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**A CASE STUDY ON ELT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

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ÖZET

İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN MESLEKİ GELİŞİM ETKİNLİKLERİNE YÖNELİK TUTUMLARI İLE İLGİLİ DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

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Modern çağın gelişen ve değişim gösteren yapısının bir sonucu olarak, öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimi önem kazanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı dil öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişim etkinliklerine yönelik tutumlarını ve mesleki gelişimlerini engelleyen etkenleri araştırmaktır. Bu çalışmanın katılımcıları Erciyes Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda çalışan 122 İngilizce okutmanıdır. Bireysel temelde gerçekleştirilen ve İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişim etkinliklerine yönelik tutumlarını sorgulayan bir anket uygulanmış ve bu anket sonucu toplanan veriler öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim etkinliklerine yönelik tutumlarını ve öğretmenler arasındaki farklılıkları bulmak için betimsel analizden geçirilmiştir.

Toplanan bu veriler öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim etkinliklerini önemli bulmalarına karşın; bu etkinlikleri verdikleri önem derecesinde kullanmadıklarını göstermiştir. Öğretmenlerin, mesleki gelişim etkinliklerinde yer alma oranları ile bu etkinliklere verdikleri önem arasında cinsiyet ve deneyim etkenleri bakımından çeşitli farklılıklar saptanmıştır. Mesleki gelişimi engelleyen faktörlerin tamamına yakını öğretmenler tarafından önemli bulunurken, güdülenme eksikliği ön plana çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: İngilizce Öğretmenleri, Mesleki Gelişim Etkinlikleri, Mesleki Gelişimi Etkileyen Faktörler

ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY ON ELT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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In recent years, because of the changing nature of language and high standards of the modern age, professional development of language teachers has gained importance. The purpose of this study was to investigate language teachers' perceptions towards professional development activities and the factors that hinder their professional development. The participants of this study were 122 English language instructors at Erciyes University School of Foreign Languages. The data collected were analyzed descriptively to find out teachers' perceptions and differences among teachers.

The data analysis indicated that teachers accepted professional development activities as part of their professional life but did not implement them as much. Gender and experience were indicators of differences among teachers. Almost all the factors that hinder teachers' professional development were found important by language teachers. However, self motivation was considered as the most important factor hindering professional development.

Key Words: English Language Teachers, Professional Development Activities,
Factors That Hinder Professional Development

ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	:	English Foreign Language
ELT	:	English Language Teaching
ICT	:	Information and Communication Technologies
PD	:	Professional Development
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
TPD	:	Teacher Professional Development
TT	:	Team Teaching

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Recently, much effort has been put into improving education in all areas of learning, including foreign language teaching. Overtime, it became apparent that many approaches, which focused on improving teaching, were ineffective. And then, reformers “abruptly turned to teachers as the agents of school improvement” (Johnson, 2005, p. 78). The following proposal has been put forward: “If children are to achieve at levels demanded by the high standards that states and districts have adopted, teachers will have to help them do so. Teachers are necessarily at the center of reform, for they must carry out the demands of high standards in the classroom” (Cuban, 1990 cited in Garet et al., 2001, p. 916). As a facilitator of this process, professional development of teachers has come to the fore.

According to Wilson & Berne (1999), “the idea that teachers are key to the success of any educational reform made professional development or the opportunities for professional learning available to school staff, a prominent topic in policy documents as well as the education literature” (cited in Molle, 2013, p. 197). Thence, professional development of teachers has become the core of study in the sources performing to this subject. According to Avalos (2010), “at the core of such endeavors is the understanding that professional development is about teachers’ learning, learning how to learn, and transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students’ growth” (p. 10). Richards and Farrell (2005) state that “teacher development provides teachers with personal and professional progress they need throughout their teaching careers and they focus on subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical expertise, self-awareness, understanding of learners, understanding of curriculum and materials and career advancement for their professional development” (cited in Ünal, 2010, p. 1).

Effective professional development is supposed to have a positive impact on students’ learning. According to Yoon et al. (2008), “professional development affects student achievement through three steps. First, professional development

enhances teacher knowledge, skills, and motivation. Second, better knowledge, skills, and motivation improve classroom teaching. Third, improved teaching raises student achievement”(p. 3). To prove the existence of the relationship between teachers’ professional development and student achievement, Villegas-Reimers(2003) cite the evidence offered by Borko and Putnam (1995). According to Borko and Putnam (1995) data collected during the Cognitively Guided Instruction Project (CGI) - a multi-year and multi-phase program of curriculum development, professional development and research – corroborate the claim that experienced teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge and pedagogical content beliefs can be affected by professional development programs and that such changes are associated with changes in their classroom instruction and student achievement (Borko & Putnam, 1995, cited in Villegas-Reimers, 2003, p.21).

Clearly, teacher development guarantees for all teachers’ and students’ achievement. However, “a rapidly changing student population, nationwide education reform, and the development of national standards for foreign language learning are placing a number of new demands on foreign language teachers” (Kreeft, 1997, p.1). Accordingly, there may be some challenges that language teachers may face in the classroom and they may need help from peers, administrators or teacher trainers to overcome these challenges. According to Kreeft (1997) some of these challenges are:

- The variety of reasons students have for learning foreign languages and the different ways they approach this learning require that foreign language curricula and instruction address a range of student goals and learning styles.
- The current emphasis on exclusive use of the target language in the classroom requires that teachers have strong language skills.
- The emphasis on collaborative learning and student self-directed learning requires that teachers be able to act as facilitators, guides, counselors, and resources, not just as language experts.
- The emphasis on technology for language learning and teaching requires that the teachers keep informed about new technologies and their instructional uses. (p. 1)

At this point, Matsumura and Steinberg (2002) state that “teachers have been charged with the difficult task of teaching students in ways that teachers themselves likely were not taught in schools and may not have learned in their teacher education programs” (p. 2). One of the biggest changes is the introduction of computers to language classrooms. Tinio (2003) claims that “the effective assimilation of ICT into the educational system is a complicated and versatile process including not only technology but also curriculum and pedagogy, institutional readiness, teacher competencies, and long-term financing, among others” (cited in Ekşi, 2010, p. 2).

Another issue is that teachers need to ensure other roles besides being merely a teacher in a foreign language class. They should change their traditional role, which is transferring knowledge directly. Instead, they have to create the optimal learning environment where students acquire knowledge themselves. In other words, they are supposed to be facilitators in the class.

The challenges listed above make the professional development even more desirable. The activities, which professional development would foster, may help language teachers to keep their proficiency in the target language, keep up to date with new teaching methods and materials and meet the demands of modern world. Therefore, there is a definite need for professional development for all teachers, in particular for language teachers.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Since teachers are the key factors in education, professional development is a must for all of them, including language teachers since English has already become a ‘lingua franca’ because of economic and cultural factors.

According to Kızıldağ (2009), English language teaching/ learning is problematic in Turkey. Kızıldağ(2009) states that there are a lot of students who have been learning English at schools for years. Yet, many couldn’t reach the desired communicative level of competence that would allow them to follow and engage in basic level of conversations unless they enrolled in private schools or visited an English speaking country itself. Irrespective of the possible cause of the projection development, the process can be reversed by focusing on teacher education.

Pachier and Field (1997) state that “being an effective foreign language teacher requires a commitment to keep up with the developments in the field and a willingness to engage in continuous professional development” (cited in Karaaslan, 2003, p.2). Literature related to language teachers’ professional development offers many activities for them. However, it is difficult to decide on the effectiveness of these activities without some understanding of how teachers feel about and respond to them. Therefore, it is crucial to know how much importance is given to these professional development activities and how often they are made use of by language teachers.

Another important issue is that there may be some factors that hinder teachers’ professional development. If these factors are detected and eliminated in time, teachers’ engagement in professional development activities might take place and lead to the required level of competence. All in all, this study focuses on the illumination and illustration of the language teachers’ perceptions towards professional development activities and the factors that hinder their development.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Over the years, the role of teachers in education has undergone visible changes. Villegas- Reimers (2003) state that:

With the new conception of teachers as professionals, and of their preparation as being a lifelong learning process, where they are active participants in their own growth and development as teachers, the concept of teacher ‘training’, whether pre-service or in-service, is no longer fitting. Professional development begins at the initial preparation stage (whether pre-service or in- service), and continues throughout the professional lives of teachers. (p. 67)

A great number of models found in several sources that support teachers’ professional development from the beginning of their career until they retire. The elements of successful professional development such as form, duration, and participants are presented in literature, but it is stated that “participant involvement and personal choice are key characteristics of successful professional development programs and activities” (Texas Education Agency, 1997, p. 7).

The life-long need for professional development for language teachers cannot be denied. However, understanding teachers and their perceptions towards professional development activities, and finding out about the factors which hinder their professional development have become more and more urgent.

One of the aims of this study is to find out which teacher professional development activities are incorporated in PD and how often teachers of English use them. Another purpose of the study is to find out which factors, if any, that hinder professional development of teachers. Thence, this study may contribute to the field of adult education. In that, policy makers and teacher trainers may understand which professional development activities support teaching and later lead to improved student outcomes. When the high-quality professional development activities are provided depending on teachers' needs and perceptions, the overall classroom performance may change drastically.

1.4. Limitations of the Study

There are limitations that need to be acknowledged and addressed regarding the present study, which intends to highlight teachers' perceptions of professional development activities and the factors (if any) that hinder their professional development. Firstly, this study was carried out only with the teachers working in Preparatory School of Erciyes University.

Another important limitation of the study is the number of the teachers. The questionnaire was administrated to 122 language teachers. Therefore, the research findings may not be the representative of the whole group (all teachers of English in Turkey).

1.5. Research Questions

In this study the following research questions will be evaluated:

1. What are the perceptions of language teachers towards professional development activities and how often do they use these activities?
2. What are the factors (if any) that hinder language teachers' professional development?

CHAPTER 2

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study investigated teachers' perceptions towards professional development activities and the factors that hinder their development and growth. In this chapter, definition of teacher professional development, the importance of teacher professional development, characteristics of effective teacher professional development and teacher professional development models are presented.

2.1. What Is Teacher Professional Development?

In recent years, teacher professional development (TPD) has received an incredible attention because of educational reforms all around the world. Policy makers, administrators, teacher trainers, even parents put emphasis on professional development (PD) to ensure the success of students (Garet et al, 2001). Since indispensability of professional development has been recognized, it is necessary fully understand its impact. Professional development, "in a broad sense, refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role" (Villegas-Reimers, 2003, p.11). More specifically, "teacher development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically" (Glatthorn, 1995, p.41). Day (1999) defines professional development in detail:

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute through these to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives. (p. 4)

Clearly, professional development does not refer to a single concept. As Smylie et al. (2001) state “it is used to describe the whole wide range of learning opportunities available to teachers, including formal, planned learning activities provided to teachers by their schools, districts, or external providers; informal learning from interacting and working with colleagues; incidental learning from classroom experience; and individual, self directed study”(p.11). Since professional development includes formal, informal and incidental experiences it is also defined in various ways by Hismanoğlu (2010). Hismanoğlu (2010) states that:

It is inclusion of in-service training and workshops.

It is a process in which teachers work under supervision to gain experience.

It is an ongoing learning process in which teachers primarily aim at how to teach in accordance with the expectations and needs of the students. (p.990)

It seems that it is hard to define professional development. Yet, the ultimate aim of professional development on the development of teachers’ content knowledge and skills, which they need for better teaching and improved student achievement, cannot be denied. This study focused on professional development activities which are offered in literature to deepen teachers’ knowledge, improve their skills, and classroom practices.

2.2. Why Is Teachers’ Professional Development Important?

In order to justify the importance of teachers’ professional development many reasons are discussed. According to Adey (2004), one of the reasons for teachers’ professional development is the continuing demand from society in general for the improvement in the quality of education. To meet the demand of society and improve the quality of education, every effort has been made. The studies on programs, methods, techniques, and teaching materials have been conducted. However, visible results have not been obtained. Then the main focus has been directed to teachers and their professional development as they are considered to be the part of educational world and lead to the improvement in overall performance.

The views of different researchers support the validity of professional development in education. For example, Smylie et al. (2001) believe that “the efforts

to improve schools and student learning will not get very far if people do not take seriously the need for teacher professional development” (p.7). And Taş (2012) states that “teachers’ quality and proficiency are the most important factors for educational activities to attain success. Quality teachers are the single greatest determinant of student achievement. Teacher education, ability and experience account for more variation in student achievement than all other factors” (p.1). In the light of this argument, we may assume that qualified teachers enhance better student learning. This may only be possible by supporting their professional development.

Professional development is directly related to student achievement and most of the studies report that “the more professional knowledge teachers have, the higher the levels of student achievement” (Villegas-Reimers, 2003, p.21). In fact, this is not surprising because all the professional development models aim at deepening teachers’ knowledge and skills, which are important for student learning. According to Alexander et al. (1998), when teachers are given the opportunity, via high-quality professional development, to learn new strategies for teaching to rigorous standards, they report changing their teaching in the classroom.

It cannot be denied that when teachers learn new teaching methods, their classroom instruction will be affected and it will have a good impact on student achievement. “Research on teaching has demonstrated to the satisfaction of many that qualified (i.e., appropriately prepared) teachers can produce improved student achievement” (Beijaard et al., 2005, p.10).

Kennedy, a researcher at the US national Institute for Science Education, made some discoveries about teacher professional development which has affects on student achievement. Two of Kennedy’s discoveries are as follows: (as reported by Villegas-Reimers, 2003, p.23):

- When comparing programs focused on subject matter, or how students learn the subject, with programs, which focus on pedagogy, the former had the greatest impact on students’ learning.

- When school-wide programs were compared with teacher specific programs, the former had the least effect on students' learning.

To see the impact of professional development on students' learning some key points should be considered, and it should not be forgotten that all educational reforms should aim at student achievement, and in order to reach this goal, the role of teachers in raising student performance should be recognized (Harwell, 2003). Clearly, the goal of professional development is to create better educational programs and provide improved outcomes for all students in the school.

Another reason for teacher professional development is the change. In today's modern world, change is occurring very fast and it is inevitable. According to Abdal-Haqq (1996), "what teachers are expected to know and do has increased in amount and complexity" (p.1). Therefore, as Yildirim (2001) states "teachers need continuous education in order to update themselves, acquire and accumulate information about their field, make use of the new technological devices in the educational process, follow contemporary educational approaches and acquire new perspectives in this regard, and use new contemporary teaching methods and techniques" (p.104). As the teachers are the fundamental elements in education, it is necessary for them to follow the changes and keep their professionalism through some professional development strategies to meet the demands of the changing world.

2.3. Effective Professional Development

Education leaders, administrators, curriculum coordinators all recognize the validity of professional development but they often fall short in terms of supporting effective professional development opportunities. According to Casteel and Ballantyne (2010), if you were to ask many in-service teachers "What does professional development mean to you?" their answer will be "a few days each year." This answer shows that the professional development offered to teachers and other educational staff often fails to meet teachers' needs. It may be too short; the topics selected may not be related to actual classroom practices. It may not allow teachers to practice, receive feedback, or to participate in follow-up activities. May

be the underlying problem is that these programs are designed for “one size fits all” and lack any intellectual coherence. For these reasons, the programs are ineffective and the participants do not feel more knowledgeable or skilled than before (Smylie et al., 2001).

According to Steiner (2004), teachers attend these programs in two ways: “Either they attend in-service days sponsored by their districts in which they are offered a menu of training options designed to transmit a specific set of ideas, techniques, or materials, or they attend courses taught by university based teacher with an academic rather than an applied focus” (p.3). And Steiner (2004) also states that “many of the training experiences take the form of ‘one-stop’ workshops with little follow up, are fragmented rather than coherent, and are not connected to the other content students are expected to master” (p.3). For these reasons, for a long time teacher professional development has been considered ineffective. Workshops or short-term programs, which are thought not to have positive impact on teachers and student learning, have been accepted as the only forms of professional development. However, recently, there has been an important increase in teachers’ professional development and some radical changes have occurred in this area.

2.3.1. Principles of Effective Professional Development

While defining the principles of effective professional development, it is important to remember the objectives to achieve. Different models of professional development may have different objectives, thus each professional development may be considered effective in some of its aspects. The National Institute for Science Education has highlighted seven principles of effective professional development (Table 2.1). “These principles apply to the design and facilitation of all teachers learning, regardless of content area or teacher certification area” (as reported by Dunne, n.d, p.68).

Table 2.1. Principles of Effective Professional Development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driven by a vision of the classroom • Helps teachers develop the knowledge and skills to create vision • Mirrors methods to be used by students • Builds a learning community • Develops teacher leadership • Links to the system • Is continuously assessed
--

When the sources about effective professional development are analyzed, the similar elements are found. For example Casteel & Ballantyne (2010) (on the left) and Smylie et al. (2001) (On the right) list the principles, which make professional development effective in a similar way:

Table 2.2. What Makes Professional Development Effective

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on foundation of skills, knowledge, and expertise. • Engage participants as learners. • Provide practice, feedback, and follow-up. • Measure changes in teacher knowledge and skills. • Measure changes in student performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential, engaging teachers in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, and observation. • Grounded in participants’ questions, inquiry, and experimentation as well as research on effective practice. • Collaborative, involving sharing knowledge among educators. • Connected to and derived from teachers’ work with their students as well as connected to examination of subject matter and teaching methods. • Sustained, intensive, and supported by follow up activities. • Connected to other aspects of school improvement in a coherent manner.
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The amount of time allocated to PD contributes to its effectiveness. According to Abdal-Haqq (1996), lack of time is one of the factors that hinder implementing effective professional development. Abdal Haqq (1996) cites Cambone (1995) to express the necessity of time for teachers. Cambone (1995) believes that “teachers are adult learners. Therefore, they need time to understand new concepts, learn new skills, develop new attitudes, research, discuss, reflect, assess, try new approaches and integrate them into their practice; and time to plan their own professional development (Abdal Haqq, 1996, p.1).

According to effective professional development principles, teachers are considered as reflective practitioners. In a study, Richards (n.d) shares Leung’s idea on professionalism. Leung mentions two different dimensions to professionalism:

The first one is institutionally prescribed professionalism –a managerial approach to professionalism that represents the views of ministries of education, teaching organizations, regulatory bodies, school principals and so that specify what teachers are expected to know and what quality teaching practices consist of. The second dimension to professionalism Leung refers to as independent professionalism, which refers to teachers’ own views of teaching and the process by which teachers engage in reflection on their own values, beliefs, and practices. (p.3)

Research related to this issue indicates that “there are a lot of professional development opportunities offered to language teachers to engage in critical and reflective review of their own teaching, for example self-monitoring, analyzing critical incidents, teacher support groups and action research” (Richards and Farrell, 2005).

Another element of effective professional development is collaboration among teachers. There is a rapidly growing literature on professional development, which indicates that collaboration among teachers leads to improvement in teaching and students’ achievement. In January 2010, Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, delivered a speech at the National Press Club entitled “A New Path Forward: Four Approaches to Quality Teaching and Better Schools.” In this speech, Weingarten called for more collaboration:

Imagine a system in which teachers have time to come together to resolve student issues, share lesson plans, analyze student work, discuss successes and failures, and learn through high-quality professional development. Imagine a system in which students can't fall through the cracks—because they're backed by a team of teachers, not just the one at the front of the room. (Weingarten, 2010, cited in Stanley, 2011, p.71)

Weingarten's speech indicates that when teachers study together, discuss their ideas on teaching and help one another to implement new skills and strategies, they grow and their students' behavior improves accordingly (Harwell, 2003). Thus, "interaction with colleagues greatly influences the development of individual teachers' knowledge of teaching, since teachers share similar school tasks and concerns about teaching more with their colleagues than others"(Park et al, 2007, p.370). According to Vrasidas and Glass (2004), recent research suggests that students learn best when they focus on meaningful activities, collaborate with their peers, exchange ideas, and receive peer feedback. The same method applies to teachers, but it is rarely emphasized.

Consequently, giving instructors an opportunity to collaborate should constitute the core of PD. Villegas-Reimers' (2003) argument in favor of collaboration runs as follows: "most effective professional development occurs when there are meaningful interactions, not only among teachers themselves, but also between teachers, administrators, parents and other community members" (p.14).

Content as well forms an integral part of the core in PD. The optimal exposure to subjects will (1) deepen teachers' knowledge of subjects being taught; (2) sharpen teaching skills in the classroom; (3) keep up with developments in the individual fields, and in education generally; (4) generate and contribute new knowledge to the profession; and (5) increase the ability to monitor students' work, in order to provide constructive feedback to students and appropriately redirect teaching (The National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century, 2000, cited in Harwell, 2003, p.4). With the standards getting higher in the fast developing world, "teachers need to have deep knowledge of their content areas" (Elmore, 2002, p.3). Yet, content does not exist without context. If the latter is not related to actual classroom experiences, it may not have a positive impact on

teachers’ practice and student learning. Thence, “the most successful teacher development opportunities are “on the job” learning activities such as study groups, action research and portfolios” (Wood and McQuarrie, 1999). A model of effective professional development is presented below.

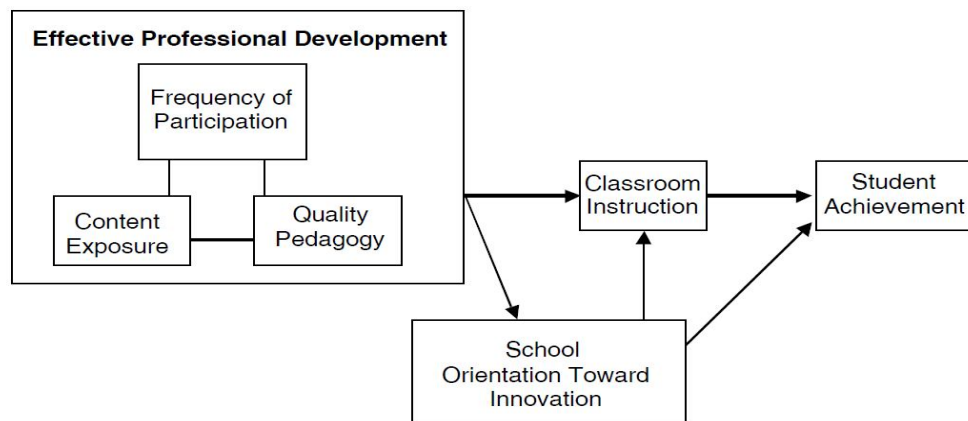


Figure 2.1. Model of Effective Professional Development (Smylie et al., 2001, p.13).

There is an agreement on to the basics of PD, but still some issues remain unresolved. Theories are not reflected in practice. Dunne (n.d) presents the paradoxes in professional development in table 2.3.

Table 2.3. Paradoxes in Professional Development

What We Say	What We Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher Learning is at the center of change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In service a couple of times a year on the innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching is a complex process designed to address a wide range of learner needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff learning that assumes all teachers learn in workshops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need independent, self-directed learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give teachers little input into content and process of their learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone is unique. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One size fits all professional development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People learn through active engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send teachers to lectures on active learning

2.4. Models of Professional Development

As teachers are considered lifelong learners their development continues throughout their careers. This section aims at describing many alternatives available for language teachers that may enhance their professional development. As mentioned previously, teacher professional development aims at deepening and broadening their knowledge of content and comprises the teaching and learning process. Little (1992) states that teacher professional development requires growth in knowledge, skills, judgment (classroom related), and the contribution teachers make to a professional community.

According to Villegas-Reimers (2003), “professional development opportunities can be created together by teachers and support people, either by choosing to focus on a new task which the teacher is interested in learning about, or by focusing on a practice which the teachers implement regularly but would like to change” (p.69). This goal can be achieved in a number of different ways using any of the models described below.

2.4.1. Workshops

Research indicates that workshops are one of the most common forms of professional development activities for language teachers. According to Cranton (1996), the original meaning of the term was “a room or building in which work, especially mechanical work was carried on. We now tend to use the term to describe a session that emphasizes the exchange of ideas and the demonstration and application of techniques and skills” (p.32). Richards and Farrell (2005) define workshops as follows: “a workshop is an intensive, short term learning activity that is designed to provide an opportunity to acquire specific knowledge and skills” (p.23). Subsequently, in a workshop, teachers learn something new about a topic they are interested in or find solutions to the problems they experience in real life. Richards and Farrell (2005) claim that workshops are the most powerful and effective forms of teacher development activity. They list several benefits of workshop-based learning for language teachers:

- Workshops can provide input from experts.
- Workshops offer teachers practical classroom applications.
- Workshops can raise teachers' motivation.
- Workshops develop collegiality.
- Workshops can support innovations.
- Workshops are short-term.
- Workshops are flexible in organization. (p. 25)

Similarly, Zuber-Skerrit (1992) discusses the advantages of one time workshops in which staff can be introduced to a topic or problem which they are specifically interested in, but she points out that an integrated series of workshops allows for more-in depth and individualized discussion. Villegas-Reimers (2003) cites two examples of successful workshops, which support Zuber-Skerrit's view. One of them is based on a series of three one-day workshops offered to teachers in New Zealand as a first phase of a professional development program designed to prepare teachers to teach under the new national science curriculum. These workshops are followed by supplementary supportive and informative visits from in-service facilitators, with an overall positive outcome. Another example comes from The North Carolina Teacher Academy (USA). It has offered over 40 one-week summer seminars for teachers, and has trained over 200 teachers, who have themselves become trainers.

Sometimes, however, there is evidence to the contrary, workshops are thought as the traditional model of professional development and found ineffective. Jesness (2000) a special educator in Texas, USA says: "Anyone who thinks education can be substantially improved with workshops probably hasn't ever attended one" (p.37). He thinks that workshops do not have any positive impacts on teaching practice and students' achievement. Cranton (1996) insists that there are many professional development workshops and "they have some common characteristics that could be related to their becoming isolated from practice" (p.34). And also, the individual needs of the participants in a workshop are hard to meet. However, Richards and

Farrell (2005) suggest that there are ways to make a workshop effective. For example;

- Choosing an appropriate topic.
- Limiting the number of participants.
- Identifying a suitable workshop leader.
- Planning an appropriate sequence of activities.
- Looking for opportunities for follow-up.
- Including evaluation. (pp.28-29)

2.4.2. Peer- Coaching

With the growing need for an improved concept of PD, the models of professional development have undergone a gradual transformation. Instead of a traditional approach promoting one-stop workshops or seminars, peer coaching has become popular. According to Zwart et al. (2011), the research literature on peer coaching suggests that the professional development of teachers can be improved through “experimentation, observation, reflection, the exchange of professional ideas, and shared problem solving” (p.982).

“Peer-coaching is based on reciprocal visits of two teachers whereby they provide each other with feedback and advice about their teaching” (Hismanoğlu, 2010, p.992). It requires collaboration of teachers which enables them to observe each other and exchange their ideas. According to Showers and Joyce (1996), early research showed that “teachers who had a coaching relationship that is, who shared aspects of teaching, planned together, and pooled their experiences; practiced new skills and strategies more frequently and applied them more appropriately than did their counterparts who worked alone to expand their repertoires” (p. 14).

In a study Kohler et al. (2001) report that researchers have used three types of outcome to evaluate the effects of peer-coaching program. Firstly many researchers have examined changes or improvements in teachers’ pedagogical strategies or activities and most of the participants reported that coaching enabled them to meet

more instructional objectives compared to traditional methods (Munro and Elliot, 1987). Secondly, researchers investigated the effects of peer coaching on student outcomes and reported significant gains in students' learning. In a third group of studies, researchers focused on teachers' satisfaction with peer coaching and subsequently found out that most of the participants were happy with the collaboration inherent in peer coaching. The study demonstrates that peer coaching is conducive to both teachers' professional development and students' achievement.

Wong and Nicotera (2003) list the variations of the term peer coaching in literature. They call it "technical coaching, collegial coaching, cognitive coaching, and challenge coaching" (p.2). They put these terms to three general categories: Technical coaching and team coaching focus on incorporating new curriculum and instructional techniques into teachers' routines. Collegial coaching and cognitive coaching seek to improve existing teacher practices by refining techniques, developing collegiality, increasing professional dialogue, and assisting teachers in reflecting on their teaching. The third type of coaching, challenge coaching, concentrates on identifying and treating a specific problem and can be used in a larger context than the classroom such as a school or grade level. In order to observe the effects of peer coaching on both teachers' professional development and students' achievement, the variables affecting peer coaching, namely, "trust, nonjudgement, commitment, administrative support, and time" should not be neglected (Shields, 2007).

2.4.3. Peer Observation

According to Richards and Farrell (2005), "peer-observation refers to a teacher or other observer closely watching and monitoring a language lesson or part of a lesson in order to gain an understanding of some aspects of teaching, learning, or classroom interaction" (p. 85). Another definition for peer observation is as follows:

A collaborative and reciprocal process whereby one peer observes another's teaching (actual or virtual) and provides supportive and constructive feedback. Its underlying rationale is to encourage (continued) professional development in teaching and learning through critical reflection, by both observer and

‘observee’. It may also include ‘observation’ and feedback of non-classroom aspects [such as] a staff member’s approaches to teaching and learning, including module or course design and documentation, teaching resources, appropriateness of assessment etc. (Lublin, 2002, cited in Academic Development Centre, n.d, p.1)

On the cited definition, peer observation’s goal is to “enhance the professional development of teaching staff through reflection, constructive feedback and participation in training associated with the process” (Taylor, n.d, p.2). Wajnryb (1992) states that “being in the classroom as an observer opens up a range of experiences and processes which can become part of the raw material of a teacher’s professional growth” (p. 1). It may be useful for both experienced and novice teachers because they may all face the same problems in the classroom and through the informed implementation of peer-observation model they can see how other teachers deal with these issues. According to Davis (2011), the benefits of peer-observation include improvement of teaching, faculty ownership, and enhancement of teaching effectiveness. Davis (2011) adds that “peer observation can also stimulate reflection on the teaching process, development of collegial relationships between faculties, improvement of faculty morale, decreased feelings of teacher isolation, and elevation of teaching to a scholarly activity” (p. 107).

No matter how positively emphatic researchers are about peer observation, many teachers still perceive it as something negative because it is generally done by supervisors or coordinators with the aim of evaluating a lesson. Teachers may also have some concerns about the objectivity of the observer or the accuracy and generalisability of what is reviewed, or they may think that observation might restrict their academic freedom. Thus, they may not want to engage in peer observation (Keig and Waggoner, 1995).

Williams (1989) points out some of the problems associated with traditional classroom observations. He states that:

- The teachers did not like it. It was threatening, frightening, and regarded as an ordeal.
- It was prescriptive.
- The checklist focused on too much at once.
- The teachers had no responsibility for the assessment. It was trainer centered. (p. 86)

2.4.4. Case Discussions

Case discussions may be a useful tool for teachers' professional development. Case discussions offer teachers an opportunity to reflect on the teaching and learning process by examining a story or videotape that captures a particular classroom experience (Loucks- Horsley et al. 1998). Villegas-Reimers (2003) claim that this model involves using "carefully chosen, real-world examples of teaching to serve as springboards for discussions among small groups of teachers"(p. 96). Hooker (n.d) states that "this approach uses print, the internet, and/or video case studies of classroom episodes" (p.15). Case studies can focus on an issue with a specific student or an entire classroom and teachers may considerably improve their ability to tackle current classroom issues by focusing analytically on some representative examples. According to Steiner (2004), there are many types of cases. Some focus on student learning, others on how teachers respond to a challenging situation.

Villegas-Reimers (2003) reports that there are several examples of the useful implementation of this form of professional development, they elaborate on the so called Mathematics Case Method wherein 6 -15 teachers discussed various issues once a month in 2 hours meetings. It is worth noting that the teachers themselves brought up some issues, and the ultimate outcome was positive.

2.4.5. Team Teaching

In general education, the classic definition of "teaching team" (TT) is as follows: "A teaching team is a group of two or more persons assigned to the same students at the same time for instructional purposes in a particular subject or

combination of subjects” (Johnson and Lobb, 1959, cited in Igawa, 2009, p.147). According to Richards and Farrell (2005),

Team teaching (sometimes called pair teaching) is a process in which two or more teachers share the responsibility for teaching a class. The teachers share responsibility for planning the class or course, for teaching it, and for any follow-up work associated with the class such as evaluation and assessment. It thus involves a cycle of team planning, team teaching, and team follow-up. (p. 159)

Research corroborates the idea that “team teaching boasts many pedagogical and intellectual advantages: It can help create a dynamic and interactive learning environment, provide instructors with a useful way of modeling thinking within or across disciplines, and also inspire new research ideas and intellectual partnerships among faculty” (Leavitt, 2006, p.1) However, as its name suggests team teaching requires collaborative approach. In order to fully benefit from TT, teachers should work collaboratively and share responsibility.

The results of a study concerning the teachers’ views on team teaching conducted by Igawa (2009) in Japan show that Japanese Teachers of English and Assistant Language teachers think that TT is contributing to students cross-cultural understanding and listening, and that motivation (of both teachers and students) and teachers’ professional expertise are two key factors that make TT work.

2.4.6. Teaching Portfolios

“A professional portfolio is an evolving collection of carefully selected or composed professional thoughts, goals, and experiences that are threaded with reflection and self-assessment. It represents who you are, what you do, why you do it, where you have been, where you are, where you want to go, and how you plan on getting there” (Evans, 1995, cited in Richards and Farrell, 2005, p.98). In other words, a teaching portfolio is a collection of materials, which give information about teachers and their work. According to Edgerton et al. (2002), “at the heart of the portfolio... are samples of teaching performance, not just what teachers say about their practice but artifacts and examples of what they actually do” (Edgerton et al.,

2002, cited in Longfield, 2011, p.1). A teaching portfolio is a form of teacher professional development that is teacher-directed. It can help teachers to improve their teaching through reflection and analysis (Longfield, 2011). Teachers may monitor their teaching with the help of a teaching portfolio and thus see their strengths and weaknesses. Richards and Farrell (2005) use two metaphors for a teaching portfolio: the mirror and the map. The mirror represents the reflective nature of a portfolio, which let teachers view themselves over time. The map stands for creating a plan and setting goals. With the help of a teaching portfolio teachers can assess their development and see in what areas they need improvement. According to Wray (2006), “there are many educative benefits of constructing a teaching portfolio. Increased reflection upon teaching and subject matter content; expanded awareness of the theories and assumptions that guide instructional practices; increased self-confidence; and heightened collaborative dialogs about teaching are some examples of the benefits of portfolio development” (Anderson & DeMeulle, 1998; Bartell, Kay, & Morin, 1998; Lyons, 1998a, cited in Wray, 2006, p.1140).

A successful use of portfolios is reported by Villegas-Reimers (2003), Jarvinen and Kohonen (1995) completed a study in Finland to support first-year teachers through an introduction program, which included the use of portfolios to help the teachers to reflect and monitor their own professional development. Results show that “among other things that the level of reflectiveness was high among the teachers who had participated in the study” (cited in Villegas-Reimers, 2003, p.108).

2.4.7. Self Monitoring

Rani (2012) states that observing and reflecting on one’s own learning is a professional development opportunity, which allows teachers to improve their teaching skills. Self-monitoring can help teachers to evaluate their performance by collecting information of their classroom teaching and classroom management. This is generally done through a systematic and objective collection of teaching behavior and the information obtained through this process is used to make necessary changes for better teaching and student achievement in the future. Thence, with the help of self-monitoring teachers can see their strengths and weaknesses and introduce some changes in their classroom instruction.

According to Skinner (1953), “individuals manage their own behavior in the same manner as they manage anyone else’s – ‘through the manipulation of variables of which behavior is a function” (p.228). Skinner’s idea indicates that people form their behavioral patterns based on the results of their previous experiences. This is also true for teachers. According to Simonsen et al. (2012), if teachers observe their own teaching, they may make desired changes in their teaching. Simonsen et al. (2012) also shares other researchers’ views on the benefits of self-monitoring. Note some of them below:

Browder, Liberty, Heller, and D’Huyvetters (1986) found that teachers made better instructional decisions (i.e., choices about maintaining or changing instructional practices based on students’ academic performance) when they were trained to self-monitor. Self-monitoring is noting the presence, absence, or level of a specific behavior and is one example of self-management (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007). Similarly, Allinder, Bolling, Oats, and Gagnon (2000) found that teachers who self-monitored made better instructional decisions that resulted in better student performance than teachers who did not self-monitor. (p.6)

As a result, self-monitoring seems to be an effective opportunity for teachers’ professional development. Teachers who are interested in professional development may be asked to use self-monitoring strategy to improve their teaching and increase student achievement.

2.4.8. Analyzing Critical Incidents

Critical incident theory is an effective teacher professional development model, which is based on improving teaching through reflection on classroom events (Farrel, 2008; Thiel, 1999; Tripp, 1993). It helps trainee teachers “to think about what happened, why it happened, and what else could have been done to reach their goals” (Cruickshank and Applegate, 1981, p. 553). According to Farrell (2008), “a critical incident is any unplanned event that occurs during class. [...] If trainee teachers formally reflect on these critical incidents, it may be possible for them to uncover new understandings of the teaching and learning process” (p. 3). Tripp (1993) states

that “incidents only become critical because someone sees them as such” (p.27). It may be inferred that a critical event may not cause a major change but participants may believe that it has to. Therefore, critical events may not be objectively identified.

According to Richards and Farrell (2005), analyzing critical incidents can facilitate professional development in a number of ways:

- It can create a greater level of self-awareness.
- It can prompt an evaluation of established routines and procedures.
- It can encourage teachers to pose critical questions about teaching.
- It can help bring beliefs to the level of awareness.
- It can create opportunities for action research.
- It can help build a community of critical practitioners.
- It can provide a resource for teachers. (p. 117)

Critical incidents may help teachers to be aware of many points that they have not realized before. When teachers read, write or analyze the incidents, they may change some points in their teaching too. Critical incident analysis is also important for collaborative study. Teachers may come together and analyze the incidents and exchange ideas for better student achievement.

2.4.9. Keeping a Teaching Journal

It is known that reflection is the most important element of teacher development. For better student achievement, teachers should become critical of their own practices. Teaching journal is also considered as a tool for reflection on a teacher’s own teaching. According to Boud (2001), “a teaching journal is ‘a teacher’s written response to teaching events’, whereby ‘events and ideas are recorded for the purpose of later reflection” (p.7). Writing a teaching journal provides an “opportunity for teachers to use the process of writing to describe and explore their own teaching practices” (Ho & Richards, 1993, p.8). It helps teachers to see their teaching and

learning. According to a survey report, thirty-two teachers who kept journals, found that 71 percent of the teachers found it useful, 25 percent found it fairly useful, and only 4 percent did not enjoy writing a journal (Ho & Richards, 1993).

It is a fact that journal writing should have a purpose for teachers' professional development and help them find solutions to the problems, which occur in the classroom. Teachers should have a purpose to write a journal and know how to write an effective journal. Richards and Lockhart (1994) suggest various questions that can be used as an initial guide when starting a teaching journal. These questions are categorized under three headings: Questions about your teaching, questions about the students, and questions about yourself as a language teacher.

Questions about your teaching

1. What did you set out to teach?
2. Were you able to accomplish these goals?
3. What teaching materials did you use? How effective were they?
4. What techniques did you use?
5. Did you have any problems with the lesson?

Questions about the students

1. Did you interact with all of the students in class today?
2. Did student contribute actively to the lesson?
3. How did you respond to different students' needs?
4. Were students challenged by the lesson?
5. What do you think students really learned from the lesson?
6. What did they like most about the lesson?
7. What didn't they respond well to?

Questions about yourself as a language teacher

1. What is the source of my ideas about language teaching?
2. Where am I in my professional development?
3. How am I developing as a language teacher?
4. What are my strengths as a language teacher?
5. What are my limitations at present?
6. Are there any contradictions in my teaching?
7. How can I improve my language teaching?
8. How am I helping my students?
9. What satisfaction does language teaching gives me? (pp. 16-17)

These questions may help teachers to keep effective and reflective journals, which are important to document their own teaching practices. For the expected results of journal keeping, teachers and teacher trainers should consider its goals and its focus carefully.

2.4.10. Teacher Support Groups (Teacher Study Group)

Teacher Study group is an opportunity for teachers' professional development, which is based on collaboration among teachers for better teaching practice and student learning. There are many definitions of teacher study groups. According to Ospina & Sanchez (2010), "teacher study groups (also known as collaborative groups) are commonly sustained by four to ten teachers who share similar interests, and reach individual goals through the interaction and collaboration with other colleagues" (p.10). Huang (2007) states that "study groups enable teachers to engage in and control their own learning" (p.36). It shows that study groups contribute to teacher professional development by enabling teachers to be aware of their own learning. Fullan (n.d) explains that "professional development is not as a course; it is about developing more powerful ways of learning that occur in their classroom practice" (Ospina & Sanchez, 2010, p.11). The 1973–78 study on "Federal

Programs Supporting Educational Change” (McLaughlin 1990) provided a seminal look at the efficacy of efforts to generate change in educational practices. This study found that “the most effective strategies were concrete, teacher-specific, extended training; local classroom assistance; teacher decision making; and regular teacher meetings for the purpose of observing other classrooms to foster long-term, collaborative learning” (cited in Stanley, 2011, p. 72).

Matlin and Short (1991) proposed to pilot a study group approach to support long-term, innovative changes in the teaching of reading. Their voluntary group meets biweekly for several hours after school. The teachers set agenda for every session, while they, as the principal and the facilitator, play support roles. The principal validates problem solving and change by being a visible member of the group. The facilitator, a university professor, supports change in every step of the way. A colleague and a coach, she is available at the request of teachers, to demonstrate lessons, team-teach, plan, and observe and critique their classrooms. And the pilot study has proved that the study group is a true staff development for the teachers and principal at Warren Elementary School, a foundation from which to learn and plan together as a staff. Matlin and Short (1991) also state that:

For the teachers the study group is an opportunity to think through their own beliefs, share ideas, challenge current instructional practices, blend theory and practice, identify professional and personal needs- as well as develop literacy innovations for their classrooms. For us, as principal and facilitator, it is a strategy for empowering teachers to be active thinkers about their work and to accept change as a natural part of their daily experiences. (p. 68)

2.4.11. Action Research

According to Kim (2005), “the new focus of professional development world-wide is now on the implementation of action research as a means for teachers to evaluate their own practice for self improvement” (p.2). Action research is defined as “a process, in which participants examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully, using the techniques of research”(Ferrance, 2000, p.1). O’ Hanlon (1996) states that three reasons explain why action research can be an

effective model for teachers' professional development: "It is inquiry-based, and allows teachers to investigate their own worlds; it is aimed at the improvement of teaching and learning in schools, and it leads to deliberate and planned action to improve conditions for teaching and learning" (cited in Villegas-Reimers, 2003, p.108). Many ideas have been suggested on the implementation an action research plan, but primary models of action research follow a similar plan: (1) Select a problem to investigate that is relevant to your own and/or your colleagues' instructional practice; (2) collect and interpret information related to the problem; (3) study the relevant professional literature; (4) determine what action you need to take; and (5) take that action and document the results (Calhoun, 1994).

According to Ferguson (2011), "action enquiries begin with the question, 'How do I improve my work?' He thinks that this perspective is quite different from traditional views of professional education, which often take the form of training. In traditional forms, the usual procedure is that an acknowledged expert offers advice to professionals (who are then usually positioned as trainees)"(p.12). With the help of action research, teachers can gather information about real classroom situations. The benefits of action research with regard to enhancing teacher professional development have been widely reported (Sagor, 2000; Mills, 2003; Johnson, 2005; Tomal, 2005, cited in Lim, 2007, p.2). As Steiner (2004) mentions in his study, Sparks and Simmons (1989) report that "teachers who have participated in action research are more reflective and more attentive and responsive to student learning" (p.10). Steiner (2004) also adds that in a study of a district-wide action research project implemented in Madison, Wisconsin (Zeichner, Marion and Caro-Bruce, 1998), it was reported that action research had multiple effects:

Teachers reported that they developed more confidence, were more likely to talk with colleagues about teaching and were more analytical about their practice. The study also found that there were positive effects on student learning, although they could not isolate the effects of participation. For example, teachers reported positive changes in student attitudes, involvement, behavior and/or learning as a result of the specific actions taken as part of their research. (Steiner, 2004, p.

CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological procedures of the study. In the first part, the research design is introduced. In the second part, participants of the study are described. In the third part, data collection instrument that has been used to collect data is given. The last part of this chapter explains the data analysis procedures used in this study.

3.2. Research Design

The aim of this study was to examine English language teachers' perceptions towards professional development activities and the factors that hinder their professional development. A quantitative research design was used to achieve this aim. Aliaga and Gunderson (2000) state that "quantitative research is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)" (cited in Muijs, 2011, p.11). As a quantitative research methodology a survey research design was used, in which data were collected through a questionnaire that was adapted from Karaaslan's (2003) study. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), in a survey research "information is collected from a group of people in order to describe some aspects or characteristics (such as abilities, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and/or knowledge) of the population of which that group is a part"(p.397). In addition, Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) state that in order to collect information, researchers ask questions related to the issue and the answers to these questions by the members of the group constitute the data of the study.

3.3. Participants

The study took place at Erciyes University in Kayseri in 2012 - 2013 academic years. The participants of this study were 122 English language teachers working at the School of Foreign Languages. Convenience sampling strategy was used to choose the participants. Convenience sampling strategy is defined as "a

group of individuals who (conveniently) are available for study” (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006, p.100).

3.4. Data Collection Instrument

In this study, a questionnaire that was adapted from Karaaslan’s (2003) study was used to collect data on English language teachers’ perceptions towards professional development activities (See appendix A for the questionnaire). The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts and the questions addressed to the research questions.

In the first part of the study, 8 questions were asked to learn about background characteristics of the participants. In the second part of the questionnaire, 11 professional development activities for English language teachers, which are based on research literature, were presented to teachers to learn how much they give importance to these activities and to what degree they use these activities. Thus, questions were asked in two parts. First, teachers were asked to rate how important the activities were on 3 point Likert-type scale where 1 was “not important” and 3 was “very important”. Secondly, teachers were asked to indicate how often they make use of these activities on 3 point Likert-type scale where 1 was “never” and 3 was “always”. The last part of the questionnaire focused on the factors (if any) that hinder teachers’ professional development. For this purpose, 8 potential factors were offered to teachers and they were asked to rate those factors according to their importance on a 3-point Likert-type scale where 1 was “not important” and 3 was “very important”.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedures

In this study, statistical methods such as means, percentages and frequencies were used to interpret the data. First, frequency distributions and percentages were calculated for all questions and statements. Some demographic variables were grouped. For example, ‘age’ variable had items from 22 to 55. It was recoded into two groups so that each group would have meaningful frequencies and percentages. Similarly, teaching experience was recoded for the same reason, into two groups in order to have meaningful group comparisons. Frequency distributions were calculated for all activity variables in terms of how important they are perceived and

how often they are made use of in section 2 of the questionnaire. These were also examined through independent sample t-tests to determine whether the differences among teachers according to background factors were significant. For the third part of the questionnaire the responses of the participants were analyzed through descriptive statistics including frequencies (f) and percentages (%).

CHAPTER 4

4. RESULTS

In this chapter, the analysis of the data gathered from the teacher professional development questionnaire administered to EFL teachers is presented (See Appendix A for the questionnaire). The findings of the study appear in 4 sections. In the first section, the demographic characteristics of the participants are described. The other sections present the results of the study regarding the research questions mentioned in the first chapter. The second section explains teachers' perceptions of the importance given to professional development activities and the teachers' making use of these activities. The third section discusses those issues by focusing on selected background factors. The fourth section discusses the factors that hinder teachers' professional development.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

This section describes the demographic characteristics of the English language teachers who participated in this study. Table 4.1. displays the gender of the participants.

Table 4.1. Distribution of Teachers Responding to Survey by Gender

Gender	F	%
Female	80	65,6
Male	42	34,4
Total	122	100,0

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage

Eighty of the teachers were female which constituted 65.6% of the teachers whereas 42 of them were male, which constituted 34.4% of the teachers.

Table 4.2. Distribution of Teachers' Age

Age	F	%
26 or lower	44	36,1
27-32	42	34,4
33 or higher	36	29,5
Total	122	100,0

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage

The participants differed in age. Forty-four (36.1%) of the teachers were 26 or lower, the age of 42 (34.4 %) teachers ranged from 27 to 32. Thirty-six (29.5 %) of the teachers were 33 or higher.

Table 4.3. Teachers' Teaching Experience

Years of Teaching Experience	F	%
0-5 years	72	59,0
6 or higher	50	41,0
Total	122	100,0

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage

The group of teacher in the study represented varied teaching experience. Teachers who had 0-5 years of teaching experience formed the largest group of respondents (59.0%). Fifty of the teachers (41.0%) had 6 or more years of teaching experience.

Table 4.4. Teachers' Undergraduate Area of Study

Undergraduate Area of Study	F	%
Teaching English as a Foreign Language	46	37,7
English Language and Literature	50	41,0
American Language and Literature	26	21,3
Total	122	100,0

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage

The undergraduate area of study varied as well. Fifty (41.0%) of the respondents were English Language and Literature graduates. Forty-six (37.7%) of the teachers were ELT graduates, and 26 (21.3 %) of the teachers were American Language and Literature graduates.

4.2. Importance Given to Professional Development Activities and Making Use of Them

This section presents the degree of importance given to professional development activities and the use of them by English Language teachers.

Table 4.5. Degree of Importance Given to Professional Development Activities by English Language Teachers

Importance of models	Not		Somewhat		Very		N
	Important		Important		Important		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Workshops	16	13,1	16	13,1	90	73,8	122
Keeping a Teaching Journal	24	19,7	40	32,8	58	47,5	122
Self Monitoring	2	1,6	6	4,9	114	93,4	122
Teaching Portfolios	12	9,8	40	32,8	70	57,4	122
Action Research	10	8,2	14	11,5	98	80,3	122
Peer Coaching	10	8,2	26	21,3	86	70,5	122
Peer Observation	8	6,6	32	26,2	82	67,2	122
Analyzing Critical Incidents	16	13,1	26	21,3	80	65,6	122
Team Teaching	34	27,9	26	21,3	62	50,8	122
Case Studies	20	16,4	38	31,1	64	52,5	122
Teacher Support Groups	14	11,5	18	14,8	90	73,8	122

Table 4.5. shows the degree of importance given to professional development activities by English language teachers. According to the results, it is clear that teachers find most of the professional development activities very important for their professional growth.

Workshops are considered as a vital professional development activity by the majority of the teachers (73.8%). Only 13.1% of teachers believe that workshops do not contribute to PD, and 13.1% of teachers report workshops as somewhat important. When asked about keeping a Teaching Journal for professional development, 47.5% respond that it is very important. 32.8% respond that it is

somewhat important and 19.7% respond that it is not important. Self-monitoring is another professional development activity, which is considered very important by the majority of the teachers (93.4%). Most of the teachers (57.4%) think that teaching portfolios are very important for teachers' professional development. The majority of teachers (80.3%) also report that they find action research very important for language teachers' professional development. 70.5% of teachers believe that peer coaching is a very important professional development activity. In addition, peer observation is agreed to be very important by 67.2% of teachers. 65.6% of teachers give importance to Analyzing critical incidents and 50.8% of teachers think that team teaching is a very important professional development activity. 52.5% of teachers agree that case studies are very important and 73.8% of teachers find teacher support groups very important for teachers' professional development.

Table 4.6. Use of Professional Development Activities by English Language Teachers

Making Use of Professional Development Activities	Never		Sometimes		Always		N
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Workshops	30	24,6	70	57,4	22	18,0	122
Keeping a teaching journal	72	59,0	40	32,8	10	8,2	122
Self monitoring	24	19,7	16	13,1	82	67,2	122
Teaching portfolios	64	52,5	32	26,2	26	21,3	122
Action research	46	37,7	34	27,9	42	34,4	122
Peer coaching	22	18,0	54	44,3	46	37,7	122
Peer observation	46	37,7	40	32,8	36	29,5	122
Analyzing critical incidents	60	49,2	24	19,7	38	31,1	122
Team teaching	70	57,4	26	21,3	26	21,3	122
Case studies	66	54,1	34	27,9	22	18,0	122
Teacher support groups	66	54,1	26	21,3	30	24,6	122

Table 4.6. shows that workshops are sometimes made use of by the majority of teachers (57.4%). 24.6 % of teachers never make use of workshops and only 18% of teachers always follow workshops for professional development. Although keeping a teaching journal is considered important/somewhat important by the majority of teachers, 59.0% report that they never make use of it. When it comes to self-monitoring 93.4% of teachers find it very important and most of them (67.2%) make use of it. When asked about teaching portfolios for professional development, the minority of teachers report making use of it and 52.5% of teachers report never making use of it for professional development. While 37.7% of teachers never make use of action research, 34.4% of teachers report that they always make use of it. Peer coaching is sometimes made use of by the majority of teachers (44.3%). On the other hand, the majority of teachers (37.7%) report that they never make use of peer observation for their professional development. Nearly half of the teachers (49.2%) never make use of analyzing critical incidents and the other half (50.8%) of the respondents often or always benefit from analyzing critical incidents for their professional development. When asked about team teaching 57.4% of the teachers report that they never make use of it, 21.3% of the teachers sometimes, 21.3% of the teachers always make use of it. When teachers are asked about case studies and teacher support groups, the majority of them (54.1%) report that they never make use of them. Table 4.5. and 4.6. indicate that although teachers find most of the activities important or somewhat important, they do not implement them as much.

4.3. Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of Importance Given to Professional Development Activities and Actual Use of the Activities by Background Factors

In this section, the data were analyzed to see if there is a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions and background factors by using t- test.

Table 4.7. Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Importance Given to Major Professional Development Activities by Gender

Importance of models	Gender	N	X	SD	t	p
Workshops	Female	80	2,6750	,61160	1,329	,189
	Male	42	2,4762	,86216		
Keeping a teaching journal	Female	80	2,3250	,75933	,911	,364
	Male	42	2,1905	,80359		
Self monitoring	Female	80	2,9750	,15711	2,070*	,044
	Male	42	2,8095	,50549		
Teaching portfolios	Female	80	2,5500	,54888	1,502	,138
	Male	42	2,3333	,84584		
Action research	Female	80	2,7250	,55060	,092	,927
	Male	42	2,7143	,70834		
Peer coaching	Female	80	2,7000	,56029	1,718	,091
	Male	42	2,4762	,74041		
Peer observation	Female	80	2,7000	,56029	2,251*	,027
	Male	42	2,4286	,66783		
Analyzing critical incidents	Female	80	2,6250	,62389	1,971	,053
	Male	42	2,3333	,84584		
Team teaching	Female	80	2,3250	,82332	1,705	,091
	Male	42	2,0476	,90937		
Case studies	Female	80	2,3750	,73562	,290	,772
	Male	42	2,3333	,78606		
Teacher support groups	Female	80	2,7250	,59481	2,113*	,038
	Male	42	2,4286	,80070		

An independent t-test was used to compare male and female teachers' perceptions towards teacher professional development activities. There is no significant difference in teacher's perceptions of workshops, keeping a teaching journal, teaching portfolios, action research, peer coaching, analyzing critical incidents, team teaching, and case studies. However, the results show that there are significant differences between the two groups as far as three professional development activities.

As the mean scores indicate, professional development activities such as self monitoring, peer observation, and teacher support groups are considered more important by female teachers than male teachers. The differences in each item are statistically significant (self monitoring $t=2,070$, $p< .05$; peer observation $t=2,251$, $p< .05$; teacher support groups $t=2,113$, $p< .05$).

Table 4.8. Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Making Use of the Activities by Gender

Making use of activities	Gender	N	X	SD	t	p
Workshops	Female	80	1,9250	,68943	-,219	,827
	Male	42	1,9524	,58236		
Keeping a teaching journal	Female	80	1,4750	,59481	-,395	,693
	Male	42	1,5238	,74041		
Self monitoring	Female	80	2,5500	,77786	1,418	,159
	Male	42	2,3333	,84584		
Teaching portfolios	Female	80	1,6750	,79197	-,256	,799
	Male	42	1,7143	,83478		
Action research	Female	80	1,9250	,88267	-,754	,452
	Male	42	2,0476	,79487		
Peer coaching	Female	80	2,2000	,71865	,069	,945
	Male	42	2,1905	,74041		
Peer observation	Female	80	2,0250	,79516	2,016*	,046
	Male	42	1,7143	,83478		
Analyzing critical incidents	Female	80	1,9250	,88267	1,839	,068
	Male	42	1,6190	,85404		
Team teaching	Female	80	1,7500	,83439	2,102*	,038
	Male	42	1,4286	,73726		
Case studies	Female	80	1,7250	,77908	1,704	,091
	Male	42	1,4762	,74041		
Teacher support groups	Female	80	1,7750	,88554	1,350	,180
	Male	42	1,5714	,73726		

Table 4.8. indicates that there is no significant difference in teachers' making use of professional development activities depending on gender. However, the results show that there are significant differences between the two groups as far as two professional development activities.

The relationship between gender and the making use of peer observation and team teaching is significant at the .05 level. As presented in Table 4.8. female teachers more often make use of peer observation and team teaching for their professional development than male teachers (Peer observation $t=2,016$, $p< .05$; Team Teaching $t=2,102$, $p< .05$).

Table 4.9. Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Importance Given to Major Professional Development Activities by Experience

Importance of models	Experience	N	X	SD	t	p																																																																																																											
Workshops	0-5 years	72	2,4722	,76861	-2,700*	,008																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	2,8000	,57143			Keeping a teaching journal	0-5 years	72	2,1667	,80491	-1,940	,055	6 or higher	50	2,4400	,70450	Self monitoring	0-5 years	72	2,8889	,39559	-1,308	,194	6 or higher	50	2,9600	,19795	Teaching portfolios	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,68690	-1,163	,247	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,64397	Action research	0-5 years	72	2,6389	,67773	-1,939	,055	6 or higher	50	2,8400	,46773	Peer coaching	0-5 years	72	2,4722	,73105	-3,648*	,000	6 or higher	50	2,8400	,37033	Peer observation	0-5 years	72	2,5556	,68974	-1,108	,270	6 or higher	50	2,6800	,47121	Analyzing critical incidents	0-5 years	72	2,6111	,64032	1,541	,127	6 or higher	50	2,4000	,80812	Team teaching	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,80053	2,975*	,004	6 or higher	50	1,9600	,87970	Case studies	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,72675	,989	,325	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,78350	Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	2,6667	,62799	,846	,399	6 or higher
Keeping a teaching journal	0-5 years	72	2,1667	,80491	-1,940	,055																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	2,4400	,70450			Self monitoring	0-5 years	72	2,8889	,39559	-1,308	,194	6 or higher	50	2,9600	,19795	Teaching portfolios	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,68690	-1,163	,247	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,64397	Action research	0-5 years	72	2,6389	,67773	-1,939	,055	6 or higher	50	2,8400	,46773	Peer coaching	0-5 years	72	2,4722	,73105	-3,648*	,000	6 or higher	50	2,8400	,37033	Peer observation	0-5 years	72	2,5556	,68974	-1,108	,270	6 or higher	50	2,6800	,47121	Analyzing critical incidents	0-5 years	72	2,6111	,64032	1,541	,127	6 or higher	50	2,4000	,80812	Team teaching	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,80053	2,975*	,004	6 or higher	50	1,9600	,87970	Case studies	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,72675	,989	,325	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,78350	Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	2,6667	,62799	,846	,399	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,76024								
Self monitoring	0-5 years	72	2,8889	,39559	-1,308	,194																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	2,9600	,19795			Teaching portfolios	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,68690	-1,163	,247	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,64397	Action research	0-5 years	72	2,6389	,67773	-1,939	,055	6 or higher	50	2,8400	,46773	Peer coaching	0-5 years	72	2,4722	,73105	-3,648*	,000	6 or higher	50	2,8400	,37033	Peer observation	0-5 years	72	2,5556	,68974	-1,108	,270	6 or higher	50	2,6800	,47121	Analyzing critical incidents	0-5 years	72	2,6111	,64032	1,541	,127	6 or higher	50	2,4000	,80812	Team teaching	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,80053	2,975*	,004	6 or higher	50	1,9600	,87970	Case studies	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,72675	,989	,325	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,78350	Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	2,6667	,62799	,846	,399	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,76024																			
Teaching portfolios	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,68690	-1,163	,247																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,64397			Action research	0-5 years	72	2,6389	,67773	-1,939	,055	6 or higher	50	2,8400	,46773	Peer coaching	0-5 years	72	2,4722	,73105	-3,648*	,000	6 or higher	50	2,8400	,37033	Peer observation	0-5 years	72	2,5556	,68974	-1,108	,270	6 or higher	50	2,6800	,47121	Analyzing critical incidents	0-5 years	72	2,6111	,64032	1,541	,127	6 or higher	50	2,4000	,80812	Team teaching	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,80053	2,975*	,004	6 or higher	50	1,9600	,87970	Case studies	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,72675	,989	,325	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,78350	Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	2,6667	,62799	,846	,399	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,76024																														
Action research	0-5 years	72	2,6389	,67773	-1,939	,055																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	2,8400	,46773			Peer coaching	0-5 years	72	2,4722	,73105	-3,648*	,000	6 or higher	50	2,8400	,37033	Peer observation	0-5 years	72	2,5556	,68974	-1,108	,270	6 or higher	50	2,6800	,47121	Analyzing critical incidents	0-5 years	72	2,6111	,64032	1,541	,127	6 or higher	50	2,4000	,80812	Team teaching	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,80053	2,975*	,004	6 or higher	50	1,9600	,87970	Case studies	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,72675	,989	,325	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,78350	Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	2,6667	,62799	,846	,399	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,76024																																									
Peer coaching	0-5 years	72	2,4722	,73105	-3,648*	,000																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	2,8400	,37033			Peer observation	0-5 years	72	2,5556	,68974	-1,108	,270	6 or higher	50	2,6800	,47121	Analyzing critical incidents	0-5 years	72	2,6111	,64032	1,541	,127	6 or higher	50	2,4000	,80812	Team teaching	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,80053	2,975*	,004	6 or higher	50	1,9600	,87970	Case studies	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,72675	,989	,325	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,78350	Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	2,6667	,62799	,846	,399	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,76024																																																				
Peer observation	0-5 years	72	2,5556	,68974	-1,108	,270																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	2,6800	,47121			Analyzing critical incidents	0-5 years	72	2,6111	,64032	1,541	,127	6 or higher	50	2,4000	,80812	Team teaching	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,80053	2,975*	,004	6 or higher	50	1,9600	,87970	Case studies	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,72675	,989	,325	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,78350	Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	2,6667	,62799	,846	,399	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,76024																																																															
Analyzing critical incidents	0-5 years	72	2,6111	,64032	1,541	,127																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	2,4000	,80812			Team teaching	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,80053	2,975*	,004	6 or higher	50	1,9600	,87970	Case studies	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,72675	,989	,325	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,78350	Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	2,6667	,62799	,846	,399	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,76024																																																																										
Team teaching	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,80053	2,975*	,004																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	1,9600	,87970			Case studies	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,72675	,989	,325	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,78350	Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	2,6667	,62799	,846	,399	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,76024																																																																																					
Case studies	0-5 years	72	2,4167	,72675	,989	,325																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,78350			Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	2,6667	,62799	,846	,399	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,76024																																																																																																
Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	2,6667	,62799	,846	,399																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	2,5600	,76024																																																																																																													

The relationship between experience and the importance given to workshops, peer coaching, and team teaching is significant at the .05 level. As presented in Table 4.9. teachers who have 6 or higher years of experience think that workshops are important for their professional development. At the same time, teachers who have 6 or more years of experience consider peer coaching an important professional development activity (Workshops $t=-2,700$, $p< .05$; Peer Coaching $t=-3,648$, $p< .05$).

When it comes to Team teaching as a professional development activity, teachers who have less than 6 years of experience believe that it is an important professional development activity for teachers' growth (Team Teaching $t=2,975$, $p< .05$).

Table 4.10. Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Making Use of Professional Development Activities by Experience

Making Use of Professional Development Activities	Experience	N	X	SD	t	p																																																																																																											
Workshops	0-5 years	72	1,8333	,60514	-2,082*	,039																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	2,0800	,69517			Keeping a teaching journal	0-5 years	72	1,5000	,65003	,168	,867	6 or higher	50	1,4800	,64650	Self monitoring	0-5 years	72	2,5833	,76453	1,793	,075	6 or higher	50	2,3200	,84370	Teaching portfolios	0-5 years	72	1,7778	,85945	1,533	,128	6 or higher	50	1,5600	,70450	Action research	0-5 years	72	2,0278	,87165	,942	,348	6 or higher	50	1,8800	,82413	Peer coaching	0-5 years	72	2,1389	,71809	-1,061	,291	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,72955	Peer observation	0-5 years	72	2,0833	,83497	2,746*	,007	6 or higher	50	1,6800	,74066	Analyzing critical incidents	0-5 years	72	2,0000	,88811	2,786*	,006	6 or higher	50	1,5600	,81215	Team teaching	0-5 years	72	1,8889	,84845	4,619*	,000	6 or higher	50	1,2800	,60744	Case studies	0-5 years	72	1,8333	,83918	3,729*	,000	6 or higher	50	1,3600	,56279	Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	1,8611	,89294	2,626*	,010	6 or higher
Keeping a teaching journal	0-5 years	72	1,5000	,65003	,168	,867																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	1,4800	,64650			Self monitoring	0-5 years	72	2,5833	,76453	1,793	,075	6 or higher	50	2,3200	,84370	Teaching portfolios	0-5 years	72	1,7778	,85945	1,533	,128	6 or higher	50	1,5600	,70450	Action research	0-5 years	72	2,0278	,87165	,942	,348	6 or higher	50	1,8800	,82413	Peer coaching	0-5 years	72	2,1389	,71809	-1,061	,291	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,72955	Peer observation	0-5 years	72	2,0833	,83497	2,746*	,007	6 or higher	50	1,6800	,74066	Analyzing critical incidents	0-5 years	72	2,0000	,88811	2,786*	,006	6 or higher	50	1,5600	,81215	Team teaching	0-5 years	72	1,8889	,84845	4,619*	,000	6 or higher	50	1,2800	,60744	Case studies	0-5 years	72	1,8333	,83918	3,729*	,000	6 or higher	50	1,3600	,56279	Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	1,8611	,89294	2,626*	,010	6 or higher	50	1,4800	,70682								
Self monitoring	0-5 years	72	2,5833	,76453	1,793	,075																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	2,3200	,84370			Teaching portfolios	0-5 years	72	1,7778	,85945	1,533	,128	6 or higher	50	1,5600	,70450	Action research	0-5 years	72	2,0278	,87165	,942	,348	6 or higher	50	1,8800	,82413	Peer coaching	0-5 years	72	2,1389	,71809	-1,061	,291	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,72955	Peer observation	0-5 years	72	2,0833	,83497	2,746*	,007	6 or higher	50	1,6800	,74066	Analyzing critical incidents	0-5 years	72	2,0000	,88811	2,786*	,006	6 or higher	50	1,5600	,81215	Team teaching	0-5 years	72	1,8889	,84845	4,619*	,000	6 or higher	50	1,2800	,60744	Case studies	0-5 years	72	1,8333	,83918	3,729*	,000	6 or higher	50	1,3600	,56279	Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	1,8611	,89294	2,626*	,010	6 or higher	50	1,4800	,70682																			
Teaching portfolios	0-5 years	72	1,7778	,85945	1,533	,128																																																																																																											
	6 or higher	50	1,5600	,70450			Action research	0-5 years	72	2,0278	,87165	,942	,348	6 or higher	50	1,8800	,82413	Peer coaching	0-5 years	72	2,1389	,71809	-1,061	,291	6 or higher	50	2,2800	,72955	Peer observation	0-5 years	72	2,0833	,83497	2,746*	,007	6 or higher	50	1,6800	,74066	Analyzing critical incidents	0-5 years	72	2,0000	,88811	2,786*	,006	6 or higher	50	1,5600	,81215	Team teaching	0-5 years	72	1,8889	,84845	4,619*	,000	6 or higher	50	1,2800	,60744	Case studies	0-5 years	72	1,8333	,83918	3,729*	,000	6 or higher	50	1,3600	,56279	Teacher support groups	0-5 years	72	1,8611	,89294	2,626*	,010	6 or higher	50	1,4800	,70682																														
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The relationship between experience and making use of professional development activities is significant at the .05 level. As table 4.10. displays, teachers who have 6 or more years of teaching experience benefit from workshops more than teachers who have less experience (Workshops $t=-2,082$, $p< .05$).

However, when teachers were asked about the other professional development activities; namely, peer observation, analyzing critical incidents, team teaching, case studies, and teacher support groups, those who have 0-5 years of teaching experience make use of them more often (Peer Observation $t=2,746$, $p< .05$; Analyzing Critical Incidents $t=2,786$, $p< .05$; Team Teaching $t=4,619$, $p< .05$; Case Studies $t=3,729$, $p< .05$; Teacher Support Groups $t=2,626$, $p<.05$).

4.4. Factors that Hinder Teachers' Professional Development

Degree of importance given to factors that hinder teachers' professional development is shown in this section (in percentages).

Table 4.11. Personal Financial Problems

Personal financial problems	F	%
Not Important	21	17,2
Somewhat Important	34	27,9
Very Important	67	54,9
Total	122	100,0

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage

As Table 4.11. reveals, personal financial problems are considered very important by the 54.9% of teachers. 27.9% of the teachers believe that personal financial problems are somewhat important, and the minority of teachers (17.2%) think that this factor is not important.

Table 4.12. Excessive Workload

Excessive workload	F	%
Not Important	4	3,3
Somewhat Important	11	9,0
Very Important	107	87,7
Total	122	100,0

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage

The majority of the teachers (87.7%) consider excessive workload a very important drawback in their professional development, while 9.0% of the teachers regard excessive workload somewhat important and 3.3% of the teachers dismiss it.

Table 4.13. Difficulty Reaching in Literature in the Field

Difficulty Reaching in Literature in the Field	F	%
Not Important	45	36,9
Somewhat Important	36	29,5
Very Important	41	33,6
Total	122	100,0

Note: F= frequency, P= percentage

Table 4.13. reveals that 36.9% of the teachers think that difficulty reaching in literature in the field is not an important problem. 29.5% of the teachers find it somewhat important and 33.6% of the teachers believe it is a very important problem for teachers' professional development.

Table 4.14. Lack of Communication among Colleagues

Lack of communication among colleagues	F	%
Not Important	31	25,4
Somewhat Important	16	13,1
Very Important	75	61,5
Total	122	100,0

Note: F= frequency, P= percentage

Table 4.14. displays that the majority of the teachers consider lack of communication among colleagues very important. 61.5% of the teachers believe that it is a very important problem. 24.4% of the teachers think that it is not an important problem and 13.1% of the teachers regard it as somewhat important.

Table 4.15. Strict Working Hours

Strict working hours	F	%
Not Important	6	4,9
Somewhat Important	12	9,8
Very Important	104	85,2
Total	122	100,0

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage

As Table 4.15. shows the majority of teachers (85.2%) consider strict working hours a very important problem. A small number of teachers believe it is unimportant or somewhat important for their professional development.

Table 4.16. Lack of Institutional Support for Professional Development

Lack of institutional support for professional development	F	%
Not Important	16	13,1
Somewhat Important	13	10,7
Very Important	93	76,2
Total	122	100,0

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage

Table 4.16. indicates that lack of institutional support for professional development is another important factor that hinders teachers' professional development. 76.2% of the teachers consider it as very important. 10.7% of the teachers perceive this problem as somewhat important and 13.1% of the teachers believe that it is unimportant.

Table 4.17. Lack of Self-Motivation

Lack of self-motivation	F	%
Not Important	1	,8
Very Important	121	99,2
Total	122	100,0

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage

As table 4.17. reveals, almost all the teachers (99.2%) consider lack of self motivation as the most important factor which hinders teachers' professional development. Only one of the teachers (0.8%) thinks that self-motivation is not an important factor for professional development.

Table 4.18. Educational Background

Educational Background	F	%
Not Important	25	20,5
Somewhat Important	19	15,6
Very Important	78	63,9
Total	122	100,0

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage

Table 4.18. shows that 63.9% of the teachers think that educational background is very important and 15.6% consider it somewhat important. 20.5% of the teachers perceive it as not important at all.

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the study are discussed by considering the research questions. After presenting the findings about English language teachers' perceptions of professional development activities, the focus will shift to the factors that hinder teachers' professional development. This chapter concludes with the implications of research for practice and further research.

5.2. Professional Development Activities

One of the aims of this study was to examine English language teachers' perceptions of professional development activities and frequency of their use. The results indicate that the attention language teachers give to the professional development activities does not correspond to their actual use in the classroom. This result is consistent with previous studies (Hismanoğlu, 2010; Karaaslan 2003).

“Workshops may be the most common professional development activities” (Cranton, 1996, p. 32). The findings of this study also indicate that workshops are considered vital by the majority of language teachers as they make use of them to various degrees. One of the reasons why workshops are popular among language teachers may be that a topic or problem which teachers are specifically interested in is introduced to teachers by experts during these sessions. Therefore, “workshops provide teachers with a chance to focus intensely on topics of interest and let teachers learn from others with more expertise than they have” (Dunne, n.d, p.76). Another reason for the popularity of workshops may be their duration. As workshops are generally a few hours, half a day or one day, teachers may have the chance to attend them despite their strict working hours and excessive workload. On the other hand, workshops are considered to be isolated from practice as they are one-stop sessions (Cranton, 1996). As a result, teachers who are critical to this concept may think that workshops will not deepen or expand their teaching skills in a short time.

According to survey results of this study, although most of the teachers emphasize the importance of self-directed teacher professional development

strategies such as keeping a teaching journal, self-monitoring, teaching portfolios and action research; they do not make use of these models to the same extent. Hooker (n.d) points out that “in self-directed teacher professional development (TPD), teachers are involved in initiating and designing their own professional development and would share materials and ideas as well as discuss challenges and solutions” (p. 6).

In this study, two of the self-directed activities: action research and self-monitoring are perceived as critical and made use of by majority of teachers. This claim may be based on several assumptions. Firstly, teachers may know that “action research emphasizes the involvement of teachers in problems in their own classrooms and has as its primary goal the in-service training and development of the teacher rather than the acquisition of general knowledge in the field of education” (Borg, 1965, p. 313). So, it is understood that action research enables teachers to examine their own practice and change their practice according to research results, which they have obtained from their own teaching. According to Ferrance(2000), “teachers and principals work best on problems they have identified for themselves” (p.1). Secondly, Angelo and Cross state that “teachers need to make their objectives explicit and need to receive specific feedback on the extent to which they reach these objectives” (Cited in Cranton, 1996, p.190). Therefore, teachers may consider that action research is a good way to receive feedback and evaluate their practices. Another reason may be the realization that “teachers who do action research in their classroom do not blindly follow what the latest study seems to suggest but they transform the knowledge into something meaningful” (Ferrance, 2000, p.13). On the other hand, in a similar study by Karaarslan (2003), teachers do not consider action research relevant. Overall, half of the teachers (48.5%) think it is a very important/important activity, whereas the other half (49.5%) believe it is useful to some extent. Teachers’ responses to how often they use action research show that the majority of teachers rarely or never initiate classroom investigation (action research) (54.6%) and just the minority of teachers often or always undertake action research in their classes. She thinks that lack of knowledge or lack of time and resources to conduct a research in the class may prevent teachers from making use of action research.

Survey results indicate that self-monitoring is one of the activities that contribute to teachers' development. One of the reasons for the popularity of self-monitoring among teachers may be that it is a teacher-initiated activity. Self-monitoring lets teachers observe themselves, identify the issues that arise in their classroom and find solutions to the problems they encounter while teaching. Secondly, teachers do not have to share the self-monitoring process or the information obtained during this process with other colleagues, supervisors or administrators. Therefore, they do not feel stressed and they may better understand their strengths and weaknesses. There are some procedures used in self-monitoring like lesson reports, written narrative, checklist and questionnaires, audio recording a lesson, and video recording a lesson (Richards and Farrell, 2005). Since it is not aimed to find which procedures teachers prefer to monitor their teaching, teachers' preferences on self monitoring cannot be discussed in this study.

Keeping a teaching journal and teaching portfolios are the least used activities. Teachers may be aware of the benefits of these strategies. However, some reasons may be attributed to why they do not use these activities. Firstly, teachers may not want to share the journal with another reader and may have difficulty in writing reflectively. In addition, writing a journal may be time consuming (Richards, 2005, p. 70). Similarly, Wray (2006) emphasizes the difficulty of teaching portfolios by stating that "portfolios are complicated and time consuming to create" (p. 1140). It might be inferred that teachers in this study may not have enough time because of working conditions and for this reason, they avoid using these strategies for their development.

The results of this study indicate that collaborative professional development activities like peer coaching, peer observation, analyzing critical incidents, team teaching, case studies, and teacher support groups are found somewhat important or very important by most of the language teachers in this study. Yet, actual implementation of these activities is a completely different story. Especially some of the activities like analyzing critical incidents, team teaching, case studies, and teacher support groups are never used by more than half of the respondents. There may be some underlying reasons that explain why it is the case. Firstly, teachers may not have enough knowledge to do these activities. Secondly, lack of

collaboration among teachers because of working conditions may prevent them from using these activities. Hismanoğlu (2010) presents the same findings in his study. He states that “the strategies requiring communication and collaboration are preferred at very low rate” (Hismanoğlu, 2010, p. 994). Ertesvag (2011) also cites in his study that “teachers generally avoid seeking opportunities to share or communicate in ways that impose on other teachers. Also, teachers value autonomy more than the chance to influence others’ work”(Hargreaves, 2005; Levine & Marcus, 2008; Mclaughlin & Tallbert, 2001). It seems that teachers are not in favor of using collaborative strategies for their development. However, a growing body of research suggests that participation in more collaborative professional communities affects teaching practice and improves students’ learning (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008, cited in Ertesvag, 2011, p.1).

According to survey results, one of the collaborative activities teachers implement and consider relevant to their development is peer coaching. Robbins (1995) defines peer coaching as “a confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices, expand, refine and build new skills, share ideas; teach one another; conduct classroom research; or solve problems in the workplace” (p.206). First and foremost peer coaching enhances both the teacher’s and the coach’s performance. The coach helps the teacher and at the same time refreshes his or her own teaching during this process. Next, as Richards and Farrell (2005) cite in their book “peer coaching reduces the sense of isolation that teachers tend to feel (Benedetti, 1997). When teachers have some problems related to their teaching, they may ask for help from their peers rather than administrators. Last but not least, teachers may favor peer coaching since it takes on different forms such as informal conversations between a teacher and a colleague, collaboration between two teachers on the preparation of teaching materials, co-teaching lessons and observing each other’s approach and teaching style (Richards and Farrell, 2005).

On the other hand, the third reason may also explain why teachers make less use of peer observation. As its name suggests peer observation aims to improve teaching skills by watching a lesson. In chapter 2, some concerns related to peer-observation are presented. Davis (2011) states that objections to peer observation

include “anxieties about openness and possible threats to academic freedom, the difficulty of defining a peer, problems with finding time to devote to peer-review, concerns about the validity and reliability of peer review, and concerns about undesirable aftereffects of the approach” (p.107). The respondents may also have the same objections in their minds. They may find peer observation time consuming and may have some concerns about it being personalized, subjective, and unreliable. They may also think that observed class session is non-representative of actual teaching (Davis, 2011, p.107). Because of these concerns, teachers may not make use of peer observation for their professional development. Siddiqui et al. (2007) mention the same finding about participation to peer observation in their study. In a questionnaire study of General Practitioner Teachers, only half of the teachers were willing to take part in the peer-observation process. Time constraints, busy workloads, and fear of scrutiny and criticism were identified as hurdles that might inhibit participation in the process (Adshead et al.2006, cited in Siddiqui et al, 2007, p. 297).

Overall, based on the research presented above most of the teachers find professional development activities as important and make use of them with varying frequencies. However, it is clear that although teachers find them important, they do not benefit from these activities as much as they give importance to. According to Hismanoğlu (2010), they put forward some impediment to their professional development that are “time allocation, heavy work schedule, strict working hours, funding, lack of communication among staff, lack of motivation, lack of support from administrative units” (p.994).

One of the variables that help us understand the relationship between PD and teachers is gender. In this study, female teachers focus on self-monitoring, peer observation, and teacher support groups more than male teachers. In addition, survey results show that female teachers make use of peer observation and team teaching more often. Thus, female teachers clearly implement more professional development activities.

Teachers also differ in their view and use of the activities depending on their experience. While teachers who have 6 or more years of teaching experience focus on workshops and peer coaching, teachers who have 5 or less years of teaching

experience turn to team teaching. As Richards and Farrell (2005) state “being asked to be a coach may be a sign of professional recognition” (p.145). Yet, novice teachers use more often other professional development activities such as peer observation, analyzing critical incidents, team teaching, case studies, and teacher support groups.

It is not surprising because when teachers start their careers, they are generally more enthusiastic about improving their teaching practice, and they may need to get help and guidance from experienced teachers. On the other hand, experienced teachers prefer workshops, as they may believe that they can build their knowledge and skills by listening to experts.

5.2. Factors that Hinder Teachers’ Professional Development

The research question with an aim of identifying “Which factors hinder teachers’ professional development” showed that lack of self-motivation stood out as the greatest obstacle to PD. The second in line was excessive workload. A similar study by Karaarslan (2003), highlighted excessive work load, lack of self-motivation, and lack of institutional support. However, in a study by Ekşi (2010) ‘lack of self-motivation’ was negligible.

According to the findings of the present study, self-motivation is a key factor that hinders teachers’ professional development. Cafferella and Zinn (1999) list the enabling and impeding factors in the following table:

Table 5.1. Enabling and Impeding Factors of Motivation

Enabling Factors	Impeding Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong personal beliefs and values which demand excellence in our work • Strong personal beliefs and values about the value of continuous professional development; sense of obligation to be active teachers, scholars, and learners throughout the career • Self-confidence in our roles as faculty members • Perception that we can make a difference in the lives of students, other educators, and in our fields of study • Commitment to a line of inquiry that helps center our work (recognizing that this focus may evolve over time) • Enjoyment of challenges and change • Ability to see the "big picture" issues related to our universities and our fields, in general • Ability to thrive with intrinsic rewards • Continued enthusiasm for the role of faculty member and for continued professional growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of commitment to excellence; "getting by" with the minimum is sufficient • Lack of interest in and commitment to continuing professional development; • lack of commitment to continue as active learners, teachers, and scholars after receiving tenure • Little confidence that we are, or can be, successful faculty members • Feelings of discouragement, or frustration related to our roles as faculty members • Lines of inquiry have no central core, leading to scholarly records which are both unfocused and inconsistent over time • Reluctance and/or active resistance to change • Focus of concern solely on your own work, or issues relevant to your department or division • Need for extrinsic rewards as a primary source of motivation • Feelings of exhaustion or burnout as a faculty member

One of the impeding factors clearly states that lack of interest in and commitment to continuing professional development discourages teachers. It is clear that during their careers, they should engage in some professional development activities to keep up their motivation for teaching. According to Cave and Mulloy (2010), “there is evidence that highly motivated teachers are more likely to engage in professional development and implement innovative programs to increase student learning” (cited in Schieb and Karabenick, 2011, p.13). It is clear that there is a close relationship between motivation and teachers’ professional development. Therefore, factors that foster teachers’ motivation should be identified and their

engagement in professional development activities should be encouraged. Stout (1996) poses four motivations teachers have for participating in professional development: “salary enhancement, certificate maintenance, career mobility (building their resume to move up the ladder into administration or pursue other careers), and gaining new skills/knowledge” (cited in Smith et al., 2003, p.17). If these points are known to strengthen teachers’ motivation to attend professional development activities then administrators, policy makers and teacher trainers should take into consideration and facilitate teachers’ program.

Research findings of this study suggest that lack of self-motivation is a major factor that hinders teachers’ professional development. However, Schieb and Karabenick (2011) point out that “although there is a growing body of literature to date, it is thus evident that the systematic examination of teacher motivation and professional development (PD) has only begun, and that more research is needed to understand how education reforms affect teacher motivation in general, and motivation for PD in particular” (p.19). Clearly, further studies must be conducted on teachers’ self-motivation that would engage them systematically in professional development.

Other factors that are perceived as decisive by the majority of the teachers are: Excessive workload, strict working hours, lack of communication among colleagues, and lack of institutional support for professional development. When the components of an effective professional development are examined the duration of these activities stands out as the most important key factor. In order to emphasize the significance of duration in teacher professional development Yoon et al., (2007) examined nine controlled studies of professional development efforts to determine how much time is necessary for an impact. Of course, in general, the more time invested, the better the results. Yoon and colleagues noted that when the effort lasted less than 30 hours, it showed no significant effect on student learning. The efforts that ranged from 30 to 100 hours, with an average of 49 hours, showed positive and significant effects on student achievement (cited in Center for Technology in Learning, 2009, p.3). As mentioned in section 5.1. workshops, which are generally one-shot, are criticized harshly because of their duration. Most of the educators believe that one-stop workshops do not make any difference in teaching and student learning. However, excessive workload and strict working hours may prevent

teachers' engagement in professional development activities that demand much time. Excessive workload and strict working hours may also hinder collaboration among teachers, which is perceived as critical for professional development. In chapter 2, it is clearly stated that collaborative teacher professional development activities contribute to effective PD. Kwakwan (2003) states that both individual and collaborative learning are important for PD. However there is a growing call for more collaboration in order to stimulate teacher learning. He states that:

The reasoning behind this call for collaboration is that feedback, new information or ideas do not only spring from individual learning, but to a large extent also from dialogue and interaction with other people. Moreover, collaboration is assumed to create a learning culture and helps to build a community in which further learning is supported and stimulated. (p.152)

Lack of institutional support is considered very relevant by teachers. They may expect extra support for their professional growth from their institution instead of other sources. Educational background is another factor. This may show the importance of pre-service education in teachers' professional life. Most of the teachers have their education in different departments of universities to be a teacher of English such as English Language and Literature and American Language and Literature. Thus, they do not have methodology classes during their education. This situation may create some problems during their teaching careers and they may perceive educational background as an important factor that hinders their professional development.

5.4. Implications of the Study

The research presented in this section leads to several implications for teachers, teacher trainers, teacher development and teacher training.

One of the major findings of the study is that teachers accept PD activities as important but they do not implement them as much. This result shows that "professional development activities depend on the objectives and needs of teachers as well as of their students" (Avalos, 2010, p.1). Some of the professional development activities, which have great positive affects, may not be relevant to teachers' needs. The findings of the study show that novice teachers prefer

collaborative activities. Logically, they need to collaborate with experienced teachers to improve their practices and deepen their knowledge. This indicates that teacher trainers and educators should be sensitive to experiences of teachers. The results of this study demonstrate that teachers choose activities, which are in line with their years of teaching experience.

Another implication of the study is that teachers show individual differences and these differences should be taken into account while designing professional development activities. According to the findings of this study, female teachers are in favor of collaborative activities. Therefore, while collaborative activities may have great impact on female teachers they may not have the same impact on male teachers. Thus, collaborative activities might not be utilized to the same degree.

Another important implication of the study is that there are some factors that hinder teachers' professional development like self-motivation, excessive workload, strict working hours and financial problems. Teacher trainers, school managers may not be aware of these factors. If these factors are taken into account while designing professional development activities, teachers' views towards professional development activities may change. It is stated that "teachers' views on PD will significantly influence their motivation to attend PD [and will also influence] its implementation, sustainability and success in integrating the curriculum and accompanying strategies into teachers' regular classroom practices"(Schieb and Karabenick , 2011, p.10).

5.5. Suggestions for Further Study

In this study, English language teachers' perceptions towards professional development activities were examined. As the only data gathering source a questionnaire, which was adapted from Karaaslan's (2003) study, was used. In further studies, interviews can be used for better understanding of teachers' perceptions.

The results of the study indicate that teachers accept PD as part of their life but quite often do not implement or participate in PD activities. In order to understand the reasons why this is the case several observations might be conducted. Some of the professional development activities are also used with varying frequencies depending on gender and experience. A further study may be conducted

to better understand why some of the activities are preferred by females or males and experienced or novice teachers.

The factors that hinder teachers' professional development were also examined in this study. The results of the study show that lack of self-motivation is the most frequently reported factor that hinders teachers' professional development. The underlying cause, however, ought to be examined in detail. Motivational factors in PD and the degree of teachers' participation in PD activities await further study.

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7. APPENDIX

7.1. Appendix A: Teacher Professional Development Questionnaire

Dear Colleague,

I am an MA student at Çağ University, Department of English Language Teaching. This questionnaire is designed to investigate teachers' perceptions of usefulness of professional development activities. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated. Your responses will only be used for this research and be kept confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Emrah MUYAN

Section I: Background Questions

1. Gender? ___ Female ___ Male 2. Your age? _____

3. How many years of English language teaching experience do you have?

4. How long have you been working at this institution?

5. Your undergraduate area of study?

a) Teaching English as a Foreign Language

b) English Language and Literature

c) American Language and Literature

d) Other (Please specify): _____

6. Are you currently enrolled in a degree program? (MA, PhD, etc.)

___ Yes (Please indicate field and degree: _____) ___ No

_____)

7. How many hours of workload a week do you have? _____

8. Do you have any plans to take additional qualifications in ELT or education in the future?

_ Yes (Please indicate) _____ ___ No

Section II

The items in this section are designed in order to find out what major professional development activities do English language teachers perceive as critical to their development and to what degree they make use of these opportunities. Please read each statement and put a check mark (✓) to the column that most closely reflects your idea.

Teacher Development	How Important			How often you use it		
	Not Important (1)	Somewhat Important (2)	Very Important (3)	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Always (3)
1. Workshops						
2. Keeping a Teaching Journal						
3. Self Monitoring						
4. Teaching portfolios						
5. Action Research						
6. Peer Coaching						
7. Peer Observation						
8. Analyzing Critical Incidents						
9. Team Teaching						
10. Case Studies						
11. Teacher Support Groups						

Section III

In this section, there are some factors that hinder professional development of teachers. Please read each statement and put a check mark (✓) to the column that most closely reflects your idea.

	Not important (1)	Somewhat important (2)	Very important (3)
1. Personal financial problems			
2.Excessive workload			
3.Lack of communication among colleagues			
4.Strict working hours			
5.Lack of institutional support for professional development			
6.Lack of self-motivation			
7.Educational background			
8.Difficulty reaching in literature in the field			
9.Other problems (Please indicate below and rate):			

If you have further comments on teachers’ attitudes toward professional development, please write in below.
