and I hope that this study will help to shed further light on this possibility.

In the next section, as a foundation for my study, I elaborate further on the insights I believe can be drawn from Kelly’s (1955) PCT in relation to teachers’ personal practical knowledge.

2.4 Personal construct theory (PCT): a theory of personality

In essence PCT is a constructivist theory of personality, originally designed for clinical situations to help people to construct and re-construct their own world just as scientists form hypotheses and test them. Kelly calls his philosophical position *constructive alternativism*, assuming that “all of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision and replacement” (p. 15). He further states that “No one needs to paint himself into a corner; no one needs to be completely hemmed in by circumstances; no one needs to be the victim of his biography” (ibid.). Kelly coined the metaphor ‘man-the-scientist’ to state that everybody holds the key to take charge of his/her own life because we can replace our old interpretations with alternative ones like a scientist does in his/her laboratory. How can this happen? Kelly uses the term *constructs* to define the alternative interpretations of the world that we can try on for size. “In its minimum context a construct would be a way in which two things are alike and different from the third” (Kelly 1955: 111). Constructs are “transparent patterns or templates” through which we see the world (pp. 8-9). Constructs are like “temporary goggles we wear to create a window on the world” to view or alter reality (Pope 2000: 5). According to Kelly (1955), each individual makes sense of his/her world by actively viewing or *construing* it through a number of personal constructs which are bi-polar, and hierarchically organised into a construct system. Studies of

teacher and student thinking and learning within this theoretical frame of reference (Olson 1980, 1981, Diamond 1991, Yaxley 1991, Pope and Denicolo 1993, Sendan 1995, Saka 1995, Cabaroğlu 1999, Castejón and Martínez 2001) bring to our attention how liberating it can be for teachers if they are made aware of alternative constructs they can experiment with.

Kelly's theory of personal constructs is composed of a fundamental postulate, and a set of eleven corollaries that explain it (1955: 46–104, italics in original), and below I will attempt to draw insights from these for the current study. In Appendix 2.4 further definitions of terms deriving from PCT can be found.

1. Fundamental Postulate: *A person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events.*

Each person reacts to and makes sense of his/her environment on the basis of his/her unique anticipation and interpretation of reality. This statement empowers the individual as being capable of reasoning, like a scientist struggling to come to terms with the outside world, but by creating a personal meaning (similar to 'practical knowledge as personal' (Elbaz 1983) and 'personal practical knowledge' (Clandinin 1986)).

2. Construction Corollary: *A person anticipates events by construing their replications.*

Kelly states that a person predicts and reacts to events or replicates his/her experiences on the basis of prior attributes ascribed to similar experiences. Bannister and Fransella (1971/1987: 9) maintain that "replication is something which emerges because of our interpretation".

Teachers every day find themselves in situations that call for interpretation to respond to the unpredicted aspects of classroom interaction and they implicitly draw upon their past experiences (which are also replications of one another) accumulated over the years since their childhood, schooling, their training, novice years and so on (Lortie 1975, Richards 1998). They do so in order to place their own mark on events in the context of education and teaching in an attempt to control and give personal meaning to them. As we have seen, Elbaz (1983) and Clandinin (1986) similarly attempted to understand these replications through what they called 'images'. However, in PCT terms, these replications can be seen to relate to constructs.

3. Individuality Corollary: *Persons differ from each other in their construction of events.*

Not only do persons differ from each other in their ways of anticipating events, but also there might be different interpretations available of the same event (or situation) for them. This provides insights into why two teachers might have different perceptions about teaching even though they go through the same training (Goodman 1988).

4. Organization Corollary: *Each person characteristically evolves, for his convenience in anticipating events, a construction system embracing ordinal relationships between constructs.*

Each person develops a construct system within which a finite set of constructs are hierarchically organised, having subordinate and/or super-ordinate relationships with each other (compare Elbaz's (1983) 'images', 'practical principles', 'rules of practice', and Woods' (1996) BAK systems). These systems are organised to help the individual minimise personal conflicts and defeat incompatibilities within the construction subsystems. For example, it would be rather difficult if we did not classify animal species like *mammals*, *reptiles*, *amphibians*, etc. Furthermore, *cats* and *whales* may be subsumed as subordinates of *mammals*; *alligators* and *snakes* of *reptiles*; and *frogs* and *turtles* of *amphibians*. In addition, all *mammals*, *reptiles*, and *amphibians* can be seen as subordinates of *animals*. The hierarchical organization of construct systems aids us to manage the world we live in.

This resonates well with the structure of personal practical knowledge, identified first by Elbaz (1983) as comprising interrelated levels of rules of practice, practical principles and images. As we have seen, Clandinin (1985, 1986) later expanded on teachers' images and showed their core importance for the coherent organisation of teachers' personal knowledge in practice.

5. Dichotomy Corollary: *A person's construction system is composed of a finite number of dichotomous constructs.*

Kelly proposes that persons do not confirm anything without concurrently rejecting something else in a particular situation (see 7. Range Corollary below). This means that within the range of convenience of a given context, constructs attribute meaning

to the elements in a bi-polar way by grouping some of them as similar at one end and by grouping the rest at the other end as contrasting to those which are similar. For example, in a given situation when Ms. Brown says that 'Mr. White is my friend', she is not saying that Mr. White is her *friend*, not *a table* or *an armchair*. She is simply saying that Mr. White is her *friend* not her *enemy* or *boss*. Or it may be that 'Mr. White is my *friend* not my *father* or *partner*' in another context. "In its minimum context a construct is a way in which at least two elements are similar and contrast with a third" (Kelly 1955: 61). This is one of the reasons that I find it useful to look at teachers' constructs because one can have access not only to teachers' views of *things as they should be*, but also to how they think *things should not be*.

For example, if a teacher comes up with the negative image of 'a frightening teacher' we might assume that the person who is saying this would reject being strict with children. But we would not know the nature of avoidance from being strict until we uncover what being 'strict' is opposed to, and get the person to articulate this as a construct. Is it 'frightening' as opposed to 'loving'? Is it 'frightening' as opposed to 'polite'? Is it 'frightening' as opposed to 'funny'? Is it 'frightening' as opposed to 'kindly-severe'? The choice is hidden in the opposite pole of the construct, which will determine how the person will not be strict. We may lack information about the implicit poles of teachers' core constructs if we only pay attention to what they articulate as images. However, what they do not articulate can give us more insights about the choices teachers make.

6. 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.*

Kelly maintains that the individual chooses the pole of a construct (either the similarity or contrast pole) to affirm his/her already existing construct systems in order to meet his/her supposed requirements at a given time ('definition'). Or the person might try to enrich his/her construct system by investigating new areas that are only partly understood ('extension'). However, Bannister and Fransella (1971/1987) state that this corollary does not imply that definition or extension is always successful. What this corollary implies is that individuals strive to keep away from conflicting situations.

It is well-documented in research especially into pre-service and novice teachers' thinking that inexperienced teachers often revert back to the ways they feel safe and secure with while they teach (Richards and Pennington 1998). It is perhaps that their construct systems have not yet successfully re-constructed (extension) the new learning experiences that they have undergone in their training, but instead have simply affirmed their existing constructions of classroom teaching (definition) rooted in their prior-to-training experiences. As for experienced teachers, coming to terms with innovations is a major problem (Sikes 1992) which might also be explainable with reference to the notions of extension and definition.

7. Range Corollary: *A construct is convenient for the anticipation of a finite range of events only.*

Kelly suggests that, in a given situation, the variety of experiences to which a particular construct can be attributed is finite in number. He coined the term 'focus of convenience' to refer to the elements (events, people, objects, etc.) for which a construct has been particularly developed (1955: 137). Thus, a construct like 'loyalty – disloyalty' might have as its focus of convenience being faithful to a particular person or people. However, what Kelly terms the '*range of convenience*' of the same construct might then be extended by someone to cover loyalty to their country, or loyalty to their place of employment.

As we saw in Chapter One, Breen et al. (2001) investigated experienced ESL teachers' classroom practices and found that teachers had both shared and different principles that guided their classroom practices. However, the apparently shared principles were put into practice by teachers in various ways and the resulting practices were also varied according to the areas to which the teachers chose to apply those principles. It seems possible that these findings might be explainable with reference to Kelly's notion of 'focus' or 'range' of convenience, since this shows that people sharing the 'same' construct will not necessarily apply it in the same way.

Kelly (1955: 69–70), while justifying his Range Corollary, says that a construct is of a different nature from the notion of a concept. The notion of concept does not include the idea of dichotomy (similarity and contrast poles) or a finite range of applicability. Also, a concept may be seen as a characteristic of the nature of things (reality). By contrast, constructs are used as devices to formulate interpretations which are imposed upon events.

Clandinin (1985: 363) strongly asserts that her notion of ‘images’ of teachers should not be understood as simply a concept, echoing a concern similar to Kelly’s:

It is important that the notion of image as part of personal practical knowledge not be confused with the notion of image as a “concept” and as a propositional knowledge term.

Indeed, teachers’ images could also be seen as having a particular focus or range of convenience, a point to which I shall return later in the thesis.

8. Experience Corollary: *A person’s construction system varies as he successively construes the replications of events.*

We systematically visit and revisit our construct systems on the basis of the validation of our working hypotheses by way of experiencing them. The success or failure of our anticipations of events in terms of experience determines the nature of the evolution of construct systems and our learning (Kelly 1955):

[Learning] is synonymous with any and all psychological processes. It is not something that happens to a person on occasion; it is what makes him a person in the first place (p. 75). [...] When a subject fails to meet the experimenter’s expectations, it may be inappropriate to say that “he has not learned”; rather one might say that what the subject learned was not what the experimenter expected him to learn (p. 77).

I have also elaborated on the Experience Corollary in section 2.3 above and showed how it is linked to the practical knowledge of teachers.

The Experience Corollary implies change and variation in one’s construct system over time through learning; however this expected variation and evolution is dependent on the permeability of the construct system.

9. Modulation Corollary: *The variation in a person’s construction system is limited by the permeability of the constructs within whose range of convenience the variants lie.*

'Permeability' is "the capacity [of a construct] to embrace new elements" (Kelly 1955: 80). A specific construct can accommodate new elements within its range of convenience and as a result generate alternative interpretations to a certain degree. In other words, a person's perception of a given context will be restricted by the permeability of his/her construct system and the modifications in the system will be directly proportionate to the degree of this permeability. This seems to relate strongly to Elbaz's (1983: 19) notion that:

In order to characterize her world as the teacher experiences it, it will be necessary to delineate its boundaries and to determine their permeability. To what degree, for example, can the teacher afford to become involved emotionally with students? What happens when she begins to consider seriously the moral impact of her teaching, or its political implications?

(Elbaz 1983: 19)

10. Fragmentation Corollary: *A person may successfully employ a variety of construction subsystems which are inferentially incompatible with each other.*

The Fragmentation Corollary follows from the Modulation Corollary above which relates to the restrictive influence of constructs on the variations in a person's construct system. What is implicit in the Modulation Corollary and explicitly stated in the Fragmentation Corollary is that different interpretations of the same experience or event are possible within the individual in such a way that these interpretations might lack consistency. "An individual may tolerate such incompatibility provided this does not interfere with their dominant needs, interests and purposes" (Yaxley 1991: 41).

Woods (1991, 1996) provides clear evidence that teachers' guiding principles at times conflicted with each other in specific situations and the teachers resolved this problem by prioritising these competing principles within their BAK system.

11. 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.*

This corollary brings to mind the Individuality Corollary which suggests that each person is *unique* in their perception of events and interpretations of a situation in a

particular context; however, the Individuality Corollary does not contradict the Commonality Corollary. Two or more people can be viewed as similar because they construe a particular experience in a similar fashion (Bannister and Fransella 1971/1987: 17). “Public constructs having demonstrated predictive implications and often rehearsed meanings are more likely to be construed similarly” (Sendan 1995: 31).

Attempts have been made to identify whether teachers in a given context share common features of practice and pedagogic thought (Gatbonton 1998, Breen et al. 2001). Evidence has been found that to a certain degree teachers working in a common context and with similar training experiences perceive things in a similar fashion; however, the extent to which they really share common perspectives and underlying constructs has not previously been explored in depth.

12. 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 persons.*

This corollary seeks to explain how we attempt to understand other people by working out what their particular constructions of the world are. However, since we tend to attempt to anticipate the world of others with our own constructs, sometimes we might fail to relate our constructs to theirs.

As Salmon (1995: 36) states, sociality:

represents the willingness and capacity to step into another person's shoes; to begin to see the world as that person sees it, to adopt, for the moment, the terms and dimensions of meaning through which that person makes sense of things. In this, a teacher's way of working may [. . .] resemble that of a psychotherapist.

Teachers deal with other persons perhaps much more than in any other profession, construing the experiences of their students, parents, head teachers, colleagues, policy makers and other significant people in their lives. From this perspective, the teacher is not a mere victim of circumstances, but engages in construing others' point of view to solve problems. This may suggest a need for changing the way teachers tend to be

represented in mainstream research as having to ‘cope with’ constraints imposed upon them by the norms and values of the wider society they work in.

While Kelly’s work has been recognised and praised for its original contributions to modern day psychology and constructivist philosophy (Allen 1994), it has also been criticised for being too cognitive, for not clearly articulating where emotions stand in relation to a scientific mind which is assumed to logically construe, for being individualistic, and for not discussing child development (Allen 1994, Hergenhahn 1994, Fransella 1995). Fransella (1995) argues that Kelly did in fact integrate “emotional experiences within his theory by seeing them as relating to an awareness that our construing system is in a state of transition or an awareness that it is inadequate for construing the events with which we are confronted” (p. 115). As my own study will show, PCT can help us understand the emotions of participants. Regarding the related criticism that the theory is a purely cognitive one, Fransella (1995) argues against this, affirming that Kelly “saw therapy and diagnosis as being combined and the whole process as being an educative one” (p. 118).

The further criticism that PCT is individualistic cannot be a valid criticism considering Kelly’s explicit focus on the culture in which the client lives (1955: 688, italics in original):

Certain common features of one’s social surroundings are often described as his *culture*. It is important that the clinician be aware of cultural variations. Yet, from our theoretical view, we look upon the “influence” of culture in the same way we look upon other events. The client is not merely the product of his culture, but it has undoubtedly provided him with much evidence of what is “true” and much of the data which his personal construct system has had to keep in systematic order.

In Volume Two of his work on PCT, Kelly (1955: 687-773) explicitly deals with the issue of sociality in line with his Sociality Corollary (see above). Finally, Fransella (1995: 127) argues that:

The absence of a theory of development was no doubt deliberate on Kelly’s part. His theory has no room for compartments or categories into which we can slot people. He would have none of ‘stages of development’ or ‘fixations’

during childhood. A child is as much a construing being as an adult. There are obviously substantial differences, but these are covered by the theoretical constructs themselves – such as preverbal construing, dependency and the like. In support of the suggestion that Kelly deliberately did not talk of the developing child as being different from the developing adult is the fact that he spent a great deal of his early years as a clinical psychologist working with children.

In the light of the arguments above, I am persuaded that for the purposes of this study the criticisms of PCT within the psychological literature can be effectively countered.

I have elaborated in this section on the theoretical framework within which I intend to collect data, analyse and interpret the findings for the current study of experienced teachers' cognition. PCT seems to be advantageous in helping me understand the way teachers think about their profession in the sense that it brings the affective/emotional, social and the rational decision-making characteristics of persons together by virtue of its fundamental postulate and eleven corollaries explained above. It highlights the individuality of the person, but it does not isolate him/her from others around. It construes persons as scientists, and does not deny their free will in the choices they make while experimenting with alternative realities.

In the next section, I shall define the overall term I favour for referring to teachers' cognition in PCT terms: 'personal theory'.

2.5 Personal theories

In this study, I particularly adopt the term 'personal theory' (Kelly 1955, Bannister and Fransella 1971/1987, Fransella and Bannister 1977, Tann 1993, Sendan 1995), drawing insights from Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory (PCT) to construe teaching as something which has a dynamically evolving individual meaning for each teacher. The dynamic way in which teachers make sense of the profession is acknowledged by the word 'theory', which suggests a process of hypothesis testing. To define this more fully, "*a personal theory is an underlying system of constructs that [teachers] draw upon in thinking about, evaluating, classifying, and guiding pedagogic practice*" (Sendan 1995: 60, italics and material in brackets in original).

Personal theory refers to a teacher's "set of beliefs, values, understandings, assumptions – [their] ways of thinking about the teaching profession" (Tann 1993: 55).

We saw in sections 1.3 and 2.2 that some previous researchers tried to gain insights into the knowledge teachers held and used in practice by exploring their beliefs. And valuable attempts have been made to understand beliefs' influence on the way teachers implement their knowledge. Some researchers also worked with images and stated they are also resistant to change. However, while the present study recognises that teachers' beliefs or images might be resistant to change, I am mainly interested in teachers' working hypotheses, that is to say, interpretations of events which might become components of their belief system once they are tested against reality within specific situations. It is contradictory to say teachers are thinking individuals and at the same time to say they behave simply as a result of their beliefs. PCT, on the other hand, indicates that change is possible provided that it comes from within the individual: hence the usefulness of the term 'personal theory'.

In PCT terms, a personal theory can be defined as a system of constructs. Constructs are the ways we anticipate events (Kelly 1955). We can think of constructs as coloured lenses. If we have a blue one in front of our eyes, we see the world in blue. If we do not know that we see the world as blue because of the lens we are wearing, then we 'believe' it is blue. However, there are alternatives and they are provisional. Similarly, Woods (1996: 71–2), in his discussion of belief systems, states that even when beliefs are explicitly stated, they must be seen as hypotheses because they may not match what the speaker really believes. Rather, they may reflect what the speaker wants listeners to think, since individuals construct their beliefs according to the rules of the society they live in, that is, according to the 'lenses' they wear.

The whole assumption of teacher thinking research is that belief systems have to be made explicit so that they can be intervened in for enhancement of professional development by showing teachers alternative ways of anticipating events. For example, Zeichner et al. (1987: 28) comment that "pre-service programs are not very powerful interventions" on student teachers' beliefs because they are inflexible. However, Kagan (1992: 150) responds to this by saying that the assumed inflexibility of student teachers' beliefs might not be the case; rather it might be that the training programmes fail to help them to reconstruct their beliefs. It is a more liberating

thought that teachers can indeed be made aware of the alternative worlds of other teachers – that is, of others’ personal theories (Pope 2000).

2.6 Research questions

Having established my theoretical framework, I am now in a position to propose research questions for the present study. The justification for them was provided in Chapter 1, where I highlighted important gaps in present understanding of experienced EFL teachers’ cognition, specifically the cognition of ‘ordinary’ secondary school teachers of English as a foreign language viewed as ‘whole persons’ (not just as classroom decision-makers). Having discussed the notion of ‘personal theory’, it is now possible to convert my general research aims (see Chapter One, 1.4) into specific research questions, which I list below:

1. What are experienced EFL teachers’ personal theories of good teaching?
 - 1a. What are the *contents* of experienced EFL teachers’ personal theories of good teaching?
 - 1b. What is the *nature* of experienced EFL teachers’ personal theories of good teaching?

I wish to describe both the contents of experienced teachers’ theories and their nature, in other words their structure, and the apparent biographical sources of influence on them. With regard to contents, I am particularly interested to see whether my participants’ theories can be said to be different from those of pre-service/novice teachers, ‘expert’ experienced teachers, and teachers of English in ESL as opposed to EFL settings. With regard to the structure of their theories, I am interested in the insights that PCT can bring, with its relatively rigorous theoretical framework. Within the same general area of the ‘nature’ of experienced EFL teachers’ theories, I am also interested in the biographical sources of influence on them, since this has hardly been researched as compared with pre-service and novice teachers.

2. To what extent are experienced EFL teachers’ classroom practices congruent with their personal theories of good teaching?

I wish to see whether and how teachers implement their personal theories in practice so as to explore the extent to which a theory–practice gap applies as has been shown to be usually the case with novice and pre-service teachers. Due to the focus in most previous ELTE research on teachers in relatively ‘uncontrolled’ ESL settings, I shall also be interested to find out whether there are any situational constraints that secondary school EFL teachers might perceive when trying to put their personal theories of good teaching into practice, and, if so, how they respond to such constraints.

Having established these research questions, in the following chapter I explain the research paradigm adopted, and the methodological procedures used to investigate the questions.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In the present chapter I would like to first discuss the research paradigm, constructivism, which seems best suited to the theoretical framework of the study. As stated in Chapter 2, the present study utilises Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory (PCT), which has at its heart the idea of 'constructive alternativism' and the perspectives of the individual. Accordingly, in this study I will be adopting the constructivist paradigm, and I shall discuss the appropriateness of its interpretivist nature of in 3.2 below. I intend to investigate EFL teachers working in one secondary school in Turkey as an in-depth case study. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 181) a case study "seeks to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors and consequently may be described as interpretive and subjective". Thus, I will describe how I attempted to achieve validity and reliability as recommended for qualitative studies before, during and after data collection (3.3). Validity and reliability require specific care while undertaking case studies due to the threat of subjectivity (Cohen et al. *ibid*). I shall next consider some ethical issues (3.4), describe the data collection methods which I used during the main study (3.5), the methodological lessons learnt from piloting and the procedures used for the main study (3.6), and finally how I analysed the data (3.7).

3.2 The constructivist paradigm

Schwandt (1994, 2000) sets out to examine the constructivist paradigm and its interpretivist epistemology with regard to human inquiry. He points out that interpretivist thinking was developed by critics of logical empiricism who "argued for the uniqueness of human inquiry" (1994: 119). Whereas natural sciences favour the scientific explanation of events, interpretivists strive to grasp the meaning of social phenomena. Therefore, the methods which natural scientists utilise are said to be inappropriate for investigation in the social sciences.

From the interpretivists' point of view, human action differs from the movement of physical objects in the sense that it hides meaning. A thoughtful smile may mean various things for the people who witness it and only the possessor of the smile knows the real meaning of it personally. Therefore, interpretivists try to grasp meaning within the system in which it has been created. Constructivism has its antecedents in this broad movement away from an empiricist and logical account of knowledge and meaning (Schwandt 2000). For constructivists, the mind is active, testing and retesting hypotheses, and importance is placed on the lived experience of social actors. It is, then, different perspectives which need to be taken into account, not one single reality, and constructivist researchers expect to uncover plural realities.

Two types of constructivism follow from here: radical constructivism and social constructivism. Both reject the idea of total objectivity. Radicals state that there is no knowledge present without experience in and action on the world. In other words, there is no knowledge that exists in a 'pure' form. The individual constructions of events are important to look at. Social constructivists, take this one step further and take into account the 'social construction of reality'. This is different from the radicals' individualistic approach: "The social constructivist approach is predicated on the assumption that [...] knowledge is one of the many coordinated activities of individuals and as such is subject to the same processes that characterise any human interaction" (Schwandt 1994: 127). Thus, meaning-making becomes a collective activity. This is the point at which Kelly's (1955) constructive alternativism meets the social constructivists. Kelly's PCT elaborates this by means of the Sociality Corollary, which emphasises the sharing of one another's individual constructions to see alternative realities as others see them. Kelly's Sociality Corollary guided me while I tried to step into the participants' shoes to understand teaching phenomena through their eyes.

However, I should emphasise that I did not adopt the constructivist paradigm without considering its possible drawbacks such as plurality in interpretations, and I have consciously and systematically made an effort to turn to the existing body of knowledge and literature for reference while interpreting the findings I focus on. One of my aims in reviewing previous literature was to be able to build my findings consistently on an existing and commonly agreed upon body of knowledge in the field of teacher cognition. Denzin (2000) sets out to examine the meaning of relativism in our age to demonstrate that how we conceptualise relativism is of

profound importance. He calls for understanding of “the very important point that relativism need not and must not be seen in terms of ‘anything goes’” (p. 898). The two extreme epistemological positions of positivism and constructivism seem to resist each other due to their either/or dichotomy. However, I recognise that – as within a positivist approach – criteria for validity and reliability must be established in an interpretivist inquiry which mostly derives its methods from qualitative instruments (since in depth information about specific cases can be gathered via such tools) that might yield too subjective insights if not employed carefully (Cohen et al. 2000). Thus, I have taken into account the proposals made by Guba and Lincoln (1998) and Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson and Spiers (2002) in formulating appropriate criteria of validity and reliability, as will be discussed in the next section.

3.3 Validity and reliability

Cohen et al. (2000) state that, whereas earlier *validity* meant the extent to which research instruments measure what they are intended to measure, it has taken new forms recently. Indeed, there have been objections among qualitative researchers that validity has nothing to do with qualitative research and some have tried to replace the terms derived from quantitative research with alternative criteria (Smith and Deemer 2000, Morse et al. 2002). Morse et al. (2002) criticise such criteria as not being useful, devaluing qualitative research and positioning it as invalid, since they tend to be used for ‘post hoc’ evaluation rather than for step-by-step verification of the research as it occurs. They assert that statements like ‘objectivity can never be captured’ or ‘reality has different forms’ are not helpful for the future of qualitative research, and they strongly recommend designing ‘verification strategies’ to accompany research from before the data collection process begins until the research ends.

In this connection, Cohen et al. (2000) state that there will always be threats to validity and reliability and one can try to minimise these, but one cannot completely eliminate all the factors which pose a danger. Cohen et al. (ibid.) mention some examples of validity that I also attempted to achieve in the present study, as follows:

Descriptive validity: This implies that the information that the researcher provides should be accurate, not distorted. This also subsumes reliability.

Interpretive validity: This implies that the researcher should employ all her/his skills to capture the meaning, interpretation, terms, and intentions that the events convey for the participants in their own terms.

Theoretical validity: This implies that the theoretical framework (in my case, PCT) that we bring to the research context should fit well with the phenomenon (teachers' personal theories) under investigation.

Generalisability: In qualitative research, threats to internal validity are to be expected and it is desirable to attempt to identify these and attempt to eliminate them. With regard to external validity, qualitative researchers need to consider comparability and transferability. The assumption is that by comparing similar groups in different settings it might be possible to see how the data relate to those settings. However, some qualitative researchers like Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that it is not the responsibility of the researcher to provide an index of transferability; rather, the researcher can provide rich data for readers and it is for users of research to determine transferability for themselves. Generalisability becomes more problematic to achieve if a case study is being undertaken due to the frequently small samples in such research (Cohen et al. 2000) and "the larger the sample, the more representative it is" (ibid. 190).

In connection with this argument, I recognise that my research context which comprised eight participants (eleven if pilot study is included) had its unique characteristics, but not in the sense that it was cut off from what goes on in the rest of the world. My research took place within state secondary school EFL education, in a setting which I believe has many similarities with other places where English is being taught around the world. However, in my research I do not claim external validity for issues regarding the very personal constructions of teachers. One of the main purposes of this study was, rather, to shed light on how individual teachers are unique in the way they think about their profession (Elbaz 1983, Clandinin 1986), and, at the level of their practices, how they make use of their individual interpretations of teaching to address common educational and instructional goals. I compared and contrasted participants' constructs to find the commonalities and differences in their construing and sought underlying explanations for teachers and teacher educators elsewhere to consider, too. The study is intended to be relevant to ELT professionals in different contexts in the sense that they can consider the issues under investigation here for themselves and make comparisons, as well as providing baseline data for

other researchers if they would like to build on this study or if they would like to replicate its instrumental design in the future.

Content validity: This implies that the research methods we use must cover comprehensively what we intend to find out by using them. This problem is addressed within the theoretical framework I adopt for the study because PCT has its own research instrument called repertory grid method (section 3.5.1). Also, I used additional data collection instruments. Sampling was not a problem in the present study initially because I involved all the English teachers at the school in the data collection and analysis process. However, a further sampling had to be made at the writing up stage for reasons explained in section 3.7.3 below.

Construct validity: The constructs that we use while explaining an event or while reporting our findings should be conceptualised clearly enough for readers to understand what we mean. Especially when talking about abstract issues we should question whether we mean the same thing as others who use the same terms (see discussion in 2.2–2.4). Furthermore, in qualitative research, our constructs should also be meaningful for participants. This problem was addressed by giving participants the opportunity to ask for clarification of areas of concern (the purpose of the study, the nature and purpose of repertory grid interviews, etc.) during the data collection.

Criterion-related validity: This implies that we have to check the results of one instrument with another external criterion. Predictive validity and concurrent validity are the subsets of criterion-related validity. The former means that if data gathered at one point in time correlates well with data acquired at a later stage by using the same instrument, we have achieved predictive validity. Most qualitative research cannot address this first type as the data collection takes place at one point in time. This was so in my case as well. I should state, however, that in spring 2004 I visited the school nine months after the data collection ended and showed teachers the profiles I had constructed for them (section 3.7). They assured me that my third person accounts were accurate. However, I do not know whether or how they have changed their constructs or classroom practices since June 2003.

Concurrent validity implies that we can compare the data gathered using one kind of instrument with other data by using a different kind of instrument on the same topic with the same participants. Thus, we can use interviews, observation, questionnaires, and so on, to investigate the same thing at one point in time and achieve concurrent validity. This brings us to triangulation:

[T]he use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured. Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation.

(Denzin and Lincoln 1998: 3-4)

Furthermore, we can turn to Morse et al. (2002) and get some very useful ideas to improve the validity and reliability of our research. Relying only on triangulation is no different from what Morse et al. (2002) criticise as “post hoc evaluation” (p. 6). We can triangulate different types of data once the data collection is over, not during or before. Triangulation alone does not help us to monitor ourselves and take the precautions necessary before the data collection ends. Morse et al. (2002: 9), therefore, prefer to use the term ‘verification’ and define it as “the process of checking, confirming, making sure and being certain”. They further assert that “verification refers to the mechanisms used *during the process* of research to incrementally contribute to ensuring reliability and validity and, thus the rigor of a study” (italics added). I tried to follow these suggestions to attain rigour in this research by being reflective myself as a researcher throughout the process as can be seen in section 3.6, where I write in detail about the methodological lessons I learnt and how I analysed and interpreted the data.

Turning now to *reliability*, Kvale (1996: 235) states that this “pertains to the consistency of the research findings”. Cohen et al. (2000) similarly explain reliability in qualitative research as requiring an accurate description of what occurs in natural settings in the data records. Unlike with experiments, we cannot talk about the replicability of events in a natural setting. Cohen et al. (2000) suggest that, instead, reliability can be addressed in several ways, including ‘inter-rater reliability’.

It was useful for me to ask help from another researcher while analysing and interpreting data to enhance inter-rater reliability. This person was doing her doctoral research in a similar (Turkish secondary school) context to mine at the time of this study. She was very helpful when I was analysing the data as well as afterwards. The two of us identified areas in which our perceptions did not match by using a criteria checklist I had prepared (Appendix 3.3). It took us long hours of discussion to solve some of the issues (such as themes, categories, selection of quotations from interview

extracts, translation, identification of core and peripheral constructs) and those aspects that we could not reach agreement on were discarded from the analysis and are not reported in the data chapters (see 3.7 below). In reality, things do not happen as in the ideal and I do not attempt to claim full reliability for my findings. This would be against the theoretical framework I adopt as well (as I reflect in Chapter 9). I can only claim that I tried to consider all the possible meanings of participants' words in the context of this study to ensure reliability, since the aim of my study is to capture from the participants' perspectives their personal theories about good teaching, not to impose my control over them.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Anonymity: The identities of the participants in the study were and will be kept confidential during and after the study. I was particularly careful about reporting socio-political issues as I do not want the participants to suffer any harm because of my claims or findings. The anonymity of participants' colleagues and previous teachers is also protected and any names that are used while presenting data are pseudonyms including the participants' own as well as other persons' they refer to.

Language: The data collection instruments were utilised in Turkish, the mother tongue of the participants. Although their level of English is advanced and sophisticated enough, I thought they would be more comfortable to express their personal concerns in their mother tongue.

Permission: The Turkish Ministry of Education supported me financially to carry out this study and I obtained official permission from the Ministry before data collection. Otherwise, I would be leaving the participants under heavy responsibility for letting a researcher into the school without permission from the authorities.

Researcher-participant relationship: I wanted to make the participants feel as comfortable as possible when they interacted with me. The use of repertory grid interviews helped me in this. During and after the data analysis, I went back to the participants and shared my findings and interpretations with them and asked for their feedback. I have also promised to show participants the parts of the written-up thesis which relate to them individually. I did not want them to feel that they have been emptied by an outsider researcher solely for research purposes and then forgotten.

And the present research was a very useful experience for them, they told me, to reflect on practices they had sometimes taken for granted for years.

3.5 Overview of data collection instruments

In this study, repertory grid interviews were used as the major research tool. Additionally, semi-structured follow-up interviews, observation field notes, and video recordings/stimulated recall interviews were utilised.

In this respect the present study has an advantage over the previous studies of experienced teachers' thinking reviewed in section 1.3.3. These studies were relatively limited in the variety of the data collection instruments used, generally relying on only two or, at most, three instruments to access teachers' concerns. Secondly, researchers' own assumptions and interpretations have tended to guide data collection in previous studies. With item-by-item questionnaires, for example, or conventional interviews, questions have to be thought up in advance, before the researcher and the interviewees meet. On the other hand, several studies which have focused on student teachers' and students' personal theories (e.g. Chard 1988, Sendan 1995, Saka 1995, Bell and Gilbert 1996, Ravenette 1999) used repertory grid interviews, showing its power as a tool to open up conversations with minimum interviewer bias. Teachers' own reasoning about their teaching is the focus of the present study, and the use of repertory grid interview, combined with a variety of other methods, I believe, provided me with very rich and valid data.

3.5.1 Repertory grid interview

Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory provides as its methodological component the repertory grid method for investigating personal construct systems. The usefulness of repertory grid interview (henceforth, 'rep-grid') in this study relates to the fact that it has been recognised by a number of researchers from different disciplines as valuable in investigating personal theories (Bannister and Fransella 1971/1987, Fransella and Bannister 1977, Yaxley 1991, Pope and Denicolo 1993, Saka 1995, Sendan 1995, Roberts 1999, Pope and Denicolo 2001).

In essence, the rep-grid 'is perhaps best regarded as a particular form of structured interview' (Fransella, Bell and Bannister 2004: 5) which is designed to enable the exploration of another person's construct system. When the intention is to elicit a

respondent's constructs about a particular topic, as in the present study, the most commonly used means of elicitation is to present the individual with or ask him/her to choose three elements among a representative pool of at least six (for a definition of 'elements' and other technical terms, see Appendix 2.4) and to ask the person to specify an important way in which two of the elements are alike (this provides the 'similarity/emergent pole' of a construct) and thereby different from the third (this provides the 'contrast/implicit pole' of the construct) (see Bell 2003, Jankowicz 2004).

Thus, a number of constructs can be elicited and written into a 'grid', usually at the end of the interview, and respondents can be asked to allocate all the elements according to each construct (see Figure 3.5.1 further below under the sub-heading 'scaling'). Then various statistical tests can be applied to such data, to investigate, for an example, the relationships between a person's constructs. It is important to recognize that, although a rep-grid is very structured in terms of the elements that are construed and the elicitation procedure, "the information it gives us is not [...] some peculiar product of our 'scientific method'" (Fransella et al. 2004: 5). It elicits respondents' own constructs rather than leading them in directions specified by the researcher, although within a topic area which *is* specified in advance.

There have been criticisms about the rep-grid itself in relation to its validity and reliability (Solas 1992, Allen 1994), which earlier on were responded to by Bannister and Fransella (1971/1987), Fransella and Bannister (1977) and Pope and Keen (1981) and more recently by Fransella, Bell and Bannister (2004) and Jankowicz (2004). Within the framework of PCT adopted for the present study, reliability can be seen as related to the accuracy of the information gathered about teacher's constructs. In Chapter 9, section 9.3, I consider reliability issues in detail with regard to the present study. As regards validity, a grid's "validity can only be talked about in the sense that we can question whether or not it will effectively reveal patterns and relationships in certain kinds of data" (Bannister and Fransella 1971/1987: 55). Thus, themes identified within the rep-grid interview transcripts were tracked through follow-up and stimulated recall interview transcripts in this study (section 3.7.2, below).

Some general issues in the use of rep-grids which were of importance for this study are mentioned by Pope and Keen (1981): purpose, choice of elements and constructs, elicitation procedure, and scaling. These are discussed below, while the

actual procedure I adopted is described in 3.6.3, and the method of analysis is discussed in section 3.7.

Purpose: I used rep-grids to investigate the contents and nature of experienced teachers' personal theories in terms of good teaching. I used them to elicit constructs, but also as a basis for opening up a genuine discussion around these constructs, overcoming possible interview bias and accessing the 'personal' in a relatively democratic and non-threatening fashion. I also used the transcripts of rep-grids as the basis for formulating follow-up interview questions.

Choice of elements and constructs: Fransella and Bannister (1977), Pope and Keen (1981) and Jankowicz (2004) all refer to an ongoing debate regarding whether elements and constructs should be provided or elicited. I chose to elicit constructs, as, in my case, it was not important to see the extent to which teachers agreed with particular 'given' ideas about teaching. In the absence of a construct being articulated, there were times when I had to sum up to the interviewee himself or herself what he or she has been trying to say but could not verbalise, in a nutshell with an adjective or a phrase (Kelly 1955: 459). However, this should not be understood as meaning that I was supplying constructs from my own interpretation and encouraging the interviewee to go along with them. Bannister and Fransella (1971/1987: 60, italics in original) state that:

you cannot 'supply' a construct, you can only supply a verbal label to which the person may attach their own construct (their *discrimination*). Clearly, if you supply a verbal label within the native language of the person, they can make *something* of it. If you supply, what is for them, an outlandish verbal label, nonsense will result.

To start a rep-grid we do not need questions, but we need 'elements' which are concretely related to the topic and representative of the pool from which they are drawn. In the selection of elements for my study I attempted to fulfil these criteria and achieve a balance between control by me and by the participants, as I shall explain further below in 3.6.3.

Regarding the number of elements to be included, a small number of elements cannot yield enough information, while, by contrast, a huge number of elements might prove extremely hard to handle both for the interviewer and the interviewee

(Pope and Keen 1981: 41). I decided on ten elements for the first rep-grid and twelve for the second rep-grid in my main study.

Elicitation procedure: It is suggested that a preliminary study be carried out in order to train oneself in conducting a rep-grid (Pope and Keen 1981: 47), and I did so, as I report here.

The preliminary testing of the rep-grid method was carried out in January 2002 with three MA in ELSM students at CELTE, University of Warwick. The participants in this preliminary study stage (relatively inexperienced teachers) were different from those in the pilot and main study (experienced teachers). However, the preliminary study had useful implications for designing the pilot and main study data collection methods.

The reason a preliminary study was done was not only to learn how rep-grids could be designed and carried out but also to find out whether follow-up semi-structured interview questions could usefully be generated from rep-grid data. At this point other methods of data collection were not considered. I had no previous experience of conducting a rep-grid, nor did I have, at that point, a detailed knowledge of PCT. Therefore, this stage was essential. The experience of reading extensively the relevant literature and preparing for and carrying out the interviews taught me how to design the elements, various elicitation techniques (specifically, the triadic elicitation technique), and possible ways of validating and further exploring rep-grids findings via follow-up interviews. The advantages of using a rep-grid which I identified at this stage were as follows:

- It is relatively free from interviewer bias compared to other methods of interviewing where one has to ask preconceived questions;
- It is directly related to interviewees' own concerns;
- It provides in-depth insights into individual personal theories;
- It facilitates a relatively equal relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee;
- It provides flexibility within a structure;
- Semi-structured follow-up questions are found to be meaningful by the interviewees.

At the same time, I became aware of the following aspects that required consideration:

- It requires a great amount of time and concentration;
- The interviewer needs to make correct decisions on the spot about what kind of questions to ask while eliciting constructs;
- The interviewer needs to avoid dominating the conversation and making verbal or non-verbal judgments about the constructs elicited.
- Rep-grids can be disturbing to the interviewee if used insensitively.

One last important issue is the way to present the elements. The most frequently used technique is the triadic elicitation technique in which three elements are given at a time (often – as in this study – on cards), and the participant is asked to specify an important way in which two of them are alike and thereby different from the third (Kelly 1955, Bannister and Fransella 1971/1987, Fransella and Bannister 1977, Pope and Keen 1981, Jankowicz 2004). This was the procedure that I followed. To enhance keeping a focus on the topic of investigation one can use ‘qualifiers’, attaching them to the question with the phrase ‘in terms of’ (e.g. ‘In what important way are two of these [elements] similar to one another and thereby different from the third *in terms of good teaching*’?). This was the procedure I attempted to follow.

Within the elicitation process the ‘laddering technique’ assisted me to move between subordinate and super-ordinate constructs. One can ladder up and reach core constructs by asking the individual which pole of a construct is most meaningful personally and why. By laddering down, we can reach more peripheral constructs by asking ‘What?’ and ‘How?’ questions (Pope and Keen 1981, Jankowicz 2004). In Appendix 3.5.1 there is an example from a main study interview extract to demonstrate both the presentation of elements in triads and laddering technique.

Scaling: Originally Kelly (1955) used the dichotomous form of a grid. In other words, following elicitation of constructs, the respondent was asked to locate each element at one or the other pole of each construct and symbolise this with a tick in a grid. If a construct failed to describe an element, ‘not applicable’ could be written. Over the years, as Pope and Keen (1981) and Jankowicz (2004) mention, other forms of scaling have been developed, for various purposes. In this study, I used Kelly’s

original method for its ease and convenience for the interviewee. At the end of the rep-grids, I let teachers allocate each pole of a construct to as many elements as they liked because, at times, they had constructs that predicted, for example, six elements out of ten or, at others, constructs that predicted only four of the ten elements. Having asked the teachers to specify which pole of the construct the elements applied to., I wrote '1' for elements close to the similarity pole and '2' for elements close to the contrast pole. I also wrote 'not applicable' ('n/a') when necessary on the grid. Figure 3.5.1 provides an example.

Figure 3.5.1: Example of a completed grid

SIMILARITY POLE – 1	ELEMENTS										CONTRAST POLE – 2
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Shows honesty and sincerity	1	n.a	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	Indifferent towards students
Soft natured, flexible	1	n.a	n.a	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	Has principles of own
Encourages sts. to use the language	1	n.a	n.a	1	1	2	2	2	2	n.a	Knows the language, but cannot teach

ELEMENTS : 1 = Myself, 2 = My students, 3 = Parents, 4 = My colleague 1, 5 = My colleague 2, 6 = My colleague 3, 7 = Previous teacher 1, 8 = Previous teacher 2, 9 = Previous teacher 3, 10 = My mother

The next method I used was semi-structured follow-up interviews which I describe below.

3.5.2 Semi-structured follow-up interview

Interviews can be categorised as structured or unstructured according to Fontana and Frey (1994), whose advantages and limitations of these types, they state, depend on the kind of research being undertaken.

For following up the rep-grids in my research, neither a structured, nor an unstructured interview procedure was appropriate. According to Fontana and Frey (1994), in structured interviews the process is relatively mechanical, leaving little room for the social interaction that I considered desirable. Although with a highly structured interview the reliability of the responses might be expected to be higher, I could not claim that I had found out participants' point of view about good teaching

without letting them have some control over the process and without being flexible to make adjustments to the flow of the discussion. However, I could not depend on an unstructured interview either, the main reason being the possibility of interviewer bias and the risk of losing the focus related to research questions (ibid.). Therefore, I used semi-structured interviews to follow up the rep-grid raw data. Kvale (1996: 125) defines such a process as “an emphatic access to the world of the interviewee” whereby “the research interview is an interpersonal situation, a conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest”. The interaction to take place in my case was neither very formal, nor very emotional, but rather in the form of a relaxed, friendly conversation based on the areas of concern I identified from the interviewees’ raw grid data and further shaped with additional questions posed on the spot.

3.5.3 Observation field notes

I had to struggle hard to interpret what I observed in participants’ lessons as I lacked the structured guidance which can be provided by an observation schedule. I observed by simply “being there” (Simpson and Tuson 1995: 13) for the initial observations until a picture started to emerge in my mind for every teacher I observed. Simpson and Tuson (ibid.) mention that, in a study where one does not have a schedule, the observer can sit in the classroom taking notes and complement these notes by talking to stakeholders. Naturalistic studies of this kind, as they mention, sometimes require a state of uncertainty in which the researcher cannot always decide from beforehand what will arise in the situation. I had to relate what I observed to the personal theories of the teachers that I gathered via repertory grid and semi-structured follow-up interviews. This made the task harder for me as I tried to capture everything going on with all my senses, at the same time making notes and bearing in mind what the teachers had said in previous interviews. My observations were not limited to lessons only, but took in events within the school, including in the teachers’ room. Indeed everything I witnessed during three months period of the main study helped me to better interpret the interviews I carried out and the lessons I observed. This kind of overall observation enabled me to understand the meaning of participants’ constructs better by providing me with knowledge of the cultural context (Kelly 1955: 688) in which they were situated.

Observation had a crucial role also during the stimulated recall interviews. Prior to the interviews (see section 3.5.4 below), I watched the recorded lessons myself and tried to analyse what I saw by relating this back to the interviews I had previously conducted. I was looking for instances that both 'reflected' and 'did not reflect' teachers' constructs because of my second research question, 'To what extent are experienced EFL teachers' classroom practices congruent with their personal theories of good teaching?'. At this stage, I just noted down what I saw as examples of congruence or dissonance from my own observation. During the stimulated recall, I did not refer to these notes initially, unless I detected significant things (as I perceived them) not being mentioned by the teachers who were watching their videos. For example, if a teacher had previously talked about the importance of speaking in students' learning a language, and for some reason there was no example of him or her putting this into practice, I expected a comment on this from the teacher. If the teacher did not mention this, then I referred to my notes and asked him or her about this.

After the stimulated recall sessions were over, I referred to the notes I had taken before the sessions and compared the examples teachers had focused on and the explanations they gave with my own descriptions and interpretations of the same instances. I tracked those instances where both my own and the teachers' interpretations matched back to their previously stated personal theories as revealed during rep-grids 1 and 2 and follow-up interviews. Those instances that were interpreted differently by me and the teacher showed me that my own observation was not valid for that particular example, and I accepted the teacher's own explanation .

3.5.4 Stimulated recall interview

In order to answer Research Question 2 ('To what extent are experienced EFL teachers' classroom practices congruent with their personal theories of good teaching?') I decided to use stimulated recall, one of various introspection techniques that have been widely used in second language research (Færch and Kasper 1987, Ericsson and Herbert 1987, Cohen 1987). The main reason for second language researchers to utilise verbal report is the limitation (Cohen 1987: 82-3) that observation on its own cannot demonstrate the truth from participants' perspectives due to observer bias and subjectivity. I used the particular verbal reporting process

which Gass and Mackey (2000) call stimulated recall methodology and called it ‘stimulated recall interview’, moved with the conviction that “stimulated recall methodology can be used to prompt participants to recall thoughts they had while performing a task or participating in an event” (Gass and Mackey 2000: 17). After classroom observations it was essential for me to engage participants in this kind of introspection since I had previously observed with my constructs only. This process enabled me to clarify the reasons behind their classroom actions for the particular lesson, ways in which their practices were or were not in congruence with their theories, and situational constraints as perceived by them.

Now that I have described my research methods in general terms, I wish to move on to describe the context, participants and design of my main study, and the actual procedure adopted. Within this account I shall incorporate discussion of methodological lessons learnt from my pilot study.

3.6 The pilot and main studies

The time scale that I followed for the study overall was as follows:

Preliminary study	Pilot study	Main study
January 2002	September 2002	March–June 2003
Repertory grid technique was tried out with 3 ELSM students.	3 experienced teachers participated for testing the data collection instruments.	8 experienced teachers participated in the main study.

I have mentioned the preliminary study in section 3.5.1. Here I will describe key aspects of the pilot and main studies, the methodological lessons learned from the piloting, and the modifications adopted for the main study.

3.6.1 The context and the participants

The context is an Anatolian high school in İzmir, Turkey. Anatolian high schools aim to educate students aged 14–17 who have been successful after completing their initial eight years of education and have passed the entrance examination. The instruction

provided in all subjects is advanced, and special attention is given to subjects like English, Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences, and Literature. It is not likely that any student who graduates from these schools would fail in the university entrance exams. Students and teachers have to be very hardworking and competitive to meet the expected high standards of these schools. As a result of these schools' perceived status, parents tend to expect teachers to be very committed professionally. Teachers who work in this context are paid a higher salary than teachers who serve in other state schools since they have more work to do in relation to preparation of students for exams as well as more paper work. Ideally, they should have fewer hours to teach and more time to prepare for class and to focus on individual students, as the classes are not large (average 25 students).

The 11 English teachers (9 female, 2 male) in this particular school appear to be relatively autonomous and independent. They have their own meeting room called 'The English Teachers' Group Room', where they keep their materials and hold their meetings. Although they have to follow the curriculum for Anatolian high schools, they are free to choose their materials of instruction among many recommended by the Turkish National Ministry of Education. The textbooks they use are mainly published in Britain. Apart from the textbooks, I saw a good collection of extensive reading materials and other materials to develop skills, accompanied by necessary listening and visual resources. In their first year (at the 'prep-class' level), students have 24 hours of intensive English lessons in one week. In grade 9 this is reduced to 12 hours per week, and in grade 10, eight hours. In their final year (grade 11), there are four hours per week of English instruction. This is because of the university entrance examination students have to prepare for after their second year in school. On several occasions when I talked with students they told me that their reason for being there was to get a good place at university, and learning English was a plus for them to get a highly paid job in the future.

At prep-class level, there are three courses in English. At the time of this study, there was a grammar-based course (main course), which was implemented for 14 hours per week. There was a skills-based course, which was implemented for 6 hours per week. And a third course called 'Video' was implemented for 4 hours a week in integration with the skills-based course. The main course, which is a grammar-oriented option, also integrates the four skills to some extent. The English teachers had also taken the initiative in collaboration with parents to bring in a native speaker

teacher to provide more chances for students to experience authentic examples of the language and culture of English. This teacher, Sarah, whose husband was Turkish, has lived in Turkey for 23 years, having taught English at various levels and institutions. By the end of the prep-class year, the students are expected to have reached an intermediate level.

The school is situated by the sea, approximately 20 minutes away from the city centre where the majority of the students and teachers live. Because it is in a small seaside town within the district of İzmir, the students see themselves as lucky to be able to sneak out during the afternoon breaks to the seaside when the teacher on duty is out of sight. This was one of my own indulgences when I was a student in the same school. I noticed several more buildings attached to the previously existing ones (their construction had begun when I was a student in late 1980s, but with the only funding coming from parents' donations they took about 15 years to complete), and the school now boasts sports grounds, its own kitchen where lunch is cooked for over 500 students, studios for activities like painting and sculpture, a music studio, a canteen (with tables and chairs for the students to sit and enjoy their drinks with popular music playing in the background). One can argue that this particular context does not really reflect the general situation in Turkey; however, ten English teachers out of the eleven who are the participants in the present study have not only worked in this rather 'elite' school, but also had to work in other state schools before they became teachers in this context.

Although the context itself is not wholly representative of the work place of the majority of 'ordinary' experienced teachers (since it is relatively well-resourced due to extra funding generated by parents), the teachers themselves are typical representatives of 'ordinary' experienced teachers. Any qualified teacher with a BA degree, five years of teaching experience and no negative evaluations by previous headmasters can apply to teach in this kind of secondary state school. Indeed, further qualifications or awards reflect on teachers' salaries equally regardless of the type of school they work at.

Additionally, due to this study's focus on experienced teachers and due to a lack of consensus within ELTE on the minimum number of years for a teacher to be counted as 'experienced', I wanted to work with teachers who were as experienced as possible. I therefore considered the choice of an Anatolian high school appropriate due to the fact that teachers in such schools necessarily have at least five years of

experience. The minimum number of years of experience in the main study being 11 and in the pilot study 7, I was able to involve all the teachers in this school in my study. Equally importantly, in Huberman's (1989/1993) study years four to six were said to mark a phase of stabilisation in terms of the phases teachers go through, and he made a decision to carry out his research with teachers having five or more years of experience because the 'beginning to teach' period was over by then. In this respect too, the choice of this context was appropriate for the purposes of my study. My own participants (including for the pilot study) were all teachers with seven to twenty six years of experience, and I would have been unlikely to find eleven teachers all of whom were experienced to this degree in the majority of secondary state schools.

The participants for the pilot study were three experienced female teachers with 7, 18, and 18 years' experience respectively: Didem, Hatice and Aliye. All of them were teaching prep-classes. In the pilot study, the sample was formed from among the female teachers since there were nine female and two male teachers within the school. I reserved the male teachers for participation in the main study. Initially, two of the three teachers who participated in the pilot study were introduced to me by the chair of the English teachers' group within the school, who was my teacher there when I was a student. I had to explain to these two teachers what was expected of them and invite them to contribute to the study after being introduced to them. The third teacher was also a previous teacher of mine. This gave me the advantage of gaining participants' trust in a very short time and they participated willingly in the pilot study not only because they found the aims of my research worthy of pursuing, but also because they seemed intrinsically motivated to help a former student of their school whom they were "proud of". This experience was very useful for the main study because during the piloting I had the opportunity to get familiar with the rest of the English teachers within the school and by the time the main study took place I was in touch with all of them on a regular basis, which is still the case. Among the 11 teachers who participated in the pilot and main study, four of them were former English teachers of mine, with whom I had spent six years of my school life. The head teacher of the school, the administrative staff, and some of the other subject teachers as well were also former teachers of mine (Turkish, History, Mathematics, Science, Biology). So, I was in a research context which had been my second home for a considerable amount of time during my schooling period.

For the main study, the participants were all the eight teachers – six female, two male teachers – who had not taken part in the pilot study: Canan (26), Gün (25), Güneş (22), Tuna (22), Oya (22), Serkan (17), İlayda (11), and Mine (11) (the numbers in parentheses refer to the number of years of experience for each teacher). All of my participants taught at all levels in the present school. All of them, with the exception of Tuna, had taught at various state schools in various regions of Turkey before they started teaching in the present context. When I first went to the school for the main study phase, on 9th March 2003, participants were already expecting to see me. I had been in touch with them since September 2002, and they were already familiar with my research since they had witnessed me interacting with their three other colleagues. Also, those three teachers informed them about my research. Therefore, I saved precious time which might otherwise have been necessary for persuading these teachers regarding the purposes and value of my study. We had informal group and individual meetings for the first few days. I told them about the design and the time-table I was intending to follow and they told me the times they would be available. In three months, I carried out two rep-grids, one follow-up interview, and one stimulated recall session with each of the eight participants. I also wrote field notes based on 6 hours' sitting in each teacher's lessons as well as noting down other things happening outside the classroom. In total, the main study (rep-grid, follow-up and stimulated recall) interviews amounted to 64 hours and the video recordings amounted to 16 hours.

3.6.2 The design

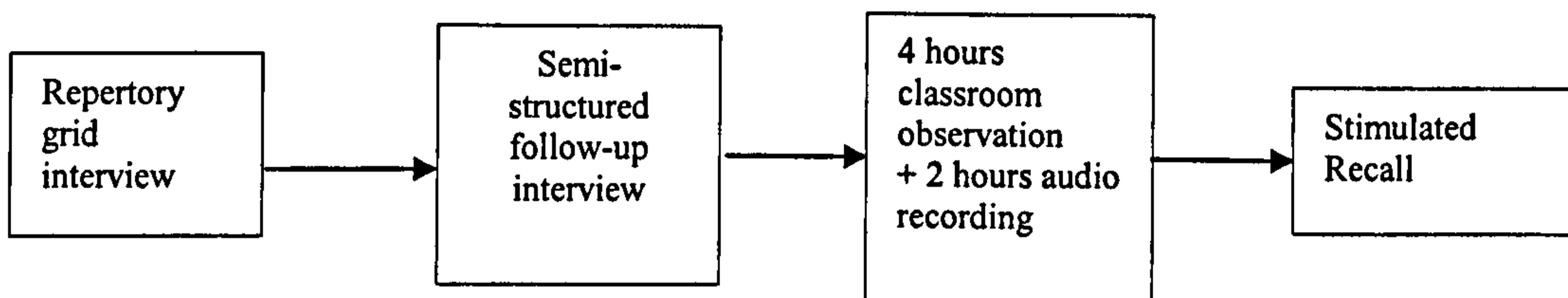
The design of the pilot study was similar, but not identical to that for the main study. The goals of the pilot study were to try out the data collection instruments and develop methods of analysis, to refine the research questions if necessary, and to discover the best possible research methodology according to the nature of the questions asked, characteristics of the research context, and constraints on the researcher.

One of the main things I had learned from the preliminary study was that rep-grid interviews were valuable for opening up a constructive discussion where the participants felt at ease, as they were able to talk about their own concerns without

fear of judgment. For piloting and the main study, however, I had to identify additional ways of data collection to facilitate triangulation and to be able to answer the second research question: ‘To what extent are experienced EFL teachers’ classroom practices congruent with their personal theories of good teaching?’.

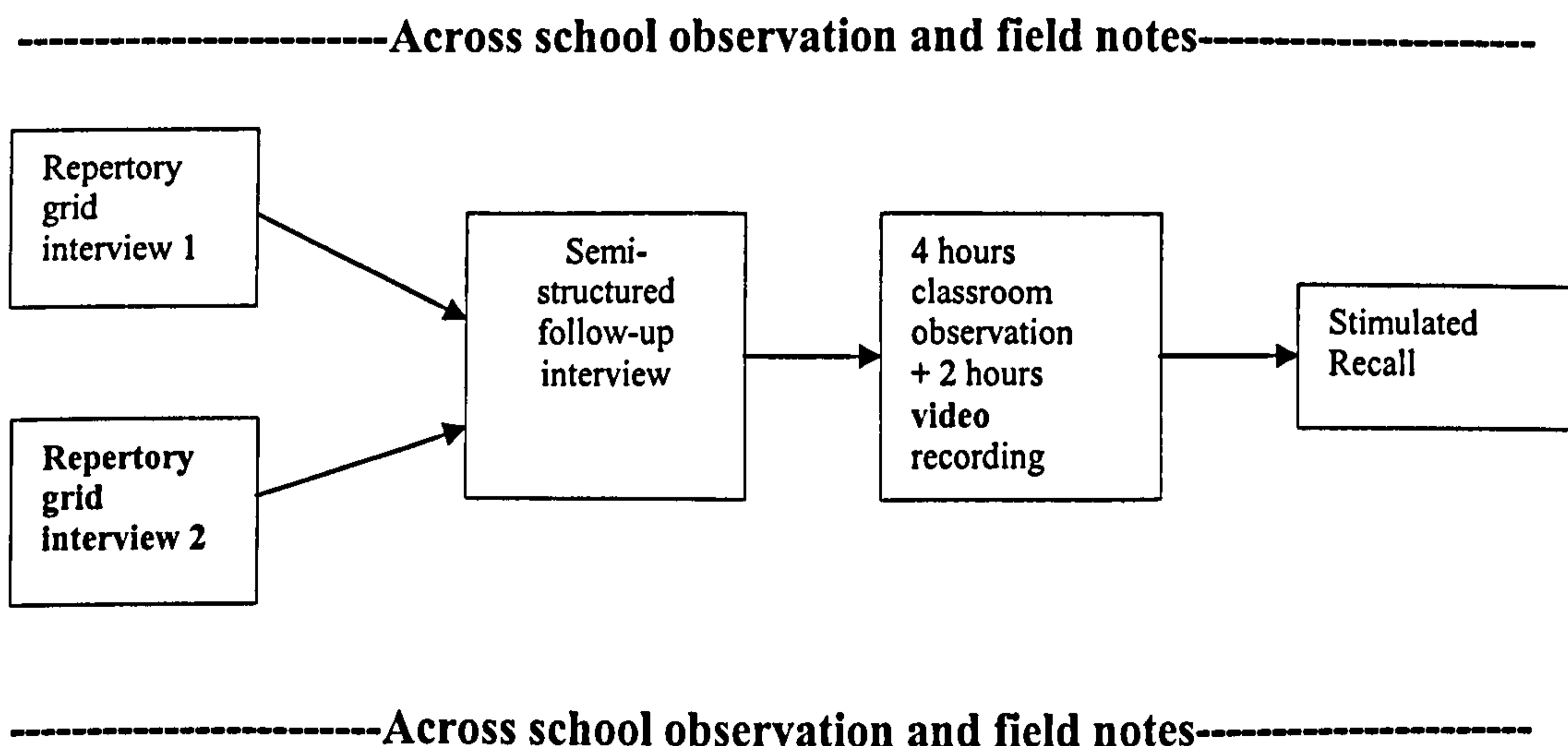
Thus, I added two additional stages for the pilot study: classroom observation (unstructured, with field notes) and stimulated recall, according to the following design:

Pilot study data collection:



The instruments I used in the pilot study seemed satisfactory with a few adaptations, and I made improvements as I shall describe below. The weaknesses in the piloting were mainly due to my lack of experience with classroom observation, not designing a second rep-grid with a specific focus on classroom activities and lack of video recording equipment to enhance stimulated recall. For the main study I made a few changes to the design, highlighted in bold in the following diagram:

Main study data collection:

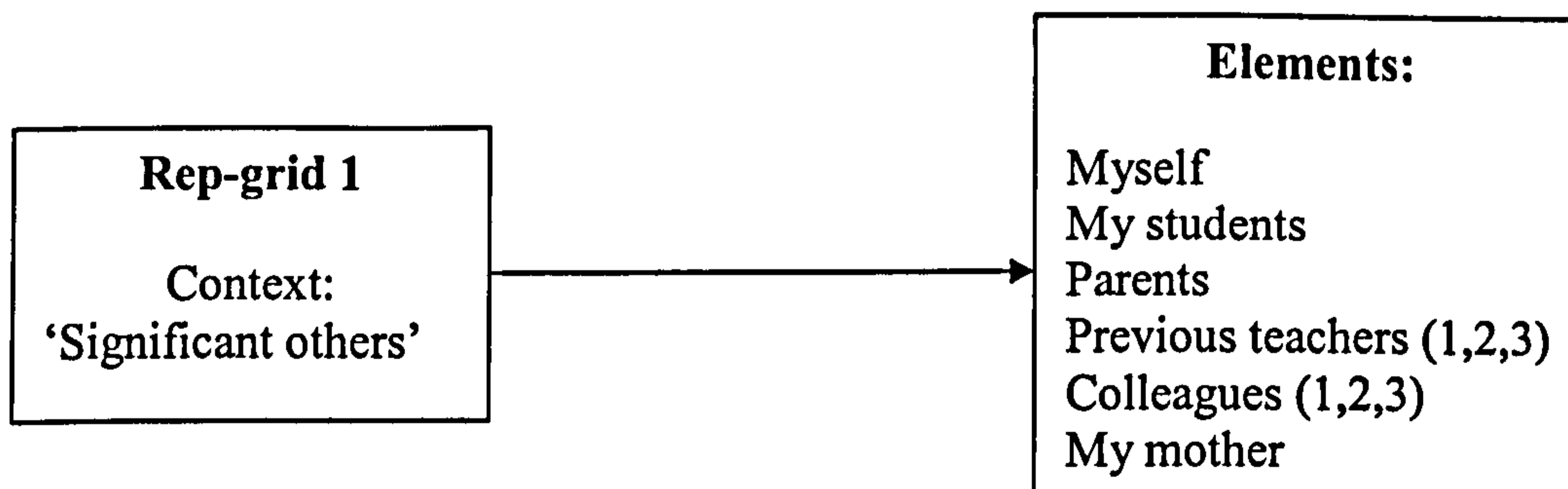


On the basis of piloting, I re-thought my role as an observer and also designed two rep-grids rather than one for the main study. Below, I would like to explain the main study procedures in detail, bringing in further discussion of the impact of the pilot study where relevant.

3. 6. 3 Repertory grid interviews

3.6.3.1 Rep-grid 1

Two rep-grids were conducted with each teacher for the main study. Rep-grid 1 referred to the context ('context' is the technical term Kelly uses for the domain of enquiry of a particular interview) of 'Significant others'. This interview was expected to provide insights into: 1) aspects of their theories relating to classroom practice (for example, implementing the method of a previous teacher); 2) aspects of participants' theories relating to professional learning (for example, learning from a colleague or not liking initial training because of a negative attitude towards trainers); 3) previous influences on teachers' personal theories; and 4) their views of relationships and roles (e.g. in relation to students and their parents):



Previous research into teachers' thinking (see Chapter One) has shown that pre-service and novice teachers; in particular, are influenced by the way they themselves have been taught. Having 'previous teachers' as elements was desirable because they represent both important role models (Kelly 1955) and (potentially) different educational contexts such as primary school, high school or university. 'Students', 'colleagues' and '[students'] parents' as elements represent the stakeholders teachers interact with in their immediate context. Colleagues may represent important role

models that some teachers learn from, especially when they are new to the profession. 'Mother' was provided as an element because family upbringing is said to be influential in shaping teachers' moral and ethical values (Bodycott 1997) and mothers may be important as role models. I did not include 'Father' as an element, although ideally including this (and perhaps even siblings) would be desirable because 'Father' is also an important source of influence on the formation of construct systems (Kelly 1955). However, I left this element out because I was concerned not to trigger any negative cognitive awareness arising from the very powerful pairing of 'Mother' and 'Father' in the same pool. And very experienced practitioners of rep-grid (e.g. Fransella 2004) have always cautioned researchers to be extremely sensitive when utilising this potentially sharp instrument.

It was necessary to include 'Myself' as an element to understand how teachers construe themselves as similar to or different from the significant others. Thus, elements for Rep-grid 1 represent aspects of participants' experiences of learning to teach, actual teaching, their past and present work environments, the kinds of teacher training they have experienced, and the significant others who may have been influential in the formation of their world view as teachers:

In section 3.5.1 above, I outlined the basic rep-grid elicitation technique. Here I will complement this information with details of the actual procedure I adopted during the pilot and main study for Rep-grid 1. Then I will explain the choice of elements and the procedure for Rep-grid 2 under the sub-heading Rep-grid 2 in 3.6.3.2 below.

Prior to Rep-grid 1 (for both pilot and main study), I explained in detail about the purpose of the study and the commitment expected of participants. Then participants were provided with an oral explanation of the rep-grid a few days before it took place. They were not introduced to the elements before the scheduled time for the rep-grids, since I wished to gain access to their spontaneous rather than considered thoughts. Each participant was interviewed individually.

To encourage teachers to make meaningful comparisons I asked them to think of and specify a name [pseudonym] for the elements 'My colleague (1, 2, 3)' and 'My previous teacher (1, 2, 3)' selecting people they thought had been influential on their views about teaching, either negatively or positively. There was, then, a mixture of control (by me) and freedom of choice (for participants) in the choice of elements for this interview.

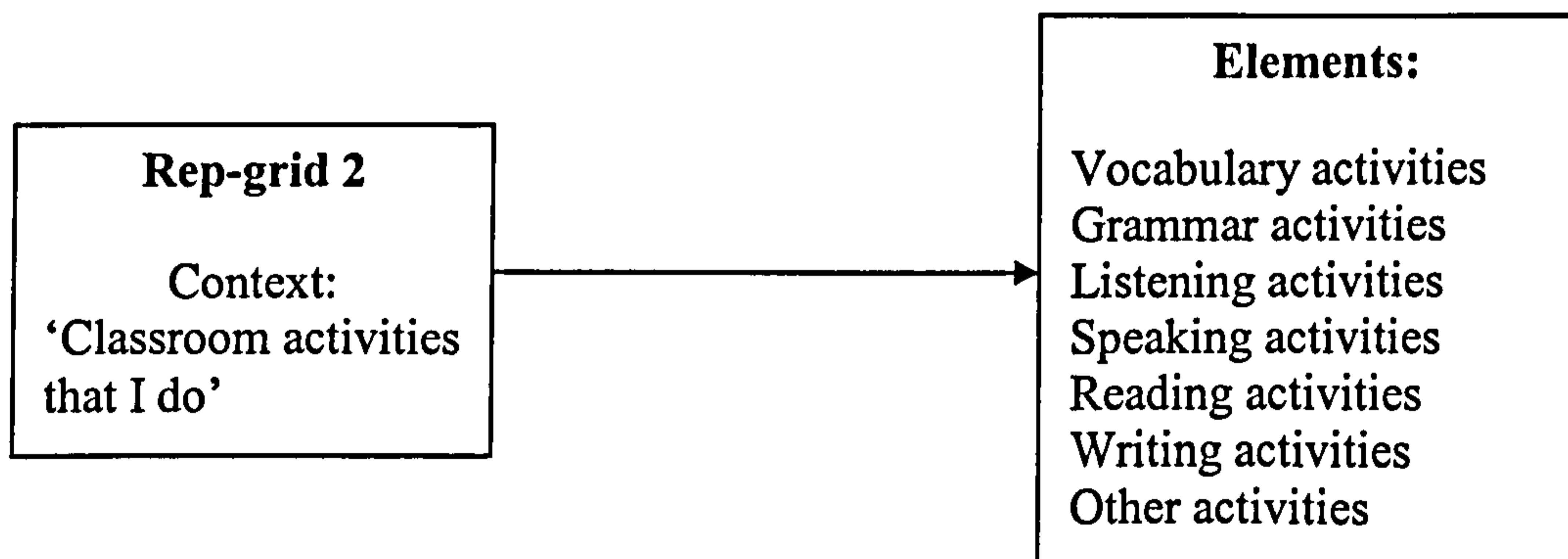
The elements were written on cards separately and the cards were laid out on a table where participants could see them all clearly. Then these cards were presented to each participant in groups of three at a time. The teachers were asked to specify an important way in which two of the elements were alike and thereby different from the third (triadic elicitation technique), in some important way for themselves in terms of good teaching. Sometimes they also chose their own triads. Each time a participant specified two elements as similar I wrote this down as the similarity pole of a particular construct. Next, I asked the participant to specify the contrast pole of the same construct by asking the questions: 'What would be the opposite of this?', or 'What would a situation be which is the opposite of this?' or 'What would a situation/something be which is different in some meaningful way from this?'. This process went on until no new constructs were being elicited.

While I was eliciting the constructs I also used laddering technique (Pope and Keen 1981, Jankowicz 2004) to go deeper, towards more super-ordinate constructs by asking participants 'Why?'. By asking 'What?' and 'How?' I could go down to subordinate constructs.

The piloting of Rep-grid 1 went well, and it was well received by the participants, apart from the interviews taking quite a long time. Both the participants and I sometimes found it hard to leave the unfolding discussion aside and carry on eliciting more constructs with more triads. Later, when I scrutinised the raw grid data after I had transcribed the interviews, I found out that those episodes where the interviewee was allowed to talk in great detail about a particular construct were very informative about the type and nature of the construct and its relationship with other constructs. Thus, the most important lesson I learnt through the piloting process was that it was not the number of constructs that I elicited during one interview which would give me insights about how teachers thought about teaching, but how much I could explore each construct's meaning for them by letting them elaborate on it as much as they wanted to. This is also one of the major warnings Kelly (1955) gives.

3.6.3.2 Rep-grid 2

For the main study, I added a second rep-grid interview (see the diagram below), which referred to what I call the ‘Classroom activities that I do’ context. This addition was a consequence of piloting the initial design. During the pilot study, while designing the questions for the follow-up interview, I noticed that discussion of ‘Significant others’ had not provided enough examples of actual classroom practices. I was trying to pinpoint observable behaviour statements for the next (stimulated recall) stage; however, most of the data I gathered at the follow-up interview stage was on more abstract issues like affective dimensions of teaching. I decided, then, that I needed elements at the rep-grid stage which were concrete examples of classroom practice. For the main study I therefore decided to design a second rep-grid with a specific focus on classroom activities:



Rep-grid 2 was designed, then, to enable investigation of teachers’ theories in relation to specific current practices. This time I did not provide any elements but elicited them all, asking participants themselves to decide on ‘classroom activities that I do’ and write the names of these activities on cards. I did, though, suggest seven possible categories: grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening, reading, writing and ‘other’. I derived these categories from my examination of the syllabus and textbooks teachers were implementing, as well as their yearly and daily plans and minutes of their regularly held progress meetings. On this basis, I considered that the first six of these broad categories reflected the contents of the curriculum they had to deliver; but I also told the participants that they did not have to consider them if they did not want to, and I included a category ‘other’ in case they wished to discuss a unique practice or practices of their own (see Chapter 6, 6.3.1, for a full list of elements actually

chosen by four participants). I made sure to try to elicit the same number of elements for consideration by each teacher. 12 elements were enough considering the amount of time we had to spend for the interview as well as for my management of the presentation of the triads. İlayda, exceptionally, came up with 11 elements only and told me she could not think of another one. I did not force her.

Each rep-grid (both Rep-grid 1 and 2) lasted between 45 and 90 minutes depending on the participants' engagement with the process. The interviews took place either in the English teachers' room, Teachers' study room or in the library, or sometimes in teachers' own homes. They were audio-recorded with participants' permission (as were later follow-up and stimulated recall interviews). I should also stress that I transcribed every interview on the same day I conducted it. This proved to be very useful in helping me understand the participants, see the whole picture and develop rapport. Most importantly, it helped me formulate appropriate questions for the follow-up interviews (see 3.6.4 below) which would refer to participants' own constructs rather than reflect only my own assumptions.

Rep-grid 1 during the main study tended to go very smoothly, with teachers remembering figures of importance in their lives such as previous teachers and colleagues very easily and vividly. Perhaps my conducting the pilot study with the same elements also helped me to manage Rep-grid 1 relatively efficiently. However, the teachers found Rep-grid 2 more difficult, they told me, because for them certain activities sometimes fulfilled more than one goal. It did become clear, however, that they implemented different activities in individually meaningful ways, and, when I ladder up their constructs, it was notable that they often referred back to the comments they had made during Rep-grid 1.

During Rep-grid 2, if they had another lesson after our interview, I had to use the time very efficiently and be satisfied with what participants wanted to give me for the time being and not ask too many questions. It was not that they did not want to speak up. It was that for the first time in their lives they were participating in this kind of interaction and it was hard for them to construe their classroom activities as similar and different in groups of three, which required a lot of concentration. They needed scaffolding for the kind of reflection I was 'demanding' from them. For my part, I tried to draw a relaxed picture of myself for them and did not show my anxieties to them. I let them wait and think for a while if they wanted to. This experience also showed me that I had made a correct decision to include a follow-up interview to be

able to investigate in more depth the issues which I could not pursue during the rep-grids.

Overall, rep-grids were the major foundation for the main study, revealing participants' personal theories about good teaching and forming a basis for ongoing interaction between the participants and me which extended into follow-up interviews, observation and stimulated recall, as I shall describe below. Raw data obtained from rep-grids suggest themselves as rich overall and I had the feeling that the rep-grids were very humanistic, besides eliciting detailed information from the participants. There was plenty of room for negotiation and initiation on the part of the teachers (see Appendix 3.6.3 for a sample of interview transcripts of rep-grids 1 and 2, follow-up interview and stimulated recall (first five minutes of each spoken text) for one teacher, Gün).

For the reasons given above, Rep-grid 2 was more specific in its focus than Rep-grid 1 because it was aiming to understand the teacher in the classroom. Issues arising from Rep-grid 1 were more varied because the elements represented persons who had different contributions to teachers' views of good teaching. On the other hand, Rep-grid 2 succeeded in providing focused insights into how these various influences are put into practice with specific instructional goals in mind.

3.6.4 Semi-structured follow-up interviews

While formulating follow-up interview questions I continued to be guided by my overall interest in participants' theories of good teaching. I began each interview by showing respondents their individual raw grid data. Referring them to points they had made in rep-grid interviews (which I had transcribed), I often asked them to explain what they had meant in greater detail. I tried to avoid expressing my personal opinions, but I was not a cold listener either. I established rapport with eye contact, nodding my head, turning off the audio recorder when they asked me to and assuring them of the confidentiality of the information they let me have. This stage was relatively easy and enjoyable for them as we had got used to each other during the first (Rep-grids 1 and 2) stage.

For the main study, as well as attempting to gain more insight into the individual concerns of teachers that had transpired from the rep-grids, I established a list of open-ended questions that I thought important to ask all teachers. I formulated these

questions (listed in Appendix 3.6.4) on the basis of the literature review I had undertaken and the common issues I identified as emerging from the rep-grids. The participants assured me later in their feedback that these questions were very significant and beneficial for them to reflect on since they made them focus on their university years, their present working environment, the meaning of being an experienced teacher, their happy and unhappy moments in the classroom, and so on. They saw personal relevance in the questions.

Since the grid data were unique to each participant, naturally I could not ask only the same set of questions to everybody. However, this was also a strength because it forced me to roughly analyse the rep-grid data in advance and keep me focused, and provided me with a chance to check the validity of my preliminary analysis and interpretation with the respondents themselves.

3.6.5 Observation field notes

I managed to observe each teacher for at least four hours before the two hours' recording for stimulated recall. Before starting the observations I had transcribed the rep-grid and follow-up interview data and tried to loosely categorise references to practice in the data. I did not have a pre-designed observation schedule due to the complex nature of my interviews. I had to make on the spot decisions about what to observe for each teacher. It was very difficult for me to try to capture the meaning of teachers' actions relying solely on my own interpretation, no matter how much I was informed about them beforehand.

In addition, during piloting, I noticed that I had to take field notes about things going on outside the classroom that I had not predicted would be useful, such as an interesting conversation I witnessed in the teachers' room, a conversation I had with students in the corridors or garden, and so on. Things were happening all around the school, not only in the classroom. For the main study, I re-thought the role of observation in my research and decided that I would focus on unexpected and interesting things in the classrooms and also keep my eyes and ears open for what was going on around the school as a whole (hence, the addition of 'across school observation' in the 'Main study data collection' diagram under 3.6.2 above). During the main study, in Adler and Adler's terms I was, then, a "peripheral-member-researcher" (1994: 379):

Researchers in peripheral membership roles feel that an insider's perspective is vital to forming an accurate appraisal of human group life, so they observe and interact closely enough with members to establish an insider's identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership.

This situation was enhanced in my case by two characteristics of the setting and my relationship to it. First of all, I was accessing a formal classroom in a school. I could not have been involved as a participant observer without prior arrangements such as obtaining official permission and/or deciding on what my role would be beside the teacher in the classroom. I would be intervening within the curriculum. Second, I was formerly educated in that particular school. In this sense, I was an insider as a past student. The teachers I worked with and the students knew this, and from my past experience of six years there, I could evaluate the situation both from students' and teachers' perspectives. In other words, I was close enough to capture the intimate atmosphere of the classroom and at the same time not intervene in the classroom activities. The involvement I had was just at times when teachers asked me the meaning of a phrase or a word to provide different examples to students. My 'insider' role also facilitated an interaction between me and the students so that they used to come up to me during the break and talk about their problems with the English language, wanting to learn some strategies to become better.

Certainly, it took some time for the students to get used to me. For this reason I sat in at least six lessons for each teacher (the last two of them video recorded) so that students could come to ignore my presence to a great extent. Apart from the six lessons I joined to make field notes, I also attended lessons with every teacher during March when the rep-grids were taking place (something I had not done during piloting). The purpose was not to make field notes at that point, but to familiarise students to my presence. Woods (1996: 37-42) highlights the possible 'observer effect' as one problem that I would also have had to think about if students and teachers had been uncomfortable due to my presence. But in this particular case, such a problem did not seem to exist as my presence was not perceived as a distraction.

3.6.6 Stimulated recall interviews

I used the initial lesson observations to familiarise myself with the context. Then, with each teacher we had stimulated recall interview sessions regarding two hours of teaching, in other words the final two lessons I observed for each teacher.

I would like to briefly sum up how I reached this stage before explaining the stimulated recall interviews in greater detail. The whole research process of the current study can be seen as a chain reaction whereby one inquiry method gave way to another in an attempt to understand the context more and to validate itself against the other in terms of the accuracy of the data. Rep-grids formed the content, basis and justification for the semi-structured follow-up interview questions. Things that seemed a bit scattered in the raw grid data became more focused and more chopped up into loose categories with the semi-structured interviews. Here I do not refer to categories that were firmly established, rather I imply a 'feeling' that informed 'category boxes' in my researcher mind which I made notes on. At that stage I was able to see what was unique for each participant as well as certain shared perspectives about good teaching.

The next stage – observation – involved looking for teachers' actions in relation to the statements they had made. Observation was essential to check the accuracy of my understanding of the information they gave as well as to trigger the process of understanding the situational constraints which might be influential on their classroom behaviour. When their actions appeared consistent with their statements, this validated my interpretations of the interview data. However, unexpected patterns of behaviour needed more clarification and justification from participants, as it would have been inappropriate for me to speculate from my perspective. This called for stimulated recall interviews.

My one big problem in the pilot study was the lack of video recordings for the participants to watch. My interventions, based on the transcriptions from the audio-recordings which I made of these sessions, proved to be very problematic. If these had not been my former teachers, perhaps they would have misjudged my questions at this stage and become offended because it must have been very hard for the three teachers to hear me asking them 'Why?' and 'How?', rather than having them reflect on certain aspects of their lessons with their own initiative.

Things had to happen this way since I did not have a video camera. Nor had I had the necessary permission from the Ministry of Education to video record lessons at that stage. I had told the teachers repeatedly that my prompts were not intended to judge them, but to get them to remember the particular incidents that occurred during the lessons. But this, I reflected later on, was in contradiction with the purpose of my intended research and theoretical framework. It should have been for them, not me to decide on what they wanted to recall.

Thus, for the main study, I obtained permission from the Ministry of Education to video record lessons, and I did video record two hours of teaching for each participant. This also reduced the heavy burden of having to observe lessons to provide a record for teachers, and enabled me to enjoy the process of sitting in the lessons and to re-conceptualise my role as observer (see 3.6.5 above).

During the main study I focused on issues from my observation field notes to compare with what the teachers had focused on during the initial interviews so that I could take the initiative to ask for clarification if they found it difficult to comment on their videos during the stimulated recall. This was negotiated with them via the protocol we all agreed on. The purpose of engaging these teachers in stimulated recall was, first of all, to identify possible congruences/dissonances between their personal theories of how good teaching should be and their real classroom practices; and, second, to get more in-depth insight into their previously stated personal theories by identifying their fulfilments and frustrations. These two goals would also reveal the situational constraints/opportunities that they worked with. For the main study I had to demonstrate that my questions embraced the goals stated above. The procedure I planned for each teacher was as follows:

- I would watch six lessons and take field notes;
- I would video record the last two lessons of these;
- Together with the teacher we would watch the video recordings.

I provided a protocol to the teachers before the viewing. I told them “Try to remember how you felt at the time”. I also gave them a written explanation of what I wanted them to do while watching:

- Stop the tape any time that you feel what you saw was in congruence with what you think of as good teaching. Why? In what way?
- Stop the tape any time that you feel what you saw was not in congruence with what you think of as good teaching. Why? In what way?
- Stop the tape any time that you remember feeling frustrated by what was happening. It could concern yourself or your students. Why?
- Stop the tape anytime that you remember feeling fulfilled by what was happening. It could concern yourself or your students. Why?

Overall:

- Did anything happen that you did not want to happen?
- How did you feel?

I told them that they could focus on some or all of these points depending on how they felt at the time.

If there remained some points that I was curious about I requested them to watch certain segments of the video together one more time and asked neutral questions like:

- Could you describe what was happening at that moment?
- What were you thinking?
- How were the students responding?
- How were you feeling? Why?

Finally, I should mention that I conducted the recall sessions within forty eight hours after a video recording took place. Thus, the lessons had not been forgotten by the participants when they recalled them.

3.7 Data management and analysis

This section describes in detail how I managed and verified the data during and after the data collection process (3.7.1), and analysed and interpreted the data both during and after data collection (3.7.2).

3.7.1 Data management

Huberman and Miles (1994) and van Kammen and Stouthamer-Loeber (1998) state that data management procedures should be carefully planned before the actual process of data collection begins, and the data need to be handled with great care. This places a lot of responsibility on the ability of the researcher herself. I tried to achieve this ability by undertaking a pilot study and this made me aware of what could happen if I did not gather the right kind of data or collected too much (Kvale 1996). For this reason, before and during the main study I

- identified necessary materials and equipment to utilise;
- transcribed the data as they were collected. I also made notes of each interview date, duration, purpose, and context for each teacher in a separate note-book;
- corrected errors by double-checking with the participants and making the corrections with a different coloured pen;
- tried to identify missing data to take remedial action;
- recorded anonymous information about the context and the participants separately;

I also:

- formed data files in my computer;
- kept track of variables as suggested by van Kammen and Stouthamer-Loeber (1998: 393-5).

Huberman and Miles (1994) have some suggestions for data management which I used as well. Data reduction occurs in an anticipatory way as the researcher collects data according to the chosen conceptual framework, research questions, cases and

instruments. From actual field notes and interview transcripts one moves into summarising, coding, finding themes, clustering, and writing. Data display is defined as an organised, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and/or action taking. Conclusion drawing and verification involve the researcher in interpretation, drawing meaning from the displayed data.

I had three kinds of interview data: rep-grid data, semi-structured follow-up interview data, and stimulated recall data. Some of the data needed already to be analysed during the main study.

During the main study the rep-grid data was roughly analysed together with field notes to generate follow-up interview questions and short profiles in the third person for each participant. In addition, after each interview ended I transcribed the audio-recording on the same day and took the transcript back to the participant the next day and asked for their feedback. Participants made the corrections they wanted to make. The follow-up interviews were also transcribed on the same day they were conducted, as were the stimulated recall sessions. At the end of the study, participants saw everything written in their individual notebooks, corrected any errors they saw and wrote their own reflections about the whole data collection process.

After data collection ended, the rep-grid data were subjected to two parallel types of analysis. First, the data were analysed to identify the core constructs and peripheral constructs of each teacher; second, the rep-grid transcripts were treated as texts and were put to content analysis together with follow-up and stimulated recall interview transcripts.

3.7.2 Methods of analysis

3.7.2.1 Analysis of constructs

There are many different kinds of analysis of rep-grids in use today depending on the purpose of the researcher. One can refer to Fransella and Bannister (1977), Pope and Keen (1981), Fransella et al. (2003), and Jankowicz (2004) to see how researchers have developed these different methods over the years. Computer analysis of rep-grid data is economical and efficient. Aspects that might have been obscured by the detailed raw data of the grid can be presented in a more coherent form with the advanced computer programs available today. A program available freely on the

World Wide Web (<http://tiger.cpsc.ucalgary.ca/>), under the name Web Grid-III, allows us to process the raw data in numerous ways for different statistical tests like FOCUS clustering. I obtained a display map and a cluster map of each participant's constructs by accessing this website (see Appendices 4.2.1–4.2.4 and 6.3.2–6.3.5 for examples).

However, as Pope and Keen (1981) maintain, “numerical analysis seems to be equated with absolute truth. The existence of numbers in repertory grids, and the ensuing development of computer programs for analysis, must be treated with caution” (p. 55). They further argue that:

The repertory grid, with its heavy reliance on numerical analysis, has been used by some investigators as a definitive measure of the persons concerned. This is totally unjustified on both statistical and philosophical grounds. [...] It is certainly not a psychological test which accurately pigeon holes the individual into a neat category system. (ibid.)

The same kind of concerns have been voiced also by Fransella and Bannister (1977) and Burr and Butt (1997). They emphasise the fact that repertory grid interviews are often conducted with insufficient awareness of the underlying theory of PCT. What is important, they say, is to grasp the essence of Kelly's PCT, become able to detach oneself from the traditionally prescribed ways of analysis and create alternatives considering contextual needs.

I wanted to consult the simple display and cluster analysis programmes on WebGrid III because later, when I carried out a detailed content analysis of the rep-grid transcripts together with follow-up and stimulated recall interview transcripts, I wanted to see teachers' constructs and elements in a coherent structure, which the in-depth content analysis alone could not show. I did not want to lose the individuality of the participants while identifying themes. By going back and forth between the themes I identified from the content analysis (see below) and the display and cluster maps obtained via the computer analysis I felt more informed about the participants.

First, in order to identify core and peripheral constructs, I let the rep-grids speak for themselves, according to the procedure suggested by Jankowicz (2004: 83-87):

1. I looked at the display maps to see the relationships between elements and constructs. From the display maps I gained a general feel for what kind of elements were construed similarly by looking at the values attached.

Kelly's (1955) Dichotomy Corollary states that persons do not affirm something without rejecting something else at the same time. So, by taking into account the range of convenience of a construct and seeing which pole of a construct applies to what kind of elements I could make inferences about how teachers viewed the activities they said they implemented in the classroom and for what reasons.

2. The cluster maps were useful for seeing the extent to which the constructs were similar to each other in terms of what they predicted. The cluster maps further validated my inferences from the display maps about the relationships of constructs with certain elements, although I always had to consider what the numbers meant by looking at the interview transcripts in detail.

3. I focused on the meaning conveyed by each construct and chosen element of the participants. To identify core constructs I went back to rep-grid transcripts and my field notes, where I had taken notes during the interviews about the emotions, body language and tone of voice of the participants. I traced the episodes where I did laddering up to reach super-ordinate constructs, and noted what kind of meaning they conveyed. I also paid particular attention to words and phrases such as "I strongly believe", "I believe", "This is what I think, am I wrong?", "I cannot think any other way", "What else? That's all there is to it", "No, I'm serious!", "Look this is very important", "Absolutely!" because they indicate the significance of constructs for the context in which they are articulated.

4. I brought together my separate analyses of Rep-grids 1 and 2 to see if there were any links between the constructs elicited from the two different contexts. 'Significant others' and 'Classroom activities that I do' are two different contexts with a different focus, but I remembered that, during Rep-grid 2, when I laddered up and reached a super-ordinate construct in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do', the interviewees could not articulate their reasons and rationale in terms of classroom activities after a certain stage. They had started referring back to important points they had made during the first rep-grid to explain to me why a particular construct was important for them. Thus, I identified those core constructs in the context of 'Significant others' which were linked to super-ordinate constructs in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do' by carefully examining the interview transcripts.

5. In the margins of transcripts I made notes of what teachers meant by each construct with a view to using this information later to follow through the constructs in the follow-up and stimulated recall interview transcripts. I could not, of course, trace the constructs exactly as articulated during the rep-grids, but the meanings that I interpreted were traced throughout the follow-up and stimulated recall interviews. Indeed, the participants' explicit references to the rep-grids during the follow-up and stimulated recall interviews were particular clues for me to pay attention to.

6. I shared the process I explained above with the fellow PhD student whom I mentioned in section 3.3, and discussed with her my insights and invited her to look at the transcripts in the same way I had done. When everything was completed I translated the core constructs and peripheral constructs into English, added 'construct labels' for ease of reporting, and made the tables of constructs I present in chapters 4 and 6.

3.7.2.2 Content analysis

The next step was guided by Ryan and Bernard's (2000) and Kvale's (1996) suggestions. Kvale proposes undertaking a six-step analysis process for interviews which fits well with analysing chunks of text by coding as suggested by Ryan and Bernard. Ryan and Bernard (2000) call interview data like mine 'free-flowing text' and propose looking for the meanings in large blocks of text. Unlike in classic content analysis, I did not have pre-established categories to analyse rep-grid, follow-up and stimulated recall transcripts; instead, broad categories emerged as the analysis progressed while I identified themes:

1. I had followed Kvale's (1996: 188-90) first three steps of analysis during the data collection, namely, I had familiarised myself with the transcripts to a great extent already to the extent that, before I left the research context, I had transcribed every interview on the same day and had taken the transcriptions back to the participants for points needing clarification.

2. After I transcribed the rep-grids, I wrote short profiles of teachers in the third person describing what kind of a teacher they were by using the constructs they came up with. I had shown these profiles to teachers together with their rep-grid transcripts before the follow-up interviews. After the follow-up interviews I had developed the

profiles written in the third person into stories of how they decided to become teachers and important things which happened to them along the way until the present time (see Cortazzi 1993). I showed these revised profiles to teachers when I re-visited the school again in spring 2004 for their feedback.

3. I started the process of meaning condensation (Kvale 1996: 192-6) with rep-grids – using colour coding and writing marginal notes on the transcripts of interviews – upon completion of analyses to identify core and peripheral constructs (see 3.7.2.1). The colour codes referred to categories of elements. I used separate colours for ‘self’, ‘previous teachers’, ‘colleagues’, ‘parents’, ‘students’, and ‘mother’ for Rep-grid 1, and for Rep-grid 2 ‘grammar’, ‘vocabulary’, ‘listening’, ‘speaking’, reading, writing and other (activities). Initially, I then went specifically to the unit of text in Rep-grid 1 where each construct had been elicited in the text, and wrote a keyword summary of what the paragraph topic seemed to be in the margin. Then I went over the whole Rep-grid 1 text again to see if there were other things that needed to be noted as themes.

Then I proceeded to the Rep-grid 2 transcripts. First I followed the above colour-coding and labelling process for constructs from Rep-grid 2. Then I looked it over to see if there were other themes (including similar themes to those that had emerged in Rep-grid 1).

Finally, I went to the transcripts of the follow-up interviews. It was generally easy to track themes through from Rep-grids 1 and 2 and there were only a few new themes.

Regarding the stimulated recall interview, my focus was on occasions when participants expressed satisfaction or dissatisfaction with some aspect of their teaching. This time, I tracked these aspects *back* to themes and constructs. It was usually not difficult to do so, showing that I had achieved some degree of validity through triangulation in my research.

By now, I had a separate list of themes, which were often phrased like maxims, or principles, for each individual teacher, and I could begin to see what themes seemed to be shared across teachers. Thus, I started to build up a table like the following:

	Serkan	Oya	Tuna	Gün	Mine	Güneş	İlayda	Canan
Being a team	X			X				X
Being honest and sincere			X			X	X	
Treat students equally	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Be kind, but not strict		X	X	X		X		X
Importance of being a good listener								X
Facilitating students learning	X				X			
Importance of students' liking the lesson and the teacher				X			X	
Cultural identity	X							
Importance of experience	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Importance of professional competence	X							X
Importance of rewarding				X				
Importance of testing and evaluating					X		X	
Be unbiased	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Modesty towards colleagues and students					X		X	

This was in fact a much longer table, and I have included only part of it here to give the reader an idea of what happened. I read the rep-grid transcripts repeatedly and very carefully and confirmed which teachers had mentioned the themes on the left. I decided to use this table as a basis and looked for the same/similar themes in the follow-up and stimulated recall interview transcripts. After this was completed, I re-read the follow-up and stimulated recall transcripts for new themes. After these were identified and added, I had a 126-item list of themes. Those themes appearing to mean the same thing and also some examples of teachers' practices that I had mistakenly included as themes were identified upon feedback from my supervisors and also the fellow PhD student whom I mentioned in sections 3.3 and 3.7.2.1 above. I gave the

table to this person and she went through the transcripts. She suggested some modifications and deletions which I also agreed. We decided to keep the examples of teachers' classroom practices to later put them under the themes they were relevant to so that I would have an additional idea of how they went about implementing their views in the classroom and be able to compare these with the practices reported in Rep-grid 2. Then she and I separately grouped the themes we agreed on, under broad categories that we could think of. Through discussion, we obtained five major and eleven sub-categories. All of these categories and the related relevant (classroom) practices marked '*' can be seen in Appendix 3.7.2.1. At the writing-up stage, I decided to focus on three broad categories and further refined the items to better distinguish practices from themes. I also extracted 'constraints' (see Appendix 3.7.2.2). From the five major categories previously identified – 'Relationships', 'Roles', 'Professional development', 'Classroom practice and pedagogy', and 'Monitoring self' – I placed 'Relationships' and 'Roles' together (since the two cannot be easily separated in discussion) and incorporated practices for 'Monitoring Self' within 'Classroom Practice and Pedagogy' because the reasons teachers monitor themselves are related to classroom practices.

Finally, the stimulated recall interviews were interpreted on the basis of the constraints and constructs that I could identify after bringing together my notes from observation and interview transcripts. I attempted to identify, in particular, occasions when previously mentioned constraints, or constructs were revealed in participants' comments on their lessons.

3.7.3 Writing up

At the writing up stage I had to make a very difficult decision. I had rich and detailed data from all eight participants and this is a strength of my study which helped me to make sound inferences. While answering the research questions, I had to be systematic and because of the nature of the questions, I had to provide both detailed profiles of each teacher and data to elaborate on the meanings of their constructs. I also had to compare and contrast individual teachers for themes and practices which appeared similar on the surface. This called for a further sampling to be made for reporting the findings in the most effective way possible. With caution I re-read many times my analyses of the eight teachers and decided to draw out a sample of four to

report on as cases, based on the types of course they taught, their years of experience, the range of differences in their biographies, and their gender. Thus, in the following chapters I report on the following four teachers:

Gün: 25 years' experience and teaches a skills-based course

Serkan: 17 years' experience and teaches a grammar-based course

İlayda: 11 years' experience and teaches a skills-based course

Mine: 11 years' experience and teaches a grammar-based course.

The majority of the teachers being female, I wanted to include both Gün and Serkan to give voice to male teachers, too. I also wanted the group to represent the range of years of experience, so I wanted to include the two least experienced teachers. I also wanted two teachers to represent skills-based and two of them grammar-based course teaching. And as we shall further see, these teachers also represent the range of variety of the experiences the teachers in this study went through over the years, relating to the great changes in the socio-political atmosphere of Turkey over the last three decades: Canan, Gün, Günes, Tuna, Oya and Serkan all experienced the university problems during the late seventies which led to the army coup in 1980. Gün and Serkan's profiles reflect the common concerns of the rest of the teachers in this respect.

Now, it is time to address the research questions. In Chapter 4, I begin to explore the first research question (regarding the contents and nature – that is, the structure and biographical sources – of these teachers' theories) by first introducing Gün, Serkan, İlayda and Mine with their profiles (biographical information) and presenting their constructs (content) as identified from Rep-grid 1 and highlighting the core nature of certain constructs (structure) in the context of 'Significant others'. This individual analysis is then followed by an exploration in Chapter 5 of how they say they have developed professionally and how they regulate relationships and roles according to their own personal theories of good teaching. Chapter 6 provides further insights into the content and nature of personal theories of good teaching, this time in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do'. Constructs of teachers identified in this context (content) and their relationship with each other and with Rep-grid 1 core constructs (structure) also serve to give background information necessary for answering the second research question: 'To what extent are experienced EFL

teachers' classroom practices congruent with their personal theories of good teaching?'. This question is explored, then, in both chapters 6 and 7. In Chapter 6, first, we see what teachers themselves say about how they realise their personal theories of good teaching in the classroom. In Chapter 7, we shall see what teachers mention when they see themselves in action.

CHAPTER 4

Personal theories of good teaching: Teachers as persons

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I begin to answer the first research question, ‘What are experienced EFL teachers’ personal theories of good teaching?’, presenting findings from the first rep-grid interview (‘Rep-grid 1’) and related findings, when relevant, from the follow-up interviews. I introduce the four teachers by presenting their profiles (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2) and focus on core constructs derived from Rep-grid 1, which was conducted to explore how participants construe themselves and ‘Significant others’ in their professional life to date – namely, their previous teachers, students, students’ parents and colleagues, – as well as their own mothers. Previous research into pre-service and novice teachers, as reviewed in Chapter 1, justifies the need to elicit teachers’ constructs of ‘Significant others’ because it shows that how teachers come to construe their work relates to their interactions with important figures and role models within the context of education and teaching. One aim of my study was to see whether this influence continues after EFL teachers gain experience.

Here I will highlight, in particular, the importance of participants’ elicited ‘core constructs’ (those “*which govern a person’s maintenance processes – that is, those by which he maintains his identity and existence*” (Kelly 1955: 482, italics in original)). Core constructs are, according to Kelly (1955), what make people who they are, and, as we shall see, reveal the moral, emotional/affective and educational dimensions of personal theories of good teaching.

Core constructs, as elicited in the context of ‘Significant others’ have – as we shall see – particular implications for how teachers view ‘Relationships and roles’ and ‘Professional development’ in their teaching contexts, and perceptions relating to these areas (again, as elicited mainly during Rep-grid 1) are focused on in Chapter 5. Constructs relating to ‘Relationships and roles’, as we shall see in Chapter 6, also find their way into teachers’ conceptions of good classroom practice.

As was explained in Chapter 2, core constructs are not enough on their own to explain how people make sense of the world if we accept them as developing continuously. In the course of learning, people are expected to add to their core constructs ‘peripheral constructs’ (*“those which can be altered without serious modification of core structure”*) (Kelly 1955: 482–3, italics in original). Peripheral constructs of the four teachers will be discussed in the next chapters rather than the present one, although those elicited in Rep-grid 1 will be presented briefly below together with the core constructs in tables for each teacher.

As is described in detail in Chapter 3 (section 3.7.2), I identified core constructs, following the procedures outlined in Kelly (1955) and Jankowicz (2004) by means of ‘laddering up’ initially stated peripheral constructs during interviews, but also from the manner in which the interviewees spoke, the intensity of emotions, their choice of words, and the frequency with which the issues they brought up related to a particular construct. Teachers’ core constructs have emotional and affective significance (Kelly 1955), to the extent that participants, when elaborating on them during interviews, frequently repeated their emphasis, asked for confirmation that their point was understood, raised their tone of voice, or used words such as “very important for me”, “I believe”, “This is what I believe, am I wrong?”, “I cannot forget”, “I remember very vividly”, “It’s all or nothing”, and “I can’t think of any other way”.

The chapter ends (in section 4.3) with a summary and preliminary discussion of the findings.

4.2 Teachers’ profiles and core constructs

Below, I provide each teacher’s profile and discuss their core constructs in turn. In this section, data are mainly derived from Rep-grid 1 (relating to ‘Significant others’). However, data from the follow-up interview are also utilised where they are further illustrative of the core constructs identified during Rep-grid 1. In appendices 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, and 4.2.4, Gün, Serkan, İlayda and Mine’s WebGrid III display and cluster analysis maps can be consulted for further information on how specific significant others are construed as similar and different. Below, for each teacher, core and peripheral constructs are presented in tables with their respective ‘similarity’ and ‘contrast’ poles. Core constructs are marked with ‘*’ and I also formulated a ‘content

label' for each construct on the basis of my understanding of their bi-polar meanings (similarity and contrast poles together) in order to facilitate easy reference to constructs in the text. Extracts are also provided from Rep-grid 1 and follow-up interviews.

4.2.1 Gün

Table 4.2.1 Gün's constructs in the 'Significant others' context

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
we [i.e. teacher and students] run towards the same goal *	outside *	common moral purpose *
gives responsibility to/encourages students *	disempowers students *	student empowerment *
aims to involve students in the lesson	students are empty vessels	student participation
implements group and project work	fastidious	tolerance of ambiguity
kindly-severe	strict	degree of strictness
explains the aim of the lesson effectively	incompetent in explaining aims	competence in explaining aims
rewards students	punishes students	rewarding students
aims for students to like the lesson	doesn't make lessons enjoyable	enjoyability of lesson

Gün has been an English teacher for twenty-five years. He wanted to become an English teacher because he believed that this would put him into contact with the rest of the world as well as enabling him to make a difference in students' lives. He made up his mind to become a teacher quite early on in his life. His secondary school teachers (Sevim, Necla and Hasan), with their various characteristics, provoked his interest in teaching. For example, Sevim used to get her students to evaluate themselves and assign their own oral exam marks. Necla emphasised rewarding the students. Gün cannot forget the two theatre tickets Necla gave him to acknowledge his success in Geography. His Biology teacher Hasan viewed education in terms of developing students as whole persons. He was interested in students' family life outside the school and used to invite parents to school. He also used to encourage students to benefit from subjects like Physical Education, Art and Music. Similarly, Gün is convinced of the need for collaboration among parents, students and teachers

for enhancing a healthy learning and development atmosphere for students. Among the three previous teachers, only Sevim was an English teacher; nevertheless they were all an inspiration for Gün at a young age to become a teacher:

I liken myself to Sevim a little bit more because she did show her trust in me and encouraged me. I was doing the best I could to be able to live up to her trust. I used to study for English much harder. By grade 8 I had come a long way. I believe because of her I loved English. I loved teaching. This shows a very important thing: teachers can be very instrumental in your future choice of profession.

Gün was not very satisfied with the initial training experience he had, due to the poor quality of the training context he was in. At that time, his university was embroiled in the political events of the decade which ended with the army coup in 1980.

For my generation, it was not an adequate training. There were many events happening every day at the universities. You know, political fights among students before the army took over. That's why I joined in-service training later.

Gün received offers to work in private companies, but as an idealistic novice teacher he did not accept those offers. He wanted to make a difference (due to his idealism), but also wanted to stay out of politics (having seen the worst side of politics at university, he wanted to avoid conflict and confrontation but nevertheless follow a humanistic approach). He says he cannot be very critical about issues in front of students – it will be up to them when they go to university to decide.

Initially, Gün went to work in a small town within İzmir district and worked there for about nine years before he joined the team in his current school. During his early years of teaching he joined numerous in-service courses and said that he was pleased with them, since they addressed his need to learn about classroom teaching methodologies and pedagogical approaches. In his novice years, Gün drew upon his observations of his previous teachers and tried to address his students' needs as whole persons. He found out about their families and invited parents to school to meet him. This was not responded to by all parents and he came to the conclusion that those children whose parents show interest in what is happening at school are more motivated towards learning and more successful than their peers. It was during this

period that he started giving credit to his own mother for “encouraging [him] night and day about homework and telling [him] to be respectful to teachers”. Also, during this period, he realised he could not work in isolation and he gained much from his colleagues’ advice. He made a move to his current school nine years later because he did not see a future for his own children in the small town he was teaching in. Nearer the big city, he could provide his children with better educational opportunities.

Overall, Gün gives the impression of being a fairly satisfied, but in some respects tired teacher. He is critical about certain issues in his context and is hoping that the new generation of teachers will address those concerns. For example, he believes that the prevailing attitude to learning English in Turkey is misconceived. Learning English should be much better structured, according to Gün, to address tourism needs, and the government should consider it as an investment and think what the country will get in return. Gün is also concerned about changing values associated with capitalism – specifically, the rise of individualistic and selfish thinking. Nevertheless, he says that he has no regrets about having become a teacher because he had really wanted to be one from a very young age and was expecting certain obstacles.

The core constructs within Gün’s personal theory of good teaching represent what Gün envisions both for his own children and for his students. He finds his role very important in nurturing good and responsible citizens for the country and the world. He has very romantic and humanistic views and states that he and his students “run towards the same goal”

to make the world a better place. Peace at home, peace in the world. This is what Atatürk said eighty years ago. I think about the future. I think about nurturing good human beings for the future of the world and for our country. I think about endless possibilities and opportunities for my own children and my students. I see tomorrow’s architects, doctors, scientists, mothers and fathers in their eyes.

His core construct, which he articulated as ‘we run towards the same goal – outside’ (and which I summarize as ‘common moral purpose’) influences his view about his subject matter, English, being an appropriate medium for actualising his dream for future generations:

I can construe my role in terms of providing a communicative skill for my students. The world is united now. It is united and global in every sense. For that reason we need people who know English for our country's welfare. If we can teach good English, we will have nurtured people who can communicate with the rest of the world.

Therefore, Gün says he focuses on the communicative function of English in his classroom and favours activities that students are involved in more than the teacher. He emphasises the instrumental role that learning English will play in his students' future growth and development towards being citizens of the world and ultimately being useful for their country.

Gün says that he has always observed English language teachers to be relatively open to different points of view and tolerant of other cultures. He views himself as similar and states he does not follow traditional teaching methods. He is critical of teachers who create fear in students, who threaten them with bad marks, who do everything in the classroom in front of the blackboard. He talks frequently about the way his former teachers Sevim and Necla used to encourage their students to feel responsible for everything happening in and outside the classroom, and he construes them as similar in this respect, with a core construct 'gives responsibility to/encourages students – disempowers students' ('student empowerment').

In teaching his own students, Gün says he tries to implement the techniques and methods of language teaching he learnt during his in-service training and an eclectic combination of classroom management and motivational strategies that he acquired from his former teachers and colleagues. He says he has discovered that some of the techniques suggested for language classrooms, such as pair and group work, are also useful for his wider aim of bringing up good individuals and empowering them along the way. He believes such activities give responsibility to students and eliminate the risk of weak students not learning by giving everybody an equal voice to express themselves.

4.2.2 Serkan

Table 4.2.2 Serkan's constructs in the 'Significant others' context

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
forms one half of an apple [i.e. misses, needs the other half] *	there is nothing [to share] *	complementing one another *
hasn't lost his own identity *	has lost his own identity *	maintaining identity *
has professional competence	doesn't have professional competence	degree of professional competence
doesn't give in to students due to lack of professional competence	unreliable	reliability
I felt whole when I found him	has no contribution to me	fulfilment from complementarity
is a researcher and continually develops	doesn't develop professionally	professional development
facilitator for learning and developing individuals	stranger	facilitation of learning
identical to me to a great extent	different from me	sameness with self

Serkan has seventeen years' experience. He did not want to become a teacher because of any intrinsic liking for teaching. After he got his teaching certificate from the university, he did not start teaching for three years. He did odd jobs here and there.

The subject that he teaches poses problems for him because, for Serkan, the English language represents a threat to the values and traditions of Turkish culture. He highly values this culture as a result of his mother's influence on his upbringing as well as his having been brought up in an economically deprived environment where he formed his early impressions. He witnessed US soldiers and expatriates living in affluence near his hometown during his childhood, and initially he wanted to enter university to learn English so as to be able to go abroad himself and marry a foreign girl. Teaching was not on his mind then. Serkan claims he does not remember a single teacher who contributed positively to the development of his teaching identity during his secondary school years. He is critical of the way he was taught English. In fact his being insulted by his English teacher at secondary school led him to teach himself English to save face among his peers. During his initial university years, he formed

his current thinking upon meeting an idealistic teacher trainer. This experience changed his then goal of going abroad and marrying a foreign girl. It was a further reinforcement for his patriotic views. Now, with reference to this image of the idealistic teacher trainer, he construes the majority of his previous English teachers and his colleagues negatively in terms of his core construct ‘hasn’t lost his own identity – has lost his own identity’ (‘maintaining identity’).

Serkan says that he was very much deprived of a relationship with his own teachers, and he always felt something was missing, like one half of an apple. One of Serkan’s core constructs (‘complementing one another’) draws on the metaphor of ‘two halves of an apple’ to describe the mother–child bond and Serkan says that promoting this kind of relationship with his own students is important to him:

What does a mother do? [...] A mother is also a teacher, but from a slightly different stance. She is a teacher who teaches the culture of a nation, family values, traditions. She is the real teacher in life. Her child is the real student. They are both one half of an apple. And I and my students are two halves of an apple.

He construes himself and his students as alike in terms of each being “one half of an apple”. ‘The apple’ is exclusive of everything but the teacher and the students only. A student is an apple whose other half is the teacher:

Students always feel themselves as one half of an apple, but they are not aware of this until they find the teacher who will make them whole.

Serkan also reflects on the inadequacies of his initial training, from two points of view. Firstly, he says that the academics (as opposed to other lecturers whom he calls ‘teachers’) who taught during the last two years on his course were not aware of the realities of the country’s schools. He says that subject-related knowledge and methodologies were imported without being adapted to make them appropriate to the context. He experienced positive influences only during his initial two years, and later there occurred some changes within the university:

It was zero. University did not give me anything apart from the initial two years. At that time it was called the ‘Higher Institute for Teacher Education’. [...] There were teachers at the Institute who had worked at all levels for the Ministry of Education. They were aware of themselves, very reflective, very experienced. They knew every corner of the country. They knew the education system in mountain villages as well as the one in the

centre of Ankara. They had worked in very different contexts. I could not learn from reading books the knowledge that I gained by listening to their stories. Then came the army and everything changed. They replaced those teachers with academics who did not travel further than the campus library, let alone seeing a real classroom

Secondly, he says that these academics were very westernised and looked down upon others because of their academic status. Regarding this second aspect, Serkan says that they were not good role models for future teachers in terms of teacher–student relationships. He is also concerned that, currently, most of the foreign language teachers in Turkey have very similar westernised views to those of the academics during his training course. As a result, he claims, there has been a cultural erosion taking place due to inappropriate western points of views being promoted in classrooms.

He describes his development process as one of self-discovery, self-education, and experimentation. He took the initiative in nominating himself to school principals to join in-service training and eventually he became a part-time trainer himself. He terms his classroom – but explicitly not the present *school* – a laboratory. He wishes that the school could be a laboratory, as language is a living thing and you have to learn it in everyday situations. He is very critical of the education system, how grammar is being taught, and how students are led to become unconfident and so unconscious of their learning that they have “speech defects” when they attempt to talk in English. He claims all the students know is grammar. Testing and evaluation is another of the areas he is very critical of. The university entrance exam is one of his major complaints. His own son took the exams at the time of the study and Serkan says English is the last thing on such candidates’ agenda.

Serkan seems to be suffering most from constraints, as compared to his colleagues. He has his own ways in the classroom and isolates his practices. He talks about his colleagues as ‘the others’, lumping them together rather than referring to them individually in most cases because he thinks they are all compromising with the system and sacrificing their identities. He complains about the lack of collaboration with his peers. He says maybe he has his own stake in this, but their conversations do not teach him anything. Apart from teaching in the school, he works part-time at the university, where he teaches reading classes to prospective English teachers. He is also involved in a textbook-writing project for Anatolian high schools which is

sponsored by the British Council. In summer holidays he gives in-service courses to teachers who are encouraged to improve their teaching skills by the Ministry of Education. His perceived status seems to be a hindrance for him to communicate with the rest of the teachers in the school.

He states that forcing everybody to learn English is nonsense (this is a view shared by some other teachers), and that only those students who want to learn it should be given the chance. But most of the parents decide instead of students about the education their children should receive, and the state is putting an extra burden on children by making English compulsory. He says the resources (the time and money) are being wasted.

Serkan frequently complained about his dilemma in having to work with textbooks published in Britain and the USA whose content he believes reflects a way of thinking and life that is not appropriate to Turkish culture. He believes that the textbooks confirm and encourage western traditions which Turkey has adopted over the last few decades under the influence of the USA, and that students might not be able to reflect on this critically. This poses a challenge for him in establishing the kind of relationship he seeks to promote with his students:

You have to make them believe in why they are learning what they are learning. A teacher has to build a bridge of love between himself and his students based on respect. Thus, one can bring the two halves of an apple together. [...] There are values that make up a nation. They are important to motivate students for their learning, for them to understand why they are learning what they are learning. [...] Loyal to our own values. OK? First, knowing ourselves and then researching from outside. The other half of the apple.

Serkan's desire is to keep students informed about appropriate values and to encourage them to set their goals accordingly while learning English. However, he finds it hard to tell his students that they have to learn English for their future economic and academic improvement. This is the way he construes the status of English language in his context:

I'm Turkish. Why are the courses at our universities given in English, but not Turkish? Why is our own language not promoted? Can you think of any other country in the world whose economy is dependent on the US Dollar and whose education is dependent on the English language? [...] Is there any other kind of school similar to Anatolian high schools that we

have around the world? We select the cleverest students, teach them English and then offer them to the USA, to Britain, to Germany, to France. Brain migration. [...] I wish we were not obliged to do this.

Thus, in the classroom, Serkan says he focuses mainly on grammar teaching for the reason that he has to teach this aspect of the language (“Whether or not I want to”). At the same time, however, because Serkan believes a good teacher should complement his students, he states that he has paid attention to students’ learning difficulties over the years and has identified English grammar as a problematic aspect of their learning:

I observed. Through living and experiencing. I think this is very important. Real. I’ve been in a laboratory for seventeen years. No matter what I did, they did not learn the grammar. [...] Students are concerned with succeeding in the exams during high school. At the university, they are concerned with understanding the academic texts. These call for learning grammar and my only aid in this context is their knowledge of Turkish. I do not have the luxury of getting them to repeat situational, authentic conversations a hundred times so that they acquire the rules unconsciously.

To sum up, there is an evident fragmentation in Serkan’s personal theory of good teaching in relation to his subject matter. He has mixed feelings towards the necessity of learning and teaching English. His core construct ‘maintaining identity’ underlies his firmly-held view that learning English in Turkey poses a threat to Turkish values and culture. In addition, the existing testing system does not enable teaching in an authentic and balanced way so he says he focuses on the grammatical aspect of the language in his own practice. He tries to actualise his image of ‘two halves of an apple’ and the related core construct (‘complementing one another’) not according to his idealised view, but at a more peripheral level to take into account the immediate and situationally oriented learning needs of his students. Overall, Serkan gives the impression of being an ambitious but unhappy teacher who seems to be suffering from constraints to the highest degree as compared with his colleagues. His idealism, but at the same time his disillusion with English as a subject is conveyed well in the following excerpt from the follow-up interview:

Firstly, in my opinion language teaching does not happen in the classroom. [...] Is it very hard building a small village, a town instead of these classrooms? The children could go there and everything is happening in English. [...] This is just the tip of the iceberg. Secondly,

why do you want to learn a language? In our country we learn English not because we really want to. We are brainwashed and conditioned to learn it. Somehow everybody is convinced that it is a good thing, but they are not aware within the current system we cannot teach English to our students, but we brainwash them with its culture and politics. The students do not learn English to communicate, to express themselves. They learn it because their parents are awed by the welfare and richness of these western countries and condition their children to learn English to go abroad, to get a good job.

4.2.3 İlayda

Table 4.2.3 İlayda's constructs in the 'Significant others' context

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
compassionate and respects students *	creates fear and anxiety *	compassion/respect towards students *
humble and modest *	intimidating: says 'Only I can do this' *	humility *
aims to get students to like the lesson	a mechanical teacher	motivating students
doesn't kill time in the classroom and has responsibility	doesn't have responsibility	responsibility
cannot exist without each other	outside	mutual dependence

İlayda has eleven years' teaching experience. Her decision to become an English teacher was influenced by her liking of the language and the teachers who taught her English during her secondary school years. She did not have any clear views of what kind of a teacher she wanted to be at that time. It was something that she felt she could do as a job because she was successful in learning English more than any other subjects. Although İlayda was unconsciously influenced in developing her views about good teaching by her previous teachers, she was not aware of this at the time but came to this realisation only after she became an English teacher. During her initial novice year, she had problems in establishing a good relationship with her students because of these early influences on her views of teaching. She reasons that she was expecting the students to be like she was herself as a student. She states that her own English teachers were concerned with students' learning and did not waste time in the classroom. This approach suited İlayda well because she was not expecting

teachers to show friendliness or love towards her. Her teachers' approach to students was formal and she felt it was her own responsibility to work hard and please her teachers:

They were not particularly loving towards us in the classroom. We were treated as grown-ups. I was taught by a very strict teacher at primary school for three years. Compared to her my secondary school teachers were mild in character. Everything was more formal when I attended secondary school, but much better than primary school times. This suited me just fine as long as I was not scolded or picked on. I finished secondary school without problems because I was doing my work and passing my exams.

İlayda's view of teachers having to teach their lesson properly without wasting time and students being responsive to teachers' efforts was reinforced at university upon meeting Gamze, who was a very knowledgeable lecturer. She recalls Gamze as giving her most in the classroom and maintaining a respectful relationship with her students. Another lecturer at the university was Cenk, who was a well-published academic, and perhaps more knowledgeable than Gamze. However, İlayda saw her strict primary school teacher in Cenk. He was a very intimidating person and used to insult students when they failed in the exams. İlayda says that she avoided his class because of her fear of him and finished university half a year later than her peers (Gamze and Cenk also taught Mine (see 4.2.4 below), and, as we shall see in Chapter 5, Mine and İlayda have quite different views of their initial training).

İlayda finds her initial training experience lacking overall in the sense that all along she was not made aware of the fact that students need love and friendliness from teachers, besides knowledge:

We had options on student psychology at the university, but I do not think they were adequate. We had only one month practice teaching. It was over before we could register what it was like teaching in a real classroom. [...] In that situation my mind was busy to fulfil the requirements of the course [planning, observing the mentor teachers, teaching] and one month passed in a panic. After I started teaching I understood that students need guidance, love and friendliness.

So, when she graduated from the university and started her first teaching job in a secondary school in a small town in İzmir district, İlayda was disappointed. At the end of the year students chose another colleague of hers (also an English teacher) as the

best-loved teacher in the school. İlayda says that her colleague, although she did the minimum in the classroom, had a good relationship with students and their parents. On the other hand, İlayda came across as a very principled and unapproachable person because of her focus only on efficient instruction:

When I first started teaching, instruction was the only important thing for me: 'I must teach this topic, I must teach this vocabulary'. There was nothing else. Having just graduated from university I was so enthusiastic that I thought all my students were waiting eagerly to learn from me. I got them to buy grammar books, dictionaries. I got them to do thousands of exercises. And they were normal state secondary school students in grade 9. Oh God! How I tortured them. How bored and devastated they got under the burden. I later understood my mistake.

İlayda says that it was a very upsetting but eye-opening event that another colleague of hers was chosen by the students as the most popular teacher in the school. İlayda now approves of that teacher, who gave a lot of love to her students, which she herself could not. İlayda reasons that at the time she was a "distant teacher" and a stranger to such a loving relationship between the teacher and students because she did not experience this in her own schooling or life. Her mother was also a distant person. She was only aware of not wanting to create fear in her students and thought that as long as she delivered her lessons well and did not insult students for their mistakes she was a good teacher.

After this experience, İlayda relaxed her attitude towards her students and found out more about their lives and interests:

I started understanding my students' troubles. They do not all have to successfully learn English. They do not have the same ability and interest. They do not all have parents who guide them and show interest in their studies.

A few years later İlayda was appointed to teach in a different school, where students came as immigrants to İzmir from Eastern Turkey. Here she was further challenged to gain her students' love and trust to be able to convince them to learn English. Most of the students were of Kurdish origin and did not know Turkish. They felt isolated and unwanted in the big city, and she responded to their emotional needs. The curriculum made it compulsory to learn English, but the teacher first had to gain the trust of students before any instruction could take place.

When she came to teach at the Anatolian high school, she was happy to find students who were more motivated towards learning. However, at the beginning İlayda found it difficult to adapt since she did not gain students' respect despite being warm and friendly towards them as in the former school:

The students in this school are very clever and [mentally] agile. They are very open to learning. I think I over-praised them at the beginning. I used to tell them that they were perfect, [that it was] wonderful that they understood everything I tried to teach them. I showed them a lot of respect, but I could not get much in return.

One thing that concerns İlayda is that students' parents do not pay enough attention to their problems. At present students are under pressure to be successful in the exams and İlayda thinks students are getting that pressure off their chests by displaying carefree behaviour sometimes towards teachers. She believes this is because of indifferent parents:

My mother was also a parent, but I don't think she really showed interest in me or my school progress. The parents today don't come to school either. They don't come and share things unless there is a very big problem. This has a negative effect on the students. It had a negative effect on me when I was a student.

Another concern for her is her own professional competence. She says that she is not sure whether her practices are right. She says she thinks more slowly than most of her colleagues, and thus cannot produce new ideas. After somebody suggests a solution to a problem, she says to herself "Well, I could have thought about this myself. Why couldn't I?". She says after every lesson she mostly feels she has not done proper teaching. This context is more challenging for her as İlayda is still new to the textbooks and the curriculum compared to her more experienced colleagues, and she recognises this fact. This is her fourth year in the school, and she finds it difficult to approach her other colleagues when she has problems. She says being a relatively inexperienced teacher in the current context forces her to step back and observe how others are going about things before she can feel ready to make her own suggestions.

İlayda's core constructs within her personal theory of good teaching stem from her school and university years and the first year of her teaching. Thus, 'compassionate and respects students – creates fear and anxiety' is one of her core constructs and the contrast pole this is very much related to her image of 'the frightening teacher':

[Cenk] is a teacher whose lesson I attended in fear. He used to live near our house and I even had thoughts of pushing down a flower pot from the windowsill as he was passing by [laughs], he was such a frightening man. He had written books and he was the head of department at that time. He put on airs because of that, and used to insult students. One cannot learn with fear.

İlayda thinks relationships among colleagues also have to be based on love and respect. She feels anxious and restless if another colleague of hers intimidates her with her/his knowledge and she construes such colleagues as different from her in terms of another core construct ‘humble and modest – intimidating: says ‘Only I can do this’’. In this respect she expects of her colleagues what she herself hopes to give to her students, in relation to whom she employs her construct ‘compassionate and respects students – creates fear and anxiety’ in viewing her relationships with them. She has to be there for them all the time and respond to their emotions when they are unsure. In return she is validated by the respect and love the students show her. Her criterion of success in her profession is the recognition of her own students as opposed to from critical inspectors and colleagues.

İlayda says she is a student-centred teacher and wants to see her students using what she has taught them. She differentiates between those activities that have to be done to implement the syllabus and those which enable her to assess her own effectiveness in teaching and students’ learning. She is happier when students speak in English and express their own ideas about the topics of the textbook because she believes that this brings the two sides closer. She does not like the mechanical atmosphere dominating the classroom when students need to do drills and grammar exercises. She says she discovered that students want to show the teacher who they really are in the classroom, and be validated by their teacher. If she lets them be, she believes she is much respected and loved in return. She thinks the teacher has to be student-centred, respecting and accepting what students want, but sometimes this is difficult. Her construct ‘compassionate and respects students – creates fear and anxiety’ prevents İlayda from being very strict towards the students and challenges her to find appropriate language and behaviour when students demand “too much of a good thing”. This poses a dilemma for İlayda because she cannot all the time leave the textbook aside and organise learning activities according to what students want to learn. She wants to use the time efficiently, finish her yearly plan and also make sure

students are learning equally with the other classes in the school. Thus, there are days when she feels unloved and a failure as a teacher. However, overall, İlayda expresses a determination to follow her core constructs because those days when she “get[s] something back” make up for all the negative emotions she experiences from time to time.

4.2.4 Mine

Table 4.2.4 Mine’s constructs in the ‘Significant others’ context

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
recognises individual characteristics *	thinks students are responsible to make most of the given time *	individualisation *
establishes one-to-one relationships with students *	cannot establish good relationships *	one-to-one relationships *
cannot tolerate losing students *	thinks [only] deserving students should be taught *	keeping students on board *
we share with and understand each other	have less in common	mutual understanding
gives positive energy to students: lively	less lively	liveliness
devoted to students: a complete teacher	loses students	devotion to students
speaks in a way everybody understands	shows s/he knows a lot: intimidating	plain speaking

Mine has been teaching English for eleven years. Her initial intention was to become a journalist. Due to her parents’ concerns for her safety, she limited her choice of faculties to the ones that were in her hometown, İzmir. She did not perform well enough in the university entrance exams to study journalism, but her score was sufficient for her to enter the ELT faculty. She was planning to make use of her English later on in journalism.

Surprisingly, Mine found herself enjoying her course. Her methodology teacher at the university, Gamze, was very influential in her coming to like the profession. Mine thought that Gamze shared the same values and beliefs as her about the world and about human interaction. Often Gamze reminded Mine of her parents, especially her mother, in her approach and relationship with students in the classroom.

If it had only been for Sevgi [one lecturer at the university], I do not think I would be here today. I owe it to Gamze that today I am a happy teacher. Often she reminded me of my mother. She used to give you confidence.

It is unquestionable of course that both Gamze and Sevgi were very knowledgeable lecturers. But I always felt myself closer to Gamze. Her actions and words fit very well with the picture in my head that I was a person and my ideas mattered. As distinct from Sevgi, Gamze paid attention to our differences. Every individual is different and has different characteristics. You have to understand their individual characteristics and treat them accordingly.

After graduating, Mine went to İstanbul to pursue her original idea to become a journalist and she worked for two years for a media company in a junior position. However, she found:

the world of media was too materialistic and pretentious. My initial training had opened my eyes and had stirred emotions in me that I had not been aware of before. After two years in journalism, I was aching to go back to my profession, teaching.

Initially, she was appointed to work in the primary school of a private college. This proved to be difficult, as she was not prepared to teach young learners:

Knowing something and being able to teach it are different things. [...] I think that teaching in a primary school requires a totally different pedagogy than the one I was prepared for. I found it really very hard to try to teach a foreign language to pupils who were just grasping how their own language worked. We had pedagogical formation courses at the university, but I think I did not pay enough attention. I understood their importance much later and found those books and read them.

Mine admits that her lack of awareness of real teaching situations “obscured her vision” during her training and she could not make the best of the opportunity to develop skills in teaching various age groups. During this initial phase of her career she had to rely on advice from her other colleagues constantly. It was through support from one of them that she could ask the head teacher to be appointed to secondary level classrooms to teach. She and her colleague got on so well that they proposed to team-teach grades 6 and 7 in her second year as a teacher. During the following two years, Mine and her colleague compiled an extensive collection of materials that they

used for teaching beyond the textbook. Mine describes this phase of her teaching as “very stimulating and exciting, just like my initial training”, enabling her to experiment a lot. She says teaching at a private college gives a teacher more freedom than working in a state school. However, she was on a temporary contract and had no job security. Besides, she had started to get anxious about not having a secure pension. The amount of work she had to do to prove her excellence to her employers was also interfering with her marriage. It was around this time that her husband, who is a doctor, was appointed to a hospital in Ağrı, one of the most remote cities of Turkey in the East. Because her husband’s service was compulsory, she had no choice but to follow him to his post. There she had to work under very severe conditions:

We were in the town of Eleşkirt at the height of the war against terrorism. We were practically targets. My husband being a doctor and me being a teacher made things really difficult, for the obvious reasons.

When she got pregnant, they decided to move back to İzmir. She applied to teach at her current school because, within the system, Anatolian high schools were the closest one could get to teaching at a private college in terms of the hours devoted to English instruction. She no longer wanted to teach in an ordinary state school. After three years’ working under the hardest conditions she felt she could not cope anymore.

Mine did not find it hard to accommodate herself to this new context. In the current school she is only responsible for teaching the textbook. Exploiting other materials in the classroom like newspapers or magazine articles takes a lot of pre-negotiation with the head teacher and other teachers because of the top-down control over materials. On the other hand, she still compiles a folder of her students’ work and she still encourages her students to keep a learning diary. These are practices that she found useful while teaching at the private college. She is aware that there are constraints, but:

If you know the overall situation in the country like me, it is natural to consider oneself lucky. I count my blessings every day. I would not have presented a happy picture if you interviewed me when I was in Ağrı. I reached better conditions. This is the best school that I have taught in so far. There will always be problems wherever you go. Some are worse than

others. Having seen the worst, it seems like a very easy escape to complain about things and make yourself unhappy.

Mine overall gives the impression of being fairly satisfied as a teacher. She states that she likes her students very much and thinks she has a lot of things to contribute.

Mine says that her experiences of her own upbringing are central to her recognition that each individual has his/her own characteristics and learning styles. Her core construct 'recognises individual characteristics – thinks students are responsible to make most of the given time' ('individualisation') derives from her construing her mother (as with Serkan) and two of her university teachers as similar. She reflects on her mother's approach to her and her sister to bring out and develop the unique features of their personalities:

My mother has two children, me and my sister. She was able to figure out what kind of approach would work for my sister and me individually without making us feel unequal. She did not try to shape us according to her own mind. She taught me certain rules that would make me comfortable to lead my life on my own two feet. While doing this she was not directive, but she let me live and learn from experience about life. Just like my mother who treated me and my sister as individual persons, I too while teaching my students try to figure out the appropriate language and behaviour according to their individual characteristics.

At the university, too, Mine met two teachers who, she says, are her "idols", describing them as "teacher for the individual student":

They are two ideal teachers for me. People I learnt everything about teaching from. This was the kind of teacher I wanted to become. The teacher for the individual student.

Mine contrasts these two teachers with a third teacher at the university whom she characterises as "following a risky approach". This third teacher had her own criteria established, diagnosed whether students matched those criteria in her mind and paced her lessons according to those students. Mine finds this risky because she believes some students would be lost by the teacher if students fail to get ambitious to meet the criteria and pace set by the teacher. She further states that in her class at the university some of her friends who she felt would be very good teachers failed in that teacher's course.

In congruence with these concerns, Mine says that student-centred instruction is her goal in the classroom and she favours enabling students to present what they

already know. She tries to find a balance between guiding the students and letting them go about learning at their own pace. She says she utilises techniques which worked for herself when she was learning English as well as the techniques she learnt at the university from those two teachers she likes. She conceptualises student-centred instruction as providing students with various learning strategies and different presentations of the same topic to suit individual learning styles.

4.3 Summary and discussion

The interpretive account incorporating the four teachers' core constructs above shows that they each have their own unique *raison d'être* for pursuing certain instructional and educational goals. They have individually meaningful core constructs in relation to significant others which make them *the persons they are*. The findings are in line with previous suggestions (Elbaz 1983, Clandinin 1986) that teachers possess influential images which are derived from their experiences, but my findings additionally seem to show that they engage in a process of *construing* their experiences in terms of *the way things should be* and *the way things should not be* and form the core constructs of their personal theories on this basis. My findings confirm previous research which shows that pre-service and novice teachers are influenced by their early learning experiences, and provide further evidence that experienced teachers, too, are guided by such influences. These influences derive from family upbringing (Serkan, and Mine) and, interestingly, from the critical experiences participants had when they were new to the profession (in the case of İlayda, for example). The core constructs, participants also imply (and as we shall further see in Chapter 6), find their way into their classroom practices; in some cases, the subject matter (English) itself is construed as an appropriate medium in its own right (Gün) for actualising core constructs.

Every teacher is unique in what his/her core constructs mean. We should take note, for example, of how the ideal of 'student-centredness' is interpreted differently by İlayda and Mine. According to İlayda, a student-centred teacher is one who respects and accepts what students want. Another important characteristic of a student-centred teacher, for her, is paying attention to their affective needs. With a different emphasis, Mine views student-centredness in terms of the teacher paying attention to the

individual learning attributes of her students and letting them present what they know so that she can build on that.

Another example is the way Gün views English as an appropriate subject for realising his core constructs in the classroom, whereas, for Serkan, the nature of the subject prevents him from actualising his core construct of 'maintaining identity' via English teaching.

Serkan is also another good example of the power of core constructs and, in his case, the tensions they can create for a teacher. He resorts to construing his subject (English) and the role he plays in teaching it in a fragmented way because this is the only way he can resolve his dilemmas.

Up to this point I have presented the core constructs of teachers, *which make them the persons they are*, but the picture is not yet complete. In Chapter 5, then, I will be shifting my focus from *the teacher as person* to the *teacher as a person developing professionally and as a person in relationships and adopting a role*. So far, I have highlighted the core constructs that make up part of teachers' personal theories of good teaching in a very individual-centred way. Now, moving in the direction of their actual classroom practices is necessary.

CHAPTER FIVE

Personal theories of good teaching: Professional development and relationships and roles

5.1 Introduction

As I stated in the previous chapter I shall move to consideration of these teachers in the setting of their classrooms gradually. I wish first to discuss the ways in which they appear to have developed professionally under the guidance of their constructs in the ‘Significant others’ context, examining their own views of their professional development as revealed by content analysis of all interview transcripts (5.2). Secondly, I shall explore how these participants establish ‘Relationships and roles’ (in section 5.3) – a second major category which emerged from content analysis. This is essential because previous research shows that teachers’ perceptions of their classroom practices cannot be understood adequately in isolation from their perceptions of other stakeholders (Elbaz 1983, Clandinin 1986). In turn, this will help us in Chapter 6 to understand in detail the same four teachers’ perceptions of ‘Classroom practice and pedagogy’ (this being the third major category of themes which emerged from content analysis). In the course of my discussion of shared themes below, I shall highlight the ways in which constructs seem to influence these participants’ personal perceptions.

5.2 Professional development

5.2.1 Overall themes

The category of ‘Professional development’ emerged as one of three main categories from content analysis of all interview transcripts. This revealed, to some extent, that participants found it an important aspect to consider when reflecting on ‘good teaching’. However, the importance of this category was also, perhaps largely, a consequence of my asking participants to construe influential previous teachers and

colleagues in relation to the element 'Myself' during Rep-grid 1, and of their responding to questions about professional development which I specifically asked all teachers during the follow-up interviews (see Appendix 3.6.4). Teachers talked about the characteristics of teachers they liked in terms of their professional development during Rep-grid 1 with phrases such as: "S/he is a researcher and continually develops", "S/he can take criticism and learn from mistakes ...", "Ambitious and open to innovations ...," "Experienced ...". Additionally, some teachers offered constructs directly related to professional development (in particular, Serkan: see Table 4.2.2).

The following themes emerged from the content analysis (see Chapter 3, 3.7.2) as important for participants in relation to professional development. Most of these themes are commonly perceived as important by all of the participants, but there were different attitudes towards some of them ('X' indicates that an item was mentioned as important, 'X, -' with a negative attitude towards it, and 'X,+,-' with mixed feelings):

Table 5.2.1 Themes from content analysis (1): Professional Development

	Gün	Serkan	İlayda	Mine
	A good teacher ...			
Learns something new every day	X	X	X	X
Researches and builds on experience (recall-reflection-reframing/reproduction)	X	X	X	X
Develops effective teaching skills	X	X	X	X
Collaborates with colleagues to learn more	X	X, +, -	X, +, -	X
Joins in-service training	X	X	X	X
Is ambitious and innovative		X	X, +, -	X, +, -
Tries to improve oneself with a positive outlook			X	X
	Constraints/opportunities			
Lack of funding and time	X, -	X, -	X, -	X, -
Occupational choice determines how one develops	X	X	X	X
Usefulness of initial training	X, -	X, -	X, -	X
Having to do things out of obligation	X, -	X, -	X, -	X, -
School administration support system		X, -		X
Recognition and promotion		X, -		

I shall now provide a comparative account of Gün, Serkan, İlayda and Mine's perceptions in the domain of professional development, on the basis of data mainly from Rep-grid 1 and the follow-up interview.

5.2.2 Collaboration with colleagues

When we examine the table above further, it strikes us that Gün and Mine are different from İlayda and Serkan in that, while the former favour collaboration, Serkan and İlayda, for their own individual reasons, have more mixed feelings about learning from other colleagues (see also 5.3.3 below). Gün and Mine, it seems, have become able to put aside individual differences that they might have with their colleagues and see collaboration as a means for professional learning:

It makes me very happy to share and learn from others here. It is a good feeling to know you are working towards a common goal. [...] You construct experience with others. It is good to know that you are not alone, on your own. (Gün)

Collaboration with colleagues is facilitated both externally and internally. The curriculum requires teachers who teach the same subject to plan and act together. Apart from this external obligation, due to having known each other for many years, participants tend to have one or two colleagues whom they can share their problems with. This seems to be a choice based on trust. On the other hand, the external obligation does not provide intrinsic motivation if teachers' core constructs intervene to affect negatively how they perceive their colleagues:

When it happens [a bad day in the classroom and İlayda is upset], I get support from one or two of my colleagues. I cannot talk with everyone. Everybody is very busy anyway. There is not an atmosphere to share the very personal. (İlayda)

In İlayda's case, her core construct regarding 'humility' intervenes, since she views many colleagues as 'intimidating' (see Chapter 4, 4.2.3). Serkan, who claims he does not find his present colleagues very helpful to learn from, recognises that his feeling of not being able to collaborate with them makes him frustrated. His core construct regarding 'maintaining identity' (see Chapter 4, Table 4.2.2) is the major problem, since through the 'lens' of this construct he sees most of his colleagues as having lost their Turkish identity. The situation is not helped by his peripheral constructs either:

as can be seen in Appendix 4.2.2, he construes the majority of his colleagues as being incompetent professionally. On the other hand, both Gün and Mine construe their colleagues positively (see their construct maps in Appendices 4.2.1 and 4.2.4, respectively). All four participants state that they value learning from the experience of others in theory, but only Gün and Mine seem to be able to do this in reality. In the cases of İlayda and Serkan, core constructs intervene to hinder this.

5.2.3 Training

It is clear that Gün and Serkan are similar in terms of appreciating the benefits of in-service training. Serkan even started providing in-service training himself a few years ago, after gaining a certificate from the Ministry of Education. His own ambition to excel was the major factor in this, an ambition which relates to his core construct of 'maintaining identity'. This construct, as we have seen (in Chapter 4, 4.2.2), was firmly established in him due to socio-political developments when he was a university student which had an important influence in changing the structure and vision of teacher education institutions (as he perceives it, for the worse, under the negative influence of western countries). He clearly states that he wants to influence others around him. In this respect, he is different from Gün in the way he links benefiting from in-service training to professional development.

Gün's reference back to the courses he attended shortly after his initial training stems from his feeling that he did not learn much from initial as opposed to in-service training (see his profile in Chapter 4). As distinct from Serkan, his response to the socio-political developments during the late seventies and early eighties does not relate to perceived cultural and educational degeneration. Rather, he regrets the opportunities having been wasted, recalling empty, lecturer-less classrooms and university students caught up in endless political fights. We shall see (in Chapter 7, 7.2.4) how Gün's views in this respect are reflected in his classroom practices when he deals with textbook topics.

Mine and İlayda are not of the same generation as Gün and Serkan, and their attitudes towards in-service training seem to be governed more by gender-related than by broader political/historical considerations. While they see such training as important, they state that they cannot leave their families to go away and join off-site in-service courses. In this case gender is clearly an issue, and one which did not

emerge as part of their core constructs. Due to external factors, they embrace the idea that family is more important than job, and this was a shared peripheral construct which I uncovered during the follow-up interviews. Male teachers seem to have better chances to pursue their interests than female teachers in this context (cf. Albelushi 2003 in relation to Oman). We saw earlier, in Mine's profile, that she had to follow her husband to Eastern Turkey when he got a job there. Both Mine and İlayda believe, then, they have to put their children and families first, no matter how much they like their profession.

They both admit they experienced a theory–practice dissonance early in their careers, but they did not have the chance to join in-service courses. İlayda, although she attended the same initial training course and was taught by the same lecturers as Mine, does not think it was a beneficial experience for her. Whereas Mine views both negative and positive influences from pre-service training as guiding her today, İlayda sees only negative influences (see Chapter 4, 4.2.3). Once İlayda's core constructs were re-defined upon experiencing a shock during her first year of teaching, what she had learned from initial training was invalidated because “it lacked a human feel”.

Mine states that she is still following two of her mentors' approaches from her initial teaching years. We know (from Chapter 4, 4.2.4) that her core constructs were first influenced by how she construed her mother and they were further validated during initial training. When she started her job she reflected more on her initial training and came to the conclusion that she had not paid enough attention to some topics. She later found her books and re-read them. In this sense, she sees her initial training as having contributed to her professional competence and development in a delayed fashion, as distinct from Gün and Serkan who had the chance to make up for the perceived inadequacies of their initial training via later in-service training.

5.2.4 Learning something new every day

This was shared as a theme by all the participants, although they each had an individual interpretation. For İlayda, for example, in the absence of other opportunities, learning from the syllabus and guidance for teachers associated with textbooks has been an important aspect of her learning. Her construct about ‘responsibility’ seems to have guided her mostly at first, in the sense that when she first started teaching her only goal was to implement the syllabus without “killing

time”, although, as she later realized, this came at the expense of neglecting her students’ affective needs (see Chapter 4, 4.2.3). Even today, she is in a dilemma as to how to bring together the goals outlined in the syllabus and positive teacher–student relationships. What İlayda means by learning from the syllabus and textbooks is as follows:

Unlike Hale [her colleague], I used to study the principles textbooks worked with day and night [laughs nervously]. I didn’t want to be killing time in the classroom at the expense of my students not learning properly. I learnt most of the things about English teaching through the textbooks I taught over the years. But I also discovered that in reality I’m not that ideal teacher. My students are not the ideal students. The syllabus makes a lot of sense to me when I read it and think about it. It gives everyone a common goal which makes sense to ... to use the time effectively. But on the other hand it makes the teacher a little mechanical because it is packed. I think teachers should be free to choose from different syllabuses so we can pace. Lots of good ideas are abandoned un-experimented with.

As an important aspect of their learning something new every day, all of the four teachers naturally place at the centre of their learning their students. They all state that it is particularly by means of the feedback they get from their students on a day-to-day basis that they learn from experience. There are slight differences, though, in terms of what each teacher looks for in student feedback.

In İlayda’s case, affective needs come first. She states that:

I met one of my former students a few years after he graduated. He told me ‘Teacher you tortured us a lot in my final year. But due to your efforts I did not have to attend the prep-class at the university’. I got both happy and sad. I was sad because I knew I did not take into account that they needed love from me.

When we look at İlayda’s constructs in Appendices 4.2.3 and 6.3.4, we can see that the majority of them are to do with students’ happiness.

Gün and Mine are similar in the sense that they say they learn from their students’ different learning styles to adopt appropriate teaching methods. However, in accordance with their respective core constructs, Gün focuses on learning styles to “involve” students in the lessons more, that is, to increase participation, whereas Mine aims to “find out how each student learns” so she can provide individually targeted instruction.

Serkan's learning from his students is defined by his concept of "researcher-student", which he explains as follows:

Some students who are curious and ask questions that the majority of the class would not think of are the opportunity for me to develop. These researcher-students should be identified and encouraged by the teacher. I tell my students all the time 'Children I am not proud of what I know and share with you. On the contrary, I am very scared of the things that I do not know'. It is important. Students also motivate the teacher.

5.2.5 Personal attributes

Here I shall consider several of the themes relating teacher development to personal attributes from content analysis findings. Serkan's view of his students is in line with his belief in the value of being ambitious and innovative in that he wants to acknowledge and encourage his students' own ambition to learn. His construct 'is a researcher and continually develops – doesn't develop professionally' (see Chapter 4, 4.2.2) guides both his own ambition and his ambition for his students in this respect.

Being ambitious and innovative is also perceived as a positive attribute by Mine and İlayda; however, they both agree on the fact that this is a positive influence on one's development only so long as ambition does not end up disappointing the teacher. Thus, Mine connects the theme "trying to improve oneself with a positive outlook" with reference to times of failure in a teacher's career, while both İlayda and Mine point out the 'realities' of the teaching context that challenge teachers' personal theories in practice:

One has to be aware of what is feasible in the immediate context. I saw some of my colleagues over the years struggling to make a difference to no avail. They are the last romantics in my opinion. The consequences of their romanticism and ambition have been destructive for some of them. (İlayda)

If a teacher can distribute her ambition equally to all the classrooms she teaches, then that's fine. But in reality this is not possible all the time, if not impossible. Being ambitious is good because you learn. But if what you learn starts to weigh heavily on your shoulders because you cannot implement it in practice, then you are unhappy. (Mine)

This is an interesting point, which leads me to ask the question: Can there be points in a teachers' career where s/he wishes s/he had not become aware of and acquired

certain kinds of knowledge, given situational constraints on innovation? I have no answer to this. Indeed, Serkan, by contrast, thinks that:

[A]n investigative teacher is a competent teacher and is knowledgeable and powerful. A teacher is empowered through his knowledge first, and his personality second.

Perhaps it is the extent to which individual teachers can tolerate, within their construct system, 'the weight of knowledge' they have acquired that determines their motivation and the ways in which they learn. Perhaps they become unhappy if they cannot use that knowledge to make a difference for their students, or overcome their own constraints.

5.2.6 Building on experience

In line with his positive appreciation of in-service training courses he joined early into his career, Gün at present favours attending seminars to extend his experience. He does so to monitor his own teaching practices and evaluate their appropriateness against "more modern" approaches that might have come into fashion in his twenty-five-year teaching career. However, he clearly values his own experience most and seeks for validation of his ideas in the seminars he attends:

Yes, I find them useful. At least it is a chance to air what I stored in my treasure chest over the years. It makes me happy to see that I haven't been doing wrong. These seminars also remind me of things that I used to do in the past, but for some reason I abandoned doing. As I said, you have a chest full of information and it needs airing from time to time.

All of the four teachers agree that they learn from their experience and that to do this they have to research. Researching means for all of them recalling, reflecting on and reframing/reproducing their classroom experiences. However, there are differences in the ways in which they go about their research, as we have already begun to see. Gün and Mine seem to have more resources to rely on compared with Serkan and İlayda, whose journeys are made in relative isolation. Even when Serkan participated in in-service training seminars, he had his own ideas in his mind stemming from his core constructs; and he used these experiences as a springboard to becoming a trainer himself to further validate these constructs through dissemination

to other teachers. We see a willingness on the part of İlayda to consult with her colleagues about her problems, but she is still unwilling to collaborate fully.

As confidence rises over the years through experience and teachers become more skilled in how to diagnose and be selective in the areas they have to improve, they also admit that sometimes their experience can be counter-productive. Over-reliance on their existing abilities might prevent them from developing as much as during their initial years. When construing her previous teachers at the university Mine reflected that she could not reach their level, yet, because:

Everything requires a lot of practice and experimentation in the initial years. You consult various resources to build up your self-esteem as a teacher. However, having taught the same subject for ten years you do not consult three different resources. Instead you check from one source to make sure what you know is true. This is not a very healthy approach of course.

Mine's example highlights the reproduction of previous experience which has worked successfully. On the other hand, there are also occasions of reflection and reframing:

What did I do today? I think back every evening while I put my legs up because they are aching after an exhausting day at school. I think back, was I successful? I try to remember reactions from my students. Were they smiling, happy? What more can I do? What could I have done differently? [...] there is always something eating away at my brain. I mean I cannot sit back comfortably in my sofa. I'm tired. (Gün)

Indeed, Mine emphasises that, for teachers to get satisfaction from what they are doing, engaging in reflection on experience is vital:

Your teaching skills improve naturally if you want to feel satisfaction and success. You adapt things from your colleagues, students, textbooks and training. When I go back home I take my classroom with me. It is crucial for a teacher to do this because you cannot stop and think for a moment at school. You have to evaluate your experiences regularly to avoid repeating the same mistakes.

İlayda, similarly, recognises that teachers have to be reflective and reframe methods that do not work. She adds, interestingly, that routines can be helpful for teachers to rely on in order to improve themselves in other areas:

Like all teachers do, I, too, have methods that I follow unconsciously. Of course I did not learn them all in one day. I have set priorities for myself to excel in some areas that I felt I needed most. Once dealt with, I have set new goals for myself. I couldn't possibly have come this far if I didn't have some basic moves to rely on.

5.2.7 Constraints and opportunities

As a different perspective on learning from experience, Serkan highlights the nature of the teaching context itself in providing incentives (or otherwise) for teachers' research. He refers to the highly structured syllabus they have to follow at the school and states that he wants to experiment, ideally, in a (school as) laboratory, but that he is constrained to stick with his grammar teaching within the current system. He does not find the school administration supportive, and emphasises lack of recognition and promotion as problems.

All of the four teachers are constrained, they state, by having to do things out of obligation (paper work), low salaries and lack of time, and they highlight the importance of reasons for entry to the profession. They see this as very closely linked to teachers' motivation to develop because, apart from the "devotion to teaching" which Mine explicitly refers to and which is revealed also in the other teachers' core constructs, there is no other way they can motivate themselves. They are teaching for their students, to give them the best ethically and morally.

5.2.8 Summary and discussion

Core constructs affect how teachers develop professionally, as well as how they go about organising relationships and roles (5.3 below). Research into teachers' career stages (Sikes, Measor and Woods 1985) shows that professional development is not value-free; on the contrary, it can be a difficult and emotional journey, given the constraints teachers have to cope with. I have shown above how the ways in which experienced teachers say they develop professionally are guided by how they construe their environment in terms of the opportunities it provides. I further showed how elements of the same, shared environment are construed differently by different teachers, suggesting that the ways teachers learn from experience are governed by how they construe significant others and their own role within the context of education. All four teachers seem to have changed since their initial training, having

practised teaching in real life for many years. In other words, their experience has constituted a means to minimise theory–practice dissonance according to *how they construe* certain elements of their work context. They all emphasise personal effort and valuing one’s own experience. Thus early learning experiences can be seen to be influencing mostly the core, moral/educational aspects of their present personal theories whereas as a result of their teaching experience they have developed other, more peripheral constructs, as we shall see in the next chapter, for classroom practices.

These teachers are both aware of the need to and willing to reflect on their practices and improve themselves. They view themselves as learners. They want to diagnose what they have to develop themselves in and be selective. They are now more confident in themselves and value learning from practice most. Their differences in how they go about their learning stem from how they view their students, colleagues and their work context. And this is governed by their personal constructs, some of which I could refer to above. However, the existence of constraints *in reality* cannot be overlooked and they state shared views of constraints in terms of having to do things out of obligation and lack of funding and time. There are also individually perceived constraints to do with school, and lack of recognition and promotion (Serkan) to motivate themselves to develop. Female teachers are also constrained in terms of their loyalty to their families (this is, of course, the way they construe it, but their position in society may in fact provide them with no alternative).

On the other hand, participants sometimes think they tend to rely too much on their confidence as experienced teachers and might neglect to rejuvenate themselves due to having established routines that work. Nevertheless, routines can be useful if they are treated as supportive structures to improve oneself in other areas (see Huberman (1992), who talks about encouraging teachers to ‘tinker’ within their own capacity).

Participants’ willingness and motivation to learn and develop further is itself evidence that they have been attempting to enrich and extend their construct systems to embrace alternative ways of seeing things; however, for Serkan and İlayda this process seems limited compared to Mine and Gün, as is evident in the ways they attempt to seek further knowledge.

5.3 Relationships and roles

5.3.1 Overall themes

Participants have clearly articulated views about teacher, student, colleague and parent roles, and about relationships in the teaching situation. Teachers' core constructs as presented in Chapter 4 are the first point of reference in their construction of 'Relationships and roles'. As we shall see, this is the domain of professional life where their core constructs seem most directly operative. On the other hand, to be able to implement the preferred poles of their core constructs, teachers also have peripheral constructs (see definition in Appendix 2.4) that enable them to organise relationships and roles in various ways.

The table below shows the themes in this area that teachers stated as important. 'X' indicates that an item was mentioned as important, 'X, -' with a negative attitude towards it, and 'X,+,-' with mixed feelings:

Table 5.3.1 Themes from content analysis (2): Relationships and roles

	Gün	Serkan	İlayda	Mine
	Students			
Teacher should be student-centred to facilitate learning	X	X	X	X
Students should be motivated to learn	X	X	X	X
Students should share responsibility with the teacher	X	X	X	X
Students should trust the teacher	X	X	X	X
Take into account affective needs of students	X	X	X	X
Provide equal opportunities to students	X	X	X	X
Do not create fear and anxiety in students	X	X	X	X
Teachers have an educational role	X	X	X	X
Provide a good example through one's own actions	X	X	X	X
Deal with behavioural and psychological problems of students	X	X	X	X
Do not put forward own values	X	X		X
Cannot tolerate losing students	X		X	X
Being a team	X	X		
Leave personal life outside				X

	Gün	Serkan	İlayda	Mine
Should have a kindly-severe approach	X			
Be honest and sincere with students			X	
Complete the missing part of students		X		
Pay attention to individual willingness of students on a day-to-day basis				X
Guide students to become good individuals and citizens	X			
	Parents			
Teacher-parent relationship does not exist at all, though it should			X	
Teacher-parent relationship does not always exist, but it should	X			X
Teacher-parent relationship does not exist at all		X		
Should care about what is happening at school	X			
Should be collaborative with the teacher	X			
	Colleagues			
There is enjoyment from collaboration with colleagues	X			X
There is difficulty in collaborating with colleagues		X	X	
Personal affinity is important		X	X	
Personal differences can be, but are not necessarily obstacles for collaboration	X			X
External obligation to collaborate is helpful	X			X
	Constraints/opportunities			
Students	X	X, –	X, –	X
Parents	X		X, –	X
Colleagues	X	X, –	X, –	X

I shall now explain how teachers' constructs (Chapter 4) find expression in what teachers say about relationships with students (5.3.2), parents (5.3.3) and colleagues (5.3.4).

5.3.2 Students

Participants emphasise both classroom management (Richards 1998) and moral/affective (Clandinin 1986) aspects when talking about the kind of relationship they want to promote with learners.

In the first area, Gün, for example, states that he is not the traditional type of teacher who threatens students with bad marks and creates fear in them (also, Serkan, İlayda and Mine); and he likes to have a team atmosphere. He also believes students should have a sense of responsibility towards their own learning. However, over the years he has learned that students can “abuse [his] good intentions”. For this reason, with experience, he has developed a ‘kindly–severe’ (as contrasted in his construct system with ‘strict’) approach in the classroom to manage the classroom and give responsibility to students:

I indeed want to start kindly. I do start, but student psychology. [...] They may abuse your good intentions. Not all of them, but three or four in every classroom. After you warn them several times if they still continue not doing their homework, not participate, then you are forced to become severe. Not a strict teacher, but kindly-severe. [...] You can show this by your tone of voice, your eyes, eye contact is very important, by telling an anecdote that has a message, and in extreme situations I take down their numbers on a piece of paper to show that I’m serious.

Gün is the teacher who seems to have the most authoritarian approach towards students, reflecting his perception that if he lets them carry on not doing homework or not participating in the lessons, this will become a habit and a bad example to the rest of the class. This probability does not fit in with how he imagines his students’ future (relating to his core construct, ‘common moral purpose’). On the other hand, he makes clear that he does not want to frighten students like a traditional type of teacher would. Therefore, he finds a compromise between being caring and tolerant and severe. He refers to this with the peripheral construct ‘kindly-severe – strict’. The notion of being ‘kindly-severe’ seems to help him to bring together his two core constructs ‘student empowerment’ and ‘common moral purpose’ and implement them together in practice

İlayda and Mine also mention the difficulty of having classroom control and convincing students of the benefit of certain activities. İlayda is still seeking a practical solution to enable her core construct ‘compassion/respect towards students’ to find its way effectively into her classroom. She wants her students to like her lessons, but things that she has to implement as part of the syllabus, she believes, make her come across as a mechanical teacher. As a result students get bored and want to do other things and then İlayda has to find a way to compromise without being strict. Both Gün and İlayda see classroom management as important in practice

for realising their constructs, but İlayda is more preoccupied than Gün with what her students would feel about her as a teacher if she came across as more strict than usual. Thus, her core construct ‘compassionate and respects students – creates fear in them’ seems to prevent her from finding the right dosage of authority over her students.

Mine, too, acknowledges the importance of classroom management, but views problems in this area as a natural outcome of students’ individual characteristics and their changing needs. She therefore evaluates the willingness of her students to participate on a day-to-day basis:

I have a look at their faces at the beginning. There will always be some students who have not done their homework, or [are] sick maybe. Then I do not focus on them in that lesson. I know it’s nothing personal. But they know that I will talk to them during the break and learn the problem. They know that next lesson they will have to participate.

Mine reflects that she is able to do this because she establishes one-to-one relationships with her students and recognises their individual characteristics (reflecting her core ‘one-to-one relationships’ and ‘individualisation’ constructs (see Chapter 4, 4.2.4)). As a result, she does not appear as concerned about this issue as Gün and İlayda seem to be, perhaps because her core constructs meet situations of challenge from students in a less problematic fashion.

Serkan did not mention any concerns about having classroom control, but he voices his disappointment with his students when their misbehaviour demotivates him from forming “the other half of the apple” (reflecting his core construct ‘complementing one another’). Serkan does not view students’ misbehaving or failing to fulfil a responsibility given by the teacher as relevant to classroom control, but in terms of a teacher’s overall failure in complementing “the missing part of students”:

I cannot be the other half of the apple if I cannot start off nicely. My concentration and mood is very much dependent on the behaviour students display. When I come to the classroom if they are still playing around and ignore my presence I get angry. I mean I come here for them no matter what happens. But when I see that they do not welcome me as I hope I feel let down. I cannot shout at them. I cannot scold them. I just stare at them silently until they all sit down. The lesson is done in silence. I don’t feel the usual enthusiasm.

Thus, differently from the other three teachers, Serkan does not see classroom management as something to be maintained by the teacher. Classroom management

and control relates strongly to his image of “two halves of an apple”. He thinks if he can be the other half, if his students motivate *him* to be their missing part, then there is no problem.

In terms of teacher’s role, all of the four teachers share in common a willingness to promote student-centred instruction. In connection with this willingness, they all see their role as one of a facilitator. However, they each highlight the aspect of student-centredness most suited to their own core constructs: that students need to be aware of what they learnt and will be learning (Mine), have different affective needs (İlayda), need help from the teacher (Serkan) and can benefit from exposure to one another’s different ways of learning (Gün).

Thus, Mine pursues her belief that students have to be informed about what they are learning:

The method I like best of and adapted from X [a particular university teacher] is facilitating learning for students on a daily basis. I never used to feel anxious about what to do in her lessons because she would bring you to the readiness level by revising the previous lesson. Then she would state the aims and goals of that day’s lesson. You formed in your mind little boxes.

İlayda pays attention to her students’ feelings:

I believe I am a mediator between what is to be learnt/taught and my students’ feelings and needs for learning. They turn to me for their frustrations and failures. I am there on that bumpy, curvy, steep, and endless road of learning for my students bridging, signposting, guiding, helping them to reach their destination.

Serkan sees his role as that of an advisor in a community atmosphere:

The teacher’s task starts after assigning students to an activity. It is not only putting them in groups. There is a social aspect in group work. It is a community. There are several communities in the classroom. Students will work together within the rules of social interaction and when they are unsure the advisor will help them only to leave them alone again.

Gün also sees his role as one of an advisor in the classroom and favours activities such as pair and group work because he believes students can learn from each other and get more involved:

I get the best results when my students learn by doing things. Like in a group doing project work. Then my role is reduced to being only an advisor and guide. As you know, the traditional teaching methods that we are used to require the teacher to do all the work and students just sit, listen and make notes. But I don't think they learn like that unless they get involved in what they are learning.

[A student] tastes the happiness of achieving something together as a group, even though s/he cannot do it on her/his own. At least s/he will have learnt it from a friend.

Another reason Gün likes pair and group work is that he believes students have equal chances:

Group work and pair work are the best activities to provide equal learning opportunities to students. They eliminate the gap between the weak and strong students.

Serkan puts emphasis on providing equal learning opportunities to students in a similar way to Gün:

I believe in the value of peer-correction in minimising the gap between the poor and strong students. Students help each other under my guidance as the advisor. Students take it better if their mistakes are corrected by their friend rather than the teacher. They do not get anxious. They do not feel inferior to one another.

Mine, on the other hand, has a slightly different reason for wanting to promote equality among her students. She pursues her core construct 'cannot tolerate losing students – thinks [only] deserving students should be taught' and wants to go beyond what is visible within the immediate context of the classroom to decrease the gap between successful and unsuccessful students:

I immediately learn everything about my students. I work like a counsellor. We are responsible for our students having equal opportunities. The child perhaps cannot buy books. The classroom teacher knows this and without breaking his/her pride s/he must support the child. The child should not feel any different from her/his peers in the classroom.

Moreover, she says she tries to promote a sharing environment and bring her students together on common ground for understanding each other. She believes that she has to find the appropriate language "to reach students' minds and hearts" to

promote this shared understanding of “each other’s concerns in the classroom society”.

All four teachers want to promote equality and equal learning opportunities among students for moral/ethical reasons. And, further, they all share the view that they have an educational role to fulfil beyond simply teaching their subject (English), and should represent a good role model. They all state that they address students’ behavioural and psychological problems when they notice these. Gün further believes that he has a duty to nurture good individuals for the country’s benefit. However, while doing this, he says he takes care not to influence students with his own values (as mentioned by Serkan and Mine, also). Mine additionally highlights the importance of the teacher leaving her personal problems outside the classroom and articulates this as a construct ‘gives positive energy to students: lively – less lively’. She believes students can feel the unhappiness of the teacher and be negatively affected.

5.3.3 Parents

The area of attitudes towards parents has been an under-explored issue in previous studies of teacher cognition in the field of ELTE. This is perhaps due to the settings previous studies took place in, the majority of them being carried out with adult learners in ESL contexts, not secondary school EFL settings. One study (Gahin 2001) stands out in recognising parents’ expectations of teachers. Gahin, in his study of EFL teachers in Egypt, found that parents’ examination-oriented expectations constrained teachers in implementing communicative language teaching principles, although he did not attempt to find out how teachers went about addressing this problem. All of the participants in my study mentioned parents as a problem, too. However, some teachers in the current study additionally think that parents have a role to play in helping them to achieve their instructional and educational goals. As we shall see, Gün, Serkan, Mine and İlayda also approach this issue differently from each other.

Gün states that parents who are responsible show some interest in what their children are up to. He believes that those children whose parents are more interested are more successful. According to Gün, parents constitute the “third leg of a trivet”. Those who are ‘outside’, as opposed to ‘we run towards to same goal’, cause problems for him in reaching and motivating his students. Thus, Gün takes personal action and invites those parents to school and talks to them about the ways in which

they can also help (as his previous teacher used to do; see Chapter 4, 4.2.1). Both Mine and İlayda share Gün's view that parents are important but tend to be indifferent; however, they deal with this issue differently. Mine says she does not directly get in touch with parents, but contacts school counselling services because she believes that students' individual problems might sometimes be beyond her own capacity to discuss face to face with parents. She prefers to get more professional help. On the other hand, İlayda does not take any action to involve parents unless they come and see her. She is convinced that if they do not want to, no one can influence parents. Her own experience with her own mother is a persistent memory (see her profile and her core constructs in Chapter 4, 4.2.3).

In congruence with his core constructs, Serkan focuses on the promotion of the teacher–student relationship only. Gün and Mine, to a certain extent, seem to be able to go beyond their construction of parents as 'outside' (Gün) or 'hav[ing] less in common' (Mine) and attempt to involve them by inviting them to school (Gün), by contacting school counselling services (Mine) and by trying to understand their point of view to help in the construction of better relationships with students. However, Serkan takes all the responsibility on himself:

Parents are outsiders. Perhaps you might ask their help [but only] when you really need to because they are the people who are the guardians of students. [...] In my opinion parents do not have any function apart from being similar to the technical equipment of the school.

5.3.4 Colleagues

With regard to relationships with colleagues, Gün and Mine state that they like the fact that English teachers have their own room within the school where they have to work together and plan lessons. This is facilitated by the policy of the Ministry of Education and Gün and Mine reflect that perhaps if it was not compulsory to work together as colleagues they would not have the chance to learn from each other. They state that they have adopted various methods of their colleagues over the years. For example, for Gün, group work is one of them. He says that he first learnt about group work through seminars and in-service training but he thinks it is different seeing a method implemented by another colleague:

Why do I like Cem? Him getting students to do project and group work. He gets every student to participate in the activities. He encourages us to do the same. He is very knowledgeable, although I cannot say easily approachable. But that's a different issue.

Although Gün thinks on a personal level Cem is different from him, he construes him as an exemplary and good teacher and appreciates the fact that he encourages his colleagues to engage in the type of activities that involve students in the lessons. Mine thinks along similar lines:

Among all three, Nebahat is the most knowledgeable, one whom I have learnt from so much during our joint projects within the English Teachers' Group. But I must say she is too ambitious, if I want to be critical. She might not be able to equally distribute her ambition among all the classrooms she is teaching. Still, her positive energy and enthusiasm are good, as they are contagious [laughs].

For Gün and Mine, as we have seen, relationships with colleagues are important to facilitate professional learning and development.

By contrast İlayda and Serkan have been experiencing difficulties in their relationships with colleagues. Although they both state a willingness on their part to collaborate, neither of them is currently happy. İlayda construes herself as relatively inexperienced compared to other teachers in the school and also feels intimidated by some of her colleagues (in accordance with her construct 'Humble and modest – Intimidating: says 'Only I can do this'). She says she wants to get involved more in collective decision-making and has a couple of colleagues that she can share her feelings with, but she is still insecure about her own competence as a teacher. On the other hand, Serkan construes himself as more competent professionally than his colleagues. If we look again at his constructs in Appendix 4.2.2, we can see that he volunteered as many as three constructs in relation to professional competence. This emphasis, reflecting his core construct 'hasn't lost his own identity – has lost his own identity', makes it very difficult for him to communicate with his colleagues. Furthermore, he also employs the construct 'identical to me to a great extent – different from me' when he talks about the majority of his colleagues:

Apart from these two [one of them is his wife, who is also an English teacher at the same school], I do not find any one of my colleagues understands me or my ideals. [...] They do not do teaching, they are just playing at teaching here.

For Serkan and İlayda, the issues are construed at a more personal level than for Gün and Mine. Hargreaves (2001) explored collegiality among teachers in different school settings and looked at their 'emotional geographies'. He states that the way colleagues view one another personally has an influence in the development of a collegial atmosphere, and sometimes even external obligation to collaborate does not result in positive relationships among colleagues. In this study, too, teachers have to collaborate due to the policy of the Ministry of Education. However, we can see that not every teacher can go beyond personal differences or overcome insecurities to the same degree. The way they construe one another clearly has an effect and can result in their keeping their own thoughts about each other to themselves rather than communicating effectively with their colleagues.

5.3.5 Summary and discussion

To sum up, on the surface, all four teachers seem to share the view that establishing positive relationships with pupils and adopting a student-centred role is of primary importance. However, they interpret student-centred instruction in their own ways, in congruence with their core constructs as described in Chapter 4: Gün highlights student involvement, Serkan emphasises helping students, Mine each student being aware of what s/he will be learning, and İlayda responding to students' emotions.

The four teachers also seem to share the view that relationships with and roles of colleagues and parents are important in helping them to establish good teacher-student relationships. Again, however, there are different emphases relating to core constructs. As can be seen from the last section of Table 5.2.1, parents and colleagues are viewed as constraining or providing opportunities for teachers differently. Both Gün and Mine feel able to take action to get help from parents and colleagues when they need to. On the other hand for the reasons described above, Serkan and İlayda see them as constraints, remaining convinced for the time being that they are on their own to solve their own problems.

Serkan stands out as the teacher with the most tightly organised core constructs, and he is the unhappiest among the four as a teacher. He isolates himself from others and appears unable to appreciate others' point of view (Sociality Corollary) as Gün and Mine do. İlayda is similar to Serkan in her construction of parents: she seems to

remain 'stuck' with her image of her own mother, whom she construes as an indifferent parent, and believes that if she made a personal effort to approach parents she would fail. However, she is different from Serkan in that she is willing to try to improve relationships with her colleagues and appears to be in the process of re-defining her core construct relating to 'humility'.

In terms of relationships with students, too, both Serkan and İlayda appear constrained. However, İlayda again recognises that she needs to find a way to strike a balance between being 'compassionate and respect[ing] students' as opposed to 'creat[ing] fear and anxiety in them'.

Core constructs have revealed themselves to be very influential within teachers' theories in the area of roles and relationships. My analysis of four teachers' accounts has revealed that over the years they could loosen their core constructs to varying extents (most noticeably in the cases of Mine and Gün), while in all cases retaining them intact.

In the next chapter, I shall begin to explore the area of 'Classroom practice and pedagogy' by looking at teachers' personal theories of good teaching in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do'.

CHAPTER SIX

Personal theories of good teaching: Classroom practices

6.1 Introduction

I turn now to further findings, from Rep-grid 2 and follow-up interviews, to shed further light on the contents and nature of experienced EFL teachers' personal theories of good teaching. I focus here on how participants' core constructs stand in relation to peripheral constructs with regard to their stated classroom practices (we should remind ourselves that Kelly (1955: 482-3) defined core constructs as "*those by which [a person] maintains his identity and existence*" and peripheral constructs as "*those which can be altered without serious modification of core structure*" (italics in original)).

In chapter 5, I have moved towards viewing the teacher in relationships and adopting roles to organise her/his classroom practices. In the present chapter I explore the four teachers' personal theories of good teaching with a more specific focus on the teaching and learning of English, as conceived by them. I want to state at this point that during and after the data collection, all of the four teachers told me that this was the first time in their careers that they had to really stop, think and verbalise their classroom practices to somebody in so much detail. They said that at times they were not sure of what to say, what kind of examples to give, or how to provide justification for practices that they had sometimes taken for granted for years. They said they had found it much easier to talk about how they perceived relationships, roles and their own professional development (issues which came up during Rep-grid 1).

As we saw in Chapter 5, teachers find it a pre-requisite to establish good relationships and roles with their students in the classroom to teach their subject. In this area most studies in the field of ELTE highlight only issues of classroom management and control, but there is a more educational (moral/ethical) dimension to this, as we already saw and shall see further below. The importance of this *educational* dimension to participants was highlighted by them often when they were discussing their classroom practices – indeed, as we shall see, they frequently referred

back to core constructs from Rep-grid 1 to explain the distinctions they made in this context. Due to their emphasis, at times, on educational, not purely technical considerations, in the content analysis I called the relevant emerging category ‘Classroom practice *and pedagogy*’.

Below I shall first present my content analysis of the four teachers’ accounts under the category of ‘Classroom practice and pedagogy’ in relation to common themes (principles and practices) identified (6.2). Secondly, I will discuss individual teachers’ stated principles and practices in relation to their constructs elicited in the context of ‘Classroom activities that I do’ (6.3) to show further (following on from Chapter 5) that, although with a content analysis we can uncover certain shared principles (Breen 1991, Gathbonton 1999, Breen et al. 2001), this is insufficient for showing *why* teachers have certain principles and may tend to mask important differences among individuals.

6.2 Shared themes for classroom practice and pedagogy

6.2.1 Overall themes

Before moving to the actual constructs elicited from Rep-grid 2, let us assume that we are relying solely on the content analysis (relating – in the area of classroom practice and pedagogy – mainly to the transcripts of Rep-grids 1 and 2 and the follow-up interview). This yielded the following shared themes (in bold in the table) as important for all four teachers. These themes (apart from ‘Constraints’) can be seen as shared principles, and the items marked with ‘*’ are associated practices. ‘X’ indicates that an item was mentioned as important, ‘X, –’ with a negative attitude towards it, and ‘X,+,-’ with mixed feelings.

Table 6.2.1 Themes from content analysis (3): Classroom practice and pedagogy

	Gün	Serkan	İlayda	Mine
	Implement syllabus goals according to students’ needs			
*Prioritise	X	X	X	X
*Take into account students’ exam needs	X			
	Facilitate learning for students			
* Use L1 in the classroom when needed	X	X	X	X
* Motivate students	X	X	X	X

	Gün	Serkan	İlayda	Mine
* Homework	X	X	X	X
* Explain the aim of each lesson to students	X	X		X
*Teach little, but in the best way possible	X			X
* Useful/relevant topics for students' future lives	X	X		
* Do pair/group work or project work to develop responsibility	X	X		
* Use problem-solving activities		X		X
* Peer-correction and peer feedback	X	X		
	Enhance target language use in the classroom			
* Reward / praise students	X	X	X	X
* Native speaker Sarah	X, +, -	X	X	X
* Use English most of the time	X	X, -	X	X
* Develop speaking skills	X		X	X
* Question and answer technique	X		X	X
* Encourage students to discuss	X		X	X
* Role-play	X		X	X
* Don't correct errors while students speak	X		X	X
* Songs	X	X		X
* Games	X			
*Students correct each other's speaking errors			X, -	
	Monitor self			
* Needs assessment and revision of syllabus	X	X	X	X
* Check homework and give feedback	X	X	X	X
*Summative assessment	X	X	X	X
* Talk about the presentation of lessons with colleagues	X		X	X
* Plan in advance	X			X
*Be sure of one's aims in the classroom	X			
*Formative assessment			X	
	Promote intercultural awareness			
Promote cultural diversity in perspectives	X, +, -	X, -	X	X
Promote integration to the global world	X			

	Gün	Serkan	İlayda	Mine
	Prevent cultural degeneration			
Prevent degeneration in the society	X	X	X	X
Textbooks and cultural degeneration	X	X		
	Constraints			
Syllabus	X, -	X, -	X, -	X-, +
Students' problems in speaking	X, -	X, -	X, -	X, -, +
Assessment system		X, -		
Grammar – to do with exams			X, -	
Topics in the textbooks	X, -			

As can be seen in the above table, the following were identified as shared themes (principles) by all participants: 'Implement syllabus goals according to students' needs', 'Facilitate learning for students', 'Enhance target language use in the classroom', 'Monitor self', and 'Prevent cultural degeneration'. All participants except Serkan also viewed the theme 'Promote intercultural awareness' positively. Below I consider these shared principles in turn, together with (only) those associated practices which were subscribed to by four or, as indicated, three teachers.

6.2.2 Implement syllabus goals according to students' needs

In this area, the only shared practice is 'Prioritise'. When I asked teachers what they meant by this they tended to state that they assess what students need to learn regularly and make modifications accordingly to their daily or weekly plans. They stated that they identify the areas students have difficulty in and focus on those areas more. Sometimes they have to rush the exercises in the textbooks, in most cases assigning them as homework, and use classroom instruction time to concentrate on students' weak points. When I asked further how they identified these missing points, they all stated that for the common exams in the school they had to cover certain topics, but there are other needs of students that cannot be assessed via the exams, and they rely on the feedback they get from students. However, these 'other needs' differ for each teacher. They might be grammar, speaking, vocabulary or even to do with students' behaviour in the classroom. So, while content analysis reveals that all teachers prioritise in order to implement syllabus goals according to students' needs,

in the absence of consideration of each teacher as an individual, important differences in *what* areas they prioritise fail to be revealed.

6.2.3 Facilitate learning for students

Shared practices associated with this principle are ‘use L1 in the classroom when needed’ ‘motivate students’, ‘homework’ and (shared by three) ‘explain the aim of each lesson to students’.

All teachers share the principle that for learning to take place teachers should help students and give responsibility to them at the same time. All of the teachers in this respect attempt to use L1 in the classroom to clarify the points students cannot comprehend in English, motivate students and give homework. Three teachers also stated that they explain the aim of each lesson so students know how what they are to learn will be useful. There are also other practices which are individual or shared by two teachers, as can be seen in Table 6.2.1, such as pair and group work, peer-correction, and so on. All of these can be seen to serve the purpose of helping facilitate students’ learning. Again, however, without a more in-depth analysis, it is not clear why they favour such practices.

6.2.4 Enhance target language use in the classroom

Shared practices are ‘reward/praise the students’, ‘native speaker Sarah’, and (for three teachers in each case) ‘develop speaking skills’, ‘question and answer technique’, ‘encourage students to discuss’, ‘songs’, and ‘role-play’. Because Turkey is an EFL context, this principle can be seen to have particular importance. English lessons are the only time when students have an opportunity to practise their speaking skills, and teachers feel particularly responsible for their development in this area. Interestingly, though, one teacher – Serkan – does not subscribe to most of the classroom practices identified, with the exception of ‘native speaker Sarah’ (a British part-time teacher employed by the school who does not assess students formally as full-time English teachers have to) and ‘reward/praise’ and ‘songs’. He says he has given up on the principle of ‘enhancing target language use’ in practice because the current assessment system forces him to do so. There is more to this than meets the eye, however, as we shall see in section 6.3. As for the other teachers, it cannot be

seen from the content analysis alone why certain practices are preferred and others are not; indeed, from the table we can also see that there are some individual perceptions which are not obviously shared (Gün's advocacy of games, and İlayda's negative attitude towards students correcting one another's speaking errors).

6.2.5 Monitor self

The shared practices in this area are 'needs assessment and revision of syllabus', 'check homework and give feedback', and 'summative assessment', and (for three teachers) 'talk about the presentation of lessons with colleagues'. These practices are engaged in to enable effective pacing of lessons both according to students' exam-oriented and other needs and also for completing yearly plans on time. Talking about the presentation of lessons with colleagues is not favoured by Serkan, however. We saw already, in Chapters 4 and 5, how he has quite rigidly formed core constructs regarding colleagues and, indirectly, the subject he teaches. This is true also of constructs relating to classroom practices, as will become clearer below in section 6.3. when I give a detailed analysis of his constructs elicited from Rep-grid 2.

6.2.6 Promote intercultural awareness and prevent cultural degeneration

These two principles (relating to cultural issues and the international role of English) are seen as important by all the participants (although Serkan does not favour the practice of promoting cultural diversity while Gün has mixed feelings about it). These two principles emerged as a result of teachers' concerns regarding the content of the reading texts in the textbooks they use. They all favour an approach in which students are expected to view what is in the texts critically. However, their practices differ widely from each other because the two principles are guided by individual core constructs already discussed in Chapter 4. Serkan and Gün see the need to raise critical reading awareness to prevent possible cultural degeneration as distinct from Mine and İlayda. İlayda and Mine recognise that the wider culture of English could lead to degeneration in society through media such as TV and advertisements, but they do not see textbooks contributing to this. Exactly *what* to promote and prevent in the classroom regarding cultural aspects connected with English is relative to each

teacher. Inevitably, teachers' personal views of the role of English in society intervene.

I shall consider the final category of the above table – 'Constraints' – in Chapter 7, since this will help shed light on the second research question, concerning the extent to which teachers are able to put their stated personal theories into practice.

In the following section, I turn to the personal constructs which can be seen to underlie the apparently shared principles and practices discussed above, in order to provide deeper insights into the choices underlying them, as well as to view classroom practice and pedagogy more in teachers' *own*, individual terms.

6.3 Teachers' constructs for classroom practice and pedagogy

6.3.1 Elicited elements: 'Classroom activities that I do'

The table below shows the elements elicited from teachers in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do' for Rep-grid 2. I should emphasise that teachers offered these activities for construal just before the rep-grid took place. I wanted to avoid the risk of participants coming to the interview having thought a great deal about the elements in advance. Participants were asked to come up with examples from their classroom practices relating to teaching vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening, reading and writing. They were also asked to mention any relevant activities which could be categorised as 'other':

Table 6.3.1 Teachers' classroom activities elicited during Rep-grid 2

	Vocabulary	Grammar	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing	Other
Gün	Antonyms/synonyms	<i>Explain grammar when necessary with simple sentences</i>	Role-play	<i>I can read aloud</i>	<i>Students read aloud paragraph by paragraph</i>	Project work	<i>Questionnaire</i>
	Use new words in sentences		Talking points/general questions in the textbook	Listening to tapes	Encourage students to read story books		<i>Fun: competition</i>

Serkan (sts. discuss)	Get the meaning through context Demonstration	<i>Grammar taught in L1</i> <i>Rules exemplified in connection with each other</i> <i>Jigsaw approach to grammar</i>	<i>Native speaker coming to the classroom</i>	Listening activities in the textbook <i>Native speaker coming to the classroom</i>	<i>Raise paragraph awareness in student</i> <i>Encourage students to approach reading critically</i>	<i>Peer-correction</i>	<i>Get students to memorise songs</i>
İlayda	Vocabulary in context Teacher gives the meaning	<i>None</i>	Speaking sections in the textbook Eliciting students' ideas at the start of a new unit	Listening to tapes Fill-in-the blanks – question and answer	Questions in the textbook Students narrate the topic then teacher asks them questions about the text	Topics in the textbook <i>Find a topic that students want to write about</i>	<i>Collect students' written work to take home and give detailed feedback</i>
Mine	Get the meaning through context Mimics, gestures, body language, draw pictures (avoid L1)	Grammar with tables, charts and formula Chain drills – lots of exercises – error correction from students	<i>Free class discussion, debates (students choose topics)</i> Before reading students discuss the topic	Native speaker + technical equipment Fill in the blanks while listening Answering questions after listening	Before reading students discuss the topic Reading exercises in the textbook	From simple to complex (letter, story, composition),	<i>Written homework and diary – feedback given and filed</i>

At this point let us engage in a preliminary content analysis of these activities. Firstly, it should be noted that most of the classroom activities the four teachers came up with are activities and methods suggested by the textbooks, apart from those in italics in the above table. The latter activities show teachers' additional attempts to actualise their personal theories in practice. The teachers state that due to their obligation to follow the syllabus they have to cover what is in the textbook, but, as we shall see, the way they construe what is in the textbook is different for each teacher. Similarly, the activities in italics are created according to individual perceptions of what is *lacking* in the textbook.

One apparent similarity between Gün and İlayda's classroom practices is an absence of focus on grammar. Gün states that when he feels necessary he explains grammar with simple sentences. İlayda states that she does not teach grammar explicitly at all. They are both teaching a skill-based course at present and this seems to have had an effect on their choice of elements.

Serkan and Mine both teach the grammar-based course but as can be seen from the table their approach to grammar is different. The students' L1 is Serkan's main point of reference when teaching grammar and he foregrounds an analytic approach whereby students are encouraged to explicitly reflect on the structures. Mine, on the other hand, has a short-cut approach to grammar where she uses charts, tables and formulae followed by intensive drilling and exercise to "get students to acquire the rules unconsciously".

In relation to vocabulary, all four teachers see it as important for students to learn vocabulary not in isolation but in some kind of context. Mine and Gün stand out as saying they present vocabulary in L2, while Mine is exceptional for her stated use of gestures and body language, and Gün for his use of antonyms/synonyms.

For the development of speaking skills, all four teachers want to promote students' own use of English, while for listening they all use the listening tapes which accompany the textbooks. They do not seem to significantly differ from each other in these respects. However, there are some immediately visible differences in how teachers approach reading and writing, and these differences will be further discussed below. For example, Gün stands out among the four because he does not approach writing as an isolated skill, but sees it as an outcome of project work. Serkan emphasises peer-correction in writing. Serkan is also different in terms of reading in that he explicitly mentions the practice of adopting a critical approach.

In the 'Other' category, Gün, Serkan, İlayda and Mine provide practices unique to themselves. Questionnaires, which Gün likes, aim at students' "learning about each other" besides "practising writing skills" and this is similar to how Mine sees the function of the diaries that she encourages her students to keep. In addition, Mine and İlayda share the practice of collecting the written work of students. Gün also wants to see his students have fun while learning so he organises competitions at times. Serkan gets students to memorise songs.

Serkan, as distinct from the other three, wished to see 'encouraging students to discuss' as an all-encompassing part of the process of their learning, not confined to the pre-determined categories of vocabulary, grammar and the four skills.

During Rep-grid 2, participants were asked to construe their chosen activities in terms of 'good teaching' similarly to Rep-grid 1, when they had been asked to construe 'Significant others' in the same terms. Their individual ways of construing their own stated classroom practices are reported on teacher-by-teacher below. Core

constructs which had previously been identified in Rep-grid 1 reappeared (all or some of them) during Rep-grid 2, as I shall detail below. As we saw in Chapter 4, these core constructs represent teachers' overall perceptions of good teaching and their role as a good teacher, and govern how teachers say they go about establishing relationships with their students. Since they tend to reappear in the present context, a reminder of them is presented in a separate table for each teacher below (these core constructs from Rep-grid 1 are marked with an asterisk (*)); the reader may also wish to refer back to the Rep-grid 1 findings for each teacher in Chapter 4). Although not themselves core constructs, there were a number of constructs which were revealed during Rep-grid 2 at the end point of a laddering up process and which are therefore super-ordinate to the others. These are marked with a '+' in the tables below.

The laddering procedure which enabled access to super-ordinate constructs during Rep-grid 2 and which provided an insight into the hierarchical relationships among constructs is revealed in some of the interview extracts below. These are relatively long in order to provide sufficient evidence for some of these relationships. Indeed, rather than explaining each construct in turn, for reasons of space I shall mainly present findings below regarding the relations among constructs for each teacher (clarifying their meanings when necessary). For more comprehensive information, the reader is referred to Appendices 6.3.2–6.3.5, where the display and cluster maps of teachers' constructs as allocated to all 'Classroom activities that I do' are additionally provided.

6.3.2 Gün

Gün's constructs in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do', as elicited in Rep-grid 2, are as follows:

Table 6.3.2 Gün's constructs in the 'Classroom activities that I do' context

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
communicative function similarity +	not communicative +	communicativeness of activity +
students are also involved	students are receivers	student involvement
requires background knowledge	simple	background knowledge requirement
there is no limit [i.e.	[coverage by teacher]	value of activity

limitless in value]	needn't be as detailed	
important for students' self-improvement	not as important [for students' self-improvement]	student self-improvement
students are productive	students are receivers	student production
complementary to each other	different from each other	complementarity of activities
a lot of student involvement	little student involvement	degree of student involvement
comprehension oriented activity	creative	creativity of activity

And here is a reminder of his core constructs from Rep-grid 1:

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
we [i.e. teacher and students] run towards the same goal *	outside *	common moral purpose *
gives responsibility to/encourages students *	disempowers students *	student empowerment *

As can already be seen, Gün favours activities which get students involved, and which are beneficial in terms of communicativeness. Involving students and ensuring they are productive is a priority for him:

Sultan: In what meaningful way can you bring two of these together as being different from the third?

Gün: Talking points and role-play are similar. Both are to practise speaking whereas in explaining grammar with simple sentences students are receivers. It is also limited in terms of the time I devote to it. Speaking is the stage where students are most productive and also involved in the lesson. They want to participate more and tell their ideas to the class. Role-play is a bit more limited than free flowing talking points, but it encourages students to be creative and if the student has background knowledge he or she can come up with really interesting things.

Sultan: So, students are productive and involved in the lesson when they have speaking chances, right?

Gün: Yes, student involvement and students are productive.

Sultan: By contrast? What would be a situation like where students were not involved and productive?

Gün: They would be just sitting there and maybe taking notes from what I say and write on the board or do the drills in the book maybe. It would not be as communicative and they would not benefit from it much.

As we can begin to see here, Gün wishes students to be 'involved' and 'productive' because this is beneficial for them. And an activity's being beneficial is strongly

related, for Gün, to communicativeness. Thus, in the extract below, he again emphasises the importance of students being involved in *communication* over and above simply ‘being involved’:

Sultan: Which of these two do you construe as similar and thereby different from the third?

Gün: ‘Talking points and questions in the textbook’ and ‘competition’ are similar.

Sultan: In what way?

Gün: Hmm, Yes, they are all involving students aren’t they?. But these two have communicative function similarity.

Sultan: As opposed to?

Gün: Not communicative. I mean I get them to read aloud to check their pronunciation, intonation, punctuation marks, and so on. Here they have an idea and they have to express it to be understood by the rest of us.

Sultan: In what way do you find communicative function meaningful?

Gün: In what way do I find it meaningful? [...] This brings me back to our discussion we had last week. I remember telling you we have a common goal with my students that they want to be good individuals and I want to help them with this [...] If they cannot communicate to the rest of the world their hopes and ideas, I will have failed as a teacher. [...] It’s not only to be able to go and sit in a cafe and order ‘Two cappuccinos please, thank you’. Communication means more than this nowadays.

Gün’s construct relating to ‘communicativeness’, which is super-ordinate to constructs of ‘student involvement’ and ‘student production’ was, itself, seen to be in a subordinate relation with his core construct regarding the need for a ‘common moral purpose’ between teacher and students (as elicited in Rep-grid 1 and as referred to explicitly by him at the end of the above extract). We can see, then, that, while Gün has a number of relatively ‘peripheral’ constructs relating to classroom activities, these can be traced back, in hierarchical fashion, to the construct of ‘communicativeness’ and beyond that to the core construct of ‘common moral purpose’. This finding with regard to specific classroom activities is consistent with what Gün himself stated in Rep-grid 1 (see Chapter 4) about his general role being to help “to make the world a better place” by “providing a communicative skill for my students”.

In line with this dual concern with English language development and moral development, Gün evaluates activities from two perspectives: firstly, in practical, language learning related terms and secondly in relation to his moral and ethical values. Project work is a case in point. Textbooks have project work sections at the

end of each unit and Gün can articulate the usefulness of project work in technical and methodological terms as follows:

Project work aims to bring everything learnt in one unit together and challenges the student to assess her/his progress regularly. It involves various aspects of the language including grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing. It recycles and provides revision. It makes it easy for the teacher, too, to assess students regularly.

In addition, though, Gün views project work as providing students with a context to learn from each other, engage in research and develop responsibility. He calls this 'self-improvement'. Below he is construing 'encourage students to read story books', project work' and 'questionnaire':

Gün: Ten [encourage students to read story books] and eleven [project work] are alike. Especially important for students' self-improvement. Students are given the sense of responsibility and research. [...]

Sultan: Can you explain it a bit more? How is this important for you?

Gün: How seriously do they take the task? Does the student really give a hundred percent and tire his/her brain on this? Or does s/he do it for the sake of having done it? Can they work efficiently in groups? Do they help each other? Do some students leave all the responsibility to others in the group? How many different sources do they consult?

Sultan: I see. How is this linked to their self-improvement?

Gün: I mean self-improvement as a person. Being able to give and take. Being respectful and encouraging, producing something together and learning along the way. To communicate, be tolerant and be proud of their achievement in the end.

In this extract, Gün views self-improvement in terms of personal development more than in terms of language learning. And his statement that reading story books and engaging in project work give students a 'sense of responsibility and research' seems to reflect the second core construct he revealed in Rep-grid 1, 'student empowerment'.

The extent to which Gün valued developing a sense of responsibility in his students was confirmed in the follow-up interview, when he claimed:

I assign students duties to develop responsibility in them and I ask them to finish their projects and homework on time as well as helping each other during group work. The child comes and tells me 'Teacher, I couldn't do my homework today. Can I bring it tomorrow?' I tell him/her 'You didn't fulfil your responsibility. All right, if you still want to do it, thank you, but

doing things on time is very important.’ I also pay attention to everybody working equally responsibly in groups. For their self-improvement as a person it is very important that they produce things together and learn to help each other.

The way Gün’s core construct of ‘student empowerment’ relates to classroom activities is even clearer in the following extract from Rep-grid2. When Gün first construes ‘explain grammar when necessary with simple sentences’, ‘students read aloud paragraph by paragraph’ and ‘questionnaire’ he thinks in terms of learning English. However, then I ladderred up his construct (‘student creativity’), and we can see that its meaning is deeper than it seemed at first:

Gün: Explaining grammar and students reading aloud. These are ... comprehending what you hear, see or read. Comprehension-oriented. Questionnaires is something they create.

Sultan: Comprehension as opposed to ...?

Gün: Creative. Their own efforts.

Sultan: Comprehension oriented – creative, right? Which end of the construct do you prefer yourself?

Gün: I prefer students to reach the stage of creativity as soon as possible. [...] I prefer students being creative.

Sultan: In what way is it meaningful for you? Students being creative. Why is it important?

Gün: It means they are succeeding. It means that I could teach them what I had to and I’m enabling them to show what they are capable of.

Sultan: What they are capable of? Why is this important?

Gün: Phew! Let me think about it. ... Capability. I think this is important. Encouraging students to fulfil their potential. Giving them responsibility and encouraging them. It’s like teaching a toddler how to walk. With each step they take, rewarding them for their achievement. It’s knowing when to let go so they can start running.

Sultan: Do you mean students’ being creative is important because it brings out their potential?

Gün: Yes. Hmm. And the teacher has a very important duty here. He should be giving them responsibility and encouragement.

Sultan: As opposed to?

Gün: You either let them go or disempower them. Make them dependent on the teacher.

This last construct is the same core construct (‘student empowerment’) as Gün had previously articulated in the domain of ‘Significant others’ (Rep-grid 1). When construing his previous teachers, he had come up with ‘gives responsibility to/encourages students – disempowers students’, exactly the same as the construct

revealed above: ‘giving them responsibility and encouragement’ as opposed to ‘disempower[ing] them’.

In Gün’s case, we have seen how, in the context of ‘Classroom activities that I do’, constructs relating to ‘student involvement’ and ‘student production’ could be laddered up to ‘communicativeness’, which, in turn, was in a subordinate relation to the core construct ‘common moral purpose’. In the same way ‘student creativity’ was laddered up to the other core construct from Rep-grid 1, ‘student empowerment’.

6.3.3 Serkan

Serkan construes his classroom practices as follows:

Table 6.3.3 Serkan’s constructs in the ‘Classroom activities that I do’ context

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
has awareness-raising function +	ignorance +	awareness-raising +
enables teacher and students to collaborate	teacher is not the advisor	teacher involvement
complementary to each other	for beginner’s level	complementarity of activities
input activity	processing and decoding the input	student processing
problem solving activity	scaffolding students	teacher support

And here is a reminder of his core constructs from Rep-grid 1:

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
forms one half of an apple [i.e. misses, needs the other half] *	there is nothing [to share]*	complementing one another *
hasn’t lost his own identity *	has lost his own identity *	maintaining identity *

Serkan has a construct similar to Gün’s: ‘complementary to each other – for beginner’s level’ (Serkan) and ‘complementary to each other – different from each other’ (Gün). They both share the similarity pole of each construct. However, within PCT terms we have to also look at the contrasting poles of their individual constructs

(Dichotomy Corollary) as well as to which elements the constructs apply to (Range Corollary). In Serkan's case 'get the meaning through context', 'grammar taught in L1', 'jigsaw approach to grammar', 'rules exemplified in connection with each other', 'peer-correction', 'encourage students to approach reading critically' and 'raise paragraph awareness in students' are *complementary to each other* and 'demonstration', 'listening activities in the textbook' and 'get students to memorise songs' are *for beginner's level*. In Gün's case input activities such as 'explaining grammar with simple sentences', 'antonyms/synonyms', 'I can read aloud for listening', and 'students read aloud paragraph by paragraph' are *complementary to each other* and the rest of the activities are *different from each other*. In Serkan's case we can say that the similarity pole of his construct ('complementary to each other') has a wider range of convenience. Gün differentiates more between various aspects of classroom activities whereas Serkan sees all language learning as centred on knowledge of grammar. This is because in Gün's case the contrast pole *different from each other* has a wider range of convenience.

From this discussion, we should recognize that while a construct may be apparently shared by two people, we have to look at the construct's range of convenience (what elements it applies to) and at its dichotomy pole. We also have to look at the place of the construct within an individual's overall system because as has already been illustrated for Gün further above, deeper meanings are hidden beneath the surface of peripheral constructs.

A brief look at Table 6.3.3 above reveals that Serkan shows particular concerns in relation to the teacher's role in the classroom ('teacher support', 'teacher involvement') and to student cognition ('awareness raising', 'student processing').

Laddering of constructs showed, as in the case of Gün, both the way that Serkan's construct system is organised as a hierarchy and the extent to which core constructs from the context of Significant others' are influential in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do'. Thus, Serkan construes some activities as alike in the sense that each is a 'problem solving activity' and different from 'scaffolding students' (Appendix 6.3.3). He expresses a clear preference for the 'scaffolding' pole of this 'teacher support' construct and relates it to a super-ordinate construct: 'enables teacher and students to collaborate – teacher is not the advisor' ('teacher involvement'). However, as is clear from the following extract, this construct is, in turn, predicted by one of Serkan's core constructs in the context of 'Significant

others’: ‘forms one half of an apple – there is nothing’ (‘complementing one another’). Thus, ‘teacher involvement’ is an important construct in Serkan’s overall personal theory of good teaching, but within this theory it is subordinate to the core construct relating to ‘complementing one another’ (‘forms one half of an apple [i.e. misses, needs the other half]’) which was revealed in Rep-grid 1:

Serkan: It [scaffolding] enables teacher and students to collaborate. Why is the teacher in the classroom? To tell students ‘Sit down! Don’t make a noise!’? [He’s an] Advisor. There needs to be somebody there to scaffold students when they cannot tackle a problem. This is the most important of all. When the teacher is the advisor, then he forms the other half of the apple.

Sultan: Did I understand you correctly? Do you mean enables teacher and students to collaborate as opposed to ...?

Serkan: Teacher is not the advisor. He is a stranger there. He has no role there. It’s better he just leaves the students to themselves rather than staying there and harming them.

Serkan’s other core construct ‘maintaining identity’ was shown to be linked to his construct related to ‘awareness-raising’. Initially upon laddering up his construct relating to ‘complementarity of activities’, ‘awareness-raising’ was expressed:

Serkan: These two [‘get the meaning through context’ and ‘grammar in the first language’] are complementary to each other, whereas this one [‘demonstration’] is for beginners. If there is no grammar, student cannot guess the meaning of the word in context. The student should know syntax, sentence, parts of speech, etc.

Sultan: Why is that important?

Serkan: I’m a grammar teacher. [...] How are you going to give them the details when necessary?

Sultan: Why is it necessary to give them the details?

Serkan: For comparison between Turkish and English. The student develops their own system in their mind. Awareness raising. Look, how are they going to work out the meanings of the words in a paragraph without being aware of what is a verb, noun, adjective, adverb? [...] it looks like a word soup to the child if they aren’t aware of the syntax. Students should be able to analyse the sentence.

In the above extract we see that the peripheral construct ‘complementary to each other – for beginner’s level’ is laddered up to a relatively super-ordinate construct involving ‘awareness raising’. However, I did not interrupt Serkan to elicit the contrast pole of this new construct at this point. On another occasion Serkan revealed the construct ‘student processing’ (‘input activity’ – ‘processing and decoding the input’) on the basis of construing ‘listening activities in the textbook’ and ‘native speaker coming to the classroom’ as different from ‘rules exemplified in connection

with each other'. When this construct was laddered up Serkan stated that he most hoped to achieve the 'processing and decoding the input' pole of the construct, for which it was important that "students become aware of how language works so that they can process the input from listening and transfer it to speaking. Without awareness of this logic what they listen to is only noise".

At another point in the interview, the same notion, 'awareness raising', came up again, together with its opposite pole ('ignorance'), and its nature as a very important construct for Serkan was better established. What became clear here was that 'awareness raising' has both a deeper and a wider meaning for Serkan than simply grammatical awareness raising, although he experiences constraints on putting this construct into practice in anything other than a grammar-teaching way:

Sultan: Which of these two are alike in some important way and thereby different from the third?

Serkan: Come to think of it, I don't know why I included these two here. I was probably thinking about 'What I ought to do'.

Sultan: Why do you say that?

Serkan: These two are alike ['raise paragraph awareness in students' and 'encourage students to approach reading critically'], but I cannot say I do these here. I do them at the university, but not here.

Sultan: Do you want to talk about them or change them?

Serkan: I want to talk about them. I think they are very important [...] Does it matter that I do not implement them here?

Sultan: You are still the same person, aren't you? I mean both here and at the university. Or do you think you are a different teacher there?

Serkan: To be honest with you I feel much freer at the university. I can be more like myself in the classroom. Perhaps students being adults also helps.

Sultan: Well, I think we should focus on the things you want to express. The things that matter to you to be able to do your profession in the way you like.

Serkan: All right then. These two are alike because they both have awareness raising function.

Sultan: As opposed to?

Serkan: In this context? In relation to 'students memorising songs'? Students like it a lot.

Sultan: No, I mean as a construct. Something which has awareness raising function as opposed to something different. [Note: it was necessary to clarify this because Serkan wanted to construe two activities that in reality he implemented in a different teaching context. 'Memorising songs' would not be a valid element for eliciting the opposite pole of this construct]

Serkan: Ignorance. What else? Unaware, ignorant you become.

Sultan: In what way is being ignorant meaningful for you?

Serkan: Ignorant in the sense that you go wherever others tell you to go, do whatever you are told and eat whatever you are given to eat. Isn't this the reason for all our problems in Turkish education system today? Isn't this the cause of my problems here as an English teacher?

Sultan: I don't know. Can you be clearer?

Serkan: Can you switch off the tape recorder?

I had to do as I was asked. Serkan's further comments, most of which I could recall later on and made notes of, were very emotional. Indeed, they were distressing for me at times because I was listening to a very unhappy, disillusioned teacher but could not go beyond just nodding my head in response to his revelations. Serkan is constrained in that he is not the person he really feels himself to be, in his classroom. He cannot implement practices that he ideally wants to. He referred back to our discussion during Rep-grid 1 and expanded on his earlier stated views regarding the dangers of becoming westernised and dependent on others. In this connection, he placed great importance on raising *critical* awareness in students (not just language awareness); however, within the current controlled system of formal education he feels he cannot. His core construct relating to 'maintaining identity' (elicited in Rep-grid 1, as discussed in Chapter 4) makes him very disillusioned and unhappy as a teacher, since he feels he cannot really implement this (i.e. engage in *critical* awareness raising) in the classroom. It appears to be an 'all-or-nothing' construct for Serkan, and whereas Gün – as we have seen – has developed peripheral constructs (including 'communicativeness of activity') which enable him to utilise textbook sections called 'talking points' to enact his core construct and share a common moral purpose with his students, Serkan appears to have found no practical solution to his dilemma. All he can do is attempt to implement the construct of 'awareness raising' in relation to the relatively narrow area of 'grammar', and this causes great dissatisfaction to him.

6.3.4 İlayda

İlayda construes her classroom activities as follows:

Table 6.3.4 İlayda's constructs in the 'Classroom activities that I do' context

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
gives the opportunity to test and evaluate both the students and myself +	has to be done +	formative evaluation +
teacher also contributes +	teacher does not interfere much, but the hardest for	teacher non-interference+

	the teacher +	
I like implementing/feel more comfortable with	I prefer less	teacher comfort
students are more comfortable with and happy	there is grammar in it	student comfort
students are productive	students are passive	student productivity
a mechanical/obligatory activity	benefits students a lot, though not obligatory	obligatory nature of activity

And here are her core constructs from Rep-grid 1:

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
compassionate and respects students *	creates fear and anxiety *	compassion/respect towards students *
humble and modest*	intimidating: says 'Only I can do this'*	humility *

İlayda, during Rep-grid 2, placed emphasis above all on herself and the students being comfortable with the way in which the activities were carried out, while also expressing concerns – like Serkan, though to a less marked degree – that it is not always possible to teach as she would like.

She sees her own comfort level and happiness ('teacher comfort') as being very much dependent on student happiness ('student comfort'):

Sultan: You say for some activities that you like implementing and feel more comfortable with them and by contrast you don't prefer some of them. Why do you think you feel like that?

İlayda: Ultimately what I prefer and like is dependent on the feedback I get from students. This is not to say their exam scores are not important. But I'm more comfortable when they are happy and confident. [...] I don't like them to associate my image with exams. [...]

In other words the construct 'teacher comfort' is subordinate to the construct 'student comfort'. Within the latter construct, 'students are more comfortable with and happy' is contrasted with 'there is grammar'. Student comfort, she thinks, has to do with absence of grammar, since this causes anxiety:

İlayda: The students feel more comfortable with and happy [with speaking] [...] I also enable them to be comfortable. I say this all the time 'It is not important that you make mistakes. You will learn from your mistakes. Every human being makes mistakes'. [...] Then they also see that they are speaking in

English and they get very happy. They tell me when we have lessons in this format they forget about the exams.

Sultan: I see. Students are more comfortable with and happy. As opposed to?

İlayda: Hmm. As opposed to... There is grammar. There is grammar in it.

Sultan: There is grammar in what?

İlayda: I mean there is grammar in other activities. The textbook oriented activities. Not that the textbook itself emphasises this. Students take textbooks very seriously. It is different when we do things together other than what the textbook asks.

This subordinate–super-ordinate relationship between ‘teacher comfort’ and ‘student comfort’ explains why earlier, when I asked for examples of activities *she* is less comfortable with, she had replied with cases of *students* worrying about their *grammar*:

İlayda: Like silent reading and writing. But don’t misunderstand me when I say I prefer them less. I do them of course. It is just how I feel comfortable with them personally.

Sultan: Why do you prefer them less?

İlayda: I think I don’t like students getting worried about grammar. Especially in writing. That’s the skill where they are confronted most with their mistakes. They can’t escape because it is in visual form.

İlayda teaches a skills-based course and she feels advantaged over grammar teachers like Serkan in this respect (though Gün, for example, who teaches the same course, does not feel the same need to avoid grammar). She cannot, though, avoid writing, and her solution is a pragmatic one – she collects written work to take home and give written feedback, rather than explicitly discussing grammatical mistakes with students in class. However, she says she still does not correct mistakes explicitly, only underlines some problematic parts and leaves it up to students to come and ask her about these outside class times. If students do not come back to her regarding her feedback, she does not follow this up.

As we have already begun to see, İlayda’s core construct from Rep-grid 2, ‘compassionate and respects students’ – ‘creates fear and anxiety’ seems to be in operation somehow in the choices she makes about classroom activities: it could be said, maybe, that she associates student anxiety with grammar, and shows compassion in avoiding it. However, İlayda herself emphasised another, more positive and, for her, ‘very important’ reason for avoiding grammar, to do with fair evaluation. It was via her super-ordinate ‘formative evaluation’ construct that images of her former teachers, and her associated core construct entered our conversation:

Sultan: So are you saying what you prefer less is also those activities that have grammar in them?

İlayda: It might sound as if I'm avoiding my responsibilities in this aspect of the language, which in fact I am not. Yes. I prefer less grammar. But even though I don't explicitly focus on grammar, textbooks have an effect on students and inevitably it crops up in their minds.

Sultan: I see. So, how do you go about it then when you're confronted by students who get occupied with grammar?

İlayda: As I said before, I try to divert their attention from the textbook activity and ask them spontaneous questions about the topics. [...]

Sultan: How is this different from asking the questions in the textbook?

İlayda: Firstly, it gives me the chance to evaluate my students based on fairer criteria. Look I think this is very important for a teacher. As a teacher you hold the power to give students oral exam marks as part of the regulations. A teacher can give as many oral exam marks to her students as she wants to. There is a good rationale behind this because it encourages formative evaluation as opposed to formal exam results. But how you practise this is very important. [...] It is left to the individual teacher's power. And I hated so much those teachers who used to create fear in me, threatening me with bad marks. I never forgot this. [...] So, I have fairer criteria to test and evaluate my students because my focus is the quality of what they say in the classroom to contribute to our discussion, not the accuracy.

Thus, İlayda's image of her disliked former teachers (and, presumably, her associated core construct of 'compassion/respect towards students': see Chapter 4) appears influential on peripheral constructs – more directly related to classroom practice – of 'formative evaluation' and 'student comfort'. 'Formative evaluation', it should be noted, relates as much to her own practice as to the English produced by her students:

Sultan: [...] So, it [asking spontaneous questions about topics] gives you the opportunity to test and evaluate your students?

İlayda: Yes, but also myself. I test and evaluate both myself and my students. I monitor myself. I try not to correct their errors while they are speaking and reflect on my answers to their comments. Am I listening? Am I judging? What are their mistakes that I should remember to focus on next lesson? It's good. It makes me happy.

Sultan: So, can we say gives the opportunity to test and evaluate both the students and myself, then?

İlayda: Hmmm. Yes.

Sultan: As opposed to?

İlayda: Some things have to be done. They still have a purpose and a good outcome. It depends how you implement it as a teacher. It has to be done. Like writing for example.

It is interesting that, even though İlayda has just expressed quite strong emotions regarding her former teachers and the benefits of (fair) formative evaluation, she appears here quite accepting of the fact that she cannot always get her own way. Instead, she recognises the need to prioritise in order to find time “for the more beneficial stuff”, wanting to find a balance between the two poles of the construct. The construct ‘formative evaluation’, then, despite being a relatively super-ordinate one, is what Kelly calls a ‘permeable’ (i.e., not an ‘all or nothing’) one, permitting İlayda to conform to situational demands without a too heavy heart:

Sultan: Which pole of this construct do you prefer? Things that have to be done or testing and evaluating your students and yourself?

İlayda: Hmm. Well, it depends on the situation. What the atmosphere requires me to do. It is not all or nothing. I have a syllabus to finish until the end of this term. If I cannot, I have to write an official report. If things have to be done, better get on with it as quickly as I can so I have time for the more beneficial stuff.

Similarly, the obligatory nature of certain ‘mechanical’ activities in the syllabus, presents İlayda with a constant dilemma, but not – at this peripheral level – a particularly painful one. Thus, her construct ‘obligatory nature of activity’ can also be termed ‘permeable’:

İlayda: These two [‘writing topics in the textbook’ and ‘reading questions in the textbook’] are mechanical activities. I mean those we do regularly and they have to be done. There is no alternative. [...] Not very creative.

Sultan: Mechanical and obligatory then?

İlayda: Yes. Whereas this one [‘find a topic that students want to write about’] does not have to be done, but benefits students a lot.

When I ladder up this construct, however, a dilemma that İlayda *does* perceive as painful was revealed: between wanting “your students to respect and love you” (seen by her as dependent on students having relative freedom to learn) and having to interfere (monitor the time left, take classroom decisions) because of being “bound by the syllabus”.

Sultan: In what way does it [‘find a topic that students want to write about’] benefit students?

İlayda: As different from teacher also contributing, here you don’t interfere much.

Sultan: In what way is not interfering much meaningful for you?

İlayda: It is difficult. I think it is hardest for the teacher not to interfere.

Sultan: How? Can you give me some example situations?

İlayda: It is hard because you want to let them decide what they want to talk about, write about, how they want to express themselves and you have to be monitoring the time at the same time. [...] You are bound by the syllabus, on the other hand you want your students to respect and love you... [...]

When I asked why İlayda finds students' deciding on what to do and how to do it so important and how this was linked to students' liking the teacher, she answered in terms which brought us right back to the similarity pole of her core construct 'compassion/respect towards students' as elicited in Rep-grid 1:

Of course it comes down to teacher–student love and respect. It is only through such activities that I am able to tap into who they really are and learn about their likes and dislikes without them having also to pretend. They feel respected for who they are not for how many correct answers they can come up with.

6.3.5 Mine

Mine's constructs in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do' were as follows:

Table 6.3.5 Mine's constructs in the 'Classroom activities that I do context'

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
students can show what they know +	students are passive +	enabling student display +
gives opportunity to test and evaluate +	less reliable +	enabling evaluation +
visual learning	more sustained learning	sustained learning
student-centred	students prefer	student-centred
requires creativity	not very challenging	student creativity
students find it difficult	easy	difficulty for students
teacher's guidance is needed most	students can do on their own	need for teacher guidance
brainstorming activity	easy	brainstorming

And here is a reminder of her core constructs from Rep-grid 1:

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
recognises individual characteristics *	thinks students are responsible to make most of the given time *	individualisation *

establishes one-to-one relationships with students *	cannot establish good relationships *	one-to-one relationships *
cannot tolerate losing students *	thinks deserving students should be taught *	keeping students on board *

As a glance at the above tables already reveals, Mine's constructs in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do' relate to ideas of student-centredness, and associated difficulty (for students) and teacher guidance. There is also a central concern with student production/display which, as we shall see, is connected with Mine's conceptions of fairness in evaluation procedures.

It became clear from Rep-grid 2 that Mine favours relatively open-ended but challenging activities which involve the preferred poles of constructs relating to 'creativity' and 'brainstorming'. The following elements, elicited from Mine at the beginning of the interview, were assigned by her both to the 'requires creativity' and 'brainstorming activity' poles of these two constructs at the end of the interview (see Appendix 6.3.5): 'get the meaning through context', 'answering the questions after listening to the text', 'from simple to complex (letter, story, composition)', 'free class discussion, debates (students choose topic)', 'before reading students discuss the topic', and 'written homework and diary – feedback given and filed'.

'Requires creativity' was contrasted by Mine with 'not very challenging', and 'brainstorming activity' with 'easy'; indeed, all of the above activities were also assigned at the end of the interview to the 'students find it difficult' pole of another of Mine's constructs, 'difficulty for students'. In the following extract, she clarifies why she links 'brainstorming/creative activities', which she also terms as relatively "student-centred", with 'difficulty':

Sultan: You say that you prefer types of activities that require creativity as opposed to not very challenging ones. Can you give me some examples?

Mine: Hmm. For example among these [the elements written on the cards in front of her] 'free class discussion' and 'students' talking about the topics before reading' both require creativity and they are brainstorming activities as well. The guidance provided here is limited to suggesting points of reference to students to open up a discussion and the rest is left to their background knowledge. So, it is not easy but very useful I think. This kind of debate atmosphere I believe is very student-centred and also develops the students a lot I think.

Sultan: Student-centred as opposed to?

Mine: Some of the activities students prefer. For example they prefer fill-in-the-blanks to answering questions about the text after listening and understanding the whole text. But I think they don't like to be left on their own all the time. If an activity is likely to take up ten minutes rather than three minutes, teachers' guidance might be needed because you might need to motivate them for those ten minutes which might be too long for some students, or some students might find certain steps of an activity difficult so they will need a little assistance.

Sultan: Are you saying that student-centred activities can be difficult?

Mine: Well, I think I want to say that student-centred activities are not always preferred by the students because they might feel they are left too much to their own devices. Then the teacher's guidance is needed most as opposed to those activities students can do on their own. I mean some activities require me to support them more than the others.

Thus, she emphasises the 'need for teacher guidance' as a solution to the difficulty for students of student-centred activities. This is a super-ordinate construct which goes hand in hand, for her, with the construct 'student-centred':

Sultan: Do you associate student-centredness with teacher guidance in any meaningful way?

Mine: That's what I was trying to establish earlier, but maybe I could not make myself clear. Teacher guidance is needed most in some cases as opposed to easy activities which students can do on their own such as fill-in-the-blanks or learning vocabulary from a dictionary. I think teacher guidance and student-centredness go together hand in hand and according to the individual student a teacher will know the amount of support to give.

Here we can see how Mine's view of student-centredness is linked to her core construct (from Rep-grid 1) regarding teacher responsibility for 'individualisation'. She states that although students find it difficult to tackle student-centred activities, and usually don't prefer them, she herself prefers them. When her 'student-centred' construct was laddered up, Mine stated that her reason for this was 'enabling student display' for *her* to be able to evaluate individual differences:

Sultan: [...] Why is it important for you to implement student-centred activities?

Mine: Firstly, there is the opportunity to tap into what students know. I mean students can show what they know as opposed to being passive because it makes them think.

[...] The atmosphere requires the students to be intelligible and also to listen to understand the others' point of view so they can complement each other's information or point of view. [...]

Sultan: Can we say student-centredness means that students can show what they know as opposed to being passive?

Mine: That's right.

Sultan: And you prefer students showing what they know and say that you can take it from there. What do you mean?

Mine: I believe it is an effective criterion to rely on students' feedback to evaluate and test them rather than my own view about them. If I rely only on the formal exam results, I will miss out the individual differences that cannot be assessed via standard tests and won't be able to complement their missing points. Many things are only visible to the classroom teacher herself within the course of a lesson. So, it [bringing out what students know] is beneficial also for me to test and evaluate my students rather than relying on less reliable sources.

Thus, 'enabling student display' and 'enabling evaluation' are together at the top of Mine's construct hierarchy where the context 'Classroom activities that I do' is concerned. Mine feels a strong need to elicit and evaluate individual differences, in accordance with her core construct from Rep-grid 1, 'individualisation'.

6.4 Summary and discussion

I began this chapter by presenting shared themes from the overall content analysis (of Rep-grid 1, Rep-grid 2 and follow-up interviews) which relate to these four participants' conceptions of 'Classroom practice and pedagogy' (6.2). I then moved on to describe, from Rep-grid 2, some of their individual constructs in this context, and relationships among these constructs within their individual theories (6.3). Below I present a preliminary overall discussion of the findings in this chapter in relation to the first research question, making connections with Chapters 4 and 5 and drawing on insights from Kelly's PCT, in particular some of the 'corollaries' of his 'fundamental postulate' (see Chapter 2, section 2.4).

When we compare the four teachers' theories of good classroom practice, although the content analysis reveals certain similarities, Rep-grid 2 itself revealed important differences. It is clear that participants' super-ordinate constructs in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do' are different from each other and tend to be further linked to the individual core constructs in the context of 'Significant others' which were reported in Chapter 4. Accordingly, as is predicted by Kelly's Individuality Corollary and as the summaries of the four teachers' constructs in 6.3 above has revealed, teachers differ from each other in the way they construe classroom practices.

To a certain extent, then, as we have seen, teachers' theories relating to classroom practices can be said to be guided by their core constructs, which relate to powerful formative experiences (see Chapter 4). However, the peripheral constructs that were

initially revealed in Rep-grid 2 interviews provide evidence that teachers construe what is available in their immediate context in practical terms rather than being *directly* governed by underlying powerful images and associated core constructs. This is evident from the process of laddering up I had to undertake to trace peripheral constructs back to core constructs. When presented with triads of elements, none of the four teachers articulated their core constructs initially, and if laddering up had not taken place, we would not have been able to see how the initially elicited constructs were linked to core constructs. At the most practical level, it is teachers' peripheral constructs that are operative, not – in a direct, unmediated way – their core constructs.

Kelly's Organization Corollary conceives of a construct system as a set of constructs hierarchically organised in mutual subordinate and super-ordinate relationships. This notion, in turn, helps to explain how teachers' theories can differ in terms of their core constructs but at the same time be similar at a more subordinate, peripheral level (as allowed for by the Commonality Corollary and as suggested by my initial content analysis). The content analysis showed that the four teachers all talk about the following 'principles': 'Implement syllabus goals according to students' needs', 'Facilitate learning for students', 'Enhance target language use in the classroom', 'Monitor self', 'Promote intercultural awareness' and 'Prevent cultural degeneration'. There are also certain classroom practices which appear to be shared by three or four teachers in each case, for example 'Prioritise' in the case of 'Implement syllabus goals according to students' needs', and 'Use L1 when needed', 'Motivate students' and 'Homework' when it comes to 'Facilitate learning for students'. Specifically from Rep-grid 2, also, we can see that the four teachers are similar in the way they all construe 'listening to tapes' as beneficial (since students can thereby listen to native speakers) and in the way three of the teachers (Gün, İlayda and Mine) seem to share a way of construing certain activities – such as 'listening to tapes' or 'teacher explaining vocabulary/grammar' – in terms of students being 'receivers' or 'passive'. These commonalities relate to the shared nature of the context they are teaching in, and shared views regarding the textbook activities that they have to implement.

Nevertheless, the more I laddered up within the hierarchy of these teachers' construct systems, the less similarity there appeared to be among them. There are still some commonalities to be found, though not as a total match. Thus, at a relatively super-ordinate level, we can see that both Gün and Mine, for example, construe

writing as an activity to increase students' sense of responsibility. In an interview extract not quoted above Gün reveals that, for him, writing as carried out in 'project work' is important because it gives students responsibility to take things seriously. Mine similarly states that "written homework and diaries is something I came up with as a solution for some of my students' not taking on responsibility for their own learning". However, Gün and Mine are guided in these comments by their respective constructs – 'student self-improvement' (Gün) and 'student-centred' (Mine) – which are themselves, as we have seen, different in emphasis, relating as they ultimately do to different core constructs ('common moral purpose' for Gün, and 'individualisation' for Mine). In this case the Organization Corollary helps to show how and why surface commonalities can mask underlying differences.

The Dichotomy Corollary can also provide insights into why sometimes there is commonality on the surface but not beneath participants' words. When we consider a construct, we have to take account of both of its poles. As I noted above, three of the teachers (Gün, İlayda and Mine) seem to share a way of construing activities in terms of students being 'receivers' or 'passive'. However, this does not mean that they construe exactly in the same way. The opposite poles of their respective constructs help us to understand this: İlayda and Gün *do* share the same contrast pole ('students are productive'), but Mine's is different: 'students can show what they know'. The opposite poles are different, and so the meaning they attach to students being passive will be different.

To return to the Organization Corollary, this example also shows how, in the overall hierarchy, a particular construct's relationship with other constructs might affect the interpretation we need to give to a teacher's words. Thus, for Mine 'students can show what they know – students are passive' is very close to her core construct relating to 'individualisation' (students need to have opportunities to show what they know in order for her to individualise her instruction). However, for Gün, for example, 'Students are productive – students are receivers' is a relatively peripheral construct, and one which relates ultimately not to individualisation but to his ideas about the communicative function of language and his vision of students' future goals.

My discussion of Serkan and Gün above (6.3.3) shows the importance, also, of the Range Corollary. Although for both of them the similarity pole of one construct is 'complementary to each other', the range of activities to which Serkan applies this

pole is wider (covering many grammar-focused activities) and quite different with regard to type of activity than for Gün. As we have seen, this connects with how they view grammar (seen as the priority by Serkan much more than by the other teachers) and language skills.

Serkan's case, in particular, can be explained with reference to Kelly's Fragmentation Corollary. He comes across as different from Gün, İlayda and Mine with his focus only on grammar, and, deep down, this seems to be the only way he can find meaning in his profession. Overall, he construes the world of teaching English with a negative attitude (see Chapter 4) and this negative stance ultimately determines the way in which he carries out classroom activities. Grammar is what students need to succeed in the exams and is a very 'neutral' aspect of language; by teaching just this aspect he does not have to 'sell out' to English, and thus he can maintain his core construct 'hasn't lost his own identity – has lost his own identity'. This core construct is always in his mind, as is obvious from his emphasis on awareness-raising. In his secondary school classroom, awareness-raising is limited to knowledge of grammar in English and Turkish, but Serkan sees this as linked to how students interpret reading texts, for example. He says at present he cannot raise critical awareness in students through discussions as he ideally would like to, but he believes he is giving them some of the tools they need through teaching them analytical and comparative grammar.

I will return to some of these insights in Chapter 8 ('Overall Discussion'), where I shall also add interpretations deriving from Kelly's experience and modulation corollaries, which relate to the issue of how teachers may have developed their theories over time. At this point, though, now that we have seen how teachers construe their classroom practices in theory, I want to move on to their actual classroom practices as reflected upon by them during the stimulated recall interviews. This will provide answers to the final research question: 'To what extent are experienced EFL teachers' classroom practices congruent with their personal theories of good teaching?'

CHAPTER SEVEN

Personal theories in practice

7.1 Introduction

Below I present findings relevant to the second research question – ‘To what extent are experienced EFL teachers’ classroom practices congruent with their personal theories of good teaching?’. I shall do so in two stages. First I describe some constraints the participants say they face, on the basis of my content analysis of Rep-grid 1 and 2 and follow-up interviews, and I present data, mainly from stimulated recall interviews (see Chapter 3, section 3.5.4), to illustrate how participants seem to respond to these same constraints (7.2). Thus, I focus on previously stated constraints of the teachers which I could trace into the stimulated recall interviews in order to show how teachers perceive and respond to them uniquely. Then, in section 7.3, I continue to report data from stimulated recall interviews to illustrate, from a more positive perspective, how participants’ personal theories of good teaching were realised in the lessons observed. In this case, I do so by tracing previously elicited constructs into the stimulated recall data.

7.2 Perceived constraints, and responses to them

Here I begin to investigate links between personal theories and practice by presenting data and analysis relating to how these four teachers responded to perceived situational constraints. Firstly, I present a list of constraints on classroom practice which were mentioned as such by participants during interviews prior to the stimulated recall interview (7.2.1). These were revealed as constraints in the ‘Classroom practice and pedagogy’ category (see Chapter 6, Table 6.2.1). How participants respond to these particular constraints is described in 7.2.2, where their claims are matched against comments made during the stimulated recall interviews and my own observations of the recorded lessons.

7.2.1 Constraints, as revealed prior to stimulated recall

Situational constraints on classroom practice which *all* teachers identified (in particular during follow-up interviews, prior to stimulated recall interviews) were as follows:

- ‘Syllabus’, and
- ‘Students’ problems in speaking in English’.

Constraints mentioned only by individuals were as follows:

- ‘Topics in the textbooks’ (Gün),
- ‘Assessment system’ (Serkan),
- ‘Students’ anxiety about grammar’ (İlayda).

Mine mentioned no further situational constraints. I should highlight at this stage that all of the last three individually articulated constraints presumably exist as real, *shared* situations, although they were mentioned as problematic only by one individual each.

How participants claimed (during the follow-up interview) to deal with these particular constraints is reported on, constraint by constraint, below, and these claims are matched in each case against stimulated recall interview findings and my own observations of the lessons recorded for stimulated recall.

7.2.2 Responses to ‘Syllabus’ as constraint

All four teachers mentioned, as a constraint, the need to cover the syllabus, but they interpreted and responded to this constraint differently, in line with their personal theories of teaching.

Gün, for example, placed emphasis (during the follow-up interview prior to stimulated recall) on the fact that the syllabus is loaded and needs to be covered in a relatively short time, and so he has to prioritise among activities to achieve high student involvement. He stated that as a professional he feels obliged to simplify the content and “decide on a weekly basis what to include and what to leave out”. He also

sees a clear necessity for varying methods and activities in the classroom, in line with his constructs relating to '(degree of) student involvement', and for this, too, he sees it as important to prepare well for lessons. During stimulated recall he did not mention this, but it was clear that he had planned in detail and prioritised in advance. His teacher's book was covered with notes taken before coming to the classroom and most of the things he did in the classroom seemed to be thought out in advance. For prioritising what to leave in and what to leave out, one of Gün's peripheral constructs from Rep-grid 2, 'value of activity', appears to be crucial.

Serkan shared other participants' dilemma regarding meeting both the demands of the syllabus and what he perceived as students' needs. His response was quite a unique one in the sense that he appeared to completely give in to the need to focus on grammar rather than seeking to implement wider ideals. I shall consider this response in further detail below, when we consider his perceptions of 'assessment as constraint' (7.2.4). The reason for this is that he did seem to at least consider the possibility of teaching the syllabus differently, but it was for him, another constraint – that of the exams – which prevented this: "I cannot implement the syllabus according to what students will need in real situations. I have to take into account their needs for the exams" (follow-up interview).

For İlayda, as for Gün, but unlike for Serkan, constraints from the syllabus/exams are not so great that they prevent her from attempting to realize her core construct ('compassion/respect towards students') in practice. Gün and İlayda see the syllabus as a constraint for the same basic reason – it is too packed and therefore 'leaves less time for what they really want to focus on. But what they 'really want to focus on' is different – in Gün's case, this means activities which involve students in communication, but in İlayda's case, responding properly to students' affective needs: as she says, "You are bound by the syllabus, on the other hand you want your students to respect and love you" (Rep-grid 2, as quoted in Chapter 6, 6.3.4).

On watching her lesson İlayda felt slightly distressed about a few cases of perceived neglect of affective needs, but was very happy to see herself letting students take some initiative. Indeed, as we shall see further in 7.3.3 below, it did seem that students took charge of the classroom at times, initiating certain activities and expanding upon the discussion points in the speaking sections, sometimes even contradicting what was written in the textbook. This lesson and associated stimulated recall confirmed what İlayda had previously stated to me (in the follow-up interview)

– that, although the need to get through the syllabus was a constraint, this did not prevent her from prioritising students’ affective and speaking needs. As we have already seen (in Chapter 6, 6.3.4), İlayda’s constructs are ‘permeable’ enough to allow her to find time when she can (as in this lesson) for fulfilling students’ affective needs, as well as assessing and completing what ‘has to be done’. Indeed, two of her peripheral constructs contain a recognition that certain things ‘have to be done’ (‘formal evaluation’ and ‘obligatory nature of activity’): it seems to be her realistic sense of what is obligatory and what is therefore *not* obligatory which enables her to omit certain activities, and find time for what she finds important.

Finally, Mine also mentions the problem of lack of time which, in her case, makes it difficult to pay attention to individual learning needs (counteracting her core construct, ‘individualisation’). After watching her lesson almost to the end, she said “You see how we are running from here to there” to refer to how busy she is, trying to do the best she can in the time available. In a similar fashion to Gün, she highlighted that she planned her lessons in advance but, differently from him, she said she did so to consider individual styles of learning, not to prioritise among activities for maximum student involvement. Mine also states that this does not limit her too much, as she uses the counselling periods she has as a classroom teacher to make up for lost time. Mine’s solution to the problem of lack of time is, then, like İlayda’s and Gün’s, a pragmatic one. Like Gün, she sees effective planning as a solution, and, unlike both Gün and İlayda, she does not omit certain textbook activities when necessary to leave time for what she prioritises, but uses up extra time given to her officially as counselling time.

7.2.3 Responses to ‘Students’ problems in speaking English’ as constraint

As with syllabus, all four teachers mentioned students’ problems in speaking English as a constraint, with different emphases.

Gün, for example, stated that since English is not spoken outside the classroom, improvement in students’ abilities can only come about through classroom practice. He strongly values the ability to communicate in a foreign language, and this is linked to his core construct ‘shared moral purpose’ and his vision for his country’s future, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 6. Therefore, for Gün, the difficulties of promoting speaking skills are particularly strongly perceived. Many of his comments on his own teaching related to his attempts (and failures) to promote speaking skills. At several

points he paused the video to make positive comments about his practice in this regard, as we shall see further in section 7.3.1, but there was one incident in his lesson where the cassette player would not work and this provoked in him a feeling of distress that he was unable to create a genuine overall communicative atmosphere in his lessons:

There is clearly a need for more communicative opportunities for students to practice English. I mean real situations, but I have to make the most of what the topics in the textbook offer. I felt rather silly seeing myself getting anxious here just because there was a problem with the tape. It is my principle that no matter what happens I make sure students listen to tapes several times in every lesson. Because that is the closest they can get to hear real English. Hoping they will catch nuances from the intonation, the rhythm, stress, exclamation marks, pauses. I mean for communication, to get your meaning across. [...] But don't you think it was so desperate of me? [...] I could have done better. [...] My own efforts to encourage students to speak are also limited as you saw so far in this lesson. I mean I liked the good-willed teacher I saw, but I know that I could do better.

The tape recorder incident was the trigger for Gün to reflect once more, then, on the way he was constrained overall regarding the issue of enhancing target language use in the classroom and the way – despite his efforts – he had problems putting into practice his super-ordinate construct from Rep-grid 2, ‘communicative function similarity – not communicative’.

For Serkan, students' poor abilities in spoken English are linked to the syllabus and assessment system, and to a generally ‘wrong motivation’ behind learning English in Turkey. I shall consider his case separately below (7.2.4), when I consider ‘individual constraints’.

Like Serkan, İlayda refers to the way speaking is undervalued in the Turkish secondary school English teaching system. Because students tend to think so much about grammar, she feels she has to try to make the atmosphere relaxed and non-threatening, making them forget about their exams while speaking. Indeed, in her lesson, rather than avoiding teaching speaking and instead emphasising grammar like Serkan, she distanced herself from relatively mechanical activities in the textbook and implemented them in a conversational manner. She was very distressed when students wanted to correct their friend's grammar mistakes while he was speaking. She did not know what to do then and vaguely acknowledged the correct form by nodding her head when the student corrected himself. Then she got anxious because of the

possibility that the student might have thought the teacher was not paying attention as he was speaking. This possibility is totally against İlayda's view that there should be love and respect between the teacher and the students.

İlayda acknowledged the constraint that students were not confident in their speaking skills and that they spoke very slowly, taking their time to think about grammar rules. During the follow-up interview she said that:

It has been a problem in my classrooms over the years to facilitate a relaxed communicative atmosphere. When students are anxious about accuracy this is very hard to actualise.

After İlayda finished watching her lesson she remembered instances when she encouraged students to speak (see 7.3.3 below). Nevertheless, like Gün, she combined this with a negative self-assessment:

Sometimes I think I'm not a good teacher because I believe a good teacher can and must somehow enhance a non-threatening communicative learning atmosphere in the classroom.

Finally, Mine acknowledges the existence of students' poor speaking abilities as a common constraint, but – differently from her colleagues – says she has to take this in her stride and get on with things as best she can. She found one kind of solution together with another colleague of hers in persuading other teachers that the school should employ a part-time native speaker teacher (Sarah). She also construes both grammar and vocabulary teaching as contributing to the development of speaking skills. She attempts to provide extra chances for students to speak and she does not skip the speaking sections in the textbook, since this “gives [students] a chance to show what they learned”. We should note that her priority here seems to be having students show their abilities, rather than (primarily) the development of speaking skills, in line with her super-ordinate constructs ‘enabling student display’ and ‘enabling evaluation’. Finally, she states that she does not expect too much from the students, since “Given the limitations of the context, there is not much point in making myself and my students upset”. For all these reasons, in watching her lesson Mine does not show as much dissatisfaction as Gün or İlayda with regard to deficiencies in the speaking components of her lesson.

7.2.4 Responses to individual constraints

There were just three further constraints mentioned by these participants in interviews prior to stimulated recall, ‘Topics in the textbooks’ (Gün), ‘Assessment system’ (Serkan), and ‘Students’ anxiety about grammar’ (İlayda). I shall consider these in turn, devoting most space to the special case of Serkan, since his views have not been fully reported in 7.2.2 or 7.2.3 above).

In Rep-grid 2, Gün said that he uses the ‘talking points and questions in the textbook’ both for developing speaking skills and for his wider aim of enabling students to go beyond what is in the textbook to present their own point of view. However, he also stressed that he found it culturally inappropriate to discuss certain topics in the classroom, and that he felt he had to avoid implementing them.

I asked about the importance of this for him during the follow-up interview because during Rep-grid 2 I had left it unexplored. Gün clarified as follows:

I wanted to emphasise the necessity of choosing *appropriate textbooks* [emphasis original] earlier. There was once ‘drugs’ and ‘abortion’ topics in one of the books for example. I do not feel comfortable. And we commonly decided not to implement those topics a few years ago. Such topics are not suitable for classroom discussion. I do not want the children to learn various names of drugs from my mouth. I do not feel comfortable. [...] It doesn’t fit in with my ideals, with my vision for my students’ future. [...] but if they really want to make it part of the syllabus we have health education as a subject in the curriculum and those teachers are more trained and knowledgeable than me to cope with the questions pupils will ask. Perhaps other teachers think differently. It is just beyond my ability to cope. I don’t feel comfortable.

In congruence with this moral/ethical view and associated core construct relating to ‘common moral purpose’, during the stimulated recall Gün reflected that he prevented one student from opening up a conversation on some people wearing transparent clothes since he predicted they would joke about it. He made it clear to students that he did not want to discuss this word by answering his own question and using tone of voice and body language to deter comments or questions: “Transparent. Who wears transparent? [does not look at students, but into the textbook] No one [he asks about the meaning of another word while raising his head from the book]”. And he commented on this instance as follows:

Yes, I asked 'Who wears transparent?' and gave the answer to my own question to end the discussion 'No-one'. [...] Transparent was one of the new words in the ghost story. On hearing the word some male students started laughing and making jokes. I did not want them to ask me.

Evidently, Gün evaluates the use of the textbooks against his wider educational philosophy. As he states above, he is concerned with how students might perceive what is presented in the textbooks, although he attempts to be tolerant of all views as much as he can be.

The two further constraints mentioned only by individual teachers relate to but are slightly different from aspects already mentioned under 7.2.2 ('Syllabus') and 7.2.3 ('Students' problems in speaking English') above.

Serkan's criticisms of the assessment system, in particular, sound in some respects similar to the other teachers' criticisms of the syllabus. Also, while they refer to students' speaking problems as a constraint but do not really explain them, Serkan considers such problems, too, as related to the assessment system:

The examination system is the biggest mistake. The future university entrance exams require us to adopt this kind of approach. We are not teaching a language here. We teach the grammar of the language ... as if students are going to become Chomsky, a linguist.

I have always dreamt of my classroom being a laboratory where you can talk. I cannot do this. The examination system. . . [...] I cannot implement the syllabus according to what students will need in real situations. I have to take into account their needs for the exams.

As the most prominent constraint, then, Serkan identifies the examination system, which he views as assessing knowledge of grammar as opposed to language use. For him, then, what the exams direct him to teach is grammar and he feels he has to teach grammar in the best way he can, while neglecting other areas.

During stimulated recall he did not volunteer further comments on this, though he did implement grammar teaching in the way he had said he did and paid little if any attention to language skills. Indeed, Serkan adopted a very explicit means of teaching grammar in his videoed lesson. He brought to students' attention the grammatical structures in the activities regardless of the aspects of language the textbook writers intended to focus on, treating vocabulary, speaking, and listening activities in the same analytical manner. He wanted students to analyse and translate sentences in the textbook very often, for example for the very first activity in the textbook that they

tackle in the lesson, whose aim is to build up vocabulary through practice of a grammatical structure (students are expected to write what people in the pictures do as an occupation by using sentences with 'who'):

Here our topic is the relative clause. The sentences they are expected to make are relative clause sentences. I asked them 'What type of relative clause is this sentence?', they told me 'Defining' and I said 'What does a relative clause do?' 'It defines a noun, it describes a noun' they said. I pushed them more 'What kind of noun does a relative clause describe? – proper or common noun?' [...] I got the answer because in the same unit there are also non-defining relative clauses. If you don't highlight the difference, they get it all mixed up.

The second activity is a speaking activity and Serkan skips this. He did not comment on this until later (see further below). The next one is a fill-in-the-blanks type of drill where students find the appropriate words for jobs' names and combine two separate sentences:

Ah, look, I say 'Translate the sentence' [the last sentence in the activity]. What did the student understand here? We combined these sentences and used the relative clause. Will they think of the adjective clause as separate from the main clause or give the meaning integrated? Will they get the adjective clause to describe the noun? [...] I mean how did the students decode it? I am not convinced, yet. I remember, a while later I will get them to analyse a sentence on the blackboard. Grammatically. You have to analyse the sentence correctly to understand its meaning.

Grammar teaching of this kind continued throughout the lesson Serkan pursued his belief that, within the current exam system, students had to know and differentiate between various grammar rules. Thus, he adapted the activities in the textbook to this purpose by explicitly discussing the rules with students.

As I have already remarked, he did not refer explicitly to his emphasis on grammar and neglect of speaking skills during stimulated recall except when I asked him about this directly. I did so because during previous interviews he had seemed to support even more strongly than the other teachers the ideal of developing students' abilities to communicate, and had criticised passionately the way the 'system' over-emphasised unnecessary details. For example during the follow-up interview (and he had many similar complaints):

We don't have any resources apart from our native speaker teacher Sarah to encourage students to talk in English. In our lessons students are passive listeners. [...] Initially, students reacted against Sarah. They said 'Teacher, we don't learn anything from her'. They could not understand and benefit from her. They are conditioned according to the grammar system.

The system forces you to give unnecessary details. Did you look at our exam papers? Did you see upon what kind of mistakes we lower their grades? Do you expect these children to study to learn English or to make their parents happy?

When I asked him during the stimulated recall, Serkan said that if it was what the syllabus and assessment system required him to do, he should teach grammar to his students in the best way possible. Also, he said he did try to enhance speaking skills by getting students to read their writing to the whole class. Perhaps this showed that he was still trying, but overall the impression was that, unlike the other teachers, he had given up on developing communicative abilities, choosing to accept the 'reality' of assessment system constraints, and the 'reality' of not being able to do anything about them. Indeed, he confirmed this at another point, saying that he believes he is capable of addressing students' speaking needs, but unless the testing and evaluation system underwent a radical change and improvement he would not be successful. Because he has 'given up' attempting to implement communicative activities, he does not seem to have the concern about insufficient time to cover the syllabus which other teachers have.

With a completely different emphasis, İlayda sees grammar itself as a constraint on her practice, since it makes students tense (due, in turn, to its place in exams). She claims that, accordingly, she avoids teaching grammar in her classroom, and this is borne out in the lesson recorded for stimulated recall: apart from not teaching any grammar explicitly, she missed out a writing activity and avoided correcting students while they were speaking. Her attitudes and practices in this area will be further examined under 7.3.4 below, since her avoidance of grammar can be viewed more positively a way of actualising her core construct relating to students' affective needs.

Finally, during the stimulated recall Mine raised the interesting idea that personality traits, in her case 'impatience', can serve as a 'constraint' (though obviously a psychological rather than a 'situational' one):

Mine: Look, I remember this part. I don't have much patience. [...] For example I'm saying 'Think about it', then I don't want to wait too long for them to think about it. I know my mistake there. A little bit more ... [talks to herself] 'Leave them enough time to think about it!' I start directing them. For example, 'Kemeraltı'. I feel as if they will not be able to think about Kemeraltı. So, I give it as an example for a place to visit so they can talk about it. ... I don't think I have much patience.

Sultan: Do you think you're doing this to support the students?

Mine: That too, but ... perhaps I cannot express myself well to you, but it is important that the teacher should not interfere with something that students can do eventually. I think this is my mistake. I should let them think and do it for themselves. But I get the urge that 'I must help them now.' It is better if they produce ideas themselves. [...] I'm in a state of rushing.

Mine, then, sees her own impatience as a constraint. She is aware that, due to this impatience, she sometimes fails to implement effectively her construct 'teacher's guidance is needed most – students can do on their own' ('need for teacher guidance'), in other words she feels she sometimes intervenes too much and provides too much guidance. However, she also says she deliberately tries to minimise the effects of this personality trait of hers and emphasises that "The important thing is to use your good points so that you can minimise the effects of your defects". Her impatience is something she is already aware of and willing to work on. Indeed, she ended the stimulated recall interview by saying that she would become better because she had noticed mistakes in this area.

7.3 'Good practices' according to teachers

Let us now adopt a different focus – not on constraints (involving teachers' negative comments on their own practice) but on ways in which teachers' classroom practices *are* in congruence with their personal theories of good teaching. To this end, I shall provide a teacher-by-teacher account below of times during each participant's stimulated recall interview when they commented positively on their own practice (or on something else happening in the classroom). In this account, I select instances which can be related quite clearly back to constructs elicited during Rep-grids 1 or 2, in particular core or super-ordinate constructs. As a reminder, each teacher's core ('*') and super-ordinate ('+') constructs from Rep-grids 1 and 2, respectively, appear

in tables at the head of each section, although peripheral constructs will also be referred to in the account below (for more detail on these the reader is referred back to Chapters 4 and 6). I have italicised parts in quoted excerpts from stimulated recall transcripts which seem to relate to particular constructs, as indicated.

7.3.1 Gün

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
we [i.e. teacher and students] run towards the same goal *	outside *	common moral purpose *
gives responsibility to/encourages students *	disempowers students *	student empowerment *
communicative function similarity +	not communicative +	communicativeness of activity +

The first comments below from the stimulated recall interview are related to the activities Gün carried out while teaching vocabulary at the initial stages of his lesson. Here italicised parts clearly relate to his constructs ‘student involvement’ and ‘student production’, while the mention of ‘classroom unity’ seems to relate to Gün’s core construct ‘common moral purpose’.

One can *unite the classroom* by engaging the students in board work and note-taking so everybody learns and participates in the lesson equally. I had my own list that I prepared at home [...], but there would be no *classroom unity* and *student involvement* there. Here all the students are *involved* in the discussion and they all expect to come up to the board and share with the class what they learnt.

I also advocate that rather than the teacher giving students ready-made sentences as examples (like I used to in the past), the teacher should be patient and wait enough time *for students to produce* their own sentences.

Indeed, the emphasis Gün placed on student involvement during the rep-grids found expression whenever he taught vocabulary during his lesson. He deliberately tried to achieve involvement (student participation) by providing students with visual, written and spoken cues and not writing on the board himself but getting students to volunteer.

Look, it is obvious that *students are participating* because they warn me about another word. It is good that when they initiate something they can say it in English. I like this because it is more authentic.

Students' hands were always up in the air to participate as far as I could observe, and sometimes even if the meaning of the word in the particular context was clarified, they wanted to say other meanings of the same word and Gün let them.

During stimulated recall, Gün mostly commented on ways in which he encouraged students to speak out in English in the classroom, and this was consistent with his super-ordinate construct from Rep-grid 2, 'communicativeness of activity' (as well as the very related constructs 'student involvement', 'student production' and 'degree of student involvement'). As we know, this is also linked to his wider vision of his students' future, as discussed in Chapters 4. Thus, he commented, for example, on the way he asked some questions which were not in the textbook:

The topic is very convenient for them to recall things from their own experiences. We all have fears and see nightmares. So, when I asked a general question 'What are you afraid of most?', *they were very articulate in describing their fears and dreams.*

I asked about the earthquake because it is a very recent and frightening experience. I heard it from a student sitting at the front actually and *I thought they might relate to it better and speak more about their feelings.*

He further reflects that he was able to do this as a result of his experience:

What I liked about myself here is that I saw that I let students think to come up with their own ideas. In the past, I didn't use to. I used to give example situations and sentences myself and think that 'They heard it, wrote it down and now they know it'. I realised the necessity of letting them be creative and leaving them time and space to digest the new information much later.

Sultan: How did you come to realise this?

Gün: Gradually. I think after I started distancing myself from myself a little and started to ... started to feel secure as a teacher that I was accepted and letting students be would not spoil this.

When students spoke he corrected some of their pronunciation mistakes and commented on one of these occasions as follows:

Here the child said 'blud' meaning 'blood' and I couldn't understand immediately [he repeats the word with its correct pronunciation]. Yes, it looks like I corrected his pronunciation, but I was simply checking whether I understood correctly.

There was only one instance when he used Turkish:

First time during the lesson I used a Turkish word. I thought the students could not get the meaning of an abstract word like 'precaution'.

Gün was not unhappy seeing himself correcting a few pronunciation mistakes and using Turkish once on the video, although, as we have seen further above (7.2.3), he did state his unhappiness while watching himself struggling with the tape recorder

Finally, when he was commenting on his teaching and justifying his practice, Gün often made comparisons with alternative routes he could have taken. There was clearly a process of conscious evaluation and choice taking place.

Overall, Gün is an example of a teacher who seems to succeed, to a great extent, in living in harmony between his ideals and the world of practice. He has a very flexible approach and shows a determination to search for alternatives. This is clear in his emphasis on planning in detail and prioritising. He does not do this to control the students or for classroom management purposes, but to maximise the ways in which he can achieve the instructional aims and goals of the syllabus in harmony with what he morally and emotionally believes good teaching to be. As we saw in 7.2 above, indications of inflexibility emerged on two occasions only. He did not want to discuss the word 'transparent' with students because this was directly threatening to his core construct 'common moral purpose'; more generally also, culturally inappropriate topics as he perceives them pose a threat to how he sees his mission. He also got extremely upset when the tape recorder did not work because his core construct 'communicativeness of activity' required him to give priority to listening no matter what happens due to the absence of other opportunities to hear English outside the classroom.

7.3.2 Serkan

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
forms one half of an apple [i.e. misses, needs the other half] *	there is nothing [to share] *	complementing one another *
hasn't lost his own identity *	has lost his own identity *	maintaining identity *
has awareness-raising function +	ignorance +	awareness-raising +

As we have already seen (7.2.4), Serkan adopted a very explicit means of teaching of grammar in his videoed lesson, following his belief that, within the current exam system, students had to know and differentiate among various grammar rules. Thus, he adapted the activities in the textbook for this purpose by explicitly discussing the rules with the students. From a positive viewpoint (as opposed to the negative 'constraints-focused' approach adopted further above), the constructs that found expression in his grammar-teaching practice and accompanying commentary (7.2.4) were 'complementarity of activities' and 'student processing'.

A very important characteristic of a good teacher according to Serkan is forming 'one half of an apple' in the classroom with his students ('complementing one another') so that the teacher and the students share responsibility. In this connection, he reported satisfaction with the following aspects of his lesson:

I return their exam papers to my students after I evaluate them. It is more important than the lesson for me. *It is feedback.* Everybody scrutinises their paper and asks me questions. I instruct them to make notes where they were missing and *ask help from me* to improve their missing points.

I collect [students' writing], and distribute them again randomly *for peer-correction.* I give them responsibility to involve them in the learning process. The students are curious because it's somebody else's work they will evaluate. *They feel like the teacher.* Then they come and consult me. [...] They are encouraged to research carefully. Then they get back their work and place it in their folders.

Serkan comes across strongly as a teacher who likes to see his own role as crucial in facilitating students' learning. At the same time, he places great stress on students' own responsibilities. While watching his teaching on the video, Serkan reflected on this complementarity of roles as follows:

[He asks students ‘What page are we doing today?'] I know what page of course, but *I have to involve them and motivate them. They also motivate me by saying which page we will be doing. Yes, it is also the students' responsibility to motivate their teacher.*

I get Cengiz to read here on purpose. He is a researcher student. I do not want to be in the position of doing everything myself in the classroom. There is always sharing of responsibility in the classroom.

During the second hour he got very angry with another teacher who knocked on the door and entered his classroom unexpectedly to ask for a tape recorder:

It is not acceptable to interrupt the lesson like this. But people are not sensitive. X comes and asks for a tape, Y comes and asks about something else. I told this to my wife as well. ‘Never disturb me in my classroom.’ But I couldn’t tell this to my other colleagues. It is not nice because they spoil the atmosphere I create. *I build up a castle from sand and they come and knock it down.* Look, how the girl [a student who was reading her writing] got startled there. She got disturbed. I also got disturbed.

This instance seems to have been perceived by Serkan as a threat to his core construct ‘complementing one another’.

During the two hours’ lesson, Serkan implemented all of the ideas he had mentioned during the follow-up interview in terms of teacher–student relationships, sharing responsibility with students and inviting them to get involved in the lesson (see Chapter 5). He made quite lengthy comments from this point of view for many of his actions, often stopping the tape minute-by-minute and explaining their rationale in great detail. (He occasionally said it was the first time in seventeen years that he had seen himself teaching and that he could not thank me enough for the opportunity.) Here are some more comments, which show different aspects of Serkan’s humane approach, and the equality he wishes to establish between himself and students:

Look this is very important. I got feedback from Meltem about something I missed out. *She reminded me. I said ‘Thanks for warning me.’* This shows how comfortable they feel in my presence. It is still a big thing in our context for students to point out to teachers their mistake.

[During pair-work, Serkan gets a girl student to write the list of words from the speaking section on the blackboard.] You didn’t ask me why I let her clean the blackboard and write on the board all the time. But let me tell you. Because she is a hyperactive student. Look, she is always on her feet, finger in the air. She needs to use up her energy. She gets bored while

sitting all the time. This gives her the opportunity to get up and walk around.

After pair-work is finished, Serkan gets students to write a paragraph about their daily or weekly routines by using the words from the list on the board. This is given as a speaking activity in the students' textbook, but Serkan implements it as writing and from there moves on to peer-correction, during which he moves from desk to desk to talk to students:

They are doing peer-correction there. If every student writes 5 sentences, it makes 150 sentences for me to check. So, *they are helping me here*. This wasn't in the textbook. I brought it in. They wrote a paragraph about their daily routine so they can transfer the structures they learnt like 'Have a bath, have a wash, have lunch, arrive home, etc.' to real life. This is the production stage. They exchange their work, correct mistakes and also learn about their friend. *Here I'm the advisor only*.

Here, too, we see clearly how congruent Serkan's classroom practice is with his core construct 'complementing one another'.

Serkan can, then, actualise his core construct 'complementing one another' to the fullest extent because this construct governs roles and relationships. However, despite the great care taken and intellectual effort made by him in relation to his teaching, there are a number of important dissonances in the relationship of his other core construct, 'maintaining identity', with his practices. In this area he works only with peripheral constructs in terms of grammar oriented instructional goals. However, he cannot fully implement 'maintaining identity' and the related construct 'awareness raising' within the current education system as he perceives it because these constructs relate strongly to his overall negative perception of teaching and learning English in Turkey – to implement them is impossible in the current secondary school climate, he feels.

7.3.3 İlayda

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
compassionate and respects students *	creates fear and anxiety *	compassion/respect towards students *
humble and modest*	intimidating: says 'Only I can do this' *	humility *
gives the opportunity to	has to be done +	formative evaluation +

test and evaluate both the students and myself +		
teacher also contributes +	teacher does not interfere much, but the hardest for the teacher +	teacher non-interference +

İlayda's constructs for classroom activities, as we saw in Chapter 6 are governed by one core construct, 'compassion/respect towards students', with two super-ordinate constructs 'formative evaluation' and 'teacher non-interference' forming the bridge towards actual classroom practice. These two super-ordinate constructs both contribute to the difficulties İlayda faces in covering the syllabus (engaging in activities that have to be done): they take her in the opposite direction of encouraging students to decide how activities are implemented and enabling them to express themselves for formative evaluation purposes. Enhancing speaking, for İlayda, has two functions. Firstly, it addresses a methodological concern; secondly it addresses a deeper pedagogical concern of hers.

The best example of the way İlayda's classroom practice was influenced by her constructs concerning 'formative evaluation', 'teacher non-interference' and, at a deeper level, 'compassion/respect towards students' was an unplanned, student-generated role play activity which took up thirty minutes of the recorded lesson. İlayda herself was very stressed due to the presence of the camera (as she told me afterwards). However, students were very comfortable and some of them wanted to act out a role-play they had prepared. This was their (voluntary) adaptation of a writing activity that İlayda was about to skip in class. The lesson had started fifteen minutes earlier and the students had just completed a speaking activity about their favourite TV game shows where they talked about an imaginary TV programme they would be producing. When İlayda introduced the new topic and skipped the extra writing activity, two students stated that they wanted to do the writing activity as a role-play. They said they liked that topic and had a surprise for their friends. İlayda took a deep breath, smiled and said "O.K. now we have a game show. Your friends prepared a quiz show and they want to act it.". İlayda did not know what the role-play would be like, but she let them act it and sat at a desk at the back of the class while a group of five students moved desks and chairs and talked to their classmates, explaining to them that they would be the audience and they also had parts to act. And it was a very engaging, colourful experience for the whole class. The students had

picked up on a real life event which occurred in a famous quiz show (“Who wants to be a millionaire?”) and had been a topic in the popular media. In the real event, somebody was caught cheating during a game show by gaining assistance from a friend’s coughs in the audience. İlayda’s comments on this instance were as follows, and clearly reflect the priority she gives not only to ‘teacher non-interference’, but also to another of her constructs, ‘student comfort’:

When they do things together they get very happy and produce very good things. For that reason *I do not interfere*. I want them to go about things in their own way to *make them happy*. This took thirty minutes, but it’s O.K.

İlayda was not afraid of letting go of classroom control in this episode:

I was not aware that they had a role-play to act and I didn’t know the content of it. I didn’t know what they would be doing. We knew the theme only. But [...], you should take risks [laughs]. It cost me half an hour. But can you see how they engage the whole class in the game? I was also surprised that they transformed a very dull writing activity into a very engaging and beneficial format for the whole class.

In other parts of her videoed lesson, İlayda also took her time to make the instructions for activities clear. While students were working in pairs she walked around the class and helped students with their work. She asked from time to time ‘Do you need more time? You do not have to hurry.’ When students finished, they presented their ideas. İlayda asked open-ended questions to them about the TV programmes they had been designing. Students had incorporated humorous situations and İlayda laughed with the class at their jokes.

In the second hour, the new topic concerned organs of the human body. And İlayda invited students to explain meanings of the new words with their own sentences relying on their general knowledge because, she says, she felt they did not want to do the matching exercise in the textbook:

It is a matching exercise. The pictures are there and the words are in the next column. They were not interested. I thought they wouldn’t get much out of it. I wanted to encourage problem solving *partly to have a bit of room for evaluation, partly to make it interesting*. So, I tried to elicit what they knew already and use their already existing knowledge to explain such words as bones, heart, blood vessels, etc. I asked them open ended questions that I could think of. And they came up with various examples. [...] They are not necessarily giving one-to-one dictionary definitions, *but they are providing the meaning in their own words in relation to some*

context. [...] This is much more valuable for me than them matching words.

This was valuable for İlayda because it seemed to engage several constructs in her personal theory of good teaching at once. Firstly, it enabled her to formatively evaluate students' progress ('formative evaluation' being one of her super-ordinate constructs). Secondly, she was responding to their feeling of boredom ('student comfort'). Thirdly, she was practising speaking ('student productivity')

In this, as in other activities, I observed that students automatically first discussed among themselves and took some notes either in pairs or groups. İlayda did not usually have to say 'Work in pairs' and did not interfere with students who moved to other desks to talk to their friends. One of her comments on the second hour of the lesson was as follows:

When they are given individual work to do, some [...] remain silent, but when they are working together they create wonderful things. So, *I do not interfere much*. It is a bit noisy, and *I am trying not to interfere*. Each student thinks in different ways, and they complement one another's ideas. Thus, the end product turns out to be very enjoyable.

Clearly, apart from implementing her construct 'teacher non-interference', İlayda was paying attention to times when students were bored, relaxed or motivated, in congruence with her core construct 'compassion/respect towards students' and peripheral construct 'student comfort'.

Nevertheless, as we have seen, İlayda experiences dilemmas with regard to actualising her construct related to students being happy and comfortable as opposed to being anxious due to grammar ('student comfort'). At the peripheral level, she has to choose between activities that are mechanical and obligatory as opposed to beneficial for students as the first step ('obligatory nature of activities'), and at a higher level she has to find a way to implement her choice of activities without creating fear and anxiety ('compassion/respect towards students'):

Sometimes I think I'm not a good teacher, because I believe a good teacher can and must somehow enhance a *non-threatening* communicative learning atmosphere in the classroom.

İlayda finished her recall session by giving an overall evaluation:

The role-play was a good bit. I'm happy that it was initiated by the students, but mostly I was trying to finish the textbook so that I will not have to write another report this year. We were following the topics in the textbook. There were a number of times I did implement one or two activities differently. O.K. they speak English, but the textbook and my guidance is controlling them most of the time. Students want to break free. One student said towards the end of the second hour for example 'I'm very hungry. Lunchtime is near and talking about food gives pain to my stomach.' You tell me now. Shall I laugh or shall I cry?

To a large extent, İlayda's classroom practices were in congruence with her personal theory of good teaching according to the evidence of her own comments during stimulated recall. However, as we have seen in 7.2 above, some students' being anxious about grammar while speaking was a constraint that gave discomfort to her while she watched herself.

7.3.4 Mine

<i>Similarity pole</i>	<i>Contrast pole</i>	<i>Content label for construct</i>
recognises individual characteristics *	thinks students are responsible to make most of the given time*	individualisation *
establishes one-to-one relationships with students *	cannot establish good relationships *	one-to-one relationships *
cannot tolerate losing students *	thinks [only] deserving students should be taught *	keeping students on board *
students can show what they know +	students are passive +	enabling student display +
gives opportunity to test and evaluate +	less reliable +	enabling evaluation +

Mine started the videoed lesson with a revision of the previous lesson and focused on several weak students to clarify the points she thought they did not understand. While doing this she formulated similar questions at different levels. It was clear from her comments during stimulated recall here and later that Mine knew her students very well individually (reflecting her core constructs, 'individualisation' and 'one-to-one relationship'):

[A student asks Mine if she's ever been to New York, which is the topic of the unit. This is when they are doing comparisons in the first hour]

Mine: [laughs and says] No. How about you?

Student: No, but I'm going to Ankara in summer [he grins].

Mine: That's good, but you can't go before you finish your exams. *Remember what you promised?*

[Mine comments] He wants to change the topic. He is bored. He is a very bright student, but he is not as motivated as he used to be. *I think he is still trying to come to terms with his father's moving away.* His father lives in Ankara now and he does not like being with his mother. We had to sit him down and get his priorities right. So, I reminded him about his promise to himself that he would concentrate on his lessons.

[second hour speaking activity] A wave of unhappiness crossed my face and I pulled myself together. Canan was very weak, zero. Now she gets 3-4 from the exams [the top grade is 5]. I keep encouraging her. She started working really hard. *She is not the type of student who learns in isolation.* She needs a lot of support from her friends. *Once I learnt this,* I placed her next to Deniz and Hasan. Both are very sensitive and sharing students. Initially she used to cry. She thought she could not manage. Now, I comment for every sentence she utters 'How very nice, you're doing very well'.

Mine's other concern was that students had to be given responsibility via a learner-centred approach in the classroom (see her construct, 'student-centred'). During the follow-up interview she had said that:

Learner-centred teaching is very important. I am trying to encourage students to express themselves a lot and keep a lower profile in the classroom by acting as a guide. Students ultimately will learn better if they *discover their own truth.* *Taking into account individual differences* is necessary to implement learner-centred instruction.

Mine put into practice her constructs to consider what is difficult and challenging for students, how they each learn differently, and how she should get students to present what they know rather than being passive receivers. While watching her lesson, Mine made various comments on different episodes which related to her learner-centred values, including:

[the lesson has just started] I am revisiting the previous unit here. *I don't know how open to learning they are when I enter the classroom.* The atmosphere is disorganised. So, before starting the lesson I'm trying to establish the connection.

As explained in section 5.3 under 'Relationships and roles', Mine attempts to make sure every student learns equally. Her knowledge of individual student traits enables

her to teach to their needs and this satisfies another core construct, too, that of 'keeping students on board'. She is not authoritarian in the classroom either, and does not confront students who are not listening:

Yes, I repeat students' sentences to the whole class because I do not want to be saying 'Please listen to your friend. Why aren't you paying attention?' When I repeat one more time by raising the tone of my voice, *I can enable other students who are not paying attention to hear without breaking their hearts. You can't expect everybody to pay attention all the time.*

Her explanation of why she had changed her seating plan to a U shape is also relevant:

Mine: In this kind of seating [U shape] I have to be fixed in the middle of the classroom because if I want to walk around I have to turn my back to some of them. But I liked this seating plan. *I can have eye contact with all of them at the same time.*

Sultan: 'Did you change the seating plan recently?

Mine: Yes, after our meeting, was it last week?. I had a good deal of thought about it. And said why not? In this way, I can see everybody and don't miss out if they want to initiate something. They feel more encouraged to present what they know. They can see their friends' faces, too.

This provided evidence of the permeability of Mine's construct system to try alternative ways. Within one week she had put into practice her reflections during the follow-up interview when she had talked about the difficulty of paying attention to every student while they were sitting in rows of desks.

Overall Mine offered the following reflections at the end of her lesson:

You see how we are running from here to there. According to my own standards, I think I had a good lesson. I did not observe many lessons since I finished my initial training and I had never watched myself before. One wishes we could do this among colleagues here and see our missing points. I think I did my best, but again it is according to what I believe. Another person might point out different things. I could motivate the students well and followed from what they brought to the classroom. I could express myself to students and the instructions were clear. I could have looked more lively and energetic. What with the earthquake and house moving it's all written on my face, my unhappiness. And I noticed I kept insisting on vocabulary for the entire two hours. Though the activities also led me to that sometimes. I think it was a good lesson. I saw myself as

On the basis of my findings, interpreted in the light of PCT, I can suggest that it is when perceptions of situational constraints directly interfere with the actualisation of core constructs that teachers become frustrated and unhappy. Kelly (1955: 489) calls this 'threat': "*Threat is the awareness of imminent comprehensive change in one's core structures*" (italics in original). For example, Serkan views several aspects of his current secondary school teaching situation as a threat to his core construct 'maintaining identity' (which is related, in turn, to his perceptions about the role of English and western culture in Turkish society). Over the years Serkan has followed an explicit and deductive grammar-based approach in the classroom, has avoided his colleagues, has become a trainer himself to influence future teachers with his ideals, and has even started to teach at a university part-time. He has done all of these things in line with the same core construct because in his secondary school teaching he is not able to actualise it, although his other core construct 'complementing one another' does find expression in his practice. In the classroom, in relation to 'awareness-raising', (though a super-ordinate construct in the 'Classroom activities that I do' context, a peripheral construct within his overall personal theory) which is directly related to his core construct 'maintaining identity', he teaches grammar on the basis of comparisons between Turkish and English. He cannot, however, get students to reflect critically on the reasons why they learn English, nor can he scrutinise the cultural content of the textbooks with them because he believes "the others" (his colleagues, and parents) will oppose this (see Chapter 4). The examination system, he feels, forces him to teach grammar. And when he teaches grammar, he does so comparatively by focusing on how the Turkish language works during the initial three months of every academic year. He also teaches reading at university as a skill for prospective English teachers. This context is the place where he can put into practice the preferred pole of his core construct 'maintaining identity'. There, but not at secondary school, he can be like the influential, idealistic teacher that he met years ago at university (see Chapter 4). In addition, he became a trainer himself so that he could disseminate his views to other pre-service and in-service teachers. We can see a deliberate search on Serkan's part for "spaces for manoeuvre" (Vieira 2003: 10) to overcome, or bypass the situations of perceived threat and maintain the existence of the core structure of his construct system, that is, his core identity.

On the other hand, we saw that when other teachers' core constructs were threatened in different ways, they were able to respond more flexibly *within* their

secondary school English teaching context. In the case of Gün, for example, we saw that his core construct 'common moral purpose' was perceived as being threatened in various ways and that he had various solutions. Firstly, in connection with his vision of students' future he is concerned with students' speaking problems and inappropriate topics in the textbooks. If his students are to serve the country in a global world, their current speaking problems are a threat, and he is trying to address this problem. Additionally, he himself suffered a lot during his university years because of the political fights of the era, so for his students' future he comes across as very protective and does not wish to implement topics that might cause controversy such as 'drugs', 'abortion', 'religion' or 'politics'. As distinct from Serkan, he does not perceive his colleagues or parents as a threat, so he is able to collaborate with them for his professional development and to enhance relationships with his students. Because of the core structure of their individual construct systems, Serkan and Gün perceive different things as threatening (as 'constraints') within the same situation, and respond to constraints in different ways.

The speaking problems of students are mentioned by all teachers. For Gün this is a threat, as we have just seen. For İlayda, too, this is a threat when combined with her perception of the students' fear of grammar because the latter is linked to her core construct 'compassionate and respects students – creates fear and anxiety'. She experiences a distressing conflict with regard to actualising her constructs related to students being happy and comfortable as opposed to being anxious due to grammar. At the peripheral level, she has to choose between activities that are mechanical and obligatory as opposed to beneficial for students as the first step, and at a higher level she has to find a way to implement her choice of activities in a way to make students happy and relaxed.

İlayda says that the reason she chose to work in an Anatolian high school was to overcome this threat because the situation is worse in normal state secondary schools. For Serkan, however, the speaking problems of students are not directly linked with how he sees the world of teaching English and the phenomenon of cultural erosion. He gives the priority to dealing with what is within the range of convenience of his core constructs, not to the speaking problems of his students, which he believes he cannot do much about under the current assessment system. He gets them to memorise songs in English to compensate. Similarly, for Mine, students' speaking problems are not perceived as a threat, either. She acknowledges the problems, but

says one has to have a realistic perspective on what can be done and compensates by not skipping the speaking sections in the textbooks. The range of convenience of her core construct ‘recognises individual characteristics – thinks students are responsible to make the most of the given time’ means that she does not perceive this problem as a threat. Indeed, Mine offered the following reflections on constraints in general:

If certain things are beyond the teacher’s capacity and authority, I believe that it doesn’t help much complaining about the situation. The important thing is to look for solutions that are within our reach. Contextual characteristics establish themselves over a very long period of time and some of these characteristics cannot be changed unless the status quo changes in the society. Turkey is not a country where English is spoken. I’m aware of the problems that my other colleagues I’m sure also must have mentioned. However, having a positive outlook on the problems, I think, is the first step if we want to improve the situation. I may not be able to teach my students to speak very fluently, but if I can instil in them some liking towards speaking English, they will master it eventually.

She also referred to the native speaker teacher Sarah as an example of having positive thinking towards solving problems:

I’m very happy that we have Sarah with us in the school. Her presence is a consequence of me and my colleague’s noticing this problem and rather than complaining about it we decided to take action. I think this is a good example to show that there can be things done within controlled institutions like ours.

In my own right I try to give students chances to speak. I don’t skip the speaking sections in the textbooks and I think this is useful. It gives them a chance to show what they learnt. And I don’t expect too much from the students. Given the limitations of the context, there is not much point in making myself and my students upset.

Kelly talks about anxiety in this connection (1955: 495, italics in original): “*Anxiety is the recognition that the events with which one is confronted lie outside the range of convenience of one’s construct system*”. Serkan and Mine are merely concerned about students’ speaking problems (‘anxious’ about them), but they are not as preoccupied with them as Gün and İlayda because their core constructs do not tell them to be so. With reference to the Fragmentation Corollary, we can say that Mine and Serkan can tolerate this ambiguity within their construct systems for the time being.

Thus, all of the four teachers, as we saw, perceive and respond to constraints surrounding them differently from each other. It transpires that the way they perceive

situational constraints is dependent on the same constructs which guide them as to what to do in the classroom.

To summarise, the findings from this study show that situational constraints in an EFL secondary school context are not equally perceived as important or responded to by all teachers. Due to their individual construct systems some of these constraints gain priority over others when they are perceived as directly threatening the core structure and teachers come up with various solutions that are individually meaningful. Reflection on their problems does not necessarily end with them all changing their practices, because they are not aware of the influence of their core constructs. They are only aware of a threat or anxiety at a lower level, and, when they reflect, they reflect on what they perceive, not on how they construe what they perceive. Wagner (1984, 1987) talks about ‘imperative knots’ in teachers’ thinking where teachers find themselves in conflicting situations in the course of their lessons as well as during interactions with others within the school. Imperative knots dictate to teachers what things should be like and “arise from self-imperated [*sic*] cognitions being in conflict with *something else*. What this something else is can vary considerably” (Wagner 1987: 165, italics in original). Wagner (1987) states that teachers often are not aware themselves of these knots in their thinking and can get caught up in a recursive, self-validating cycle whereby “they often act ‘as if their life depended upon it’ and get quite agitated if something happens that they perceive as a violation of their self-imperated [*sic*] cognition” (ibid. 167). The findings from my study confirm this and provide directions for other researchers who might wish to explore situational constraints in a similar way in their own contexts.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Overall discussion

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter I shall discuss my findings in relation to my research questions (see Chapter 2, 2.6) and previous work in the field. First, in 8.2, I consider the *contents* of participant teachers' personal theories of good teaching (Research Question 1a), highlighting the new insights the present study provides in relation to an under-researched area, namely the cognition of 'ordinary' experienced secondary school teachers of English as a foreign language. Next, in 8.3, the *nature* of experienced teachers' personal theories is examined (Research Question 1b), with particular reference to their structure. Based on the findings, and in accordance with the theoretical framework adopted from PCT, I present a re-conceptualisation of the structure of teacher cognition which has relevance to future studies of pre-service and novice as well as experienced teachers' thinking. In 8.4, I consider in what ways experienced teachers' classroom practices are or are not congruent with their personal theories of good teaching, including discussion of different kinds of perception of and response to constraints (Research Question 2). Finally, Section 8.5 returns to the question of the *nature* of experienced teachers' theories (Research Question 1b), this time discussing their sources and the way they may have developed over the years.

8.2 The contents of experienced teachers' personal theories

This is perhaps the first ELTE research study to investigate, on their own terms, the personal theories of good teaching of 'ordinary' (not necessarily expert), non-native speaker, experienced secondary school teachers of English as a foreign language.

Since the present study deliberately set out to adopt a wider focus than most ELTE research in the way it looks at EFL teachers as 'whole persons' (see Chapter 4), several findings are relatively new in the field of ELTE but correspond well with findings in the general educational literature. As a consequence of not focusing only on technical, methodological aspects, the study has shown that teachers have ideals with moral and affective dimensions which influence *educational* principles – and this

is reflected particularly in teachers' conceptions of 'roles' and 'relationships' (as reported in Chapter 5).

As in the well-known studies by Elbaz (1983) and Clandinin (1986) in the field of general education, certain 'moral' values of participants in my study are reflected in *educational* ideals they possess, which include providing a good example through one's actions and dealing with behavioural and psychological problems of students (these ideals were shared by all four participants according to content analysis). For an individual example, we can take the case of Gün, who adopts a clear moral stance with regard to textbook contents, judging (according to his core construct 'common moral purpose') that certain topics are unsuitable for developing future Turkish citizens. Serkan, too, has moral/educational goals, concerned with 'maintaining identity' in the face of perceived threats from western culture. He is less able than Gün to implement these goals in practice but they are nevertheless of great significance to him. Possibly, similar moral/educational dimensions may be important for (ESL) teachers outside formal educational settings also, but if so they have yet to be documented.

As highlighted also by Elbaz and, particularly, Clandinin, the present study has additionally uncovered *affective* dimensions of experienced teachers' theories of good teaching, to a greater extent than previously within ELTE research (for example, Golombek 1998, Golombek and Johnson 2004). İlayda provides perhaps the best example of a teacher whose emotions are heavily involved in her theory of good teaching (cf. her core construct relating to 'compassion/respect for students' and peripheral constructs relating to 'teacher comfort' and 'student comfort'), but Serkan's personal theory, too, has an affective dimension (cf. his core construct, 'complementing one another'). In a previous ELTE study, Albelushi (2003) mentions that Omani teachers come to depend less on students emotionally as they gain experience. However, both İlayda and Serkan do appear dependent emotionally, in different ways, on their students – perhaps because they also display a different kind/level of commitment to the profession than the participants in Albelushi's study.

As with the moral and educational dimensions revealed in my study, the affective dimension which has also been revealed may have arisen because of the (rep-grid) research instruments I used and associated elements. Alternatively, its importance may be related to the fact that the teachers were secondary school EFL teachers rather

than the tertiary or language school teachers who have usually been focused on in ELTE research. For clarification of this issue, further research is clearly needed.

I would like to highlight one area, however, where – it seems clearer – my focus on non-native speaker secondary school teachers in a particular EFL context revealed educational/moral values which are unlikely to be shared by native speaker ESL teachers in an English-speaking country. This concerns the area of ‘preventing cultural degeneration’, which emerged as a common area of concern for all four participants (see Chapter 6) but was particularly a focus for Serkan. Here, a political/ideological, not just a moral aspect was revealed in these participants’ personal theories of good teaching.

Later in this chapter (in 8.5), I shall consider in greater depth the possible sources for participants’ personal theories of good teaching, but here it is worth mentioning that the ideas for classroom practice which they advocated were not generally supported by reference to formal language teaching theory. Instead, they made reference to constructs within their *personal* theories of good teaching to justify their practices, and this is different from the way teachers’ theories are interpreted in the ‘expert’ teacher studies previously carried out by ELTE researchers in ESL settings (Mok 1994, Tsui 2003). As we shall see (in 8.4), this might have implications for discussion of congruence or otherwise between theory and practice in the case of these teachers. Gün, for example, justified his use of pair and group work not with reference to communicative language teaching theory (as one might expect) but according to his core construct ‘student empowerment’, involving students taking on greater responsibility in the classroom. I should mention, however that, these arguments will be presented in section 8.4 alongside considerations regarding the possible influence of the research design itself on participants’ responses. Since the main aim of the study was to gain in-depth understanding of *personal* meanings of teaching for participants, they were encouraged to reveal their thoughts without reference to formal theory. Then again, this might at the same time be a strength enabling us to consider an alternative view of the relationship between theory and practice.

My intention in the present study was to investigate the type of ‘ordinary’, secondary school EFL, non-native speaker, experienced teacher who I felt had been neglected in previous ELTE research. Influenced by research in the field of general education, I also wished to adopt more of a ‘whole person’ approach than has been

adopted typically within ELTE. Due to this variety of emphases, it is difficult to be more precise than I have been regarding *why* these teachers' personal theories are as they are, and it would also be unwise to generalise from just four individually quite unique cases. However, the importance of moral, educational, affective and ideological/political dimensions in these teachers' theories as revealed throughout this study and the relative lack of attention paid to formal theory by these teachers are findings which seem quite different from those in previous ELTE research, whatever the ultimate explanation.

8.3 The nature of experienced teachers' personal theories

The main thrust of my research was not to generalise but to investigate teachers' very personal and individual theories of good teaching. Every teacher is unique in what his/her constructs imply, due, as we have seen, to their bi-polarity and the fact that they form part of a construct *system*. It is therefore easier to provide clear answers to Research Question 1b concerning the *nature* of experienced teachers' theories of good teaching, since useful and perhaps generalisable insights can be generated from just four cases. Here, I discuss how adopting the view that a 'personal theory' is a system of constructs and deliberately setting out to elicit such constructs in the present study has helped to clarify the nature, in particular the 'structure', of teacher cognition more generally.

We saw in Chapter 2 how Connelly and Clandinin (1984), Clandinin (1985, 1986) and Clandinin and Connelly (1987) have argued for the establishment of a common language and framework for research into teacher development and education. And their attempts have been influential over the past twenty years in that their favoured concepts of 'image' and 'personal practical knowledge' have become well-established. In ELTE the term 'image' has been frequently used, often interchangeably with 'belief', 'assumption', 'perspective', and so on (see Chapter 2, section 2.2) within research into teachers' cognition. In Chapter 2, section 2.3, I suggested that Clandinin's notion of 'image' is in some ways similar to that of the 'construct' within PCT. Now, on the basis of my findings, I wish to further re-conceptualise her notion within a PCT framework.

With regard to the notion of 'image', as we saw in Chapter 4, the experienced EFL teachers in this study recalled very vividly images associated with their mothers, former teachers, (previous) colleagues, and so on ('Significant others') via the regards that made this possible. Their memories of the past were articulated in the form of images such as 'frightening man' (İlayda), 'teacher for the individual student' (Mine), and 'one half of an apple' (Serkan) (while some images were articulated on the basis of powerfully imagining the future: 'tomorrow's doctors, architects, scientists' (Gün)).

We also saw that teachers were not acting under the guidance of a single image only. They had other images, too: 'a distant teacher' (İlayda, of herself), 'a very ambitious teacher' (Mine), 'a teacher loyal to one's own values' (Serkan), 'a strict teacher' (Gün) and some others. Thus, my findings confirm previous research that teachers do operate under the influence of powerful images (Elbaz 1983), while suggesting that there is not necessarily one single over-arching image for each teacher (as tends to be implied by Clandinin 1986).

Teachers' images, as Clandinin (1986) states, have emotional and moral significance for them. The present study additionally provides indications about where the participants' most influential images connected with teaching originate from and how they have contributed to forming their core *constructs*, with implications, as we shall see, for the overall structure of teacher cognition.

Clandinin (1985, 1986) argues that teachers act under the guidance of images which are stored in their memory and which they recall when confronted by various situations in the present. However, the Theory of Personal Constructs (Kelly 1955) adopted for the present study enables us to see images in a new light. It provides the insight that perhaps teachers do not simply act under the guidance of a certain image, but rather *construe* images in a bi-polar way to anticipate what has not yet been experienced.

Thus, my findings show that teachers engage in a process of *construing* their experiences in terms of *the way things should be* and *the way things should not be* and form the core constructs of their personal theories on this basis.

Let us recall the case of İlayda (as profiled in Chapter 4). We have seen that İlayda, when she began her teaching career, had images of her primary school and university teachers as 'frightening', of herself as 'a distant teacher' and of a colleague of hers who was 'loving' towards her students. These three different images originated from

three different areas of experience. The image of the 'very frightening teacher' was formed at primary school and university. The image of 'distant teacher' was formed during her own secondary school years where she was happy as long as teachers did not pick on her. They were distant towards students, but they were not strict, either. So she herself acted in the same way in her novice year of teaching. The image of 'a loving teacher' was formed at the end of her novice year due to a shocking experience. Today, İlayda, as we saw, is not acting under the guidance of these images without 'making something' with them. She is construing all three of these images by means of a core construct which is bound up with them: 'compassionate and respects students – creates fear and anxiety'. And then she makes *a choice*: she has to be compassionate to students and respect what they want. Not because they will learn better, not because they will be successful in the exams, only because *she does not want to create fear and anxiety in them*. It is as simple and complex as that.

It is also possible to argue that Clandinin (1986) may have overplayed the significance of images, with their emotional and moral dimensions, since these correspond mainly or only to one theme, which she called 'relationships'. Due also to the setting of Clandinin's (1986) study, which was a primary school, this theme emerged as predominant, and teachers seemed able to put their images into practice with relatively few constraints to organise their relationships with students. So, in that particular context, the images identified ('classroom as home', 'language as the key') were *adequate* for teachers to anticipate their environment to do with '*relationships*'. I presented core constructs relevant to 'Relationships and roles' in Chapter 5, and my findings do show that teachers attempt to organise these with reference to core constructs as elicited in the context of 'Significant others'. From their previous schooling and initial training experiences, they relate to their mentors and teachers as role models and interpret methods and approaches for teaching English firstly in terms of their effectiveness in establishing good relationships with their students in the classroom.

However, while very important, relationships and roles are not these teachers' only areas of concern. In Chapters 5, 6 and 7 we saw that 'Professional development' and 'Classroom practice and pedagogy' were two additional domains with a role to play in teachers' thinking. While teachers' perspectives on 'Professional development' as well as 'Roles and relationships' were mostly governed by core constructs, views of 'Classroom practice and pedagogy' involved peripheral constructs as well.

We could say, then, that the notion of image as identified by Clandinin (1985, 1986) is adequate to capture *core constructs* with respect to their *preferred poles* only (Dichotomy Corollary) and to predict the events to do with *relationships* only (Range Corollary). If we are to gain insights from the notion of ‘image’ as defined by Clandinin (and over the years we know that ELTE researchers have used this term interchangeably with ‘beliefs’, ‘maxims’, ‘principles’, and so on), this causes two problems. First, we are limited in our understanding of the relationship between *teachers as persons* and *teachers as intellectual practitioners*. Teachers by the very nature of their profession face new situations and experiences every day. There are likely to be many cases when core constructs (those which make teachers the persons they are) are not enough to solve a problem. Secondly, teachers in secondary schools cannot solely be concerned with establishing positive relationships with their students, either. They have to teach their subject matter under – perhaps – more constraints than a primary school teacher or a university teacher might have. So what are the teachers going to do in the absence of a relevant image in their memories concerning how to teach their subject matter? They need to develop so-called ‘peripheral’ constructs to meet this need.

The relationship with practice, however, is not a simple one – in the ‘Classroom pedagogy and practice’ domain, teachers in the present study have developed ‘peripheral’ constructs which are related to deeply held core constructs, but to varying extents. Some teachers are able to find ways to mediate their core constructs into their ideas about ‘Classroom pedagogy and practice’ by learning from other sources such as colleagues, reading, textbooks and so on (Gün, Mine, İlayda). But others (Serkan, in relation to his core construct, ‘maintaining identity’) seem unable to do so.

Gün and Mine, in the present study, are good examples of teachers who have added peripheral constructs to their core constructs to enable them to meet educational as well as specific methodological needs. We saw that they do not simply act under the guidance of their core constructs (the preferred poles of their earlier formed images), but instead employ peripheral constructs which correspond well with their core constructs and at the same time serve to manage students’ learning of the language.

Thus, core constructs do not *determine* behaviour as is implied with Clandinin’s notion of image. The notion that there is flexibility in the construct system (provided by the notion of peripheral constructs) is an encouraging one for teacher educators to

consider, especially considering that core constructs are so deeply rooted in teachers' biography and apparently difficult to alter. Another important finding from the present study is that at the 'Classroom practice and pedagogy' level, teachers in the present study prefer to prioritise teaching methods, first and foremost, according to their (relatively 'core') educational principles.

Previous research which has highlighted the relatively sophisticated decision-making processes of 'expert' experienced teachers (Berliner 1997, Westerman 1992, Mok 1994, Tsui 2003) has not uncovered the influence of core constructs. On the other hand, those researchers who do acknowledge the importance of what they tend to call 'images' have either failed to provide adequate evidence of their influence on practice via peripheral constructs (Calderhead and Robson 1991, Breen et al. 2001) or have overemphasised the direct, affective influence of such images on their practices (Clandinin 1986, Golombek 1998, Golombek and Johnson 2004).

Elbaz (1983) has, however, previously offered the insight that teachers attempt to resolve theory–practice gaps by organising their thinking at the different levels of images, practical principles and rules of practice. In Elbaz's explanation, practical principles act as a mediating level between what teachers believe and what they (can) do. These are principles which teachers derive from their guiding images (different from Clandinin (1986) who states that various images come together and form a kind of guiding image first, and that this then governs most of a teacher's actions), and which have an evaluative component oriented to situations.

We can, in PCT terms, re-conceptualise practical principles as the preferred poles of teachers' peripheral constructs. In other words, it seems plausible to suggest that images are construed in a bi-polar way first and form core constructs and then, depending on the preferred pole of the core construct we form our practical principles about how things should further be. Rules of practice, I suggest, are decided when the preferred pole of a peripheral construct is further construed. Thus, depending on the choice we make we take action.

For example, in the present study, one of Mine's core constructs in the context of 'Significant others' is 'recognises individual characteristics – thinks students are responsible to make most of the given time' ('individualisation', for short). In Chapter 4, we saw very clearly how she formed this core construct upon construing the images of Gamze and Sevim (her university teachers) and her own mother. Her choice is to recognise individual characteristics (the preferred pole of her construct).

One of her peripheral constructs following on from this choice is ‘students can show what they know – students are passive’ (‘enabling student display’). Her choice is to enable students to show what they know (principle – preferred pole of her peripheral construct). Thus, following from this choice as a principle, in her videoed lesson, in order to revise the previous unit, she elicited everything from students and built on what they gave her (rule of practice).

Thus, in relation to the structure of teacher cognition, I suggest that viewing this in terms of constructs whose links and relationships to each other can be comprehensively identified differs from the difficulty of separating out images, practical principles and rules of practice from each other and identifying the links among them (Elbaz 1983, Breen et al. 2001). The findings seem to confirm the usefulness of looking at teachers’ personal theories about classroom practices in terms of different ‘layers’ of images, practical principles and rules of practice as suggested by Elbaz (1983), but they also show that this is unnecessary. Instead, the notion of ‘construct system’ allows one to more coherently and comprehensively trace the super-ordinate and subordinate relationships between core and peripheral constructs. In this study I identified EFL experienced teachers’ personal theories of good teaching in terms of their construct systems in two contexts, ‘Significant others’ and ‘Classroom activities that I do’. Via laddering up during rep-grid and follow-up interviews, it proved to be feasible to see how constructs were hierarchically ordered, to a degree that has not, as far as I am aware, been achieved in previous research into experienced ESL/EFL teacher cognition.

8.4 The congruence of theory and practice

In this section I discuss Research Question 2: ‘To what extent are experienced EFL teachers’ classroom practices congruent with their personal theories of good teaching?’. In Chapter 7 (section 7.4) above I have already considered this question to a certain degree, providing an overview of the four participants’ different responses to constraints and the ways they all succeed, although to different degrees, in implementing their personal theories in practice. Here I shall relate the findings reported there to previous research and to wider issues.

Previous studies in the field of ELTE (e.g. Johnson 1992, Richards and Pennington 1998, Smith 1996, Gahin 2001, Mangubhai et al. 2004) have tended to classify novice or experienced teachers' beliefs in terms of pre-existing formal theory, to investigate the extent to which this is implemented in practice. In the present study, by contrast, teachers' theories have been elicited and described *in their own terms*, rather than being categorized in this manner. As I mentioned in section 8.2, the research design of the present study might have strongly influenced the participants to reveal their thoughts not with respect to formal theories and principles of language teaching and learning as has been the case in previous studies (due to their own particular research design), but with an emphasis on the very personal meaning of their classroom practices. I find this influence, however, useful, since it provides us with an alternative view on taken for granted issues such as the relationship between teachers' beliefs and how they implement formal theory.

This perspective enabled us to consider (in 7.4) that experienced teachers in the present study might no longer (if, indeed, they have ever been) themselves be preoccupied with formal theories of language teaching, and that they might tend to interpret methods and techniques ('classroom practices') within the broad frame of reference of their core constructs rather than with explicit reference to formal theory. This is a potentially significant finding within the field of ELTE, and is possibly related to participants' being 'ordinary' secondary school teachers of EFL rather than *in* or connected with Diploma or MA in ESL programmes and so on. During the stimulated recall, none of the teachers referred to theories of language learning or teaching in their pure form (they always gave their own individual reasons, for example for 'student-centredness'), whereas I did witness (and reported in 7.3) that on many occasions they referred back to their personal constructs, in other words back to their own overall theory of good teaching. It could be argued that, by the stimulated recall stage, the teachers were in a sense conditioned to reflect on their classroom practices in the ways they did, and this possible limitation has to be acknowledged, but it does not lessen the importance of considering the findings as a basis for possible further research. In this study principles or categories derived from formal language teaching theory did not guide the research design and data collection, and correspondingly different findings were gathered when compared with previous ELTE studies.

Johnson (1992) and Smith (1996) both found that the theoretical beliefs of ESL teachers are congruent both with how they interpret L2 learning theory and with how they implement curriculum and task design. However, this was not so in the current study, where teachers *do not* refer to L2 learning theory and *do* perceive constraints on implementing their constructs in practice. In this particular EFL secondary school setting (as opposed to the ESL contexts focused on in much previous research), what teachers construe as theoretically important – enhancing a communicative atmosphere in the classroom, for example – and their knowledge of associated methods and approaches to achieve this is not justified by the participants with reference to formal theoretical knowledge only. Situational knowledge and core constructs might also have a contribution to make, in individually meaningful ways as we saw in Chapter 7, and participants' peripheral constructs reflect this. The present study then, suggests that there is a need for further research into the relationship between personal theories of teachers and formal language learning and teaching theories. Such research could utilise a further refined and controlled research design in which the limitations (of the present study and of previous studies) mentioned above could be minimised. It is a particularly worthy pursuit to investigate what happens to the commitment of teachers to implementing formal theory under constraints, since this has not been a focus of previous studies in ELTE (see Mangubhai 2004).

An important strand of previous research into pre-service and novice teachers relates to the constraints they face in actualising theory, and the way they deal with constraints (see Chapter 1, 1.2). In the general education field, responses to constraints among experienced teachers have been explored in relation to 'coping strategies' (e.g. Woods 1981, Pollard 1982, Sikes, Measor and Woods 1985, Huberman 1992), while in the field of ELTE they have not been much explored at all, except in terms of teachers not implementing particular innovations, for example, communicative language teaching (Gahin 2001) or process writing (Tsui 2003). Within ELTE especially, then, how experienced teachers perceive and respond to constraints has not yet been researched very thoroughly, perhaps due to the relative autonomy teachers have in the language school or tertiary ESL as opposed to secondary EFL contexts which have tended to be investigated. The present study makes a contribution, firstly, by identifying (through content analysis reported especially in 7.2) some of the situational constraints which are faced by experienced EFL teachers in this, and perhaps other secondary school EFL contexts, and how they

are responded to by this group of teachers. A number of constraints were highlighted by them during interviews, with the following being mentioned by all four teachers, according to content analysis reported in chapters 5, 6 and 7: 'having to do things out of obligation' (in relation to 'Professional development'), and 'syllabus' and 'students' problems in speaking' (in relation to 'Classroom practice and pedagogy').

As we saw, then, the four participants specifically mentioned situational constraints on self-development and addressing their students' needs. As distinct from the pre-service and novice teachers investigated in previous studies, however, the experienced teachers in the present study are very confident of the choices they make as a result of having formed peripheral constructs which are appropriate to the situations they face. We saw how they each had different peripheral constructs they employed while evaluating the situation and making their choices in response to the above constraints. Thus, in section 7.4, I highlighted the way individual construct systems govern how teachers respond (differently) to constraints.

To sum up, the findings from this study show that situational constraints in an EFL secondary school context are not equally perceived as important or similarly responded to by all teachers. Due to teachers' individual core construct systems some of these constraints gain priority over others in teachers' minds, and are particularly paid attention to when they are perceived as directly threatening the core structure of a personal theory (certain textbook topics viz-a-viz Gün's 'shared moral purpose', for example, or student anxieties about grammar viz-a-viz İlayda's core construct, 'compassion/respect for students').

The findings confirm that teachers do not simply respond to a stimulus, but to their perceptions of it (Bannister and Fransella 1971/1987, Wagner 1984, 1987). Woods (1981) reached similar conclusions with two teachers by showing how within their immediate context they were agitated by different constraints. He concludes that teachers' commitments and identities play a great role in how they cope with constraints, and whether they choose to give up or not. The findings from the present study highlight core constructs as the major factor in 'self' as a teacher and also shed light on the reasons – within core constructs and their origins – for individual ways of perceiving and responding to constraints. I suggest that if teachers are not made aware that the sources of their dilemmas tend to reside in how they see the world as well as in the world, they will not consider alternative ways of solving their problems.

Teachers' core constructs – as we shall see in the next section – tend to guide them in how they develop professionally. Another important finding of the present study is that none of the teachers, no matter how reflective they are, want to sacrifice their core constructs. Gün and Mine, as we saw, have managed to a great extent to add peripheral constructs to keep them more focused on the immediacy of their teaching context so that they can collaborate with parents and their colleagues and implement syllabus goals for their students' needs. Serkan and İlayda's core constructs are not as permeably organised as Gün and Mine's and they perceive situational constraints as directly threatening to their core constructs. The present study highlights the need to focus on the organisation of teachers' construct systems and to determine to what extent and in what areas constructs are permeable in individual cases. More research is needed in this area if we are to find ways of enabling teachers to accommodate alternative ways of seeing their situation, which, in the light of the above discussion, seems to be a valuable goal within teacher education.

8.5 Experienced teachers' development

Finally, I shall return to Research Question 1b (concerning the 'nature' of experienced teachers' personal theories of good teaching) and consider how participants' theories appear to have developed over time. I set out to investigate this area partly by including elements in Rep-grid 1 ('Mother', and 'Previous teachers (1–3)') which I expected would elicit retrospective accounts. During the follow-up interviews I also asked specific questions about teachers' professional development up to this point. As a result I was able to write the profiles of each teacher in Chapter 4. Also principles relating to professional development emerged as quite prominent in the content analysis reported in Chapter 5. I should also note that, although there has been a recent trend towards providing more biographical information in research in ELTE (e.g. Tsui 2003), this biography generally serves just as a backdrop (see, however, Ulichny 1996) and is not linked with teachers' theories themselves. My study does make such links, showing how in some cases past experiences have influenced present theories.

The main reason that I included elements such as 'my mother' and 'my previous teacher (1–3)' in Rep-grid 1 is that, while many studies have reported on the

biographical sources of pre-service and novice teachers' theories (see Chapter 1), there has been much less research into the sources of experienced teachers' cognition, in particular within ELTE. I was, then, keen to find out if the pre-training influences previously reported as significant for pre-service and novice teachers' theories continued to be influential on experienced teachers. Within ELTE, to date only Woods (1996), Borg (1998) and Tsui (2003) have provided (some) biographical evidence for such influences, in connection, by and large, only with early language learning experiences, and Ulichny (1996) has reported in connection with affective dimensions of early schooling experience. Other ELTE researchers acknowledge but have not reported such influences on experienced teachers' cognition.

Teachers' retrospective accounts for my study confirm findings of previous research which show that pre-service and novice teachers are influenced by their early learning experiences. My findings (as reported mainly in the profiles in Chapter 4) show, indeed, that there is a continuing influence from early images (mother, early schooling experiences, previous teachers and university trainers) on the core constructs of experienced teachers (see the discussion of Mine's core construct 'Individualisation', at the end of 8.3 above).

Important influences on current theories additionally derive from private life (Serkan, and Mine), previous subject teachers who were not necessarily English teachers, and, interestingly, from the critical experiences participants had when they were new to the profession (in the case of İlayda, for example), as well as from parents and from colleagues. Most of these influences have already been identified in the general education field (Lortie 1975, Olson 1980, Sikes, Measor and Woods 1985, Knowles 1992), but their identification in the present study is new in the field of ELTE.

One point which I should highlight is that early experiences had an influence particularly on core constructs. I also found, however, that teachers added peripheral constructs (see above) over the years, often in order to teach more in harmony with their core constructs. Thus, the so-called 'problem' that pre-service and novice teachers' existing theories remain largely unchanged by initial training can be re-conceptualised as a less negative phenomenon than it might at first appear (since peripheral constructs are likely to be added later through experience).

We have seen (in Chapter 5) that the way teachers say they go about 'Professional development' during their careers appears to be guided by their core constructs in the

context of 'Significant others'. The reason for this is that development does not happen in isolation, but in cooperation with others, in particular, colleagues, but also – potentially – parents and students. Indeed, learning from experience means, for all teachers in this study, interacting with their students and getting feedback from them, and collaborating with colleagues, but what they are able to see in students' feedback or the extent to which they can collaborate with colleagues is coloured by how they construe 'Significant others' who have been role models in their lives in individually meaningful ways. Especially, during the process of their professional development, the way they choose to construe available alternatives to learn from is very important (Chapter 5, section 5.2) because the elaborate extension of teachers' construct systems (Kelly 1955) as explained by the Experience Corollary is dependent on the choice to try on new alternatives for size (extension) or to watch them go by from their own sheltered corners (definition).

To take an example, Serkan's core constructs have had far-reaching implications for how he has chosen to develop professionally and how he organises his relationships with his colleagues. As we have seen, Serkan associates professional competence with knowing oneself, one's own values and culture. He construes the majority of his previous teachers and previous and present colleagues as incompetent because they have lost their own identity and given in to what the culture of English dictates. Although he strongly believes in the value of collaboration among colleagues, he cannot see them as worthy of collaborating with to learn from because they do not share the same ideals as him. As a result, we have seen that his journey to learn and develop has been carried out in isolation over the years. As long as a threat (as he perceives it) remains for Serkan, he is likely to carry on in the same manner.

Thus, the notion that teachers can become experts if they engage in deliberate reflection and constantly change their practices (Tsui 2003) might need further refinement, because deliberate reflection on problems cannot always trigger change and improvement as is conventionally expected (see Kelly's Experience and Modulation corollaries, Chapter 2, 2.4). Sometimes, as in the case of Serkan, it involves a self-validating recursive cycle when the reflected-upon issues are connected with core identity and existence. On the basis of findings such as this one, I suggest that within the field of ELTE we might need to decrease our expectations of reflection in terms of challenging teachers' core constructs, although there is no doubt

that, under the right conditions, peripheral constructs can be added in the course of a career.

I end this discussion with some words on teachers' own theories with regard to professional development. As we saw in Chapter 5, all the teachers state that if they did not commit themselves to their students so much, they would not have the motivation to develop. In other words, how teachers construe their students and their own roles within the context of *education* (the emphasis is teachers' own, and the distinction they make between 'education' and simply 'teaching' should not be overlooked, reflecting as it does the influence of their core constructs) is the ultimate determinant for their willingness to develop. Woods' (1979: 171) assertion that:

An 'experienced' teacher is one who has learnt how to teach his subject most effectively within the definitions imposed by the problems and structures of the system [...]. [Experience] is distinguished by a large element of adaptability and pragmatism. The classroom is no place for educational principles.

is *not* confirmed by the teachers in this study. Mostly, they show the necessary pragmatism and adaptability the situation requires, as we saw in Chapter 6, but we have also seen how they continue to entertain educational principles in their consciousness and how they pragmatically attempt to realise educational as well as instructional goals. In a later study, Woods (1981) also emphasises teachers' commitment and identity as crucial in influencing how they cope with constraints and how they develop professionally, as my findings have also shown.

Finally, then, in the light of the findings I have presented and the arguments I have made, I suggest an alternative characterisation of being an experienced teacher for researchers, pre- and in-service trainers and for teachers themselves to reflect upon: Being an experienced teacher typically involves retaining core constructs which may be deeply rooted in early, even childhood experiences – constructs that make teachers the persons they are – but also involves, in most though not all cases, having added a range of peripheral constructs and having developed increased permeability of the construct system.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I wish to reflect on both the overall contributions and the limitations of the present study. I begin (9.2 below) with a return to my starting point – the current debate on the ‘knowledge base’ of English language teacher education (ELTE). Drawing out implications in relation to this debate, I highlight here the overall value of my own contribution to research into teacher cognition, specifically the cognition of experienced (but not necessarily ‘expert’) EFL teachers in a secondary school context. I then discuss limitations of the study and consider some areas for further research which seem to be worth exploring (9.3), and end with some concluding reflections on ‘theory–practice dissonance’ (9.4).

9.2 The knowledge base of ELTE revisited

I first wish to both summarise and contextualise the main findings of the present study by relating them to the current debate on the knowledge base of ELTE (Freeman 2002), as described in Chapter 1, and by indicating the value of my own contribution to research on teacher cognition. I should state clearly that I view this research as contributing to just *one component* of an ELTE knowledge base, namely in the area of providing better foundations which take into account teachers’ own cognition. The present study has advanced understanding of the cognition of experienced teachers and, to some extent, of how experienced teachers develop.

Below, then, I provide a summary of the findings of the present study, indicating how these build on previous research into teacher cognition, before drawing out some implications for ELTE:

1. Participants’ personal theories of good teaching have moral/educational and affective dimensions, connected to powerful images and core constructs (c.f. Elbaz 1983, Clandinin 1986). Although affective dimensions have been

recognised and researched by a few recent ELTE studies (Golombek 1998, Golombek and Johnson 2004), their importance within the overall structure of teacher's personal theories has been depicted by the present study for the first time within ELTE research

2. Core constructs appear to be deeply rooted in participants' personal biographies. The influence of relatively early experience ('mother', 'previous teachers') continues beyond the pre-service and novice years, in the form of core constructs (cf. Clandinin 1986).
3. In relation to 'Classroom practice and pedagogy' as well as (particularly) 'Roles and relationships', experienced teachers seem to evaluate the appropriateness of classroom activities first and foremost according to their core constructs. This indicates that further research is necessary regarding teachers' perceptions of formal theories of language learning and teaching (Smith 1996, Johnson 2002, Mangubhai 2004).

All of the above indicate the importance for ELTE of uncovering and validating the teacher's 'self' – his/her identity as s/he perceives it. Teacher education practices should be based on such attempts and not on attempting futilely to change core constructs. There may, then, be a need to move beyond a prevalent current motivation behind uncovering teachers' beliefs, images, theories, principles, and so on; namely, to change them in desired directions to reflect 'empirically proven' or currently fashionable methods and approaches of language teaching and learning. Instead we should, perhaps, be looking at what is valuable or not in terms of student learning and teacher satisfaction in teachers' own current practices, when these reflect deeply held core constructs. In particular in secondary school EFL contexts, perhaps, the educational values of experienced teachers may deserve more validation than they have received to date within ELTE.

The above findings regarding the importance of core constructs are relatively new in the field of ELTE, but not in the field of general education (Elbaz 1983 and Clandinin 1986, for example, have similar findings, though they refer to 'images' and not 'core constructs'). Beyond just ELTE, however, the PCT-based approach of the present study has contributed certain new suggestions regarding the structure of teacher cognition in line with Kelly's theory:

4. Experienced teachers do not act under the guidance of an overall governing image only (as tends to be implied by Clandinin 1986)
5. 'Images' do not guide practice directly. Rather, teachers seem to *construe* images in a bi-polar way, and anticipate events using these constructs.
6. Experienced teachers (in most but not all cases) have developed 'peripheral' constructs which, when these are related to more deeply held core constructs, mediate between them and practice.

This last insight relates well to previous work on the hierarchical organization of 'images', 'practical principles' and 'rules of practice' in teachers' thinking (Elbaz 1983). However, there seem to be benefits to be gained from viewing these layers in terms of a single 'construct system'. With more originality, perhaps, the present study has also shown how:

7. In secondary school EFL contexts, there are shared constraints on the implementation of personal theories in practice. However, teachers are selective in their perceptions of situational constraints. They also respond to such constraints differently, again, according to their different construct systems.
8. When constraints are perceived as a threat to core constructs (as in the case of Serkan's 'maintaining identity' construct), permeability within the construct system does not materialise and, no matter how reflective teachers are, they may tend to reflect only to validate existing constructs further. In sum, deliberate reflection on problems cannot always trigger change and improvement.
9. Thus, the sources of experienced EFL teachers' dilemmas may reside partly in how they see the world, not necessarily in a gap between formal theory and practice.

One implication of these findings is the positive one that there are possibilities of change in teachers' thinking, although not necessarily through reflection alone. We can imagine that teacher educators, while ensuring that trainees' core constructs are not threatened (see above) can at the same time trigger change, by helping them to find ways in which they can extend (the permeability of) their constructs. This may

seem rather abstract, and so here are two practical ideas to end with. Firstly, all of the participants in my study told me that the experience of becoming aware of their personal constructs was a beneficial one for them in terms of their development. I feel encouraged to suggest that a process of offering new constructs to in-service teachers via rep-grids and follow-up interviews specifically designed for them could make them similarly aware of the potential for change in their personal theories (see Cabaroğlu and Roberts 2000). Similarly, in pre-service teacher education and during the early years of teaching, trainees and novices could benefit from elicitation of their own constructs about 'self as teacher' and 'ideal self as teacher', and then by being exposed to alternative constructs, perhaps including some of those which underlie more experienced teachers' thinking (see Sendan 1995). As Carter (1990: 307) has suggested, "processes used to deliver teacher education content to novices must not only reveal pedagogical problems but also bring out ways of thinking about these problems and provide opportunities for novices actually to practice problem solving". And the main findings of the present study regarding the structure and content of experienced EFL teachers' personal theories can provide an initial basis for a future corpus of examples of ways of teachers' thinking.

Overall, the findings of my study imply that we should not be looking for *a* new knowledge base for ELTE but, instead, deeper insights into the very personal, multiple ways teachers themselves construe their profession. I shall return to this thought in 9.4 below, after examining the limitations of my study and indicating some directions for further research.

9.3 Limitations of the study and directions for future research

The limitations of the study can be viewed firstly from a theoretical perspective. PCT and its associated term 'constructs' imply that there is not one single truth, but plural realities as different persons see them. Thus, the findings of the current study regarding the contents of participants' personal construct systems cannot be generalised to other contexts or even to other teachers in the same context. Although, by means of a content analysis of all interviews, I showed that certain concerns are shared among the four participants I focused on, analysis of their constructs highlighted the *personal* nature of their theories. Further research is needed to see

whether the moral, affective and educational dimensions of these theories, and the way they make little explicit reference to formal theories of language learning and teaching are typical of experienced teachers in other secondary school EFL settings, as I have implied they might be. Much research still needs to be carried out, then, into the constructs which underlie experienced secondary school EFL teachers' thinking and decision-making, since this remains an under-explored area, but an important one for ELTE worldwide. If more such constructs can be revealed, they might be communicated as alternatives for trainees and novice teachers to construe, too.

Regarding the contents of personal theories of teaching as described in this study, the research design itself may have strongly influenced the nature of the information elicited from participants. However, this does not detract from the overall value and contribution of the present study in terms of offering a new and alternative way of characterising teacher cognition. It should be borne in mind that any kind of data collection method brings its own theory and assumptions to the phenomenon investigated. There is no absolute truth, but within the boundaries of reason and logic there are alternatives.

Although, for reasons of space, I focused in this thesis on just four (out of eight) teachers, I also need to recognize that I could only convey a partial picture of their personal theories. I hope I have managed to provide an in-depth analysis, but, given the large amount of data gathered, I could not discuss all of their constructs in depth and was forced to be selective. Additionally, rep-grids in the contexts of 'Significant others' and 'Classroom activities that I do' elicited certain constructs, but carrying out other interviews with different kinds of elements ('Students in my class', for example) would probably have elicited further constructs. It cannot be said that I elicited the full range of teachers' personal constructs, probably not even in the contexts I chose to investigate. 'Father', for example, ideally could have been presented as an element together with 'Mother' (see section 3.6.3.1 for further explanation). Ultimately, what I hope I have achieved by focusing on just four participants is an in-depth picture, but it remains a partial one. Future studies of this kind could even focus on just one teacher, providing greater depth.

One further methodological limitation needs to be taken into account, concerning a possible lack of reliability of repertory grid interviews, since no two interviews (with the same person) can ever be alike (Bannister and Fransella 1971/1987: 54-55, Fransella and Bannister 1997: 82-83) This issue has not been much addressed by rep-

grid practitioners, with a few exceptions who are psychologists (Bannister and Fransella 1971, Fransella and Bannister 1977, Pope and Keen 1981, Fransella, Bell and Bannister 2004, Jankowicz 2004). Educational researchers tend to adopt this technique without much scrutiny and may assert that the notion of a static mind underlying the concept of reliability is contradictory in itself to the fundamental postulate of PCT which places emphasis on the idea of people as continuously 'in motion'. Our aim, they argue, should be to show extra effort to understand change rather than trying to sustain static versions of events (Bannister and Fransella 1971/1987: 54). On the other hand, experienced teachers can be assumed to have comparatively established ways of thinking, although it may be correspondingly hard to get inside their thoughts since over the years these ways of thinking may have become internalised (Karavas-Doukas 1996). In the present study, participants' personal theories were of this relatively internalised kind and there was no intervention given to prompt them to change dramatically within the duration of the investigation. I used additional data collection instruments (i.e. follow-up and stimulated recall interviews) and also asked the participants to look at their interview transcripts for confirmation of the information they gave to me, as is also suggested by Solas (1992). Nevertheless, rep-grids, apart from being an interview instrument, can be seen as an intervention because they inevitably make people aware of their constructs (Kelly 1955, Sendan 1995). I cannot therefore say for sure that participants did not change their peripheral constructs during the data collection period, or after it ended.

While the contents of the four participants' personal theories are particular to them (see above), I have suggested that insights from the present study into the *structure* of teacher cognition, its sources, and the ways personal theories are or are not translated into practice (via peripheral constructs) *are* generalisable and of wider relevance. Thus, the propositions of Kellyan theory and the use of rep-grids as reported in the present study have, I believe, been insightful in contributing to a deeper understanding of the individual and complex nature of experienced EFL teachers' pedagogic thinking and practices. However, I need to recognize that the theoretical framework which has generated this understanding (Kelly's PCT) is not a commonly agreed one, and that further research will be needed to verify the insights presented, possibly even via a 'grounded theory' approach which does not adopt rep-grid interviews. It could be claimed, even, that my findings regarding the structure of

experienced EFL teachers' cognition are a product of the theoretical framework and the method adopted, although the rep-grid interviews appeared to me a particularly bias-free and efficient means of accessing deep thoughts which might otherwise not have been made available. Indeed, Kelly (1955) himself stated that PCT should be seen as a 'construct' in its own right, alongside all theories that attempt to explain the complexity of human thought and action. In saying this, Kelly frees us from being theory-bound and if we can discover other ways of approaching the same phenomenon, then we are free to go along with them.

Finally, I recognize that, although I make certain claims regarding the sources of teachers' core constructs, and the processes by which they have been elaborated over time (involving the development of peripheral constructs), these areas of interest did not involve such systematic investigation as the main attempt to identify what personal theories of good teaching *are*. More research is needed, then, into the development of personal theories, whether naturalistically over time, or as a result of teacher education interventions and more systematic enquiries need to be carried out into the sources of teachers' theories. Also, the insights developed in the present study regarding the ways core constructs can or cannot be implemented in practice and the different ways core constructs also influence teachers' responses to situational constraints and engage in teacher development seem to me particularly in need of and worthy of further research.

9.4 Theory–practice dissonance: concluding reflections

I wish to end with some reflections on the so-called theory–practice dissonance in ELTE (which, as I stated in the Introduction, I used to suffer from as a novice teacher), asking *whose* theory is to be implemented in EFL teachers' classrooms. As I first suggested in Chapter 1, there may be a mistaken motivation behind the current interest in uncovering teacher cognition in ELTE, namely to change it, rather, that is, than to learn from experienced teachers for incorporating insights from their 'practical wisdom' (Shulman 1987) *into* ELTE.

The dysfunctions of the so-called theory–practice gap are widely debated in the field of ELT (see Clarke 1994). We saw in Chapter 1 how attempts have been made by researchers in the field of general education and ELTE to understand why pre-

service, novice and even experienced teachers cannot implement formal theory in their practices as they are expected to do and how the reasons identified could be remedied by encouraging teachers towards 'better' reflection (pedagogical reasoning). However, in the field of ELTE in particular, perhaps, there is no longer (if there ever was) a consensus as to what or whose theory language teachers should be encouraged to implement. Thus, Clarke (1994) states that:

Individuals involved in theory building and research very seldom are language teachers themselves (p.12). [...] As a direct result, the theory/practice distinction creates strata of expertise, in which, paradoxically, teachers are seen to be less expert than theorists (p.13). [...] The theory of theory/practice discussions is usually imported from other disciplines (p.15). [...] The theory/practice discourse tends to be general, rather than specific, limited in depth and detail. [...] The theory/practice mentality of the profession creates an atmosphere which exaggerates cognitive phenomena and underestimates the institutional, political, and interpersonal constraints that teachers must deal with (p.16).

These are very important observations and have profound implications for how a knowledge base of ELTE should be developed for incorporation into training programmes. However, for the last eleven years since Clarke's article was published, these observations have not always received the attention they deserve from researchers.

Elbaz (1983) remarked very rightly that ultimately it is not for formal theorists to decide what is good for students in classrooms. Attaching value to practical knowledge as personal implies that teachers hold both the power and responsibility while teaching and educating. In Chapter One we saw how, in Richards and Pennington's (1998) study, for example, after trainees graduated they were seen to have 'given in' to the demands of social constraints prevailing in their schools such as students' exam-oriented needs and traditional teaching of grammar, even though during their training they all had maxims in congruence with the principles of communicative language teaching. If we accept the formal theory of communicative language teaching as of primary importance, then we can talk about a theory-practice mismatch. However, if we value more highly the individual characteristics of the

trainees and their prior-to-training maxims which were validated by the social characteristics of the schools they worked in, then talking about a theory–practice dissonance does not make sense at all. On the contrary, we should be seeing that there may be a congruence between what the trainees believe and what they do in the classroom because taking into account students’ exam-oriented needs, for example, is a legitimate justification for sticking with a traditional approach to grammar (cf. Serkan in the present study). If, as Elbaz said, teachers have the power and responsibility in their classrooms, what is more natural than a teacher acting responsibly to cater for the needs of students as s/he perceives them and using her/his power of choice to cater for those needs?

For the reasons outlined above, I suggest that there are less likely to be theory–practice dissonances in reality if we consider theory to be *teachers’ own* theory. In the present study, a theory–practice dissonance can only be discerned with regard to teachers’ personal theories when teachers’ core constructs are impermeable to new alternatives (in the case of Serkan definitely; and in the case of Gun and İlayda, to some extent) but there is no such dissonance when they can develop peripheral constructs which are permeable (Gun, Mine, İlayda).

Finally, then, I suggest that, while it is valuable to uncover teachers’ or student-teachers’ core constructs, images, and so on (what makes them ‘who they are’), teacher educators need to be wary about attempting to change them. Teacher education, one should remember, is not therapy: “For the most part, formal education deals with what presumably are peripheral constructs, while therapy deals with core constructs, or at least with constructs which start out by being core constructs” (Kelly 1955: 483). Teacher educators need to respect the validity of core constructs, and work with teachers sensitively to *extend* but not replace their construct systems.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 2.4 Definitions of key terms of PCT

Constructs: “[A] construct is a way in which two or more things are alike and *thereby* different from a third or more things” (Fransella and Bannister 1977: 5). Each construct has two components distinguished in a bi-polar way: The positive pole of the construct represents the source of the perceived similarity (likeness end/emergent pole/similarity pole), the negative pole of the construct represents the basis of the perceived contrast (contrast end/implicit pole). In other words we might say that a construct is a process of construing in which we affirm the similarity of two or more elements at the similarity pole while simultaneously denying the contrast of a third or more elements to that similarity at the contrast pole.

Construing: “By construing we mean “placing an interpretation”: a person places an interpretation upon what is construed. He erects a structure, within the framework of which the substance takes shape or assumes meaning. The substance which he construes does not produce the structure; the person does” (Kelly 1955: 50).

Elements: “The things or events which are abstracted by a construct are called elements” (Kelly 1955: 137). “The elements must be within the range of convenience of the constructs to be used. ... The elements should be representative of the pool from which they are drawn” (Fransella and Bannister 1977: 13). When choosing elements to elicit constructs for a specific context/problem, the elements must be meaningful for the person whose constructs are to be elicited.

Range of convenience: This refers to the ‘permeability’ or appropriateness of particular constructs to all the elements in the context. Range of convenience covers all of the elements for a particular construct which the person finds applicable.

Focus of convenience: “A construct may be maximally useful for handling certain matters. The range of these matters is called its focus of convenience” (Kelly 1955: 137).

Context: This refers to all those elements to which the construct is applied. It is more restricted than the range of convenience because the construct is applied for the particular situation, and other situations in which the same construct can be permeable are not considered. It is more embracing than the focus of convenience in that the

construct may frequently be permeable for other circumstances as well as for the best one applicable.

Pole: Constructs are dichotomous (bi-polar). Every construct has “two poles, one at each end of its dichotomy” (Kelly 1955: 137). The elements are allocated at each pole, with one pole to represent the similarity, the other to represent the contrast.

Contrast: “The relationship between the two poles of a construct is one of a contrast” (Kelly 1955: 137).

Similarity/Likeness Pole: This refers to the pole at which similar constructs for elements are allocated.

Contrast Pole: This refers to the pole at which contrasting constructs are allocated for the elements which are grouped as similar by the construction.

Emergence: “The emergent pole of a construct is that which embraces most of the immediately perceived context. For example, in the statement, “Mary and Alice are gentle but Jane is aggressive,” gentleness is emergent because it refers to the two thirds of the context. Frequently only the emergent pole is explicitly mentioned, as when a person says, “Mary and Alice are gentle but Jane is not.”” (Kelly 1955:138).

Implicitness: “The implicit pole of a construct is the one which contrasts with the emergent pole. It is frequently not mentioned by name. Sometimes the person has no symbolization for it; it is symbolized only implicitly by the emergent term” (ibid.).

Qualifier: A qualifier is used to narrow down the topic under investigation to elicit constructs which are related to a specific domain (Pope and Keen 1981).

Super-ordinate constructs: A super-ordinate construct is one which subsumes another as one of the elements in its context (Kelly 1955: 479).

Subordinate constructs: A subordinate construct is one which is subsumed as an element in the context of another (Kelly 1955: 479).

Core constructs: “*Core constructs are those which govern a person’s maintenance processes – that is those by which he maintains his identity and existence*” (Kelly 1955: 482, italics in original)

Peripheral constructs: “*Peripheral constructs are those which can be altered without serious modification of the core structure*” [...] Peripheral constructs can be broken up in therapy without precipitating serious anxiety” (Kelly 1955: 482-83, italics in original)

Pre-verbal constructs: “*A preverbal construct is one which continues to be used even though it has no consistent word symbol*” (Kelly 1955: 459, italics in original).

Tight constructs: “*Tight constructs are those which lead to unvarying predictions*” (Kelly 1955: 483, italics in original).

Loose constructs: “*Loose constructs are those which lead to varying predictions, but which, for practical purposes may be said to retain their identity*” (Kelly 1955: 484, italics in original).

Permeability: “A construct is permeable if it will admit to its range of convenience new elements which are not yet construed within its framework” (Kelly 1955: 79).

Anxiety: “*Anxiety is the recognition that the events with which one is confronted lie outside the range of convenience of one’s construct system*” (Kelly 1955: 495)

Threat: “*Threat is the awareness of imminent comprehensive change in one’s core structures*” (Kelly 1955: 489).

Appendix 3.3 Criteria checklist for data analysis and interpretation

Domain: Experienced EFL teachers

1. What are the research questions?
2. Overall, are the data in hand adequate to address the research questions? If not, how can the questions be modified?
3. Do the constructs elicited by the researcher and the illustrative quotations from the interview transcripts match each other?
4. Was the laddering up procedure appropriately used to identify core constructs?
5. Did the researcher take adequate field notes to reflect on the emotions, tone of voice, and body language of the interviewees after the repertory grid interviews finished? Are these notes used at all while identifying core constructs? If so, how?
6. Were the follow-up interviews focusing on all the concerns of the participants? If not, what was missing, how else could they have been explored?
7. How are teachers' profiles constructed? How were the sources of influence on teachers' personal theories extracted for these profiles?
8. How did the researcher use observation field notes while analysing and interpreting the interview transcripts?
9. How did the researcher use classroom observation field notes during the stimulated recall? To what extent does the researcher bring in her own interpretation of the videoed lessons while determining teachers' actual classroom practices?
10. How were the themes found within the transcripts? What kind of coding system was used?
11. Overall, are there any translation problems?

Appendix 3.5.1 Demonstrative rep-grid transcript sample

Sultan: In what important way are two of these people alike and thereby different from the third person? [Firuze, Nebahat and İlknur are the elements. They are colleagues].

Mine: Firuze and İlknur are alike. Nebahat is different.

Sultan: In what way?

Mine: Firuze and İlknur are both very energetic and lively. I construe them as teachers who are *lively and giving positive energy* to their students.

Sultan: What would be the opposite of this?

Mine: Everybody wants to communicate with this kind of a person. Not only in terms of lessons, as a human being you want to interact with this kind of people. Especially if you are going to learn from them, of course the students would prefer a teacher who shares her knowledge with a smile on her face. Her problems, her *personal problems*. ... I believe those teachers *who do not bring their problems to the classroom* are more successful.

Sultan: Do you mean *doesn't bring personal problems* as opposed to *brings personal problems to the classroom*?

Mine: Yes, but you cannot see this happening most of the time. I mean you do not go and tell your students I have such and such problems and this makes me tired and so on, but it consumes your energy if you let them crop up in your mind during the course of a lesson. You become less lively.

Sultan: How would you put it then? *Gives positive energy to her students as opposed to?*

Mine: I could say *less lively* I suppose.

Sultan: I see. *Which pole of this construct do you prefer yourself?*

Mine: *I'm a lively teacher*. I do anything to get the students going if I feel they are bored or tired. I mean *I cannot always succeed of course*. When I do this my audience is the whole classroom, but *individual problems of students are important*. For example this colleague of mine (Nebahat) that I said was different, although she is also energetic and enthusiastic, sometimes gets over ambitious I think.

Sultan: Being lively and being over ambitious. How are they related?

Mine: Nebahat is more ambitious than all three of us. If a teacher can distribute her ambition equally to all the classrooms she teaches, then that's fine. [...] You get emotional and *less lively*. [...] It keeps us going as teachers, *but I cannot say her students can respond to it all at the same level*.

Sultan: Are you evaluating the consequences of being over ambitious as negative both for the students and the teacher herself?

Mine: Yes.

Sultan: *In what way is it meaningful to you students responding to teachers' ambitions at different levels?*

Mine: A good teacher *recognises individual characteristics of her students*. As I said earlier, we cannot expect them to learn in the same way and style, to have the same interest and motivation.

Sultan: *What would be the opposite of recognising individual characteristics of students?*

Mine: Eeee, hmmm. ... You either do this or *leave the students to struggle to make most of the given time*. I remember this teacher at the university who thought *students were responsible to make most of the given time*. She had her own goals and expected students to live up to her own standards. There was no such teacher–student relationship. A few of my friends whom I believed would be very good teachers failed in her course and as a result, repeated one year at the university. *This is unacceptable!* [laughs nervously] *Absolutely!* [...] How can you think *it is the students' responsibility to make most of the given time without paying attention to who they are?* [...]

Appendix 3.6.3 Samples of interview data – rep-grids 1 and 2, follow-up and stimulated recall interview – transcripts of Gün

Note: The first five minutes of each interview are transcribed below.

1. Gün, Rep-grid 1, ‘Significant others’, 25-03-2003

[We are in the Teachers’ Study Room. The first lesson after lunch break just started and everyone else is in their classrooms. Gün has the afternoon free.]

Gün: Yes, shall we start [sipping his tea]?

Sultan: O.K. Please bear in mind that you are going to think in terms of good teaching when you make your reflections. ‘Yourself, your students and parents’. Can you think of a way in which two of these are alike in some important way and thereby different from the third in terms of what you think good teaching is?

Gün: Myself and my students. I’m talking from the point of view of a teacher. Both the teacher and the students are together within the context of education.

Sultan: O.K. How would you define this togetherness if you wanted to with a few key words?

Gün: Well, there is nothing as enjoyable and rewarding as teaching I think because you can see the results of your efforts in students, whereas we don’t have such a cause and effect relationship with the parents.

Sultan: What do you mean by cause and effect relationship?

Gün: A good teacher has the goal and motivation to make a difference in his students’ lives. But at the same time, this is a shared endeavour between the teacher and students. I have always felt like this as long as I can remember. I wanted to become a teacher to make a difference.

Sultan: I see. Why is it important for you to make a difference in students’ lives?

Gün: I would say because we run towards the same goal first of all. ... Myself, to bring up good individuals. Both of us [teacher and students] want to achieve the same thing. We run towards the same goal, but, parents are linked to the context of education indirectly, they are outside.

Sultan: Why do you think parents are outside as different from you and your students running towards the same goal?

Gün: I thought about it from my own point of view. Most probably parents also have similar goals for their children, but I'm approaching the topic as a teacher. We share the same physical atmosphere, breathe the same air, and have a lot of things in common. As well as teaching and education, I and my students share emotions. Then, ... If you ask me questions, I think I can give you clearer answers.

Sultan: How do you feel when you think about the goal that you share with your students?

Gün: First of all, I think about the future. [pauses here for a while] Why? [to himself], to make the world a better place. Peace at home, peace in the world. This is what Atatürk said eighty years ago [his voice quivers and speeds up a bit from here onwards]. I think about the future. I think about nurturing good human beings for the future of the world and for our country. I think about endless possibilities and opportunities for my own children and my students. I see tomorrow's architects, doctors, scientists, mothers and fathers in their eyes. My students, too, I believe want to have good jobs in the future and be good people. As I said, we run towards the same goal here. ... Anything else?

Sultan: Thank you. I see. So, would it be alright to write down this construct as 'we run towards the same goal – outside'?

Gün: Hmm. hmm. Yes.

Sultan: O.K. Among your colleagues here [names on the cards]: Is there any way in which you find two of them as similar in some meaningful way for you in terms of good teaching whereby the third one is somewhat different?

Gün: I did not think like that when I wrote their names down. I mean they have all been instrumental in my teaching in one way or another. That's why I wrote their names down because I believe I have got beautiful things from all three of them.

Sultan: Do you want to think for a while perhaps? Can you remember those beautiful things about these three colleagues that have inspired you?

Gün: For example, why do I like Bilge? Besides teaching and education, she also deals with the psychological and affective needs of her students. She is also very organised and well-prepared in the classroom. Why do I like Cem? Him getting students to do project and group work. He gets every student to participate in the activities. He encourages us to do the same. He is very knowledgeable, although I

cannot say easily approachable. But that's a different issue. Mehmet, I think with his trust, I mean "trust" in inverted commas, in his students. Hmm. Yes.

Sultan: Hmm. You counted quite a few things there which I think might be useful if we could talk about them in more detail.

Gün: Yes, sure.

Sultan: Do you now think you can make any groups of three adding 'Myself' as an element to these three colleagues?

Gün: Hmm. Yes, I can. But also I can now say that Cem and Mehmet are slightly more similar to each other and different from Bilge. I think I'm closer to Cem and Mehmet. Perhaps it is because Bilge is more emotional so she is more concerned with her students' affective states. Hmm. It is difficult. I liken myself to all of them in various ways, but I cannot really distinguish them from each other including myself in terms of our approach to education and teaching. Hmm. Cem and Mehmet's most common characteristic is implementing group and project work which I like best myself.

Sultan: Do you mean, in terms of good teaching practice, Mehmet and Cem are alike in that they do project and group work?

Gün: Yes. That's right.

Sultan: O.K. and you yourself as a teacher like implementing group and project work best [he nods]? So, can we say a good teacher implements group work and project work?

Gün: Yes. I think so.

Sultan: How would you describe another teacher different from a teacher who implements group and project work?

Gün: I would say he is a fastidious teacher. Someone who is not flexible and is very traditional as a teacher. Fastidious.

[...]

2. Gün, Rep-grid 2, 'Classroom activities that I do', 01-04-2003

[We are in the English Teachers' Room. Gün is a little excited because his daughter and son finally got their funding and visas extended to continue their education in the US. "They can come home now for a holiday", Gün tells me. "They have been stranded there while waiting for their applications to come through for the M type

visa. Their mother missed them so much.” We chat for a while about his children before eliciting the elements for the interview. He is clearly proud of their achievements in a foreign country and tells me how a local [US] newspaper tracked them for a year as part of a research project into students’ success in college education. This brings him back to the points he made during our first interview about indifferent parents and tells me one more time how important it is that parents should be interested in what their children are up to at school.]

Sultan: O.K. Shall we just try and see with 1, 2, 3 and then 3, 4, 5 and so on? If that does not work, we can always make other groups of three as you wish. And thinking in terms of good teaching should help, too.

Gün: Yes, that’s fine.

Sultan: Fine. Which of these two [‘antonym/synonym’ (1), ‘use the new words in sentences’ (2) and ‘explain grammar when necessary with simple sentences’ (3)] do you think are similar in some important way and thereby different from the third in terms of good teaching?

Gün: Yes, I’m thinking. ... two and three are similar in the sense that they are carried out with simple sentences to also involve the students in the process. Also, when you keep it simple, they come up with their own sentences.

Sultan: Hmm. Hmm. How do you achieve this?

Gün: After I do my presentation with a few examples I always ask them for their own examples. According to what they come up with I can tell how much they understood and how I should complement the information without giving too much detail.

Sultan: Are there any situations where this does not happen?

Gün: Only at the beginning. I mean, at the beginning of your presentation, which is something totally new. After giving some input and bringing them to a readiness level I can involve the students in the lesson. Before this, I do a lot of planning in my head to figure out the easiest and simplest way to present new information. The aim is to involve everybody in this.

Sultan: Then, if you wanted to articulate this as a construct, to begin with, can you say two and three are similar because while you implement them students are also involved?

Gün: Yes, that’s what I’m saying. Whereas, in this one [antonym/synonym], students are receivers. It is my short cut approach especially while teaching adjectives. It

makes it easier for the teacher. More time-saving. Sometimes there are very short sections in the textbooks that do not require the teacher to give too much detail. I prefer this. Then again, you would not see me doing all of these activities in the same way, to the same degree in every lesson. One just chooses when one needs to.

Sultan: Thank you. How about this one? In what meaningful way can you bring two of these together as being different from the third?

Gün: Talking points and role-play are similar. Both are to practise speaking whereas in explaining grammar with simple sentences students are receivers. It is also limited in terms of the time I devote to it. Speaking is the stage where students are most productive and also involved in the lesson. They want to participate more and tell their ideas to the class. Role-play is a bit more limited than free flowing talking points, but it encourages students to be creative and if the student has background knowledge he or she can come up with really interesting things.

Sultan: So, students are productive and involved in the lesson when they have speaking chances, right?

Gün: Yes, student involvement and students are productive.

Sultan: By contrast? What would be a situation like where students were not involved and productive?

Gün: They would be just sitting there and maybe taking notes from what I say and write on the board or do the drills in the book maybe. It would not be as communicative and they would not benefit from it much.

Sultan: What do you think has to happen for them to benefit?

Gün: It has got to be their own efforts and motivation. But as a teacher I cannot expect this to materialise unless I make an effort, too, to make them productive. But I do not mean them doing a lot of exercises without learning and understanding.

Sultan: When you say 'communicative', do you mean communicative in terms of language teaching methods or do you mean communication between the teacher and the students?

Gün: Remind me what I said?

Sultan: O.K. Hmmm. Shall we rewind the tape and listen to it? [tape rewound and listened to] There, you say that if the students just sit down and make notes it will not be as communicative.

Gün: Hmm. Hmm. Yes. I meant communicativeness in learning the language. For their part. Involvement, you see. I'm trying to get them to use the language as much as possible by giving them chances to speak even when I teach grammar with simple sentences by asking them to give their own examples. They do not just sit and write what they see on the blackboard in my lessons.

Sultan: Right. Thank you. Do you want to have a look at the cards yourself and choose your own triad for construal this once?

Gün: Yes. Why not? How about 5, 8 and 9?

Sultan: Which of these two do you construe as similar and thereby different from the third in terms of good teaching?

Gün: 'Talking points and questions in the textbook' and 'competition' are similar.

Sultan: In what way?

Gün: Hmm, Yes, they are all involving students aren't they?. But these two have communicative function similarity.

Sultan: As opposed to?

Gün: Not communicative. I mean I get them to read aloud to check their pronunciation, intonation, punctuation marks, and so on. Here they have an idea and they have to express it to be understood by the rest of us.

Sultan: In what way do you find communicative function meaningful?

Gün: In what way do I find it meaningful? The 'function' means the usefulness of something, doesn't it? So, usefulness of communication that is. This brings me back to our discussion we had last week. I remember telling you we have a common goal with my students that they want to be good individuals and I want to help them with this. Why do they learn English in the first place? I know for most of them it is a gateway to having good jobs in the future, but for me there is another motivation. I want to see them in the future serving for this country's benefit in today's world. If they cannot communicate to the rest of the world their hopes and ideas, I will have failed as a teacher. Everything has changed so much now. One has to be able to put two words together in English if one wants to be taken seriously. We have got our own problems which I know are not unknown to the rest of the world either. And it is a big image making, marketing industry out there and English is indispensable as the common language. My children in the US are experiencing this at the moment. It's not only to be able to go and sit in a cafe and order 'Two cappuccinos please, thank you'. Communication means more than this nowadays.

[...]

3. Gün, Follow-up interview, 09-04-2003

[Today we are in the Teachers' Study Room again. Gün had his afternoon lessons cancelled because of the rehearsals students had to attend for National Children's Day celebrations on 23rd April. This seems to be a common problem of all subject teachers in the summer term. There are quite a few official celebratory or commemoration events that students have to be taken to participate in as part of the curriculum, but then teachers complain they cannot finish the syllabus on time. Gün tells me how he has to work out now how much he can leave out without affecting students' performance in the exams. He says prioritising is something he has to do on a regular basis given the circumstances. However, today's cancellation was useful for me to conduct this interview and speed up my research a bit]

Sultan: Today I would like to begin by exploring some points from our previous two interviews that I thought we might find useful to remember and reflect on. I also took into account the corrections you made in your notebook while preparing these questions. As you can see we have thirty-one questions to go through today. Are you O.K. to carry on another day in case we cannot finish them all today?

Gün: It is fine by me, but on Monday the inspectors are coming [**Sultan:** Are they?] and I do not think I will have time for you. Maybe we can continue it on Friday afternoon if they have another rehearsal like today.

Sultan: O.K. Let's see how we do today. Do you want to have an overall look at the questions first and familiarise yourself with them for a few minutes? And here is a summary of our initial interviews that I wrote. You can see your constructs listed at the top of the page followed by my third person summary. You also have the actual transcripts you went through last weekend in your notebook as you might remember. Do you want to have the notebook in front of you, too?

Gün: Hmm. Yes. Shall we have some tea while I go through this?

[After this I discuss with Gün his feedback on the summary profile of him I constructed in the third person and then we start the follow-up interview]

Sultan: You said that you wanted to become a teacher to make a difference in students' lives. Is there any particular event or memory that you might remember which might have been influential on your decision? You said that several teachers were instrumental during your secondary years during our first interview. Like Sevim, for example, with her encouragement and giving responsibility. What else could you say?

Gün: Hmm. Hmmm. Yes. During my high school years I had two ambitions. One of them was to become a doctor; one of them was to become an English teacher. In later years I thought that medical school was not for me. Perhaps because of my parents' encouragement I was initially thinking to become a doctor. But over the years my English teachers generally happened to be very cultured, and having different perspectives on issues as far as I could observe. They could look at events from various angles. Then I was also convinced that foreign language teachers were more open to other cultures, they could read in another language, they could communicate with people abroad and ultimately they had a much broader understanding of issues. While at the university I got a very good offer, too, from a big company. But I said no. I said I will teach. I had idealism in me then. And I had asked myself the question 'Why did I study for years to become a teacher?'. I did not accept to do another job that did not involve teaching. I had so many nice ideas, but ... [sighs]. Teachers have problems. English teachers have problems. I like English lessons being taught in our schools, but I do not think we should be forcing people to learn it unless they want to. I mean your audience should be willing to learn it. Students should put their hearts into it. Otherwise, this is not happening in the way it should. [Gün talked a lot more about the problems teachers shared across the country, highlighting the lack of motivation in state schools towards learning English, crowded classrooms, low salaries and lack of in-service opportunities for the majority of the country. Then I moved on to the second question.]

Sultan: You said you wanted to nurture good individuals for the future. Can you explain a bit more how you link teaching English with this wider goal of yours?

Gün: I can construe my role in terms of providing a communicative skill for my students. The world is united now. It is united and global in every sense. For that reason we need people who know English for our country's welfare. If we can teach good English, we will have nurtured people who can communicate with the rest of the world.

Sultan: Do you remember that when we were discussing about the importance of the communicative function of certain activities such as role-play and talking points, you made similar comments? Can we say then that as a teacher you give more weight to such activities because ultimately they are providing a means to an end, to a wider goal of yours in nurturing good individuals?

Gün: It all adds up doesn't it? How I wanted to become a teacher years ago was motivated by the same desire in the first place. Sevim, my English teacher, was particularly instrumental in my choices. And I believe today I achieved personal fulfilment due to my choice of attitude back then. I want my own children and students also to fulfil themselves. To have a broader perspective on certain issues.

Sultan: Thank you. What do you think are the advantages of being well-prepared and well-organised for your lessons?

Gün: Being well-prepared and organised. Firstly, you can find the things you need at the time you need them. It prevents wasting time. In the classroom, you can give the information in a timely fashion and according to the appropriate order. In fact, this thinking of mine has been changing lately. I watched a programme on TV last night. It was saying being well-organised and prepared all the time makes a person stressed and ages them. I mean, having certain principles and sticking with them all the time to be organised. Health-related issues such as the link between our heart and brain. I have been thinking about this since yesterday [laughs].

[...]

4. Gün, Stimulated recall, Skill-based course, two hours, 23-04-2003

[Today I am visiting Gün at his house to watch his video. He invited me over to his house partly for its convenience for both of us and partly he wanted his wife Yeliz to see his teaching, too. They both seem pleased to see me when I arrive at their door with a bouquet of lilies my mother picked for them from our garden. I notice that they have a much nicer garden and much nicer looking lilies in the front. Gün is the same at home as he has been at school and he is quite relaxed with his wife present. He brings me some pastries his wife baked especially for me. Yeliz takes her place on a sofa at the back of their sitting room while Gün and I set up the video. Gün tells me he wants a copy to keep if I do not mind. Of course I do not. I could not be happier. We go through the recall protocol and he tells me he understands my prompts]

[1st lesson: The lesson begins with Gün taking the roll call and signing the register. Then he checks homework and signs students' notebooks. He introduces the day's topic and starts the lesson with vocabulary teaching]

Gün: I must start using contact lenses. I noticed that I fiddle with my glasses too much. Perhaps this is because this year is the first time in my life that I was prescribed glasses. I'm not used to them. I might disturb the students' motivation.

[There are some adjectives to be taught and Gün draws a diagram on the board]

Gün: I drew a diagram, extra information showing adjectives meaning the same thing, but with varying degrees of strength. 'Terrified' and 'petrified' are not in the topic. I added them. Better learnt visually. I think they don't forget. Like the trivet I drew for you during our previous interviews. ... Hmm. And as we can see, I did not find it enough students giving the meanings of the words orally. It might not be sustained. Moreover, some words might have more than one meaning. So, I get them to write on the board the meaning which the textbook topic is utilising after we discuss other meanings. I also like that I simplified their sentences after hearing them. I advocate teaching vocabulary in the simplest way possible so it can be sustained. ... One can unite the classroom by engaging the students in board work and note-taking so everybody learns and participates in the lesson equally. I had my own list that I prepared at home. If I wanted to I could get one student to copy it on the board while the rest of the class took it down, but there would be no classroom unity and student involvement there. Here all the students are involved in the discussion and they all expect to come up to the board and share with the class what they learnt. ... Students are more careful and motivated, too. Look, it is obvious that students are participating because they warn me about another word. It is good that when they initiate something they can say it in English. I like this because it is more authentic. ... At the beginning of the lesson when I was taking the register for example, it looks like there is no authority in the classroom because I have no communication or involvement with them there, but once the lesson starts and the teacher involves everybody in the discourse, the students become one with the teacher. ... What do you think? How does it look from outside? Am I being subjective?

Sultan: I would say it is not apparent from here that all these thoughts are going in your head at the time of your teaching. You seem to be very much focused on the students. I noticed you checked their homework at the beginning of the lesson.

Gün: This happened to me once. I used to assign homework, but was not checking it always. One day one of my students rebelled against it. He said 'Teacher, we are putting so much work into this. Are we doing it for nothing? You did not check our homework today either'. While I thought I was following a flexible approach by not checking homework always, some of my students saw this as me being invalidating and not respecting their efforts.

[On the video, Gün has just asked students what they are afraid of most and also prompted them to use the different adjectives they have just learnt to describe their fears and nightmares to their classmates.]

Gün: The topic is very convenient for them to recall things from their own experiences. We all have fears and see nightmares. So, when I asked a general question 'What are you afraid of most?', they were very articulate in describing their fears and dreams.

Sultan: I noticed you also asked about the recent earthquake.

Gün: I asked about the earthquake because it is a very recent and frightening experience. I heard it from a student sitting at the front actually and I thought they might relate to it better and speak more about their feelings. ... What I liked about myself here is that I saw that I let students think to come up with their own ideas. In the past, I didn't use to. I used to give example situations and sentences myself and think that 'They heard it, wrote it down and now they know it'. I realised the necessity of letting them be creative and leaving them time and space to digest the new information much later.

Sultan: How did you come to realise this?

Gün: Gradually. I think after I started distancing myself from myself a little and started to ... started to feel secure as a teacher, that I was accepted and letting students be would not spoil this.

[...]

Appendix 3.6.4 Semi-structured follow-up questions asked to all teachers

- 1. Is there anything you want to say about pair and group work?**
- 2. Is there anything you want to say about error correction?**
- 3. Is there anything you want to say about a native speaker teacher coming to school?**
- 4. In the school, lessons are shared among teachers separately for the main course and the skills-based course. How do you think this kind of sharing of responsibility influences you as a teacher and your communication with your colleagues? Are there any advantages/disadvantages?**
- 5. How do you usually start a lesson?**
- 6. How do you usually end a lesson?**
- 7. What kind of situations do you experience during the course of a lesson that makes you say 'I wish it had not happened'?**
- 8. What kind of situations do you experience during the course of a lesson that makes you fulfilled and happy?**
- 9. How was your view of English teaching during your university years?**
- 10. What kind of expectations did you have then?**
- 11. What kind of a change have you gone through since?**
- 12. Have you ever taken part in in-service training?**
- 13. How do you conceptualise effective and useful in-service training?**
- 14. How do you feel about your present school?**
- 15. Are there any important things for you that I did not ask, but you feel you want to express?**

Appendix 3.7.2.1 Initial content analysis table for all eight participants

'X' indicates that an item was mentioned as important. Items marked '*' are practices associated with the principles written in bold under *Classroom practice and pedagogy* and *Monitor self* categories.

	Serkan	Oya	Tuna	Gün	Mine	Güneş	İlayda	Canan
RELATIONSHIPS								
Teacher and student relationship								
Being a team	X			X				
Cannot tolerate to lose students	X				X		X	
Taking into account affective needs of students	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Providing equal opportunities to students	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Teacher's personal life			X		X	X		X
Being kindly-severe		X	X	X		X		X
Not creating fear and anxiety in students	X			X	X	X	X	
Being honest and sincere with students						X	X	
Teacher and parent relationship								
Doesn't exist at all	X	X					X	
Students' behavioural / psychological problems			X	X	X	X		X
Students' achievement				X	X			X
Colleagues								
Enjoyment of collaboration	X	X,	X	X	X	X	X	X
Difficulty in collaboration	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Personal affinity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
ROLES								
Teacher's role								

	Serkan	Oya	Tuna	Gün	Mine	Güneş	İlayda	Canan
Providing a good example through one's own actions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Putting forward one's own values	X,	X	X	X	X	X		X
Dealing with behavioural and psychological problems of students	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Guiding students to become good individuals and citizens			X	X				X
Teacher being facilitator	X			X	X		X	
Transmission of subject knowledge and general world knowledge		X	X			X		X
Being student centred	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Student's role								
Motivated to learn	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shares responsibility with the teacher	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Trusts the teacher	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parents' role								
Care about what is happening at school			X	X		X		X
Collaborative with the teacher			X	X				X
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT								
Learning something new everyday	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Being ambitious and innovative	X	X			X		X	X
Trying to improve oneself with a positive outlook					X		X	
Developing effective teaching skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Initial and in-service training	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Collaboration with colleagues	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
School administration support system	X	X			X			X

	Serkan	Oya	Tuna	Gün	Mine	Güneş	İlayda	Canan
Recognition and promotion	X	X						X
Having to do things out of obligation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Funding	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Experience (recall-reflection-reframing/reproduction)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Time	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Occupational choice	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Researching	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
CLASSROOM PRACTICE AND PEDAGOGY								
Implement syllabus goals								
*Taking into account students' exam needs	X		X					X
*prioritising	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Facilitate learning for students								
*Textbook being a tool, not a goal	X	X					X	
*Teaching little, but in the best way possible		X	X	X	X	X		X
* Motivating students	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
* Explaining the aim of each lesson to students	X			X	X	X		
* Relevance/ usefulness of the topics to/for students' future lives	X	X		X				X
* Doing group work/ pair work or project work to develop responsibility	X			X				
* Use problem-solving activities	X				X			X
* Use L1 in the classroom when needed	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
* Peer-correction and peer feedback	X			X				
* Homework	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Enhance target language use in the classroom								
* Develop speaking skills		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

	Serkan	Oya	Tuna	Gün	Mine	Güneş	İlayda	Canan
* Question and answer technique		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
* Encouraging students to discuss		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
* Games			X	X		X		X
* Songs	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
* Role-play		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
* Native speaker Sarah	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
* Teacher using English most of the time	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
* Not correcting errors while speaking		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
* get students correct each other's speaking errors			X				X, -	
* Rewarding / praising the students	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Promote								
Cultural diversity in perspectives	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Integration to the global world		X		X		X		X
Prevent								
Degeneration in the society	X	X	X	X	X		X	
MONITOR SELF								
* Being sure of one's aims in the classroom		X		X				
* Talking about the presentation of lessons with colleagues		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
* Planning in advance				X	X			X
* Needs assessment and revision for syllabus	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
* Check homework and give feedback	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
* Formative assessment							X	
* Summative assessment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Textbooks and cultural degeneration	X	X	X	X				

Appendix 3.7.2.2 Refined content analysis table for the four participants included at the writing up stage

'X' indicates that an item was mentioned as important, 'X, -' indicates a negative attitude, 'X, +, -' indicates mixed feelings. Items marked '*' are practices associated with the principles written in bold under *Classroom practice and pedagogy*.

	Gün	Serkan	İlayda	Mine
	RELATIONSHIPS AND ROLES			
	Students			
Teacher should be student-centred to facilitate learning	X	X	X	X
Students should be motivated to learn	X	X	X	X
Students should share responsibility with the teacher	X	X	X	X
Students should trust the teacher	X	X	X	X
Take into account affective needs of students	X	X	X	X
Provide equal opportunities to students	X	X	X	X
Do not create fear and anxiety in students	X	X	X	X
Teachers have an educational role	X	X	X	X
Provide a good example through one's own actions	X	X	X	X
Deal with behavioural and psychological problems of students	X	X	X	X
Do not put forward own values	X	X		X
Cannot tolerate losing students	X		X	X
Being a team	X	X		
Leave personal life outside				X
Should have a kindly-severe approach	X			
Be honest and sincere with students			X	
Complete the missing part of students		X		
Pay attention to individual willingness of students on a day-to-day basis				X
Guide students to become good individuals and citizens	X			
	Parents			
Teacher-parent relationship			X	

does not exist at all though it should				
	Gün	Serkan	İlayda	Mine
Teacher-parent relationship does not always exist, but it should	X			X
Teacher-parent relationship does not exist at all		X		
Should care about what is happening at school	X			
Should be collaborative with the teacher	X			
	Colleagues			
There is enjoyment from collaboration with colleagues	X			X
There is difficulty in collaborating with colleagues		X	X	
Personal affinity is important		X	X	
Personal differences can be, but are not necessarily obstacles for collaboration	X			X
External obligation to collaborate is helpful	X			X
	Constraints/opportunities			
Students	X	X, -	X, -	X
Parents	X		X, -	X
Colleagues	X	X, -	X, -	X
	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
	A good teacher ...			
Learns something new every day	X	X	X	X
Researches and builds on experience (recall-reflection-reframing/reproduction)	X	X	X	X
Develops effective teaching skills	X	X	X	X
Collaborates with colleagues to learn more	X	X, +, -	X, +, -	X
Joins in-service training	X	X	X	X
Is ambitious and innovative		X	X, +, -	X, +, -
Tries to improve oneself with a positive outlook			X	X
	Constraints/opportunities			
Lack of funding and time	X, -	X, -	X, -	X, -
Occupational choice determines how one develops	X	X	X	X
Usefulness of initial training	X, -	X, -	X, -	X
Having to do things out of obligation	X, -	X, -	X, -	X, -
School administration support system		X, -		X
Recognition and promotion		X, -		
	CLASSROOM PRACTICE AND PEDAGOGY			
	Implement syllabus goals according to students' needs			
*Prioritise	X	X	X	X

	Gün	Serkan	İlayda	Mine
*Take into account students' exam needs	X			
Facilitate learning for students				
* Use L1 in the classroom when needed	X	X	X	X
* Motivate students	X	X	X	X
* Homework	X	X	X	X
* Explain the aim of each lesson to students	X	X		X
*Teach little, but in the best way possible	X			X
* Useful/relevant topics for students' future lives	X	X		
* Do pair/group work or project work to develop responsibility	X	X		
* Use problem-solving activities		X		X
* Peer-correction and peer feedback	X	X		
Enhance target language use in the classroom				
* Reward / praise students	X	X	X	X
* Native speaker Sarah	X, +, -	X	X	X
* Use English most of the time	X	X, -	X	X
* Develop speaking skills	X		X	X
* Question and answer technique	X		X	X
* Encourage students to discuss	X		X	X
* Role-play	X		X	X
* Don't correct errors while students speak	X		X	X
* Songs	X	X		X
* Games	X			
*Students correct each other's speaking errors			X, -	
Monitor self				
* Needs assessment and revision of syllabus	X	X	X	X
* Check homework and give feedback	X	X	X	X
*Summative assessment	X	X	X	X
* Talk about the presentation of lessons with colleagues	X		X	X
* Plan in advance	X			X
*Be sure of one's aims in the classroom	X			
*Formative assessment			X	
Promote intercultural awareness				

	Gün	Serkan	İlayda	Mine
Promote cultural diversity in perspectives	X, +, -	X, -	X	X
Promote integration to the global world	X			
Prevent cultural degeneration				
Prevent degeneration in the society	X	X	X	X
Textbooks and cultural degeneration	X	X		
Constraints				
Syllabus	X, -	X, -	X, -	X-, +
Students' problems in speaking	X, -	X, -	X, -	X, -, +
Assessment system		X, -		
Grammar – to do with exams			X, -	
Topics in the textbooks	X, -			

Appendix 4.2.1 Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of Gün's constructs in the context of 'Significant others'

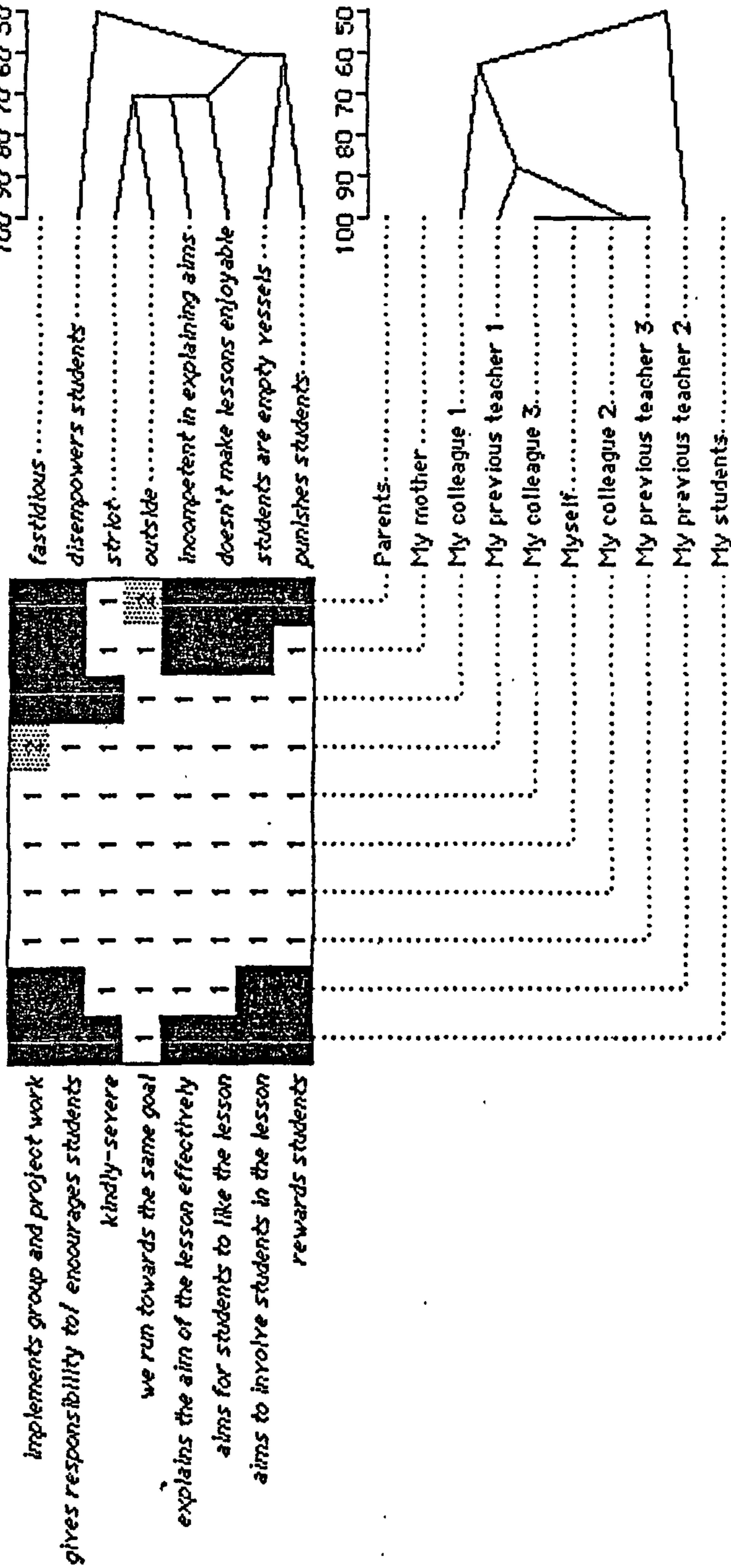
WebGrid-III Display

Display Gün (25 years experience), Domain: EFL experienced teachers
 Context: Significant others - good teaching, 10 elements, 8 constructs

<i>we run towards the same goal</i>	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	outside
<i>gives responsibility to/ encourages students</i>	1	?	?	?	1	1	1	?	1	?	1	?	?	disempowers students
<i>aims to involve students in the lesson</i>	1	?	?	?	1	1	1	?	1	?	?	?	?	students are empty vessels
<i>implements group and project work</i>	1	?	?	?	1	1	2	?	1	?	?	?	?	fastidious
<i>kindly-severe</i>	1	?	1	?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	strict
<i>explains the aim of the lesson effectively</i>	1	?	?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	?	?	incompetent in explaining aims
<i>rewards students</i>	1	?	?	1	1	1	1	?	1	?	1	1	1	punishes students
<i>aims for students to like the lesson</i>	1	?	?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	?	?	doesn't make lessons enjoyable
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	My mother
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	My previous teacher 3
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	My previous teacher 2
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	My previous teacher 1
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	My colleague 3
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	My colleague 2
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	My colleague 1
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Parents
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	My students
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Myself

WebGrid-III FOCUS Clustering

FOCUS Gun (25 years experience), Domain: EFL experienced teachers
 Context: Significant others - good teaching, 10 elements, 8 constructs



Appendix 4.2.2 Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of Serkan's constructs in the context of 'Significant others'

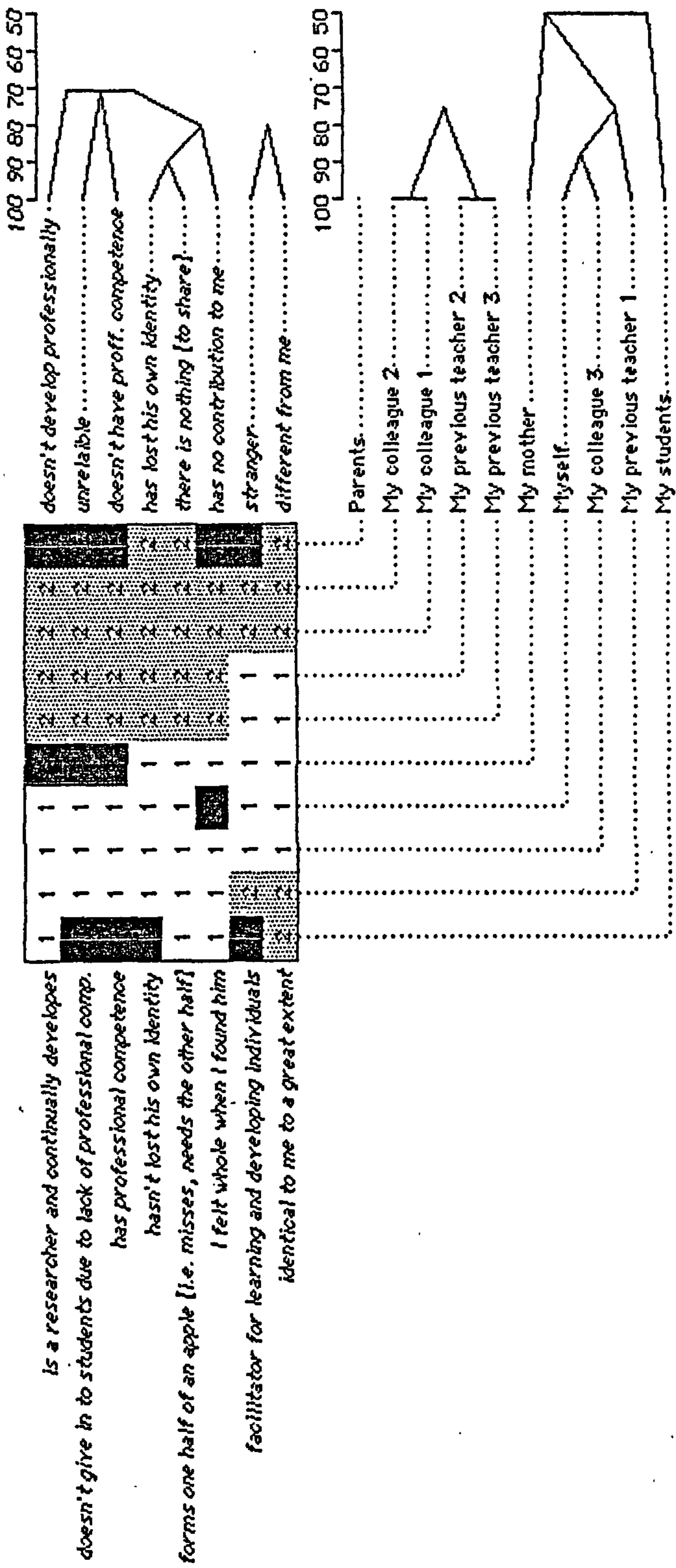
WebGrid-III Display

Display Serkan (17 years experience), Domain: EFL experienced teachers
 Context: Significant others - good teaching, 10 elements, 8 constructs

<i>forms one half of an apple [i.e. misses, needs the other half]</i>	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	there is nothing [to share]
<i>has professional competence</i>	1	?	?	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	?	?	doesn't have prof. competence
<i>doesn't give in to students due to lack of professional comp.</i>	1	?	?	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	?	?	unreliable
<i>hasn't lost his own identity</i>	1	?	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	has lost his own identity
<i>I felt whole when I found him</i>	?	1	?	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	has no contribution to me
<i>is a researcher and continually develops</i>	1	1	?	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	?	?	doesn't develop professionally
<i>facilitator for learning and developing individuals</i>	1	?	?	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	stranger
<i>identical to me to a great extent</i>	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	different from me
																My mother
																My previous teacher 3
																My previous teacher 2
																My previous teacher 1
																My colleague 3
																My colleague 2
																My colleague 1
																Parents
																My students
																Myself

WebGrid-III FOCUS Clustering

FOCUS Serkan (17 years experience), Domain: EFL experienced teachers
 Context: Significant others - good teaching, 10 elements, 8 constructs



Appendix 4.2.3 Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of İlayda's constructs in the context of 'Significant others'

WebGrid-III Display

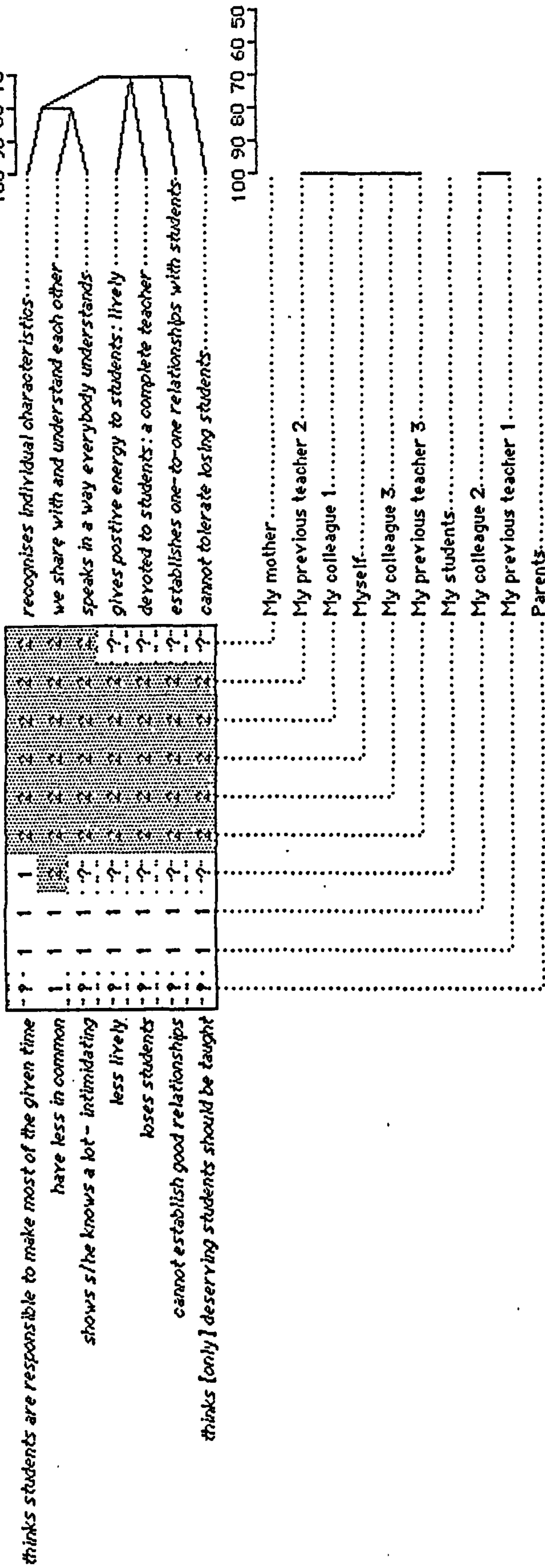
Display İlayda (11 years experience), Domain: EFL experienced teachers
 Context: Significant others - good teaching, 10 elements, 5 constructs

<i>aims to get students like the lesson</i>	1	?	?	2	2	1	2	2	1	?	<i>a mechanical teacher</i>
<i>compassionate and respects students</i>	1	?	?	2	2	1	2	2	1	?	<i>creates fear and anxiety</i>
<i>humble and modest</i>	1	1	?	2	2	1	2	2	1	?	<i>intimidating: says 'Only I can do this'</i>
<i>doesn't kill time in the classroom and has responsibility</i>	1	?	?	2	2	1	2	2	1	?	<i>doesn't have responsibility</i>
<i>cannot exist without each other</i>	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	<i>outside</i>

..... My mother
 My previous teacher 3
 My previous teacher 2
 My previous teacher 1
 My colleague 3
 My colleague 2
 My colleague 1
 Parents
 My students
 Myself

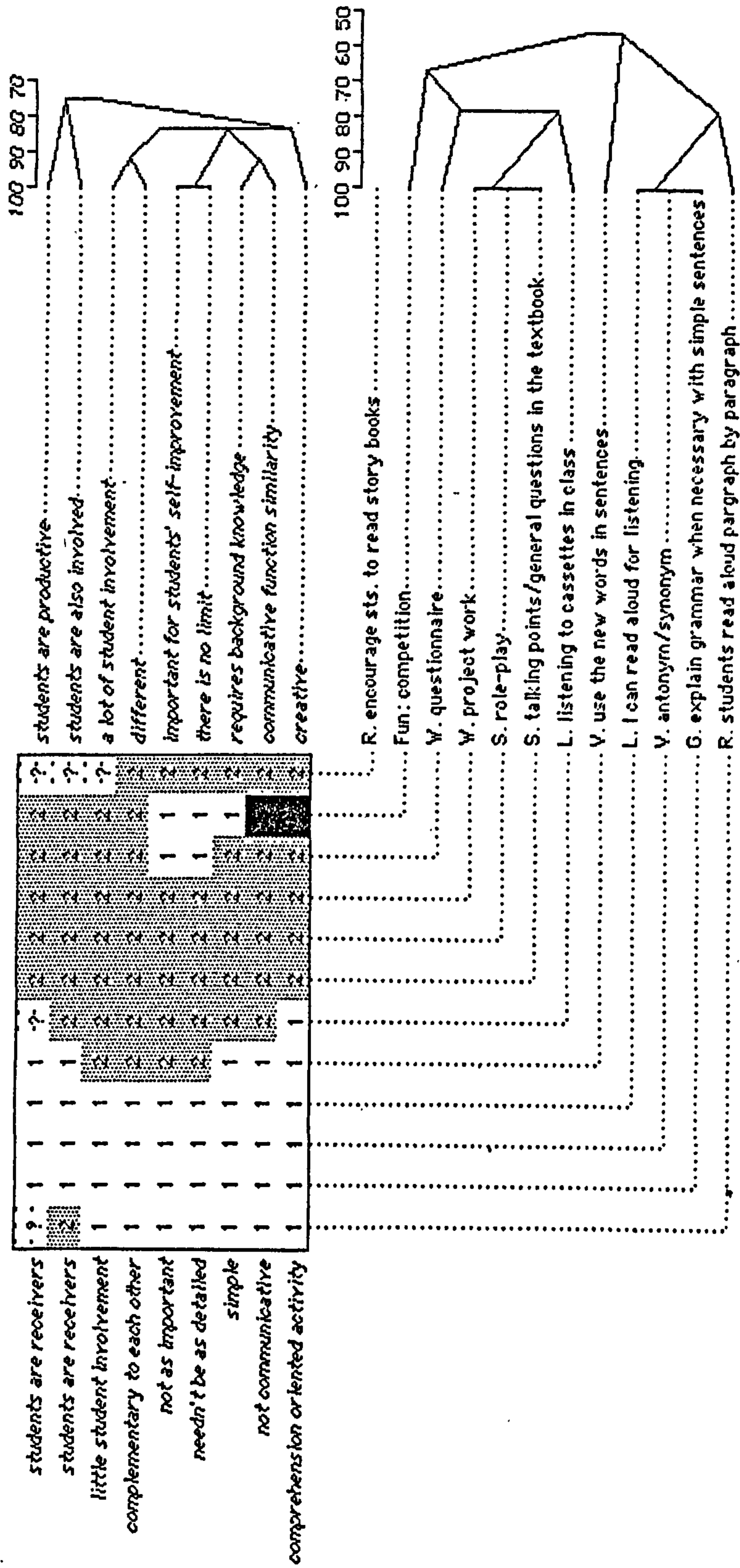
WebGrid-III FOCUS Clustering

FOCUS Mine (11 years experience), Domain: EFL experienced teachers
 Context: Significant others - Good teaching, 10 elements, 7 constructs



WebGrid-III FOCUS Clustering

FOCUS Gun (25 years experience), Domain: EFL experienced teachers
 Context: Classroom activities that I do, 12 elements, 9 constructs



Appendix 6.3.3 Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of Serkan's constructs in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do'

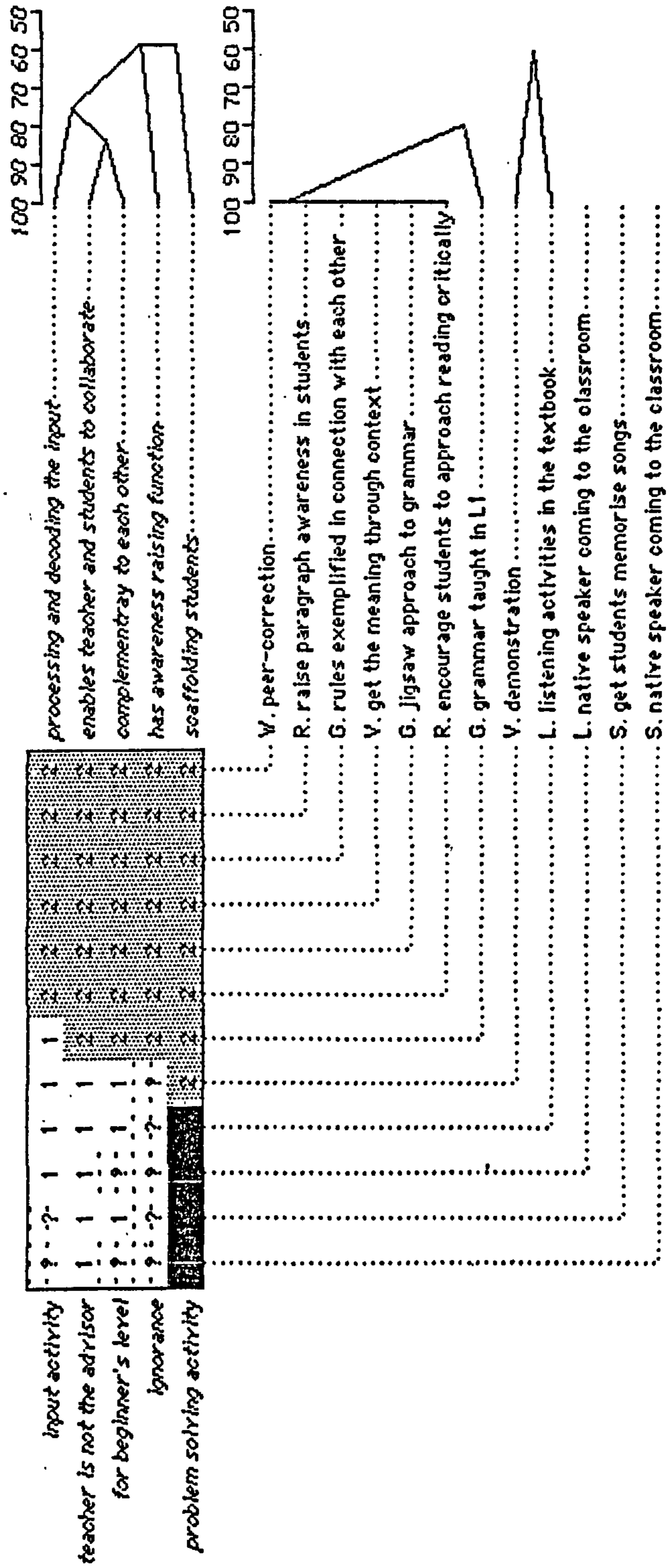
WebGrid-III Display

Display Serkan (17 years experience), Domain: EFL experienced teachers
Context: Classroom activities that I do, 12 elements, 5 constructs

1	2	1	1	1	2	?	2	?	1	1	1	1	for beginner's level
1	2	2	1	1	2	?	2	?	?	1	1	1	input activity
1	?	1	1	1	?	?	?	?	?	1	1	1	ignorance
2	2	2	2	2	?	?	?	?	?	2	2	2	scaffolding students
1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	teacher is not the advisor
													W. peer-correction
													R. encourage students to approach reading critically
													R. raise paragraph awareness in students
													S. native speaker coming to the classroom
													S. get students memorise songs
													L. native speaker coming to the classroom
													L. listening activities in the textbook
													G. jigsaw approach to grammar
													G. rules exemplified in connection with each other
													G. grammar taught in L1
													V. demonstration
													V. get the meaning through context

WebGrid-III FOCUS Clustering

FOCUS Serkan (17 years experience), Domain: EFL experienced teachers
 Context: Classroom activities that I do, 12 elements, 5 constructs



Appendix 6.3.4 Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of İlayda's constructs in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do'

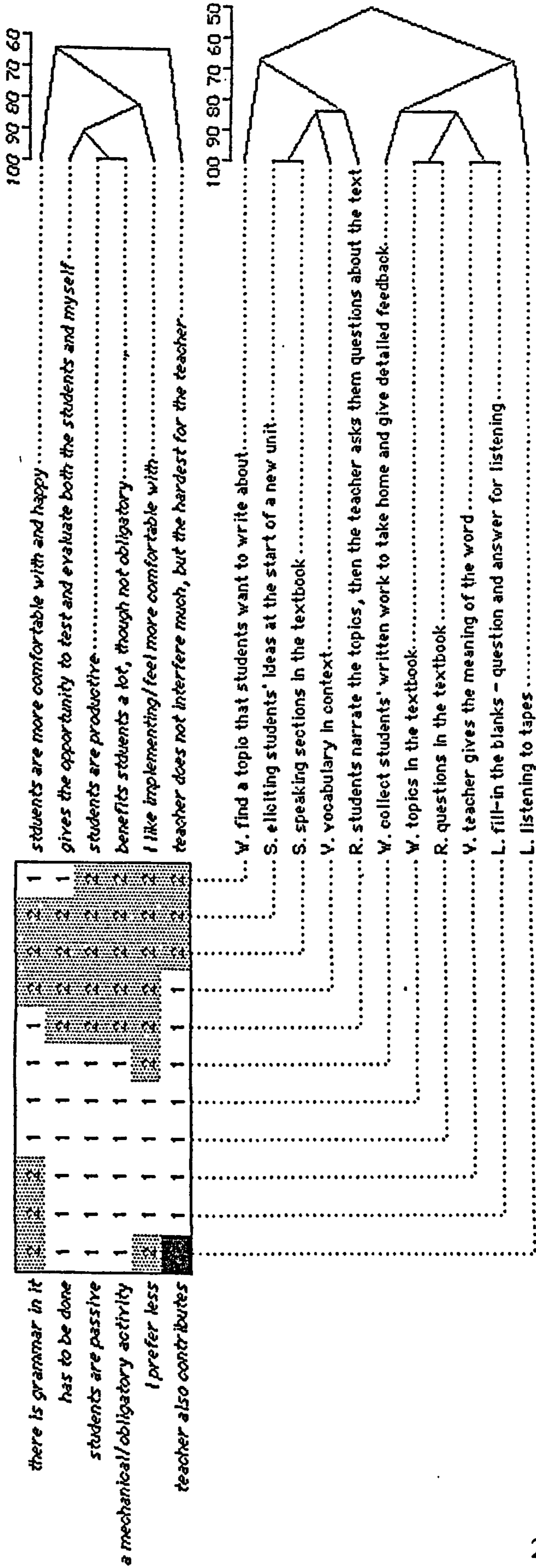
WebGrid-III Display

Display İlayda (11 years experience), Domain: EFL experienced teachers
 Context: Classroom activities that I do, 11 elements, 6 constructs

<i>I like implementing/feel more comfortable with students are more comfortable with and happy</i>	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	<i>I prefer less.</i>
<i>gives the opportunity to test and evaluate both the students and myself</i>	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	<i>there is grammar in it</i>
<i>students are productive</i>	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	<i>has to be done</i>
<i>teacher also contributes</i>	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	<i>students are passive</i>
<i>a mechanical/obligatory activity</i>	1	1	?	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	<i>teacher does not interfere much, but the hardest for the teacher</i>
	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	<i>benefits students a lot, though not obligatory</i>
													<i>W. collect students' written work to take home and give detailed feedback</i>
													<i>W. find a topic that students want to write about</i>
													<i>W. topics in the textbook</i>
													<i>R. students narrate the topics, then the teacher asks them questions about the text</i>
													<i>R. questions in the textbook</i>
													<i>S. eliciting students' ideas at the start of a new unit</i>
													<i>S. speaking sections in the textbook</i>
													<i>L. fill-in the blanks - question and answer for listening</i>
													<i>L. listening to tapes</i>
													<i>V. teacher gives the meaning of the word</i>
													<i>V. vocabulary in context</i>

WebGrid-III FOCUS Clustering

FOCUS Ilayda (11 years experience), Domain: EFL experienced teachers
Context: Classroom activities that I do, 11 elements, 6 constructs



Appendix 6.3.5 Display and FOCUS cluster analyses of Mine's constructs in the context of 'Classroom activities that I do'

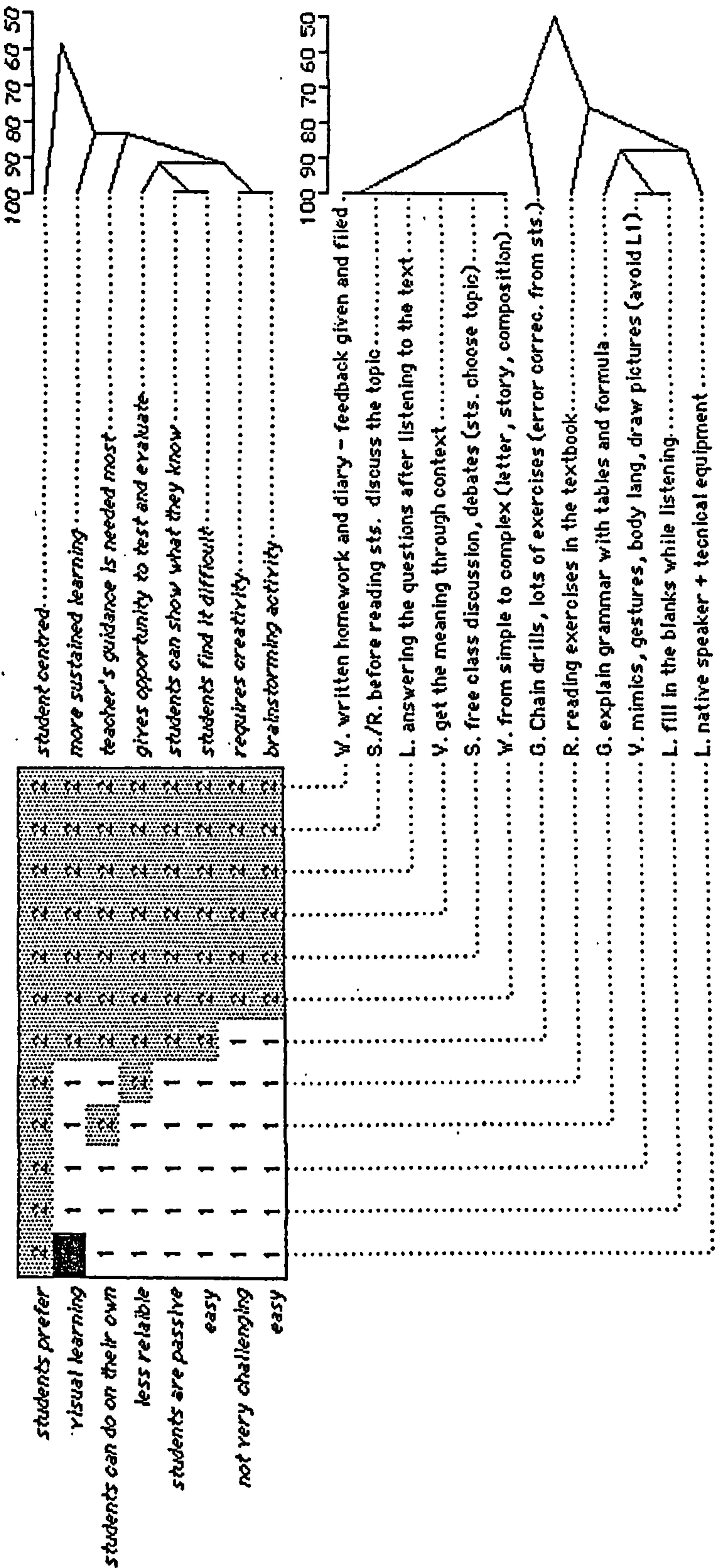
WebGrid-III Display

Display Mine (11 years experience), Domain: EFL experienced teachers
Context: Classroom activities that I do, 12 elements, 8 constructs

<i>gives opportunity to test and evaluate</i>	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	less reliable
<i>student centred</i>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	students prefer
<i>students can show what they know</i>	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	students are passive
<i>requires creativity</i>	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	not very challenging
<i>students find it difficult</i>	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	easy
<i>teacher's guidance is needed most</i>	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	students can do on their own
<i>brainstorming activity</i>	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	easy
<i>visual learning</i>	1	2	1	2	?	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	more sustained learning
														W. written homework and diary - feedback given and filed
														W. from simple to complex (letter, story, composition)
														R. reading exercises in the textbook
														S./R. before reading sts. discuss the topic
														S. free class discussion, debates (sts. choose topic)
														L. answering the questions after listening to the text
														L. fill in the blanks while listening
														L. native speaker + technical equipment
														G. Chain drills, lots of exercises (error corree. from sts.)
														G. explain grammar with tables and formula
														Y. get the meaning through context
														Y. mimics, gestures, body lang, draw pictures (avoid L1)

WebGrid-III FOCUS Clustering

FOCUS Mine (11 years experience), Domain: EFL experienced teachers
Context: Classroom activities that I do, 12 elements, 8 constructs



Appendix 7.1 Individual follow-up interview questions for Gün, Serkan, Mine and İlayda

Gün

1. You said that you wanted to become a teacher to make a difference in students' lives. Is there any particular event or memory that you remember which might have been influential on your decision? You said that several teachers were instrumental during your secondary years during our first interview. Like Sevim, for example, with her encouragement and giving responsibility. What else could you say?
2. You said you wanted to nurture good individuals for the future. Can you explain a bit more how you link teaching English with this wider goal of yours?
3. What do you think are the advantages of being well-prepared and well-organised for your lessons?
4. What are the benefits of being interested in the social background and psychological state of students?
5. What kind of resources do you utilise to achieve this?
6. What other things do you do in the classroom to give responsibility and encouragement to students apart from those you mentioned before?
7. You said that your previous teacher Sevim used to get you give yourselves your own oral exam marks. You said hers was a unique practice. Was it a different approach from the conventional? How?
8. You said motivating students is very important to involve them in the lesson. What kind of things do you do in the classroom to achieve this?
9. You said a teacher should continuously refresh his/her knowledge. What kind of things do you do to this end?
10. You said the old traditional system did not exist anymore. What kind of a system was it?
11. You also mentioned that textbooks should be chosen carefully. What are your own criteria in choosing materials?
12. What kind of benefits does it bring students to correct each others' mistakes on their project work that are displayed on the display board in the classroom?
13. Do you often do group work?

14. Learning English – textbook – culture, in what way are these concepts meaningful for you?

15. Why do you think you should not use Turkish in the classroom?

16. Why do you think you give a special emphasis to listening?

Serkan

1. What are the advantages of behaving like one half of an apple for a teacher?

2. How can we recognise such a teacher?

3. What kind of behaviour would a teacher who is the opposite of this display in the classroom?

4. How do the students respond to such a teacher?

5. How do you explain to your students what you want from them, how do you motivate and make them believe?

6. How do you prepare yourself and your students for the ‘process of learning’, as you call it, in the classroom?

7. How does a teacher gain professional competence?

8. What do you do to this end?

9. Why does “the corridor” in this school does not interest you anymore?

10. How do we recognise a teacher who compensates towards students for lack of professional competence?

11. What kind of disadvantages does it have?

12. How is not losing one’s own identity related to teaching English?

13. You said grammar should be taught in the mother tongue. Have you always thought like this?

14. For listening you said you cannot go beyond what is in the textbook. Why?

15. What kind of things do you do to encourage students to speak in English in the classroom?

16. Why do you think it is important for students to answer ‘Why and what am I reading?’?

İlayda

1. You said a teacher could not exist without love and respect from students. How do you see your own role in this respect?
2. What do you mean when you say teacher and students cannot exist without each other?
3. You said your colleague Zuhâl aims to get students to like the lessons and stated this was very important. What do you do in your own capacity to this end?
4. You said you constantly compete with time and that you are obliged to finish the syllabus. Are there any ways in which you can think of to solve this problem?
5. What does 'textbook' mean to you?
6. You said that reading and writing activities in the textbooks do not encourage students to think. Why not?
7. In what way is it meaningful for you not to interfere with students during the lessons?
8. You said parents' being indifferent is a problem. How do you go about addressing this problem?
9. You said sometimes you felt intimidated by your colleagues. How does it affect you at present?
10. Have you always felt like this?
11. Why do you think your initial training was not helpful?
12. Apart from Cenk and Gamze do you remember any other teachers from your initial training years?

Mine

1. Can you remember some of the techniques and approaches that you said you adopted from Gamze? Why do you think you like them?
2. Can you remember some of the techniques and approaches that you said you adopted from Leyla? Why do you think you like them?
3. Apart from those that you bring from Gamze and Leyla, are there any you adopted from other teachers?
4. During the first rep-grid you told me to ask you more about yourself, your mother and your students when we met for today's follow-up meeting. I am asking now.

Yourself, your mother and your students, is there a meaningful way to you in which you want to talk about them?

5. What kind of things do you do to motivate your students?

6. You said the personality of the teacher was important. Can you explain it a bit more?

7. You said the teacher should not bring her personal problems and her ideologies into the classroom. Why is this disadvantageous?

8. What do you think about using Turkish in the classroom?

9. You said you established one-to-one relationships with your students. Can you give some example situations?

10. You said reading and writing activities in the textbooks were not very challenging for students. Why is this important?

11. You mentioned that all the classroom activities in your lessons are implemented in a learner-centred way. What do you do to this end?

12. You said having a positive outlook on problems is better. What may those problems be? What would a positive outlook be like?