TEACHERS AND RESEARCH: A CASE STUDY OF ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS IN AN EFL CONTEXT

A Master's Thesis

by

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The Department of
Teaching English as a Foreign Language
Bilkent University
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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Teaching English as a Second Language.

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ABSTRACT

TEACHERS AND RESEARCH: A CASE STUDY OF ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS IN AN EFL CONTEXT

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July 2010

This study focuses on attitudes towards research at the Department of Basic English (DBE) at Middle East Technical University (METU). The study is based on the understanding that using research as a tool, teachers can construct knowledge through interaction and collaboration with teacher educators, and colleagues. Achieving a research mindset is an important step towards an accurate evaluation of matters related to the immediate school context as well as to the social context at large. In this study, teachers' involvement in and with research activities and their cognitive, affective and behavioral attitudes were explored. Teacher educators' and administrators' attitudes were also investigated to reveal whether teachers' needs and expectations are met by the current support mechanisms and whether their views on teachers' research activities are congruent with each other. The participants of the study were 134 teachers, four administrators and four teacher educators working at the DBE. I collected quantitative and qualitative data with questionnaires, interviews and institutional documents, which were later analyzed and interpreted. Evidence suggests that

teachers at the DBE, though positive in their feelings and ideas about research, are not inclined to be actively involved in research projects. The major reasons cited for this were a perceived lack of relevance of research in teaching and lack of time. The administrators consider research as a necessary tool to improve curricular activities; however, the support provided does not correspond to the needs. Likewise, teacher educators, who value research as a tool for professional development, are bound by the school policies and a tight timeframe to offer more. I offer research as a tool in a constructivist manner: a tool for constructing new meanings and improvement in all matters related to teaching and learning. To achieve this, special interest groups could be set up to investigate common academic issues, teachers experienced in research activities could collaborate with other teachers who are willing to take part in such activities and school policies could be planned to provide encouragement and motivation for teachers to get involved in and with research.

Keywords: research, constructivism, Department of Basic English, METU

ÖZET

ÖĞRETMENLER VE ARAŞTIRMA: İNGİLİZCE'NİN YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRETİLDİĞİ BİR ORTAMDA TUTUM VE DAVRANIŞLAR ÜZERİNE BİR OLGU ARAŞTIRMASI

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Bu çalışma ODTÜ Temel İngilizce Bölümünde (TİB) araştırmaya karşı tutum ve davranışlar üzerine odaklanmıştır. Bu çalışmada TİB'deki öğretmenlerin öğretmen eğitmenleri ve meslektaşları ile iletişim ve işbirliği içinde bilgi üretebilmeleri için araştırmayı bir araç olarak kullanabilecekleri düşüncesi temel alınmıştır. Araştırmacı bir düşünce yapısına sahip olmak sadece okul bağlamında değil, daha geniş sosyal bağlamda da konuların doğru değerlendirilmesine yönelik önemli bir adımdır. Bu çalışmada öğretmenlerin araştırma etkinliklerine katılımları ve bilişsel, duygusal ve davranışsal tutumları incelendi. Öğretmen eğitmenlerinin ve yöneticilerin tutumları da öğretmenlerin gereksinim ve beklentilerine uygun destek mekanizmaları sağlanıp sağlanmadığının ortaya koyulması ve bu iki grubun arasında öğretmenlerin araştırma yapmaları konusunda fikirbirliği olup olmadığının anlaşılması amacıyla incelendi. Çalışmanın katılımcıları ODTÜ Temel İngilizce Bölümünde (TİB) çalışan 134 öğretmen, dört yönetici ve dört öğretmen eğitmeniydi. Bu çalışmada anket, görüşmeler ve kurum belgeleri ile nicel ve nitel veri toplandı ve

sonrasında bunları çözümlendi ve yorumlandı. Bulgular TİB'deki öğretmenlerin duygusal ve bilişsel olarak araştırmaya olumlu baktığını ancak etkin olarak araştırma projeleri yapmaya eğilimlerinin olmadığını gösterdi. Öğretmenler araştırma yapmama sebeplerini araştırmaların sınıf uygulamalarıyla ilişkili olmaması, zaman yetersizliği ve araştırma yapmak ile öğretmenliğin ilişkili olmaması şeklinde bildirdiler. Yöneticiler öğretim etkinliklerinin gelişmesi için araştırmayı gerekli bir araç olarak gördüklerini bildirdiler ancak araştırma için sağlanan desteğin öğretmenlerin bildirdikleri gereksinimleri ile tam olarak örtüşmediği ortaya çıktı. Benzer şekilde öğretmen eğitmenleri mesleki gelişim için araştırmanın değerli olduğunu düşündüklerini ancak okul politikaları ve zaman yetersizliği sebebiyle bu konuda daha aktif olamadıklarını belirttiler. Ben araştırmayı yapısalcı bir yaklaşımla bir araç olarak görüyorum: yeni anlamlar oluşturma ve öğretme ve öğrenme ile ilgili tüm konularda gelişim ve ilerleme için bir araç. Buna ulaşabilmek için okuldaki ortak akademik sorunlar üzerinde araştırma yürütecek çalışma grupları kurma, araştırma yapma konusunda tecrübeli hocalarla bu konuda çalışmak isteyen diğer hocaların işbirliğini sağlama, ve araştırma yapmaları için hocaları cesaretlendirme ve harekete geçirmek üzere uygun bir çalışma politikası planlamak gerekebilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: araştırma, yapısalcılık, Temel İngilizce Bölümü, ODTÜ

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CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

Learning is central not only to teaching but also to teachers' capability to respond to the changing and challenging needs of learners. Lieberman (p. 45; 1995, p. 45) argued that students have been bestowed with many opportunities for learning "through experiencing, creating and solving real problems, using their own experiences and working with others" whereas teachers did not have such a chance (p.58). Today, however, there is considerable emphasis on teachers' learning in the form of reflective practice, collaboration with colleagues, action-research and academic research. Among these, academic research is considered to be the most challenging process for teachers since it entails traditional research paradigms that are believed to be extraneous to teachers' realm (Hopkins, 1993, in Halsall, 1998, p. 73). Still, there is a growing tendency within the academic milieu to engage teachers in research. Research engagement helps teachers develop, and more importantly, transforms them to become "creators of knowledge [and] managers of educational policy" (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 2). A theory of learning that supports teachers' active role in the production of knowledge is not limited to the classroom or the school context; it is concerned with empowering learners so that they "take cognizance of social, political and historical issues in the practice of education in the context of the community in which they practice" (Kincheloe, 1991 cited in Stears, 2009). This constructivist approach designates teachers a powerful role in matters related to curricular activities as well as to the politics of education.

The recognition of teachers' potential to "develop knowledge and skills [which will] allow them to connect educational practice with larger social visions"

(Kincheloe, 2003, p. 2) has led me to design this case study which explores attitudes towards research in an academic institution. The participants of the study are teachers, teacher educators, and administrators of a foreign language school.

Background of the study

In the last half of the 20th century, there has been a growing interest in engaging teachers in action research to improve school output and solve problems related to the curricula (McKernan, 1996). For the development of the school system, teachers' roles have been viewed as crucial and this interest has resulted in many studies. Some of those studies associate effective teachers with effective teaching behavior (Gardner, 1972; Hativa, Barak, & Simhi, 2001; Needels, 1994). Some others emphasize teacher development as a crucial factor in the efficacy of the practice of teaching (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Liou, 2001; White, 2000). In teacher self-development, Gebhard (2009, p. 8) mentions the need for commitment to learning, which includes learning new things about teaching through problem solving, exploring and cooperating with colleagues. Lieberman (2000) emphasizes the fact that teachers' development needs to be initiated by themselves; otherwise, it may not be possible to respond to the needs of practitioners working in different contexts. Another approach to teacher development comes from Polanyi, (1966, in Knezevis & Scholl, 1996, p. 79) who suggests the collaboration of a wide network of teachers for development since through collaboration teachers can identify and understand their tacit knowledge. Participating in in-service training programs (Hayes, 1995), being engaged in action-research to provide meaning and solutions to problematic situations in the classroom (Burns, 2005) and changing teachers into

"transformative intellectuals" through research (Giroux cited in Kincheloe, 2003, p.47) are considered important in the professional development of teachers.

Among the activities proposed for professional development, teachers' research engagement is a controversial one. There are strong defenders of teachers' involvement in research, who claim that through research teachers can commit themselves to their own achievement as well as their students' enlightenment (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 45) and there are opponents, who believe that teachers do not possess the necessary tools and knowledge to carry out research in the traditional sense (Allwright, 1997). This study views research as an act of inquiry that has roots in educational as well as social frameworks (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Research transforms the traditional passive teacher into an active individual who generates knowledge by questioning, negotiating and collaborating with others. This activity proposes ways for change in the teacher's own practice, in the classroom and school context as well as change in social and political frameworks.

Teachers are traditionally viewed as "the objects and consumers of research rather than its generators" (Kirk, 2004 cited in Kirkwood & Christie, 2006, p.430). However, Kincheloe argues that knowledge needs to be created within the close environment of teachers rather than by experts in distant domains (2003, p.18). He also criticizes the top-down standards of the hierarchical system in education policies which "deskills" (p.31) teachers whereas the ability to conduct research leads teachers to emancipation through learning to teach themselves (p.47). A similar view is expressed by Halsall (1998), who advocates the involvement of teachers in research to attend to the creation and modification of teaching theories and practices,

since these activities help to raise standards, provide quality in teaching and demonstrate effectiveness (p.75).

A growing number of studies in recent years have focused on the relationship between conducting research and teaching from different perspectives. Research activities carried out by teachers, which is called *teacher* research (Hall, Leat, Wall, Higgins, & Edwards, 2006; Kirkwood & Christie, 2006; Lunenberg & Willemse, 2006; Rathgen, 2006) has been a popular subject lately since it confers a new title and stance on the teacher. The term *teacher research* was interpreted by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993, cited in Zeichner, 1995) as a "systematic and intentional inquiry about teaching, learning and schooling carried out by teachers in their own school and classroom settings" (p.14). The term action research is used in a similar vein representing a reflective process to improve one's own teaching, however not concerned about the dissemination of findings for public use.

Hahs-Vaughn & Yanowitz (2009) state in their study that to guide students effectively teachers should engage themselves in research. Reflecting on their own practice and inquiry will provide teachers the tools to improve their teaching and learning. Another study explored the role of teacher research in continuing professional development (Kirkwood & Christie, 2006). The findings revealed that, with the proper conditions provided, teachers could develop into researching professionals. Yet another study, a longitudinal case study, explored the role of formal instruction in teachers' conceptions of teacher-research and self perceptions as enquiring practitioners (Reis-Jorge, 2007). In this study, the researcher revealed how academic work helps teachers to develop critical and analytical reading and writing skills. Nevertheless, the highly structured forms of research and the need for

time and expertise for a formal research study were presented as impediments to teachers' research engagement. Thus, Reis-Jorge concluded that action-research projects could be an alternative for the professional development of teachers. Despite the flourishing interest in the teacher as a researcher in the educational context, a contextual and heuristic presentation of the research agenda of a single institution including all academic staff has yet to be explored. Though the literature on teacher development seems to favor research as an effective tool for this end, there is need for further research to reveal the attitudes of all the practitioners within an academic institution towards research using multiple data sources.

Statement of the problem

Studies investigating the nexus of relations between teaching and researching are many. One popular aspect of inquiry has been the impact of conducting research on teachers' professional development (Rathgen, 2006; Murray, et al., 2009; Kirkwood & Christie, 2006; Lunenberg & Willemse, 2006) as well as its impact on school change (Berger, Boles, & Troen, 2005). Teachers' views and conceptions of educational research were found to be of interest by some researchers (Beycioglu, Ozer, & Ugurlu, 2009; J. Reis-Jorge, 2007). Another viewpoint has been to look at the characteristics of teachers who conduct research (Hahs-Vaughn & Yanowitz, 2009). Many of those studies have scrutinized the relationship between teachers and researching; however, few studies have dealt specifically with language teachers' research involvement. Of those, ways to involve English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in research have been investigated (Atay, 2008), and language teachers' views of the relationship between research and language teaching (Allison & Carey, 2007) as well as EFL teachers' conceptions of research have been studied (Borg,

2009). Borg specifically inquired whether EFL teachers conduct and read research, and explored teachers' perceptions of their institutions' culture in relation to research. However, none of these studies investigated the attitudes of all academic staff with relation to research at an institution to reveal a complete picture. Exploring a real-life context using a case study design provided means to explore the many variables that are key to the understanding of attitudes towards research, the value attributed to these activities, and the extent to which these activities are supported.

Merriam (1998) states that *case study* is an established and widespread form of research in education that imparts "a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon" (p.26). In this case study, I tried to provide a comprehensive account of the Department of Basic English (DBE) by investigating sub-units within the concept of *research*: teachers, teacher educators and administrators. To this end, teachers' attitudes and behaviors towards research, and teacher educators' and administrators' attitudes towards research conducted by teachers at the DBE at Middle East Technical University (METU) were investigated. The level of congruence between the teacher educators' and administrators' perceptions with respect to teacher-research relationship and whether teachers' needs for a research mindset are met by school policies were thus elucidated.

Researchers have asserted the benefits of a research-oriented environment in academic institutions since "a vibrant professional culture depends on a group of practitioners who … continuously reinvent themselves via research and knowledge production" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 19). At the macro level, for administrators/policy makers to develop appropriate strategies for a progressive environment at their institution, they need to be aware of the attitudes of the academic staff towards

research. With regard to classroom practices, specifically, teachers who are able to "reinvent themselves" are argued to be better able to respond to learners' needs (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 19). Thus, the need to provide a detailed account of the conceptions, reactions, and behaviors of the academic staff at the DBE towards research becomes apparent. This study will attempt to elucidate these issues by asking the following research questions:

At the DBE,

1) What are the behaviors and attitudes of teachers toward academic research?

   a. To what extent do they read and/or conduct research?

   b. What are teachers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes towards academic research?

2) What are the attitudes of administrators towards research?

   a. How do they relate research and teaching?

   b. To what extent do they support research activities among teachers?

3) What are the attitudes of teacher educators towards research?

   a. How do they relate research and teaching?

   b. To what extent do they support research activities among teachers?

Significance of the study

The growing recognition of research involvement of the teacher as a constructive and feasible exertion is apparent from previous research findings (Hahs-

Vaughn & Yanowitz, 2009; Hall, Leat, Wall, Higgins, & Edwards, 2006). However, studies on teachers' research involvement neglected to explore conceptions and attitudes of the other local practitioners, such as teacher educators, testers, coordinators and administrators, who are assumed to share the same goals in a particular workplace. Exploring attitudes of all academics in a single institution using a case study construct is a novel attempt: it will bring about not only an understanding of attitudes in a real-life context but also the impact of group attitudes on the whole unit. Thus, this study may contribute to the literature by providing a rich and detailed analysis of attitudes of interrelated persons in an academic environment revealing the extent of congruence in terms of attitudes towards teachers' research activities. Exploration of causal mechanisms between research activities, teacher profiles and behaviors of other academic staff may also contribute to literature as a model to improve practice and inform policy.

At the local level, this study aims to provide data for a better understanding of attitudes towards research of different but related units at the DBE. The correspondence between the teachers' needs and expectations and available resources in relation to research may provide the administrators valuable insight in the planning of policies for the school. The administration and the teacher education units may better interpret the needs and beliefs of teachers about research, and thus design pre- and in-service training programs and materials for all groups including teachers, testers and coordinators, accordingly. It may also aid the administration in setting goals for and accommodating teachers' academic needs since research engagement is one of the major requirements for advancement in teachers' academic

careers. From the teachers' point of view, an understanding of the administrators' attitudes towards research will be meaningful for their career plans.

In this chapter, I provided reasons that led me to study attitudes towards research by EFL teachers at METU's DBE. In Chapter II, I present the literature relevant to my study. Detailed accounts related to the institution, participants, data sources and data analysis methods are given in Chapter III. The results of both quantitative and qualitative data are presented in Chapter IV. In the final section, Chapter V, discussion of data and conclusion are given.

CHAPTER II - LITERATURE REVIEW

This study views research as a systematic and purposeful inquiry about anything that happens related to teaching and learning in a classroom environment (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) as well as a tool to construct knowledge through interaction, which in turn may provide a path for teachers for a more influential role in various contexts. My aim in this study was to explore EFL teachers' involvement with and in research activities and teachers' as well as teacher educators' and administrators' attitudes towards research in a single institution. By doing so, I aimed to understand the level of concordance between the attitudes of different groups of practitioners towards teachers' research activities, and whether teachers' needs and expectations are met by the current support mechanisms at the DBE at METU.

Meaning of research in the context of this study

Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English (2005) defines research as "a serious study about a subject to discover new facts or to test new ideas" (p.1398). It is a broad, yet, insufficient definition to embody the attributions and connotations of research in the field of education. Research has traditionally been recognized as an academic endeavor with an emphasis on rigorous methodology. Research carried out by teachers, on the other hand, is perceived and valued in various and diverse manners.

One notion of research is that *teaching is research* (Richardson, Neil, & Paul, 2001). Richardson et al. (2001) claim that many of teachers' actions in the classroom, such as testing a treatment or an activity, are actually experimenting. Teachers monitor students or use assessment tools, in other words, collect data, and

judge by this data to decide whether the activity is useful for a specific classroom environment. Thus, according to Richardson et al (2001), regular teaching efforts entail analysis of students' output according to a specific criterion, much like testing of a theory in a research study.

A second notion of research by teachers is called teacher *as reflective practitioner* (Dewey, 1933, in Richardson, et al., 2001). Dewey's reflective thinking included a logical analysis of a real problem. He claimed that when teachers face a real problem that they need to resolve, they resort to analytic reflection. This reflection includes thinking about the situation and the options in a critical manner; thus, teachers engage in *critical reflection* about their own practice (Norlander-Case, Reagan, & Case, 1999). Analogous to Dewey's concept of reflective thinking is Reis-Jorge's (2007) "reflective and/or reflexive process" (p.403). This concept emphasizes teachers' reflections on daily classroom interactions to have a better understanding of themselves as well as their students, but does not necessarily involve gathering of new data (Berthoff, 1987, cited in J. Reis-Jorge, 2007).

Reis-Jorge (2007) provides two other conceptions of research. The first one is analogous to traditional academic research, and refers to investigations conducted by teachers who are conversant with the paradigms and reporting standards of university-based research. The other is reported as "a grassroots phenomenon" (p.403) which diverges from the traditional research paradigms.

The "grassroots phenomenon" comprises pedagogic activities to answer questions derived from teachers' practice, and is not concerned with generalisability or academic standards (J. Reis-Jorge, 2007). This practice is similar to what Allwright (1997) presents and advocates in his short review about quality and

sustainability in teacher research. Allwright (1997) calls it *exploratory practice*. He states that research done by teachers is difficult to sustain due to predictable reasons. Teachers need to learn many complex issues about research; therefore, they need to find time for their own learning as well as for their own investigation.

Allwright (1997) defines *exploratory practice* as a research perspective rather than a demonstration of performance: It is the adaptation and use of regular pedagogic activities to explore problematic situations in classrooms. Allwright (1997) suggests if it could be integrated into teachers' normal workload, despite the fact that academic standards will not be met, it might help solve problems at the local level.

Nunan (1997), however, advocates evaluation of teacher research against the standards of academic research, such as, ethical standards, rigorous collection of data, acknowledging the limitations of research, and conducting and reporting research openly for appraisal and replication. In this way, "threats to internal and external reliability and validity" (p. 366) will be reduced. Nunan (1997) emphasizes the importance of the viability of teacher research to reinforce relationships between research and practice.

Another form of research, directly relevant to any discussion of teacher research model, is action research. It is developed by Kurt Lewin in the 1940s to respond to social problems (Dickens & Watkins, 1999). Despite its original focus, today action research is used as an umbrella term that covers different models. One common use of the term consists of cycles of planning, acting, evaluating, and then taking further action (Dickens & Watkins, 1999).

The different models and approaches to research presented here give us a clue about the multi-faceted nature of *research* that is constituted according to the context, the dimensions of the problem, the skills and knowledge of the *researcher,* the goal and the prevailing educational policies. In this study, I mainly focused on traditional academic research since this model of research has a universal quality and it is valued and accepted in all contexts as a valid form of knowledge construction or theory testing. Thus, I consider research as a systematic inquiry about teaching and learning or issues concerned with schooling carried out and evaluated according to academic standards. My focus here is on research conducted by language teachers at the tertiary level. The much-debated dichotomy of research and practice is dealt with in more detail in pages to come.

Historical development of the concept of research

Although the "implicit theory of inquiry and reflective action" could be historically traced back to Dewey (1910, cited in McKernan, 1996, p. 16), at this point, I will only go as far back as the 1940s, when a social psychologist, Kurt Lewin from the United States, theorized action research and applied it to social problems of the postwar period (Reason, 2001). McKernan (1996) states that action research in education in the mid 20th century was a strategy adapted to aid the design of educational curricula and an attempt to solve complex problems through curriculum projects. Towards the end of the 1950s, however, action research had largely lost its significance as a form of inquiry due to the shift of emphasis to the establishment of research by experts in laboratories (McKernan, 1996, p. 10). This divide between theory and practice reduced teachers merely to the status of data collectors in the studies (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001).

In Britain, investment in and implementation of projects related to research proliferated beginning from the 1960s and 70s (Nisbet, 2005) in the form of school-based curriculum development studies. The idea of involving teachers in research was heightened initially by government officers who believed that school outcomes were far from being satisfactory. This dissatisfaction resulted in the establishment of a national program called the *Educational Priority Areas Programme* (Halsey, 1972, cited in Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). This program initiated a collaboration between academic researchers and teachers to provide a higher quality teaching and learning environment especially for the economically disadvantaged population in Britain (Smith, 1987).

Stenhouse and Elliott are two important academics whose works marked a change in teachers' involvement in research activity in Britain (Halsall, Carter, Curley, & Perry, 1998; Hulme, Baumfield, & Payne, 2009). They conceptualized the bottom-up reform of the curriculum by teachers (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). Stenhouse's belief that "it is the task of all educationalists … to serve the teachers; for only teachers are in a position to create good teaching" (1984, cited in Halsall, 1998, p. 42) reflected the substantial interest in educating teachers for school effectiveness. He was also the person to create the term *teacher as researcher* to emphasize the significance of teachers' capacities in changing any aspect of pedagogical practice (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). Elliott shared similar views with Stenhouse, however, limiting teachers' reflective action to the classroom level (1996, cited in Halsall, 1998), a point which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The dissemination of action research to other continents continued when a colleague of Stenhouse, Kemmis, with another British educational philosopher,

Wilfred Carr, went to Australia and developed a theory for action research deriving from the critical theory of Habermas, which has its roots in Marx's historical materialism. Habermas' interpretation of this theory conceptualized action research as a cyclic endeavor that included planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The aim of action research is then to "improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, in Zeichner & Noffke, 2001, p. 12).

In Australia, political, social, and educational conditions were ready to welcome the idea of teacher participation in generating educational knowledge in the 1970s as a result of the works of academics like Kemmis and Tripp (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001).Three different projects in the 1970s, The Innovative Grants Project, the Language and Learning Project, and the Curriculum Development Center, fostered the idea of change in teacher education as well as bringing an increase in practitioner research in tertiary institutions (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). These projects also motivated teachers to question their own practices in schools.

In the USA, the funding of educational research activities increased enormously right after the successful launching of the Soviet artificial satellite, Sputnik, in 1957. After a major reorganization of the Office of Education around 1965 and the establishment of the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1964, the educational research agenda of the USA was filled with sponsored research and development activities (Knox, 1971). In the 1980s, teachers' roles transformed to include research activities in collaboration with other teachers to construct theories from practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999)

mention several other influences for the advent of the teacher research movement. One of them is a group of writings published by American presses on language learning, improving curriculum, and practice in the 1980s. Another influence came from writings by British and Australian publishers who grounded their work in "critical and democratic social theory and in explicit rejection of the authority of professional experts" who produced and accumulated knowledge in scientific research settings for use by others in practical settings (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 16).

As described above, the teacher research movement was fostered by ideas and philosophies from different international contexts, and transformed over time. Despite the variety of conceptions of and approaches to research, a common theme among studies reveal a need for commitment to research for teachers to support their professional development (Hulme, et al., 2009).

Theoretical background

In the field of education, numerous and diverse theories have been constructed to understand and explain the thinking and learning processes. One line of thought derives mainly from critical theory, which is concerned with generating knowledge that will change the world (Brookfield, 2001). Critical theory involves also the notion of commodification, which has been interpreted as approaching human qualities as goods to be exchanged for another value (Brookfield, 2001). In the commodity exchange economy, intellectual outcomes, such as learning, are considered a commodity with value, which can be exchanged for money or status.

Opposed to the exchange value of learning is the use value of learning, which has been greatly emphasized. Brookfield (2001) states that the use value of learning is:

> …how it helps the adult develop self confidence, draw new meanings from life, become open to new perspectives on the world and develop the capacity to imagine more congenial, humane ways of living together on the planet (p.11).

Brookfield claims that despite the apparent positive outcomes of the use value of learning, the exchange value of it is accounted for by educators and policy makers in their evaluations of educational programs. However, this Marxist interpretation of the *use* value of learning is what all those working in the field of education need to be looking for to create a change in teachers' role at school and in society.

Vygotsky (1978) was one of the first people to expand on Marx's idea that change in human nature is a result of historical changes in society and material life. Vygotsky extended this idea to claim that social activity is central in shaping thought processes (Holborow, 2006). For him, signs (tools of higher mental processes) have intellectual and communicative functions (Holborow, 2006). John-Steiner & Mann (1996) summarize this idea as "human activities take place in cultural contexts, are mediated by language and other symbol systems, and can be best understood when investigated in their historical development" (p. 191). Thus, according to Vygotsky, we develop as we interact with other people around us, using language as the most critical tool. His concept of "dynamic interdependence of social and individual processes" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 192) when explaining the construction of knowledge clearly denotes that social sources play an important role in an individual's learning and cognitive development, an idea which could naturally be extended to the potential of cognitive development of teachers through communication and collaboration with peers.

Vygotsky and his collaborators were the first people to apply sociocultural approaches to learning and development; however, their approaches were not widely recognized until the end of the 1950s (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Marxist historical materialism, Dewey's (1929/1984) characterization of human exchange as transactional (Dressman, 2008), and Piaget's emphasis on knowledge building by individual cognitive conflict (Applefield, Huber, & Moallem, 2000) have all placed emphasis on the learner's role in constructing knowledge. Although these theoreticians had different constructivist perspectives, a central theme in all revealed that in the constructivist view, learners examine, question and analyze experiences, through which they construct conceptions of knowledge (Applefield, et al., 2000).

One important aspect of constructivism is its emphasis on social interaction. Constructivism emphasizes interaction between people which enables them to share and compare ideas (Applefield, et al., 2000) to construct knowledge. As such, social constructivism echoes Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory: "Through coparticipation, cooperative learning, and joint discovery, teachers bring existing knowledge to [other teachers] by coconstructing it with them" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 199).

This perspective of constructing knowledge through interaction with the social environment clearly indicates the need for the learner (in my case, the teacher) to question her immediate/social environment (the classroom, the school, and a larger social context), to interact (with colleagues, academics, previous work by scholars) and collaborate with peers to construct knowledge, which will *transform* herself and the social context. For Horkheimer, generating knowledge is a transformative process and it is useful as long as it helps change people in society (1972, in Kellner,

1990). Kincheloe (2003), with a similar perspective, states that educational acts imply purposes, a political stance, strategies for teaching, forms of knowledge and interaction between learners and teachers. He draws on Dewey's views on the relationship between teaching and researching: Teachers' most important role is to investigate pedagogical problems; the act of inquiry helps teachers understand their students better and construct a better understanding of the educational process, which in turn will lead both the teacher and the students to a new experience for learning. Kincheloe (2003) takes a critical constructivist perspective in exploring the impact of knowledge derived from inquiry and maintains that:

> …critical constructivism revolutionizes the way we view teaching and the education of teachers. The negative consequences of the quest for certainty are avoided, as teacher researchers and teacher educators begin to imagine and construct new ways of thinking about teaching and teacher education. If the act of teaching were known and constant, teachers could act on empirical generalizations and teacher educators would know exactly what teachers needed to know to perform successfully. But teaching is not constant and predictable - it always takes place in a microcosm of uncertainty. (p.157)

Kincheloe's reference to uncertainty is based on the fact that in each classroom context, there are different cultural experiences and different ways of knowing. Thus, there are no certainties in this sense. Teachers learn to respond to the subjective experiences of their pupils as well as their own when constructing knowledge and making new meanings in the classroom.

Research as a tool for change

Christianakis (2008) says teacher research is revolutionary because it rebels against the educational hierarchy. The educational hierarchy assigns a passive role to the teacher, perceiving her as an agent to implement the policies planned by those in

power; Kincheloe (2003) calls this a "social regulation [which reduces] teachers to deliverers of pre-packaged and homogenized information" (p.3). He believes this is not an accidental situation but a result of a particular Western way of seeing the world. His arguments against the top-down, technical and standard way of education lies in the fact that this tradition is after producing knowledge in a positivist understanding which believes in a single correct interpretation of the world and that it is the teachers' job to pass this information to the students (2003). Students, in this positivistic context, become "passive recipients" (p. 13) of conceptualized knowledge and come to believe in a single and simple approach to the world. By contrast, research is a tool for teachers to investigate their context, and construct an understanding and dialogue with their colleagues to reach an insight rather than true technical knowledge. Kincheloe (2003) states that teacher research, in response to this technical and standard view of knowledge, is about empowerment of teachers, who, by joining the culture of researchers, understand power implications contained in school systems, and form a new, democratic culture at schools that would bring enlightenment to teachers and learners alike.

Greenwood & Levin (2001) share a similar view of research as a "strategy that generates knowledge … for the express purpose of taking action to promote social analysis and democratic social change"(p.435). The researcher through inquiry at different levels gains an understanding of the world that includes a historical as well as a social perspective. The construction of consciousness at different levels as such helps teachers understand not only the school culture but also other cultural entities such as mass communications, youth culture, schooling, and popular culture (Kincheloe, 2003). Through a critical understanding of the world around us, we can

establish a democratic culture and participate in the decision-making processes of learning and teaching. In support of this view, Kincheloe (2003) presents Giroux's (1988) perspective of schooling that involves changing social situations for the development of a democratic society. In his view, teaching and culture are intertwined and the interaction between the two brings about historical consciousness and self-criticism, without which teachers cannot be but "passive followers of administrative directives" (p.56).

Christianakis (2008) draws an analogy between teacher research and feminism, stating that both upset patriarchal hegemony. Hegemony, according to Gramsci, is the re-production and distribution of the belief systems and attitudes dominant in a society. Feminist theory, as well as critical constructivism, favors subjectivity over the neutral and hierarchical objective practices of a Western tradition, which Kincheloe believes, is free of any social or ethical responsibility (2003). Objective science separates thoughts and emotions, and devalues any emotional conviction whereas subjectivity refers to a deep connection between a questioning individual and the world, as Søren Kierkegaard (in Kincheloe, 2003) puts it. Through inquiry and research, individuals develop a profound relationship with themselves that makes it possible to construct meaning critically. Thus, the dominant male researcher profile, representing a view of knowledge detached from the self, has been challenged by this critical constructivist view of teacher researchers who "see themselves as passionate scholars who connect themselves emotionally to that which they are seeking to know and understand" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 64).

There is a wealth of intellectual inquiry on the meaning and significance of research in the educational as well the social context. The theoretical background

indicates that research, for one, is a tool to learn how to look critically at the world around us. By learning how to inquire and to be critical, teachers, with a wide perspective and a liberated mind, can be active participants of a democratic society. In terms of the significance of research in educational context, there are equally vital ideas presented in numerous studies.

Research in educational studies

Throughout this thesis, research has been viewed as a significant tool for construction of knowledge. Thus, this section starts with studies related to the knowledge construction facet of research. In the next section, I present studies that investigate how collaborative activities and scaffolding help to construct knowledge in specific contexts. Teachers' collaboration and research activities are viewed as important phases of teacher development in the studies that follow. A section is reserved for studies that investigate teacher-research relationship and another to studies related to the shortcomings of educational policies and remedies. Finally, studies that focus on conditions that promote teachers' research activities are presented.

Knowledge construction through research

In accordance with its perceived significance in educational contexts, research has been construed in many and diverse manners. The role of research in constructing knowledge (Lunenberg, Ponte, & Van De Ven, 2007) and constructing understandings about teaching and learning (Blumenreich & Falk, 2006; Fairbanks & LaGrone, 2006) have been investigated. The way research activities conducted in collaboration with peers help scaffolding (Hall, et al., 2006), and teacher

development (Christie & Menter, 2009; Henson, 2001; Kirkwood & Christie, 2006; Mann, 2005; Rathgen, 2006) have also been investigated in a number of studies.

Lunenberg et al. (2007) in their study reflect on the concept of research from a perspective that views knowledge, knowledge-constitutive interests, and knowledge construction as interrelated. They go on to pose questions related to the quality of research conducted by practitioners. To clarify their point of view, Lunenberg et al. (2007) describe research and teaching as closely related activities. As do many other scholars mentioned in this study, they criticize the linear approach to education at schools, in other words, a top-down implementation of research findings into classroom practices, using teachers as a means to utilize these products and procedures. Due to the belief that this approach did not yield the expected success at schools, policy makers turned their attention to implementing change at schools in collaboration with teachers (Ponte, 2002, cited in Lunenberg, et al., 2007). This change of thought helped push forward the decline of the dichotomy of teaching and research according to Lunenberg et al. (2007). In the definition of practice based research, Lunenberg et al. (2007) stress the impact of contextual, normative and ethical factors affecting situations when dealing with problems, and thus approach research "as a method of obtaining critical insight into a problem experienced in the real world and of solving that problem, in order to learn from the experience for future action" (p.15). The need for such research to contribute to the public knowledge base is also stressed. Thus, Lunenberg et al. (2007) exclude ad hoc and unsystematic reflection in schools as a way to provide solutions to local problems. Lunenberg et al. (2007) see research and teaching as multi layered processes and reason that promoting practitioner research could help connect these diferent layers.

One of the reasons cited for the need to promote practitioner research is that research provides a change in perspective, which can be facilitated by theory (Lunenberg et al., 2007). Practice tests theory through the lens of forms of work, class activities, learners' attitudes, and evaluations, as a result of which, theory is refined and adapted (Lunenberg et al., 2007). The interrelation between theory and practice drawn as such, Phelps (1991, cited in Lunenberg et al., 2007) eliminates the hierarchical governance of theory, the act of which promotes the concept of teacher empowerment, thereby resulting in more research.

The second reason Lunenberg et al. (2007) quote for advocating research by practitioners is that it is seen as construction of knowledge that could be attained through exploration of practical situations and interpretation of findings. Here, knowledge is connected with and embedded in praxis, which are, according to Lunenberg et al., (2007) the two sides of the same coin. Educational science and educational practice serve to the interaction between different layers of theory and practice. Hence, the researchers emphasize the need for teacher researchers and teacher educators to work in collaboration to carry out a research project. This joint work by teachers and educators might also serve to eliminate potential difficulties teachers face such as time limitations and lack of opportunities (Lunenberg, et al., 2007).

Blumenreich & Falk (2006) also focused on constructing knowledge. They investigated how classroom-based teacher research supported teachers in constructing understandings about teaching and learning in urban American schools. They believed "inquiry experiences help teacher-learners question their assumptions about [students] and adapt their professional knowledge to the particular contexts of

their schools" (Blumenreich & Falk, 2006, p. 865). In their study, the researchers observed one-year-long classroom based inquiry research classes in a university and documented the course and reflections of 50 teacher-learners, and reviewed a project and two case studies completed by course participants. Their aim was to explore how inquiry research helped teacher candidates construct knowledge and engage in critical thinking and problem solving. Data collected through qualitative methods of interviews and field notes revealed five main themes about conducting research: being involved in research constructed new understandings about the theories and practice of teaching and learning, affirmed intuitive knowledge of teaching, transformed their views of themselves as learners, changed their attitudes, and helped them become self efficacious. Blumenreich & Falk (2006) conclude that teachers learn how to think critically and reflect on their work through doing research. As they become learners themselves, they develop an understanding of ways to facilitate their students' learning as well.

Another study that drew on socio-cultural learning theories is by Fairbanks & LaGrone (2006). They emphasized individual's constructing knowledge while interacting collaboratively with her immediate social context. More specifically, they examined the discourse of a teacher research group (TRG) focusing on how teachers constructed knowledge through talk about theory and practice during their meetings. The TRG consisted of six female and one male teacher. The three-day-long meetings of the TRG were audio taped and transcribed, which yielded about 370 pages of transcribed data. Using other data, such as, field notes of meetings and summaries of projects Fairbanks & LaGrone (2006) first identified stretches of talk that reflected the speaker's focus of attention then they identified the purpose of each chunk of

data (such as reporting, clarifying, explaining, and speculating). Eleven different categories of talk emerged from their analysis. In the final analysis, the researchers examined how categories of talk were used to engage in an exploration of topics and to contribute to the conversation. The analysis of the prevalence and patterns of talk categories, the purpose of this talk in relation to the topic under discussion and the effect of different categories of talk on the flow of the conversation helped understand the nature of exploratory talk through which new meanings were constructed.

Discourse analysis provided tools for Fairbanks & LaGrone (2006) to explore how teachers in a TRG expanded their understandings of teaching. Through language, teachers in the TRG developed a mental picture of each other's practice and they collaborated to build knowledge. Fairbanks & LaGrone (2006) conclude that the analysis of teachers' "situational knowing" (p. 24) through the TRG shows how different speech acts, such as questions, deepen understanding and provide opportunities to improve practice.

Knowledge construction and scaffolding

Support of knowledgeable peers in research processes is believed to be an important asset for inexperienced teachers. Hall et al.'s (2006) study presents an action research project which was supported by Newcastle University through a research project called Learning to Learn (L2L). L2L is used as an umbrella term for the action research projects implemented in 33 primary and secondary schools. In this study there is a snapshot of the process during which 43 teachers create new understandings of L2L and how they experience and practice action research. In the first year of the L2L project, the researchers gathered main themes and experiences

of participating teachers. In the second year of the L2L project the researchers devised an interview schedule to explore a key learning experience of the teachers, how this knowledge had affected their teaching and learning, and whether they shared this new knowledge with their colleagues. The 15 to 45 minute interviews were conducted on the telephone in 2004 and 2005.

In the analysis of data from the interviews, Hall et al. (2006) refer to Vygotsky's (1978) concept of scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Scaffolding refers to the learning process through negotiation with a more knowledgeable other and the ZPD is the zone where this learning takes place. In this study, teachers stated that they relied for support on their colleagues or the head teacher in the team. Looking at the greater picture, a large number of teachers stated that conferences on the L2L project provided opportunity to develop their thinking with colleagues from different parts of the country.

In the conclusion of their study, Hall et al. (2006) use the analogy of a tool to refer to cultural practices used in social and educational contexts. They cite from Boreham and Morgan: "The development and transmission of knowledge and skill in a community can be explained by progressive acquisition of socially constructed capacities which result from carrying out operations with these tools" (2004; in Hall et al., p. 161). The L2L project provided scaffolding for teachers who conduct research, and encouraged them to use the cultural tools of research. The use of these tools changed not only the teachers who used them but also the people around them and the institution.

Role of research in teachers' development

There are a number of studies that investigate the impact of research engagement in teachers' professional development. Christie & Menter (2009), for example, make use of the metaphors of Cochran-Smith (2007) to convey different forms and purposes of research in teacher education. I will concentrate on only the fourth metaphor, which is related to the research concept of this study. The fourth metaphor calls research *a stance*. Part of the implication of the metaphor, as the creator of the word suggests, is the "lens we see through" (2003, cited in Christie & Menter, 2009, p. 338). We not only look at the educational context within a society through the lens, but observe the political, social, historical and cultural aspects as well. Put that way, teacher education should augment and support professionalism of teachers but it should also include "critical activism" (Sachs, 2003, cited in Christie & Menter, 2009, p. 339). Though Christie & Menter (2009) did not emphasize critical activism in their report, I believe such an approach has an important message for teacher researchers in the field of education. By definition, critical activism involves teachers' participation in a community of teachers as well as participation in the critique of the same community. In this sense, being critical brings about an activism to change that society as well. The teacher researcher role model requires active thinking and involvement in "an ongoing critical analysis and reflective criticism of discourses and practices with/in a community of practitioners" (Hildebrand, 1999).

Christie & Menter (2009) claim that research and inquiry have become crucial concepts in the discourse of teacher professionalism and the new professional

standards set in Scotland promote research as a significant activity for teachers. Thus, teachers are expected to improve their teaching by,

- engaging in professional enquiry and action research, and applying findings
- reflecting critically on research evidence and modifying practice as appropriate
- testing whether a particular theoretical perspective actually applies in practice
- interpreting changes to education policy and practice and
- contributing and responding to such changes

(Scottish Executive, 2002, in Christie & Menter, 2009, p. 343)

Christie & Menter (2009) conclude that although the teacher educators in Scotland face challenges similar to those identified in the literature, collaborative approaches to research capacity building are effective. The researchers mention the theoretical and ethical justifications of adopting a collaborative approach and its potential for an effective use of scarce resources of methodological knowledge and skill (Christie & Menter, 2009).

In another study, Henson (2001) explored how a research initiative affects the people within the same working environment. She calls attention to the interest in school restructuring movements that necessitate a change in policies about teacher training and development strategies. Teacher educators and researchers work together to present new methods for teacher development, which will enable teachers to control their own classrooms as well as their own instructional improvement. This approach as a whole is believed to bring about meaningful professional development and self-efficacy.

In this study Henson (2001), aims to examine the motivational effects of a teacher research initiative implemented in a special education school. She constructs the framework of her study on Bandura's social cognitive theory "which suggests

that one's efficacy beliefs are impacted by two important components: human agency and triadic reciprocal causation" (Henson, 2001, p. 822). The human agency component draws attention to humans' capability of choice and shaping their lives, and triadic reciprocal causation is a model in which behavior, internal personal factors and the environment exert casual influence on each other (Henson, 2001). Using this triadic reciprocal causation model of social cognitive theory as a framework, Henson (2001) examines the relationship between a teacher's sense of empowerment and teacher efficacy.

The study was initiated at the request of the principal of an alternative, special education school. The participants of the study were eight teachers and three instructional assistants. Data were collected from multiple sources. The Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984, in Henson, 2001), which consists of 16 items in Likert format, was used to measure general and personal teaching efficacy. Another scale, The School Participant Empowerment Scale (Short & Rinehart, 1992, in Henson, 2001), was used to assess teacher empowerment. A third data source was the School-Level Environment Questionnaire (Rentoul & Fraser, 1983, in Henson, 2001), which was used to measure teacher perceptions of school climate. Furthermore, the implementation of the research projects by the participants was rated internally according to context specific criteria to determine the degree of success. Yet another data source was the measurement of teachers' level of collaboration with each other after being examined from multiple perspectives. Finally, interviews with teachers at the beginning and end of the project, and field notes accompanied other data.

The analysis of data revealed strong change in teacher efficacy during the teacher research project. Henson (2001) gives two explanations for efficacy gains. Firstly, she states that teacher research may be a particularly powerful method of professional development that can affect efficacy. Secondly, the setting being a special education school, teachers may have had extraordinary opportunity to perceive success in their projects since, as revealed during the interviews, there had been few successful projects until then. Moreover, the findings displayed a positive relationship between conducting research and efficacy. Henson (2001) concludes that teacher research can affect teacher efficacy and collaboration by actively engaging teachers in issues related to improvement of teachers' practices and teaching.

In a similar vein, Kirkwood & Christie (2006) studied the role of teacher research and enquiry in the professional development of teachers. The Scottish Education Department made an attempt to improve the status of Scottish teachers through the declaration of the Standard for Chartered Teacher (SCT), which expects teachers to read research, conduct research, reflect on research findings, and implement changes in their practice if necessary (Kirkwood & Christie, 2006). The motive for the researchers in this study was to reveal whether the expectation that teachers become researching professionals was sensible and suitable in their context. To this end, the researchers evaluated the professional development activities that came out of the Chartered Teacher Program. To start with, before collecting data from the actual participants of the program, the researchers identified sources of evidence for the framework of the SCT to reveal whether the SCT program emerged out of realistic and applicable needs of the related community. The data for the framework came from an international literature review, two rounds of focus group

interviews involving more than 500 teachers, in-depth interviews conducted with accomplished teachers, and two national consultation surveys of the Scottish teaching profession. The researchers state that content analysis of this data generated a pattern that could be claimed indisputably to reflect the ideas of the educational community including teachers, parents, students and policy makers. Thus, Kirkwood and Christie (2006) conclude that the Standard is consensual and derived from genuine needs of the people who make up the essential segment of the education system. Next, the researchers deliberate on the modular program consisting of several modules and projects leading to a master's degree, and the status of Chartered Teacher. The participants of the program were 20 people from different sectors (nursery, primary, secondary). Out of the 20, 12 of the participants completed the program and 11 of them passed the module. As a result of a formal evaluation of the program, the researchers collected summative assessments, detailed questionnaires and focus group interviews. The analysis of data revealed that the activities in the program helped facilitate an exchange of ideas and experiences, provided a stimulating environment, challenged current thinking, and enabled respondents to be more creative in their lesson planning and teaching.

Kirkwood and Christie (2006) refer to Stenhouse's perception of educational research as a means "to develop thoughtful reflection in order to strengthen the professional judgment of teachers" (p. 442), which accurately reflects the participants' understandings of research. Although, in general, findings in this study indicate that the purpose of the Chartered Teacher program was achieved, respondents cited many factors as constraints to professional development, such as, lack of time, teacher autonomy, and motivation. A more critical constraint mentioned

by the respondents is the fact that policies for teaching and school development were dictated by a governmental office and modification of these policies was not allowed.

Kincheloe (2003) refers to this top-down implementation of standards as "a view of knowledge [that] is philosophically impaired" (p. 7). According to this understanding, knowledge is an entity complete in itself and unconnected to the world (Dewey, 1916, cited in Kincheloe, 2003); the dominance of objectivity in this definition signifies detachment of knowledge from issues related to feelings, commitment, beliefs, and ethics. Kincheloe (2003) claims that this objectivity in formal knowledge denotes political apathy, which in turn leads to severance between production of knowledge and educational practices.

Yet another study on the impact of teachers' involvement with classroom-based research projects on their professional learning comes from Rathgen (2006). The participants of the study were five teachers with whom Graham Nuthall (a prominent researcher) and his research associates worked on classroom-based research projects between 1985 and 2001. Rathgen (2006) conducted semi-structured interviews to understand the impact of this experience on teachers' professional learning, and on the transformation of their practice afterwards. Some of the participants in this study had started working with Nuthall while they were novice teachers, and some already had long years of teaching experience. Hence, Rathgen (2006) was also interested in exploring whether research experience would have a similar significant effect on the novice and the experienced teachers.

Rathgen (2006) compared her field notes with transcriptions of the interviews to identify significant themes in two sets of data. The common threads included

Nuthall's extreme success in creating a collegial relationship with the teachers. Teachers highly valued this and became more receptive for learning. Another theme that emerged from data was that though teachers were busy to solve issues related to their own classrooms, they were conscious of self-improvements in this process. The professionalism of the research team members and their supportiveness in providing ideas for teaching enhanced teachers' professional learning opportunities. Nuthall's classroom research projects provided extensive learning opportunities for all teachers regardless of their teaching experience (Rathgen, 2006).

Studies on teacher-research nexus

Despite the diverse views on the feasibility and practicality of teachers' involvement in research, there is a broad consensus on the need to aid teachers in their research endeavor. There are many studies investigating teachers' involvement in research from different viewpoints. How teachers view research (Allison & Carey, 2007; Borg, 2009; Everton, Galton, & Pell, 2002; J. Reis-Jorge, 2007), concern over the quality of research by practitioners (Allwright, 1997), challenges of conducting research for teachers (Gewirtz, 2009), and the need to build research capacity in education (Christie & Menter, 2009; Murray, et al., 2009; Pollard, 2007) have been expressed in a number of studies.

Teachers' conceptions of research

Before I present studies related to teachers' research involvement, I find it important to understand how teachers in different contexts conceive the concept of research. Allison & Carey's (2007) study explores through a questionnaire and follow-up discussions how language teachers view the relationship between research

and language teaching. They investigated the research issues that interest language teachers and how teaching insights might contribute to research. The participants of the study were teachers from a university's School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies. A questionnaire was distributed to 22 teachers and 17 of them participated in the follow-up interviews. Since the questionnaire was an open-ended one, the researchers generated interpretive categories based on most frequently mentioned issues. As for the follow-up discussions, which were in the form of e-mail exchanges, corridor chats, live group discussions and one individual interview, the content summaries were generated by listening and reading the data. The findings revealed predictable results. The respondents of the study mentioned lack of time and time-consuming demands of teaching as an impediment to conducting research. Immediate classroom needs had priority over any other project.

Another theme that emerged from the data was that teachers needed some external motivator to initiate and follow a specific project or conduct research since research was not a mandatory exercise for them. The researchers interpret the need for encouragement as an indication of insecurity and lack of confidence among language teachers. Another important aspect of this study is that many questions arouse on issues related to doing research, publishing research, and the need for supervision. These issues were in the agenda for a while which stimulated teachers to discuss these issues and raised teachers' awareness about activities related to them. Conversations between teachers on topics, such as projects in contemplation or in progress show that though teachers seem to be intimidated by professors at the university and cannot claim a researcher title, according to Allison & Carey (2007), those teachers were "aware of a research stance [which] implies processes of

question-raising, planned investigation and [willing] to rethink assumptions in the light of evidence" (p. 75), therefore, they could be regarded as researchers.

Similar to Allison & Carey (2007), Borg (2009) explored teachers' conceptions of research. He administered questionnaires that were completed by 505 teachers and conducted follow-up interviews with 22 teachers from 13 countries. His aim was to understand teachers' views on what research is, and to what extent teachers do, and read research. He considers the results of these questions significant in developing policies to support teachers to do and/or read research. Borg (2009) discusses the results of his study in two sections: teachers' conceptions of research and levels of reported research engagement. Teachers perceived research as a study that involves statistics, has objectivity, and includes hypotheses, large samples and variables. This conception of research, Borg concludes, might discourage teachers from becoming engaged in a research activity. The challenges presented by the need for a formal written publication might equally be a de-motivator for this activity. Borg suggests increasing teachers' awareness of the forms of research as well as practical approaches in dealing with issues related to the classroom and a variety of forms to communicate their work to their colleagues. As for the levels of reported research engagement, Borg cautiously reports moderate level of engagement among teachers in both reading and doing research. Major reasons teachers cited for doing research were personal, pedagogical and professional. Pressure from external sources seems to play a major role in driving teachers to conducting research. About 40% of the teachers, who reported having been involved in research, did so due to a requirement of a course they were studying. The researcher argues that though autonomously designing and conducting research projects is desired, lack of structure

and support may impede these attempts. As for reported reasons for not doing research, Borg affirms the results of previous studies by Atay (2008) and Henson (1996) that lack of knowledge and therefore a limited confidence in the ability to do research were the main concerns. Borg (2009) concludes his study by emphasizing the fact that without organizational, emotional, intellectual and collegial support structures, teachers' involvement in quality research could not be expected. Borg's study offers an awareness raising function for those who are involved in the promotion and initiation of teachers' research engagement.

Yet another study investigating teachers' views on research was conducted by Everton et al. (2002). The writers of the article state that in the UK the value of educational research to policy makers and its usefulness to teachers have been greatly emphasized in the past few years. In this study, they aimed to provide baseline data on teachers' views about research, which may provide important implications for the setting of research agendas.

Everton et al. (2002) carried out this research by distributing a questionnaire through the journals of two teacher organizations in 1998. There were 302 returns to this first round of questionnaire distribution. Later in 2000, during a conference held by the Teacher Training Agency, another set of questionnaires were distributed to the participants and 270 questionnaires were completed. For the analysis of teachers' views about research, 572 questionnaires were collected, which, according to the researchers, gave a satisfactory representation of the people in teaching profession.

Everton et al. (2002) claim that according to the findings of their study, research is of value for teachers if it focuses on classroom action and deals with

specific problems related to teaching. Evaluating the overall impact of research, Everton et al. (2002) report that close to three-quarters of teachers who are engaged in research re-examine their present opinions, which leads to a perceived improvement in their practice in about 50% of the cases. They conclude that despite the desire of policy makers to have teachers get involved in research, the then-present schemes and initiatives were not sufficient to increase the number of people to do so. Time and supervision are two important elements in the process of having teachers involved in research.

Reis-Jorge's (2007) longitudinal study handles the same issue, teachers' conceptions of research, though from a different viewpoint. He aimed to understand the role that formal instruction and research involvement can play in shaping teachers' views of teacher research and of themselves as researching practitioners. The study was conducted with nine teachers attending a degree program in TEFL in Britain. Data triangulation was implemented using different data sources, such as, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and field notes. To explore the effect of the participants' learning experience in shaping their conceptions of teacher research and their self-perceptions, Reis-Jorge (2007) followed the participants from admission to the program to the submission of their research-based dissertations. Data analysis revealed that the participants described teacher research in two different ways: functional views (referring to its aims and purposes) and structural views (referring to its nature and process). In the early stages of the program, the participants' tendency was to give a functional definition for teacher research: a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching methods and techniques against the learning outcomes. Towards the end of the first year, almost all teachers agreed on a more

sophisticated definition: a process of discovery guided by the teacher to solve issues related to the language classroom. By the end of the course, the participant teachers added two more dimensions to teacher research: an awareness raising endeavor and a basis for professional development. In terms of the structural view of teacher research, there was a distinction between formal (associated with academic research) and informal (associated with practitioner based inquiry) research. The latter was perceived as methodologically different from traditional academic research, that is, not as systematic in the collection and selection of data. At the end of the course, all participants described teacher research as a process involving conventional and systematic data collection methods with a special focus on issues related to the classroom. In terms of disseminating the results of teacher research, there was no consensus. While some respondents stated the need for the teacher researchers to write up reports, others believed this to be a burden on the teachers' daily routine.

In terms of teachers' self-perceptions as future inquiring practitioners, this learning experience promoted self-discovery and self-awareness. Especially, the production of a dissertation brought about a boost in self-esteem and self-confidence. Yet, Reis-Jorge (2007) is tentative about whether the teachers in this study would become teacher researchers when they return to work for several reasons: the traditional research paradigms are difficult to handle together with a heavy workload as a practitioner, there may be time and material constraints and the institutional culture may not be motivating.

Challenges teachers face in their research engagement

Studies on teachers' conceptions of research give us clues about the reasons why teachers remain tentative about being more active in this field. Several studies investigated challenges to teachers' research involvement. One of them is a study by Gewirtz et al. (2009) which reflects on the challenges of facilitating teacher research. The researchers present the analysis of 14 semi-structured interviews that were conducted with participants in a teacher-researcher project to understand the purposes, processes, and lived experiences of teacher researchers. A theme that was repeated by all participants during the interviews was that they were anxious at the beginning of the project since they moved into an unknown arena where their conventional roles were to be changed. There was also a concern about time constraints: They already had a busy work life and were concerned about finding spare time for a complex and new endeavor such as research.

Gewirtz et al. (2009) conclude their study with the analysis of challenges awaiting the teacher researcher. Time limitations force teachers to follow their routines in the order of importance. Without external support and intervention, it does not seem possible for teachers to incorporate a researcher identity into their regular heavy loads of classroom practices. For a meaningful practice of research at schools, Gewirtz et al. (2009) propose a change in three aspects in schooling: new roles for teacher researchers, an expansion on teacher roles and a viable understanding of research. They hold a transformative view of teacher research, the products of which may extend beyond the school zones.

Gewirtz et al. (2009) point out the influence of policy makers in shaping the manner in which teacher research is designed and utilized at schools. As is the case in many other contexts, the zone of influence of this kind of work, whether "peripheral or central to reforming education policy" varies over time (p. 569). The conditions in the UK in this research report echo the much criticized top-down model of teacher research, in which research is usually undertaken as part of a course certification and positions teachers as recipients of research rather than producers of knowledge. A serious criticism of this model of research activity which is controlled by government policies in accordance with their own ends comes from Kincheloe (2003) who states that "[critical] research is an activity that contains democratic principles within itself so that teachers can determine the conditions of their work" (p. 45). This democratic medium provides freedom for teachers to get organized and to collaborate as a community of researchers. The final product of such a network of teachers will be both their own and their students' enlightenment (Kincheloe, 2003).

The conditions presented by Gewirtz et al. (2009) inform us of the positioning of teachers after 1980s in the UK. Stenhouse's (1981, cited in Gewirtz et al., 2009) view of the teacher as an empowered professional and producer of knowledge did not last due to government policies that established the work of teachers as *technical* rather than *intellectual.* The focus of attention in teacher training turned to practical issues associating student success with graded outcomes. As a result, effective classroom practices rather than inquiry and reflection dominated teacher-training policies at schools (Gewirtz, et al., 2009).

Shortcomings of educational policies and remedies

A number of people in the field criticize educational policies which do not provide support and motivation for teachers to be involved in research activities (Hargreaves, 1999) and some provide schemes for opportunities and arguments for motivation for teachers to conduct research (Gewirtz et al., 2009, Kincheloe, 2003).

David Hargreaves (1999) criticizes educational reforms for discouraging teachers from developing into professionals who could create knowledge to accomplish an effective education system. He states that schools, in general, are places to develop good practice rather than to create knowledge. However, changing demands of professional life require creation of new knowledge, and schools are liable to create knowledge through "auditing [their] professional working knowledge, managing the process of creating new professional knowledge, validating the professional knowledge created and disseminating the created professional knowledge" (Hargreaves, 1999, p. 124).

Elliot provides another argument on the deficiency of policies related to teachers' research activities (1989, in Kincheloe, 2003). He states that "the technocratic educational reform" (p. 36) corrupted teacher research activity: it became a means to reach the specified goals of the curriculum and increase the test scores. He concludes that the need to include socio-political and ethical dimensions of teaching and learning in the training of teachers were overlooked, and improvement in student achievement was promoted as a target for the inquiring teacher. In the same sense, Gewirtz et al. (2009) identify different roles of the teacher-researcher rather expressively as "problem-solvers (of problems identified elsewhere) or problem-makers (problematising their own and others' taken-for-

granted assumptions)" (p.570). The problem-maker teachers question the attempts of policy-makers in the implementation of educational acts. Only those teachers who comprehend the socio-cultural impact of education in societies can, if needed, critically resist policies (Elliott, 1991 in Gewirtz et al., 2009).

When do teachers conduct research?

Despite the many ambiguous components and controversial aspects related to teachers' research activities, such as inefficient, even encumbering nature of educational policies, teachers continue to be engaged in these activities. Hahs-Vaughn & Yanowitz (2009) investigated characteristics of teachers who were involved in research activities in an exploratory study. They aimed to develop a model that examines teacher and school attributes that can be used to predict teacher engagement in research. The participants of the study were 49,184 teachers. Data were obtained from the SASS (Schools and Staffing Survey, 1999-2000) project conducted by the National Center for Education, which is the largest survey in K–12 education. The researchers used three different models to reveal the relation between teacher characteristics and research activities. In Model 1, they examined only the relation between teacher characteristics and the likelihood of a teacher's participating in individual or collaborative research. In Model 2, they looked at school characteristics in addition to teacher characteristics that were found to be significant in Model 1. Model 3 examined participation in professional development and explored how those factors might affect teacher participation in research. This final model explored the impact of support for professional development with teacher and school characteristics, and participation in professional development.

The results of Hahs-Vaughn & Yanowitz's (2009) study revealed that half of the teachers surveyed in this study were involved in research activities. Teaching experience in private schools, participation in professional development activities, support of a mentor and receiving release time for professional development activities were major factors that increased the likelihood of a teacher's reporting engagement in research. Understanding these factors, Hahs-Vaughan & Yanowitz (2009) argue, will provide an insight for the administrators about teachers' motivation towards research; thus, they can provide a supportive environment and necessary resources for the teachers to actively take part in research activities.

In this chapter, I presented the concept of research for this study, the historical development of the concept of teacher research, theoretical framework, and studies related to teachers' views on research, effect of research on school change and teacher empowerment, and the relation between teacher research and change in larger social contexts. I tried to form connections and make comparisons with the theories presented in the studies and the theories that underline my perspective of teacher research. By this, I aimed to introduce a critical presentation of ideas that are prevalent in studies in the field of education. In the next chapter, I present the methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to explore the attitudes and behaviors of EFL teachers, teacher educators, and administrators toward research in an academic institution. In this attempt, I tried to answer the following questions:

At the DBE at METU,

1) What are the behaviors and attitudes of teachers toward academic research?

   a. To what extent do they read and/or conduct research?

   b. What are teachers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes towards academic research?

2) What are the attitudes of administrators towards research?

   a. How do they relate researching and teaching?

   b. To what extent do they support research activities among teachers?

3) What are the attitudes of teacher educators towards research?

   a. How do they relate researching and teaching?

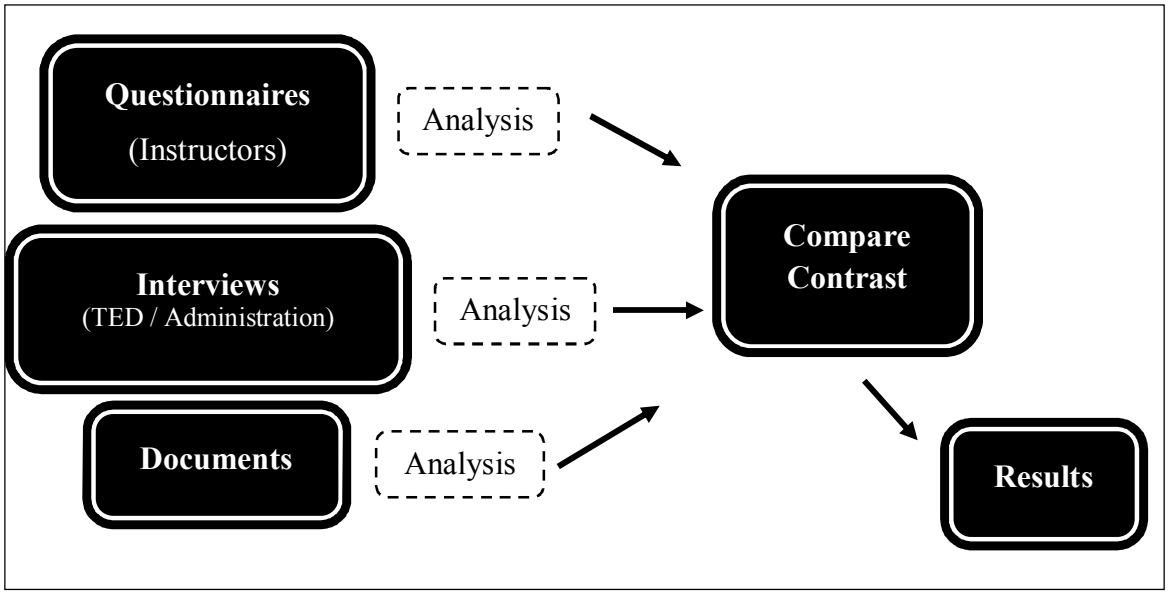
   b. To what extent do they support research activities among teachers?

To provide a comprehensive picture of the DBE with relation to research, a case study design was used as a research strategy. Yin (1984) points out that "the case study contributes uniquely to our knowledge of individual, organizational, social, and political phenomena" (p.14). An important strength of the case study is that various different evidence can be used, such as, documents, artifacts, interviews,

surveys, observations, or participant observations. In this study, I triangulated data from a survey questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and institutional documents to arrive at a rich understanding of the institution with relation to teachers' research engagement. I used the convergence model of Creswell (2007, p. 65) since I wanted to complement quantitative findings with qualitative results to understand the level of concordance between the attitudes of different practitioners at METU.

In this study, quantitative data were derived from questionnaires. I also collected data from the Teacher Education Unit (TED) and administration groups through interviews. I retrieved documents from the school website. Later, I merged the information I gathered from these different sources and contrasted them to validate the data (Figure 1). Triangulation of data helped me gain better insight into the questions I have been investigating (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Figure 1 *Triangulation Design: Convergence Model*



Setting

METU is a state school located in Ankara, Turkey. The school accepts students through the university entrance exam held by a government office, the Higher Education Council Student Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM). The medium of education at METU is English. Students who are admitted to the university are given a proficiency exam before the start of the academic year. Those who fail to score at the proficiency level established each year for the exam, study English for one year at the School of Foreign Languages (SFL) Basic English Department.

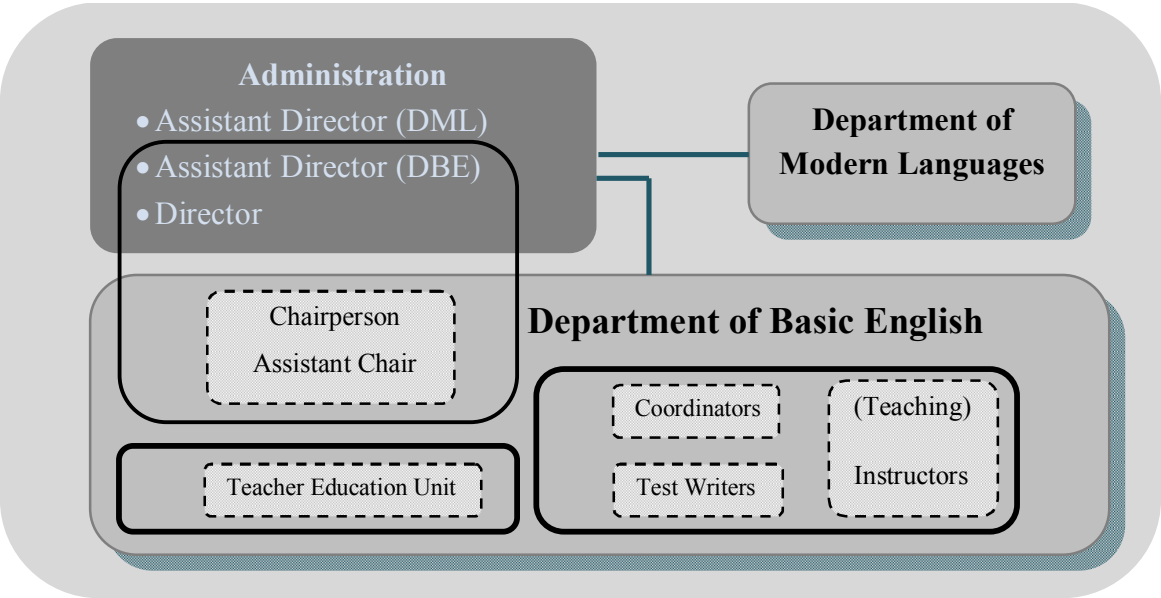
The SFL has two departments: Modern Languages (DML) and Basic English (DBE). DML provides English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses for freshman and sophomore students, whereas DBE is the one-year preparatory school for those whose level of English is not proficient enough for subject studies.

The SFL is managed by a director and two assistant directors, one responsible for the DBE and the other for the DML. At the DBE, a chairperson is elected every three years from among the instructors working at the department. Instructors, who are chosen by the chairperson, carry out all operational work (Figure 2). Group coordinators are responsible for designing the program and developing the syllabus for five different levels of students, and test writers prepare quizzes and mid-terms for each of those levels. The teacher educator group is responsible for the pre- and in-service training of new instructors at the department. The instructors who carry out operational work, such as, syllabus design and test writing, do not have a teaching workload. However, due to the shortage of instructors in the first semester of the 2009 – 2010 academic year, the teacher educators taught two hours each in

addition to running their regular training sessions for the newly hired teachers. In terms of working conditions provided by the school for teachers: teachers share office rooms with two to four other teachers. They may also need to share desks and the computer in their offices. The computer equipment in some offices is outdated. A wireless Internet connection was installed during the spring term of 2010.

In all school buildings at every floor there is one or two staffrooms shared by the teachers with a class on that floor. Teachers get together in the staffrooms during the breaks. A staffroom is a place where teachers exchange ideas related to classroom or school issues as well as chat and socialize. Being a member of METU provides teachers access to the school library as well as many databases with electronic journals in various subjects.

Figure 2 *Organizational Structure of SFL and DBE*



Participants

DBE consists of a chairperson, an assistant chair, six coordinators, four test writers, four teacher educators, and 164 instructors (excluding 10 who were on leave during the 2009-2010 spring semester). In this study, I arranged the participants into three groups (Fig. 2):

1. Administrators, 2. Teacher educators, 3. Instructors

I classified the director and assistant director of SFL, and the chairperson and assistant chair of DBE as the administrator group, since members of this group have authority to regulate academic, operational and executive affairs, such as;

- Supervising the teacher training center (SFL Director)
- Coordinating and supervising all the projects of SFL (SFL Assistant Director)
- Dealing with instructors' academic affairs (DBE Chairperson)
- Working in cooperation with academic coordinators, test writers and teacher educators to ensure various academic activities are consistent as regards the teaching principles being employed at the department (DBE Assistant Chair).

In this study, one of the assistants to the director was not included since that person was responsible only for the DML, which fell outside the scope of this study.

The second participant group in this study is the TED unit. The teacher educators are assigned to their post by the chairperson and they continue their job as long as they want or as long as the chairperson finds appropriate. The TED unit consists of four instructors who are responsible for designing pre-service programs for the newly hired teachers and running the METU certificate program in addition to other duties concerning the syllabi, materials, and tests. The TED unit is also responsible for conducting in-service sessions and workshops for the needs of the

staff as deemed necessary by the administration. All members of this unit are familiar with academic research paradigms and they have the tools to provide academic support to instructors on research related matters.

The third and the last participant group consists of instructors (164 persons), test writers (four persons) and coordinators (six persons). Since the test writers and the coordinators also fall into the *instructors* category, and do not have any responsibility regarding instructors' research engagement, I decided to treat them as a single group under the heading of *instructors*.

About 52% of the instructors at the DBE have an ELT degree. The rest of the teachers have diverse backgrounds; there are graduates of English Language and Literature, Translation and Interpretation, Linguistics, Architecture, Physics, Chemistry, etc. The breakdown of the levels of the participants' educational degrees is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 *Breakdown of Degree Specifications of the Participants*

Degree	Frequency	%
B.A. / B.S.	58	43.3
M.A. / M.S.	68	50.7
Ph.D.	5	3.7
Other	3	2.2
Total	134	100

Upon admission to the DBE, all instructors attend a training course designed by the Teacher Education Unit for one year. During this training period, they also have a regular teaching duty at the department. The instructors teach either three or four hours every day depending on the level of the group they are teaching. In general, there are no other duties for the instructors who have a regular class to teach other than the tasks related to their class work, such as, evaluating student

assignments and pop quizzes, and providing feedback during office hours. Apart from the regular duties, some instructors take on an additional teaching job voluntarily for extra income. During the 2009-2010 academic year, second semester, 71 instructors worked extra hours.

Research design

To investigate the attitudes and behaviors of different groups of practitioners toward research at METU, different instruments were used. For the administrators and the teacher educators, Groups 1 and 2, interviews were carried out. For the last and largest group, the instructors, questionnaires were administered. Data collection lasted for two months.

Interviews

The semi-structured interviews conducted with Groups 1 and 2 were designed in Turkish to provide a comfortable conversation medium for the interviewees as well as for myself. I used an mp3 player and a voice recorder to record the interviews; moreover, I took notes discretely during the interviews so as not to make the interviewee uncomfortable. The meetings took place in a vacant room at the department, where each interviewee was secluded from all the other staff. The interviews with the teacher educators were carried out in one of the offices of the TED unit.

For the interviews, two pilot studies were conducted with two English instructors from a different department at METU. After the pilot interviews, I revised those questions to which the respondents could not give clear answers or which needed further explanation on the question.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire used in this study to collect data from Group 3 had three sections. In the first section, I aimed to gather information about demographic specifications of the participants. This information, I believed, might be significant in interpreting EFL teachers' interest in research related activities. The second section of my questionnaire aimed to reveal EFL teachers' degree of involvement in reading and conducting research. It also aimed to expose reasons teachers provide for their behavior towards research. This part of the questionnaire was adapted from an earlier questionnaire designed and used by Borg (2009) in his study in which he investigated the conceptions of English language teachers towards research. Originally, Borg's questionnaire had six sections. I used sections four and five only and adapted some questions, since the other sections were not related to my focus in this study. The questionnaire was in English and I decided to use it in English as well since the participants of the study were all teachers of English, thus, highly proficient in this language. For the questionnaire designed by Borg (2009), no pilot study was deemed necessary since Borg himself had piloted the questionnaire and revised length, wording and organization in line with the feedback he received from a pilot group. In the third and the last section of my questionnaire, I aimed to gather information about the attitudes of EFL instructors towards research by using a scale. The process of developing this section is described below, in detail.

Understanding *attitude*

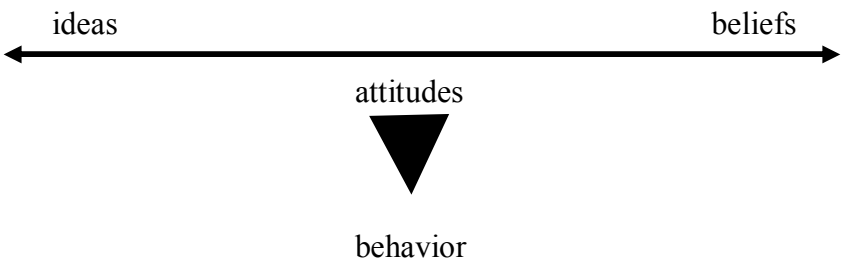
Attitudes have been cited by many researchers (Reid, 2006; Tavşancıl, 2006) as being comprised of three elements:

1. Cognitive (beliefs and ideas)

2. Affective (feelings)

3. Behavioral (tendency and behavior)

According to Tavşancıl (2006), these three elements have many points in common and it is possible to demonstrate their relationship with attitudes by placing them on a continuum.



In this study, I explored how each participant group (teachers, teacher educators, and administrators) thought and felt *about* research and what their tendency and behaviors were towards research. To this end, I developed a scale, which consists of 21 questions designed to reveal beliefs/ideas, feelings, and behaviors of teachers towards research. The questions were developed so that nine questions (Questions 1, 6, 8, 9, 11, 14, 17, 19, 21) aimed to reveal the cognitive component, six questions (Questions 2, 4, 7, 12, 16, 18) aimed to reveal the affective component, and the remaining six questions (Questions 3, 5, 10, 13, 15, 20) aimed to reveal the behavioral component of attitude towards research.

For the reliability and validity of this scale, I administered a pilot questionnaire to a group of 16 people with a similar job position to my participant group. The first and third scales yielded sufficient internal consistency reliability

(Cronbach's alpha= .72 and .77 respectively). However, the second subscale yielded a much lower alpha value. Before making any conclusions, I decided to gather data from my research participants and re-check Cronbach's Alpha, later. In the second reliability analysis after the administration of the questionnaire, the alpha values of the subscales 1 and 2 yielded good (α= .83) and acceptable (α= .70) results, respectively (see Gliem & Gliem, 2003). The third scale, which was designed to provide information on the behavioral component of attitudes, yielded an unacceptable (α=.60) result. Consequently, I decided to disregard three of the questions within the subscale, namely, questions 5, 10, and 15. The remaining questions (3, 13 and 20) yielded an alpha value of .69 which is an acceptable value according to Gliem & Gliem (2003). The remaining questions (5, 10, and 15) were analyzed individually.

Due to difficulties regarding the layout of the school buildings and staffrooms (four different buildings, teachers distributed to staffrooms of four, six or eight within these buildings) I was not able to meet each of the 174 teachers working at the DBE to administer the questionnaire. With the help of several colleagues, I was able to administer 150 questionnaires, 134 of which were completed. The remaining 24 teachers who have never been contacted were either substitute teachers who did not teach a regular class and therefore it was difficult to locate them at school or teachers on sick leave during the week that I collected data. Moreover, I was not able to contact teachers from one staffroom (with eight people) in one of the buildings.

Documents

In addition to the questionnaire and interviews, I collected some documents related to job descriptions and responsibilities of the participants. Those documents are job descriptions of instructors, chairperson, and director of SFL, and the guidelines of the teacher-training program. These documents were compared with the beliefs and attitudes of different practitioner groups about their job responsibilities.

Data analysis

Data from the questionnaires were analyzed in a number of ways. The mean scores of each group of questions related to the components of attitude were calculated. These mean scores from the responses of all participants revealed whether the general tendency related to each component, that is, cognitive, affective and behavioral, was positive, neutral or negative. In addition, I analyzed the same data using SPSS statistical analysis software. Two separate SPSS files were formed, one to analyze the Likert scale data (sections 1 & 3) and the other to analyze the multiple response questions (sections 1 & 2). The mean scores of the three subscales of the questionnaire were calculated and, using the analysis of variance (ANOVA) or the Mann-Whitney test (depending on whether data were normally distributed or not), significant relations between some categories were evaluated.

For the analysis of the interview data, after the transcription, I read the documents several times and marked the passages that seemed related to the focus of my study. I used color codes to mark those parts that were directly related to my questions. I also paid attention not to miss any common theme that emerged in the transcriptions from different interviewees. I gathered color coded data together and

checked whether data from different interviewees and groups were congruent or divergent. Later, I assigned codes to the interviewees instead of using their names, took out information that could reveal their identities, and put together data from the same group of interviewees and tried to make meanings and form connections between categorized data..

As for the documents, I compared and contrasted themes from the documents with themes from the interview data. The documents mainly contained information regarding legal duties and responsibilities of job titles, such as, instructor, chair, and director. Thus, I compared this information with what the interviewees reported about their responsibilities regarding their posts.

In the next section, I present data collected through the interviews, questionnaires and other documents retrieved from the school website and from the department.

CHAPTER IV - DATA ANALYSIS

This study aimed to reveal teachers' attitudes towards academic research, administrators' and teacher educators' conceptions of the nexus between researching and teaching, and the support mechanisms they provide for teacher-researchers at METU DBE. To explore attitudes towards research, I administered a survey questionnaire to teachers at the DBE, conducted semi-structured interviews with administrators and teacher educators, and collected institutional documents. In this chapter, I provide the results of the analysis of data gathered from the instruments mentioned above.

Questionnaire results

The survey questionnaires were completed by 134 teachers at the DBE. The results of the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS software and Microsoft Excel. The interviews with four administrators and four teacher educators were transcribed and analyzed to reveal common patterns within and between groups with respect to attitudes and behaviors towards research.

The questionnaire collected information in the following fashion: in the first part, there were questions regarding background information, in the second part I asked teachers whether they read and/or conduct research and reasons for doing so or not and in the last part, there were 21 questions to explore attitudes about research.

Background information

The characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 *Characteristics of Participants*

Category	Breakdown	N = 134*	Percent
Age	20 - 24	2	1.5
	25 - 34	42	31.3
	35 - 44	41	30.6
	45+	49	36.6
Undergraduate Degree	ELT	70	52.2
	non-ELT	64	47.8
Qualification	BA/BS	61	45.5
	MA/MS	65	48.5
	PhD	5	3.7
	Other	3	2.2
Teaching Experience	1 Year	4	3.0
	2-5 Years	21	15.7
	6-10 Years	21	15.7
	11-20 Years	39	29.1
	21+ Years	47	35.1
Position	Instructor	126	94.0
	Test Writer	6	4.5
	Coordinator	2	1.5
Currently enrolled in an academic / certificate program	No	118	88.1
	MA	5	3.7
	PhD	5	3.7
	Training	5	3.7
	Other	1	.7

* Within the teaching experience category, since two respondents did not provide the relevant information, the number of respondents does not total 134; hence, the percentages do not add up to 100.

In the design of the questionnaire, gender information was not included. There are two reasons for this: first, 95% of the total population at the DBE is female leaving a very small number of male respondents, which could not be statistically significant in data analysis; secondly, gender did not seem a relevant factor with respect to the research questions.

Almost half (49%) of the respondents of the questionnaire were over 45 years old. There was not a big difference in number between ELT and non-ELT graduates (52.2% and 47.8%, respectively). Almost half of the respondents (48.5%) hold a master's degree. Those who had a Ph.D were quite small in number (five people), and another three people said that they had "other" qualifications, which have been explained as a teaching certificate of English (CTE) from the TED unit at the DBE, or from an international program such as a Diploma for Overseas Teachers of English (DOTE), Cambridge Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA), or Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English (COTE).

In terms of teaching experience, those who stated that they had more than 20 years of experience made up the biggest group (35.1%). Following them was the 11-20 year-experience group (29.1%). Teachers who had 2-5 and 6-10 years of experience were the same in number (21 people in each group, each making up 15.7%). There were only four new teachers (3%) among the respondents.

A very high number of the respondents (94%) had a teaching workload at the DBE ranging between three and four hours per day. Six people were working as test writers during the semester in which the study was conducted, and two were group coordinators. There were 16 people (11.9%) who were involved in some form of academic program leading to an advanced degree, or in a certificate program of the TED unit at the DBE.

Due to the fact that there were unequal sample sizes across grouping variables, I either disregarded some of the samples when running statistical tests or put small groups together when they made a meaningful whole, such as the higher

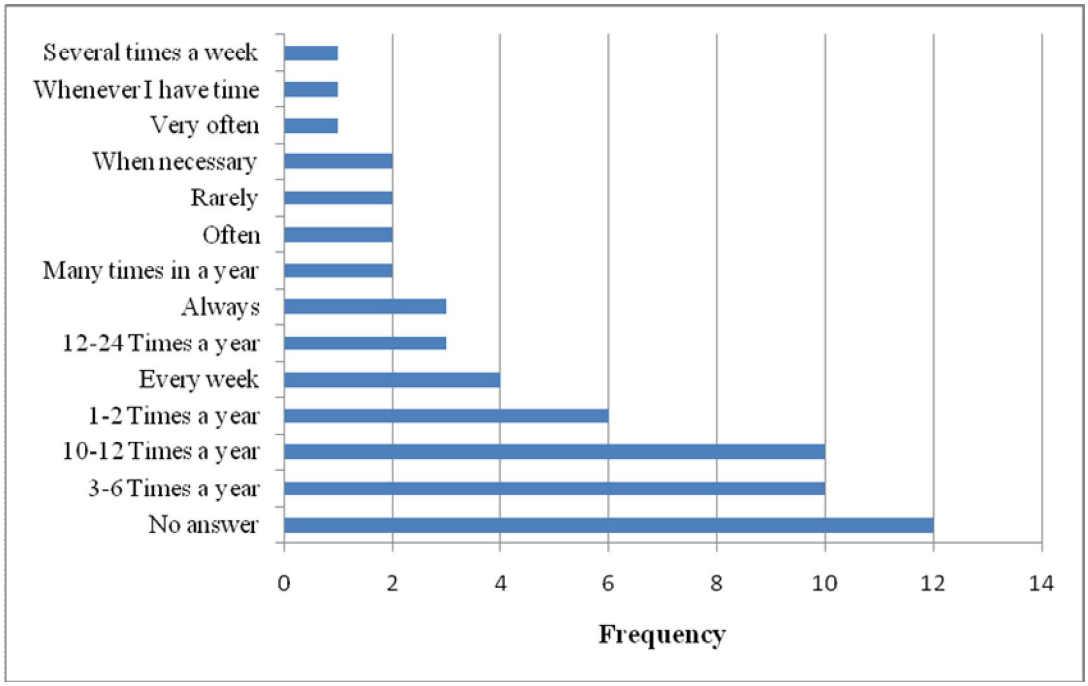
qualification group: those who have an MA, PhD and Other qualification. Those eliminated from analysis due to small numbers and the combined groupings are shaded grey in Table 2.

Research involvement

Patterns of reading

In this section of the questionnaire, I asked the respondents whether they read published research. I also asked for reasons for *yes* and *no* answers. Of the 134 respondents, 59 of them (44%) reported that they read research. Those respondents were asked to report their reading frequency in words in the space provided (Figure 3). Previous research (Borg, 2009) on a similar subject reported that frequency words commonly used in Likert scale measures, such as “sometimes” or “often,” could be interpreted in very different numerical values. This drawback led me to design an open-ended question, instead of a multiple-choice question, with an explicit request for a precise numerical answer. Still, some respondents left this area blank (12 people) and some used ambiguous terms such as, *often*, *very often*, *when necessary*.

Figure 3 *Reported Frequency of Reading Research*

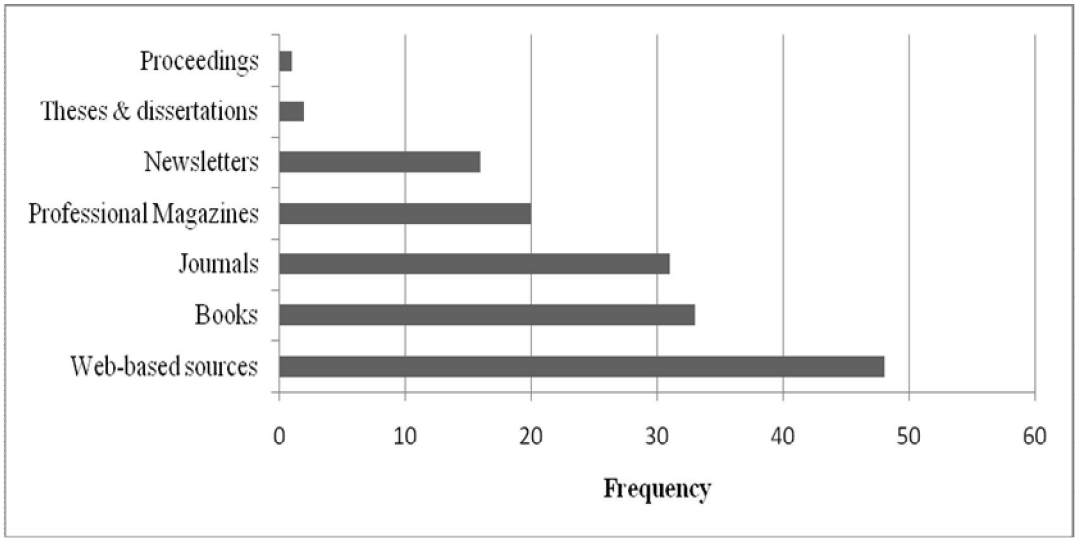


The reported frequency of reading published research, as displayed in Figure 3, shows that among the readers, close to half (47.5%) read published research "*rarely*". About 20% of the respondents did not give an answer to this question and another 19% did not clearly indicate their reading frequency and used ambiguous phrases, such as, "*whenever I have time", "very often", "when necessary", "often", "many times in a year",* and *"always*." The remaining eight people said they read "*several times a week*", "*12-24 times a year*", and "*every week*", and they constitute 13.5% of the reader group and 6% of the whole participants.

As a complementary to the frequency of reading research question, I asked the sources teachers used to read research. I provided a list of sources and a blank field to be used by the respondents in case they wanted to specify other sources

(Figure 4). The teachers provided "*proceedings*", and "*theses and dissertations*" in the blank field as sources to read research.

Figure 4 *Reported Sources of Reading Published Research*



Among the sources cited for reading, web-based sources were the most commonly noted (32%). Books and journals were the second and third most popular sources (21.71% and 20.39% respectively). The preference for web-based sources, together with the reported frequency of reading research "*always*", "*every week*", "*whenever I have time*", strongly suggests that these respondents were actually referring to simple inquiry on the Internet rather than reading academic research articles.

Reasons for not reading research

Of the 134 respondents, 74 of them stated that they do not read published research. The characteristics of the readers and non-readers and the ratio of these groups within the categories are given in Table 3.

Table 3 *A Comparison of Readers and Non-Readers Within Categories*

		Non-Readers (56%)		Readers (44%)	
Category	Breakdown	N = 74	Percent	N = 59	Percent
Age	20-24	0	-	2	100
	25 - 34	20	47.62	22	52.38
	35 - 44	25	60.98	16	39.02
	45+	29	60.42	19	39.58
Qualification	BA/BS	37	61.67	23	38.33
	MA/MS	35	53.85	30	46.15
	PhD	0	-	5	100.00
	Other	2	66.67	1	33.33
Teaching Experience	1 Year	0	-	4	100.00
	2-5 Yrs	8	38.10	13	61.90
	6-10 Yrs	12	57.14	9	42.86
	11-20 Yrs	24	61.54	15	38.46
	21+	28	60.87	18	39.13
Involvement	No	73	62.39	44	37.61
	MA	0	-	5	100.00
	PhD	0	-	5	100.00
	Training	0	-	5	100.00

According to the data in Table 3, in the “Age” category, whereas there are no non-readers in the youngest age group (20-24), 47% of the 25-34 age group and approximately 60% of the two highest age groups reported that they do not read research. There is a similar trend within the “Teaching Experience” category, naturally. All new teachers (1 year) reported that they read research. In the 2-5 years category 38.10% of the teachers reported that they do not read research. This ratio increases to 57.14% in the 6-10 years teaching experience group and to approximately 60% in the higher (11-20 years and 20+ years) groups. The non-reader

ratio of 61.67% in the BA qualification group goes down to 53.85% in the MA qualification group. Whereas there are no non-readers among the PhD graduates, 66.67% of those teachers with "Other" qualification do not read. All the teachers who are enrolled in an academic degree or a training program reported that they read research. The non-reader ratio among those who are not involved in any program is 62.39%. A comparison of readers and non-readers within these categories reveals a pattern among the teachers with varying years of teaching experience (Figure 5).

Figure 5 *Comparison of Readers and Non-Readers across Years of Experience*

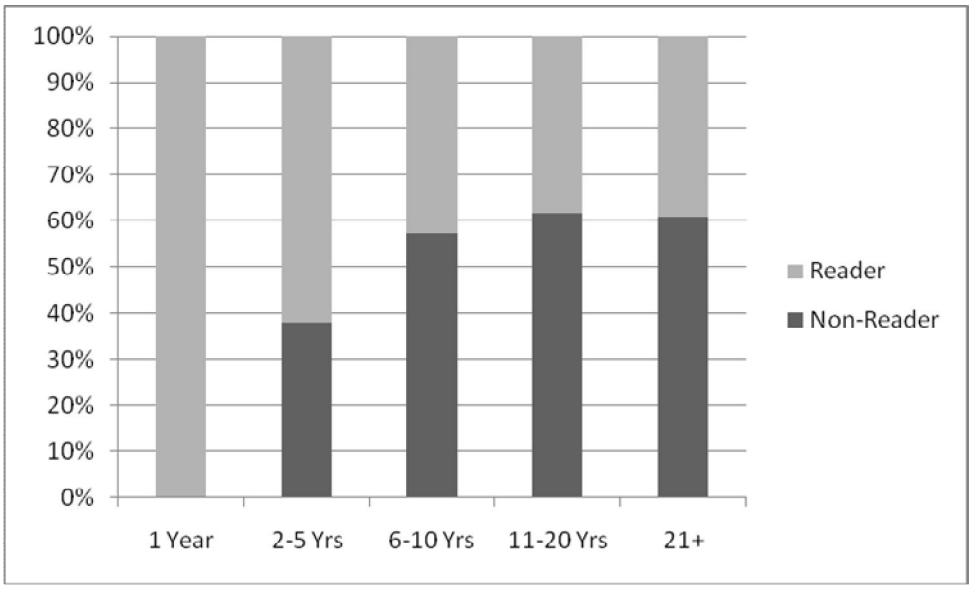
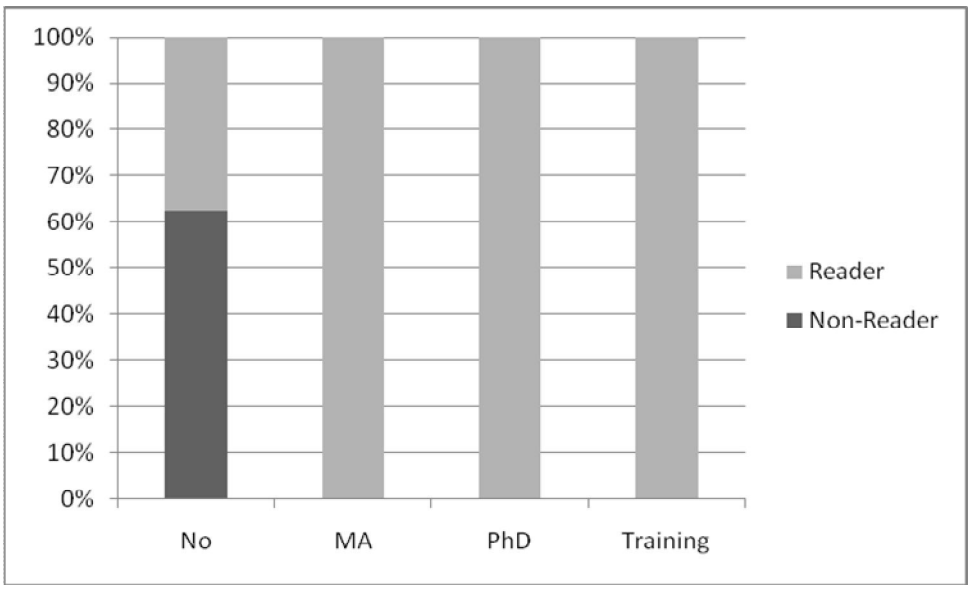


Figure 5 displays disinclination towards reading research as years of teaching experience increase. In other words, the majority of the people who say they do not read research are also those who have the longest teaching experience. This may be due to experienced teachers' reflection on experience rather than on theory in teaching.

Another comparison was made between those respondents who are enrolled in academic or certificate programs and those who are not (Figure 6).

Figure 6 *Comparison of Readers and Non-Readers According to Academic Involvement*



An important and reasonable trend is that all MA and PhD students and trainees reported reading research. Those who reported not reading research make up 62% of the group with no involvement. The teachers studying for an MA or PhD degree, and the newly hired teachers who are attending the training program of the TED Unit, apparently, read research as a requirement of their courses. Consequently, they become familiar with the format and language of research studies, and perhaps continue reading research after they complete their studies.

In the next question, teachers were asked to identify reasons for not reading published research from among a set of answers. They could check as many answers as they found appropriate and/or provide their own reasons in an open field. All respondents who reported that they do not read research checked at least one of the reasons. The reasons identified by teachers are given in Table 4.

Table 4 *Reported Reasons for not Reading Research*

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Published research does not give me practical advice for the classroom	46	39.7
I do not have time	35	30.2
I am not interested in research	25	21.6
I do not have access to books and journals	3	2.6
I find published research hard to understand	2	1.7
I find research findings useless & repetitive	2	1.7
I do not have motivation to read	1	.9
I prefer to attend conferences	1	.9
I have read enough	1	.9

The predominant reason cited for not reading research was, with 39.7%, a perceived lack of relevance of research findings to classroom applications. The second most cited reason was lack of time and the third was lack of interest in research. These three reasons cited for not reading research made up more than 90% of all reasons. The fact that teachers report research as not being relevant to their classroom practice may be due to a number of reasons. First, teachers may have unseemly expectations from research. Secondly, they may place overemphasis on research findings, and ignore the fact that research findings may not accurately overlap with issues they face in the classroom. Alternatively, perhaps they fail to notice that not only the findings of research but also the processes help to the development of a critical perspective on a subject matter.

Trends in conducting research

The questionnaire results revealed that 42 people reported conducting research regularly. The characteristics of those respondents are given in Table 5.

Table 5 *Characteristics of Teachers who Reported that they Conduct Research*

Category	Breakdown	N = 42	Percent
Age	25 - 34	21	50
	35 - 44	12	28.6
	45+	9	21.4
Qualification	BA/BS	15	35.7
	MA/MS	25	59.5
	PhD	2	4.8
Teaching Experience	1 Year	2	4.9
	2-5 Yrs	8	19.5
	6-10 Yrs	10	24.4
	11-20 Yrs	10	24.4
	21+	11	26.8
Involvement	No	29	69
	MA	6	14.3
	PhD	5	11.9
	Training	2	4.8

Data in Table 5 reveal that half of the respondents who reported that they conduct research are under 35. As age goes up, the number of researching teachers goes down. Majority of the researching teachers have either an MA or a PhD. Half of the researching teachers have 6 to 20 years of experience. Other than revealing information regarding characteristics of teachers who do research, answers to this question presents another aspect of teachers at the DBE. In this study, I was particularly interested in identifying the number of people who conduct empirical research about issues concerned with language education at either the micro (classroom) or macro (institutional practices / education policies) level. In other words, I was interested in research that could be considered as a possible contribution to the advancement of our knowledge on matters related to second

language teaching and learning. However, a close inspection of the questionnaires revealed important data regarding teachers' perceptions of research. Although in the questionnaire I specifically emphasized *academic research,* some of the answers revealed that teachers did not differentiate between traditional academic research and inquiries made for the purpose of getting classroom teaching ideas. Responses such as "*I do research (online) for classroom teaching ideas and activities*" or "*I do research almost every lesson, when I'm teaching*" reveal that online inquiries or informal investigations on the Internet were considered as research by a number of respondents. This unprecedented data reveals that the word *research* encompasses different meanings for the teachers at the DBE and that their perception of *academic research* as was written on the questionnaire does not necessarily overlap with the definition of research used within the scope of this study. Thus, the figures given regarding the responses to this question include all kinds of *research*: anything from a simple search on the Internet for the purpose of finding ideas for teaching to traditional academic research. In order to clarify the number of teachers who actually conduct *academic research,* I looked closely at the questionnaires and found some clues that could help distinguish informal research within the positive responses to question 2b. Data revealed that, eight of the people who said that they conduct research also reported that they do not read published research at all. Three people reported that they conduct ten to fifteen research projects every year. This information, conducting research without reading, as well as the excessive number being reported for the frequency of research involvement showed that the respondents' perception of research is different from what the questionnaire had intended to measure. Some respondents who reported that they rarely read research

also reported conducting two to four research studies every year. Since the reported frequency of reading and conducting did not correspond, I counted those responses as informal research activities. The responses at issue here were written in a blank answer field in respondents' own words. Consequently, I added up the number of responses that do not seem to correspond to academic research, and I found that among the 42 who reported that they conduct research, at least 31 teachers' answers were possibly related to basic inquiries they make to find ways to solve classroom issues or just to find new ways in teaching. The responses that provided me insight into teachers' different perceptions of research are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 *Responses that Presented Different Perceptions of Research*

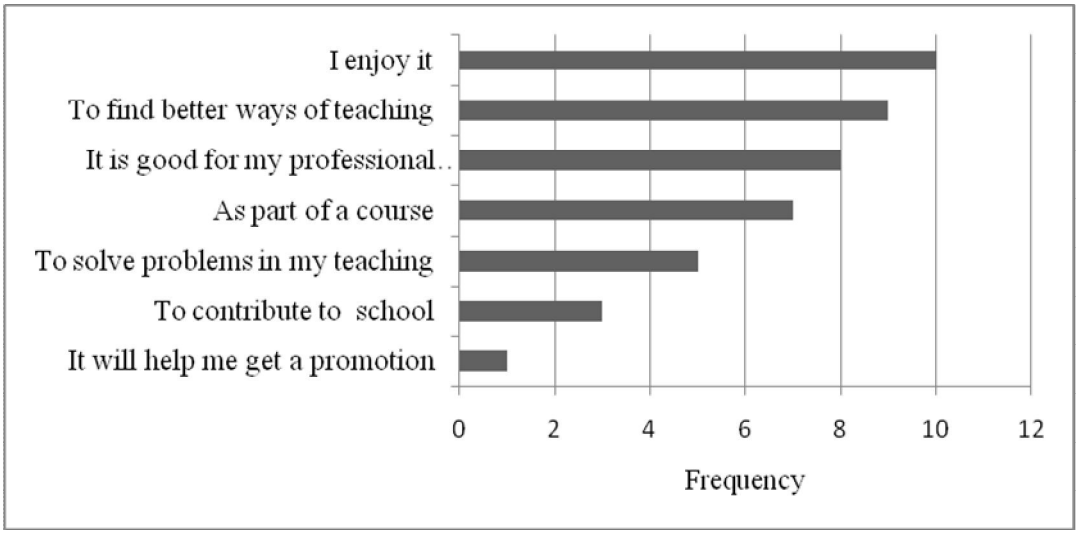
Frequency of Conducting Research	**N**
10 -15 Times a year	3
Always	3
Every month	1
Once a week	1
Non-ELT research	2
Reading Habits / Frequency	**N**
Does not read (published research)	8
Reads only web-based sources/books (not articles / journals)	7
Rarely reads (from 2 to 10 articles per year)	6
Total	31

The responses presented in Table 6 are not conclusive to claim that out of the 42 respondents who said they conduct research, the remaining 11 people actually conduct academic research. Other than my personal acquaintance with several teachers whom I know to conduct formal academic research, I do not have any other clue to make further claims on this issue.

Reasons for Doing Research

The teachers were asked to indicate their reasons for doing research by ticking one or more items from a list or by specifying reasons of their own. The findings are summarized in Figure 7.

Figure 7 *Reasons for Doing Research*



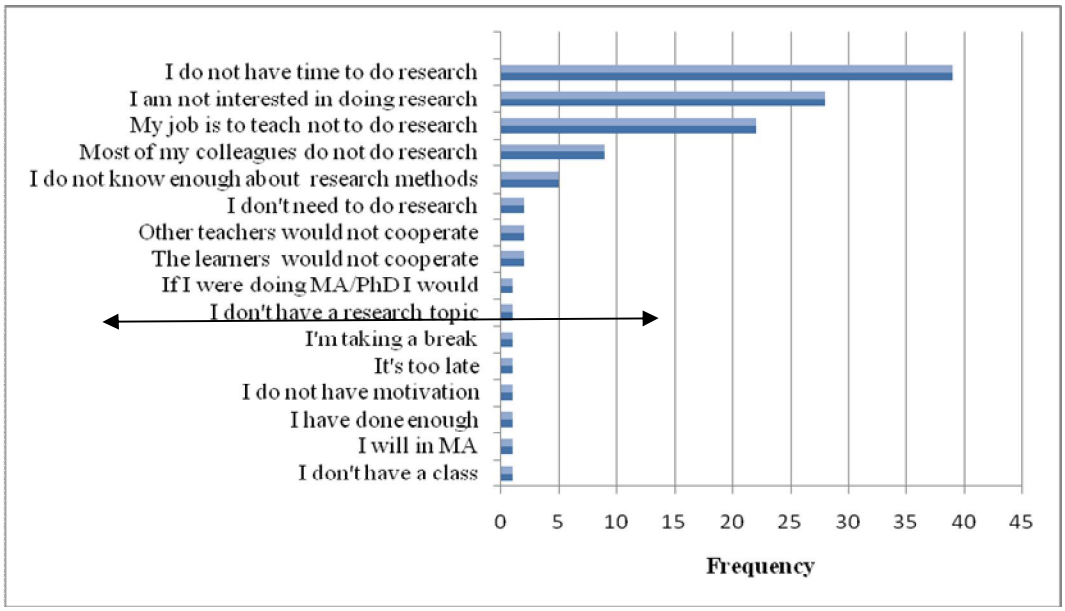
The three main reasons cited for doing research were "*I enjoy it"* (10 replies), "*To find better ways of teaching"* (9 replies) and "*It is good for my professional development"* (8 replies). The top reason has a personal focus whereas the next two are pedagogical, both referring to a progress in relation to the job. However, it should be noted that these figures were driven from the responses of all the teachers who said they conduct research but not necessarily academic research. Therefore, these responses should be considered as reasons for doing *any* kind of research or inquiry rather than only formal academic research.

Reasons for not doing research

In this section, I asked respondents to provide reasons for not being involved in a research project. I provided 10 set answers which were adopted from Borg

(2009), and left an empty field to be filled in by the respondents. The arrow in Figure 8 divides set answers (upper part) from those provided by the respondents.

Figure 8 *Reasons Cited for Not Doing Research*



The top reason cited for not doing research is lack of time, which corresponds with the findings in the literature (discussed later in Chapter V) and thus not surprising. The second most popular reason was no interest in research activities (35 responses), and the third was the view that it was not the teachers' job to do research (25 responses), both of which, actually, point to a similar view of research: that research is not relevant to teaching.

The results of the attitude scale

The low frequency of involvement in and with research activities, and especially the reasons provided for not doing so called for a more detailed investigation of teachers' attitudes towards research. This questionnaire was designed to reveal teachers' attitudes by collecting responses to 21 items. Nine items were related to beliefs and ideas about research, six items were related to feelings

about research and six items were related to behavior and tendency towards research. The last group of items was later decreased to three due to an insufficient reliability measure and the remaining three items were analyzed individually.

Reid (2006) claims that precision is lost when applying scale methodologies to categorical data. He provides several reasons for this: The steps on a scale may not be equally spaced and it is not possible to measure the spacing. Secondly, similar scores may be obtained for different patterns of attitudes and finally, he claims, combining scores may hinder rich detail arising from each question, whereas the distribution of responses in each separate question is crucial. Based on Reid's (2006) warning with regard to cautious use of statistical techniques because they may cause a loss of detail in the adding process, I presented the results of this data in two different ways: First I analyzed the data using SPSS to reveal significant differences between respondent categories with respect to the three groups of questions related to the three components of attitude. Secondly, I calculated each respondent's mean scores for each group of questions, then I counted the number of positive (ranging between 1 and 2.39), neutral (between 2.4 and 3.6) and negative (between 3.61and 5) answers. Thus, I computed the ratios of positive, neutral and negative answers for each factor of attitude.

The questionnaire was designed as a 5-point Likert scale where *1* denotes Strongly Agree and *5* denotes Strongly Disagree. It comprised of 21 questions designed to explore the attitudes of teachers towards research. In accordance with the three dimensional aspect of attitudes (Tavşancıl, 2006), I designed questions related to beliefs/ideas, feelings, and behaviors/tendency of teachers towards research. Question 1, 6, 8, 9, 11, 14, 17, 19, 21 aimed to reveal beliefs/ideas (the cognitive

component), questions 2, 4, 7, 12, 16, 18 aimed to reveal feelings (the affective component), and questions 3, 5, 10, 13, 15, 20 aimed to reveal tendency--the behavioral component of attitudes towards research. Reliability analysis of these subscales yielded acceptable results for the cognitive component (Cronbach's Alpha= .83) and affective component (Cronbach's Alpha= .70). However, for the behavioral component, Cronbach's Alpha was .60; therefore, I re-organized the third group of questions: I regarded questions 3, 13, and 20 as the behavioral component and the reliability analysis, then, yielded an acceptable .69. The rest of the questions, which were originally in this group, namely, 5, 10, and 15, were dealt with individually.

Cognitive component

A total of nine items related to teachers' beliefs and ideas about research are presented here (Table 7). The distribution of responses across the scale and their mean scores are also given in the same table.

Table 7 *Distribution of Responses Related to the Cognitive Factor*

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean*
Q 1. Doing / reading research improves instructors' performance	23.02	43.65	28.57	3.97	0.79	2.16
Q 6. Doing research is the job of academicians in other departments	10.85	15.50	14.73	37.98	20.93	2.57
Q 8. Doing research and teaching are not related	4.65	6.98	20.93	42.64	24.81	2.24
Q 9. Research findings do not have great importance in teaching of English	2.34	11.72	21.88	48.44	15.63	2.37
Q 11. Training on how to do research is out of the scope of DBE	10.94	30.47	29.69	22.66	6.25	3.17
Q 14. Instructors' research activities should be supported by the institution	38.76	47.29	9.30	2.33	2.33	1.82
Q 17. Research involvement (by reading or doing) helps me understand how well I do my job	6.98	39.53	34.11	14.73	4.65	2.71
Q 19. To teach effectively, there is no need for research	5.43	17.83	29.46	32.56	14.73	2.67
Q 21. Conducting / reading research helps/would help improve my teaching practice	13.18	41.09	31.78	10.85	3.10	2.50

* 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree
Note: Statements 6, 8, 9, 11, and 19 were reverse coded.

Results in Table 7 indicate that Q14, *Instructors' research activities should be supported by the institution*, is the most agreed upon item (86.05%) in this group of questions. This result may be interpreted as teachers' wish for the recognition of their research activities, their need for encouragement and motivation for these activities and material support. The second and third highest items in order of agreement are Q8, *Doing research and teaching are not related*, (reverse coded) (67.45%) and Q1, *Doing / reading research improves instructors' performance*, (66.67%), respectively. These two statements point to the fact that teachers generally agree that there is a

relationship between teaching and research, and a constructive one. However, the answers given to Q21, *Conducting / reading research helps/would help improve my teaching practice*, received only 54.27% agreement, which looks contradictory since this statement is almost identical with Q1, *Doing / reading research improves instructors' performance,* except that in Q21 there is inclusion of the reader in the process with the use of the pronoun *my.* This may be an unintentional disclosure of the actual disinclination of the teachers towards *action*; a finding which corresponds to the data presented in Section 2. The fourth item which received a relatively high agreement (64.07%) from teachers is Q9, *Research findings do not have great importance in teaching of English*, (reverse coded). Agreement on this item reveals that teachers are like-minded on the idea that research outcomes can play an influential role in various aspects of teaching. Q6, *Doing research is the job of academicians in other departments,* received a similarly high agreement (58.91%) from the participants (reverse coded). The positive responses to this item indicate that research activities are viewed as interrelated with the teachers' job. The rest of the items, Q21, *Conducting / reading research helps/would help improve my teaching practice*, Q19, *To teach effectively, there is no need for research*, Q17, *Research involvement (by reading or doing) helps me understand how well I do my job*, and Q11, *Training on how to do research is out of the scope of DBE*, received neutral or mixed responses. Except for the last item, Q11, all the items were concerned with the role of research in effective teaching and compared to others, they received a relatively high ratio of neutral answers, which demonstrates there is no agreement on this aspect of research. The last item, Q11, refers to the pre- and in-service training provided by the TED unit. Again, there does not seem to be a

consensus on this issue: close to half of the respondents (41.41%) said they agreed that DBE is not responsible for providing training on research methods, the rest of the answers were divided almost equally between indecisive (neither agree nor disagree) and disagreement—in other words, saying that DBE *is* responsible for providing training.

These nine statements were designed to reveal teachers' beliefs and ideas about research (the cognitive component of attitude). Out of these nine items, six of them received positive responses with 50% or more agreement. The data revealed that teachers at the DBE believe that institutional support for research is important, that research and teaching are related and research influences teachers' performance in a positive manner.

In the next section, data were analyzed to reveal whether there were any significant differences between respondents' background information and their responses to the items.

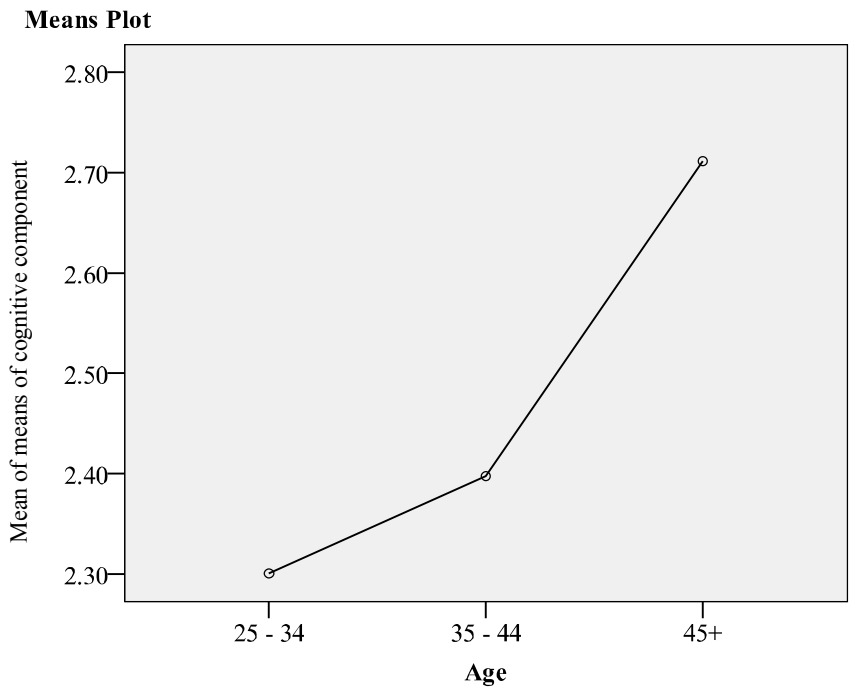
In these statistical tests, I looked for differences between categories of age, major, qualifications, teaching experience, and the three components of attitude. I used either variance of analysis (ANOVA) tests to test variables with more than two factors or *t*-test or the non-parametric counterpart Mann-Whitney test to test variables with two factors. Due to insufficient number of respondents in some categories, I had to rearrange the groups before running tests: In the age category, one of the factors (20-24 age group) was not included in the comparative tests since the number of respondents was not high enough (N=4), and thus comparisons across age groups were conducted with age groups 25-34, 35-44 and 45+. Similarly, in the

Teaching Experience category, respondents with one year of experience were not sufficient to be included in the tests. Again, in the qualification category since the number of respondents to in the *PhD* and *Other* group were too small, I formed a *Higher* qualification group with the respondents of *MA, PhD* and *Other* groups. This grouping allowed me to explore responses with respect to respondents with undergraduate qualification and those who had studied further. In the *Involvement* category, there were five groups, however, again with small number of respondents. Thus, I grouped those people who were attending an academic degree program into one group and those who did not have such an affiliation in another group.

For the cognitive factor of attitude, a one-way ANOVA revealed that there were significant differences between age groups 25-34 (M =2.30, SE=.10), 35-44 (M =2.39, SE=.09) and 45+ (M =2.71, SE=.09), $F(2,124) = 4.936$, $p < .01$, $\omega = .99$.

The means plot in Figure 8 indicates that as the age of the participants increases, belief and ideas about research shifts from a more positive towards a more neutral position. The mean of the means of responses related to beliefs and ideas about research in the 25-34 age group is 2.30 and that of the 35-44 age group is 2.39; whereas, for the 45+ age group the mean is 2.71, which is verified to be significantly different according to LSD post-hoc tests. However, no significant difference was found between the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups.

Figure 9 *Means Plot*



An independent samples *t*-test revealed that on average, ELT graduates' (M = 2.36, SE = .07) beliefs and ideas towards research are more positive compared with that of non-ELT graduates' (M = 2.59, SE = .09), $t(125) = -1.98$, $p < .01$, $r = .17$.

Another independent samples *t*-test revealed a significant difference between respondents with a BA/BS degree (M = 2.72, SE = .08) and those with a higher degree (M = 2.28, SE = .07), $t(127) = 3.941$, $p < .01$, $r = .33$. The group with a higher qualification seems to be more positive than the BA/BS group in terms of their beliefs and ideas about research.

A one-way ANOVA test did not reveal any significant difference between groups with 2-5 years of experience (M=2.26, SE=.16), 6-10 years of experience (M =2.37, SE=.12), 11-20 years of experience (M = 2.52, SE=.10) and 21+ years of experience (M =2.65, SE=.10), $F(3,119) = 2.085$, $p > .05$.

The last point of comparison of the cognitive factor is between those people who are involved in an academic degree program (N = 16) and those who are not (N = 113). A subsequent independent samples *t*-test revealed that teachers who are involved in an academic degree program ($M = 1.90$) were significantly different in their responses to the cognitive factor questions than those who were not ($M = 2.55$), $t(127) = 3.456$, $p < .01$, $r = .29$. Those respondents with an academic affiliation seemed to be closer to the positive end of the continuum with respect to their beliefs and ideas about research.

Affective component

The second group of questions, which were designed to reveal how respondents felt about and valued research, are given in Table 8, along with their mean scores.

Table 8 *Distribution of Responses Related to the Feeling/Value Factor*

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean*
Q 2. Doing research is difficult for language teachers	8	26.2	18.3	40.5	14.3	2.58
Q 4. I value research conducted by my colleagues	27.9	48.8	19.4	2.3	1.6	2.02
Q 7. Reading research articles is boring	6.3	18.0	31.3	34.4	10.2	2.76
Q 12. I respect those people who conduct research and teach simultaneously	45.0	40.3	13.2	.8	.8	1.71
Q 16. I do not like to do research	5.5	19.5	27.3	29.7	18	2.65
Q 18. Conducting /designing a research project is an important achievement	22.7	53.1	18.0	5.5	.8	2.09

* 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree
Note: questions 2, 7, and 16 were reverse coded.

Table 8 reveals that the top three most agreed upon items are Q12, Q4, and Q18. These three items were designed to reveal how teachers valued research. The most agreed upon item (85.3%) is Q12, *I respect those people who conduct research and teach simultaneously*, which reveals the fact that the respondents see a positive relation between the two occupations and they have a high opinion of those people who manage to do both. The next most agreed upon item (76.7%) is Q4, *I value research conducted by my colleagues*. Again, the implication here is twofold: research is somehow associated with teaching and that teacher-research is valuable. Q18, *Conducting /designing a research project is an important achievement,* also received a high percentage of positive responses (75.8%). Similar to the first two items discussed here, respondents view research engagement as a successful endeavor, an indication of a positive mindset about research activities. Between this item and the next, Q2, *Doing research is difficult for language teachers*, there is a noteworthy decrease in agreement. Q2 (reverse coded) received 54.8% agreement from all respondents. The least agreed statements in the ordered list are Q16, I do *not like to do research,* (reverse coded) and Q7, *Reading research articles is boring* (reverse coded). Although teachers' agreement with these two statements (Q 16 = 47.7, Q 7= 44.6) is relatively low, their reported behavior, in reading and conducting, does not support this. Apparently, positive feelings towards research related activities do not necessarily bring about actual involvement in such activities.

An independent samples *t*-test revealed that those who have a bachelor's degree ($M = 2.48$, $SE = .08$) are different from those who have studied more (MA, PhD or a certificate program) ($M = 2.16$, $SE = .06$). The latter were significantly

more positive in their feelings/values towards research, $t(127) = 3.145$, $p < .01$, $r = .27$.

The last point of comparison for the affective factor is between those people who are involved in an academic degree program and those who are not. Both the Mann-Whitney and the Two-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests revealed that teachers (N = 13) who are involved in an academic degree program (M = 1.70, SE = .11) were significantly different in their responses to the affective factor questions than those (N = 110) who are not ($M = 2.38$, $SE = .05$), $U = 305.500$, $p < .001$, $r = -.42$. Those respondents who are involved in an academic degree program seem to be inclined towards the positive end of the continuum with respect to their feelings and values about research.

Behavioral component

In the third group, which aimed to reveal the behavioral component of attitude, there were originally six questions. However, since the reliability analysis did not yield an acceptable Alpha value, I reduced the number of the statements to three (Questions 3, 13, and 20) to achieve α=.69. The mean scores of the three statements are given in Table 9.

Table 9 *Distribution of Responses Related to the Behavioral Factor*

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean*
Q 3. I plan to be involved in a research project	6.4	13.6	26.4	37.6	16.0	3.43
Q 13. I am not interested in doing research whatsoever	16.3	28.7	22.5	24.0	8.5	2.80
Q 20. Under different conditions, I could be involved in (a greater number of) research activities	14.0	48.8	23.3	10.9	3.1	2.40

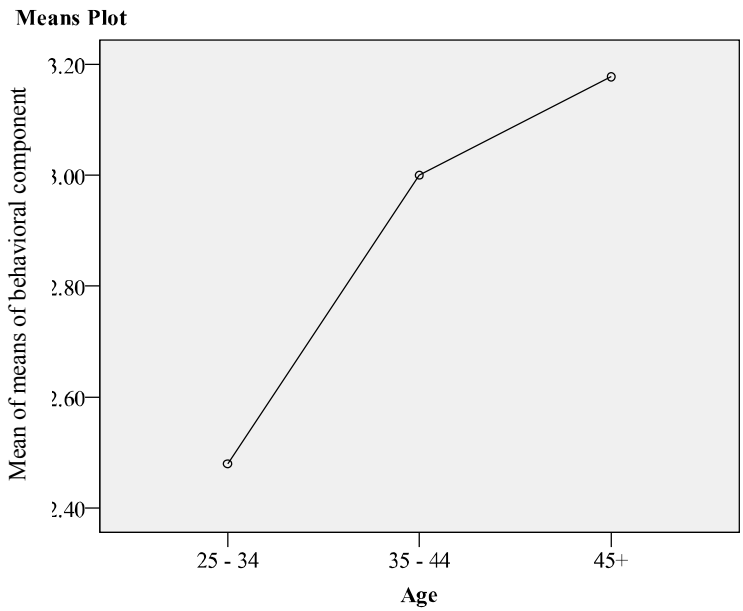
* 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree
Note: Question 13 was reverse coded.

The mean of the means of the responses to this group is 2.88, which is the highest mean score among the three groups: idea/belief, feeling/value and behavior. According to this result, the respondents' tendency to do research is weak when compared to their beliefs (M of means = 2.48) and feelings (M of means = 2.63) towards research.

A one way ANOVA test revealed that there were significant differences between age groups 25-34 (M =2.48, SE=.10), 35-44 (M =3.00, SE=.14) and 45+ (M =3.18, SE=.13), $F(2,127) = 8.458$, $p < .01$, $\omega = .99$ in responses to statements related to tendency/behavior about research activities. The means plot in Figure 10 indicates that as participants' age increases, tendency to do research shifts from a more positive towards a more neutral position. In the Post-Hoc tests, the mean of the means of responses related to tendency/behavior reveal significant differences between the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups ($p < .01$), and between the 25-34 and 45+

age groups ($p < .01$). However, no significant difference was found between the 35-44 and 45+ age groups.

Figure 10 *Means Plot*



A Mann-Whitney test revealed no significant difference between ELT Graduates ($M = 2.55$, $SE = .09$) and non-ELT graduates ($M = 2.64$, $SE = .10$) in their answers to items related to the behavioral factor, $U = 1915.5$, $p > .05$. Similarly, comparison of groups with different teaching experiences, namely, 2-5 years ($M = 2.38$, $SE = .16$), 6-10 years ($M = 2.43$, $SE = .14$), 11-20 years ($M = 2.69$, $SE = .13$) and 21+ years ($M = 2.74$, $SE = .12$) of teaching experience with a one-way ANOVA did not reveal any significant result, $F(3, 119) = .880$, $p > .05$.

A Mann-Whitney test revealed that those (N = 55) who have a bachelor's degree ($M = 2.69$, $SE = .07$) are different from those (N = 74) who have studied beyond the undergraduate level (MA, PhD or a certificate program) (M=1.92, SE =

.14), $U = 1524.0$, $p < .01$, $r = -.22$. Those teachers who have a degree above the BA have a greater tendency towards research engagement than the teachers with a BA degree do. In a similar manner, according to the results of a Mann-Whitney test, those (N = 113) who are not involved in any academic program ($M = 2.69$, $SE = .07$) are significantly different in their answers to the questions related to the behavior factor than those (N = 16) who are involved in an academic program ($M = 1.91$, $SE = .14$). The latter have a stronger tendency towards research than the former, $U = 308.000$, $p < .01$, $r = -.38$.

Question 5, 10 and 15 did not fit into any of the question groups above according to the reliability test; therefore, I analyzed the results individually (Table 9). I intended to explore the participants' behavioral tendencies in the first statement, Q 5, *I tend to put off research related activities due to a number of issues.* Although the answers yielded a fairly high level of disagreement (44%), a substantial number of respondents (34.6%) selected the neither agree nor disagree option, which may be due to the tortuous wording of the item. The next item questioned whether teachers read published research on language teaching. Positive responses to this statement made up 42.4% of the total responses. This result corresponds closely to the percentage of research-reading-teacher (44%) from Section 2. The last item, Q 15, questioned whether teachers were in the habit of participating in ELT conferences. The majority of the teachers (68.8%) responded positively to this item; only 10.9% of the responses were negative. The fact that the DBE organizes an international ELT conference biannually presents a good opportunity for the teachers to participate without much effort.

Table 10 *Percentage of Responses to Statements 5, 10, and 15*

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean*
Q 5. I tend to put off research related activities due to a number of issues	3.9	17.3	34.6	29.1	15	3.34
Q 10. I read research published on language teaching	7.2	35.2	20.8	27.2	9.6	2.98
Q 15. I participate in ELT conferences	18	50.8	20.3	8.6	2.3	2.27

* 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree
Note: Q 5 is reverse coded.

Among the responses to Q5, Q10, and Q15, the only significant difference was the response to Q10 between respondents with higher qualifications ($M = 2.79$, $SE = .13$) and the BA/BS graduates ($M = 3.27$, $SE = .16$), $T = 4050$, $p < .0$, $r = -.21$. The teachers with an MA or PhD degree had a higher tendency to read published research than the group with a BA/BS degree. This finding corresponds with results from the first section of the questionnaire, Reading Patterns.

The survey questionnaire provided information on the characteristics of the respondents, their involvement with research as well as their attitudes and behavior towards research. I used statistical methods, scaling, and comparisons across groups to reveal significant results. The implications of these results are discussed in the next chapter.

Interview results

I conducted interviews with four administrators and four teacher educators to reveal their conceptions about the relationship between teaching and researching, the support mechanisms provided by these two groups, as well as their expectations from teachers with respect to research involvement. Of the four administrators

interviewed, two were from SFL, the Director, and Assistant Director, and two were from the DBE, the Chair, and Assistant Chair. I will refer to them as A1, A2, A3 and A4. All members of the administration, except for one, have more than 20 years of teaching experience; one has four years of teaching experience and twenty years of experience as an administrator. Likewise, I conducted semi-structured interviews with four teacher educators. I will refer to them as T1, T2, T3, and T4. The teacher educators have between 16 to 24 years of teaching experience; one of them has chaired the department for 2.5 years.

The interviews were conducted in Turkish and later transcribed. After several readings of the transcriptions, those parts that seemed to reveal information regarding my foci in this study were translated into English.

Views about the status of the DBE

During the interviews, my questions regarding teachers' research activities brought up a matter that needs to be discussed before other issues: the controversial subject of the *academicity* of the department. Here, *academicity* is used to refer to the feature of academia as a center for higher education and research at tertiary level. In higher education, Wikipedia defines an academic as a person who works as a researcher (and usually a teacher) at a university in tertiary education. Defined as such, DBE does not stand out as an academic unit within the university since research is not a required activity for the teachers working at the DBE and teachers working here do not necessarily hold an advanced degree. Moreover, there are no job titles, such as, professor or assistant professor at the DBE.

DBE, as mentioned before (Chapter III,), is a one-year-English preparatory school for students whose proficiency level is not high enough to start studying at their departments. In several instances during the interviews, the DML, another department again under the SFL, was used as an anchor point in this discussion by the interviewees. Different from the DBE, the DML offers English courses to students during their first and second year of their subject studies. These two departments are similar in the way they operate. In both departments there is a mandatory 12 hours teaching job; however, most teachers teach longer hours due to staff shortages. Both departments employ teachers with either a BA or MA or PhD. On the DML website, it is mentioned that over 75% of the staff has an MA or PhD degree; at the DBE, this number is around 55%. Neither department offers an academic title: there are no professors, associate professors, and assistant professors in any of the departments but only lecturers and instructors. One difference, though, between these two departments is that there is a Research Unit at the DML. More information about this unit is presented later in the Documents section of this chapter.

All administrators mentioned that some members of the DBE do not perceive the department as an academic unit, as discussed above; even among the administrators there were differences in their conception of the department's academicity and the properties of the job of the DBE teachers. One administrator maintained that this conception of academicity is subjective:

> We educate students therefore this is an academic job. Every occupation has a scientific dimension. (…) If some people say *I am a lecturing machine, I teach and leave; this is not an academic place,* then that is how they see themselves. Then others will see them as such. But if one says *I am going to be*

> *better every other year, there are things I need to learn, I should learn more, etc*. then s/he sees self as an academic. When we consider activities at the school there are, of course, academic activities; each year seven to ten people complete their MA or PhD, ten to fifteen people attend the certificate program. Some say *we are not academic* that implies that Modern Languages is academic. I cannot understand on what grounds people make this distinction. If we look at the staff composition, ok, there are a greater number of people [there] with MA and PhD, but here too. (…) Those who see themselves as such would confine themselves to that framework. (A3)

A3 evaluated the current composition of the DBE as an academic unit and ignored the organizational and procedural differences between the SFL and other faculties at METU. His/her emphasis was on the individual competence of an instructor at the DBE rather than the academic functions of the department.

A4 had a similar opinion on this issue. S/he maintained that, "everyone at the university needs to be academic to some extent." S/he also touched upon the conflict between DBE and DML saying that the job both departments do is the same. S/he said,

> teachers over there [at the DML] consider themselves more academic. They look down on teachers here due to this. (…) It may be that since there is no academic progress [no opportunities for academic advancement] here, it is perceived as non-academic. If the number of MA and PhDs increase, even then there is no career advancement… (A4)

Even though the two departments are very similar in their staff composition, that is, there are no instructors with an academic title in either department, A4's comments reveal that the DML teachers have a high opinion of themselves as part of academia, something the DBE has not.

Since this research study is woven around the subject of academic research, the interviewees formed associations between research and academia, and explicitly

mentioned it from time to time. A1 said that the DBE is not a department that is expected to conduct academic research but instead to provide educational services. Ironically, s/he said, "Rather than one that conducts academic research, we are a department that is *being* researched." A1 also maintained that it is the Teacher Education Unit (TED) within the DBE that encompasses features of an academic unit:

> We have an academic unit. One of their primary responsibilities is to investigate the developments in the field of ELT. (…) That is the unit we have assigned academic tasks in our field. (A1)

From what s/he says, it is possible to conclude that if a unit undertakes academic tasks, such as inquiries and investigations, then it can be considered as academic.

In a similar vein, when asked about the reason why s/he thinks teachers do not tend to do research at the DBE, A2 mentioned being a "different department since this is not an academic department in the conventional sense: there are no opportunities for academic advancement." The way it is put forth, there is the opinion that people conduct research either as a requirement of an academic study or that of a department as part of the academic milieu. In fact, a number of the interviewees mentioned that teachers only do research to obtain a degree. A1 explicitly stated:

> People conduct research for their MA or PhD projects. Other than that, I have never witnessed someone coming and saying that they want to do a research on a subject, not during my management.

S/he maintained that the Faculty of Education is the place responsible for conducting research projects since there are teachers who work to receive academic titles, such, as assistant professor or professor.

Teaching – research nexus

In terms of how administrators relate teaching English and conducting academic research, all mentioned a constructive relationship:

> I find it very useful for personal development. It will help the teacher to acquire knowledge and follow the agenda even if they do only action research or review literature. English teachers should conduct research. (A4)

A4 emphasized the personal benefits of doing research, as well as its positive impact on classroom practices. Likewise, A1 maintained that research is necessary for the advancement of the profession. S/he said research involvement provides "valuable information if it conforms to academic rules since it gives an objective picture, and reflects the profile of the institution." His/her view of research is that of a scientific evaluation of the practices followed at the department, and as an administrator, s/he maintained that s/he conducts research before considering an alteration, for example, in the course programs. S/he said, "I see it as part of the education [system]." However, A1 also emphasized that teachers' primary responsibility in the department was to teach:

> Our duties have been defined by laws and regulations: it is among our duties that we provide educational services as best as possible. Research is possible as much as it serves this purpose. It is not our primary duty to conduct research. We do what the laws and regulations tell us to do…In this sense, the related unit at the Faculty of Education is responsible for this [research]. .. We are a football team. Of course, we need strategies. We play in the field, that is our primary job…Our main job is not to comment on the game but to play… (A1)

The dilemma presented here, that is, the need for teachers to teach fulltime and A1's recognition that they also need to be involved in activities such as research for self-development is a reflection of a conflict that has wider appeal within the

teaching contexts. Research-based teaching is one of the widely accepted approaches in increasing teacher effectiveness (Hargreaves, 1999) yet it is also a demanding and time-consuming activity especially for teachers whose work related responsibilities who do not stop even after the end of class hours.

A2 responded to the relation between teaching and research as follows: "I am not experienced at this but I am sure it contributes. I guess research will be more beneficial if it is something applicable to the classroom rather than theory." S/he added that teachers need to improve themselves and that they progress as they discover points that would provide motivation for and active participation of students.

A3 provided a more detailed account for reasons why they would want teachers to do research and how the two relate:

> Management especially wants new teachers to do research to prevent burnout, so that they maintain motivation and enjoy their job. Teachers do research for recognition, promotion, to move to a new position. (A3)

What A3 listed, actually, was a detached view of research from the daily practice of the teacher. As an administrator, A3 emphasized the regulatory results of obtaining a degree as a result of conducting research.

All teacher educators agreed that research activities are important for EFL teachers. T1 maintained that although s/he did not consider research activities as an indispensable part of teaching, s/he believed it would be beneficial. S/he listed these benefits as,

> She will be objective. It is beneficial for the school, beneficial for the other teachers, beneficial for the syllabus. It provides insight, reflects this on to others; it helps other teachers' development, students' development. (T1)

In a nutshell, T1 provided a four-tiered benefit structure other than the gains s/he anticipated for the teacher herself: the school, colleagues, students, and syllabus.

T4 maintained a positive view as well:

> English teachers can definitely conduct research and it would be beneficial for them. There is no rule saying that they need to collect data to teach English effectively; however, it facilitates the teaching process. Because these are processes that develop together. We cannot start off with assumptions like, students will learn this anyhow, does not matter I teach this way or that. (T4)

T4 had a practical approach to my question. S/he was aware that conducting a research project is a challenging activity for teachers, and s/he gave the data collection process as an example to this challenge. However, s/he was also cognizant of the impropriety of teaching through hypothesizing. S/he said, "[Teacher] should do it to reflect on her [teaching]; I mean, it is feedback for the students and it is feedback for [teacher]."

T2 was resolute in her conception of the relationship between researching and teaching. S/he said, "Our mission is to teach English for academic purposes; therefore, we have to do research." She explained this as follows:

> In order to know what academic English is, one has to do academic research. If one does research, she will be using the strategies she is teaching to her students. (…) She will be practicing what she preaches. Rather than teaching from the book, she will be teaching what she knows. (T2)

T2's emphasis was on the fact that teachers need to improve and expand their knowledge for an effective transmission of information.

T3 maintained an account of how teachers could benefit from research:

> Actually these two [researching and teaching] are much related. In simple logic: what do the theoreticians do? They try

> to advance what we do. I mean effective teaching, providing a more effective learning environment, be a better facilitator. Therefore, I expect a teacher to think about these, to know theory, to get clues from theory, even consult theory to solve her problems, to develop a theory herself and to do research. T3)

T3 provided how practice could actually be linked to theory: first, s/he explained how a teacher could benefit from theory and as a next step, suggested that a teacher becomes a producer of knowledge. His/her view suggests a constructivist and contextualized view of research mentioned for the first and only time during the interviews.

Institutional culture and research

The majority of the interviewees mentioned that research engagement is not in institutional culture since the notion of *not being an academic unit* is dominant. T2 said:

> It is not in the institutional culture. There is an established view that we are not academicians. I think this is very sad. This is not a private school [*dershane*], but part of an academic institution. This is a university. It is a vicious circle. Actually, other departments do not accept us as an academic unit. They repeat it at every opportunity. This happens because we do not conduct research. As a reaction to that, ok, we are not academic. We badly influence each other. It is the legacy of people who worked here before. For years, they have never done [research]. (T2)

T2 criticizes the acceptance of the passive role assigned to the department. Although s/he saw, for example, publishing research, as an academic achievement of the department, s/he maintained that such activities could not be forced on people.

T3 had a similar view:

> Research involvement had never been part of school [culture]. Perhaps, if we start anew and add it to the job description (…) make it a part of our lives and prepare the conditions. (T3)

T3's suggestions point to the idea that research activities could be formalized in job responsibilities. S/he, however, also said that if such activities were imposed on teachers, no one would benefit from the results since work conditions at school are already coercive. His/her emphasis was on the heavy workload of teaching, which is by itself a challenging job; therefore, it would be difficult to conduct a proper research project.

From among the administrators, A1believed that research is not a popular activity. S/he said:

> I cannot say there definitely is [research in institutional culture]… there are people who study for self-development but I cannot give a percentage. However, this place is not dry in that sense, there is no limit to it…I would want much much more. People come to me with demands but for personal development, there was only one request… in the last three, four years. We would be delighted if people asked for more but I would not turn it to an obligation, they should feel up to it. A person at the university has to be discontented with oneself. Discontented about knowing little. (A1)

While echoing T2 and T3 about lack of research in institutional culture, A1 expressed his/her attitude towards the teaching job by stating the need to learn more; however, his/her emphasis on this quest for knowledge was not necessarily through academic research but any attempt at self-improvement, even a simple search on the Internet.

Support for research activities

The support mechanisms provided by the administration were stated as follows: material support in the form of literature resources, financial aid, and permission to attend conferences. The directorate mentioned purchasing books for the *Resource Center* (a small library for teachers' use) and the TED unit. They also

mentioned that they provide some financial aid to teachers who present their projects at international conferences abroad (on the condition that their project is approved by the administration after a screening process). In addition, the administration gives leave of absence during the course of the conference to teachers who present their research projects in Turkey or abroad. One final point mentioned was the allocation of performance points to those teachers who give such a presentation. According to these performance points, which accumulate through various out-of-class activities, the administration makes a list going from the highest to the lowest points. When assigning tasks to or replying to the demands of teachers, the administration refers to this list and decides accordingly, on a *high point- first served* basis.

When I asked about academic support within the department, it has been stated that there is no program support for people who want to conduct research. A2 mentioned "a decrease in workload" as a way to support researching teachers but s/he added promptly that there is a problem of teacher shortage. S/he maintained that, "*if* it will be something that we could utilize, something to reflect on us [the school]…" the administration could arrange support. Their argument here, which displays a singular emphasis on the research outcome, is that research could be conditionally supported: it should focus on classroom practice.

Although most administrators were like-minded in the need for time and substantial support for teachers to do research, none of them , except for one, said they could provide support of this kind.

> It will be problematic if time [for research] is stolen from class time; it is for the chair to decide. It may be possible if they give up the half-day project work [refers to the certificate courses]. If we believe [the research] to be beneficial for the school, we may find material support. (A4)

A4 provided a similar vision of research as A2: research is valuable as an outcome. Although these two administrators, A4 and A2, stated that research involvement is beneficial for teachers' development, in the next section, they limited support to those research projects the outcome of which would directly benefit the school.

The research support measures provided by the TED unit are in the form of assignments given to the student teachers attending the in-service training program. T3 stated that this assignment asks them to do a small-scale literature review. In addition, they provide resources, they help teacher-researchers collect data, and they act as participants in their studies. T4 mentioned providing video recorders as well as research articles, books and other resources about the subjects teachers want to do research. She also mentioned that in the pre-service program there is no direct reference to research methodologies and that the assignments given, such as, action research projects, do not correspond to an academic research. However, they were willing to help researching teachers with methodology, formulation of the research questions, and the analysis.

Do teachers want to do research?

My inquiries with the interviewees related to teachers' tendency to get involved in research projects revealed somewhat discouraging results. In general, the administrators said they do not think that teachers have a desire to do research. Both A1 and A2 mentioned that teachers conduct research only because they are involved in an academic degree program. A1 said, "I have never witnessed a person saying that they would conduct a research project without a degree at the end." Although this sounds like a hasty statement, it has been verified by other interviewees. A4, for example, said, "I have never been asked for support for research. (…) Honestly, I

have doubts about the teachers, how many of the teachers would want to do research." A3 also mentioned that s/he believes that very few people have an inclination to do research. Findings from the questionnaire related to teachers' tendency to be involved in research projects substantiate these statements.

Teacher educators had opinions similar to the administrators' about the lack of interest in research involvement. T3 and T4 said only about 10% of the teachers may tend to get involved in a research project, whereas T1 said that the ratio could not be over 5%, but that she believed the majority of the remaining 95% must have, at one point in their career, conducted a research project. T4 said teachers, in general, are not inclined to conduct research, except for those who do it as part of a course or academic program.

The analysis of quantitative data revealed that, although 31% of the teachers reported that they are involved in research activities, only 8.2% of the respondents could be assumed to be involved in academic research projects, a number very close to what the interviewees predicted. Again, as predicted, more than half of those teachers who report being involved in a research project do so due to the requirements of an academic degree program.

Reasons provided for the current state of affairs at the DBE

Parallel to what the teachers indicated in the questionnaires, almost all interviewees mentioned lack of time as a major constraint for research activities. T2 said,

> There is a very loaded program here. Four hours of class every day, twenty hours in a week, preparing and planning for these classes, reading exam papers; these really do not leave much time… (T2)

In addition to the regular teaching workload, about half of the teachers at the DBE teach another two hours every day in what are called *certificate courses,* to earn some extra money. Teaching time totals up to 30 hours per week for almost half of the cohort (71 people during the Spring 2010 semester).

The reasons A1 provided for teachers' disinclination to do research were physical/ material inadequacies, such as lack of convenient offices and Internet access. Again, lack of time was mentioned as an important barrier towards the pursuit of research related activities. T1 said:

> More than half of the teachers take extra jobs to make a living. I am of the idea that this is a mentally and physically tiring situation. A typical teacher mentality is that research is a luxury; there is the idea that it is a luxury, the results of which could not be consumed, would not be of use. (T1)

T1 makes a reference to two points: the first one is that conducting research is an intensive and demanding activity. Secondly, s/he calls it a luxury because s/he thinks research outcome may not closely correspond to teachers' needs in the classroom. Another reason provided for teachers' not doing research was linked to the department's *[non] academic constitution*: "There is no academic advancement here… I guess the teachers consider what they could gain [from research]." A2's view, in a way, is a verification of T2's opinion of the new generation of teachers: "as a general tendency, the older generation perceived [teaching] as a career, now they perceive it as a job." Put this way, it is a vindication of teachers' preference to supplement their salaries rather than being involved in curricular activities.

A final reason provided by a TED member is that teachers may not be sufficiently knowledgeable about research methods.

Do teachers value research?

Teacher educators at the TED unit had different ideas about how teachers valued research and its findings. One point they agreed on was that teachers value research that gives practical advice for classroom use:

> Most people in our profession do not want to listen to research findings. They find it boring. Because we are implementers. Most colleagues say, *I am going to class tomorrow, I need something practical.* I do not blame them, really. She herself will not conduct research. Who is interested in research? One who conducts research herself is interested in research. (T2)

T2's commentary here accurately reflects how teachers view research findings. According to the questionnaire results, one reason why teachers were not involved in or with research is because they thought research was irrelevant to their job. Another popular answer was that teachers were not interested in research, which may be interpreted as their opinion of research with a peripheral role in curricular activities.

T3 provided a logical proposition:

> Generally speaking, how does one value something? We value something if we know about it, if we appreciate it, we value it. What does theory say? What kind of studies are there? How can they help me? If I do not have an idea about these, I will not value them. If I see people around me who conduct research and that they find answers to their problems, then maybe I will value research. (…) This … seeing some concrete results then seeing that it is possible to find solutions to problems can be an element of stimulus for the teacher who feels distant to research. Then they can value what is done. I mean, seeing a concrete thing. (T3)

T3's comments again draw attention to the fact that the worth of research is measured with the outcome, if the outcome is directly connected to classroom practice.

The final view was that teachers are doubtful about research findings:

> I think they are doubtful. (…) There is a widespread *ivory tower* idea. There is the understanding that people theorize from there; teachers say, *come and see the classroom.* I believe theory or research findings are not properly reflected, that is where it stems from. (T1)

T1 drew attention to a conflict between the notion of a researcher and teacher that what researchers do is not always correctly interpreted by the teachers and, similarly, that researchers sometimes think teachers ruin what the researchers achieve.

Do the administrators and teacher educators read/conduct research?

The administrators' own activities related to research were also quite limited. In terms of reading, three people stated that they do not have much time to read research; however, one of them said, "not having time is not an excuse; one could if one wanted to." A1said they have to read research for the job, and that s/he reads about 10-15 pages every month related to ELT. All members of the TED unit stated that they read research; even one that said s/he "cannot read much lately", nevertheless noted that s/he reads one article per month. Obviously, the teacher educators' job is explicitly and directly related to research since the administration consults the TED for their opinion or asks support on matters related to, for example, staff recruitment exam, or the ELT conference organization.

When asked about their participation in research projects, none of the administrators gave a positive response except for A1, who explained that when there is a need for a change in the program they set up a committee that investigates the situation. As for the TED members, on the same matter, except for one, all TED

members said they have been involved in a research project within either the last semester or year.

Documents

The documents at issue here are legal forms downloaded from the website of DBE and the SFL. These forms include job descriptions of the chairperson, assistant chairperson, the SFL director, assistant director, class instructors, and teacher educators. I also included job descriptions of instructors from the Modern Language Department for a comparison with that of DBE instructors. Furthermore, the guidelines of the In-Service Teacher Training Program are also included.

At the DBE, in addition to regular teaching duties, instructors are expected to prepare materials, develop and implement teaching methods that will help students improve, prepare and evaluate exams, evaluate students' achievement, and carry out other academic and administrative responsibilities that are delegated by the administration. Among the job descriptions of EFL teachers at the DBE, there is no exclusive reference to conducting academic research, however, there is a reference to making inquiries and refreshing and improving oneself.

In terms of the job descriptions of the SFL administrators, likewise, there is no direct deference to research activities. As a general outline, the director is responsible "for the smooth, well coordinated, and efficient running and realization of all the academic and administrative activities, operations, and transactions in both departments – DBE and DML." Within the specific duties listed, most items relate to the director's role as the head of the different units at the SFL, such as, supervising the Teacher Training Center, or representing the SFL at the university level councils.

As for the assistant director responsible for the DBE, her duties include coordinating and supervising all the projects (courses) run at the DBE, carrying out primary responsibility for all operations of the proficiency exam, and similar work concerned with the operations of the department; again there is no reference to academic research projects within the list.

The Chairperson of the DBE is responsible to the Director of the SFL and is in charge of organizing and supervising all the administrative and academic functions and activities in the department. The details of these functions and activities are given as a list on the website. Examining this list, one comprehends that the Chair undertakes mainly administrative duties in the department. There is one reference to the responsibility of the Chair to initiate and supervise academic and materials development projects.

The Assistant Chair is in charge of the coordinators who prepare syllabi and materials; s/he oversees the preparation and administration of midterms and quizzes; and works in cooperation with different units within the DBE to ensure various academic activities are consistent as regards the teaching principles being employed at the department. His/her other duties include administrative tasks.

The (TED) is mainly held responsible for designing and implementing pre- and in-service programs for the newly hired teachers, conducting teacher observations, providing the Assistant Chair and Academic Coordinators with academic guidance regarding syllabi, programs, materials and tests, taking part in the preparation of new course materials and attending Department Council and other

meetings when deemed necessary. Again, there is no direct or indirect reference to research activities for the members of this unit.

The guidelines of the in-service teacher-training program provide information about the length, aims, components of the program, and course objectives. According to the guidelines, the program aims to:

> equip instructors with the teaching skills, strategies and behaviors that will not only enable them to plan and execute lessons that reflect the teaching approach of the department but also render their teaching effective to maximize learning.

None of the duties published by the SFL website includes any reference to research activities for the DBE. However, the DML actually accommodates a Research Unit within the department, the main goal of which has been defined as:

> Planning and conducting research into various aspects of teaching as required by the administration; producing written reports of research undertaken and disseminating research results to interested parties.

The documents retrieved from the DBE and DML websites, from the TED unit regarding their training program and program guidelines, suggest that there is no legal or regulatory obligation for any of the staff working at the DBE to be involved in research activities. This lack of orientation towards research was reinforced with an anecdote by a TED member, who recalled the Rector visiting the department years ago. She said, "Someone told the Rector, *we do not have research studies in our job description* and the rector responded, *well, I know, but let's not prevent those who want to do it."*

In this chapter, I presented quantitative data from the questionnaire and its statistical analysis, and qualitative data from the interviews with the administrators

and teacher educators, and documents related to regulations. The analysis of these data helped to reveal the predisposition of the related parties towards research at METU. This information was further ensured by a comparison with information from the collected documents. In the next chapter, I discuss the results and implications of the data.

CHAPTER V – CONCLUSION

Creating and sustaining an institutional culture that fosters teacher development through research has wide implications. Kincheloe (2003) maintains,

> Teachers are aware of the complexity of the educational process and how schooling cannot be understood outside of the social, historical, philosophical, cultural, economic, political and psychological contexts that shape it. Scholar teachers understand that curriculum development responsive to student needs is not possible when it fails to account for these contexts. With this in mind, they explore and attempt to interpret the learning processes that take place in their classrooms. (p.18)

A research mindset provides teachers a greater understanding of issues related to school both inside and outside the school context. Research becomes a tool through which teachers move towards emancipation with a liberated mind and take a constructively critical approach to matters related to schooling (Hulme, et al., 2009) as well as to the dynamics of a larger social context.

My research study is based on the understanding that by using research as a tool, teachers at the DBE could construct their own knowledge through interaction and collaboration with peers and students. Within this constructivist view, the main responsibility of teachers is not to transmit knowledge but to interact with the elements of the social context to make new meaning of the classroom, the school at large, or the educational policies. As a step towards a building up of a school environment where teachers actively participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of curricular studies, I conducted this case study and presented a detailed description of the DBE with relation to behaviors and attitudes towards research. I also explored whether the attitudes of the different involved practitioner groups and

administrators towards research are congruent with each other and whether the school caters for teachers' needs for research engagement.

For a motivated teaching force with a research mindset an extensive understanding of teachers' needs, beliefs, ideas, and feelings related to research activities is necessary. Moreover, discovering administrators' and teacher educators' attitudes towards teachers' research activities is imperative since these posts are influential in supporting, guiding and motivating teachers to pursue activities that would promote acquisition of higher skills for an effective teaching and learning environment.

The participants of this study were 134 teachers, four administrators and four teacher educators working at the DBE. I collected quantitative and qualitative data with questionnaires, interviews, and institutional documents, which were later analyzed and interpreted. In the next sections, I present a discussion of the findings with relation to the specific practitioner groups, namely, teachers, administrators and teacher educators.

Teachers' behaviors and attitudes towards research

In this study, I explored teachers' attitudes towards research as well as their reading habits and frequency of conducting research. In the questionnaires, I indicated that I used *research* in the traditional sense, which is academic research. Academic research is a systematic investigation that follows structural processes. It starts with a hypothesis followed by conceptual and operational definitions, data collection, analysis and conclusion. My study does not incorporate how teachers at the DBE interpret the research concept; it was designed to focus on this traditional

model of research and this was explicitly stated in the questionnaires. However, data from the questionnaires revealed that at least some of the teachers at the DBE deviated from this concept of research defined above. Thus, there is a need to understand how these teachers may have perceived research and why.

As was indicated in Chapter IV, the notes on the questionnaires revealed that some teachers seem to have overlooked the intended research model related to the questions and responded the questions independently. For those participants research could be anything from getting ideas from various sources on the Internet to informal inquiries. One reason for such diversion could be that since research engagement is not an expected and regulatory activity for teachers at the DBE, which is not the case for academicians at the other departments at METU, a concept of research is not an established construct at the department. Thus, teachers may have annotated various meanings to research. In addition, the variation in the perception of research may stem from teachers' own varied backgrounds. For the MA and PhD graduates *research* may be more likely to imply traditional academic research whereas those who have an undergraduate degree may perceive research in a number of ways.

Teachers' interest in reading research and its findings, and their actual involvement in research projects are limited. The total number of respondents who said they read research (44%) and the reported frequency (never, rarely, sometimes, often, always) of reading substantiates this result. In a similar study to this one, Borg (2009) reported that research reading frequency of the respondents in his study was 67.5% in the often/sometimes range, whereas only 29% of my respondents reported reading published research either often or sometimes. Considering all teachers who read published research in the frequency of *rarely* to *every week*, there is still a

cohort of 56% who do not read published research at all. The reasons for such a difference and low frequency of reading research may be due to DBE teachers' low level of research engagement and perhaps due to regulatory policies that do not anticipate and encourage teachers' research activities.

The top three reasons that make up 91.5% of all reasons cited by teachers in this study for not reading research were perceived irrelevance of research to classroom practices, lack of time, and lack of interest in research. About the perception of research as irrelevant to classroom practices, the world of academia and literature is full of studies investigating the nature of relationship between theory and practice. On one side of this long running argument are people like Hargreaves (1996, cited inWatkins, 2006), who criticizes most research on the basis that it has not been relevant to practice. In this respect, the criticism of research by the teachers at the DBE has roots in the literature. On the other hand, Zeuli's (1992) study elucidates an important point about the reason why teachers view research as irrelevant: when reading research, teachers are more interested in research products rather than drawing on different conceptions of learning or educational aims. Zeuli (1992) maintains that these teachers consume research findings without understanding why and how the researcher verifies or proves a theory. This *consumer* approach to published research impedes teachers from benefitting from the modules, the concepts, claims and evidence of research. The structural processes of research provide the teacher a route to follow, across which she learns about the intellectual work of other researchers. She pauses to ask questions and find credible answers. Learning this process itself helps the teacher to learn to construct her

teaching practice, and maybe even her teaching philosophy, on a consistent framework.

The second reason cited for not reading research is lack of time. At the DBE, regular teaching hours are 12 to 20 hours per week depending on the level being taught. The 12-hour shift is usually deployed to senior teachers. Ironically, teachers with 11-20 and 20+ years of experience make-up the majority of the non-reader group although they teach for fewer hours and probably require less time for lesson preparation. On the other hand, some of the senior teachers are known to take on extra teaching hours (10 hours per week) to supplement the monthly salary. This practice is not limited to senior teachers alone. It was stated by an administrator that about 50% of all the teachers teach extra hours every week. Still, compared to institutions with a similar character where regular teaching hours go up to 35-40 hours a week, working hours at the DBE seem to be advantageous. Thus, the picture of the DBE portrayed here, the external factors, do not seem to be sufficient to explain the 56% non-reader group. The low reported practice of reading research might be linked to the third reason cited by the teachers for not reading research: lack of interest in research.

Lack of interest was the third most cited reason for not reading research articles. This item can have a similar connotation with the first, that is, teachers do not think research articles are relevant to their job and therefore they are not interested in reading them. Various studies in the literature provide information on the correlation between teacher profiles and their practices related to research.

The research-reading group mainly consists of respondents with an MA or PhD qualification. In line with the literature, those respondents with a higher degree read published research more than those with a BA degree. This may partly be due to the highly structured format and language of published research, which is difficult to read for teachers who are not familiar with academic research paradigms. Zeuli's (1992) research study on how teachers understand research when they read it provides evidence that teachers who have less experience with research, and who are novice teachers, had common problems in reading articles and understanding their findings. Zeuli (1992) maintains that many teachers do not understand research since they do not have a specialized knowledge of research; however, those who had the opportunity to read research during courses on educational research were able to respond more substantively to the article and their findings.

In terms of conducting research, 31% of the teachers in this study reported that they are engaged in research activities. This number includes people who conduct traditional academic research as well as those who do basic inquiries for the purpose of getting classroom ideas. From the questionnaires, it was understood that the latter outnumber the former. Thus, conducting academic research in the traditional sense is not a popular activity among the teachers at the DBE, in general. Borg (2009) also maintains that systematic and rigorous research is a minority activity among teachers of English.

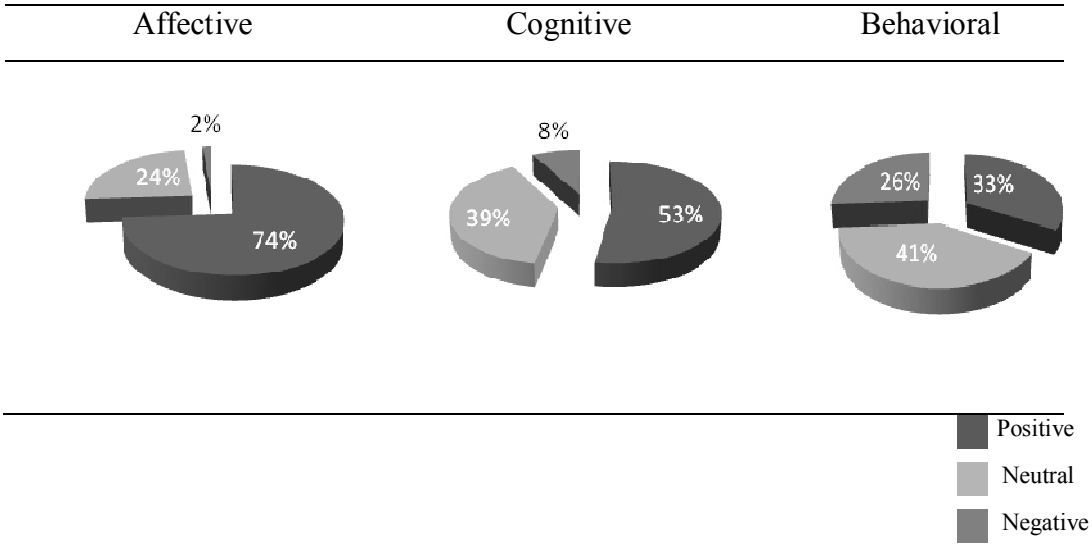
The reasons reported by the teachers for not conducting research also correspond to those in the previous literature. The primary reasons cited were lack of time, lack of interest, and perception of research as not related to teachers' job.

Firstly, lack of time was reported as an impediment to be involved in research activities by teachers. There are many studies in the literature that support this finding (Borg, 2006; McBee, 2004; Stenhouse, 1981). Teachers all over the globe face severe time restraints in their work, which makes it difficult for them to spare ample time to an endeavor that requires high motivation and intellectual investment.

The second and third reasons, lack of interest and perception of research as irrelevant to teachers' job are reflections of the ancient controversy between research and teaching, theory and practice. In this study, the respondents who reported that they perceive research as irrelevant to their job as the prevalent reason were those in the 45+ age group and those with the longest teaching experience. Similarly, those respondents who do not have an MA or PhD qualification were the most likely to report that they perceive research as irrelevant to their job. Zeuli (1992) maintains that further academic studies increase familiarity with research concept as well as methods, which seems to result in a more positive perception of research and its affinity with teaching and learning.

Another tool used to reveal attitudes towards research was the questionnaire. The items were designed to provide evidence of the teachers' beliefs and ideas, feelings, and tendencies and behaviors towards research. Figure 11 reveals the weight of the participants' positive, neutral and negative responses to the three components of attitude.

Figure 11 *Responses Related to the Three Components of Attitude*



This graphic (Figure 11) and the rates of teachers' reported involvement in and with research reveal that the correlation between affective and cognitive factors of attitude and teachers' actual behavior is low. In other words, although teachers report that they have positive ideas regarding research activities and they value research, they are not actually involved or they do not intend to be involved in these activities. Behavior is believed to be influenced by factors other than attitude (Ford-Martin, 1987): preconceptions about self, social influences, and convenience are some factors that could provide insight into the findings. Opinions of oneself, peers' approval, teacher educators' and administrators' encouragement and support, availability of material resources and time all may influence the degree of motivation that is required to perform the behavior. As for some of the respondents, the balance between attitude and behavior was significantly different from the rest (Figure 12).

Figure 12 *Differences between respondents with a BA degree and a higher degree*

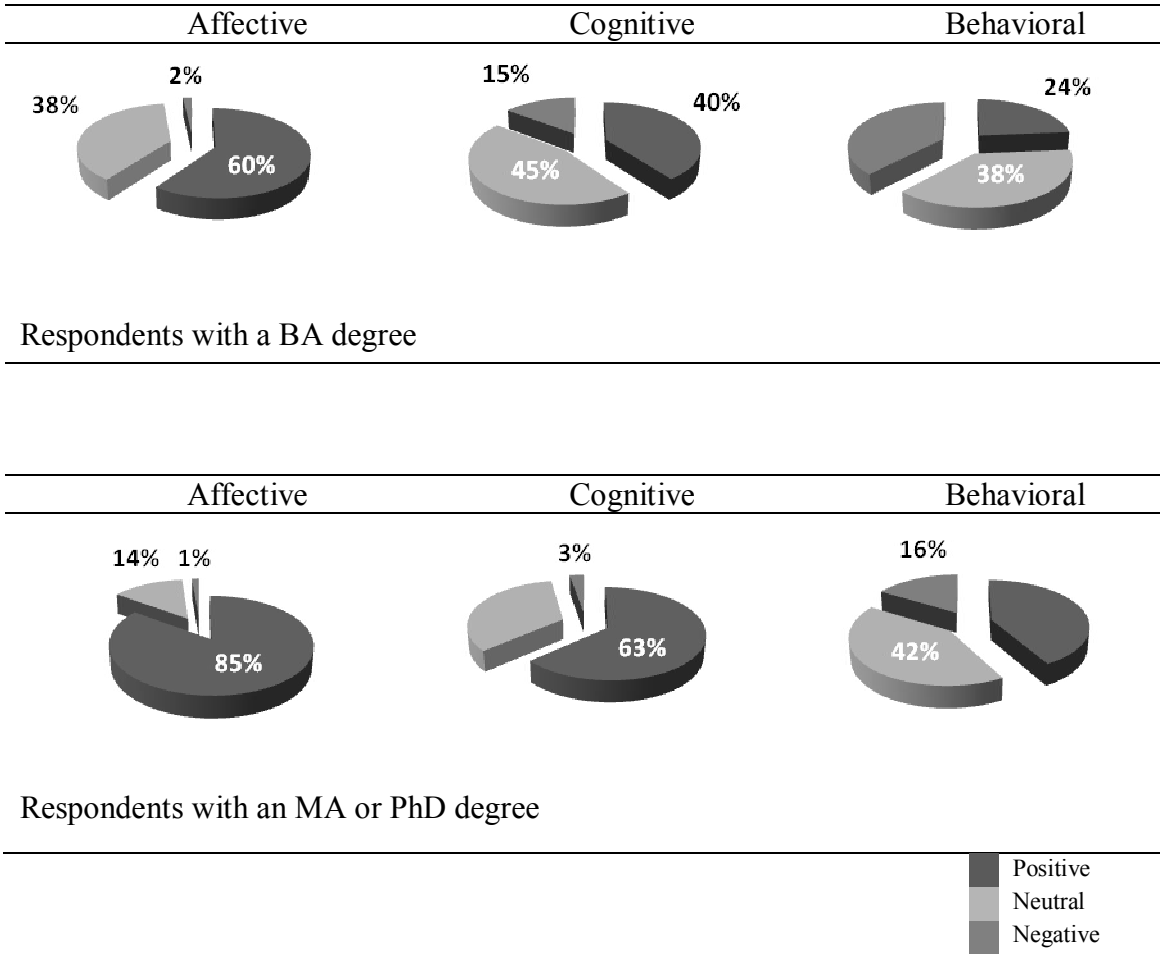


Figure 12 reveals that for both groups of respondents, those with a BA degree and those with an MA or PhD degree, moving from the affective to the cognitive and to the behavioral attitude there is a decrease in positive answers and an increase in negative answers. From this data, I conclude that there is a similarity between respondents with different qualifications regarding levels of reported behavior, and cognitive and affective attitude. In other words, in both groups, reported positive behavior is much less than reported positive feelings and ideas. Looking at the same figure vertically helps to see the difference between the two groups in all three

factors of attitude. Respondents with an MA or a PhD degree reported to have been more positive in their overall attitudes towards research.

Literature data support these findings: academic studies, such as a Master's Degree or a PhD, that require research engagement help teachers gain the abilities to deal with theoretical discourse of rigorous research (J. M. Reis-Jorge, 2005). Those teachers can make use of research literature and have a better understanding of social theories. Further academic studies seem to increase teachers' tendency to develop positive feelings towards research; and their cognitive attitudes and behavior seem to be more positive compared to teachers who have not undergone such studies. Hence, academic studies can be said to help teachers develop a research mindset. However, as maintained by Reis-Jorge (2005), understanding formal research discourse and knowledge of theories do not necessarily help to promote active practice of conducting research. Similarly, findings in this study reveal that even when teachers report to have positive cognitive and affective attitudes towards research, their reported behavior or tendency is not as positive, suggesting that transferring their academic knowledge into practice in the form of research has not been a preferred / feasible activity for the teachers.

The low level of reported research engagement of the teachers at the DBE may be partly explained by the fact that conducting research is not within the duties of the practitioners at the DBE. An examination of job descriptions of instructors at the DBE revealed that there is no formal requirement for instructors to be involved in research activities whereas at the DML teachers are required to contribute to institutional and professional development by participating in professional development activities within and outside the department. In addition, at the DML

there is a research unit whose sole function is “to plan and conduct research into various aspects of teaching” ("METU MLD Job Descriptions," 2007). The difference between the regulations of the two departments with respect to job assignments derives from the policy either of the SFL or of the university council. Nonetheless, the reported low level of tendency/behavior of the teachers at the DBE to be involved in research activities may partly be a consequence of the establishment of a department policy that does not require teachers be active in this respect.

Administrators’ attitudes

The predisposition of the administration towards teachers’ research activities reflects a positive attitude. All members of the administration acknowledged the benefits of research involvement for the teachers, and two administrators further stated how the institution could gain from such activities. They maintained that for assessment purposes, materials development, overall program development, and for an objective evaluation of the institution, research by teachers is necessary. In stating these positive benefits, the administrators were reflecting the literature, which has argued that research involvement and findings have a crucial function in educational settings. Kirkwood & Christie’s (2006) study suggested that being involved in a program for the development of research activities helped the teachers to be more creative in teaching, enabled them to think critically in curricular matters and provided a collaborative environment for the exchange of ideas. The benefits specified in the literature regarding teachers research activities to some extent overlap with those reported by the administrators; both parties mention critical evaluation of curricular activities and improvement in teaching practice.

A comparison however, of the significance ascribed to research by the administration and the related support mechanisms they provide, reveals a discrepancy between the two. Whereas the administrators acknowledge the role of research to ameliorate vital elements of a teaching and learning environment, for various reasons, they offer limited and material support only. The major support systems, material resources and post-research funds to cover travel and accommodation expenses for conference presentations, are hardly motivating for the passive majority who say that research is irrelevant to their job and daily practices. Moreover, the number of teachers who receive these funds to present in conferences do not exceed 10 or 15 teachers each year- this number was exceptionally low in 2009, only eight teachers utilized these funds. Hence, compared to the total population of the department, approximately 180 people, the number of active teacher-researchers seem to be at a low level. The administration explains the lack of more substantial support for research as being the result of teachers' disinterest in such activities. However, the implication of this low level of activity may be due to more fundamental reasons related to contextual circumstances, such as, school policy, lack of peer and official encouragement, and workload.

Teacher educators' attitudes

There is consensus among the teacher educators with respect to the constructive role research involvement is believed to establish in teaching: Research is argued to help create an effective learning and teaching environment, promote objectivity and reflective teaching, help in the development of the syllabus, provide insight, and positively affect other practitioners in the same academic environment. Although some teacher educators mentioned that it is not a must for teachers to be

involved in rigorous academic research, small-scale research or action research is definitely thought to benefit teachers.

With respect to what teacher educators offer teachers in their research related activities, there seems to be no program support except for a few assignments given to newly hired teachers during the pre-service program. Teacher educators maintain that their training program is *not aimed at research*, and that there is a timeframe they need to attain. Thus, the support TED provides is again limited to material resources for those who already have a research mindset, and have taken off for action. Another support mentioned ironically by a teacher educator with the analogy of the Wailing Wall is that the TED unit is a place where teachers come to find comfort from frustrations of the job.

The school policy, in the case of the TED unit, does not provide any impetus for a research oriented training program: they are constrained to "designing and implementing the pre-service program for the newly hired teachers and conducting in-service sessions and workshops to cater for the needs of the staff as deemed necessary by the administration." Whereas the workshops and in-service sessions mentioned could, in theory, incorporate sessions for research training, TED members state it is not within their responsibility areas, which is established by the school policies. A further argument provided by a couple of TED members was that the initiative should come from the teachers rather than the administration or the TED unit, and that otherwise the instructors would not appropriate it as their own endeavor.

The TED unit evidently is capable of providing the instructors the necessary tools and knowledge for a research experience; however, school policies, a tight timeframe for training, lack of an established model for teachers to follow, and lack of teacher motivation hinder the teacher educators from undertaking a more active role in promoting a research agenda. There seems to be a need to balance the demands of a research-oriented program with the available resources while maintaining high standards for a competent teaching force at the department. Formulating school policies to accommodate a program, which would facilitate the development of practitioners with a research mindset, is essential for a university culture that empowers with knowledge and promotes learning.

Pedagogical implications

According to the regulatory practices of the DBE, a teacher chosen from among the cohort chairs the department for three years. The Chair together with the Assistant Chair and Academic Coordinators (again chosen from among the same cohort) occupy a strategic position in terms of preparation of the syllabi and education programs run at the DBE. Considering teachers' level of engagement with research activities, it looks imperative that teachers should be encouraged to involve themselves as learners to be able to cope with the dynamic nature of education.

With the installment of a wireless network connection in 2010, teachers have easier access to university's library resources. Involvement with research by reading, discussing, and thinking about new ideas will make learning a similarly integral activity as teaching for teachers.

In terms of conducting research projects, there is a need to introduce different research models to teachers. The TED unit can organize training sessions to introduce concepts, models, and processes of research. This approach may help teachers to comprehend the vital connections between teaching and research, theory and practice. Bringing a research perspective into teachers' daily lives through action research, reflective practice, or academic research, depending on teachers' level of expertise, nature of the problem, and level of commitment, will make knowledge building and teacher learning an indisputable part of school life.

Other reported impediments to research engagement could be overcome by setting up a comprehensive framework that will allow teachers the flexibility to plan and incorporate research activities into the current curriculum. As Hahs-Vaughn & Yanowitz's (2009) study revealed, support of a mentor and receiving release time for professional development activities increase teachers' involvement in research activities. For those teachers who are not familiar with research paradigms, there is a need for the teacher educators to develop and initiate a program, which will provide a basis for a syllabus developed to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to be actively engaged in the projects.

The literature provides evidence that collaboration with colleagues is an effective practice in teachers' research activities. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized construction of knowledge under the guidance of a more knowledgeable mentor. He claims that a more skilled person - in our case either the teacher educators or experienced colleagues – will help teachers in their learning process by scaffolding, by providing the amount of support they need to be involved in research activities.

Scaffolding can become a vital tool in teachers' learning during collaborative research activities.

A practical starting point for research activities is for teachers to setup a special interest group, which will organize to explore issues related to the classroom or the school. A poll of issues can be created with the voluntary contribution of teachers. Later, small groups of interested teachers, under the supervision of a research oriented teacher or a teacher educator, can be coordinated to carry out systematic inquiries to propose solutions to specified issues. Collaboration in this manner may provide emotional as well as intellectual support for all professional development activities. Christie & Menter (2009) emphasize that teachers need to be critical towards their own work and reflect on their own practices. Within a special interest group, teachers may also learn to analyze their own practices and work to find ways to improve themselves as a result of a collective work with colleagues.

The school policies can also inform and encourage teachers to be engaged in research projects. For this to happen, there is a need to build new roles for teachers, such as, mentor, teacher leader, or teacher researcher. In addition, new structures, such as research groups, can help to initiate peer support and to create a culture of learning by making professional learning an integral part of teaching and school life (Lieberman, 1995).

The path to the establishment of a social constructivist framework at the DBE lies in providing opportunities for teachers. These opportunities could involve informing, encouraging and motivating teachers "to raise questions, generate hypotheses and test their validity" (Applefield, et al., 2000, p. 32). If teachers were

provided with such a prospect, they would learn to look beyond the daily classroom concerns and focus on their own learning as well as their students'.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is about the fuzziness of the term "academic research." I presumed that this phrase used in the questionnaire would be self-explanatory for the respondents to answer the questions accordingly; however, at least one fifth of the respondents interpreted *research* as a generic term referring to different types of inquiries, as was observed in Section 2 of the questionnaire. Therefore, I considered research in a broader sense when writing up the implications.

Another limitation is about the methodology of the study. Initially, I wanted to include all the teachers working at the DBE in my study to be able to collect data that could safely reflect the attitudes of them all. For this end, I designed a questionnaire and collected data from about 82% of the teachers. However, a questionnaire, no matter how meticulously designed, will inevitably, to some extent, impose the researcher's ideas on the participant through the statements. Participants of this study may have perceived my side on the issue, which, in return, may have caused them to report a higher degree of positive attitude towards research activities than they naturally have.

The final limitation I should mention is about the generalisability of the study. METU DBE is a one-year preparatory school with a specific character. It is part of a well established English-medium university, with a large student (approximately 4000 students every year) and teacher (about 200) population. Admission standards for students as well as teachers are very high compared to many

other universities. The DBE differs from the other departments at METU with regard to job responsibilities: teachers at the DBE are not required to conduct research studies. For the applicability of this particular case of the DBE to other institutions, one may have to consider the school structure at large and the preparatory school in particular with its above average students, the objectives of the language-teaching syllabi, and requirements of the teaching posts.

Future directions

In this study, I focused on the DBE, exploring the research dynamics within the department. Under the School of Foreign Languages, there are two departments: one is the DBE and the other is the DML. During the data collection and analysis period, I noticed that the participants frequently mentioned the DML as a point of comparison. I touched upon the DML and referred to job descriptions and the regulations in the discussion of the findings. However, there seems to be a need for a study focusing solely on the DML. A study of this kind could shed light on the assumptions put forth by the interviewees and provide a solid basis for a comparison of the two departments under the School of Foreign Languages.

As a case study, this work presents a picture of a certain instance of a school environment related to attitudes towards research. A longitudinal study of the same environment with more detailed qualitative data could provide interesting findings: differences in teachers' practices and attitudes towards research over time or reasons for changes at the individual or institutional levels could be investigated.

To establish a research culture at a school environment a thorough understanding of teachers' views is necessary. Only then can issues that might hinder

these activities be better addressed. In this study, teachers reported various reasons for their attitudes towards research related activities. In order to understand the implications of the reported reasons, teachers' conceptions of and expectations from research involvement need to be investigated further. In addition, an empirical investigation into factors that could motivate teachers into research engagement could be helpful in the design of a syllabus for teacher education.

Conclusion

Research is a crucial tool for teacher cognition. Research engagement helps to transform teachers from being implementers to constructors of knowledge. From a constructivist point of view, achieving a research mindset is an important step towards meaningful evaluation of matters related to the immediate school context as well as to the social context at large. Recognizing the potential of research in the advancement of our knowledge of educational processes, I designed this case study and explored teachers' attitudes and behaviors towards research at the DBE at (METU). More precisely, I investigated teachers' involvement in and with research activities and teachers' cognitive, affective and behavioral attitudes. Teacher educators' and administrators' attitudes towards teachers' research activities were also investigated, to reveal to what extent they relate research and teaching and whether teachers' needs and expectations are met by the support mechanisms provided by these two groups. Findings revealed there is a need to develop a viable school policy that includes research as a crucial tool to enhance teacher learning. Roles of teachers and teacher educators need to be redefined to make better use of their relative expertise in their praxis in all educational processes at the DBE. The DBE encompasses the dynamics to establish a framework that can unveil the DBE

teachers' potential to actively engage in knowledge production in collaboration with colleagues.

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APPENDIX A - QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **About yourself** (Please circle the numbers that correspond to your choice)

1.1	Your Age	1	2	3	4	
		20 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 +	
1.2	Your undergraduate degree	1	2			
		ELT	Non ELT			
1.3	Your degree(s)	1	2	3	4	
		BA/BS	MA/MS	Ph.D.	Other	
1.4	Your teaching experience	1	2	3	4	5
		1 yr	2-5 years	6-10 years	11-20	21 +
1.5	Your position	1	2	3	4	
		Instructo	Test Writer	Coordinator	Other	
1.6	At this moment, are you involved in any academic or certificate program?	1	2	3	4	5
		No	Master's	Doctorate	Training	Other

About your involvement in and with *academic research*

a. Do you read published research?

Yes [ ]

How frequently?

(e.g. how many times a year?)

_____

You said that you read published research. Which of the following do you read? (Please tick all that apply)

Books	○
Academic / Professional Journals	○
Professional Magazines (e.g. ET Professional)	○
Newsletters (e.g. IATEFL SIG Newsletters)	○
Web-based sources of research	○
Other (please specify)	○

_____

No [ ]

You said that you do not read published research.
Here are some possible reasons for this.
(Please tick those that are true for you.)

I am not interested in research.	○
I do not have time.	○
I do not have access to books and journals.	○
I find published research hard to understand.	○
Published research does not give me practical advice for the classroom.	○
Other reasons (please specify)	○

_____

b. Do you do research yourself?

Yes [ ]

How frequently? (please give as much detail as possible. E.g. how many times a year?)

_____

You said that you do research. Below are a number of possible reasons for doing research.

'I do research …

As part of a course I am studying on	○
Because I enjoy it	○
Because it is good for my professional development	○
Because it will help me get a promotion	○
To contribute to the improvement of the school generally	○
To find better ways of teaching	○
To solve problems in my teaching	○
Other reasons (please specify)	○

_____

No [ ]

You said that you do not do research. Below are a number of possible reasons for not doing research. (Please tick those that are true for you.)

I do not know enough about research methods	○
My job is to teach not to do research	○
I do not have time to do research	○
My employer discourages it	○
I am not interested in doing research	○
I need someone to advise me but no one is available	○
Most of my colleagues do not do research	○
I do not have access to the books and journals I need	○
The learners would not cooperate if I did research in class	○
Other teachers would not cooperate if I asked for their help	○
Other reasons (please specify)	○

_____

2. **Views on research**

Here are some statements about views on research. Please give your opinion by marking the appropriate number for each statement.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Doing / reading research improves instructors' performance.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Doing research is difficult for language teachers	1	2	3	4	5
3	I plan to be involved in a research project	1	2	3	4	5
4	I value research conducted by my colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I tend to put off research related activities due to a number of issues.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Doing research is the job of academicians in other departments	1	2	3	4	5
7	Reading research articles is boring.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Doing research and teaching are not related	1	2	3	4	5
9	Research findings do not have great importance in teaching of English.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I read research published on language teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Training on how to do research is out of the scope of DBE	1	2	3	4	5
12	I respect those people who conduct research and teach simultaneously.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I am not interested in doing research whatsoever.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Instructors' research activities should be supported by the institution	1	2	3	4	5
15	I participate in ELT conferences.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I do not like to do research.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Research involvement (by reading or doing) helps me understand how well I do my job.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Conducting /designing a research project is an important achievement	1	2	3	4	5
19	To teach effectively, there is no need for research .	1	2	3	4	5
20	Under different conditions, I could be involved in (a greater number of) research activities.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Conducting / reading research helps/would help improve my teaching practice	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

1. What is your duty and how long have you been working at the DBE?
2. How do you relate research and teaching?
3. What are the potential benefits of research involvement for EFL teachers?
4. What kinds of support mechanisms do you provide for teachers who want to conduct research?
5. Is there an agenda for research activities at school?
   5.1. Which unit at school is responsible from such an undertaking?
   5.2. What other support systems could be provided within this scheme?
6. What is your opinion of teachers' tendencies to conduct research at the department?
   6.1. What are your reasons for thinking so?
7. To what extent do you think teachers at the department value research?

   <u>About the interviewee:</u>

8. Do you read research?
   If yes,
   8.1. How frequently?
   If no,
   8.2. Why?
9. Do you conduct research?
   If yes,
   9.1. How frequently?
10. What conditions are required for you to conduct research?
11. What are / would be the benefits of conducting research for your current occupation?
12. (If positive answer to Q9) Do you think research involvement helped you to this position?