

**T.C.  
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**EFL INSTRUCTORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**Melahat ÇEVİK**

**Department of Foreign Languages Education  
English Language Education Program**

**FEBRUARY, 2024**



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**(Y2112.021034)**

**Department of Foreign Languages Education**  
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**FEBRUARY, 2024**

**APPROVAL PAGE**

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare with the respect that the study “EFL Instructors’ Attitudes Towards Professional Development”, which I submitted as a Master thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the References. (22/02/2024)

Melahat ÇEVİK

## **FOREWORD**

First, I would like to express sincere appreciation to Assist. Prof. Dr. HÜLYA YUMRU for her guidance, ongoing support and invaluable suggestions through the research. Her patience and scholarly rigor have not only shaped this work but have also profoundly influenced my growth as a researcher.

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Finally, I would like to acknowledge the important contribution of Istanbul Aydın University to the research.

February, 2024

Melahat ÇEVİK

# **EFL INSTRUCTORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the attitudes of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors towards professional development (PD) within the Turkish educational context. The research aims to identify the perceived value of PD, the extent of participation in PD activities, and the barriers to effective engagement in PD. Data were collected from 50 EFL instructors across various Turkish institutions using a structured questionnaire, which included both Likert-scale and open-ended questions to elicit quantitative and qualitative data.

The quantitative analysis, conducted through SPSS, revealed a positive disposition towards PD, with instructors acknowledging its critical role in enhancing pedagogical skills and teaching methodologies. However, a notable gap between the recognition of PD's importance and actual participation rates was observed. Qualitative data, analyzed thematically, underscored several challenges, such as excessive workload, financial limitations, and inadequate institutional support, which hinder instructors' ability to engage in PD.

The study further highlights instructors' preferences for PD activities that are tailored to their specific teaching contexts, emphasizing the need for customization of PD programs. Respondents also expressed a desire for more collaborative PD practices, such as peer observation and action research, to foster a supportive learning community among educators.

Implications of the study include the necessity for educational policymakers and institutions to implement supportive measures that address the identified barriers to PD. This includes providing financial and scheduling accommodations, enhancing institutional backing, leveraging technology for accessible PD, and fostering a culture that values continuous professional growth and autonomy.

The findings contribute to the discourse on teacher education by advocating for a holistic approach to PD, which incorporates the needs and preferences of EFL instructors, aiming to cultivate an environment conducive to lifelong learning and pedagogical excellence.

**Keywords:** Professional Development, Teacher Perception, Professional Development Activities



# İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİM GÖREVLİLERİNİN MESLEKİ GELİŞİME YÖNELİK TUTUMLARI

## ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Türk eğitim bağlamında İngilizce öğretim görevlilerinin mesleki gelişim konusundaki tutumlarını incelemektedir. Araştırmanın amacı, mesleki gelişimin algılanan değerini, etkinliklerine katılımın derecesini ve etkin katılımının engellerini incelemektir. Veriler, anket yoluyla çeşitli üniversitelerin hazırlık okullarındaki 50 İngilizce öğretim görevlisinden toplanmıştır. Anket açık ve kapalı uçlu sorulardan oluşmuştur ve veriler sıklık ve yüzdeyi hesaplamak için betimsel analizden geçirilmiştir.

Analiz, öğretmenlerin pedagojik becerileri ve öğretim metodolojilerini geliştirmede kritik bir rolü olduğunu kabul etmeleriyle mesleki gelişime olumlu bir tutum sergilediğini ortaya koymuştur. Bununla birlikte, mesleki gelişimin öneminin tanınması ile gerçek katılım oranları arasında belirgin bir fark gözlemlenmiştir. Ayrıca gelişimi engelleyen faktörler incelenmiştir. Belirtilen faktörlerin hepsi öğretmenler tarafından önemli bulunduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Engelleyen faktörler arasında aşırı iş yükü, finansal kısıtlamalar ve yetersiz kurumsal destek gibi faktörler öne çıkmıştır.

Çalışma, eğitimcilerin belirli öğretim bağlamlarına uyarlanmış PG etkinliklerini tercih ettiğini ve gelişim programlarının özelleştirilmesi gerekliliğini vurgulamaktadır. Katılımcılar ayrıca, eğitimciler arasında destekleyici bir öğrenme topluluğu oluşturmak için akran gözlemi ve eylem araştırması gibi daha işbirlikçi uygulamaları istediklerini ortaya koymuşlardır.

Çalışmanın sonuçları, gelişimin önündeki tanımlanan engelleri ele alan eğitim politikalarının kurumlar tarafından uygulanmasının gerekliliğini vurgulamaktadır. Bu, finansal ve zamanlama düzenlemelerinin sağlanması, kurumsal desteğin artırılması, erişilebilir mesleki gelişim için teknolojinin kullanılması ve sürekli

gelişim ve özerkliği değerlendiren bir kültürün teşvik edilmesini içerir.

Bulgular, öğretmenlerin ihtiyaçlarını ve tercihlerini kapsayan gelişim programının benimsenmesi yoluyla bu alana katkı sağlamaktadır ve böylece ömür boyu öğrenmeyi ve pedagojik iyileşmeyi teşvik eden bir ortam oluşturmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mesleki Gelişim, Öğretmen Tutumu, Mesleki Gelişim Aktiviteleri

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>EFL</b>	: English as a Foreign Language
<b>ELT</b>	: English Language Teaching)
<b>PD</b>	: Professional Development
<b>SPSS</b>	: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>USA</b>	: The United States of America

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Background to the Study**

There has been a rapid change in all fields as a requirement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, dynamism plays a crucial role to keep up with the changes and having the required skills for these fields of knowledge. Education is at the forefront of all these areas, so as a vital part of education, teachers have an extremely complex and demanding profession. They are required to develop themselves in teaching in ways that keep pace with the ongoing changes for the high quality of education and teaching. Therefore, teachers need continuous professional development to update their knowledge.

In addition to its significance for teachers, the characteristics of high-quality professional development are also at the center of research. According to Hiebert, professional development activities need to share core features (cited in Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman and Yoon, 2001, p. 917),

Research on teacher learning shows that fruitful opportunities to learn new teaching methods share several core features: (a) ongoing (measured in years) collaboration of teachers for purposes of planning with (b) the explicit goal of improving students' achievement of clear learning goals, (c) anchored by attention to students' thinking, the curriculum, and pedagogy, with (d) access to alternative ideas and methods and opportunities to observe these in action and to reflect on the reasons for their effectiveness . . .

As for language teachers, Richards and Farrell (2005) point out, language teaching undergoes rapid changes both as an occupation try to meet the changing demands of educational paradigms and as institutions come across a variety of learner profiles and needs, changes in curricula. So, teachers are required to have routine access to professional development activities to refresh their professional knowledge and teaching skills.



As a core characteristic of relevant professional development, Dunne (2002) puts great emphasis on professional development that is driven by teachers' classroom experiences. She measures the success of professional development activities with their applicability in the real setting. Besides, she suggests professional development activities should provide options for the teacher to choose relevant subjects to their student's needs, and these activities should be extended in time and should help to build a professional culture of collaborative learning. Finally, as a requirement of learning, these activities need to make a difference in students' learning. Additionally; Birman, Desimone, Garet, and Porter (2000) suggest that for students learning to be transformed to higher standards, teachers' practices in the classroom reflect these standards in a real setting, and they should be prepared to do so. Professional development activities have a significant role to address the gap between high standards and teachers' preparedness. One of the most crucial characteristics of these activities is coherence. This indicates to what extent these activities are consistent with lesson objectives or teacher goals, former activities, and prospective ones. To be coherent, the professional development program should consist of collaboration with other teachers and administrators in their institution as well.

Teaching experience is often associated with successful teaching. Because it can be calculated, years of experience are given great importance in Turkey as well. It is one of the top features sought in job interviews. According to Adams and Pierce (cited in Wichadee, 2011), how many years of experience do not always guarantee to teach success. However, as they suggest, it is only appreciable when teachers reflect on their experience with the techniques they use and modify them accordingly and readjust the way they teach as the students' needs change. What will ensure success is the way teachers perceive these professional activities and how much they reflect them in their classrooms and reframe their teaching to have more satisfactory performance in their teaching. As Wichadee (2011) states, satisfactory performance means preparedness to teach a wide range of students with a variety of needs and interests.

As the key determining point for improved student performance, professional development has changed from a behavioristic approach towards a constructivist approach as required to meet the needs of the century (Pitsoe and Maila, 2012) which

is also noted in Abdal-Haqq's study (1996) as a characteristic of effective professional development. The idea behind that the professional development programs should be based on the idea of constructing of knowledge rather than transferring it as Charner-Laird suggests (cited in Pitsoe and Maila, 2012). Therefore, this process requires a holistic approach to teachers' development including their teaching and learning experiences along with institutional and students' needs. The teachers are both teachers and learners as they add to and change their pre-knowledge of the teaching. As their knowledge evolves their experiences change which changes the performance of the students. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) point out that the process, program, and activities should be related to and must be connected to and stem from teachers' work with their students. Therefore, the whole process is an empirical, unique product based on their students' needs and perspectives. As it is a more personalized experience, this approach encourages teachers to turn to their problems and students' needs in the classroom. In this case, they feel more confident and keener to improve themselves professionally. These viewpoints are related to teachers. Also, from the institution's perspective, every school has its own unique needs and context. For long-term results, to create a culture of professional development and collaboration; the intuitions should support professional development processes and should allow teachers to have initiatives to improve themselves professionally which may result in self-confidence among them. To summarize, Pitsoe and Maila (2012) point out that professional development can be seen as liquid, and should be derived from the needs of teachers, institutions, and students. In professional development processes, the teachers should construct their knowledge through their experiences and their viewpoints and real-life experiences in the classroom evolve accordingly.

In addition to what teachers are expected to earn from professional development activities, institutions should provide teachers with opportunities to reflect what they experience, discuss what they desire to learn and explore, adjust new concepts, learnings and strategies to their current setting (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995). This doesn't have to be carried out professionally or via organizations, it can be achieved with a critical friend or an experienced teacher as mentor-mentee relationships. The main issue related to institutions is that they should provide time for teachers reflect and share what they learnt, want to learn and

connect new concepts to former ones in a collaborative context. Therefore, schools should be encouraged as reflective communities equipped with essential sources. As mentioned in Darling-Hammond and Mclaughlin's study (1995), Professional Development Schools (PDS) in the USA aims to include experts as mentors, teachers as both colleagues and learners. So, any knowledge gained through these programs, can be shared and adjusted by teachers to their unique contexts.

As for professional development situation in Turkey, according to Ar (as cited in Coşkuner, 2001, p.3) teachers have little time to improve themselves, convert their experiences into professional achievements. As they have to deal with the difficulties in their own contexts which vary in terms of job satisfaction, conditions at work, relationships among teachers, salaries, workload and time limitations as Demircan (as cited in Coşkuner, 2001, p.3) argues. These are the main limitations for them. However, teachers have a center role in students' learning. Therefore, the Turkish Ministry of National Education which has been the only organization with the authority to decide on educational foundations and schools since the law on unified education was passed, has organized teacher development meetings and workshops. The six main competencies that make up generic teacher competencies are "Personal and Professional Values-Professional Development," "Knowing the Student," "Learning and Teaching Process," "Monitoring and Evaluation of Learning and Development," "School-Family and Society Relationships," "Knowledge of Curriculum and Content," and "Personal and Professional Values." These competencies can be used by teachers to help them set their own personal professional development goals. (General Directorate of Teacher Training Turkish Ministry of National Education, 2006). In this way, they have inner motive to develop themselves professionally. Ideal teacher in theory may be realized utilizing inner motive to become more capable of delivering solutions in practical cases.

## **B. Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to find out EFL instructors' opinions and attitudes towards professional development activities. Another purpose of this study is to find out current limitations for the instructors to take part in these activities. In this context this study may contribute to field of professional development and their practices in real settings.

### **C. Research Questions**

1. What are English language teachers' attitudes toward professional development?
2. What major professional development activities do English language teachers perceive as critical to their development?
3. What factors hinder English language instructors' professional development?

### **D. Significance of the Study**

The way that instructors are viewed in the classroom has changed over time. They play many different roles outside just lecturing at the board, like building scaffolds and setting the mood. To stay up with developments in their domains and in learners' requirements, they must continue their professional development. As these needs alter, the instructors' ability to instruct is becoming just as important as their expertise in their respective fields. It is essential for both their teaching abilities and their self-confidence that they continue to improve professionally. Therefore, they need time, motivation, chances to implement their knowledge. Lack of these factors prevents teachers from personal commitment.

Knowing teachers and their perspectives on professional development events may assist to identify any issues that might be troublesome for both their institutions and the organizations that organize these activities. Understanding the factors that motivate them and hinder their motivation as well as the possible effects of their institutions may help implementing professional development activities.

### **E. Definition of Key Concepts**

**Professional development:** A process of teachers' ongoing intellectual, practical, and mental development (Bailey et al., 1998).

**Teacher perception:** The ideas or mental pictures that instructors have about their work or students, which are influenced by their prior knowledge and experiences (Papadakis and Kalogiannakis, 2022).

**Professional Development Activities:** Any form activity aimed at enhancing instructors' effectiveness based on both the skills and content knowledge necessary for the teaching (Brookfield, 2015).

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, first alternative definitions of self-development will be discussed. Second, a review of the stages of teacher development and characteristics of effective professional development will be given, followed by a discussion on the life cycle of instructors. Afterwards, peer coaching, action research, and in-service training programs that support the professional growth of English language instructors will be presented with other reflective ways of professional development. Also, limitations for these activities will be presented. The discussion will conclude with research on English language teachers' personal growth both globally and in Turkey.

### **A. Introduction**

Teachers are at the center of students' learning. In order for instructors to provide the optimum learning environment for their students, teacher development is seen as a strong tool to meet the variable demands of students. Teacher development makes possible for teachers to stay current with changes in their field, feel confident and it gives teachers chances to modify their teaching environment in accordance with current issues. As Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) argue today's professional development is not just about enhancing education and knowledge. All professional development systems must be adaptable and able to meet the changing demands of educators and other professionals. In order for instructors to reflect on their existing practice and apply new information and viewpoints to their unique teaching situations, support of professional development is also required. With the aid of professional development, educators at all levels, including teachers, administrators, and parents, could become accustomed to their new roles in the classroom.

As Desimone (2002) states professional development is regarded as a crucial tool for increasing teachers' subject-matter expertise and improving their instructional strategies. In order to strengthen teachers' ability to teach to high

standards, systemic reform initiatives may use professional development as its basis. Therefore, pre-packaged training is not sufficient for improving standard of learning environment, learning and teaching process should be supported both internally and externally.

As Cohen, McLaughlin, and Talbert (cited in Desimone, 2011, p.68) state teachers engage in a wide variety of activities and relationships that can help them learn more, develop their teaching methods, and advance their personal, social, and emotional development. Therefore, any tool for them to learn, practice and reflect on their teaching and learning process is part of professional development. These activities range from planned; formal courses held on in-service days to casual, daily conversations with their colleagues in the hallway. Workshops, regional and national conferences, college courses, specialized institutes, and other events can be used as professional development activities.

Furthermore, teachers' own inquiry, reflection on their practices in the classroom are as valuable as other planned activities, as through self-examination or investigation, teachers' own classrooms can provide some of the most significant learning opportunities (Desimone, 2011).

Besides all these conceptions of professional development, self-development plays a key role for teachers to improve their content knowledge and practices in the classroom and understanding of their own process. Other words for teacher self-development in the literature include self-inquiry, self-supervision (Bailey, 1981), and self-reflection. As Amidon and Flanders (cited in Bailey, 1981, p. 9) suggest the teacher is constantly influencing the students and the learning environment. The teacher may learn more about his own pattern of influence by systematically and objectively observing their own actions. As they learn more about their behavior, they may think about the ones they want to change. Therefore, reflection is essential to have a greater grasp of what happens in the classroom. English language teachers can gain from reflective teaching in three main ways, according to Farrell (1998): it frees them from impulsive and habitual behavior; it enables them to act deliberately and intentionally and avoid the "I don't know what I will do today" syndrome; and it distinguishes them as educated individuals. To have a deeper knowledge of what happens in the classroom, the concept of "reflection" is essential. The methods teachers use in the classroom and other options for achieving their objectives must be

considered by them.

Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, and Stiles (cited in Dunne, 2002, p. 68) suggest that professional development as the activities that aid teachers to acquire the knowledge and abilities to build a vision, build a learning community, includes an ongoing process and assessment, help both teachers and students reflect on their understanding and inseparable part of overall success of the system and education. To sum up, teachers' professional development is a crucial component in the success chain for both nationwide and universal education reform.

## **B. Effective Professional Development**

Professional development activities cannot be defined or limited to a single definition or a practice as education field is in constant change. As Guskey (1994) points out as the needs, context, teachers, and learners change in time, the key elements of professional development take various forms as well. Therefore, a method that can be considered effective for one class may be insufficient for another group of students or teachers at another time. But still, there are many common points that constitutes effective professional development (PD) activities and are largely useful.

Desimone (2011) suggests instead of concentrating on the many structural elements of the activities that teachers participate in, one alternative is to concentrate on the characteristics of professional development activities that promote teacher learning. The activities should enhance their knowledge and practice. Similarly, Abdal-Haqq (1996) states that despite traditional way of teacher training viewed as isolated with regards to subject and practice, effective professional development (PD) program should include real setting experience and enhance teachers' knowledge of area.

Desimone (2011, p.69) suggests effective professional development includes common characteristics as following:

- Content-focused: the activities should concentrate on subject matter content and the way students get it.
- Coherent: All professional development that teachers participate in should align with their knowledge and objectives, other professional



development, and state, district, and most recent standards and reform measures.

- Extended: A semester should be allotted for professional development activities, with 20 hours or more of contact time required.
- Active learning: Instead of passively listening to lectures, teachers should have the chance to participate by giving and receiving feedback, reviewing student work, giving presentations or reflecting on their practice. Maggioli (2003) places a strong focus on the necessity of instructors actively participating in all phases of development activities, from planning to evaluation.
- Collaborative: To create a learning community, teams of instructors from the same grade, subject, or school should engage in professional development activities. They may include both teachers and professionals. Teachers also can improve their skills by consulting researchers and professionals.

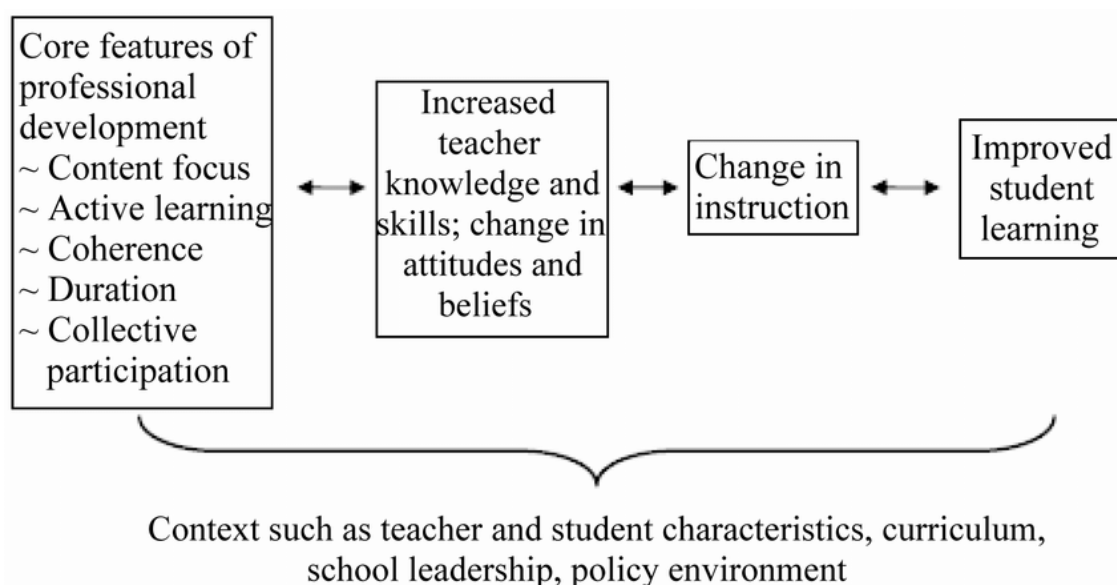


Figure 1: Proposed core conceptual framework for studying the effects of professional development on teachers and students (Desimone, 2009, p.185).

Reflective practices are merely enough for effective Professional development, as they have phases necessary for enhanced learning and teaching according to Richards and Farrell (2005, p.4),

However, although many things can be learned about teaching through self-observation and critical reflection, many cannot, such as subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical expertise, and understanding of curriculum and materials. PD, therefore, should go beyond personal and individual reflection. For example, it can include exploration of new trends and theories in language teaching; familiarization with developments in subject-matter knowledge such as pedagogical grammar, composition theory, or genre theory; and critical examination of the way schools and language programs are organized and managed.

Effective professional development is inclusionary and multifaceted. It is progressive, comprises training, practice, and feedback, chances for self or group reflection, inquiry about practice, mentoring. Also, effective professional development (PD) is grounded in the classroom practices and integrated into teachers' daily tasks; collaborative, allowing teachers to connect with one another. Furthermore, it places a strong emphasis on student learning, which may help the assessment of how effective it is. It also promotes and supports teacher and school-based initiatives and is grounded in the body of knowledge for teaching. Effective professional development practices should integrate constructivist teaching and learning methods, acknowledge teachers as professionals and adult learners, and give teachers enough time and after-class support. Finally, it should be accessible for all teachers (Bull et al., 1994).

As an ultimate description of effective professional development, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995, p. 599) suggest the following points as core features;

- It must involve teachers in practical teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection tasks that will shed light on the developmental and learning processes.
- It must engage them inquiry and provide opportunities to reflect themselves
- It must be cooperative, involving the sharing of knowledge among teachers and placing more emphasis on the communities of practice of

teachers than on individuals.

- It needs to be relevant to and derived from the work that teachers do with their students.
- It should be ongoing, extended, assisted with mentors and professionals,
- It should find solutions for particular practice-related issues; and
- It should involve other members of the institute so that it can be holistic.

### **C. Types of Professional Development Activities**

Teachers fall under the category of professions that need specialized education and content knowledge and must stay current with changes and innovations in their fields in order to improve their content knowledge and their practices in the classroom. Preservice education in universities is not sufficient for language teachers, they need additive sources and ongoing education to be effective in their profession. As Day (1999) suggests teachers should have continuous motivation to keep up with the changes in language teaching. The rapidly changing nature of the English language teaching field and the ever-evolving body of teaching knowledge are two important reasons for instructors' involvement in professional development (Richards and Farrell, 2005).

It is necessary to describe training in order to examine the topic of professional development. Freeman (1989), Richards and Farrell (2005) distinguish the terms training and development. As for training, Freeman (1989) describes it as the teaching of individual material. It is a direct intervention and can be evaluated. It relies on the assumption that teaching individual material and skills create a holistic effective teaching. However, complicated components of education cannot be dealt with in a fragmented manner. Training will not provide discrete results; instead, it will generate types of changes. According to Richards and Farrell (2005), training consists of acts that teachers take that immediately affect their context. According to them, training focuses on preparing instructors for the actual process of teaching, namely, skills that will help them deal with situations when they may need to change their lesson plans or group students. In contrast, development entails instructors'

awareness of their own practices and the contexts in which they teach. Development is a bottom-up method to teacher education, as opposed to training which is top-down, specialists determine what should be included in training programs (Richards and Farrell, 2005, p. 4).

Teacher professional development is a crucial component of school success across the country and can be carried out in a number of ways, as will be discussed below.

## **1. Action Research**

Each classroom's environment is unique due to its students' values, objectives, and cultures. Consequently, conventional research methods might not be helpful in all situations in the classroom. Since the researchers are now in a classroom, action research (AR) might be essential to finding a solution. Most teachers have chances to evaluate and reflect on their teaching, and they find genuine solutions in the classrooms regarding the needs and backgrounds of the learners. Burns (2009, p.2) defines AR as a “self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach” to improve and solve context-related problems in teachers’ classrooms. In line with this, one of the critical objectives of AR is to find a "difficult" circumstance or issue that the participants—who may include instructors, students, managers, or even parents—consider to be worthwhile for further investigation. Difficult circumstance does not necessarily mean an issue that is problematic to solve. The point is that there are sometimes gaps between what occurs in their classrooms and what instructors would prefer to see happen. It can be any issue or concern that teachers would like to improve. The main goal of AR's action component is to purposefully intervene in the problematic situation in order to make adjustments and, even better, improvements in actual practice. The main goal of the action component of AR is to purposefully intervene in problematic circumstances in order to effect change and, even better, practice improvements.

According to Richards and Farrell (2005), action research empowers teachers to take responsibility of their own development away from others, which in turn alters their perspective on instruction and classroom procedures. "Planning, action, observation, and reflection" processes are involved in action research (Richards and Farrell, 2005 p. 185).

In their updated version of action research concept as “critical participatory action research”, Kemmis and McTaggart (2014, p.19) describe action research as:

A disciplined way of making change” with a spiral of self-reflection as following and can be seen in Figure 2, which shows spiral of self-reflective cycles: “planning a change, acting and observing the process and consequences of the change, reflecting on these processes and consequences, and then re-planning, acting and observing, reflecting, and so on...

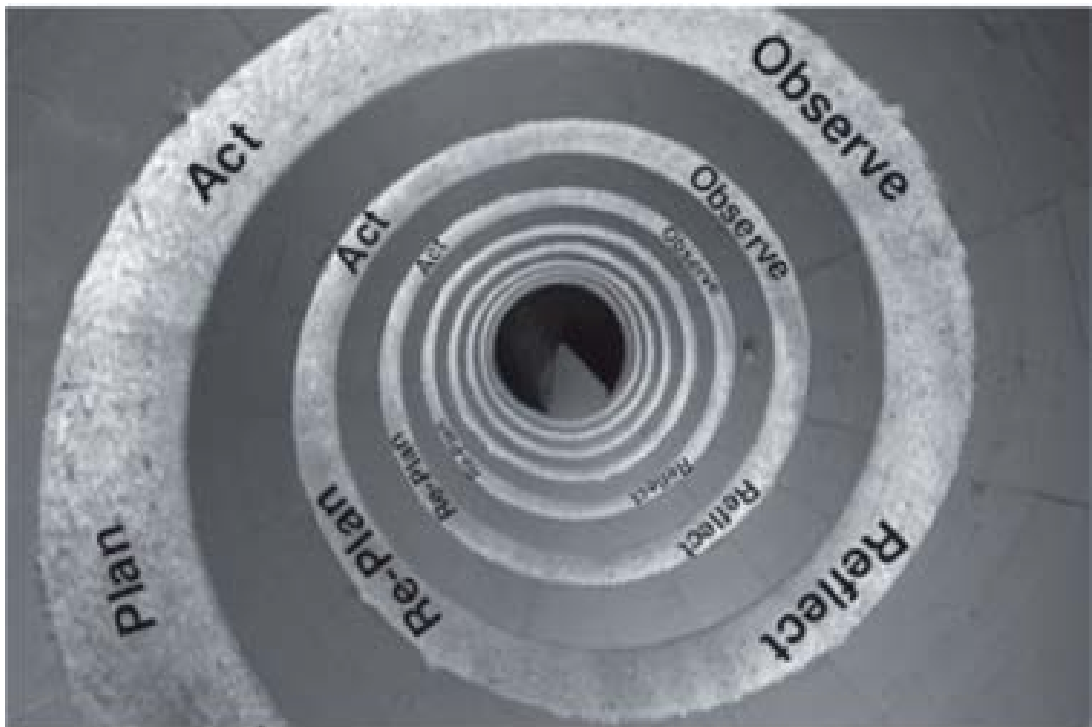


Figure 2: The action research spiral

They suggest success is measured not by how closely participants follow the steps but rather by how strongly and authentically they feel that their practices, understandings of their practices, and the contexts in which they practice have evolved. Co-participants in the process should carry out each of the steps in the spiral of self-reflection together for it to be most effective.

Even if it may take lots of time and effort, there is increasing evidence that language instructors around the world greatly like conducting AR, especially when they can discuss common problems with other colleagues (Burns,1999).

## **2. Peer coaching**

Robbins (Cited in Richards and Farrell, 2005, p.143) defines the concept as follows: “A confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices, expand, refine, and build new skills, share ideas; teach one another; conduct classroom research; or solve problems in the workplace.”

During a peer coaching session, two teachers work together to help one or both of them make improvements to their teaching. In peer coaching, a teacher and a colleague arrange a number of occasions to discuss the instructor's teaching in detail. One of them becomes the role of “critical friend” as a coach to give constructive feedback in one aspect of teaching. The coach gives the other teacher feedback and suggestions both during and after the procedure. The feedback is given according to objectives set beforehand together. But still, each teacher retains primary responsibility for their own professional growth and does not hand over this responsibility to a colleague (Richards and Farrell, 2005). Teachers can assess their language use, planning, and assessment processes through this procedure, and they can also implement new methods in the classroom. According to Thorn et al. (2007, p.4), peer coaching has a variety of advantages:

- Personal development plan
- Reduce isolation among leaders
- Establish collaborative norms
- Build a shared knowledge base
- Enable leaders to give and receive ideas
- Share successful practices
- Transfer training to the workplace
- Encourage reflective practice
- More cohesive organizational culture
- Accelerate leadership development

### **3. Peer observation**

Peer observation is different than the traditional classroom observation in which a coordinator or outsider visiting a classroom to conduct a supervisory or evaluative observation as a part of the performance review process. Because observation is generally associated with evaluation, people frequently perceive it as a threatening or unpleasant experience. During sessions, group members alternately observe each other's instruction and discuss their findings. The information gathered from the observations can be discussed in light of the collected data and beliefs (e.g., by recording it on audio or video) (Richards and Farrell, 2005).

### **4. Workshops**

A workshop is a concentrated, brief learning activity created to give participants the chance to learn particular knowledge and skills. Participants at a workshop should gain knowledge they can use in the classroom and practical experience with the subject matter, such as developing methods for observing classes or carrying out action research. (Richards and Farrell, 2005: 23). However, its effectiveness is arguable. It is generally held in one day or one session and it includes 'sit and get' sessions. As Giraldo (2014) states in professional development programs, theory and practice are mutually reinforcing, which can benefit teachers and their practice. These courses ought to provide instructors with the tools they need to interpret, evaluate, and effectively apply theory in the context of the classroom. Therefore, for a workshop to be effective, the need analysis should be done beforehand, and the process should support the teachers in terms of theory and practice. A well-planned workshop that takes into account the needs of the participants can be very beneficial and have a long-lasting positive impact on in classrooms.

### **5. Self-Monitoring**

An awareness of the teacher's current knowledge, abilities, and attitudes, as well as the utilization of this information as a foundation for self-evaluation, serves as a beginning point for teacher professional development. For this reason, self-monitoring or self-observation refers to actions in which data regarding one's teaching is recorded or documented in order to analyze or evaluate instruction (Richards and Farrell, 2005). It can be utilized for understanding the gap between the

starting and the desired point in any aspect of teaching.

## **6. Teaching Journal**

Usually in the form of a notebook, book, or electronic format, a teaching journal is a continuous written account of observations, reflections, and other thoughts about teaching that can be used as a basis for debate, reflection, or evaluation (Richards and Farrell, 2005). It is possible to utilize the notebook to keep track of incidents, issues, and revelations that occurred during lessons. It can be a report from a lesson the teacher wants to review or go back to or it can be a resource for knowledge that is shared and discussed with other colleagues. Keeping a journal may serve as a guide for identifying a teaching environment's strengths and weaknesses, helping one to better comprehend the issues that students may eventually confront in class and attempt to find solutions.

### **D. Limitations to the Implementation of Professional Development**

There is general agreement that high-quality professional development is essential for high-quality education in classrooms. It is for teachers, students and the institutions as well. But several obstacles or limitations prevent its implementation. Although finding the obstacles and constraints to efficient professional development is a significant first step in creating improved educational policy, it is not an easy process due to the complexity of professional development. The factors that contribute to a professional development effectiveness in meeting the objectives may not apply at all to a different setting, level, institution, or person. So, it is to be expected that when individuals and other actors are asked to identify the factors that restrict and/or impede their professional development, they would give varying answers.

Given that teachers are crucial to the success of standards-based reform, professional development should offer the materials and opportunities required to promote teacher learning and practice modifications. One of the major challenges is cost. More funding should be allocated to teachers' professional development for desired outcomes for the stakeholders (Adamy and Heinecke, 2005).

Besides funding, another issue with participating in professional development is a lack of time. Teachers require time to learn new practices, skills, and content



knowledge, to apply them to their teaching, to experiment with the new knowledge and skills, and to reflect on them. As Desimone (2011) suggests mentoring, reflecting on lessons, group discussions on student work, a book club, a teacher network, or a study group are all examples of embedded professional development that is closely related to the activity of teaching which require more spare time out of teaching. Additionally, Garet et al. (2001) states duration of the professional development (PD) activity is related to its depth. Whether the activity is extended is one of the factors for the efficiency of professional development activity Guskey (2003).

Experience in teaching is regarded as one of the significant factors for mentoring. However, most of the experienced teachers got their in-service training during a period when teaching did not frequently entail many of the abilities required to perform well in reforming schools according to Bull, Buechler, Didley, and Krehbiel (cited in Abdal-Haqq, 1995). For Türkiye, this may be especially true in public schools. Teachers may resist changing their way of teaching in the classroom.

In addition to lack of motivation among experienced and aged teachers, lack of inner motivation is another commonly mentioned barrier to professional development. Mandatory procedures have been found to produce less successful outcomes for teachers, administrators, trainers, and students. Many professional development (PD) activities requires self-autonomy to get the starting point and self-monitoring to reflect on classroom practices, so inner motivation plays a key role for ongoing professional development.

To sum up, Professional development cannot be achieved in a single, ideal way, and depending on the educational setting, different challenges may exist. There are many researches regarding these factors.

#### **E. Studies Relevant to Professional Development of English Teachers**

As the relevant literature indicates that professional development is integral part of high-quality education in terms of many aspects: optimizing teacher's potential, teacher's professional enhancement, improvements in students' learning, institutional progress, learning communities.

*Enhancement in teacher's potential:* The fundamental objective of professional development (PD) activities is to help instructors examine, renew, and

progress their abilities, knowledge, perspectives, and attitudes in order to better their personal and professional lives as well as their teaching practice (Abdal-Haqq, 1995; Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995; Dunne, 2002; Richards and Farrell, 2005). There are various hindering factors of implementing it. However, Desimone (2011) suggests by self-reflection or observation, teachers' classrooms can provide some of the most potential learning opportunities. Teachers became aware of their teaching practices (Giraldo, 2014). In his study, one of the positive results is teachers became aware of issues in instruction such as grammar teaching and student motivation.

*Improvements in students' learning:* Literature also offers encouraging data on better student results as a result of better instruction and subject knowledge of the instructors, in addition to the link between professional development chances provided to teachers and increased teacher efficacy and power (Birman et al. 2000; Guskey 1999). In their study, Lee and Smith (1996) states schools with teachers who collaborate as a professional community boost student learning. When taken as a whole, schools' connections and attitudes have a significant impact on students' academic performance. Notwithstanding the fact that attitudes may alter education, their findings also indicate that they directly impact students. According to their research, trying to alter the way teachers operate in classrooms may have an impact on how children learn. Day (1999) noted that in-service training as a strong resource for teachers' development, it may have significant influence on instructors' practices and ways of thinking, which, in turn, indirectly affects the standards of students' classroom experiences. Furthermore; Newmann, King and Youngs (2000) suggest that professional development (PD) activities should focus on five facets of school capacity in order to increase student achievement across the board: mentorship; professional community; coherent activities; technical sources; and teachers' content knowledge and attitudes. However, there is little direct evidence regarding how these traits link to beneficial outcomes students, despite lists of these traits frequently appearing in the literature on effective professional development (Garet et al, 2001; Louis and Marks, 1998).

*Learning communities:* As Palmer (2017) emphasizes peer-discussion among teachers by stating that any craft will develop as long as its practitioners cooperate and have open discussions. In his book, "The courage to teach" he states "We grow by trial and error, to be sure – but our willingness to try, and fail, as individuals are

severely limited when we are not supported by a community that encourages such risks.”, which highlights the significance of discussing the challenging aspects of teaching and how these challenges might be reframed and reproached through education. These features are essential to create communities of practice. Teachers and teacher mentors who are independently involved in a group and collaborative working environment to support each other through shared planning, giving opportunities for peer observation and peer criticism, make up professional learning communities (Easton, 2011). Collaborative participation of both teachers and experts is crucial for professional development (PD) activities themselves, as it enables them to acquire more experience and content knowledge by consulting and discussing about PD implementation (Newmann, King and Youngs, 2000; Desimone, 2011). Individual teaching capacity can be optimized in a planned collaborative endeavor. This collective enterprise highlights the value of social resources—also known as the school's professional community (Newmann, King and Youngs, 2000). According to the results of their study Newmann et al. (2000, p.280) suggest professional development was employed far more extensively in some schools than others to address capacity.

*Institutional progress:* Teachers’ perceptions of professional development (PD) activities can be associated with the improvement and the effectiveness of the school in a direct or indirect way (Desimone, 2009). Educational institutions can enhance their own quality by putting in place professional development policies and planning PD activities, which in turn will improve student performance and results by either directly or indirectly encouraging recruitment and retention (Pitsoe and Maila, 2012; Richards and Farrell, 2005).

There are four main parties of professional development activities. With a wholistic perspective, enhancement in one of them effects the others directly or indirectly. Professional development should go beyond the improvement of individuals to the improvement of other organizational resources, even though individual teacher learning of subject matter, methodology, and expectations remains essential (Newmann et al. 2000).

## **F. Studies Relevant to Professional Development of English Teachers in Türkiye**

In Türkiye, students start their language learning process roughly in primary school. They get almost 10 years of language education. However, students or graduates of university attempts to learn English through language courses. It may be improved by giving significance on professional development activities and their perceptions towards them.

Karaaslan (2003) examines teachers' attitudes about professional development (PD), their opinions of key professional development activities, and the things that prevent instructors from changing and developing with 110 English language teachers at Başkent University. The analysis of the survey indicated that they knew the significance of PD activities for their advancement. The other activities were preferred more than peer observation and action research. Also, it was revealed that the teachers did not utilize the activities despite importance they gave to. Moreover, female teachers, instructors without a lot of experience and young teachers appeared to give specific professional development activities more importance and use them more than the other teachers. Hindering factors for professional development activities mattered for all of them. Excessive workload, a lack of self-motivation, and a lack of institutional support were cited as the three main barriers.

Türüdü and Selin (2020) investigate teacher interaction in a professional development program by investigating the motivations for instructors to enroll in the program and the benefits that they believed the program provides. The study was conducted with 14 teachers at a private university in Turkey. The finding of the study indicated that their main motivations were to be part of learning community, to reflect on their experience in the classroom, to learn continuously. Furthermore, other reasons were about the design of the research, the characteristics of the group-teachers and professionals. As for the contributions of the program, the group environment was beneficial for the participants since they had chance to interact with teachers, they may have common challenges.

Özdemir (2013) examines the individual professional development experiences of 507 elementary and secondary teachers Kırıkkale. The study's

findings indicated that the most popular activities teachers engaged in were searching the internet for the most recent developments relevant to their fields or education and make use of these into their lessons, participating in online forums for educators or teachers to share opinions, documents, or activities for professional development, and visiting another school (in or outside of the city) to learn from their experience and reflect on their own teaching.

Eroglu and Özbek (2023) have just conducted casual-comparative study to investigate the professional development (PD) participation of teachers in relation to gender, marital status, age, and subject matter with 542 teachers in high schools in Tukey. The data analysis revealed that teachers' participation in PD is low and the opportunities for them are restricted. Furthermore, regarding to gender, marital status, seniority, and branch, teachers' engagement in PD events varies significantly. Age factor effects the participation level. There is an inverse proportion; participation in professional development activities declines as teachers' age rises.

It was suggested that to ensure the professional development of inexperienced instructors, coaching and mentoring should be utilized. According to authors, professional development opportunities, time, financial support, and individualized professional development programs are required in order for instructors to engage in PD activities.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

This section starts with the design of the study, provides information about descriptions of setting and participants respectively. Then data collection, data analysis procedures are explained with details.

#### **A. Research Design**

The study aimed to find out EFL instructors' opinions and attitudes towards professional development activities. Another purpose of this study was to find out current limitations for the instructors to take part in these activities. In this regard, the following questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are English language teachers' attitudes toward professional development?
2. What major professional development activities do English language teachers perceive as critical to their development?
3. What factors hinder English language instructors' professional development?

A mixed-method research design was utilized to conduct this study. Utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research techniques in one study is known as mixed-methods research. Those who conduct such research contend that using both approaches together provides a more complete understanding of research issues than does using either strategy alone (Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun, 2012). It is critical to comprehend how these two methodologies fit into a mixed-method research as in this study.

Quantitative research where the goal is to understand phenomena through the collecting and analysis of precisely planned and controlled data mainly numerically. As opposed to that, qualitative research where the researcher tries to understand complex naturally occurring phenomena largely explained with open-ended data (Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun, 2012). In this research, quantitative data was collected

with a questionnaire to find out teachers' opinions of professional development opportunities, activities they participated in, and comments regarding barriers to professional development.

The qualitative data was collected with open-ended follow-up questions to get their further comments and suggestions.

## **B. Setting and Participants**

This study, which involved 50 participants, was carried out in the context of Turkish education in the second term of the 2022–2023 academic year. The participants involved English language teachers from state universities and foundation universities. They were selected through convenience sampling. As in Dornyei's (2007) definition convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling method. It involves selecting individuals from the target population based on practical considerations, such as their easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a specific time, or their willingness to participate. The questionnaire was sent online with google forms via e-mail and WhatsApp.

Table 1: The Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

FLCAS Items	F	%
Gender		
Female	43	86
Male	7	14
Age		
25-30 years	28	56
31-35 years	9	18
36-40 years	4	8
41-50 years	6	12
More than 50 years	3	6
Years of experience		
0-5 years	20	40
6-10 years	16	32
11-15 years	8	16
16-20 years	4	8
21-30 years	2	4
Working years at institution		
Less than 1 year	7	14
1-5 years	28	56,0
6-10 years	12	24,0

Table 1: (con) The Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

FLCAS Items	F	%
More than 10 years	3	6,0
Undergraduate area of study		
English Language Teaching	32	64,0
English Language and Literature	10	20,0
American Language and Literature	6	12,0
Translation and Interpretation	1	2,0
TV Production	1	2,0
Highest Completed Degree		
BA/ BS Degree	29	58,0
MA/ MSc Degree	19	38,0
PHD	2	4,0
Completed Degree Field		
ELT	35	70,0
English Language and Literature	6	12,0
American Language and Literature	2	4,0
Translation and Interpretation	1	2,0
Other than these fields	6	12,0
Hours of workload		
12-20 hours	32	64,0
21-30 hours	13	26,0
More than 30 hours	5	10,0
Future plans in ELT or education field		
Yes	34	68,0
No	16	32,0

f= frequency % = percentage

The demographic information of the participant was shown in Table 1. The participants in the study were predominantly female, making up 86% of the sample, with males accounting for 14%. Regarding age, the majority fell within the 25-30 years category (56%), followed by 31-35 years (18%), and the rest distributed across older age groups. Regarding years of experience, 40% had 0-5 years, 32% had 6-10 years, and 28% had more than 10 years. Most participants worked at their institution for 1-5 years (56%). Their undergraduate study area varied, with English Language Teaching being the most common (64%). The majority held a BA/BS degree (58%), and most completed their degree in ELT (70%). A significant portion had a workload of 12-20 hours (64%). Their plans in the ELT or education field were positive, with 68% indicating they had such plans.



### **C. Data Collection Instrument**

In this study, the data was collected through a questionnaire by Karaaslan (2003) to find out EFL instructors' opinions and attitudes towards professional development activities and their views on the factors that they think hinder their professional development (Appendix A).

The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions, which was useful for deeper understanding of topic. The questionnaire consisted of four sections, and the questionnaire items in each section aimed to find out the answers to each research question of the current study. The first section included ten items to find out personal background of the participants; age, gender, teaching experience, years of teaching in their current institution, undergraduate area, last degree and field of education, current degree of education, workload, level of teaching and their opinions about their plans about professional development.

The second section consisted of eleven items to elicit about the teachers' attitudes towards their own professional development (PD). The participants were expected to rate the items on scales ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). The items were about variety of professional development such as self-initiation for PD (items 1-2-3-4), interaction with others (items 5-6), willingness (item 7), self-evaluation (item 8) and meeting the demand of current changes (items 10 and 11).

In the third section, the participants were asked what major professional development activities English language teachers see as significant to their development and to what extent they utilize the opportunities and to what degree they make use of these opportunities.

Therefore, the questions were asked in two parts. First, teachers were asked to indicate how important the activities were and secondly, they were asked to comment on how often they make use of these activities on two five-point Likert-type scales. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 measured teachers' attitudes and use of collaborative activities, while items 6, 7, 8, and 9 measured activities on research, reflection and practice. Professional development through outside resources and opportunities were measured through items 10, 11, and 12. Item 13 was about observation by superiors and the last item referred to training other teachers.

The items in the last section of the questionnaire aimed to uncover some of the constraints on teacher development. For this purpose, teachers were given items related to potential constraints and were asked to rate their importance in the questionnaire.

#### **D. Data Collection Procedures**

After getting permission from Karaaslan (2003) to conduct the survey and approval form The Institute of Graduate Programs of Istanbul Aydin University, the questionnaire was sent via Google Forms to the participants from various preparatory schools. A total of 50 questionnaires were answered during the data collection process.

#### **E. Data Analysis Procedure**

The quantitative data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed utilizing the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The percentages and frequencies of the data were calculated. The qualitative data gathered via open-ended questions were subjected to descriptive analysis.

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines preparatory schools EFL instructors' attitudes towards professional development via survey. The results related to three research questions as well as comments from the participants are presented in four sections. The first section presents the participants' perspectives about professional development as an answer to first research question. The following part deals with teachers' perspectives on the importance of professional development activities and to what extent they use them. The last part of the results is about the hindering factors to professional development activities.

### A. English Language Teachers' Attitudes Toward Professional Development

Professional development is a critical component of any teaching profession, including English Language Teaching (ELT). It plays a pivotal role in ensuring that educators stay updated with the latest pedagogical trends and continuously improve their instructional practices. English language teachers' attitudes towards professional development are a crucial determinant of the effectiveness of these programs.

Table 2: Degree of Agreement About English Language Teachers' Attitudes Towards Professional Development

FLCAS Items	SD		D		N		SA		A	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Teachers should improve their professional skills and knowledge without too much dependence on the institution they work for.	4	8,0	6	12,0	6	12,0	15	30,0	19	38,0
Teachers should take the initiative and action for their own professional development.	5	10,0	2	4,0	0	0,0	13	26,0	30	60,0
A teacher should be free to test any idea or a new technique in teaching.	4	8,0	3	6,0	10	20,0	15	30,0	18	36,0
Teachers should be involved in the evaluation of their teaching skills and knowledge.	5	10,0	1	2,0	3	6,0	18	36,0	23	46,0

Table 2: (con) Degree of Agreement About English Language Teachers' Attitudes Towards Professional Development

FLCAS Items	SD		D		N		SA		A	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Teachers should help each other evaluate teaching to identify problems, strengths, and weaknesses.	5	10,0	2	4,0	5	10,0	13	26,0	25	50,0
Teachers should help each other produce solutions to solve problems.	5	10,0	1	2,0	1	2,0	11	22,0	32	64,0
Willingness is an important factor in successful professional development.	6	12,0	0	0,0	1	2,0	8	16,0	35	70,0
Teachers should be open to new ideas and changes.	6	12,0	0	0,0	1	2,0	11	22,0	32	64,0
Teachers should reflect (consider and evaluate) upon their own practices to improve professionally.	5	10,0	2	4,0	2	4,0	10	20,0	31	62,0
Peer observation should be used to gather information about teacher performance.	7	14,0	3	6,0	11	22,0	15	30,0	14	28,0
Teachers should try to keep themselves up to date with changes and improvements in ELT.	6	12,0	0	0,0	4	8,0	7	14,0	33	66,0

SD= Strongly Disagree D= Disagree N= Neither agree nor disagree  
 SA=Strongly Agree A= Agree f= frequency %= percentage.

Table 2 presents the degree of agreement among English language teachers regarding various aspects of professional development. The data is expressed in percentages, indicating the level of agreement with each statement, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." This analysis aims to provide insights into the attitudes and priorities of English language teachers concerning their professional growth and development.

The data indicates that a majority of English language teachers (68%) agree or strongly agree that they should improve their professional skills and knowledge without excessive dependence on the institution they work for. This finding highlights a proactive approach to self-improvement. It suggests that the teachers value personal agency in their professional development, indicating that while institutions play a crucial role, teachers are also keen to take the lead in enhancing their skills.

The second statement about taking initiative in the table reveals that majority (86%) of teachers agree or strongly agree that they should take the initiative and

action for their own professional development. Therefore, the majority of the teachers agree on the importance of self-driven development. This highlights the idea that teachers are not merely passive receivers of professional development opportunities but are actively searching ways to enhance their knowledge and experience. In addition to this, for willingness in professional development, a significant proportion (88%) agrees that willingness is a vital factor in successful professional development, recognizing the role of motivation in growth. It suggests that teachers acknowledge the role of motivation and personal drive in their growth.

In terms of freedom to test new ideas and techniques, approximately two-thirds of the teachers (66%) agree or strongly agree that they should have the freedom. This implies a culture of innovation and a willingness to explore the newest approaches to teaching. Teachers who feel confident to experiment are more likely to adapt to the changing needs of their students and respond to emerging educational trends (Richards and Farrell, 2005).

Moreover, as for involvement in self-evaluation, a large proportion of teachers (82%) agree or strongly agree on the importance of their involvement in the evaluation of their teaching skills and knowledge. This finding implies that self-assessment and reflection are recognized as valuable tools for growth. Also, 82% of teachers agree that they should reflect upon their practices to improve professionally, emphasizing the role of self-reflection in development. This implies that the participants value personal agency in professional development.

Under the theme of change and innovation, the majority of teachers (86%) agree that they should be open to new ideas and changes, fostering adaptability and readiness to innovation. Additionally, the majority of teachers (80%) agree or strongly agree that they should keep themselves up-to-date with changes and improvements in ELT. This reveals that they support the idea of continuously evolving field. The willingness to try new teaching ideas and techniques, with the openness to change, demonstrates a dynamic approach to teaching.

Another theme that can be drawn from the data is collaboration. The data reveals that teachers are highly keen on collaboration in professional development. They widely support the idea of helping each other evaluate teaching (84%) and produce solutions to problems (86%), indicating a culture of mutual support and experience sharing. However, the finding for peer observation for teacher

performance contradicts the idea of collaboration. While 58% agree or strongly agree, a substantial percentage (36%) are uncertain about using peer observation to gather information about teacher performance. This may suggest a need for more awareness and training in this area.

These findings suggest that English language teachers show a positive attitude towards professional development, with a strong emphasis on self-initiative, collaboration, and adaptability to evolving needs and teaching environment. However, there are opportunities for improvement in areas such as peer observation and staying up-to-date with changes in ELT. These findings can be benefited for enhancing professional development programs and fostering a culture of ongoing improvement in English language teaching.

## **B. Major Professional Development Activities Do English Language Teachers Perceive as Critical to Their Development**

Professional development is a cornerstone in the career of teachers, shaping teaching methodologies, enhancing skills, and fostering a continuous commitment to improvement. This part examines the level of importance that English language teachers assign to various professional development activities. The data in Table 3 is expressed into percentages and frequencies ranging from "Not Important at All" to "Very Important." This analysis aims to indicate the significance teachers attribute to different activities, providing valuable insights into their preferences and priorities for professional growth.

Table 3: Level of Importance English Language Teachers Give to Major Professional Development Activities

FLCAS Items	Not Important at All		Of Little Importance		Somewhat Important		Important		Very Important	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Sharing experiences and problems with colleagues	0	0,0	3	6,0	2	4,0	17	34,0	28	56,0
Asking for professional help from colleagues	0	0,0	2	4,0	3	6,0	18	36,0	27	54,0
Working on developing new materials with colleagues	0	0,0	1	2,0	7	14,0	14	28,0	28	56,0
Working on developing techniques and activities with colleagues	0	0,0	0	0,0	6	12,0	15	30,0	26	58,0
Peer observation	1	2,0	1	2,0	14	28,0	19	38,0	15	30,0

Table 3: (con) Level of Importance English Language Teachers Give to Major Professional Development Activities

FLCAS Items	Not Important at All		Of Little Importance		Somewhat Important		Important		Very Important	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Observation of classroom events by heads, administrators	1	2,0	7	14,0	18	36,0	15	30,0	8	16,0
Teacher initiated classroom investigation (action research)	2	4,0	2	4,0	8	16,0	12	24,0	26	52,0
In-service training (workshops, seminars, etc.)	0	0,0	2	4,0	6	12,0	15	30,0	27	54,0
Trying out new ideas or suggestions in practice	0	0,0	0	0,0	3	6,0	15	30,0	32	64,0
Gathering information about one's own teaching performance (surveys, interviews, etc.)	0	0,0	1	2,0	5	10,0	14	28,0	30	60,0
Reflection on own teaching	0	0,0	0	0,0	1	2,0	13	26,0	36	72,0
Following research literature on own field	1	2,0	1	2,0	4	8,0	21	42,0	23	46,0
Training other teachers	1	2,0	2	4,0	8	16,0	22	44,0	17	34,0
Following professional development programs	1	2,0	0	0,0	7	14,0	14	28,0	28	56,0

f= frequency %= percentage.

An emphasis on collaboration emerges from the data. Activities such as sharing experiences, seeking professional help, and working collaboratively on materials and techniques are generally regarded as important or very important by a significant majority of teachers. A majority of teachers (90%) find sharing experiences and problems with colleagues important or very important. This indicates a strong emphasis on collaborative learning and the value on collective mind in addressing challenges. Similar to sharing experiences, seeking professional help from colleagues is seen important or very important by 90% of teachers. This highlights a culture of mutual support and seeking advice from peers. Additionally, collaborative material development is considered significant by 84% of teachers, showing a preference for teamwork in creating effective teaching resources (Little, 1993). A significant majority (88%) of teachers assign importance to working with colleagues on developing teaching techniques and activities. These findings emphasize a collaboration among the participants.

However, it's noteworthy that a small percentage of teachers expressed uncertainty about the importance of sharing experiences (6%) and asking for professional help from colleagues (4%), working collaboratively on materials (2%). This uncertainty may indicate a need for clarification on the benefits of collaborative

practices.

Reflective practices, emerging as another theme, both individually and collaboratively, are highly esteemed by English language teachers. Almost all teachers prioritize reflection on their teaching, indicating a connection between self-awareness and professional growth. Most teachers (98%) consider reflecting on their teaching very important or important, underlining the significance of self-reflection in the professional development process. Only 2% of teachers are not sure about the importance of self-reflection. Similarly, 88% percent of teachers acknowledge the importance of gathering information about their teaching performance, again indicating a commitment to self-reflection and improvement. Nevertheless, the uncertainty around the importance gathering information about one's teaching suggests a need for further exploration into the factors contributing to this uncertainty.

Another theme from the analysis is observation. While peer observation is recognized as important by a significant portion of teachers (68%), observations by heads and administrators receive a more mixed response; 46% percentage of the teachers consider it important or very important. 54% of teachers are not sure about the importance of it. This may be because the teachers may feel under pressure while being observed by the administrators of their institutions. This finding may suggest varying perceptions of the purpose and impact of administrative observations on professional development.

In addition to observation, openness to innovation emerges as a theme from the data. English language teachers show a strong preference for innovation and experimentation. Trying out new ideas or suggestions in practice is overwhelmingly considered important or very important by teachers (94%) indicating a willingness to adapt and explore new approaches in the classroom.

Moreover, most teachers (76%) consider teacher-initiated classroom investigation, commonly known as action research, important or very important. This reflects a commitment to self-initiated teaching practices. However, 24% of teachers remain uncertain. This may be driven by an unwillingness not to take additional burden. A majority of teachers (84%) value in-service training opportunities, underlining the importance of organized workshops and seminars for professional development, still 16% of teachers remain uncertain.



Keeping updated is another theme considered to be essential by teachers. The majority of teachers (84%) consider following professional development programs important or very important, emphasizing the role of structured programs in their ongoing learning while 16% of teachers are sure about it. Following research literature is seen as important or very important by 88% of teachers. This also reflects an awareness of the importance of staying informed about advancements in the field. A small percentage of teachers expressed uncertainty about the importance of following professional development programs (14%) and Following research literature (12%).

As a result, the findings from Table 3 provide an overview of the level of importance English language teachers attribute to various professional development activities. The results underline the diverse preferences and priorities among teachers indicating the professional development activities that are generally valued, but they exhibit variability in significance.

### C. What Extent Teachers Make Use of Major Professional Development Activities

This analysis of Table 4 presents the levels of engagement of teachers in major professional development activities. The data provides insights into the extent to which teachers participate in collaborative and individual initiatives aimed at improving their teaching skills and practices.

Table 4: Level of Making Use of Major Professional Development Activities

FLCAS Items	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Sharing experiences and problems with colleagues	0	0,0	2	4,0	8	16,0	24	48,0	16	32,0
Asking for professional help from colleagues	1	2,0	4	8,0	13	26,0	23	46,0	9	18,0
Working on developing new materials with colleagues	0	0,0	5	10,0	11	22,0	19	38,0	15	30,0
Working on developing techniques and activities with colleagues	1	2,0	5	10,0	9	18,0	19	38,0	16	32,0
Peer observation	3	6,0	14	28,0	18	36,0	14	28,0	1	2,0
Observation of classroom events by heads, administrators	4	8,0	12	24,0	21	42,0	9	18,0	4	8,0
Teacher initiated classroom investigation (action research)	10	20,0	9	18,0	12	24,0	16	32,0	3	6,0

Table 4: (con) Level of Making Use of Major Professional Development Activities

FLCAS Items	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
In-service training (workshops, seminars, etc.)	3	6,0	8	16,0	13	26,0	18	36,0	8	16,0
Trying out new ideas or suggestions in practice	1	2,0	1	2,0	5	10,0	28	56,0	15	30,0
Gathering information about one's own teaching performance (surveys, interviews, etc.)	3	6,0	7	14,0	12	24,0	17	34,0	11	22,0
Reflection on own teaching	0	0,0	0	0,0	8	16,0	28	56,0	14	28,0
Following research literature on own field	1	2,0	5	10,0	18	36,0	15	30,0	11	22,0
Training other teachers	14	28,0	11	22,0	9	18,0	12	24,0	4	8,0
Following professional development programs	1	2,0	6	12,0	13	26,0	18	36,0	12	24,0

f= frequency %= percentage.

As for teachers' engagement for collaborative activities, a considerable majority engages in collaborative sharing, with 48% often, 32% always, 16% sometimes and a combined 4% doing so rarely or never. This collaborative culture reflects a strong emphasis on peer-to-peer learning and support networks within the teaching community. Moreover, teachers show willingness to ask for assistance, with 46% often, 18% always, 26% sometimes and a combined 10% rarely or never asking for professional help. While the majority seeks support, there are minority of teachers who are less inclined to do so. Similarly, collaborative material development is prevalent, with 38% often, 30% always, 22% sometimes and a combined 32% rarely or never engaging in this activity. While a significant portion collaborates, addressing those who rarely or never participate may enhance overall collaborative activities and initiatives. For developing techniques and activities, teachers frequently collaborate with 38% often, 32% always, 18% sometimes and a combined 12% rarely or never participating. Moreover, a significant number of teachers (8% always, 28% often, 22% sometimes) engage in training other teachers, while a combined 42% rarely or never participate. Encouraging more teachers to share their expertise through training initiatives could contribute to a more collaborative teaching community. Cooperative effort reflects a commitment to find and improve instructional methods collectively, though efforts may be made to engage those who participate less frequently.

Under the themes of observation and investigation: peer observation is common but varies, with 36% sometimes, 28% rarely, and a combined 36% often or

always participating. Encouraging a more consistent culture of peer observation may further enrich professional development opportunities for teachers. Classroom observation by heads and administrators is diverse, with 42% sometimes, 24% often, and a combined 34% rarely or never participating. Exploring ways to standardize and structure classroom observation could contribute to more consistent professional development.

As for teacher-initiated classroom investigation (action research), a considerable number of teachers make use of action research with 6% always, 32% often, 24% sometimes, and a combined 44% rarely or never engaging in action research. This may be increased by further engagement with the conference or other informative tools. As action research is a valuable tool for teacher professional development as it encourages teachers to systematically reflect on their teaching, see the gaps, and implement intended changes. Additionally, teachers engage in self-reflection, 22% always, with 34% sometimes, 24% often, and a combined 20% rarely or never gathering information about their own teaching performance. However, with A substantial majority of teachers 28% always, 56% often and 26% sometimes reflects on their own teaching practices, indicating a strong commitment to personal and professional growth. Regular self-reflection is a cornerstone of effective teaching. Encouraging more teachers to actively engage in self-reflection may enhance overall professional growth.

Moreover, teachers actively participate in in-service training, with 36% often, 16% always, and 26% sometimes; a combined 22 % rarely or never attending workshops and seminars. Addressing barriers for those who rarely or never participate may improve overall engagement in structured training programs.

As for following professional development programs, a significant proportion of teachers follows professional development programs, with 24% always, 36% often, 26% sometimes and a combined 14% rarely or never participating. Strategies to increase participation among those who rarely or never engage could contribute to more widespread involvement in structured professional development. Teachers actively stay informed about their field, with 22% always 36% sometimes, 30% often, and a combined 12% rarely or never following research literature. Efforts to promote the importance of staying current with educational research may increase overall engagement.

In addition to these items, for trying out new ideas or suggestions in practiced he majority of teachers (56% often, 30% always, 10% sometimes) embraces innovation, while a combined 4% rarely or never try out new ideas or suggestions. This attitude may contribute to the evolution of effective teaching methodologies.

The analysis of professional development activities among teachers reveals both positive engagement and areas for improvement. Addressing the varying levels of utilization, particularly among those who rarely or never engage in certain activities, presents an opportunity to improve the overall professional development field and practices. Strategies to foster a positive culture of peer observation, structured professional development, and increased individual reflection may contribute to a more dynamic and continuously improving teaching profession.

#### *Comparison between Perceived Importance and Actual Utilization of Major Professional Development Activities*

Professional development is a significant part of the ongoing and dynamic educational environment. While teachers' attitudes towards major development activities directly affect the overall quality of education delivered in the classroom, their actual realization of these activities matters more. This part examines the difference between the level of importance that English language teachers assign to various professional development activities and the level of their actualization of these activities. For actual utilization, the percentage of those who choose sometimes is excluded as it poses uncertainty.

As for teachers' engagement for collaborative activities, there is a moderate difference between perceived importance (90%) and actual utilization of sharing experiences and problems (80%) with colleagues indicating that while a significant portion of teachers engages in sharing experiences and problems with colleagues, there is room for improvement to align these numbers more closely. The utilization (84%) of asking for professional help from colleagues closely aligns with perceived importance (90%), suggesting a strong culture of seeking professional help from colleagues among English language teachers. However, there is a notable difference between perceived importance (84%) and actual utilization (68%) of working on developing new materials with colleagues indicating that collaborative material development is not as widely practiced as its perceived importance suggests. Similarly, the utilization (60%) is significantly lower than perceived importance

(88%) suggesting potential barriers or challenges in actively engaging in collaborative development of teaching techniques and activities. Given the positive perception of collaborative activities, institutions may focus on providing additional support, resources, and structured platforms to encourage more active participation in activities such as sharing experiences, developing materials, and working on techniques with colleagues.

Under the themes of observation and investigation: there is a substantial difference between perceived importance (68%) and actual utilization (30%) of peer observation, indicating that despite recognizing the importance of peer observation, it is not widely practiced among English language teachers. Similarly, there is a substantial difference between perceived importance (66%) and actual utilization (26%) of observation of classroom events by heads, administrators, indicating that despite recognizing the importance of peer observation, it is not widely practiced among English language teachers. Recognizing the gap between the perceived importance of peer observation and its actual utilization, institutions may implement strategies to promote and facilitate regular peer observation practices. This may involve training programs, mentorship initiatives, and recognition of the value of peer learning.

As for teacher-initiated classroom investigation (action research), there is a notable difference between perceived importance (76%) and actual utilization (38%), indicating that teacher-initiated classroom investigation is not as widely practiced as its perceived importance suggests. As action research is perceived as important but is not widely practiced, institutions may identify and address barriers that hinder teachers from initiating classroom investigations. Moreover, there is a moderate difference between perceived importance (72%) and actual utilization (56%) of gathering information about one's own teaching performance, indicating that while a significant portion of teachers actively engages in gathering information about their teaching performance. In addition, there is a notable difference between perceived importance (98%) and actual utilization (84%) of reflection on own teaching, indicating that while a significant portion of teachers actively reflects on their own teaching, there is room for improvement to align these numbers more closely. Institutions may promote a culture of regular reflection through structured reflection frameworks, mentorship programs, and recognition of reflective practices.

Moreover, there is a notable difference between perceived importance (84%) and actual utilization (52%) of in-service training (workshops, seminars, etc.), indicating that in-service training is not as widely attended as its perceived importance suggests.

As for following professional development programs, there is a notable difference between perceived importance (84%) and actual utilization (60%), indicating that following professional development programs is not as widely practiced as its perceived importance suggests. Similarly, there is a substantial difference between perceived importance (88%) and actual utilization (52%) of following research literature on own field, indicating that following research literature on one's own field is not as widely practiced as its perceived importance suggests. While for trying out new ideas or suggestions in practice, the utilization (86%) closely aligns with perceived importance (96%), suggesting a strong commitment among teachers to try out new ideas or suggestions in practice.

In addition to these items, there is a substantial difference between perceived importance (78%) and actual utilization (32%) of training other teachers, indicating that training other teachers is not as widely practiced as its perceived importance suggests.

The analysis reveals a nuanced picture of the utilization of major professional development activities among English language teachers without too much difference. While there is a strong alignment between perceived importance and actual utilization in certain areas, there are notable gaps in others. These gaps may suggest areas for improvement and targeted interventions to enhance the effectiveness of professional development initiatives.

The analysis of Tables 3 and 4 provide valuable insights into the perceptions and practices of English language teachers regarding major professional development activities. While there is a significant alignment between perceived importance and actual utilization in certain areas, the identified gaps may offer opportunities for improvements. By addressing these gaps, educational institutions may create a more effective and tailored professional development landscape that empowers teachers to excel in their roles and contribute to the advancement of English language education in general.

## D. Barriers to Professional Development

Professional development is a critical aspect of career growth and success, playing a significant role in the continuous enhancement of skills and knowledge. Table 5 presents hindering factors for professional development, shedding light on the perceptions of individuals regarding the importance of various challenges. Understanding these factors is crucial for institutions, teachers, and professionals themselves to formulate effective strategies that address these factors. The data in Table 5 is expressed into percentages and frequencies ranging from "Not Important at All" to "Very Important."

Table 5: Barriers to Professional Development

FLCAS Items	Not Important at All		Of Little Importance		Somewhat Important		Important		Very Important	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Personal financial problems	0	0,0	1	2,0	7	14,0	15	30,0	27	54,0
Excessive workload	0	0,0	0	0,0	2	4,0	9	18,0	36	78,0
Lack of communication among colleagues.	1	2,0	4	8,0	6	12,0	15	30,0	24	48,0
Lack of collaboration among colleagues	1	2,0	3	6,0	5	10,0	17	34,0	24	48,0
Strict working hours	1	2,0	0	0,0	4	8,0	17	26,0	7	64,0
Lack of institutional support for professional development	0	0,0	1	2,0	4	8,0	15	30,0	8	60,0
Lack of self-motivation	1	2,0	2	4,0	0	0,0	12	24,0	3	70,0
Educational background	4	8,0	6	12,0	10	20,0	17	38,0	11	22,0
Difficulty in reaching literature in the field	5	10,0	5	10,0	8	16,0	22	44,0	10	20,0

f= frequency %= percentage.

A substantial of respondents (96%) consider excessive workload as an important or very important hindrance to professional development while 4% of respondents are not sure about it. This may have detrimental effects on teachers' job satisfaction. Therefore, organizations may conduct workload assessments to identify areas of improvement. The demanding nature of work can impede the time and mental energy required for pursuing professional development activities. Similarly, the strict working hours, are seen as important (64%) or very important (26%) by the respondents while a small percentage of teachers expressed uncertainty about the importance of sharing experiences (8%). This may limit flexibility for professional development activities outside of regular work hours. Organizations may explore flexible work schedules and remote work options, allowing teachers to have more

time for professional development.

The importance attributed to the lack of collaboration and communication among colleagues is similar, with 78% (30% important, 48% very important) for communication and 82% (34% important and 48% very important). However, 20% of the respondents need clarification about the importance of communication and 18% of the respondents need clarification about the importance of collaboration among colleagues. Moreover, 2% of the respondents don't consider both factors important. This draws attention to the significance of a supportive work environment. Organizations may foster a culture of open communication and collaboration, leading to a productive atmosphere for exchanging ideas and knowledge sharing.

The data suggests that 94% of respondents find a lack of self-motivation to be a very important or important hindering factor (70% very important, 24% important). In comparison, 6% of the respondents do not consider it as an important factor. This emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation in driving professional development initiatives. Strategies to enhance self-motivation may involve goal-setting workshops and personalized development plans. Awareness of a goal may encourage teachers to take ownership of their development journey. Additionally, the significance placed on educational background is attributed with 22% very important and 38% important. In comparison, 8% of the respondents don't consider this factor as important and 32% of them aren't sure about the importance of this factor. Tailored learning paths and recognition of prior learning experiences may contribute to a more equitable approach to professional development. Similarly, accessing literature is considered very important 20% and important 44% among the respondents while 26% of the are unsure about significance and 10% of them don't consider it as important hindering factor at all.

In addition to previous hindering factors, financial problems are considered very important by 54% and important by 30% of respondents, while 16% of them are not sure about its importance. This may pose a substantial barrier to accessing professional development resources. Institutions may establish financial assistance programs and partnerships with financial institutions. This may ensure that financial considerations do not hinder their pursuit of professional development. Moreover, lack of institutional support is deemed very important (60%) and important (30%) by the respondents, while 10% are unsure about its importance. This emphasizes the



need for organizations to invest in their employees' professional growth, as organizational support may affect teachers' willingness to engage in development activities. Institutions and organizations may invest in accessible databases, provide training on literature search techniques, and establish partnerships with academic institutions.

This analysis provides a detailed examination of each hindering factor, offering insights into the implications and potential strategies for overcoming these obstacles.

## **E. Comments of the Respondents**

At the end of Section 2 and Section 4, through an open-ended question, the participants were asked to provide further comments of the respondents about teachers' attitudes toward professional development, further opinions and suggestions regarding different aspects of professional development activities, and problems in professional development. This part presents an analysis of the comments, with themes indicating the crucial factors influencing teachers' engagement in continuous learning and improvement.

### **1. Comments of The Respondents on Teachers' Attitudes Toward Professional Development**

A total of 32 respondents (64%) provided their comments on teachers' attitudes toward professional development.

*Technology Integration for Enhanced Learning (4 responses):* A recurrent theme highlights the significance of integrating technology into education to encourage critical thinking skills among students. They provide suggestions for adapting teaching schedules to suit different generations through online activities emphasizing modern pedagogy's dynamic nature. One of the respondents expressed his/her opinion commenting on the importance of technology: "Instructors should follow the innovations in technology integrated education to improve student based critical thinking skills which should be supported and enhanced. Try to vary schedules of the needs of the students according to their generation via online activities."

*Institutional Support and Recognition (6 responses):* The analysis recognizes the dynamic nature of teaching and the importance of continuous professional growth. It is emphasized that teachers should be encouraged to adopt an open-minded and adaptable approach, fostering a mindset that embraces change and innovation throughout their careers. One of the respondents expressed his/her comments with a difficulty s/he faced: “Now I am more dynamic to changes but have some problems applying them due to the program I am expected to follow.”

*Continuous Professional Growth and Adaptability (7 responses):* The analysis recognizes the dynamic nature of teaching and the importance of continuous professional growth. It is emphasized that teachers should be encouraged to adopt an open-minded and adaptable approach, fostering a mindset that embraces change and innovation throughout their careers. One of the respondents expressed his/her comments with a difficulty s/he faced with: “Now I am more dynamic to changes but have some problems applying them due to the program I am expected to follow”.

*Autonomy and Voluntary Activities (8 responses):* This part addresses the balance between institutional initiatives and individual autonomy in professional development. Comments highlight the preference for teachers to have the freedom to choose their development paths, emphasizing that forced initiatives may lead to reluctance and hinder genuine growth. Some comments suggest a preference for voluntary and inclusive professional development activities. This part suggests that encouraging teachers to participate in activities of their choice fosters a more engaged and motivated teaching community. One of the respondents emphasized autonomy and the balance between institution and individual with this comment:

I think what matters the most is whether the teachers themselves want to grow in their field or not. Thus, encouraging themselves to find the right path by providing the right tools for them to discover their potential and realize their potential is at both their and the institutions' mercy. The dilemma here is that the institutions would want to invest in their visions and whatever suits their needs for the professional growth, but teachers (who are reluctant) within this system would be almost forced to grow that way. If they do not fully engage themselves along this path, they will not grow or feel empowered. Rather, it would almost feel like another workload. That's why, actions on professional

development should be planned by taking the opinions of the staff into consideration first.

*Financial Considerations and Time Constraints (3 responses):* Financial constraints are identified as potential barriers to professional development. This part discusses the need for institutes or government intervention to provide financial support or long-term contracts, emphasizing the societal impact of investing in teachers' continuous improvement. One of the respondents expressed his/her opinion with this comment:

Because it is crisis times economically, teachers might find it hard to afford their professional development. Instead of following this route, institutes should sign long term contracts and support their employees to get better or the government should support its people. Education is not an area to risk because it affects everything in the society and staff should be encouraged to be better all the time.

Additionally, time constraints as a challenge, this part suggests needs analyses should be done to tailor professional development initiatives. Volunteer groups and collaborative approaches may be proposed to overcome time-related barriers and maintain high levels of motivation among teachers.

*Peer Collaboration and Observation (4 responses):* Collaborative practices, such as peer observation and action research, emerge as valuable tools for collective professional development. This part presents the benefits of creating opportunities for teachers to collaborate, share experiences, and engage in mutual observation to enhance their teaching skills. One of the respondents commented by mentioning other impediments in teachers' lives:

As far as I gather from thoughts of my colleagues, including my own ideas, teachers are generally eager to develop themselves on the condition that they are generally happy in their lives. If they are too tired, or facing too many problems in their personal life, or if they have difficulty to find enough time to rest, they are unwilling to make an extra effort to get better in their profession. Nevertheless, they constantly share in class activities and experiences with each other during the semester.

This analysis provides valuable insights into the diverse factors influencing

teachers' attitudes toward professional development. This part presents a holistic approach, where institutions, teachers, and policymakers may collaborate to create an environment that nurtures continuous learning, innovation, and the overall professional growth of teachers.

## **2. The Suggestions and Opinions of the Respondents Regarding Various Aspects of Professional Development Activities and Problems Faced in Professional Development**

A total of 24 respondents (48%) provided their suggestions and opinions on various aspects of professional development activities and problems faced in professional development. The following analysis present the data with themes.

*Financial Constraints (6 responses):* Financial difficulties, including the cost of seminars, lack of resources, and the financial burden of pursuing advanced degrees, were frequently mentioned. Moreover, teachers expressed concerns about excessive workload and the salary, affecting their ability to engage in professional development. One of the respondents expressed his/her opinion on financial constraints as: “Personal financial problems and lack of administrator’s support really affect teachers’ self-motivation for effective teaching, and it can unfortunately affect learners’ learning process negatively.”

*Excessive Workload (5 responses):* Excessive workload, both in terms of teaching hours and administrative tasks, is seen as a significant impediment to participating in professional development activities. Also, in terms of time management, teachers struggle with time constraints, making it challenging to attend seminars or engage in additional activities. One of the respondents expressed his/her opinion on excessive workload as: “Excessive workload and academic workload make it very hard to be updated on the professional development activities such as going to a conference or reading articles on this issue.”

*Motivation and Support (5 responses):* Intrinsic motivation was highlighted as a crucial factor, with some teachers feeling demotivated if students are resistant to new teaching techniques. One of the respondents expressed his/her opinion on motivation as: “I’ve observed that also a lack of motivation might be a hindering factor in this area.” Additionally, the lack of support from administrators and colleagues is a recurring theme, impacting motivation and hindering professional

development.

*Work Environment and Pressure (4 responses):* Some teachers express a desire for a free setting for professional development, free from bosses, financial pressures, and other stressors. Also, Pressure from school heads or principals is mentioned as a demotivating factor that hinders teachers from engaging in professional development.

*Technical and Resource Challenges (2 responses):* Difficulties in accessing technical materials and a lack of resources were mentioned to hinder the ability to engage in professional development. Moreover, suggestions for online seminars and libraries for easier access to professional development resources were noted.

*Personal Factors (2 responses):* Some teachers expressed that they may avoid professional development due to feeling incompetent or lacking the required background knowledge: “Some teachers tend to keep themselves away from professional development trainings because of feeling incompetent. The level of background knowledge is slightly important for most of the trainings and this information should be conveyed by the trainers.” Also, fear of judgment for sharing ideas or going beyond the norm was mentioned as a barrier to professional growth.

In summary, these comments highlight a range of interconnected challenges, emphasizing the need for addressing financial, time-related, motivational, and support-related aspects to create a more effective environment for professional development.

## V. CONCLUSION

This research has provided a comprehensive analysis of EFL instructors' attitudes towards professional development and identified the major professional development activities they consider crucial for their growth. The study also examined the factors that hinder their professional development. Conducted within the context of Turkish education during the 2022-2023 academic year, the mixed-methods approach afforded a holistic view, combining quantitative data from questionnaires with qualitative insights from open-ended questions.

The findings reveal a strong, positive attitude among English Language Teachers toward professional development characterized by autonomy, collaborative support, reflective practice, and openness to innovation. As for autonomy, these findings suggest that English Language Teachers are committed to self-improvement and are aware of the dynamic nature of ELT. This proactive and collaborative approach to professional development may contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and adaptation in the ELT field, which is essential for meeting the changing needs of learners and the educational landscape. The results from this study and Karaaslan's study (2003) have similarities that English Language Teachers have a positive attitude towards professional development, particularly valuing autonomy, continuous learning, and collaborative practices.

Moreover, the findings emphasize the significance of reflective practice, peer collaboration, and innovation in professional development activities. The agreement is placed on reflection and the application of new ideas. This suggests they are eager to adopt novel approaches and committed to continuous development. The emphasis on sharing experiences and collaborative material development indicates that professional growth is viewed as a communal effort rather than an individual one. Moreover, they prefer peer observations rather than external observations by administrators. This may be derived from traditional observation during in-service teacher training, where the observer's primary function is to evaluate. This may suggest a preference for feedback is sought from within the peer group rather than

from an administrative perspective. This may be diluted by including a contrasting conversation approach, as Döner (1997) suggests in her study. This approach includes setting goals, selecting the observation tool from the options commenting, and interpreting the observation by the observer and observing together. As Döner suggests, this may create a more friendly and unthreatening environment.

The barriers to professional development, such as excessive workload, financial constraints, and lack of institutional support, were found to be significant impediments. These issues highlight the necessity for educational institutions to facilitate more accessible and effective professional development opportunities that accommodate the diverse needs of EFL instructors.

It may be concluded that a complicated approach is required for a more improved professional growth environment. Institutions may not only recognize and promote the importance of self-driven and continuous professional development but also actively work to remove the obstacles that instructors face. By doing so, they will foster an environment where EFL instructors can develop themselves professionally, ultimately leading to a more effective and adaptive educational landscape.

As the field of ELT continues to evolve, it is imperative that professional development programs are available and tailored to meet the changing demands of the profession as Dunne (2002) suggests that one of the principles of effective professional development is "links to the system" (p.69) meaning creating links to analyze the data of the institutions and decide the needs of the school and following needs to meet them. Therefore, one-size-fits-all can be misleading for every professional development experience. This study provides valuable insights that may inform the development of such programs, ensuring they are relevant, accessible, and beneficial to all EFL teachers seeking to advance their teaching capabilities and enhance their students' learning experiences.

#### **A. Suggestions for Further Research**

While the current study has shed light on significant aspects of professional development among English Language (EFL) instructors in Turkey, it has also indicated several directions for further research that could enrich the field. Future

research may deepen our understanding and refine professional development practices in response to the ever-changing educational landscape. First, future research may adopt a longitudinal approach to see the long-term effects of professional development activities on teaching practices. Such studies may examine whether changes are sustained over time and how they can be seen in improved student learning outcomes.

Second, as technology plays an important role in education, further studies may explore how digital platforms and resources are utilized for professional development in EFL contexts. This could include the effectiveness of online professional learning networks, webinars, and self-directed learning tools.

In addition to technology, this research highlighted several barriers to professional development, such as workload and institutional support. Future studies may explore these barriers in more detail, examining the underlying causes and proposing solutions. Studies may also investigate the impact of new policies or initiatives designed to reduce these barriers.

Moreover, another significant area for further research is the direct relation between teacher professional development and student achievement. Empirical studies that link professional development with student outcomes may be valuable for justifying the investment in teacher development for both institutions and teachers themselves.

As final suggestion for further research, the implementation of action research in teacher's curriculum can be addressed. Since, as Farrell (1998, p.4) suggests it presents practical and directly applicable knowledge for classroom problems. The similar research can be conducted for similar reflective practices.

Each of these suggested areas for further research presents potential contributions to EFL instructors' professional development knowledge. By addressing these areas, future studies can help professional development remain responsive to the changing needs of teachers, thereby enhancing the quality of EFL teaching and learning worldwide.



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## **APPENDIX**

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Appendix 2. Ethical Approval Form

## Appendix 1. Questionnaire

### SELF-INITIATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Colleague,

I am an MSc student at İstanbul Aydın University. This questionnaire is designed to better understand teachers' attitudes towards professional development activities. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for this research.

*Thank you for your cooperation*

Melahat ÇEVİK

#### Section I

##### Background Questions

1. Gender?     Female             Male
2. Your age?
3. How many years of English language teaching experience do you have?
4. How long have you been working at this institution? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Your undergraduate area of study?
  - a) Teaching English as a Foreign Language
  - b) English Language and Literature
  - c) American Language and Literature
  - d) Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
6. a. The last degree you have completed?  
 BA/ BS Degree     MA/ MSc Degree     PhD
- b. In what field? (ELT, Education, etc.) \_
7. Are you currently enrolled in a degree programme? (MA/ MSc,

PhD, etc.)

Yes (Please indicate field and degree: \_\_\_\_\_)  No

→

8. How many hours of workload a week do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Which level are you teaching in currently?

Nursery School  Primary School  Secondary School  High School

Preparatory School

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

Yes (Please indicate) \_\_\_\_\_  No



**Section II**

The items in this section are designed in order to explore English language teachers' attitudes towards their own professional development. Please read each statement and put a check mark (✓) to the column that most closely reflects your idea.

SD Strongly Disagree = 1

D Disagree = 2

U Uncertain. = 3

A Agree. = 4

	SD 1	D 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5
1. Teachers should improve their professional skills and knowledge without too much dependence on the institution they work for.					
2. Teachers should take the initiative and action for their own professional development.					
3. A teacher should be free to test any idea or a new technique in teaching.					
4. Teachers should be involved in the evaluation of their teaching skills and knowledge.					
5. Teachers should help each other evaluate teaching to identify problems, strengths, and weaknesses.					
6. Teachers should help each other produce solutions to solve problems.					
7. Willingness is an important factor in successful professional development.					

SA Strongly Agree. = 5

	SD 1	D 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5
8. Teachers should be open to new ideas and changes.					
9. Teachers should reflect (consider and evaluate) upon their own practices to improve professionally.					
10. Peer observation should be used to gather information about teacher performance.					
11. Teachers should try to keep themselves up to date with changes and improvements in ELT.					

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

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### Section III

The items in this section are designed in order to find out what major professional development activities do English language teachers perceive as critical to their development and to what degree they make use of these opportunities. Please read each statement

Teacher Development Activities	How important					How often you do it				
	Not important at all (1)	Of little importance (2)	Somewhat important (3)	Important (4)	Very important (5)	never	rarely	sometimes	often	always
1. Sharing experiences and problems with colleagues										
2. Asking for professional help from colleagues										
3. Working on developing new materials with colleagues										
4. Working on developing techniques and activities with colleagues										
5. Peer observation										

and put a check mark (✓) to the column that most closely reflects your idea.

Teacher Development Activities	How important					How often you do it				
	Not important at all (1)	Of little importance (2)	Somewhat important (3)	Important (4)	Very important (5)	never	rarely	sometimes	often	always
6. Observation of classroom events by heads, administrators										
7. Teacher initiated classroom investigation (action research)										
8. In-service training (workshops, seminars, etc.)										
9. Trying out new ideas or suggestions in practice										
10. Gathering information about one's own teaching performance (surveys, interviews, etc.)										
11. Reflection on own teaching										
12. Following research literature on										

Teacher Development Activities	How important					How often you do it				
	Not important at all (1)	Of little importance (2)	Somewhat important (3)	Important (4)	Very important (5)	never	rarely	sometimes	often	always
13. Training other teachers										
14. Following professional development programs										
15. Other activities (please indicate below and rate):										

**Section IV**

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

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

If you have any further opinions and suggestions regarding various aspects of professional development activities and problems faced in professional development, please write in below:

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## Appendix 2. Ethical Approval Form

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 02.02.2023-76374



T.C.  
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ  
Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü

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Sayın Melahat ÇEVİK

Tez çalışmanızda kullanmak üzere yapmayı talep ettiğiniz anketiniz İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Etik Komisyonu'nun 26.01.2023 tarihli ve 2023/01 sayılı kararıyla uygun bulunmuştur. Bilgilerinize rica ederim.

Dr.Öğr.Üyesi Mehmet Sencer GİRGİN  
Müdür Yardımcısı

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## **RESUME**