



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EFL TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN BENINⁱ

Katchédé Etienne Iwikotan,

Paulin T. Dohou,

Pédro Marius Egounletiⁱⁱ

Université d'Abomey-Calavi,
Benin

Abstract:

For effective and efficient teaching, EFL teachers need to update their teaching practices by keeping abreast of new developments in their field. To that effect, professional development is critical. EFL teachers can grow professionally through diverse professional development activities, including reading journals and attending seminars and workshops. This paper aims to explore EFL teachers' perceptions about professional development and determine EFL teacher professional development strategies used in the Beninese educational system. For this purpose, a questionnaire was administered to 173 teachers in state-owned secondary schools in the Ouémé region. The findings showed that the respondents were aware of the importance of professional development, but most of them were poorly informed about it. They also indicated that weekly and regional staff meetings are the major professional development activities in the region. Few respondents engaged in reading, subscribing to professional journals, or taking membership in professional organisations. The challenges hampering the participants' professional development include a heavy teaching load, inadequate materials, equipment and documents, and administrative support. Lack of training is a major concern for the respondents. The study concluded that opportunities for professional development should be provided for EFL teachers to enable them to grow professionally. Adequate materials and equipment should be provided, and the government should support teachers' professional development by investing in their pre-service and in-service training.

Keywords: training, professional development, EFL, secondary education

ⁱ DÉVELOPPEMENT PROFESSIONNEL ET PERFORMANCE DES PROFESSEURS D'ALE DANS L'ENSEIGNEMENT SECONDAIRE AU BÉNIN

ⁱⁱ Correspondence: email ekiwikotan@gmail.com, dohoupaulin1@gmail.com, pedmareg@yahoo.fr

Résumé :

Pour enseigner de manière efficace et efficiente, les professeurs d'anglais langue étrangère doivent mettre à jour leurs pratiques pédagogiques en se tenant au courant des nouvelles avancées dans leur domaine. À cet effet, le développement professionnel est indispensable. Les professeurs d'anglais langue étrangère peuvent assurer leur développement professionnel à travers diverses activités, notamment la lecture des revues et la participation à des séminaires et ateliers. Cet article vise à explorer les perceptions des enseignants d'anglais langue étrangère sur le développement professionnel et à déterminer les stratégies de développement professionnel des enseignants d'anglais langue étrangère utilisées dans le système éducatif béninois. Pour ce faire, un questionnaire a été administré à 173 enseignants des établissements publics d'enseignement secondaire du département de l'Ouémé. Les résultats ont montré que les personnes interrogées étaient conscientes de l'importance du développement professionnel, mais que la plupart d'entre elles étaient mal informées à ce sujet. Ils ont également indiqué que les animations pédagogiques hebdomadaires et zonales sont les principales activités de développement professionnel dans la région. Peu de personnes interrogées s'adonnent à la lecture, s'abonnent à des revues professionnelles ou adhèrent à des organisations professionnelles. Les défis qui entravent le développement professionnel des participants comprennent les masses horaires élevées, le manque de matériel didactique, d'équipement et de documents adéquats, ainsi que le manque de soutien administratif. Le manque de formation est une préoccupation majeure pour les personnes interrogées. L'étude conclut que des opportunités de développement professionnel devraient être offertes aux professeurs d'anglais langue étrangère pour leur permettre de mieux faire face à leurs activités pédagogiques. Des matériels et équipements adéquats devraient être fournis et le gouvernement devrait soutenir le développement professionnel des enseignants en investissant dans leur formation initiale et continue.

Mots clés : formation, développement professionnel, ALE, enseignement secondaire

1. Introduction

For many decades now, there have been rapid changes in education. Due to frequent reforms, there is a growing need for professional development for English language teachers to address the challenges in education in the 21st century. Therefore, professional development is crucial for successful teaching and learning. Unfortunately, professional development in Benin is confronted with many problems. Despite the recognition of its importance, professional development still receives little attention in Benin secondary schools. EFL teachers seem to attach little importance to it. Many of them neglect weekly professional development meetings (AP) in their schools or regional professional development meetings (APZ). The content of the professional development activities organised does not enable teachers to address their daily

problems in the classroom, such as classroom management and how to teach writing effectively. As a result, many of the EFL teachers often have the impression that they do not learn anything new, and that they do not actually benefit much from the professional development meetings. Nevertheless, given the fact that today, educational reform movements around the world are exerting pressure for better student learning (Borko, 2004), EFL teachers have to be equipped to facilitate the learning process for their learners. Both experienced and novice teachers need to be academically recharged with fresh knowledge and new insights through activities that provide them with the opportunity to reflect on their daily practice and on the link between professional development and the improvement of such practices.

Although teachers' educational administrators generally support high standards in teaching and learning, plenty of them are not prepared to adopt practices based on such standards (Cohen, 1990; Elmore, Peterson & Shojgreen-Downer, 1996; Sizer, 1992). Over the past four years, to meet the significant demand for English teaching in state-owned secondary schools in Benin, a large number of teachers of English have been recruited without any professional qualification and sent to secondary schools. Graduates and even undergraduates have become teachers overnight. They have embarked on the teaching profession without any preparation and have to teach about 28 hours of class per week. This situation is ever critical, and deserves special attention. They are not aware of teaching requirements. As Iwikotan and Dossou (2017) argued, *"teaching is a demanding job in that it requires not only subject matter knowledge but also knowledge in educational psychology and pedagogy"* (p. 121). Many novice teachers do not know how to go about teaching. They hardly master the teaching techniques, methods, and strategies to be used. They seldom have a responsive class for the mere reason that they have not received any pre-service training. They do not know anything about educational psychology and pedagogy. Today, most EFL teachers are worried about how to keep peace and order in their classes. These issues are related to classroom management, and even experienced teachers may have difficulty handling them if they do not undergo capacity-building from time to time.

Other issues that characterise EFL teachers' professional development include lack of pedagogical assistance, lack of administrative support and lack of documentation. There have been many research publications on professional development, and a number of its specific aspects have been studied. For example, Diaz Maggioli (2003) provided an overview of effective approaches to professional development, whereas Rachmajanti *et al.* (2020) concentrated on the teacher's role. This paper, on the contrary, aims to explore EFL teachers' perceptions about professional development and determine Beninese EFL teachers' professional development strategies. Therefore, it addresses the following research questions:

- What are EFL teachers' perceptions about professional development?
- How is EFL teachers' professional development organised in Benin?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teacher Training and Teacher Professional Development

2.1.1 Teacher Training

For a successful teaching/learning process, teachers need to be trained. Training is all the more important for them since they need to be acquainted with the principles and theories underlying teaching. It introduces teachers to the methodological models and techniques available and familiarises them with terms and concepts that are commonly used among language teachers (Mann, 2005). However, training is not only about teachers' introduction to those techniques, models and choices. It goes beyond that. For Richards and Farrell (2005), training involves understanding basic concepts and principles and the ability to demonstrate principles and practices in the classroom under supervision and receiving feedback. According to these authors, "*training refers to activities directly focused on a teacher's present responsibilities and typically has short-term and medium-term goals.*" (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 3). It is viewed as preparation for induction into a first teaching position or as preparation to take on a new teaching assignment or responsibility. For Stuart *et al.* (2009), it has long been considered as part of formal initial teacher education that prepares teachers for induction into the first full-time teaching position. This formal initial teacher education is also referred to as pre-service training. Pre-service education is a stage where a teacher's teaching principles and philosophy are shaped. At this stage, the trainee is prepared with knowledge and skills, including theories and practices necessary to navigate the world of teaching.

Willems (2004, as cited in Iwikotan and Dossou, 2013) contends, "*lack of theoretical grounding may lead to poor teaching*" (p. 604). In light of this, one cannot embark on the teaching profession without any pre-service training. Nevertheless, theories learnt during this stage of the career alone cannot be sufficient. The provision of skills and techniques is not sufficient to make teachers competent. Pre-service training cannot cover everything that a teacher needs to know in a rapidly and continually changing educational scene (Kennedy, 1995, as cited in Raza, 2010). There is always a need for on-the-job follow-up support through in-service courses that focus on practical training based on the realities of the classroom.

1.1.2 Teacher Professional Development

Development has traditionally been associated with in-service training much later in the teacher's career. In-service training is a stage where a teacher learns to consolidate what he or she has learnt during the pre-service training. As mentioned earlier, training courses alone cannot fully enable teachers to be dynamic and competent in their job. They cannot satisfy all the trainees' needs, nor can they solve most of the problems occurring at the trainees' home institution. Thus, the notion of development presupposes competence in basic skills and knowledge. It is a continuing process that is either fully or partly individualised, flexible, usually bottom-up and not focused on a specific job (Spratt, 1994; James, 2001). According to Richards and Farrell (2005),

“Teacher development is the process of lifelong learning in the teaching profession; it involves any activities aiming to achieve personal and professional growth for teachers” (p. 3). This implies an endless or continuous effort to grow professionally. Teacher professional development is also referred to as Continuing Professional Development.

Chinese scholar Ye (2004, as cited in Jiang, 2017, p. 5) argued, *“teachers’ professional development is teachers’ professional growth, or is the process of continuous updating, evolving and enriching of teachers’ internal structure of the profession.”* From this statement, professional development is a process which helps teachers update, evolve, and be empowered endlessly. Teachers are not the only beneficiaries of professional development. It is beneficial to others, including individuals, groups, and even institutions. In this vein, Day (1999, as cited in Jiang, 2017) stated, *“professional development encompasses all natural learning experiences and various consciously organised activities which benefit individuals, groups and schools directly or indirectly, so as to improve the quality of education”* (p. 5). Hoyle (1980) argued, *“teachers’ professional development refers to the process of mastering knowledge and skills necessary for professional practices at every stage of teachers’ career of teaching”* (p. 6). From this statement, it can be retained that professional development aims at the mastery of knowledge and skills teachers will need throughout their careers, but professional development is not only concerned with mastering knowledge and skills.

Knowledge in educational psychology and pedagogy is constantly evolving and EFL teachers need to keep abreast of new developments in their field to perform well. Professional development, in a broad sense, can be defined as *“the engagement of individuals in any activity for the enhancement of their capacity at the workplace and to gain, improve, and share a body of knowledge and skills that are relevant to perform particular duties in their workplace”* (Alemu, 2013, p. 306). Therefore, professional development aims at the enhancement and improvement of teachers’ knowledge and skills in order to perform well. Moreover, professional development is one of the most effective ways of empowering teachers. It is an element that supports teachers’ competence in catering for their students’ needs. Learners gain much from teacher professional development in that the improvement of teachers’ knowledge leads to the improvement of learners’ performance.

Apart from the improvement of teachers’ knowledge and skills, professional development helps to improve their attitudes towards their profession. Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) went further and proposed, *“teachers’ professional development refers to not only the development of specific aspects acquired through in-service teacher education or training, but also the overall process of teachers made target sense, teaching skills, ability to cooperate with colleagues, and other aspects”* (p. 6). Through this definition, the authors emphasise the collaborative aspect of teachers’ professional development. Teachers can collaborate with their colleagues to learn from them through peer observation and peer coaching. Class observations give them the opportunity to share experiences and to learn from one another in order to improve their instructional practices.

1.2 Professional Development Strategies

There are various types of professional development opportunities for teachers. According to Richards and Farrell (2005, p. 4), *“strategies for teacher development often involve documenting different kinds of teaching practices, reflective analysis of teaching practices, examining beliefs, values, and principles, conversation with peers on core issues, and collaborating with peers on classroom projects”*. Murray (2010) mentioned several teacher development activities for language teachers, such as reading journal articles, doing reflections on teaching, keeping a teaching journal, sharing journals, peer mentoring/coaching, joining teacher support groups, joining local or national, or even international teachers’ associations and participating in workshops and conferences either as a presenter or just a participant.

Drawing from Iwikotan (2017), professional development opportunities can be grouped into three categories: classroom-based opportunities, teacher collaboration opportunities, and reading and writing opportunities. Professional development activities that occur in class fall under classroom-based opportunities. Activities which require the participation of two or more teachers are classified under collaborative opportunities, and those requiring reading or writing skills fall under reading and writing opportunities.

1.2.1 Classroom-based Opportunities

Classroom opportunities include lessons or classroom observations and action research. The main type of classroom observation is peer observation. It contributes to professional development as it gives teachers the opportunity to hear comments on their instructional delivery and get new insights (Brown, 2007; Ur, 2012). However, many teachers do not like accepting their peers in their class because they feel afraid of being criticised. With regard to this, Vaciloto and Cummings (2007, as cited in Hartono, 2016, p. 20) considered a professional development program as *“a process that focuses on improvement of instruction rather than on revealing weaknesses for the purpose of punishment.”* Classroom observation as a professional development activity should aim at the improvement of teachers’ instructional practices. On the contrary, many teachers or supervisors focus only on the observed teachers’ faults or weaknesses, criticising them. Peer teaching or classroom observation should help teachers improve their instructional performance by seeing each other’s way of teaching in the classroom and discussing about the strengths and weaknesses of their teachings. In the same vein, Gebbard (2005) suggested that observation, as one kind of teaching exploration, should be conducted in a non-judgmental and non-prescriptive way. This shows that observation provides an opportunity for mutual support and an atmosphere of collegial trust, not an opportunity to find faults, criticise, and judge. Observation should provide teachers with an opportunity to feel free and to feel at ease. To avoid the embarrassment that might arise from lesson observations, Ur (2012) suggested: *“teachers could arrange mutual observation as this will enable them to create a spirit of collegiality in the workplace (through)*

sharing of best practices" (as cited in Shousha, 2015, p. 131). The authors draw attention to the importance of creating a spirit of collegiality among teachers.

Collegiality is of great importance in professional development. It allows teachers to meet regularly and discuss particular topics. It also facilitates collaboration between younger and experienced teachers. The advantage of this is the feedback that follows the lesson observation. Giving or receiving feedback contributes to teachers' professional development.

Action research is research carried out by teachers to understand and resolve a problem in their classes (Balley, 2001; Ur, 2012; Brown, 2007). For Jiang (2017), *"it is widely believed that action research is a small-scale study run by classroom teachers"* (p. 8). Generally, action research is conducted in order to find a practical solution to a problem in the classroom. As a consequence, its scope is often limited to that particular problem. Woods (1996) suggested that action research is research conducted by a professional for purposes of behaviour change. The improvement of teachers' instructional practices is possible as soon as difficulties are identified and steps are taken to solve them. For Murdich (1998), action research is the process during which teachers could, based on their own teaching focus, find problems related to their classroom teaching, examine new methods and collect data. Apart from classroom-based opportunities, teachers can also collaborate among themselves.

1.2.2 Collaborative Opportunities

Collaborative opportunities include professional organisation, peer coaching, mentorship, and staff meetings. Teachers can benefit much from professional organisations. According to Iwikotan and Dossou (2017), *"professional organisations offer diversified advantages for their members such as individual and institutional networking."* (p. 123). Most professional organisations publish journals and subscription to some of them is free after payment of membership fees. Therefore, as a member of a professional organisation, EFL teachers have the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of EFL instructional standards, programme evaluation, and the promotion of best practices (Crandall & Miller, 2014). Professional organisations are beneficial to teachers, but they can also learn and gain insights from peer coaching.

Peer coaching plays an important role in EFL teacher professional development. It enables teachers to *"assist each other in enhancing their teaching in an atmosphere of collegial trust"* (Kinsella, 1994, p. 35). As a result, peer coaching provides an opportunity for mutual support, but it works well only if teachers succeed in building trust among themselves, as in the case of classroom observations. Vaciloto and Cummings's (2007) study investigated the effectiveness of peer coaching as a mode of professional development for pre-service ESL/EFL teachers. The findings revealed that peer coaching facilitated exchanges of teaching methods and materials, fostered the development of teaching skills and made the teachers rethink their own methods and styles.

However, care should be taken regarding observations, peer observations, and peer coaching. Generally, many teachers do not like to collaborate with their colleagues within the school for classroom observations and peer coaching for fear of being criticised by their colleagues. For this reason, as mentioned earlier in the case of lesson observations, to avoid such a situation, mutual observations or coaching arrangements among teachers for the creation of a *“spirit of collegiality in the workplace(through) the sharing of best practices”* (Shousha, 2015, p.131) are very important. Alemu (2013) emphasised the importance of collegiality as a professional development activity to facilitate junior and senior faculty members to collaborate and discuss issues related to teaching and learning. Mentoring and peer coaching play an important role in teachers’ professional development by engaging in professional development activities like peer coaching. Teachers can improve their teaching practices and be open to criticism and changes from their colleagues.

Mentorship is another professional development opportunity. Mentoring is a professional development strategy which consists of *“using a critical friend or specialist to discuss teaching, gain new ideas or fine-tune practice.”* (Wilson, 2014, p. 532). According to Wilson (2014), for professional development to work well, all the peers involved should keep confidentiality about what they hear and learn from each other, especially in areas of improvement. Further, according to Iwikotan (2017), *“mentorship is a typical example of peer coaching.”* Here, the mentor’s role is to meet the mentee from time to time to discuss issues such as classroom management, grading, homework, transitions between activities, school policies and whatnot (Crandall & Miller, 2014; Ur, 2012; Brown, 2007). Ur (2012) suggested that a mentor can also observe lessons taught by the mentee and give feedback on the mentee’s instructional delivery or invite the mentee to follow some of his lessons to see pedagogy in action.

Staff meetings also provide professional development opportunities. They favour *“common planning time”* (Kraft and Papay, 2014, p. 478), enabling teachers to receive input from one another. Staff meetings can also serve as a forum for experience sharing in which teachers discuss instructional challenges and outstanding successes, and for that reason, they may be extended to teachers of other disciplines from time to time. Apart from all the professional development strategies mentioned above, reading and writing can enhance and empower teachers’ professional growth.

1.2.3 Reading and Writing Opportunities

Reading articles from journals can be a very useful activity for teacher professional development as many teacher educators or scholars share their best practices and findings of their research through articles. Teachers may learn a lot from reading articles on English Language Teaching to improve their knowledge base of teaching and to stay updated with the current developments in the field. Alemu (2013, as cited in Hartono, 2016, p. 23) argued that *“journal subscription is important and should be accessible to all teaching personnel; educational institutions may consider providing access to their teachers so that they can keep up with the field.”* Teachers can improve their teaching

practices through reading, but writing can also help them enhance and better their performance in class.

Keeping a reflective teaching journal is also a type of professional development activity. Teachers may improve their teaching performance by writing about their experiences of everyday teaching. This helps them identify the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching. According to Vaciloto and Cummings (2007), *“reflective teaching journal should include thoughts, insights during the teaching, peer observations and reflections of what occurred in the class including classroom activities and participation”* (as cited in Hartono 2016, p. 21). Teachers should keep a reflective journal by writing their teaching experiences, but they should also try to create time to read it in order to foster their teaching capacity.

Another professional development opportunity for teachers is attending conferences. Borg’s (2014) study on the impact of attending conferences shows three benefits. They include enhanced knowledge of ELT techniques, which lead to changes in practice, networking with other ELT professionals, and enhanced professional confidence and motivation. Attending conferences can motivate teachers to be confident as presenters while building their professional network in the field. Attending conferences, training, workshops, or seminars is important for the enhancement of teachers’ confidence and the improvement of their teaching skills. This will work only if teachers implement the knowledge gained from those professional development activities. Because of the variety of the forms of professional activities, teachers may choose to participate in either one or more of these individually or collectively.

In teacher education, teachers need to have a better understanding of the importance of professional development and different possibilities of professional development activities. They are also expected to learn from the professional development and implement the knowledge in their classroom decision-making.

1.3 The Need for Professional Development

The need for teacher development arises from the inadequacy of training courses, which alone cannot fully enable teachers to be dynamic and competent in their jobs. Any training course, either pre-service or in-service, long-term or short-term, can be. Training courses cannot satisfy all trainees’ needs, nor can they solve most of the problems occurring in the trainee’s home institution (Spratt, 1994).

Professional development is essential for all teachers regardless of the subject that they teach. They may need it to keep up with the current developments in ELT. Teachers need professional development to cope with daily teaching problems and the diversity of students in classrooms. Greenwell and Zingouris-Coc (2012) argued, *“teachers need effective and relevant professional development to help them meet the literacy needs of students and the content demands of their discipline”* (p. 22). Therefore, professional development should be pursued because it benefits both the teacher and the students. To that effect, Greenwell and Zingouris-Coc (2012) posited that the need for

professional development is for the sake of teacher growth and student achievement. Teachers engage in professional development for many other reasons.

Teachers participate in professional development “*to be empowered, to have the opportunity and confidence to act upon –[their] ideas as well as to influence the way [they] perform in [their] profession*” (Murray, 2010, p. 3). The quest for self-confidence and efficacy makes teachers engage in professional development. It helps teachers to enhance their teaching practices and to be competent.

1.4 Factors for Effective Professional Development

Professional development activities are organised to empower teachers. For successful professional development, hard work and commitment from both institutions and teachers are necessary; otherwise, it may be ineffective. Greenwell and Zigouris-Coc (2012) found that there is a discrepancy in the perceptions of teachers who are engaged in professional development and professional development providers. Therefore, there is a need for communication and collaboration between policymakers, researchers and practitioners. Teachers also need to realise that professional development is a need rather than an obligation. Once teachers agree to start and participate in a program, they may negotiate how the program should be run. Vaciloto and Cummings (2007) opined, “*effective peer interactions required a high level of care and personal investment in one another to be successful*” (p. 158). In light of this, the willingness of teachers to improve by helping and learning from one other, and the commitment to run the program are important factors required for effective professional development.

Furthermore, another factor to be considered is the way adults learn. With regard to this, Cooper and Boyd (1998, pp. 58-59) pointed out that “*traditional models of staff development often ignore principles of adult learning.*” Professional development is fundamentally a matter of adult education. Thus, the appropriate approach for its effectiveness is the constructivist one because previous experiences of adults should be tapped into when training them (Baker, 2016). For this reason, teachers’ involvement is recommended in the planning of professional development activities that concern them. It is also recommended to make the content of the activities relevant to the problems that they are confronted with. Teachers should also be given the opportunity to apply whatever they have learnt during the training (Knowles, 1984). Once they are involved in the planning of the professional development activities and have the opportunity to apply what they have learnt, they are not passive learners. Teachers should play an active role in their professional development. They should be given the opportunity to learn from one another, but most importantly, they should not be treated like empty tanks to be filled with knowledge by somebody else (Johnson, 2006; Brown, 2007).

As mentioned earlier, adult education should not be conducted in the same way as a child or teenage education. Adults’ ways of learning or knowing are factored into EFL teacher development programmes. Apart from the knowledge of adult learning styles, the effectiveness of Professional Development depends on another factor, which is institutional performance goals. Linking school performance objectives to

professional development enables to get better results because teachers work together as a learning community or a community of practice (Crandall & Miller, 2014; Hedgcock, 2002).

The effectiveness of professional development also depends on a number of approaches that are likely to enhance teachers' institutional as well as subject-matter knowledge (Lv, 2014). Wallace (1991, as cited in Crandall & Miller, 2014, p. 632) identified three such approaches. They include the apprenticeship approach, the applied science approach, and the reflective approach. In the apprenticeship approach to teacher development, younger teachers learn from more experienced ones. In the applied science approach, teachers apply in their classrooms what they have learnt from research and experts; whereas, in the reflective approach, teachers constantly adapt their practice through critical thinking and research. Most EFL teacher development practices fall within one of these three approaches.

1.5 The Impact of Professional Development on Classroom Teaching

Professional development influences EFL teachers' instructional practices. Through professional development, teachers become mature professionals. Peer observations and peer coaching help them acquire knowledge. These professional development strategies give them opportunities to discover new teaching methods or styles and learn from their colleagues. Based on what they learnt from classroom observation, they are likely to improve and hone their teaching. Reading journals and attending conferences and workshops help teachers to keep abreast of new developments in their field. As a result, they become knowledgeable and are ready to transfer what they have learnt into their classroom practices. Talking about the influence of professional development on teachers' work, Hansen-Thomas and Grosso (2012) refer to this as "*transference and translation of knowledge and experience*" (p. 142), which is the ability to transfer what they learnt from professional development programs and translate it into a training session for their peers. Lv (2013) showed that teachers hold their personal attitudes and beliefs, which they translate into their professional and classroom practices. The professional development activities that they undertook influenced aspects of teaching such as lesson planning, instructional activities' materials, tasks, and teaching techniques. Teachers may employ their beliefs in making classroom decisions. Teachers' decisions can be influenced and informed by various factors, one of which is through professional development experiences.

The knowledge acquired during workshops, conferences and through reading enable them to master their subject matter and to better know their learners. The mastery of their subject matter and knowing their students help them to be skilful and competent teachers. Thanks to professional development, EFL teachers can become mature professionals, and the internal structure of the profession can be updated. It results in evolution and enrichment, including the richness and adeptness of their professional knowledge and skills, which can, ultimately, lead to an excellent teaching style and quality.

From an individual perspective, Richards and Farrel (2005, p. 5) advocated:

“Teachers are generally interested in adding to their professional knowledge and keeping up to date with theory and practice in the field, in improving their teaching skills so that they feel more confident about what they teach and achieve better results with their students. They may also be interested in clarifying and understanding their principles, beliefs, and values, as well as the nature and values underlying the schools in which they work so that they can be empowered.”

According to them, from the point of view of the teacher’s personal development, a number of areas of professional development may be identified. Those areas include subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical expertise, self-awareness, understanding of the learners, understanding of the curriculum and materials, and career advancement.

In a word, professional development transforms teachers into better and more apt educators by enabling them to create relevant and tailored course instructions for today’s students and keep up with the latest educational standards to ensure optimal student learning. Moreover, teachers learn better ways to teach when they discover new teaching strategies. Through professional development, they are able to go back to the classroom and make changes to their lecture styles and curricula to better suit the needs of their students.

2. Methodology of the Study

This study combines qualitative and quantitative approaches, even though it is basically qualitative. A nineteen-item questionnaire was used to explore EFL teachers’ perceptions about professional development, professional development strategies, the influence of professional development on their teaching practices, and challenges and suggestions for the improvement of professional development in Beninese secondary schools. The questionnaire included open-ended and closed items to maximise reliability, as suggested by Cohen *et al.* (2007).

The respondents of this study were 200 EFL teachers in 24 state-owned secondary schools in Ouémé region. One hundred and seventy-three (173) completed questionnaires were returned, and 5 were not validated. The qualitative analysis consisted of exploring the respondents’ opinions, thoughts or perceptions. Efforts were made to analyse the data for themes and ideas using thematic analysis. Holiday’s (2010) thematic analysis was applied. According to Holiday, *“all the data is taken holistically and rearranged under themes which emerge as running through its totality”* (2010, p. 94). For the data analysis, emphasis was laid on *“the frequency and variety of messages, the number of times a certain phrase or speech patterns is used”* (Merriam, 2009, p. 205). For each item for which an explanation was given, responses were read, and the emerging themes were noted until saturation. After saturation, the coding process consisted of assigning

different colours to the themes identified. Using the highlighter, all the passages related to specific themes were highlighted in the completed questionnaire before writing the report.

3. Findings of the Study

The data collected revealed that the teachers who participated in this study do not belong to the same category. The first category is that of full-time teachers, referred to as FE and ACDPE. They are 52 out of 168 participants. The second group of respondents is the aspiring teachers, referred to as AME. They represent a large proportion of the participants (69.04%).

The data also revealed that the respondents have different professional qualifications. Forty-two (42) of them are holders of BAPES degrees, 25 participants hold CAPES degrees, and the largest proportion (69%) do not hold any professional qualification. In addition to these, the respondents have diversified teaching experiences.

3.1 Length of Teaching Experience

The participants fall within four categories concerning their teaching experience: 1 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, 11 to 15 years, and over 15 years. The data revealed that 32 respondents have been teaching for 1 to 5 years, 40 participants for 6 to 10 years, 76 for 11 to 15 years, and 20 teachers have been teaching for over 15 years. Furthermore, all the respondents did not receive pre-service training. Ninety-five (95) respondents reported they had received pre-service training, whereas 63 participants mentioned that they had not received any pre-service training, and 10 respondents did not answer the question.

3.2 EFL Teachers' Perception of Professional Development

The research question related to participants' perceptions about professional development dealt with EFL teachers' awareness of professional development and what it meant to them. From the findings, 126 of the respondents had read or heard about professional development, whereas 36 had not read nor heard about it. The participants in this study demonstrated different perceptions and understanding of professional development by giving various definitions. There are two categories of respondents: those whose definitions are close to reality and those who seem not to know what professional development means. The first group provided definitions that are close to the reality as it appears through these verbatim quotations taken from the questionnaires: *"Professional development is a sort of training teachers undergo so as to improve their teaching quality"*, *"Professional development has to do with all that a professional does in order to become more efficient in his or her day-to-day routine"*, *"It is a set of tools, resources and training sessions for teachers to improve their teaching quality and effectiveness"*. The second group of respondents seem not to understand deeply what professional

development means, as exemplified by the following statements: *“It is a training session through which we can learn from our colleagues, mentors, pedagogical advisors”*, *“It can be defined as the capacity, the ability to solve any problem or the capacity to deal with professional matters”*, *“It is a task which helps teachers to improve their job”*, *“Professional development can be defined as the training which permits to obtain degrees, to progress in a career”*, *“A professional development is whatever workshop, training, seminar that can contribute to the professional qualification of human resources.”* Many of the participants mentioned activities they consider as professional development for teachers. Instead of giving a concrete definition of professional development, the respondents provided examples. They also acknowledged the necessity of professional development. When they were asked if they thought that professional development was necessary for them, almost all the respondents (99%) reported that it was necessary for teachers.

From the data, teachers defined and perceived professional development as an activity whose purpose is to make them effective teachers. It transpires from the foregoing that the respondents are already aware of what they are supposed to do or should do in order to grow professionally.

3.3 Professional Development Strategies Used in the Selected Secondary Schools

This research work revealed that many professional development strategies are used in the selected state-owned secondary schools. Those strategies include mentorship and attending weekly and regional professional development meetings.

The data revealed that some respondents were assigned a more experienced teacher to mentor them. Fifty-four percent (54%) of the respondents reported they had been assigned a more experienced teacher to mentor them, whereas forty-four percent (44%) indicated they had not. Attending weekly professional development meetings is another professional development activity the respondents participated in.

The study revealed that almost all the respondents attended the weekly professional development meetings. During those meetings, the respondents reported that they discussed about issues related to instruction improvement, teaching process, lesson planning, teachers' concerns, classroom management, and learners' assessment. The data revealed that attending weekly and regional professional development meetings has an impact on their teaching practices. A large number of the participants (89%) reported that (AP) and (APZ) influence their teaching practices in different ways. Most of them reported that weekly professional development meetings enable them to improve their teaching practices. The data also revealed that to improve their teaching, the participants collaborate with their colleagues through class observations.

Concerning class observations, eighty-five percent (85%) of the respondents reported that they observed a class taught by a colleague once to learn from him or her. Apart from class observation, professional organisation membership is another professional development opportunity. A large proportion of the respondents (79%) do not belong to any professional organisations. Only 32 out of the 168 respondents reported that they belonged to a professional organisation. Out of the 32, 4 indicated

that they belonged to BNTEA, 3 belonged to ASPA-OP or ASPA, and 2 belonged to AFE (Acers Freedom English Activity). The other participants mentioned Benin English teachers, inspectors, advisors forums, subject coordinators and teachers of English forum. Obviously, these respondents are not actual members of any professional organisations. They are just members of WhatsApp groups. Thus, very few participants belong to a professional organisation. Subscribing to professional journals is another professional development strategy that teachers use to improve their teaching.

Regarding subscriptions to professional journals, a large proportion of the surveyed teachers (92%) reported that they had never read or subscribed to professional journals. As in the case of professional organisations, very few respondents read or have subscribed to professional journals. Another professional development strategy mentioned by the participants is a reflection on teaching practices. Reflecting on one's teaching practices is also a professional development strategy used by the participants to improve their teaching. A large number of the respondents (78%) reported that they reflected on their ways of teaching. They indicated that they take time to reflect on their teaching practices. Issues that they reflect on include the assessment of their teaching to see whether they have reached their objectives or not, as exemplified through these statements: *"I check whether my goal is reached or not and see how to remediate"*, *"I assess myself to know what aspects have not been successful and how to improve them"*. The participants do not only reflect on whether they reached their objectives or not, but they also emphasise the instructional improvement as illustrated through these statements: *"I think on how to teach well"*, *"How to help weak learners"*, *"How to motivate learners"*, *"How to improve my teaching practices"*, *"How to make my teaching successful"*. These statements show that the respondents do reflect on their teaching, and even manage to find out areas to improve for successful performance.

Although the participants try their best to improve their teaching practices, their professional development remains confronted with some difficulties and challenges.

3.4 Challenges to Professional Development

The challenges that the respondents mentioned include a lack of more experienced teachers, a lack of appropriate teaching materials, equipment, and documentation as exemplified through these terms: *"There are not enough experienced teachers"*, *"Lack of materials"*, *"There is no library; documents are not available"*, *"Lack of library and adequate materials and equipment"*, *"Lack of internet"*. Apart from a lack of materials and equipment, the respondents mentioned a lack of training. This is illustrated through these quotations: *"Lack of pre-service training"*, *"Lack of training"*, *"Most of our leaders are not trained to do the job"*, and *"Our head teachers or coordinators are not trained to do their job"*. This implies that the young teachers are aware that they need training to grow professionally, but those who are supposed to train them are not even trained. Another important issue raised by the participants is workload as exemplified through these statements: *"Lack of time"*, *"Too much work (28 hours class per week)"*, *"Always busy with 26 or 28 hours of teaching"*, and *"Overwork"*. In addition to the fore mentioned difficulties,

the respondents pointed out a lack of administrative support. A large proportion of the respondents (73%) did not receive from their school administration any support for professional development. Only 46 of the 168 participants mentioned that they received support from their school administration. As support for the professional development activities, they reported, *"The members of the administration visit us from time to time", "They provide us with teachers' books, the programs and the guides", "The members of the administration sometimes pay us some visit", "Moral assistance", "In my school, the administration provides us with WIFI for internet connection."*

Concerning the challenges related to APZ in terms of the quality of the training, the quality of trainers, and logistics, the respondents' concerns include the unpreparedness of the trainers to conduct the training, training conditions, the practical aspect of the training, the adequacy of the training with teachers' needs, and the availability of materials and equipment. Regarding the training quality, the participants reported that topics or themes are not, most of the time, adequate to the needs as illustrated through these quotations taken from the questionnaires: *"Uninteresting topics", "We need more practices than theories", "Most of the themes are not appropriate or adapted to our real needs", "More practice than theories is our wish", "Send good trainers", "Improve the quality of the training"*. Moreover, respondents pointed to the unpreparedness of some trainers as shown through these statements: *"Some trainers are not trained beforehand", "Provide enough competent trainers", "Train the trainers", and "The coordinators of APZ must be trained enough."* The training conditions and the logistics are also issues that the participants mentioned. Most of them complained about overcrowded and hot classrooms for holding the training. Despite these challenges facing professional development, the participants made a number of suggestions for the improvement of teachers' professional development.

3.5 Suggestions

Suggestions that relate to the teachers themselves are not numerous. The respondents reported, *"Teachers should be aware of the importance of attending meetings, trainings for teachers' professional development", "They should care about their own professional development growth instead of waiting for school authorities."* These statements imply that the respondents are aware that teachers are beforehand responsible for their professional development. Contrary to these suggestions, most of the respondents pointed to the government while making their suggestions. To grow professionally, the government should provide teachers with training irrespective of their category. Adequate materials, equipment, and documents should be provided, and the government should support teachers' professional development by investing in their pre-service and in-service training. The time devoted to the training should be increased, and the number of teaching hours given to teachers should be reduced, which will allow them to have enough time to engage deeply in professional development activities.

4. Discussion of the Findings

The findings show that the respondents are all aware of professional development and that they have different understandings of it as demonstrated through their responses. Defining professional development, Day stated:

“Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives.”
(1999, p. 4)

Those who seem not to know what professional development means should be well informed about it.

Through the findings, it transpires that staff meeting is the major form of professional development, that is, AP and APZ meetings. Very often, issues discussed during those meetings by teachers relate to instructional and classroom management concerns, assessment and lesson planning. Lesson study allows teachers to set learning objectives, develop teaching aids, design teaching and learning activities collaboratively, and foster students' active learning and critical thinking skills. It is one of the ways to improve teaching quality and teacher's professionalism by applying the 21st education attributes (Cerbin, 2011, as cited in Rachmajanti *et al.*, 2020). During weekly professional development activities, the respondents focused on their problems and even tried to find out solutions, but they did not mention that they shared success experiences that can encourage other teachers. To that effect, Ur (2012) suggested that teachers should also share their successful experiences to enable other teachers to replicate such experiences. As regards class observation, many of the participants indicated that they had been observed or had observed a colleague to learn from him or her. Concerning issues related to class observation, most of the respondents reported a lack of experienced teachers and the unpreparedness of those who are supposed to train them. Very few of the respondents engaged in activities pertaining to reading or subscribing to professional journals or professional organisation membership. As a result, they cannot benefit from the uncountable advantages of professional development, be well-informed and keep up with new trends in the teaching field if they do not read professional journals. Similarly, Iwikotan and Dossou (2017) revealed that very few EFL teachers read professional journals.

Concerning mentorship, 90 respondents reported that they had been assigned a more experienced teacher to mentor them. There is substantial doubt about it since this

practice is rare in our secondary schools. On the contrary, the results of a study on EFL teachers' views on their professional development by Rachmajanti *et al.* (2020) revealed that although the percentage of discussing and sharing classroom issues with other teachers is considerably high, collaborative teaching is not mentioned as one of the possible solutions to improve teachers' professionalism and to enhance students' learning at the same time. The respondents in this study reported that they reflected on their teaching, but the researcher wonders if they really do that and take decisions and actions to improve their teaching practices.

Concerning the difficulties or challenges facing their professional development, the respondents stated that more experienced teachers are not available to help the younger ones. This is due to the fact that most of the more experienced teachers have retired or have been appointed as members of the administration. The lack of adequate materials, equipment and documents has also been mentioned by the respondents. It appears that teachers do not have the opportunity to get appropriate reading materials to prepare lessons. Concerning this aspect of textbooks, Kochhar (1985, p. 99) stated, "*It is the opinion that a textbook does occupy an important place in education.*" Issues related to documentation include the quality of learners' textbooks which are of poor quality. They have been manipulated many times, and this affected the quality of the pictures. This must be one of the reasons why a respondent suggested that programs should be reviewed. One of the participants mentioned "*the absence of a professional development plan*". Most of the participants did not mention this, but it is worth noting that the authorities do not provide such professional development programs, and attending weekly and regional professional meetings is not sufficient to enhance their performance. In this vein, Alemu (2013) suggested that institutions should arrange professional development training and workshops on ELT for English teachers, including subscriptions for local and foreign journals to allow them to keep abreast of the current developments in the field. Richards and Farrell (2005), enumerating teachers' education activities, asserted: "*It is the responsibility of schools and the administrators to provide opportunities for continued professional education and to encourage teachers to participate in them. In order for such opportunities to take place, they need to be planned, supported and rewarded*" (p. 3)

Heavy teaching load is another concern of the respondents. Many of them pointed out that they are too busy with 28 teaching hours per week. Addressing constraints on professional development is crucial, as Day *et al.* (2006, p. 123) found in a study of teacher effectiveness in England, "*Teachers across all professional life phases felt that heavy workload, a lack of time and financial constraints were important inhibitors in their pursuit of professional development.*" This must be the reason why many respondents suggested that the government should reduce the number of teaching hours they are allotted.

In addition to this, they reported that the time allotted to the weekly and regional professional development meetings is not sufficient for, most of the time, they did not succeed in finishing the activities they launched. They suggested that the time devoted

to those training sessions should be increased in order to be well-informed and keep up with new trends in the field.

Administrative support is another challenge. Many challenges of participating in professional development do not only come from the teachers themselves but also from the institution where they work, and it is good to have a supportive environment such as colleagues and school administration that have the same goal: increasing the quality of both students and teachers. Based on the findings of the study, most of the respondents (72%) reported they did not receive support of any kind from their school administration. This can be related to a lack of encouragement, training and motivation. The respondents' complaints about the administrative support may be linked to their low income, as it has been worded through these statements: *"Motivate teachers through revenues"*, *"Government should motivate financially EFL teachers"*, *"Improve working and living conditions"*, *"Motivating teachers through incentives"*, *"Motivation"*, *"The government must motivate the teachers"*. What retains attention here is the need for the government to motivate teachers financially. The issue of being underpaid affects teachers' professional growth (Yuwono & Harbon, 2010). They suggested that *"teachers should enhance their professionalism regardless of the financial rewards"* (Yuwono & Harbon, 2010, p. 159). In this vein, a case study by Utami and Prestidge (2018) examined 4 Indonesian EFL teachers and discovered that professional enthusiasm plays a vital role in whether or not teachers will improve themselves professionally. Self-driven professional learning is more beneficial on the part of the teachers than policy-driven one (Utami & Prestidge, 2018, as cited in Rachmajanti *et al.*, 2020).

Furthermore, training seems to have received much attention on the part of the respondents, but they were not interested in joining a professional organisation and in reading or subscribing to professional journals which are two important ways of solving this challenge. The respondents also pointed to the quality of the training especially the practical aspect of the training. They suggested that, instead of being theoretical, training sessions should be more practical. For effective and efficient sessions, the participants recommended that the government recruit and train many teachers' advisors and inspectors to supervise teachers' performance. Efficient and effective training sessions will make them competent and skilful teachers who are able to keep up with current educational demands and challenges. This will also enable them to acquire, as Harmer (1983) indicated, *"the teacher's ability to be both adaptable and flexible"* (p. 39). The provision of an internet connection is another suggestion made by some respondents. These participants suggested that the government should make internet available in schools, which will be very hard, or even impossible mostly in a village where there is not even electricity.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to explore Beninese EFL teachers' perceptions about professional development and determine the strategies used for their professional

growth. Although this study is mainly qualitative, a mixed approach was used. The data collected were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Findings from this study indicated that the respondents are aware of the importance of professional development, but most of them showed little understanding of the concept for they mentioned activities as professional development. Staff meetings, the mandatory weekly and regional professional development meetings (AP and APZ), seem to be the major form of professional development the participants engaged into the detriment of the most important ones. Very few of the respondents engaged in activities pertaining to reading or subscribing to professional journals or professional organisation membership and attending workshops or seminars. Despite the difficulties or challenges facing professional development in Benin in general and in the selected state-owned secondary schools in particular, the teachers of English themselves should be aware of the importance of their professional growth and actually and deeply engage in the different professional development activities for their professional development. To that effect, they should be sensitised to the important role that professional organisations and journals can play in their professional growth.

For satisfactory and successful professional development, school administration should be more supportive of teachers by encouraging and motivating them. Motivation can also take the form of the provision of training by the government. In this case, the training programme needs to take into account the challenges confronting the teachers.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal conflicts of interest related to this research. No funding was received for this study, and the authors have no financial relationships with any organisations that could be perceived as influencing the research. Additionally, there are no other potential conflicts of interest to disclose.

About the Author(s)

Katchédé Etienne Iwikotan is an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at the English Department of the Université d'Abomey-Calavi in Benin and an interpreter/translator. He holds a Master of Education in Higher Education Administration from Loyola University Chicago and a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the Université d'Abomey-Calavi. His research focuses on curriculum development and evaluation, assessment, English education at the primary school level, and the competency-based approach to English language education.

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3444-3833>.

Tovidégbé Paulin Dohou is the principal of Djomon Secondary School. He holds a Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics and Didactics from Ecole Docotrale Pluridisciplinaire "Espaces, Cultures et Développement" of the Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Benin. His research interests include professional development and EFL teacher supervision.

Pédro Marius Egonleti is an Associate Professor of English Linguistics and Didactics. He is a Lecturer of writing skills, ESP, Curriculum Designing, Implementation and evaluation at the English Department of the University of Abomey-Calavi in Benin. He is the current Director of Resource Mobilization, Marketing and Documentation of the Fund for Literacy and the Promotion of National Languages. He is interested in research on motivation techniques and English language teaching via communication technologies.

References

- Alemu, A. (2013). Professionalism and professional development of teachers in English language teaching: University of Gondar in focus. *International Journal of Innovative Research & Development*, 2(9), 305-313. Retrieved from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Professionalism-And-Professional-Development-Of-In-Alemu/c469611f41764b6b0385c7319dd60c0092f067ad>
- Borg, S. (2014). The benefits of attending conferences. *ELT Journal*, Aug 2014, 1-12. Retrieved from: <http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2014/08/27/elt.ccu045.full.pdf+html>
- Cerbin, B. (2011). Lesson study: Using classroom inquiry to improve teaching and learning in higher education. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC. Retrieved from <https://www.routledge.com/Lesson-Study-Using-Classroom-Inquiry-to-Improve-Teaching-and-Learning-in-Higher-Education/Cerbin/p/book/9781579224332>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. London and New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203029053>
- Crandall, J. A., & Miller, F. S. (2014). Effective professional development for language teachers. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. M. Brinton, & M. A. Snow (Eds.). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (4th ed.), (pp. 630-648). Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning/Cengage Learning.
- Day, C. (1999). *Developing teachers: The challenges of lifelong learning*. London: Falmer Press. Retrieved from <https://www.routledge.com/Developing-Teachers-The-Challenges-of-Lifelong-Learning/Day/p/book/9780750707473>
- Day, C., Stobart, G., Sammons, P., Kington, A., Gu, Q., Smees, R., & Kujtaba, T. (2006) Variations in teachers' work, lives and effectiveness. Research Report RR743. London: Department of Education and Skills. Retrieved from <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/6405/1/rr743.pdf>
- Gebhard, J. G. (2005). Teacher development through exploration: Principles, ways, and examples. *TESL-EJ*, 9(2), 1-13. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240273258_Teacher_Development_through_Exploration_Principles_Ways_and_Examples

- Glatthorn, A. (1995). Teacher development. In L. W. Anderson (Ed), *International encyclopedia of teaching and teacher education* (2nd ed., p. 41). Oxford: Elsevier Science. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED392795>
- Greenwell, S., & Zygouris-Coe, V. (2012). Exploring high school English language arts teachers' responses to professional development in reading instruction. *Journal of Reading Education*, 37(2), 21-26. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2024.2357884>
- Hansen-Thomas, H., Casey, P. J., & Grosso, L. (2013). Multiplying the effect of professional development: Teachers training teachers. *TESOL Journal*, 4(1), 129-150. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/tesj.54>
- Harmer, J. (1983). *The principle of English language teaching*. London and New York: Longman. Retrieved from <https://coljour.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/jeremy-harmer-the-practice-of-english-language-teaching-4th-edition-longman-handbooks-for-language-teachers.pdf>
- Holiday, A. (2010). *Doing and writing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). London, United Kingdom: SAGE Publications Inc. Retrieved from <https://artlesstanzim.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/holliday-qualitative-research-full.pdf>
- Iwikotan, E. K. (2013). Critical appraisal of secondary school English curricula reform in Benin. Université d'Abomey-Calavi, unpublished PhD dissertation. Retrieved from <https://www.galda-verlag.de/product/english-curricula-reform-benin/>
- Kochhar, S. K. (1995). *Methods and techniques of teaching*. New Delhi: Serling Publisher. Retrieved from https://books.google.ro/books/about/Methods-And-Techniques-Of-Teaching.html?id=U7ZwPwAACAAJ&redir_esc=y
- Kraft, M. A. & Papay, J. P. (2014). Can professional environments in schools promote teacher development? Explaining heterogeneity in return to teaching experience. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 36(4), 476-498. Retrieved from https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mkraft/files/kraft_papay_-_prof_env_teacher_development_eepa_full.pdf
- Lv, Y. (2014). The professional development of the foreign language teachers and the professional foreign language teaching practice. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4(7), 1439-1444. Retrieved from <https://www.academypublication.com/issues/past/tpls/vol04/07/17.pdf>
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Retrieved from <https://www.wiley.com/en-gb/Qualitative+Research%3A+A+Guide+to+Design+and+Implementation%2C+4th+Edition-p-9781119003618>
- Murray, A. (2010). Empowering teachers through professional development. *English Teaching Forum*, v48 n1, Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ914883>

- Rachmajanti, S., Sulisty, G. H., Magawati, F., & Akbar, A. A. N. M. (2020). Professional development as viewed by EFL teachers at lower secondary schools. *JEES (Journal of English Educators Society)* 5(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.21070/jees.v5i2.964>
- Richards, J. C., Farrell T.S.C. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <https://assets.cambridge.org/97805218/49111/sample/9780521849111ws.pdf>
- Shousha, A. I. (2015). Peer observation of teaching and professional development: Teachers' perspectives at the English language institute King Abdulaziz University. *Arab World English Journal*, 6(2), 131-143. <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol6no2.10>
- Yuwono, G. I., & Harbon, L. (2010). English teacher professionalism and professional Development: Some common issues in Indonesia. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 12(3), 145-163. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308454183_English_Teacher_Professionalism_and_Professional_Development_Some_Common_Issues_in_Indonesia

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions, and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions, and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Foreign Language Teaching shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage, or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations, and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed, and used in educational, commercial, and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).