TERTIARY LEVEL TURKISH EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES ABOUT SELF-INITIATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TUĞÇE HAMAMCIOĞLU

A THESIS SUBMITTED

FOR

THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

IN

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BILKENT UNIVERSITY

ANKARA

JULY 2023

Tertiary Level Turkish EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences About Self-Initiated Professional Development

The Graduate School of Education

of

İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

Tuğçe Hamamcıoğlu

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Teaching English as a Foreign Language

The Department of English Language Teaching

Ankara

JULY 2023

İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BILKENT UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Tertiary Level Turkish EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences About Self-

Initiated Professional Development

Tuğçe Hamamcıoğlu

June 2023

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

Asst. Prof. Dr. Tijen Akşit (Advisor)

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

Prof. Dr. Çiler Hatipoğlu, METU (Examining Committee Member)

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

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elif Tokdemir Demirel, Kırıkkale University (Examining Committee Member)

Approval of the Graduate School of Education

Prof. Dr. Orhan Arıkan (Director)

ABSTRACT

TERTIARY LEVEL TURKISH EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND

EXPERIENCES ABOUT SELF-INITIATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Tuğçe Hamamcıoğlu

MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Advisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Tijen Akşit

July 2023

This study aimed to explore the perceptions and experiences of tertiary level Turkish ELF teachers regarding self-initiated professional development, and to find out if their perceptions differed according to their demographics. For this mixed-methods study, the quantitative data was collected from 67 Turkish EFL teachers through surveys, and one-on-one interviews were conducted with 14 of them. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data, and for the analysis of the qualitative data, content analysis was used. The results showed that teachers valued collaboration greatly and thought professional development should be context-specific, address their needs, provide practical information and help them be up-to-date. They also asserted teachers should have more autonomy about their own professional development and receive financial, attitudinal, and time-related support from their institutions. The results also indicated that teachers having an undergraduate or graduate degree in teaching English as a foreign language put greater emphasis on the duration of professional development compared to the teachers who graduated from a non-TEFL program, did not have a master's degree or had a master's degree in a non-TEFL program. Moreover, sharing experiences and problems with colleagues was the most experienced professional development activity by the participants, whereas attending article discussion club sessions was the least experienced one. Moreover, teachers found attending certificate/diploma programs to gain teaching qualifications the most beneficial, but preparing portfolios was found to be the least useful professional development activity for them.
Keywords: professional development, self-initiated professional development, professional development perceptions of EFL teachers, professional development experiences of EFL teachers

ÖZET

Yükseköğretim Kurumlarında Görev Yapan Türk İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Öz

Yönetimli Mesleki Gelişim Algı ve Deneyimleri

Tuğçe Hamamcıoğlu

Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans Programı

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Tijen Akşit

Temmuz 2023

Bu araştırma, yükseköğretim kurumlarında görev yapan Türk İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öz yönetimli mesleki gelişim algı ve deneyimlerini keşfetmeyi ve bu algılarında demografik bilgilerine göre farklılıklar bulunup bulunmadığını araştırmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu karma yöntemli çalışma için nicel veriler 67 Türk İngilizce öğretmeninden bir anket kullanılarak, nitel veriler ise bu öğretmenlerin 14'ü ile gerçekleştirilen bire-bir görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Nicel verilerin analizi için betimsel ve çıkarımsal istatistik kullanılmış, nitel veriler ise içerik analizi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlara göre, katılımcılar öğretmenler arası iş birliğinin altını çizdiler ve mesleki gelişimin kendi bağlamlarına özgü olması, ihtiyaçlarına hitap etmesi, uygulanabilir bilgiler sağlaması ve onların güncel kalmasına yardım etmesi gerektiğini öne sürdüler. Buna ek olarak, aynı grup katılımcı, kendi mesleki gelişimlerinde daha otonom olmaları gerektiğini ve çalıştıkları kurumdan maddi, davranışsal ve zamansal açılardan destek görmeleri gerektiğini belirttiler. Sonuçlar, aynı zamanda yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretimi bölümlerinde lisans veya yüksek lisans derecesi olan öğretmenlerin, başka bölümlerde bu derecelere sahip olan veya yüksek lisans derecesi olmayan öğretmenlere kıyasla mesleki gelişimin süresine daha çok önem verdiğini gösterdi. Bunlara ek olarak, sonuçlar, deneyim ve sorunların meslektaşlarla paylaşılmasının en çok deneyimlenen, makale tartışma kulübüne katılımın ise en az deneyimlenen mesleki gelişim aktivitesi olduğunu ortaya koydu. Bunun yanı sıra, öğretmenler, yeterlilik kazanmak için sertifika/diploma programlarına katılımı çok yararlı bulurken, portfolyo hazırlığı en az fayda sağlanan mesleki gelişim aktivitesi olarak gösterildi.

Anahtar kelimeler: mesleki gelişim, öz yönetimli mesleki gelişim, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişim algıları, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişim deneyimleri

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The changes that the millennium brought has affected the field of education (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). This brings the level of expected educational quality high, which leads to a thorough consideration for educational reform (Campbell et al., 2004; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Professional development of teachers is pointed out as one of the major elements and the determiner for the accomplishment of such a change (Borko et al., 2010; Desimone, 2009).

This chapter discusses the major aspects of professional development in education including its brief history of evolution, the characteristics of effective practices, and the situation in Türkiye more specifically. It also presents the problems in the field by exemplifying from the relevant literature. Next, the purpose of the current study along with the research questions is given. In addition, the significance of the study is stated through referencing the previous studies. Lastly, the definitions of key terms are pointed out.

Background of the Study

Professional development has become an important part of education due to the rapid changes in the 21st century. That is why, there is a growing interest in providing professional development for teachers around the world to keep them up with those changes, and thus, to increase the quality of education (Borko et al., 2010; Smith, 2017).

Professional development is important for teachers as they are in constant search of ways to improve themselves in their field (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). In

that sense, professional development can help teachers enhance their practices so that they can address the changing needs of students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). What is more, professional development can create a chain reaction, in that the beneficial outcomes in student achievement can lead to a better educational environment (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Thus, for a successful educational change, professional development plays a crucial role (Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

For the past fifty years, the evolution of professional development has been towards the aim of making teachers the active agents of the process (Johnson, 2009). In this regard, Diaz-Maggioli (2004) emphasizes that professional development should take personal characteristics into consideration, be context-specific and ongoing. Desimone (2009) adds that professional development should become a natural part of a teacher's life, and not be seen as something separate from it. It is also pointed out that professional development is more beneficial for teachers when it gives them a chance to try what they learn in their classrooms, exchange ideas with their peers and reflect on their own practices (Karaaslan, 2003; Richards & Farrell, 2010; Timperley, 2008; Veen et al., 2012). Overall, the development of teachers as professionals should "facilitate growth of teachers' understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers" (Richards & Farrell, 2010, p. 4). Therefore, understanding what is important to teachers plays a significant role in their professional development (Smith, 2017).

According to Desimone (2009), professional development can be in the form of "formal, structured topic-specific seminars given on in-service days", or alternatively, it can include "informal 'hallway' discussions with other teachers about instruction techniques, embedded in teachers' everyday work lives" (p. 182). In the light of this statement, it can be said that professional development

encompasses one-time-only events such as "workshops, seminars, or courses", as well as "coaching, mentoring, portfolios, observations, and action research" (Villegas-Reimers, 2003, p. 70). Furthermore, Richards and Farrell (2010) extend the list by adding "journal writing, self-monitoring, team teaching, case studies and teacher support groups" (p. 14). In this respect, the diversity of its patterns and the fact that it is more related to the overall "growth" of teachers in a longer time period, professional development is differentiated from in-service trainings which aim to create specific solutions for practical problems that teachers encounter (Richards & Farrell, 2010, p. 3).

In terms of language teaching, the scope of professional development has also altered. Second language teachers are valued as facilitators of new information in various contexts, and the social characteristic of professional development is emphasized (Johnson, 2009). Furthermore, the purpose and the duties of language teachers have been reshaped (Sadeghi & Richards, 2021). As a consequence, professional development activities are taking a different form that encourages teachers to make new meanings of what they learn instead of only giving them a receiver role (Borg, 2015).

In Turkish education context, professional development has also gained more attention (Başar et al., 2020). Başar et al. (2020) state that while the professional development activities for primary and secondary level are organized by the Ministry of National Education, at tertiary level, universities are in charge of their own professional development activities. Both at the K-12 and tertiary level, the experiences of teachers indicate that the professional development activities provided for them do not always match their context-specific needs, which could make teachers unwilling (Çalışkan, 2021; Türüdü, 2020). In addition, time related issues,

top-down structures and insufficient communication and collaboration between colleagues are the major factors hindering teachers' professional development (Çalışkan, 2021; Ekşi, 2010; Karakaş & Yücedağ, 2020; Korkmazgil, 2015; Mitten-Kükner & Akyüz, 2012). However, regardless of their contexts, it can be said that teachers would like to improve themselves, especially in the areas of technology, theoretical knowledge, and classroom management; therefore, more professional development opportunities are needed not only to become better professionally, but to be more motivated and confident personally (Karakaş & Yücedağ, 2020; Korkmazgil, 2015; Korkmazgil & Seferoğlu, 2015; Türüdü, 2020).

The aforementioned aspects of professional development such as teachers' ability to determine their needs and act accordingly as well as their taking the responsibility of their own growth refers to self-initiated professional development (Louws et al., 2017; Priajana, 2017). Self-initiated, or "self-directed" learning, throughout which self-motivation and willingness play crucial roles, facilitates self-awareness, owning the agency of one's improvement, and taking action to achieve self-determined goals (Bull, 2017; Louws et al., 2017; Merriam et al., 2007; Priajana, 2017). In that sense, it is indicated that teachers who can guide their professional development without solely depending on what their institutions provide can more easily make meaning of their professional development process and benefit from it (Priajana, 2017; Zerey, 2018). Moreover, as self-initiated professional development encompasses self-reflection and continuous improvement, it not only plays a crucial role in teachers' process of change, but also makes this change more effective, purposeful and relevant to teachers' contexts (Li, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Professional development is an indispensable part of teachers' life since it is through which teachers can adapt to new conditions, reconstruct their ideas and feelings; thus, contribute more to the achievement of their students and institutions (Richards & Farrell, 2010). Therefore, it is important that teachers have a say in how professional development activities are created, that is their individual characteristics and opinions should form the base of these activities (Leahy & Torff, 2013). In other words, teachers need to be the center of professional development process and what they think is a vital element to make professional development geared towards their context and practice (Campbell et al., 2004). In the same vein, Smith (2017) also underlines the significance of teachers being the major stakeholders to guide and shape their own professional development by being actively involved in the process.

Although there is a growing awareness about professional development and increasing effort in providing best practices, the study conducted by Sadeghi and Richards (2021) reveal that teachers' participation rate in these activities is low. Similarly, it is indicated that teachers are not satisfied with the professional development activities as they are not in line with their context-specific needs (Başar et al., 2020).

In Turkish educational context, according to the Teaching and Learning International Survey report published in 2018, the teachers' satisfaction rates regarding professional development activities are below average. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report which was published in 2020 further reflects the situation in Türkiye and proposes that there is not enough professional development provided for teachers in Türkiye. The most important aspects of professional development which should be bettered are also listed.

Accordingly, professional development activities should be in a continuous fashion, directly relevant to teachers' needs, and designed in a way that enables them to enhance their practices.

At tertiary level, learning English gains an additional dimension of significance for students in Türkiye, which increases the responsibility of teachers to prepare them for their academic life (Borg, 2015). In the light of this, the value of professional development is becoming more apparent and that is proved by the foundation of professional development units at many School of Foreign Languages in Türkiye. However, in her study, Güçlü (2018) explores the perceptions of EFL teachers at tertiary level about professional development and states that the majority of teachers choose to read online materials over other types of professional development activities such as participating in conferences or joining courses, which indicates there are not enough opportunities offered to teachers. Çalışkan (2021) finds similar results and points out that teachers express their displeasure about the activities which puts them in a passive position. The study conducted by Ercan and Ivanova (2020) also reveals that teachers mostly attend one-time-only professional development activities which do not have a positive impact on them.

In terms of self-initiated professional development, the limited number of international studies mostly explored the experiences and perceptions of English teachers working at non-tertiary level and indicated similar results. In many of them, it was found that teachers benefitted from their interactions with their peers and valued collaborative activities (Abbasi, 2015; Alshaikhi, 2020; Priajana, 2017; Sharifzadeh & Khojasteh, 2018). In addition, most teachers favored being the agents of their own professional development, which directly shows their willingness and awareness about their responsibility on this issue (Abbasi, 2015; Alshaikhi, 2020;

Louws et al., 2017; Simegn, 2014). However, in some of these studies, it was suggested that teachers were not always supported by the administration of their institutions financially, attitudinally and timewise, which was found to be one of the factors affecting teachers' professional development negatively (Abbasi, 2015; Li, 2019; Priajana, 2017; Simegn, 2014;).

In Türkiye, there are not many studies focusing on the self-initiated professional development of tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers. The existing studies produced similar results to the aforementioned ones and revealed that teachers' willingness and freedom played an important role in their professional development, which is linked to owning the process (Irgatoğlu, 2021; Karaaslan, 2003; Sarıyıldız, 2017; Zerey, 2018). In addition, the lack of support from the administration, excessive workload, activities which are irrelevant to teachers' specific context and insufficient interaction among colleagues were mentioned as some of the elements which had a negative influence on teachers' professional development (Irgatoğlu, 2021; Karaaslan, 2003; Sarıyıldız, 2017; Zerey, 2018).

Aims of the Study

The focus of this study is what tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences about self-initiated professional development. Whether their perceptions differ according to their demographics has also been studied. Another purpose of this study is to address the gap in the literature on professional development at tertiary level in Turkish education context as there are few studies focusing on the perceptions and experiences of Turkish EFL teachers and providing both quantitative and qualitative data. Lastly, the current study aims to raise awareness by presenting diversified data which were obtained via surveys and one-

on-one semi structured interviews and provide support for EFL teachers'

professional development.

Research Questions

This study attempts to address the following questions:

1. What are tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions about self-

initiated professional development?

1a. Do their perceptions differ based on:

    i.   their age?

    ii.   the city they live in?

    iii.   the type of university they work at?

    iv.   years of teaching experience?

    v.   their undergraduate department?

    vi.   their master's department?

    vii.   having a postgraduate degree?

    viii.   having teaching qualifications?

2. What are tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' self-initiated professional

development experiences?

Significance of the Study

Professional development is an area which is receiving more and more

attention every day (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Because of this growing interest, more

investigation is needed in the field of teachers' professional development (Bataineh

et al., 2019; Kaivanpanah et al., 2021; Sancar et al., 2021). It is suggested that

teachers' assumptions, behaviors, motivation, and expectations can be focused on

more, which shows the necessity to put teachers in a central position (Guskey, 2002;

Osman & Warner, 2020).

In Türkiye, some studies have explored K-12 teachers' perceptions or compared the perceptions of teachers in different countries (Çalışkan, 2021; Ercan & Ivanova, 2020; Karakaş & Yücedağ, 2020; Korkmazgil & Seferoğlu, 2015; Yücedağ, 2020). However, Başar et al. (2020) explain the inadequate amount of research about professional development of teachers at tertiary level. Studies including EFL teachers who work at tertiary level are mostly case studies or they take place at one institution (Ekşi, 2010; Güçlü, 2018; Karaaslan, 2003; Türüdü, 2020; Yüksel, 2021).

There are even a more limited number of studies exploring self-initiated professional development. The studies conducted in various countries mostly focus on teachers working at non-tertiary level (Alshaikhi, 2020; Priajana, 2017; Sharifzadeh & Khojasteh, 2018; Simegn, 2014). In the Turkish context, most studies are quantitative, and they take place in one city, one institution or limited number of institutions (Irgatoğlu, 2021; Karaaslan, 2003; Sarıyıldız, 2017; Zerey, 2018).

It can be observed that there are no studies in literature which present both qualitative and quantitative data, explore perceptions and experiences at the same time, have participants as tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers from all over Türkiye from various kinds of institutions, and focus on self-initiated professional development. In this sense, this current study would demonstrate a broader picture which reflects the perceptions and experiences of Turkish EFL teachers at tertiary level about self-initiated professional development and create a possibility to make inferences based on the diverse demographics of the participants.

Definition of Key Terms

Professional development (PD): All the activities, practices and experiences that develop teachers not only professionally but also in a "personal, social and emotional" way (Desimone, 2009, p. 182).

Self-initiated professional development: The improvement process in which teachers are the agents of their learning, make their own decisions about what they need and want through self-reflection, have high self-motivation and willingness, and accept the main role of active involvement for their professional development (Bull, 2017; Louws et al., 2017; Merriam et al., 2007; Priajana, 2017).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This study aims to explore the perceptions and experiences of Turkish EFL teachers working at tertiary level about self-initiated professional development. It also aims to investigate if their perceptions differ in terms of their demographics. The purpose of this chapter is to present a detailed background about professional development in education. First, the conceptual framework of the current study and definitions of professional development from different perspectives along with a brief history of how it has evolved throghout the years will be introduced. Second, effective professional development will be discussed. Third, professional development in the field of language teaching will be addressed. Fourth, self-initiated professional development will be presented. Lastly, relevant studies both in international and Turkish context will be covered.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework developed by Desimone (2009) is chosen for this study as it brings the significant aspects of professional development of teachers together. Thus, it demonstrates a comprehensive portrait of effective professional development.

As explained in her article, Desimone (2009) creates this conceptual framework with the aims of making the evaluation of professional development easier and diverting the focus of professional development to its effectiveness. The framework includes five "core features" of professional development which are "content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation" (Desimone, 2009, p. 184).

Figure 1

The Framework of the Study
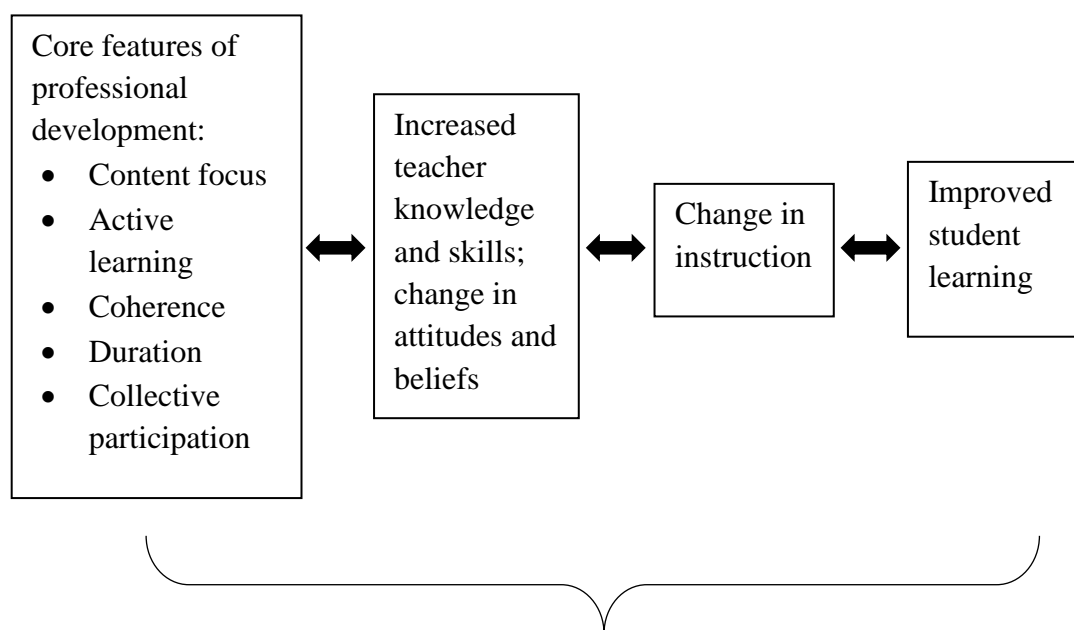
Context such as teacher and student characteristics, curriculum, school leadership, policy environment

"Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures," by L. M. Desimone, 2009, *Educational Researcher,* 38(3), p. 185 (https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08331140).

According to Desimone (2009), the core features of professional development constitute one of the necessary elements of the framework. The first of these core features is content focus, and it refers to what professional development is about, the betterment it causes regarding teachers' instructional performance, and eventually, the positive effect it creates on students. Therefore, it is considered to be the most crucial one of all the features. Active learning is the second one of the core features and it emphasizes the involvement of teachers in professional development activities in various ways, which is the opposite way of sit-and-learn type of activities. The third core feature of effective professional development is coherence, and it means

how much professional development and what teachers already know and believe in match with each other. Duration, which is the fourth core feature, is related both to the number of professional development activities and how long they last. Finally, Desimone (2009) points out that collective participation can be achieved when teachers, especially the ones working at the same institution, join professional development activities together, because then, they can communicate with each other, which facilitates collaboration.

Desimone (2009) puts forward that the idea behind this whole framework is that the aforementioned core features create a chain reaction influencing teachers and students. As shown in Figure 1 above, when professional development is effective, it contributes to teachers' theoretical knowledge and practice, which affects their professional behavior. As teachers change their perception towards their own beliefs and their instructional performance, the students' performance and achievement are enhanced as a result of this better learning environment. In addition, the two-sided arrows shown in Figure 1 emphasize that this process is not linear.

According to Desimone (2009), the framework is appropriate for different types of research designs. She also states that other studies could be built up on this framework, which means that it could form the base of those studies and could be used in various contexts to reflect different views (Desimone, 2009).

Because of the aforementioned qualities of Desimone's (2009) conceptual framework, it is selected for the current study. In the light of this framework, it could be easier to approach teachers' self-initiated professional development perceptions and experiences through different lenses, and therefore, draw a comprehensive portrait of them.

Definitions of Professional Development

In general, professional development refers to "the process whereby an individual acquires or enhances the skills, knowledge and/or attitudes for improved practice" (Mitchell, 2013, p. 390). In educational context, the definitions of professional development are in a similar vein with Mitchell's (2013) description, and they can also be more varied. On the other hand, based on the status quo of a specific context, professional development can be conceptualized differently, which makes it harder to define (Campbell et al., 2004). For Desimone (2009), for example, professional development involves all the activities, practices and experiences that develop teachers not only professionally but also in a "personal, social and emotional" way (p. 182). Day (1999) puts forward a more comprehensive definition and states that:

> Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. (p. 4)

Furthermore, it is suggested that professional development takes place during the course of teachers' professional life, and it initiates alterations in their practices (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003, 2004). As a consequence, the relationship between professional development and student achievement is also underlined (Guskey, 2002).

The Evolution of Professional Development in Education

The 21st century has brought about changes concerning professional development as competitiveness has increased in the field of education and issues about educational liability have emerged (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). As a result of this

rapid transition phase, teachers have been expected to "provid[e] continuity and routine within an uncertain and changing educational landscape" (Smith, 2017, p. 4); therefore, professional development has become a fundamental element to create better educational opportunities (Borko et al., 2010). Campbell et al. (2004) state that since the 1990s, there has been a growing endeavor to develop the quality of teaching to raise more successful generations. In this regard, they emphasize the popularity of professional development since it provides many opportunities for teachers in addition to being an indicator of their performance (Campbell et al., 2004). In the same vein, for more than thirty years, professional development has been considered crucial in the educational context since students' needs are constantly changing in this era, and teachers should be able to address them (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; DiPaola & Wagner, 2018).

The scope of the commonly-perceived mode of professional development is narrow, and it is more theoretical and static. This type of professional development is generally referred to as "in-service training" (INSET) (Villegas-Reimers, 2003, p. 11). The amount of education and training teachers are provided with before they become professionals plays a significant role in determining how INSET is defined in different contexts (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Although INSET was perceived as equal to professional development in the past, taking how the scope of INSET enlarged and moved away from theory-based and discontinuous events into consideration, the distinction between professional development and INSET has become blurred (Day, 1999; Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

Although INSET is a concept that has been well-known in the field of education, the degree of its availability and accessibility is not the same in different parts of the world and there may be problematic aspects which are related to its

duration, coherence, and practicality (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Richards and Farrell (2010) state that this kind of practices are generally provided by workplaces in the form of one-time-only events, and they aim to help teachers with their instructional problems that they have in their classrooms. However, INSET mostly fails to create long-term practical consequences because of the gap between what teachers undergo every day in their classrooms and what INSET offers to them (Smith, 2017; Veenman et al., 1994). This may be because of the fact that the decisions about INSET are made by national stakeholders (policymakers) and school administrators, which indicates a top-down approach (Day, 1999; Richards & Farrell, 2010). Therefore, it can be said that teachers are less likely to own these trainings as they do not often take their professional goals into account, and this may also pose a risk of diminishing teachers' independency and reducing the chance of showing their uniqueness as practitioners (Day, 1999; Richards & Farrell, 2010; Smith, 2017). For teachers to maintain their long-lasting motivation to develop, they should be viewed as individuals first (Day, 1999). In this sense, the ultimate goal of INSET should be encouraging teachers to become life-long autonomous learners (Day, 1999).

On the other hand, a new angle has been added to what professional development encompasses. To be more specific, it does not only include events that are specifically work-related, but it refers to a career-long improvement journey (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). The shift from sit-and-learn type of activities to context specific, thus useful activities is an indication that professional development is evolving (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In the light of this advancement, Richards and Farrell (2010) highlight the role of teachers as the agents of their own professional development, which signifies that bottom-up approaches could be more commonly observed. In this sense, they suggest that teachers can carry out their

professional development on their own, or they can engage with one or more of their colleagues (Richards & Farrell, 2010). They also add that teachers being active in their own development improves the professional development process and teachers become more responsible for their own betterment (Richards & Farrell, 2010; Smith, 2017). For example, teachers need to be observant and aware of the changes which need to be accomplished in terms of their own practices (Timperley, 2008). In other words, their consciousness about which areas to better should be high, and this can be achieved by constant evaluation of themselves (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). In short, it is important that professional development should be in line with teachers' aims (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987).

Thanks to the aforementioned changes, the coverage of professional development has also broadened. Besides the approaches which can be viewed as "traditional", it has become possible to observe some "visionary" approaches in which teachers are the main focus (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004, p. 11). DiPaola and Wagner (2018) point out that different types of professional development may cover "short conferences at the end of the school day, half-day work sessions or full day workshops, book or lesson studies, common or collaborative planning time, [and] weeklong seminars …" (p. 231). "Online podcasts, degrees [and] discussion boards" can be forms of professional development as well (Babanoğlu & Yardımcı, 2017, p. 790). In addition to these, it is noted that "team-teaching, observation, coaching and group discussion" can also be counted as professional development activities (Campbell et al., 2004, p. 19). Veen et al. (2012) also suggest that communication with other teachers, conducting research and "mentoring" are more "innovative" activities since they require teachers' activeness and participation as decision-makers (p. 3).

Non-Traditional Professional Development Activities

Mentoring

Mentoring can be defined as "one-to-one, workplace-based, contingent and personally appropriate support for the person during their professional acclimatization (or integration), learning, growth, and development" (Malderez, 2009, p. 260). It is practiced commonly as a way of helping new teachers to get better in their teaching (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004), which also affects their "enjoyment, confidence, efficacy and satisfaction in teaching" (Wang, 2019, p. 283), and helps them get accustomed to their new work environment (Wang, 2019). Novice teachers can especially benefit from mentoring when their mentors teach the same subject and grade as them, and if they can spend time with their mentors (Wang, 2019). Mentoring can also motivate the mentors who constitute the more experienced population in a workplace and can be a reason for them to continue working at the same institution (Malderez, 2009). In this sense, because it contributes not only to the mentees' but also to the mentors' improvement, it can be regarded as a great professional development opportunity (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). Therefore, mentoring is a two-way street process which necessitates mutual trust, growth and active involvement of both parties (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). It is also important to note that mentoring should not have judgmental purposes; in other words, this process should not be built upon the appraisal of the mentee, which would damage the relationship between the mentee and the mentor (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Wang, 2019). In the same vein, it would contradict with the function of mentors in the learning process of teachers which is not linear, may not always be tangible and includes meaning-making practices, self-discovery and increased awareness (Malderez, 2009).

Willingness and readiness should be the initial issues new mentors should consider (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). In addition, it would be beneficial if more experienced mentors and administrators provide new mentors with training so that new mentors can fulfil their roles as "counselors and challengers" (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004, p. 51), and share their experiences with their mentees in the right way, avoiding imposition and leading attitudes (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Wang, 2019). Furthermore, this kind of support can produce more fruitful experiences for mentors, mentees and students as well; however, whether mentoring is supported is mostly contingent on the institutional context and cultural conventions (Malderez, 2009; Wang, 2019).

Action Research

The growing popularity of action research (AR) is directly related to the process throughout which teachers have begun to be perceived as more active stakeholders in education (Burns, 2009). Action research facilitates the development of teachers as professionals and researchers in many ways such as raising their awareness about what needs to be improved, developing a critical eye towards their own practices, allowing them to include self-inquiry and reflection in their professional lives more and helping them adopt a more organized approach to problem solving (Burns, 2009). In general, it addresses the betterment of context-specific issues, and therefore, the results may not be applicable to different settings (Burns, 2009; Glanz & Heimann, 2019). Overall, the aim of action research is to "bridge the gap between the ideal (the most effective ways of doing things) and the real (the actual ways of doing things) …" (Burns, 2009, p. 290). It is also important to note that action research is not a linear process of change because the next steps of action are determined according to the results of this change, which indicates a trial-

and-error approach (Burns, 2009). In other words, this process may not evolve in the way that teachers have planned, and this is a part of its nature; thus, teachers should be prepared for this kind of ambiguity (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004).

Action research can be carried out individually or with a group of teachers, the latter of which can generate a cooperative work environment and have a positive impact on student achievement (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). In addition, the contribution of every participant to the collaborative study with their own views can provide a diverse understanding not only of the findings but also of the issue that is being investigated (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004).

Similar to other professional development activities, the support that teachers receive has the utmost significance, because that way, they could improve themselves as researchers (Burns, 2009). However, in order not to make action research become a burden on teachers because of its labor-intensive and time-consuming aspects, conditions such as requiring less teaching hours, which could give teachers adequate time to carry out these practices, should be created (Akşit, 2013).

Classroom Research

Classroom research is put forward as an alternative for teachers who would like to challenge themselves in terms of their perception and performance in teaching, and it aims to address classroom-related issues through the collection and analysis of data (Stewart & Farrell, 2013). While action research requires one to make changes in a particular practice based on the results of an intervention process and to repeat the cycle multiple times, for classroom research, it may not be an indicated outcome as the changes might not happen immediately or can only happen on a cognitive level (Check & Schutt, 2012).

Classroom research is also indicated to be a great source for teachers as it can provide other perspectives and accompany them throughout their decision-making processes, which they generally practice based on their intuition and experience (Firth, 2019). Shahim (2021) supports this idea as well and she makes an implication that classroom is the "subject of investigation" (p. 148). Another reason that teachers may find classroom research beneficial could be the fact that it promotes a bottom-up approach by allocating an active and self-sufficient role for teachers, which makes their professional experience both purposeful and worthwhile (Burnard et al., 2015; Firth, 2019). Furthermore, it promotes not only being up-to-date all the time as research involves following the relevant literature, but also reflective practices, which would result in increased motivation, confidence and efficiency in teaching performance (Burnard et al., 2015; Firth, 2019).

Peer Coaching

A peer coach can be described as a "critical friend" which implies positive concepts such as working together, helping each other, showing what can be unnoticed and being able to discuss openly without an evaluative purpose (Richards & Farrell, 2010, p. 148).

Coaching is not a linear process as the steps of it, which are "needs assessment, preparation for observation, observation, and reflection" can be revisited multiple times (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004, p. 79). The target area that the participants of coaching work on is determined by both parties taking into consideration what they would like to work on and improve more, which shows that both participants have equal amount of power (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). This aspect of peer coaching distinguishes it from mentoring (Richards & Farrell, 2010).

Peer coaching gives the coach and the teacher freedom in determining how to carry out this practice and this is highly contingent on the unique dynamics of the relationship between the two (Richards & Farrell, 2010). Various versions of peer coaching can occur; for example, the coach can give the teacher advice as they chat, they can work on lessons together and team-teach or they can provide feedback to each other based on their lesson observations (Richards & Farrell, 2010). The observations conducted within this practice are different from the observations carried out by the administration, in that while the first have a developmental purpose, the latter is usually a part of appraisals and has judgmental underlying aim, which makes teachers feel stressed (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). As the coach and the coached teacher spend a lot of time and build a close connection, it may be possible that the coached teacher starts to imitate the coach; however, the coach should always remember that her main goal is to guide the coached teacher in her path and in the light of her achievement plan (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004).

Peer coaching has multi-dimensional advantages for all its stakeholders (Richards & Farrell, 2010). The coach feels motivated as a result of being acknowledged and appreciated; the coached teacher develops as a professional thanks to the non-judgmental nature of observation and feedback sessions, and as a result, the institution becomes a place with good practitioners who support and help each other (Richards & Farrell, 2010). However, it is important that peer coaching is recognized and prioritized at a workplace, which means that there should be certain times allocated for this practice allowing teachers' engagement (Richards & Farrell, 2010).

Peer Observation

Observations do not have positive connotations for a lot of teachers because they have a top-down structure, generally conducted with the purpose of assessing teachers' performance, and create an imbalance of involvement between the observer and the teacher (Richards & Farrell, 2010).

Through observations, not only less experienced teachers can learn from their more experienced peers and improve their practice, but also new approaches used by the observed teachers can get the observers' attention, generate a self-realization, and encourage them to develop a critical eye towards their own teaching (Richards & Farrell, 2010). Besides the benefit of improved practice, observations can produce other positive results such as a collaborative and harmonious work environment (Richards & Farrell, 2010).

On the other hand, observations only provide information about lessons which can be seen, so other elements such as "decision making, engagement, problems [and] teaching principles" are likely to be missed by the observer (Richards & Farrell, 2010, p. 87), which proves that it is necessary for the observer and the observed teacher to meet afterwards to talk about the lesson and clarify the points that are ambiguous or unnoticed (Richards & Farrell, 2010).

For observations to be successful, the whole process should be designed thoroughly by including different types of data collection, and the management of institutions should provide all the help that is needed by the teachers (Richards & Farrell, 2010).

Reflection

For more than 30 years, reflection has been one of the most popular concepts and practices of teachers' professional development (Farrell, 2017; Freeman, 2016).

Although there is no consensus on the exact definition of reflection, in general terms, it can be described as the effort to interpret a rather complex and challenging experience by approaching it with different perspectives and immersing oneself in questioning (Freeman, 2016; Walsh, 2013). While the common understanding of reflection may be that it is comprised of a set of tasks to be completed, which generally requires teachers to look back on their instructional performances, explore their choices and the reasons behind some specific incidents, it may actually be more complex, context-specific, and not aimed at betterment in teaching (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Sarab & Mardian, 2022; Walsh, 2013). In the same vein, it can be said that reflection is in fact a very individual action as it totally depends on a person's understanding of and her reaction to a particular situation, which may depend not only on that person's background but also on external factors (Freeman, 2016; Sarab & Mardian, 2022). This can simplify the realization process of needs throughout one's professional development (Freeman, 2016). On the other hand, Walsh (2013) and Hidayati (2018) argue that adding a more collective aspect to reflection can be more beneficial for teachers as they can learn from each other's experiences, create awareness, and offer solutions.

As there are a lot of different job options for language teachers to work in, it cannot be expected for undergraduate programs to prepare teachers for every context. Therefore, self-reflection may act as a tool for teachers to make informed decisions about their syllabus or materials, make meaning of their everyday experiences and transition to work life more smoothly (Hidayati, 2018). It can also help teachers become better learners as self-reflection creates a platform for combining what is learned in theory and what is experienced in practice, which can eventually increase the effectiveness of their teaching performance although this might not be an

immediate change (Hidayati, 2018). Moreover, self-reflection can especially be beneficial for teachers who are in the beginning or their career to deal with practical problems they encounter since it is possible that their pre-service education may fail to prepare them for real life circumstances of novice teachers (Hidayati, 2018).

One of the issues about reflective practices is that they are generally included in obligatory institutional professional development activities and may not be designed in a way that takes teachers' personal differences into consideration (Walsh, 2013). As a result, they may become repetitive and unappealing tasks which teachers do not invest in and are only involved because they have to without intrinsic motivation, and they may not become a regular part of teachers' professional life (Walsh, 2013). That is why the reflective process can be differentiated by making it more collaborative and including spoken features in addition to the written ones (Sarab & Madian, 2022; Walsh, 2013).

Teacher Portfolios

Tucker et al. (2002) define a teacher portfolio as "a structured collection of selected artifacts that demonstrate a teacher's competence and growth" (p. 3). Adding to the previous description, Taş and Cengizhan (2013) state that this collection of works, which encompasses not only cognitive but also practical proof, is a result of thorough contemplation about one's professional skills, identity, and development. Thanks to technological advancements, teachers can now prepare their portfolios electronically as well, which not only adds an interactive aspect to the portfolios, but also enables teachers to be more creative (Bala et al., 2012).

Portfolios can be used in many different contexts and can easily be modified according to the purpose of their usage, and the needs of teachers or institutions (Tucker et al., 2002). As opposed to the top-down and judgmental approaches to

teachers' professional development, portfolios have become a preferred alternative due to their more comprehensive, individualistic, and developmental nature (Tucker et al., 2002). In addition, they are perceived to be more reasonable methods of performance evaluation by teachers, because portfolios provide a chance for them to show a wide range of evidence about their improvement instead of a one-time-only class observation, which supports the multiple-sided quality of teaching profession and reveals the generally unnoticed work happening in the background (Tucker et al., 2002). Another reason why a teacher portfolio is considered an efficient way of professional development is that teachers are the agents and the decision-makers of the process as they choose what to include in their portfolios, which makes it more meaningful for them and creates a platform to show their stance on teaching (Taş & Cengizhan, 2013; Tucker et al., 2002). In that sense, through "self-reflection" (Tucker et al., 2002, p. 7), teachers can become aware of the areas which they need to work on and take action in a self-determined way (Taş & Cengizhan, 2013).

Although preparing portfolios may require time-wise dedication and constant hard work, and therefore may become difficult to fulfil in teachers' busy schedules, it is more likely that the positive outcomes outweigh the hardships (Taş & Cengizhan, 2013). The increase in the level of teachers' preparedness which may foster students' interest and attentiveness, and teachers' increased self-esteem and job contentment resulting in the realization of how important lifelong learning is could be some examples of these beneficial consequences (Bala et al., 2012; Taş & Cengizhan, 2013). In spite of the fact that portfolios demonstrate a teacher's individual professional journey, they may also play a communicative and collaborative role at a workplace, in that portfolios may encourage teachers to share their work with each

other and facilitate the creation of a supportive community, which can also be another positive aspect (Bala et al., 2012; Tucker et al., 2002).

Team Teaching

Team teaching can be a beneficial practice for every stakeholder that are involved in it such as teachers, students, and administrators (Buckley, 2000; Plank, 2011). As the name suggests, teaching involves a team of teachers, and in addition, the process covers making decisions about the lesson together, which includes determining the aims for a class, planning together, meeting after teaching to discuss about the class taught and the next course of action (Buckley, 2000). These parts of the process foster a learning community, encourages sharing and learning between teachers, and thus, allows for teachers to strengthen their bonds and friendship (Buckley, 2000). Observing each other and providing constructive feedback, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of each other in a supportive manner reflecting on performances also contribute to a positive working environment, increases teachers' self-confidence and motivation, which plays a great role in retaining teachers (Buckley, 2000; Plank, 2011). Having a group of teachers who take action to improve themselves constantly, thus, content to work at their institution for a long time without feeling stuck in a monotonous cycle could also be an advantage for administrators (Buckley, 2000). Furthermore, observing their teachers working hard for their classes and being in constant contact and support with each other can portray an excellent example for students, which could promote lifelong learning (Buckley, 2000; Plank, 2011).

On the other hand, there may be challenges of team teaching, although they are usually outweighed by the benefits (Buckley, 2000; Plank, 2011). For example, as the process is labor intensive and time consuming, teachers may expect a financial

reward to carry it out (Buckley, 2000). In addition, teachers' personalities could create difficulty since some people may not be open to change, receiving feedback or may have dominant character traits (Buckley, 2000). Regarding students, it may become more difficult to form a routine and habits in a classroom because of the constant change and action happening although some of the students may enjoy monotony and not being an active participant at all times (Buckley, 2000).

Effective Professional Development in Education

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), effective professional development is "structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes" (p. v). It is stated that taking what teachers want into consideration may make professional development more effective (Leahy & Torff, 2013). Furthermore, Diaz-Maggioli (2004) notes that for professional development to be effective, it should be regarded as a career-long process which is in line with the specific context of teachers socially and practically. In addition, teachers may have diverse educational and career backgrounds. Thus, professional development should be varied so that it appeals to every teacher who is going through different stages in their lives (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Leahy & Torff, 2013; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987).

As the aforementioned characteristics show, the conception of effective professional development varies greatly in literature. However, it is possible to find some common features. First, it is argued that professional development should not only help teachers expand their theoretical knowledge, but it should also provide opportunities to enhance their instruction, which is one of the primary purposes of professional development (Borko et al., 2010; Guskey, 2002). Desimone (2009) suggests that initially, professional development should have an impact on teachers'

perceptions and behaviors so that they can better their in-class practices. The demonstration of how new methods can be implemented as well as the involvement of teachers are also underlined because teachers need to be able to experiment with what they learn as part of their professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In addition, the combination of theoretical and practical aspects of professional development can affect the choices teachers make in terms of lesson planning and evaluation (Timperley, 2008). Another reason why teachers can benefit from this kind of approach is that they are pragmatic, that is, their interest can be captured if professional development is directly related to their context and if it has a practical application (Leahy & Torff, 2013).

The changes in teaching are generally associated with student achievement (Campbell et al., 2004; Desimone, 2009; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Guskey, 2002; Leahy & Torff, 2013; Timperley, 2008). According to Guskey (2002), achievement is not only limited to students' performance in evaluations, but it also encompasses their engagement, participation, and interest in learning. In this sense, teachers need to be cognizant of students' needs so that they can equip themselves with the necessary information and abilities, which is one of the determiners of effective professional development (Timperley, 2008).

Another important element which makes professional development effective is that institutions provide continuous opportunities for teachers (Borko et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; DiPaola & Wagner, 2018; Guskey, 2002; Leahy & Torff, 2013; Timperley, 2008;). For Guskey (2002), in order to observe long-term retention of newly learned practices, teachers' improvement should be monitored, and teachers should be offered help whenever they need. Moreover, Timperley (2008) emphasizes that professional development is "cyclical" rather than "linear"

(p. 15), because while improving, teachers make adjustments in their already existing knowledge and involve themselves in a trial-and-error phase. In other words, as teacher learning could be intricate, basing teachers' professional development on a "process-product model" could be problematic (Smith, 2017, p. 11). In this regard, the amount of time allocated for professional development should be arranged taking the way teachers learn into consideration (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). As a result, teachers' involvement in constant professional development supports their life-long growth as professionals (Leahy & Torff, 2013).

It is also emphasized that professional development should create an interactive environment where teachers can share their experiences and learn from one another (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; DiPaola & Wagner, 2018; Ekşi, 2010; Karaaslan, 2003; Leahy & Torff, 2013; Parhamnia & Farahian, 2021; Richards & Farrell, 2010; Timperley, 2008). It is suggested that this aspect of professional development is especially important for teachers' learning process since similar purposes and difficulties that teachers face unite them, and that way, they can guide and help each other (Richards & Farrell, 2010; Timperley, 2008;).

Lastly, it is noted that effective professional development should "encourage personal and professional reflection" (Leahy & Torff, 2013, p. 108). This feature of professional development is in line with the cyclical aspect of teachers' learning and improvement process, which includes learning, applying, observing the outcomes, and modifying instructional practices accordingly (Timperley, 2008).

Professional Development in Language Teaching

Similar progress has been made in the field of professional development for language teachers. Changes in the world are reflected on languages, making them

ever-evolving (Babanoğlu & Yardımcı, 2017). English is one of these languages with

a growing significance, and this has had a global impact which is the interest in

teaching and learning English and the inclusion of English in many curricula around

the world (Babanoğlu & Yardımcı, 2017). Developments in the language result in the

emergence of different techniques and approaches in teaching English, and in this

sense, professional development builds the bridge between these changes and

teachers who are the main stakeholders of the teaching process (Babanoğlu &

Yardımcı, 2017). Therefore, the role of professional development in language

teaching should receive attention and be stressed (Babanoğlu & Yardımcı, 2017).

As the individuality of second language teachers has started to be in the

forefront of professional development, the content-based focus has changed its

direction towards a practice-based one (Freeman, 2009). Johnson (2009) emphasizes

that professional development of second language teachers is in fact a dynamic and

reciprocal process, that is, teachers take an active role in internalizing what they

learn and turn it into a meaningful practice. She also points out that the professional

development process is highly interactive which is supported by collegiality and is in

line with teachers' everyday experiences in their classes (Johnson, 2009). Moreover,

it is argued that because of the evolving state of second language teaching, it is of

high importance that there are multiple and ongoing occasions for teachers to keep

up with recent developments and provide a better educational experience for their

students (Johnson, 2009; Richards & Farrell, 2010).

Similarly, Mann (2005) describes the major characteristics of language

teacher professional development. He states that this process engages teachers as

decision-makers, is not necessarily contingent on institutions, is ongoing, and

involves individual differences (Mann, 2005).

Self-Initiated Professional Development

For more than 50 years, self-directed learning has been getting attention from various areas of research (Merriam et al., 2007). Although it is possible to find many different definitions of this concept, highlighting all the significant aspects of it, Merriam et al. (2007) put forward a comprehensive description and state that it is the "process of learning, in which people take the primary initiative for planning, carrying out, and evaluating their own learning experiences" (p. 110). As this definition indicates, self-directed learning requires having the sense of responsibility, a high level of self-awareness and ability for self-reflection to determine one's own needs, intrinsic motivation and confidence to make decisions and have control over one's learning journey (Bull, 2017; Merriam et al., 2007). In addition, to take action, a person needs to like and be interested in learning, be willing to reject the role of a passive learner and own the agency (Bull, 2017). It is also mentioned that this type of learning can happen both at or outside a workplace, and with or without a facilitator (Bull 2017; Merriam et al., 2007). Even though the name "self-directed" suggests individuality, Bull (2017) claims otherwise and states that it is a highly cooperative process. He also underlines that evaluation of one's progress is a fundamental element of self-directed learning.

In terms of professional development, over the years, the central role of teachers has influenced how it is viewed. As educational institutions are generally structured primarily focusing on the students' but not the teachers' learning processes, teachers' improvement in a professional way generally depends on their own efforts (Veen et al., 2012). Parallel to the aforementioned definitions, self-initiated, or "self-directed" professional development (Louws et al., 2017, p. 172) as a term therefore indicates teachers' becoming more aware of their needs and

interests, and more independent in shaping their own learning journey as a result of their self-motivation and dedication (Louws et al., 2017; Priajana, 2017).

Differing from traditional conceptions, self-initiated professional development promotes and generates possibilities of experimentation for teachers in which they can combine theory and practice, and highlights learning through reflective practices and from peers and students (Alshaikhi, 2020; Li, 2019; Sharifzadeh & Khojasteh, 2018). Therefore, this form of professional development is being more favored as it directly addresses teachers' needs determined by themselves and it can be tailor-made for their own contexts (Alshaikhi, 2020). In addition, not having to be a part of institutionally provided professional development may make the experience more purposeful and relevant for teachers, and this can be another reason for the preference of self-initiated professional development (Priajana, 2017; Zerey, 2018). In the same vein, self-initiated professional development means that teachers are ready to be autonomous, which may lead to more positive perceptions about professional development and more participation in professional development activities (Irgatoğlu, 2021; Karaaslan, 2003).

Although self-initiated professional development may seem suitable for today's educational context, it may not be simple to facilitate it in practice because of the passive role that has been prescribed for teachers on many levels (Smith, 2017). Recently, the importance of teachers' willingness has been recognized and it is considered to be the first and one of the most vital elements for teachers to be engaged in professional development, which indirectly refers to institutional patterns and implies that not the administrative enforcement of professional development, but the support about it is mostly needed by teachers (Abbasi, 2015; Karaaslan, 2003; Priajana, 2017; Sarıyıldız, 2017; Sharifzadeh & Khojasteh, 2018; Zerey, 2018).

Teachers are also becoming more aware that it is mainly their responsibility to follow and adapt to current changes and trends and be more eager to take the initiative to direct their own professional development (Abbasi, 2015; Alshaikhi, 2020; Simegn, 2014).

Relevant Studies

International Context

It is possible to find many studies about professional development of teachers in literature. An example in the international context could be Sadeghi and Richards' (2021) study which focused on the kinds of professional development activities Iranian teachers attended and the reasons of their involvement. It was revealed that the participation rate was very low, and the engagement of teachers in professional development was limited to individual activities. It was also pointed out that teachers were generally not motivated and interested in professional development and a gave a variety of answers for why they were involved in professional development, which included earning more income, improving their proficiency in English, and having a better job.

Another example is the study conducted in Kosovo by Mustafa and Paçarizi (2021), which explored 16 pre-university EFL teachers' perceptions about a 100-hour professional development program. Through an analysis of qualitative data, they aimed to find out if the program caused a change in the teachers' knowledge and skills. In the light of the findings, they proposed the qualities of effective professional development, which are "coherence" and "community of practice" (Mustafa & Paçarizi, 2021, p. 9). The results also revealed that although the teachers had doubts about the effectiveness of the professional development program and were hesitant to change, their thoughts altered as they observed that their students

reacted positively to their new practices; therefore, it was concluded that the program had a positive impact in general. In addition, the fact that the program enabled teachers to participate actively and combined theory with practice made it more relevant to teachers' context. Another reason why the program was found effective was that it gave the teachers a chance to collaborate and learn from each other, which emphasized the importance of creating a "community of practice" (Mustafa & Paçarizi, 2021, p. 10).

In addition, in the context of Australian middle school education, Main and Pendergast (2015) created a tool that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of continuous professional development (CPD), which was indicated to be likely to generate positive consequences regarding student achievement. The tool, which is a survey, was used in various CPD occasions and more than 450 teachers completed it. Although the study did not aim to show the results of the collected data, it demonstrated a sample which indicated the results gathered after a CPD event. From the findings, it can be observed that the participants highlighted the role of the professional development facilitators and emphasized that they should find ways to engage their audience by addressing the teachers' specific needs in their contexts and by creating opportunities for them to be active. Therefore, administering a survey for a needs analysis was suggested to be a good idea. Moreover, it was suggested that the CPD initiators should gather feedback from the teachers who joined an event and take it into consideration to provide a better experience for the upcoming occasions. It was also revealed that the participants favored professional development which had practical applications and included collaborative aspects.

Furthermore, in her comparative qualitative research, Yücedağ (2020) studied how Turkish, German and Spanish EFL teachers perceived professional

development. As a result of the interviews, 45 EFL teachers who worked at K-12 level in these three countries unanimously emphasized that professional development was a continuous process which helped teachers adapt to recent advancements in education. It was also revealed that Spanish and German EFL teachers defined professional development mainly as "trainings" (Yücedağ, 2020, p. 96). Yücedağ (2020) also reported that unlike the EFL teachers in Germany and Spain, Turkish teachers were not the agents of their own professional development and had rather a passive role in activities provided for them by their schools.

Casale's (2011) study whose participants were elementary, middle, and high school teachers from a public school district in Rhode Island was about teachers' perceptions on professional development. As a result of the survey and focus group discussions, Casale (2011) found out that teachers valued the professional development activities if they addressed their practical needs, gave them a chance to choose the content, and collaborate with other teachers. However, it was also revealed that many of these activities were not ongoing, that is, they were not supported by coaching or mentoring.

Moreover, Parhamnia and Farahian (2021) conducted a study which focused on the perceptions of tertiary level Iranian EAP teachers about knowledge sharing, exploring if their perceptions were related to their professional development and the factors hindering community building. According to the results of this mixed-methods study, knowledge sharing was found to be an efficient method and it was perceived positively by the participants. In addition, it was revealed that the participants' perceptions about knowledge sharing was highly related to their professional development. In terms of the factors affecting the development of learning communities for teachers negatively, the results showed that the teachers did

not trust and collaborate with each other enough and there was a lack of administrative support to encourage and create a work atmosphere which could facilitate more open communication among colleagues. Parhamnia and Farahian (2021) also suggested that both informal and formal conversations could be beneficial for teachers who were at different stages of their careers; however, they also indicated that in their context, the cruciality of community building among teachers was hardly recognized.

In a recent mixed-methods study of Fitzpatrick et al. (2022), through questionnaires and interviews, they explored the current experiences, expectations, wants and needs of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers working in the U.K. The results showed that teachers thought professional development should be tailor-made for their contexts, continuous, and involve both theoretical and practical features. They also emphasized the importance of being aware of developments in the field, and the community building among teachers, which could be accomplished by creating more platforms for teachers to share their experiences with each other such as "peer observation" (Fitzpatrick et al., 2022, p. 8). In addition, it was pointed out that as professional development should be considered as an integral component of teaching profession, there should be specific times allocated for teachers to spend time on these practices.

Simegn (2014) aimed to investigate secondary school Ethiopian EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding their self-initiated professional development and conducted a study using a questionnaire and open-ended questions. The results indicated that teachers felt a "need for practicing self-initiated PD activities and opportunities in their career" (Simegn, 2014, p. 1110). In addition, it was revealed that teachers found reflective practices valuable, put great emphasis on

their self-improvement and were mostly aware that it was their responsibility to direct their own professional development. "[R]eading other books, magazines and publications; conversations with colleagues, listening to radio and watching movies" were not included in the teachers' self-initiated activities (Simegn, 2014, p. 1111). Teachers also pointed out that not being able to find materials and not receiving enough support from their schools were the most influential factors hindering their self-initiated professional development.

In a qualitative study conducted with seven high school English teachers in Cirebon, Indonesia, Priajana (2017) found out that the professional development activities that teachers participate in together were beneficial both socially and professionally, and they were more preferred rather than the individual activities. In-house professional development activities were favored by the teachers compared to others taking place outside their schools as those activities addressed their specific work-related issues. Moreover, it was stated that teachers can also be involved in some activities alone such as "individual reading, joining online professional community, writing articles and … reflective activities such as self-monitoring and reflective writing journal" (Priajana, 2017, p. 39), which can have diverse positive effects on the teachers depending on their personal needs and can contribute to their self-exploration. Priajana (2017) recommended at the end of her study that professional development of teachers should be continuous and supported and encouraged by the administration of schools.

In another study which investigated how English language teachers in Iran perceived self-initiated professional development, the participants were 48 EFL teachers who worked for different institutions and taught different age groups and levels (Abbasi, 2015). The quantitative findings which were obtained through a

questionnaire showed that teachers shared the opinion that they should take the responsibility of their own professional development. They also agreed on the significance of collaboration among teachers, and therefore, the role of problem-solving was emphasized. However, it was observed that action research and peer observation were not considered crucial by the majority of the participants. Following the developments in the field of teaching, trying new techniques, and having the flexibility to change were among the characteristics that the participants thought as necessary. Regarding the factors that prevent the participants' professional development, it was revealed that "personal financial problems", "excessive workload" and "lack of communication among colleagues" were the most dominant ones (Abbasi, 2015, p. 179). Overall, it was inferred that EFL teachers' professional development highly depends on how interested, motivated, and eager they were.

Another study conducted in Iran investigated how EFL teachers working at private and public institutions perceived self-initiated professional development (Sharifzadeh & Khojasteh, 2018). "Willingness, collaboration with colleagues, being up-to-date, and teacher reflection" were found to be the major aspects of professional development by 82 EFL teachers (Sharifzadeh & Khojasteh, 2018, p. 101). Although most participants valued collegiality, "peer observation" was not among the activities that were practiced much and considered significant (Sharifzadeh & Khojasteh, 2018, p. 113). Sharifzadeh and Khojasteh (2018) also observed that public school teachers had a more negative approach towards professional development and took less responsibility of their own professional development compared to the private school teachers. These participants thought differently about the reasons hindering

their professional development as well. However, they agreed that it was important to use "students' feedback" for the betterment of their instructional ability.

In the qualitative study conducted with Saudi EFL teachers working in public schools, Alshaikhi (2020) found out that teachers valued their professional development greatly. It was also revealed that teachers were aware of their responsibility regarding professional development and favored the type of professional development which they can initiate and shape since it could provide experimental experiences, make them more involved and create a cooperative environment. They also believed that it should be ongoing so that they could remain up-to-date. Experience in teaching practice was emphasized as one of the main sources of improving professionally along with using online sources, peer interaction, pursuing graduate degrees and gaining teaching qualifications. Activeness and the right to make decisions were also pointed out as some of the most essential concepts to be underlined for teachers in order to start a positive change in terms of teacher professional development.

The quantitative study carried out by Louws et al. (2017) involved Dutch secondary teachers and investigated their self-directed learning preferences. According to the results, teachers had high levels of motivation to have the option to choose what they learned. In addition, it was revealed that in terms of content, the teachers were more interested in activities related to technology and the ones which are practical, theoretical, and specific to their context. It was also observed that the teachers who had less experience had a tendency towards hands-on activities rather than more individual ones such as reading. In relation to this finding, it was pointed out that the teachers also favored collective and reflective practices in their learning processes.

Turkish Context

There are some studies focusing on EFL teachers' professional development in Türkiye, too. For instance, Çalışkan's (2021) study took place in the K-12 context and explored the perceptions of 13 English language teachers about professional development in addition to their reasons of participation, and difficulties they faced. The study showed that most teachers related the improvement in their classroom practices with their students' success. It was also noted that teachers underlined the cooperative aspect of professional development and online opportunities. Moreover, it was reported that the greatest challenge for them regarding their involvement in professional development was the time constraints due to their busy schedule. Furthermore, Çalışkan (2021) pointed out that as the professional development opportunities offered by schools were not in line with the teachers' context-specific needs, teachers did not find them beneficial, and thus, expressed disinterest and unwillingness to attend them.

In the same vein, Korkmazgil (2015) studied the perceptions of 41 English language teachers working at K-12 and tertiary level about their professional development experiences including their demands and difficulties. Her study showed that teachers would like to improve their "English language proficiency and speaking skills, knowledge and skills in ELT methodology", and that they would like to learn more about "incorporating technology into language teaching, and materials development and adaptation" (p. 167). Furthermore, Korkmazgil (2015) reported that the top-down structure of schools was the main reason behind teachers' assuming a passive role in professional development. Her study also indicated that professional development should be geared towards teachers' specific contexts and shaped with their contribution.

In addition, a study conducted by Korkmazgil and Seferoğlu (2015) investigated the professional development practices, needs and difficulties of non-native primary and secondary school EFL teachers in Antalya, Türkiye. The results revealed that the majority of teachers attended seminars and workshops; however, these activities were mandatory and mostly organized by their institutions, which showed the teachers' lack of awareness regarding bottom-up professional development and self-initiated practices. It was also found that the participants did not find the professional development activities they had participated in very useful. Similarly, the findings indicated that there was a need for more professional development opportunities especially to become better in classroom management and to improve technological skills. In terms of the challenges the teachers faced, it was stated that the teachers were not content with the course books they used, and they did not have the freedom to make changes in their curriculum or materials, which pointed out the lack of agency for teachers. The participants also suggested that teachers should be provided with travel or study opportunities abroad, and they highlighted the importance of online community membership to be informed about more professional development events.

In their 2020 study, Karakaş and Yücedağ explored EFL teachers' perceptions and activities regarding professional development. The participants were experienced English teachers who worked at state schools in Burdur, Türkiye. The results showed that the majority of teachers considered that professional development was an ongoing process, helped them be up-to-date and included instructional experience. In terms of the activities, the participants were mostly involved in in-service trainings, projects on both national and international scale, workshops, seminars and courses which were cost-free. It was also found that

professional development played a motivational role in increasing teachers' self-esteem and contentment not only professionally, but also personally. The participants also added that professional development encouraged them to practice reflection, have a sharing and collaborating community, and be more useful for their students' success. As for the challenges they faced, the teachers pointed out the economic difficulties, time-related issues, technological problems and obstacles generated by administration. As a result, Karakaş and Yücedağ (2020) suggested that the views of the teachers about professional development did not indicate much awareness about more visionary approaches, but they were rather limited to more traditional ways, which could highly be related to their specific context.

In the context of tertiary level education, the study of Mitton-Kükner, who was a novice teacher educator, and Akyüz (2012), who was an EFL teacher in the beginning of her career, presented a more personal aspect of teachers' professional development and revealed that the experiences of two colleagues working at the same institution could be beneficial for each other though they might come from different cultural and educational backgrounds. This kind of practice also revealed that Mitton-Kükner and Akyüz (2012) had more common ground than they had thought, in that they realized they both felt insecure and isolated at their workplace due to the lack of collaboration. Moreover, their study indicated the inadequate number of opportunities for teacher educators to improve themselves professionally and the role of the lack of communication between colleagues in their research efforts.

Another example in the Turkish context could be the exploratory study of Türüdü (2020) which focused on the motivations of 14 EFL teachers working at a private higher education institution regarding a professional development program

provided by the institution and how this program could be useful as perceived by the teachers. The results revealed that teachers had different reasons for attending the professional development program such as "learning from and with others, reflecting on their teaching, a desire to be part of a community, the group, the trainers, and the planning of the program" (Türüdü, 2020, p. 121). It was also stated that the program facilitated the formation of a community, put teachers in a central position, encouraged teachers to make alterations in their teaching, and increased their self-esteem as professionals.

In addition, Ekşi's study which was conducted in the Turkish tertiary level educational context focused on the professional development needs of teachers. Ekşi (2010) worked with 92 English preparatory school instructors who worked at a state university in İstanbul, Türkiye, and through a needs assessment questionnaire, the researcher gathered information in various areas. The results showed that the instructors' perceived professional development positively, and they emphasized the collaborative side of professional development by indicating that they needed more support from external sources. It was also found out that the instructors would like to learn the newest developments in the teaching field and how to use technology more. In addition, the results regarding the instructors' experiences suggested that the majority of them communicated with their peers. For them, writing and speaking were indicated to be the most challenging skills to teach and evaluate. Moreover, according to the findings of the study, professional development activities taking place at a time that is not convenient for the teachers and having content that did not address the instructors' everyday experiences were pointed out to be the hindering aspects of professional development.

Moreover, a case study conducted by Yüksel (2021) was specifically about the obstacles English language teachers encountered related to their professional development. These English language teachers, who were the participants of this research, worked at the English language preparatory program of a private higher education institution. Yüksel (2021) indicated that professional development leads to teachers' self-discovery as professionals, and advancement in their theoretical and practical knowledge. She added that teachers believed that their institution should also be accountable for their professional development because of the possible beneficial outcomes it may produce for the institution. The study also demonstrated some core elements of effective professional development and suggests that it should be "optional, ongoing, personalized, practice-driven and diverse in terms of the content" (p. 120). However, it was stated that teachers did not have enough time to spend on their professional development, were not given a chance to be in charge of it and did not receive enough support from their workplace, which were suggested as the main challenges the teachers faced.

Güçlü's (2018) research investigated Turkish EFL teacher's perceptions about CPD (continuing professional development) activities. Her quantitative study was conducted at a state university with 107 participants. The results showed that the majority of teachers chose to read online materials over other types of CPD activities, and they often joined reflection sessions and workshops held by their colleagues. Moreover, it was stated that while age and years of experience did not have a significant effect on teachers' preferences of CPD, having a graduate degree and CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) or DELTA (Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) certificates increased their engagement.

In the correlational and causal-comparative study of Irgatoğlu (2021) which was conducted with 271 teachers working at state universities in Ankara, the researcher aimed to find out if teachers were engaged in or how their attitudes were towards professional development activities, and whether they were ready for their self-directed learning. The results showed that teachers' participation level in professional development activities were low and individual activities such as reflective ones were more commonly practiced compared to collaborative ones. It was also revealed that female teachers were more actively involved in professional development activities than their male peers. In addition to the high levels of self-directedness of teachers, willingness was another issue which was emphasized. Regarding the relationship among the variables, it was demonstrated that teachers' attitudes towards professional development and their participation rate in those activities were highly related to each other. It was also stated that a correlation between self-directed learning readiness and teachers' attitudes towards professional development was found. Lastly, it was put forward that self-directed learning readiness and teachers' attitudes were significant factors which can affect their participation rate in professional development activities.

In her 2003 study which involved 110 teachers working at a private university in Ankara, Türkiye, Karaaslan investigated the perceptions of teachers about self-initiated professional development using a questionnaire. It was found that teachers thought that willingness played a significant role in teachers' professional development, and motivation was considered as the first key step. The results also indicated that the teachers were of the opinion that being a lifelong learner, up-to-date and open to change were important qualities that teachers should improve themselves. In addition, it was highlighted that the teachers valued collaboration with

their peers, and preferred reflective practices and self-assessment to develop themselves professionally. The findings of the study also suggested that teachers valued being the agents of their own professional development and taking action without merely relying on their institutions' initiations for professional development. Moreover, it was revealed that teachers' having too many hours to teach, economic challenges, inadequate amount of communication among teachers and absence of self-motivation were suggested to be the hindering elements of the participants' professional development.

In the study that Sarıyıldız (2017) carried out, she explored how Turkish EFL teachers working at preparatory programs of universities in Türkiye perceived self-initiated professional development, the significance of professional development activities and the issues that may affect their professional development negatively. It was also studied if the perceptions of experienced and novice teachers differed. A questionnaire was administered and 70 Turkish EFL teachers from 5 universities in Türkiye responded. The results showed that despite minor disagreements, the participants shared similar opinions about self-initiated professional development and lifelong learning and collaboration were some of the concepts that were underlined. The findings about professional development activities indicated similar results. Sarıyıldız (2017) also found out that the participants were indecisive about the benefit of "peer observation" (p. 254). Although the experienced and novice teachers had different thoughts about what affected their professional development in a negative way, they were of the same opinion that working too much and having inadequate amount of intrinsic motivation were the dominant factors.

In her study, Zerey (2018) explored the attitudes and perceptions of tertiary level EFL teachers in Türkiye about self-directed professional development along

with the factors that might hinder their professional development. In the study in which 96 EFL teachers working in seven state universities in Türkiye participated, it was revealed that teachers thought they should be the ones who should direct their own professional development as they could make the best decisions about which areas to improve and guide their professional development process depending on their needs. Although the participants did not deny the support they got from their institutions, some indicated that their institutions did not provide any opportunities for their professional development, and even if they did, they were compulsory, and they did not address the teachers' individual interests. Peer observation and receiving feedback from supervisors were the only collaborative activities that were not found significant and experienced by the teachers. Reflective practices, adapting to recent changes and practicing newly-learned information were suggested to be the most essential professional development practices. Similar to the findings in previous studies, working too many hours, financial issues and inadequate cooperation among peers and administration were indicated to be the most common elements that could influence teachers' professional development negatively.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Introduction

In this chapter, the methodology regarding the research design, the setting and participants, data collection and the data analysis procedures will be presented.

Research Design

The aim of this study was to explore what tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' self-initiated professional development perceptions and experiences were and if their perceptions differed in terms of their demographics. The participants of the current study were the EFL teachers working at both preparatory and post-preparatory English language programs of universities in Türkiye.

With reference to the aims of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions about self-initiated professional development?

1a. Do their perceptions differ based on:

i.	their age?
ii.	the city they live in?
iii.	the type of university they work at?
iv.	years of teaching experience?
v.	their undergraduate department?
vi.	their master's department?
vii.	having a postgraduate degree?
viii.	having teaching qualifications?

2. What are tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' self-initiated professional development experiences?

In this study, mixed-methods explanatory sequential design was adopted since qualitative data was collected after quantitative data collection process was completed (Creswell, 2008).

Surveys are used when researchers aim to learn "the beliefs and opinions of large groups of people" (Tuckman & Harper, 2012, p. 244). The choice of surveys for the quantitative data collection instrument was considered as the best option since the current study was conducted on a larger scale and the purpose of it was to reach Turkish EFL teachers who work at tertiary level around Türkiye. A survey (Appendix A) adapted from Main and Pendergast (2015), Karaaslan (2003) and Ekşi (2010) was used to obtain quantitative data from Turkish EFL teachers who worked at tertiary level.

The research questions that the survey attempts to answer in this study are related to Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences about self-initiated professional development in the context of tertiary level English education in Türkiye. By asking questions to the people in their sample and using their answers, researchers can learn and make deductions about the opinions of their target population (Tuckman & Harper, 2012). That is why, in the current study, surveys were chosen as the means of collecting quantitative data.

Interviews enable researchers to learn about events from their participants' point of view; therefore, they play a compensatory role in completing the gaps in the findings of surveys (Wellington, 2015). In this research, once the quantitative data was analyzed, one-on-one semi-structured interviews (Appendix B) were conducted to acquire more specific details of the perceptions and experiences of Turkish EFL

teachers who work at English language programs of universities in Türkiye about self-initiated professional development.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted with Turkish EFL teachers working at both preparatory and post-preparatory English language programs of universities in Türkiye. During the data collection phase of this study, there were 291 universities in Türkiye which included 129 state and 79 foundation universities (Higher Education Council, 2022). At these universities, courses were delivered in Turkish, English, or in both languages (British Council & TEPAV, 2015). Universities in which the medium of instruction is a combination of Turkish and English offer only thirty percent of their classes in English (British Council & TEPAV, 2015).

As the importance of learning English has increased since it has become the common language for international communication, the preference for English medium instruction universities has grown (Kırkgöz, 2009). As a result, at these universities, "foreign language centers" have been founded in order to equip students who do not have adequate competency in English with both general and academic knowledge of English, which is a requirement for them to continue their education with their departmental courses (Kırkgöz, 2009, p. 672). These centers are known as "preparatory schools" in Turkish higher education context, and they offer a one-year English language program (British Council & TEPAV, 2015). For almost twenty years, this program has been offered compulsorily to students who are enrolled in English or mixed medium instruction universities (British Council & TEPAV, 2015). However, it can be observed that the number of English language classes decreases gradually throughout students' undergraduate studies; in other words, it is not

possible for students to take as many English language classes as they do in preparatory programs once they complete them. (British Council & TEPAV, 2015).

The target population of this study was the Turkish EFL teachers who work at both preparatory and post-preparatory English language programs of Turkish universities. According to the legislation shared on the official website of The Council of Higher Education, Turkish teachers are required to have a score higher than 85 from the foreign language exam which is called Yabancı Dil Sınavı and administered by the government (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2018). In addition, it is stated that since 2019, it has become mandatory that these teachers have at least a master's degree in an English language related field (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2018).

For this study, snowball sampling was used to reach tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers around Türkiye. This method requires the participants to share the information about the study they are involved in with other people who would fit in the population criteria and like to be a part of the study (Hibberts et al., 2012). The sampling method was utilized to increase the number of participants so that the researcher could make comparisons and draw conclusions using the diversified profile of the participants.

Data was collected from tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers because through their contributions, how professional development is perceived in higher education context could better be reflected. Moreover, it was intended to reach a diversity of respondents in terms of their age, the city they lived in, the type of university they worked at referring to state and foundation universities, their teaching experience, undergraduate department, master's department, if they had a post-graduate degree, or teaching qualifications to present more detailed results about whether their perceptions differed in regard to their demographic information. All of the Turkish

EFL teachers working at the language programs of universities in Türkiye were tried to be reached. However, the response rate was lower than expected. The participants of the study were 67 Turkish EFL teachers. Table 1 below shows the demographics of the survey participants of this study.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Survey Participants

Variable	Category	n	$\%$
Gender	Male	10	14.9
	Female	55	82.1
	I prefer not to mention.	2	3.0
Age	26-30	4	6.0
	31-35	24	35.8
	36-40	17	25.4
	41-45	7	10.4
	46-50	6	9.0
	51+	9	13.4
City	İstanbul	13	19.4
	Ankara	23	34.3
	İzmir	16	23.9
	Other	25	37.3
University type	State	43	64.2
	Foundation	24	35.8
ELT experience	1-5 year(s)	3	4.5
	6-10 years	16	23.9
	11-15 years	20	29.9
	16-20 years	9	13.4
	21 years and more	19	28.4
BA field of study	Teaching English as a Foreign Language	34	50.7
	English Language and Literature	23	34.3
	American Culture and Literature	5	7.4

Table 1 (cont'd)

Demographic Information of Survey Participants

Variable	Category	n	%
BA field of study	English Translation and Interpreting	2	2.9
	English Linguistics	1	1.4
	Other	2	2.9
MA degree	Yes	44	65.6
	No	23	34.3
MA field of study	Teaching English as a Foreign Language	27	40.3
	English Language and Literature	7	10.4
	American Culture and Literature	2	2.9
	Other	9	13.4
PhD Degree	Yes	9	13.4
	No	58	86.5
PhD field of study	Teaching English as a Foreign Language	5	7.4
	English Language and Literature	1	1.4
	American Culture and Literature	1	1.4
	Other	3	4.5
Teaching qualifications	Teaching Certificate (Pedagojik Formasyon)	27	40.3
	CELTA	13	19.4
	TESOL	2	2.9
	DELTA	8	11.9
	TEFL	6	9.0
	None	22	32.8
	Other	6	9.0

As can be seen in Table 1, most participants were female and, in that sense, it can be said that they are good representatives of the general population of Turkish English language teachers. They were between the ages of 31 and 35. The majority

of them had approximately 13 years of English teaching experience and they worked at state universities. It can also be observed that most of the teachers who participated in the survey worked at universities in Ankara. The teachers primarily had a bachelor's degree in the department of teaching English as a foreign language and had MA degrees in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. Most of them had a teaching certificate; however, a considerable number of them did not have any other teaching qualifications, and only a few of them had PhD degrees. Considering all the demographic information mentioned about the participants except for the absence of teachers in their first year of teaching, it can be observed that this group reflects the general qualities of the English language teachers in Türkiye, and therefore, it provides a good representation of the whole population.

Among the survey participants, 14 of them volunteered to take part in one-on-one interviews. The demographics of the interview participants are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Demographic Information of Interview Participants

Variable	Category	n	$\%$
Gender	Male	2	14
	Female	12	86
Age	26-30	1	7
	31-35	6	43
	36-40	3	21
	46-50	2	14
	51+	2	14
City	İstanbul	1	7
	Ankara	8	57
	İzmir	2	14
	Other	3	21

Table 2 (cont'd)

Demographic Information of Interview Participants

Variable	Category	*n*	*%*
University type	State	6	43
	Foundation	8	57
ELT experience	1-5 year(s)	1	7
	6-10 years	4	29
	11-15 years	4	29
	16-20 years	1	7
	21 years and more	4	29
BA field of study	Teaching English as a Foreign Language	11	79
	English Language and Literature	2	14
	American Culture and Literature	1	7
MA degree	Yes	11	79
	No	3	21
MA field of study	Teaching English as a Foreign Language	5	45
	English Language and Literature	1	9
	American Culture and Literature	1	9
	English Translation and Interpreting	1	9
	Other	3	27
PhD degree	Yes	1	7
	No	13	93
PhD field of study	Teaching English as a Foreign Language	1	100
Teaching qualifications	Teaching Certificate (Pedagojik Formasyon)	3	21
	CELTA	4	29
	TESOL	1	7
	DELTA	4	29
	TEFL	1	7
	None	5	36

Table 2 (cont'd)

Demographic Information of Interview Participants

Variable	Category	*n*	*%*
Teaching qualifications	Other	5	36

As Table 2 suggests, most participants were female and between the ages of 31 and 35. Most of them were residents of Ankara and worked at foundation universities. There was an equal number of teachers who had between six and ten, eleven and fifteen, and 21 years and more years of English teaching experience. The majority of them had a bachelor's degree in the department of teaching English as a foreign language and had MA degrees. Most of those who had MA degrees studied teaching English as a foreign language. It can also be observed that only one teacher had a PhD degree and less than half of them had teaching qualifications.

Methods of Data Collection

Turkish EFL teachers who worked at the English language programs of universities in Türkiye were chosen as the participants of the current study. Before the start of data collection process, the approval of Bilkent University Ethics Committee was sought. After the approval was taken, the researcher sent a text message (Appendix C) to 26 people. These people were the previous colleagues and close friends of the researcher and matched the criteria to participate in this study. They were from different parts of Türkiye, experienced and mostly had worked at both state and foundation universities. Therefore, it was considered that their contribution would increase the chance of reaching teachers from various contexts, and therefore, add to the diversity of the data for this study. The message was about the purpose and the content of the research with the link to the online survey. The message was also informative about the one-on-one semi structured interviews which

would take place after the survey data were collected and be on a voluntary basis. In addition, the receivers of the message were asked to share the link with other tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers they might know.

Surveys

The survey which was used in this study was adapted from the tool that Main and Pendergast (2015) developed. The reason why this specific survey was chosen is that Desimone's (2009) core features of professional development were used as its categories and the items were built upon this conceptual framework.

As the tool created by Main and Pendergast (2015) was originally developed to find out information about a particular professional development program, some changes were made. One of the aims of this study was to investigate the self-initiated professional development experiences of Turkish EFL teachers, thus, a part related to that was added to the original survey. Another part was also added with the purpose of gaining demographic information of the participants.

Eventually, the conducted survey (Appendix A) consisted of three sections. The first section was added with the purpose of gaining demographic information of the participants as research question 1a aimed to find out if the participants' perceptions about self-initiated professional development differed according to their demographics. In this section, eight multiple-choice items were created to learn about the participants' gender, age, the city they lived in, the type of university they worked at, their teaching experience, undergraduate department, whether they had a postgraduate degree, or teaching qualifications.

The second section was related to the self-initiated professional development experiences of these teachers. 36 types of professional development activities were presented in the form of a list. These items were created based on the surveys which

were developed by Karaaslan (2003) and Ekşi (2010), and a thorough review of the relevant literature. These surveys were chosen for their comprehensive lists of professional development activities. The participants were expected to mark "Yes" or "No" next to the items to indicate if they experienced those activities or not. Then a sub-section was added, to find out which of these professional development activities were found to be most beneficial. The participants were asked to choose at least three professional development activities that they had participated in and found the most beneficial. In addition, one last item was created for the participants who did not find any activity beneficial.

The last section of the survey aimed to explore the perceptions of tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers about self-initiated professional development. This section is based on the tool created by Main and Pendergast (2015), and it was stated that this survey was used in different contexts and the results were consistent (Main & Pendergast, 2015). However, as it was constructed to find out information about a particular professional development program, some changes were made. First, the items were rephrased by the researcher to make them suitable to learn what Turkish EFL teachers think about professional development in general. Moreover, some items had two constructs, and they were separated since it would not be possible to understand which construct the answer belonged to (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). As a consequence, the number of items increased from 38 to 41. There are five sub-sections, which are "content focus, active learning, coherence, duration and collective participation" (Desimone, 2009, p. 183), and they represent the "core features of professional development" (p. 185). Although these sub-sections and the items within each were presented in a different order in the survey of Main and Pendergast (2015), it was chosen to keep the order that Desimone (2009) preferred in

the framework for the purpose of this survey as she was the creator of that conceptual framework. That framework formed the base of this study; thus, her choice and order were adhered to. In addition, the sub-sections were deleted in the version that is presented to the participants as Wellington (2015) states that the questions in a survey should not be "leading" (p. 195). For validity and reliability purposes, in the version which was shared with the participants, items number 2, 6, 8, 14, 17, 21, 24, 38 and 39 were reversed as they were in the original survey that this tool was adapted from (Main & Pendergast, 2015). A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the items in the survey: *1* indicating s*trongly disagree*, and *5* indicating s*trongly agree*.

The internal reliability of the survey was checked, and it was found to be .865, which is high and within a good range (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). Table 3 displays the Cronbach's alpha result of the survey in general.

Table 3

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of the Survey in General

Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
41	.865

Table 4 below shows the Cronbach's alpha results for the five core features separately.

Table 4

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the Core Features

Core Feature	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Content Focus	9	.731
Active Learning	11	.721
Coherence	8	.507
Duration	6	.815

Table 4 (cont'd)

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the Core Features

Core Feature	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Collective Participation	7	.542

According to Table 4, the responses related to *content focus* showed an alpha coefficient of .731, which indicates a fairly high level of range (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). In terms of *active learning*, Cronbach's alpha was .721 and it is also acceptable (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). Regarding *coherence*, the alpha coefficient was .507, which is again within an "acceptable" range as Taber (2018) suggests (p. 1278). As for *duration*, Cronbach's alpha was .815, which is a good range (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). As regards *collective participation*, the alpha coefficient was .542 and it is also "sufficient" (Taber, 2018, p. 1278).

After the approval of Bilkent University Ethics Committee was obtained, the researcher prepared the online version of the survey via Google Forms, and it was shared through that platform.

Interviews

One-on-one semi-structured interviews (Appendix B) were conducted with 14 survey participants who volunteered. The questions asked to the participants in the interview addressed all the research questions of the current study.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the interview, the questions and the protocol were piloted, and necessary changes were made with the purpose of eliminating any kind of ambiguity or complexity that could possibly be experienced by the participants. Those changes were not major and were mostly related to the wording. For instance, in question 3, as the word "element" caused confusion, it was eliminated, and the question was rephrased. Similarly, to clarify the time frame in

question 4, the phrase "so far" was added at the end of the sentence. Moreover, in 4. c. ii., to be more specific, "Think about this imaginary ideal experience" was added in the beginning of the question, and the phrase "provided for" was preferred instead of "offered to". Lastly, one more question was added at the end of the interview to ask if the participants had anything else to mention. As a result, 8 questions with 11 sub-questions were asked to the participants.

The interviews took approximately 40 minutes each. In total, the recordings of the interviews lasted for 530 minutes (almost nine hours), and the transcriptions were 63,633 words long. They were carried out via Zoom, which is an online platform for virtual meetings. A virtual environment was preferred for the interviews as it was beneficial both for the researcher and the participants in terms of time and place arrangements and technical convenience. Moreover, the participants could be contacted without having to meet in person, which also provided health safety in terms of Covid-19 not only for the researcher but also for the participants. The interviews were video recorded and were transcribed by the researcher using the dictation option of Microsoft Word Online. It is important to note that the interviews were conducted in English; however, this was not viewed as a potential limitation in this study as the participants were all English teachers and were very competent with the language.

Regarding ethical considerations, the participants' consent (Appendix D) was sought. They were also informed that the researcher would record the interviews so that they could be transcribed later. Moreover, the participants were assured that the recordings would be kept confidential and would only be used for the current study.

Pilot Study

Pilot tests enable researchers to find out if their survey "items achieve the desired qualities of measurement and discrimination" (Tuckman & Harper, 2012, p. 265). They are also considered as a very important phase of conducting surveys as they create the opportunity for the researchers to do the necessary editing if need be (Tuckman & Harper, 2012; Wellington, 2015). For this purpose, not only the surveys but also the interview questions were piloted. 26 Turkish EFL teachers participated in the pilot study and two of them volunteered for one-on-one semi-structured interviews.

Feedback was obtained from the participants of the study regarding the time needed to complete the survey, the clarity of the items in the survey and the interview questions. Based on the feedback, some items were rephrased and added in the second and third sections of the survey. For example, it was found out that in the second section of the survey, there was an ambiguity about the meaning of items 2, 24, 25 and 26. Therefore, instead of using the word "professionals", "practitioners" was used in item 2. In items 24 and 25, "new" was capitalized to draw more attention. For item 24, "working on" was replaced with "preparing" and for item number 26, rather than using "techniques" only, it was preferred to use "teaching techniques" to make it clearer. Similarly, for item 26, the verb "work on" was replaced with the verb "create". In addition, to prevent the ambiguity about the coverage of "activities", the phrase was changed into "in-class teaching activities". Moreover, "online or face-to-face" was written in parentheses for items 7 and 12, and for item 8, "webinars" were added next to "seminars", as it was observed that with the original wording, teachers were not sure about the medium of some of the activities listed. In addition to these changes, based on the other professional

development activity suggestions made by the participants, items 13 and 14 were added. Lastly, in the third section of the survey, "strategies" was omitted as it was observed that the understanding of the concept could vary among teachers.

Regarding the interview questions, minor changes were made in terms of wording and one question was added. For instance, in question 3, instead of saying "…what are the elements that make professional development effective", it was rephrased as "… what makes professional development effective". In question 4, "so far" was added at the end of the sentence as it was found out that teachers were not sure what to talk about in the pilot when this question was asked. The same situation was faced in question 4. c. ii. That is why, in the beginning of the sentence, "Think about this imaginary ideal experience" was added, and the phrase "offered to" was replaced with "provided for". Adding question 8 to the interview questions was the last change that was made.

Methods of Data Analysis

As this study had a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Once the quantitative data was obtained through surveys, it was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics on Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The second section of the survey, which was about the tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' self-initiated professional development experiences, was analyzed using descriptive statistics and the mean scores and standard deviation results were used to investigate which professional development activities were experienced more and found the most beneficial.

The third section of the survey was about the perceptions of the same group of participants about self-initiated professional development, and both descriptive

statistics and inferential statistics by using Independent samples *t*-test and Mann Whitney *U* test were utilized to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were used to show the means and standard deviations of the answers given to the survey questions which indicated the participants' thoughts about the issue. The Independent samples *t*-test and Mann Whitney *U* test were conducted to see if their perceptions differed according to their demographics regarding the core features of professional development which are "content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, collective participation" (Desimone, 2009, p. 184).

First, the normality tests were run in order to see if all the groups met the normality assumption. Skewness and kurtosis values were checked, and z-scores were calculated. Gravetter and Wallnau (2013) put forward that the range of z-scores should be within 1.96 and -1.96 for a normally distributed data set.

The results of the normality tests showed that for *content focus* and *active learning*, which are the first two core features, all the groups met the normality assumption. Regarding *coherence*, the distributions were normal except for four variables which are age, city, experience and having a master's degree. In terms of *duration*, which is the fourth core feature, there were more groups that did not meet the assumption of normality. These groups were regarding the participants' age, the city they lived in, the type of university they worked at, the years of their teaching experience, their undergraduate department, if they had a master's degree or teaching qualifications. For the last core feature *collective participation*, the groups related to age, years of teaching experience, undergraduate department, having a master's degree and the master's department did not meet the normality assumption.

In the light of these tests, the groups that Independent samples *t*-tests can be run with were determined. In total, 24 Independent samples *t*-tests were used. For the

core features *content focus* and *active learning*, the tests were run with all the variables. However, for *coherence*, only four tests could be used for four variables which were the type of university the participants worked at, their undergraduate and master's departments and whether they had teaching qualifications. For the core feature *duration*, only one Independent samples *t*-test could be run and that was for the participants' master's departments. Lastly, in terms of *collective participation*, three tests were done regarding the city the participants lived in, the type of university they worked at and if they had teaching qualifications. Levene's test was conducted for each *t*-test to see whether the variances were homogenous or not. The results of the *t*-tests were checked depending on the results of Levene's test.

However, as mentioned earlier, some parts of the data were not found to be distributed normally, thus, Mann Whitney *U* tests, which were nonparametric tests, were used. 16 Mann Whitney *U* tests were used in total. For the core feature *coherence*, the tests were run for four variables which are the participants' age, the city they lived in, their years of teaching experience, and if they had a master's degree or not. In terms of *duration*, there were seven variables that these tests were used. Those variables were the participants' age, the city they lived in, the type of university they worked at, their years of teaching experience, their undergraduate department, whether they had a master's degree or teaching qualifications. The last core feature that Mann Whitney *U* tests were run with was *collective participation*, and there were five variables which were the participants' age, their years of teaching experience, their undergraduate department, whether they had a master's degree, and their master's department.

Following these procedures, the qualitative data which was collected via one-on-one semi structured interviews were analyzed through content analysis which

"applies significance or meaning to information […] collected and helps to identify patterns in the text" (Birmingham & Wilkinson, 2003, p. 68). It can also help the researcher to reveal the concealed representations from the way participants tell their stories (Birmingham & Wilkinson, 2003). Content analysis took place once the recorded interviews were transcribed with the help of the dictation option of Microsoft Word Online, which was preferred because it could create mostly accurate transcriptions specifying the speakers. The transcriptions were read and gone over thoroughly by the researcher to ensure that they matched the audio recordings verbatim.

"Perceptions" and "experiences" were the predetermined parent categories at the beginning of the content analysis process as the current study investigates those of Turkish EFL teachers regarding their self-initiated professional development. The first list of predetermined sub-parent categories comes from the framework of the study based on Desimone's (2009) core features of professional development, and the interview questions. Table 5 below shows these predetermined categories.

Table 5

Predetermined Parent and Sub-parent Categories

Parent Category	Sub-parent Category
Perceptions	Content Focus
	Active Learning
	Coherence
	Duration
	Collective Participation
	Willingness
Experiences	Content Focus
	Active Learning
	Coherence
	Duration

Table 5 (cont'd)

Predetermined Parent and Sub-parent Categories

Parent Category	Sub-parent Category
Experiences	Collective Participation
	Willingness

Once the predetermined categories were prepared, the coding of the interview transcripts was done based on this list. During the coding process, further categories were formed according to the survey questions and interviewee comments creating new levels of categories. For instance, first level coding category *observation* was created under the sub-parent category of *active learning* in the light of the eleventh item in the survey: "PD should give me opportunities to observe other teachers modeling good practice." (Main & Pendergast, 2015). The survey questions under the core feature of *collective participation* were all related to collegiality and peer learning, so first level coding categories such as *peer support* or *networking* were created based on the interview participants' answers as well.

Figure 2 below displays an example of the analysis and coding.

Figure 2

Example Analysis of the Interview Transcripts

EXPERIENCE – Active Learning - Observation

As I said in my previous sentence, so I changed my way of teaching. I tried… I was able to find different teaching techniques not only by joining teaching practices, but by also observing other teacher candidates or the teachers from other institutions. And also, I had the chance to meet different people from different parts of the worlds, so it was also a chance to feel an atmosphere with lots of people from different cultural backgrounds.

EXPERIENCE – Collective Participation - Networking

Microsoft Excel was used in the analysis process, starting with the creation of two spreadsheets for *perceptions* and *experiences*, which were the parent categories. In those sheets, the participant numbers, sub-parent categories, first, second, and third level categories along with the codes and quotations were shown, which were updated and reviewed continuously during the coding of the transcripts. In Figure 3 below, a sample sheet for the analysis is presented.

Figure 3

Sample Sheet for the Analysis of the Interviews

P. Code	Sub Parent Category	First Level Coding Category	Second Level Coding Category	Third Level Coding Category	Code	Quotations	P. No
T7	EXP-/Willingness (Will)	EXP-/Will/ Self-initiated (SI)	EXP-/Will/ SI/Activities (Act)	EXP-/Will/SI/Act/ Post-graduate Studies (Pgra)	EXP-/ Will/SI/ Act/Pgra	"Yeah, enough for me." But *I wanted to do my master's degree.*	10
T7	EXP-/Willingness (Will)	EXP-/Will/ Self-initiated (SI)	EXP-/Will/ SI/Activities (Act)	EXP-/Will/SI/Act/ Post-graduate Studies (Pgra)	EXP-/ Will/SI/ Act/Pgra	*I'm doing my master's degree* … that has been a *great experience* , to be honest.	11
T8	EXP-/Willingness (Will)	EXP-/Will/ Self-initiated (SI)	EXP-/Will/ SI/Activities (Act)	EXP-/Will/SI/Act/ Post-graduate Studies (Pgra)	EXP-/ Will/SI/ Act/Pgra	*MA TEFL* is also… I wanted to apply for it (and still doing it).	12
T10	EXP-/Willingness (Will)	EXP-/Will/ Self-initiated (SI)	EXP-/Will/ SI/Activities (Act)	EXP-/Will/SI/Act/ Post-graduate Studies (Pgra)	EXP-/ Will/SI/ Act/Pgra	Actually, in *MA program* (non-TEFL), I *didn't get more than I had in my bachelor's degree* …	10

Throughout the analysis, there was a need to create new levels of categories, and they are shown with an asterisk in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Emerged Sub-parent, First Level and Second Level Coding Categories

Parent Category	Sub-parent Category	First Level Coding Category	Second Level Coding Category
Experiences	Duration	Breaks*	

Table 6 (cont'd)

Emerged Sub-parent, First Level and Second Level Coding Categories

Parent Category	Sub-parent Category	First Level Coding Category	Second Level Coding Category
Experiences	Willingness	Motivation*	
Experiences	Administration*		
Experiences	Teaching Profession*		
Perceptions	Willingness	Motivation*	
Perceptions	Willingness	Responsibility	Colleagues' Responsibility*
Perceptions	Willingness	Responsibility	Government's Responsibility*
Perceptions	Willingness	Responsibility	Units' Responsibility*
Perceptions	Administration*		
Perceptions	Teaching Profession*		

* Emerged coding categories

As can be seen in Table 6, two sub-parent categories and two first level coding categories emerged under the parent category of *experiences*, and two sub-parent categories, one first level coding category and three second level coding categories came out under the parent category of *perceptions.*

In order to prove the reliability and credibility of the analysis, the researcher had constant meetings with her advisor throughout the whole coding process and as a result of the consultation sessions, updated and edited the codes. In addition, the analysis was checked by another researcher who is a PhD student in the department of English Language Teaching. The codes and categories were discussed. Agreement was sought between the researchers for at least twenty percent of the data, thus the coding process continued until consensus was reached.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of the current study was to find out about tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences about self-initiated professional development and if their perceptions differed with regard to their age, the city they lived in, the type of university they worked at, years of teaching experience, undergraduate and master's department, whether they had post-graduate degrees, or teaching qualifications. The participants of the study were 67 Turkish EFL teachers working at preparatory and post preparatory programs of state and foundation universities in Türkiye.

The study focused on answering the following research questions:

1. What are tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions about self-initiated professional development?

1a. Do their perceptions differ based on:

    i.   their age?

    ii.   the city they live in?

    iii.   the type of university they work at?

    iv.   years of teaching experience?

    v.   their undergraduate department?

    vi.   their master's department?

    vii.   having a postgraduate degree?

    viii.   having teaching qualifications?

2. What are tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' self-initiated professional development experiences?

In this chapter, findings of the study will be presented. Initially, regarding perceptions, the analysis of the quantitative data which was collected through an online survey and the results of the online interview data will be discussed in detail following the comparison of these findings. Second, the quantitative and the qualitative findings regarding experiences will be addressed and their comparison will be presented.

Turkish EFL Teachers' Perceptions About Self-Initiated Professional Development

Quantitative Data Results

Participants' perceptions about self-initialed professional development which were obtained via a survey adapted from Main and Pendergast (2015), Karaaslan (2003) and Ekşi (2010) will be presented in five sub-sections below according to the core features of professional development in the framework of this study. These are "content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, collective participation" (Desimone, 2009, p. 183).

Teachers' Perceptions About Content Focus

Table 7 below presents the means and standard deviations of the items that explore teachers' perceptions regarding content focus, which is Desimone's (2009) first core feature of professional development. It refers to what professional development is about and how it is related to teachers' learning process both theoretically and practically.

Table 7

Perceptions on Content Focus

Item	*M*	*SD*
1. Through PD, I should gain new knowledge or skills that are	4.22	0.95

Table 7 (cont'd)

Perceptions on Content Focus

Item	M	SD
related to my profession.		
2. It is important for me to be able to integrate PD into my day-to-day practice.	3.97	1.07
3. PD should enhance my teaching strategies.	4.54	0.50
4. PD topics should make me see areas where I can improve or learn more.	4.46	0.65
5. It is important that PD topics should link directly to institutional and/or national goals.	3.42	0.92
6. PD has to help me meet the needs of more students.	3.85	0.94
7. PD activities should take into account the learning needs of all the teachers in attendance.	3.93	0.91
8. PD has to address my learning goals.	4.00	0.78
9. PD should enhance my knowledge and skills.	4.40	0.65

As evidenced in Table 7, regarding content focus, in general, the mean scores are rather high, ranging from 3.42 to 4.54. The highest mean score (4.54) indicates that the teachers thought professional development should help them improve their teaching strategies, and the relatively small standard deviation (0.50) shows an agreement among the participants.

The teachers also put great emphasis on the fact that professional development should create an awareness about the areas that they can develop themselves (M=4.46, SD=0.65). In addition, it can be observed that they would like to enhance their knowledge or skills through professional development (M=4.40, SD=0.65), and they also want to gain new teaching-related knowledge and skills although the high standard deviation indicates that the teachers had varied opinions

(*M*=4.22, *SD*=0.95). Another high mean score, which is 4.00 (*SD*=0.78),

demonstrates that the teachers believed their learning goals should be addressed by

professional development.

On the other hand, some of the participants were not of the opinion that

professional development should be related to institutional and/or national goals

(*M*=3.42, *SD*=0.92) although it is important to note that the answers were diverse due

to the relatively high standard deviation. The highest standard deviation among

content focus-related items was about being able to integrate professional

development into day-to-day practice of teachers, and it indicates that teachers had

different points of view about this issue (*M*=3.97, *SD*=1.07).

Teachers' Perceptions About Active Learning

The second core feature according to Desimone's (2009) framework is active

learning. According to Desimone (2009) and Main and Pendergast (2015), it includes

chances of different types of engagement for teachers in which they can play an

active role rather than being inactive receivers of information. Table 8 displays the

means and standard deviations of the items regarding this core feature.

Table 8

Perceptions on Active Learning

Item	*M*	*SD*
10. PD should give me opportunities to practice new skills.	4.43	0.55
11. PD should give me opportunities to observe other teachers modeling good practice.	4.13	0.81
12. PD should help me solve the problems I have.	4.27	0.68
13. During PD, I should be able to suggest solutions to problems someone else has.	3.79	0.82
14. The facilitators should not take the lead in any part of PD activities.	3.66	0.91

Table 8 (cont'd)

Perceptions on Active Learning

Item	M	SD
15. During PD activities, I should be able to give feedback on the ideas of others.	4.01	0.59
16. PD activities should encourage teachers to share best practice.	4.13	0.75
17. I have to be able to explain what I have learned from PD activities to others who did not attend.	3.03	1.05
18. I should be able to apply what I have learned.	4.39	0.57
19. PD activities should give me opportunities to practice skills under simulated conditions.	3.85	0.80
20. PD activities should give me opportunities to receive feedback.	4.27	0.56

In Table 8, similar to the results related to content focus, it can be seen that the mean scores are high although the range is wider, which is from 3.03 to 4.43.

It could be observed that teachers shared the opinion that professional development should offer them hands-on experience and they should be able to apply what they learn, with means of 4.43 (*SD*=0.55) and 4.39 (*SD*=0.57), respectively. It is possible to observe that the lower standard deviations signify the agreement among the participants. Teachers also thought that feedback was a valuable element in professional development (*M*=4.27, *SD*=0.56), and they perceived professional development as a way of dealing with their issues (*M*=4.27, *SD*=0.68). In addition, the results demonstrated in Table 8 show that the participants believed they should be given a chance to see their peers perform good examples of teaching (*M*= 4.13, *SD*=0.81), and they should be encouraged to share their best practice with their peers (*M*=4.13, *SD*=0.75).

However, the high standard deviation, which is 1.05, shows that the participants could not reach an agreement on whether they have to be able to explain

what they had learned from professional development activities to others who did not

attend (*M*=3.03). The second lowest mean score and the second highest standard

deviation in the table (*M*=3.66, *SD*=0.91) also mark the fact that the participants had

different views about who should take the lead in parts of professional development

activities.

Teachers' Perceptions About Coherence

Desimone's (2009) third core feature of professional development is

coherence, which is related to "the connection between the professional development

activity and the reality of the classroom" (Main & Pendergast, 2015, p. 6), and the

means and standard deviations of the items about this core feature are demonstrated

in Table 9 below.

Table 9

Perceptions on Coherence

Item	*M*	*SD*
21. PD has to address problems with which I have experience.	3.37	1.08
22. PD should enable me to put what I learn into practice.	4.33	0.53
23. Putting what I learn through PD into practice should improve student outcomes.	4.19	0.72
24. I have to be able to see a PD activity topic linking to other professional development activities.	3.19	0.83
25. PD should not be on topics I feel I already knew about.	2.90	0.94
26. Learning about new topics through PD should improve teachers' work environment.	4.15	0.58
27. PD should be in an area that teachers have not done any training in before.	2.84	0.93
28. There should be a direct link between PD and my day-to-day practice.	3.96	0.74

According to Table 9, the mean scores regarding coherence are not very high except three of them, and they range from 2.84 to 4.33. The highest mean among the items, which is 4.33 (*SD*=0.53), is related to being able to transfer what is learned during professional development activities into practice in classroom, and the relatively small standard deviation shows the agreement on this issue among them. The teachers also thought that the improvement in their teaching performance should have consequences regarding students (*M*=4.19, *SD*=0.72) and that acquiring new information about teaching should change the atmosphere at their workplace positively (*M*=4.15, *SD*=0.58).

On the other hand, 2.84 (*SD*=0.93) and 2.90 (*SD*=0.94), which are the lowest means in the table above, indicate that teachers thought professional development could be on issues that they were already familiar with or had done training in. Additionally, due to relatively high standard deviations, it can be said that the teachers' opinions varied on this matter.

Teachers' Perceptions About Duration

Table 10 below shows the means and standard deviations of the items related to the fourth core feature, duration, according to Desimone's (2009). Duration refers to the length of professional development, which should be long enough for teachers to internalize what they learn (Desimone, 2009; Main & Pengerdast, 2015).

Table 10

Perceptions on Duration

Item	M	SD
29. PD sessions should be long enough for me to engage with the ideas.	3.88	0.80
30. There would be a benefit from spreading PD over a greater number of days/sessions.	3.49	0.89

Table 10 (cont'd)

Perceptions on Duration

Item	*M*	*SD*
31. There should be refresher courses to remind me of the details of the PD.	3.64	0.69
32. I prefer spending extended amount of time on PD.	3.12	0.99
33. Teachers should do a lot of training in the PD areas in the future.	3.60	0.88
34. PDs should have follow-up sessions over time.	3.79	0.78

As it can be observed in Table 10, the mean scores are not either very high or low, and the range is the smallest among all core features, from 3.12 to 3.88. The results indicate that the participants were not very opinionated regarding the duration of professional development. The participants in general thought that professional development activities should have a reasonable length so that the teachers could engage with the new ideas (*M*=3.88, *SD*=0.80), nonetheless, it is important to note that their opinions differed, which can be inferred from the relatively high standard deviation. Although there are no items in this category which have really high mean scores, the other items which have higher mean scores compared to the others reveal that professional development should not be a one-time-only event and there should be follow-up sessions and refresher courses, with means of 3.79 (*SD*=0.78) and 3.64 (*SD*=0.69), respectively. However, the highest standard deviation in this group of items shows the disagreement among the teachers about whether they should spare much time on professional development (*M*=3.12, *SD*=0.99).

Teachers' Perceptions About Collective Participation

Desimone's (2009) last core feature is collective participation which is considered to be another facilitator for teacher learning, and the means and standard deviations of the items related to that are shown in Table 11 below. Collective

participation also refers to attending professional development activities with colleagues who work at the same place, which could create opportunities for communication (Desimone, 2009; Main & Pengerdast, 2015).

Table 11

Perceptions on Collective Participation

Item	*M*	*SD*
35. Peer support helps me apply learnings from my PD experience.	4.01	0.61
36. I should be able to develop a common understanding of the knowledge or skill with my colleagues thanks to PD.	3.94	0.64
37. All my colleagues should participate in PD activities for me to improve my practice.	2.58	0.94
38. During PD I should do planning on my own.	3.58	0.80
39. During PD I should do planning with my colleagues.	3.70	0.65
40. I should be able to discuss concepts and skills with colleagues with whom I work closely.	4.12	0.66
41. There will be a real benefit if several members of a school attend PD together.	4.06	0.69

According to Table 11, in general, the mean scores are relatively high with the exception of a rather low one, and they range from 2.58 to 4.12. It can be observed that the teachers believed that they should be able to communicate with their peers about teaching matters (*M*=4.12, *SD*=0.66) and participate in professional development activities with their colleagues (*M*=4.06, *SD*=0.69). The relatively small standard deviations regarding these items display that the participants had similar opinions about these issues. In addition, the participants thought that receiving support from their peers when they apply their learnings from their professional development experience was important (*M*=4.01, *SD*=0.61). Developing a common

understanding of the knowledge or skill with colleagues was also emphasized (M=3.94, SD=0.64).

However, the lowest mean score, which is 2.58 (SD=0.94), suggests that the teachers held the view that for their practical improvement, it was not necessary for all of their colleagues to attend professional development activities. They also had different views about this issue, which could be inferred from the high standard deviation.

Qualitative Data Results

During the interviews in which 14 volunteer teachers were involved, the discussions were primarily about the core features of professional development that were explored in the survey. However, as explained in Chapter 3, some further categories under these features also emerged during qualitative data analysis. In this part, the participants' perceptions about self-initiated professional development will be discussed within the framework of this study. Before doing this, participants' overall views regarding the teaching profession and professional development will be presented.

The Meaning of Professional Development

In the beginning of the one-on-one interviews, in which 14 volunteer teachers participated, the teachers were first asked to define what professional development meant for them and they gave various responses to that question. Table 12 shows the number of comments made related to the meaning of professional development.

Table 12

Distributions of Comments on the Meaning of Professional Development

Category	Number of Comments
Become better	12
Lifelong learning	10
Up to date	4
Reflection	3
Peer learning	2
Taking action	1
Expectation	1
Teachers' needs	1

As can be seen in Table 12 above, the interviewees included ten categories in their comments about the definition and meaning of professional development, and these are *become better, lifelong learning, up-to-date, reflection, peer learning, taking action, expectation* and *teachers' needs.*

In their definitions of professional development, the participants asserted that it consisted of all the actions helping them become a better teacher in terms of both skills and knowledge. They added that it also meant gaining wider perspectives about teaching and establishing goals for oneself. What is more, one of the teachers (T9) did not limit her definition to only work-related activities, and said, "I would refer to professional development as the personal developmental process of an individual outside the school as well."

It was observed from the interview data that a lot of teachers perceived professional development as a lifelong learning journey, which highlighted that it should be continuous. They also believed that professional development involved being alert to the latest changes and news regarding teaching. In addition, one of them (T14) said, "I think it's [professional development] about maybe developing

self-awareness about your teacher identity first", which highlighted the intertwined connection between professional development and reflection. Learning from peers was put a great emphasis by the teachers while expressing what professional development meant to them, and they underlined the importance of the communication which happened at a workplace. It was also mentioned that professional development meant taking action to fulfil one's needs and it could be shaped by one's expectations.

Teaching Profession

The participants also expressed their thoughts about teaching as a profession during the interviews. The number of comments made regarding this issue is demonstrated in Table 13 below.

Table 13

Distributions of Comments on Teaching Profession

Category	Number of Comments
Teaching profession	14

The teachers stated that unlike office jobs, teaching was a multifaceted and "demanding" profession. With regards to this description, one participant (T4) said "If you come to the lesson and go back home, mark things, stay in the school until the office hour… It's not like that." The teachers also emphasized that teaching was an active field where a lot of change happened constantly; thus, it required teachers to improve continuously. Exemplifying on this issue, one of the participants (T11) said, "… it is the nature of teaching that necessitates … doing research and reading, and getting help and revising teaching and improving it …" Moreover, some interviewees pointed out that teaching entailed developing an understanding towards others and representing different cultures. Lastly, the participants also mentioned that

as teaching as a job took up most of one's life, it had a great impact on one's

contentment.

Professional Development Qualities

During the interviews, the teachers also shared their opinions about how

professional development should be and asserted their preferences. In Table 14, the

number of comments made about the qualities of professional development is shown.

Table 14

Distributions of Comments on Professional Development Qualities

Category	Number of Comments
Professional development qualities	12

According to the interview findings, some participants expressed their

preference for online professional development activities; however, others stated that

they enjoyed participating in face-to-face ones. The teachers also highlighted the fact

that professional development should be achievable for teachers.

In addition, the teachers described their expectations about the facilitators of

professional development, including the professional development unit members.

The teachers thought that these people should be experts, which means that they

should have great knowledge in the field. Although they believed that the facilitators

should have credentials, the teachers stated that they would like to see the facilitators

improving themselves continuously. Finally, they also added that the facilitators of

professional development should be able to create a safe and pleasant atmosphere

and guide the teachers.

Content Focus

During the interviews, the participants expressed their thoughts about

professional development. Initially, content focus, which is the first core feature of

professional development, was discussed. In Table 15 below, the number of comments made by the participants about the content of professional development can be found.

Table 15

Distributions of Comments on Content Focus

Category	Number of Comments
Needs	38
Become better	20
Reflection	14
Up to date	9
Features of the content	9
Context-specific	7
Theory-based	3

As can be seen in Table 15, based on the interview data, categories emerged throughout the qualitative data analysis, which are *needs, become better, reflection, up-to-date, features of the content, context-specific,* and *theory-based.*

Needs was the most commented issue in terms of the content of professional development. The participants mostly commented on their needs and students' needs, but there were a few comments regarding institutional and country-related needs as well. The teachers put great emphasis on the importance of taking teachers' needs into consideration. They stated that professional development activities should be in line with their needs and interests; therefore, they thought that before the organization of professional development events, conducting a needs analysis could be a good idea. Moreover, one of them (T6) highlighted the link between teachers' needs and their improvement by saying, "If the teachers believe that they need those information, those trainings, they improve, they develop themselves."

Regarding students' needs, it was observed that teachers cared a great deal about creating a bond between themselves and their students. According to the data, it was revealed that building this connection might be both academic and personal so that the teachers could be more helpful for their students. The interviewees also emphasized that as the changes of the current era happened very fast, improving themselves in a way that addressed their students' needs could also help them understand that specific population. Apart from teachers' and students' needs, one of the participants (T7) added that institutional aims could also be taken into account.

During the interviews, the interviewees asserted that professional development should improve them by showing them different perspectives and the right way for certain practices, which could enhance their adaptation skills and create a change for the better. The teachers also put great emphasis on the reflective side of professional development although they believed that it was generally neglected. As regards to this matter, they mentioned that professional development activities should give them a chance for self-reflection and provide them with a critical stance so that they could view their practices and experiences through different lenses, which would make those experiences more meaningful and effective. One of the teachers (T12) summed up the issue by saying, "I think reflection is the best part of this [professional development process], because we need to consider what we have gained in this process, and what we have ... improved, what we have done better, what we have done ... in a bad way."

Some participants also emphasized that professional development activities should provide them with up-to-date information so that they could keep up with the innovations happening in the field of education. Moreover, they stated that the

content of professional development should be interesting and engaging and focus on a certain area. While sharing her thoughts, one teacher (T7) added:

> They [the majority of teachers] have this prejudice against teacher development because if they think it's something ... about just typical, very repetitive things ... workshops and seminars, and always telling you the same stuff and always the boring content, and then they feel reluctant.

In that sense, it can be observed that the impact of professional development content on teachers' willingness was pointed out. Related to this issue, some teachers mentioned that although some topics could be optional, some were fundamental for teachers; thus, learning them could not depend on the willingness of teachers. It was also discussed that professional development should contribute to teachers' theoretical knowledge.

In addition, the interview data revealed that some participants believed that professional development should be in alignment with their specific working environment and culture. One of them (T1) commented on this issue by saying, "So, professional development, I believe, should be taking into consideration those local realities as well. So, that is why it should have a focus, plus it should … be aware of its own kind of situatedness." At the same time, one teacher (T13) thought that it should give them a chance to learn about different contexts.

Active Learning

Active learning was the second core feature of professional development that was discussed with the interviewees. The number of comments regarding this core feature is shown in Table 16 below.

Table 16

Distributions of Comments on Active Learning

Category	Number of Comments
Feedback	15
Observation	13
Active participation	7
Problem-solving	3

According to the interview data, it can be said that the participants valued the role of feedback in their professional development greatly. They talked not only about the feedback which can be received from more experienced teachers, but also about peer and student feedback, and how significant they might be for the teachers to improve themselves. The teachers also mentioned the benefits of both observing another teacher and being observed. They also suggested that observing oneself via video recordings could be useful. Including observation in her definition of ideal professional development, one teacher (T8) said, "[Ideally] I should also be given the opportunity to observe real classrooms, teachers and my peers and take notes and feedback."

Furthermore, the participants mentioned that professional development should facilitate production and creativeness and generate active involvement for the teachers in the process. With regard to the issue, one of the teachers (T7) said, "… you shouldn't just sit passively and listen to someone and trying to make you understand some stuff…", which signified that teachers did not want to be only the receivers of the information. The interviewees also added that professional development should address the problems they encountered in their day-to-day professional life and offer them ways to solve them.

Coherence

The third core feature of professional development, which is coherence, was also discussed with the participants. Table 17 shows the number of comments about this core feature.

Table 17

Distributions of Comments on Coherence

Category	Number of Comments
Practice	32
Students' improvement	6
Student-centeredness	3

The number of comments in Table 17 indicates that the teachers put great emphasis on the importance of the practical side of professional development. The participants expressed that professional development should prepare them for handling different classroom environments, inform them about the newest teaching techniques and give them a chance to hear about other people's experiences, which could help them deal with real life situations, and thus, make professional development more purposeful. They also stated that they preferred learning practical strategies rather than theory which they thought they could not implement in their classroom easily. Moreover, they mentioned that providing teachers a platform to practice what they learn could be a good idea. One of the participants (T7) also pointed out that in-class teaching, including the communication with the students, could provide a lot of practical benefits, and said, "With teaching you gain more insights about teaching… Even the interaction we have in class is part of teacher development I think."

Another issue that was discussed was the improvement of students. The interviewees asserted that professional development should not only improve teachers but should also have features to develop students' performance. They also talked about a chain reaction that teachers' improvement could create, which means that if teachers updated themselves regularly and adapt to the recent changes, they could create a more effective and efficient learning environment for their students, and this could result in improved student performance. Moreover, the teachers added that while creating that environment, engaging students played an important role. Related to this issue, one participant (T1) said, "It's becoming more interactive all the time. It's inevitable and people [students] want to be included in the things that they are dealing with."

Duration

Duration is the fourth core feature of professional development that was discussed with the interviewees. The number of comments made about this core feature are demonstrated in Table 18 below.

Table 18

Distributions of Comments on Duration

Category	Number of Comments
Lifelong learning	24
Amount of time	12
Follow-up	2

As can be seen in Table 18, the teachers emphasized the fact that professional development is continuous. They stated that learning constantly was necessary for teachers to keep up with the changes happening and it should not come to an end at any point of one's career. Regarding lifelong learning, one teacher (T10) said, "First,

it [ideal PD] must be regular, OK? Not only in the first years of your teaching, but also, even if you're at the edge of your retirement days..."

The participants also talked about how much time professional development should take. It was suggested that the duration of professional development could vary from one-hour to a few months. While some teachers stated that it should not be very time-consuming, others emphasized that professional development was a "process", and therefore it should not be short. In that sense, they asserted that professional development should not only include one-time-only events and should consist of follow-up sessions. In addition, some participants expressed that the teachers should be the decision-makers of how long professional development should take and when it should take place.

Collective Participation

During the interviews, collective participation, which is the last core feature of professional development, was also discussed with the participants. Table 19 illustrates the number of comments made on this core feature.

Table 19

Distributions of Comments on Collective Participation

Category	Number of Comments
Peer learning	28
Peer support	9
Networking	2

As Table 19 suggests, the interviewees highlighted the significance of learning from their peers. They mentioned that both the job-related and the informal conversations with colleagues could be very helpful in various ways such as informing each other about the latest trends in the field. They also talked about the

importance of having an institutional culture which supported being open to sharing. The participants put forward that teachers could benefit from each other's company a great deal by sharing their experiences, coming up with solutions for each other's problems, portraying good examples and creating inspiration for one another, observing each other and providing feedback. However, it was pointed out that as teachers got more experienced in the field, there could be a decrease in the amount of communication they had with their peers.

The interview data also revealed that peer support was valued by the participants. Regarding this matter, one of the interviewees (T13) said, "… it's impossible to just understand what to do in what circumstances without getting any support, without getting any feedback, without getting any interaction from the experts and from the peers." The teachers also suggested that teaching was not an individual job, and this indicated the necessity of collaboration. Moreover, the participants emphasized the importance of encouragement towards improvement, learning, and being open to sharing. While signifying the value of having a network, the teachers also pointed out the role of social media platforms to reach more professionals.

Willingness

During the interviews, the role that willingness plays in professional development was also discussed with the participants. The number of comments made about this issue is shown in Table 20 below.

Table 20

Distributions of Comments on Willingness

Category	Number of Comments
Responsibility	165

Table 20 (cont'd)

Distributions of Comments on Willingness

Category	Number of Comments
Suggestions	77
Teachers' willingness	59
Motivation	52
Unwillingness	5

As can be seen in Table 20, based on the interview data, five categories emerged throughout the qualitative data analysis, which are *responsibility, suggestions, teachers' willingness, motivation,* and *unwillingness.*

During the interviews, the participants talked about their perceptions on the issue of responsibility about professional development. Table 21 below shows the number of comments made regarding responsibility.

Table 21

Distributions of Comments on Responsibility

Category	Number of Comments
Teachers' responsibility	81
Institutions' responsibility	27
Joint effort	17
Other stakeholders	11

As Table 21 demonstrates, in terms of responsibility, there were far too many comments regarding the thought that teachers themselves should be responsible for their professional development. While emphasizing that teachers were the main stakeholders in taking the responsibility for their own professional development, the interviewees stated that teachers should be the ones who could utilize what they learn in the best way. One of them (T9) added, "Well, it is our personal ... responsibility,

to be reflective and to enhance ourselves personally so that we enjoy doing our job in the best way no matter what the hindrances can be."

The participants also mentioned that their responsibility involved improving themselves and making an effort to learn. They put forward that they should always be up to date, which means that following the innovations, learning different teaching techniques and upgrading constantly was vital. According to them, this could also increase their job satisfaction. The teachers added that being proficient could be beneficial for their students, in that they would communicate with them more easily and address their needs. Moreover, the participants highlighted the importance of reflective professional development practices as well. In that sense, one teacher (T2) said, "If you get bugged about things, if you're uncomfortable about things, then you start to develop that second."

Based on the interview data, it could be said that the participants were aware of the significance of taking action. For example, one of the teachers (T7) pointed out the necessity of taking the initiative to improve a specific area which could be determined as a result of self-reflection. The participants also expressed that teachers could ask for more professional development activities from their workplaces and provide feedback about them. One of the participants (T7) commented on this issue and said, "And from the institutions, they [teachers] should know that they [have a] right to demand more … not just events, but … any kind of teacher development activity."

The participants also discussed the issues of teachers' autonomy and independency regarding their professional development and highlighted the role of agency. They stated that teachers should act according to their needs and wants in their professional development process. In other words, they suggested that teachers

should be given options in terms of which areas to focus on, which activities to participate in, and how much time they would like to spare in their professional development. The interviewees also added that professional development should create awareness not only about the essentiality and significance of professional development on a more general level, but also about teachers' own needs and weaknesses on a personal level.

On the other hand, some teachers put forward that the responsibility of teachers' professional development should be owned by the institutions they work for as institutions have "more power". Signifying the creation of an encouraging atmosphere at a workplace, one participant (T6) said, "It's the culture. It's not the teachers but the admin's duty to set up that environment, actually: The culture that everybody is just trying to improve themselves." It was also discussed that institutions should offer opportunities according to teachers' needs, which indicated that it was necessary for administrators to be aware of their teachers' personal professional development journeys. In addition, it was pointed out that institutions could support the teachers financially and by providing them enough time to participate in professional development activities.

While other teachers were expressing their opinion on this issue, they stated that only one stakeholder should not be held responsible for teachers' professional development and emphasized that it should be a joint effort. They mentioned that institutions could provide professional development opportunities, but it was the teachers' responsibility to decide what to carry out and how to use them in their own context. In contrast, some teachers suggested that this process could happen in a reverse direction and indicated that professional development could start with teachers' themselves feeling responsible, but to put thoughts into action, they should

be supported by their institutions. In addition, there were some other comments made during the interviews suggesting that other stakeholders such as professional development units, governments and colleagues were also responsible for teachers' professional development.

The next category regarding willingness is "suggestions" that the participant teachers put forward sharing their opinions and advice about what teachers could do more for their professional development. The comments made regarding their suggestions are demonstrated in Table 22 below.

Table 22

Distributions of Comments on Suggestions

Category	Number of Comments
Reflective practices	11
Reading	9
Observation	8
Courses	6
Online	4
Community building	4
Seminars – webinars	4
Open-mindedness	3
Workshops	3
Trainings	3
Watching videos and films	2
Action research	2
Feedback	2
Portfolio	2
Certificate programs	2
Multicultural environment	2
Following literature	1
Post-graduate studies	1
Scholarships	1

Table 22 (cont'd)

Distributions of Comments on Suggestions

Category	Number of Comments
Digital skills	1
Going abroad	1
Teacher exchange	1
Being disciplined	1
Conferences	1
Doing research	1
Going out of comfort zone	1

As can be seen in Table 22, the most commonly suggested professional development activity by the participants was reflection. Reading was another activity that the participants thought could be done to develop professionally, which could help them follow the literature, too. However, one of the participants (T7) added that it might not be very influential if it was done as the only action of developing oneself. It was also mentioned that teachers should demand carrying out observations, which may involve observing a peer or themselves, as well as being observed and receiving feedback. The interviewees also mentioned that taking part in conferences, workshops, seminars, webinars, conferences, and trainings could be a good idea, and thanks to the online platforms, they could access these events more easily and conveniently. Therefore, having digital skills was pointed out as a vital component of being a teacher. The participants also talked about some opportunities that help create a community. About this issue, one of them (T9) said, "All professions have associations and teachers also need to form these kinds of associations through seminars, collaborations to discuss, to enhance their knowledge personally and professionally."

In addition, the importance of trying new practices and having an open mind was emphasized. About this issue, one teacher (T2) said, "You need to go out of your comfort zone. Let's try something new and be a newbie again. That's where you learn, you know." The participants also suggested pursuing post-graduate degrees and participating in certificate programs, which could be done in another country as well. Being involved in teacher exchange programs such as Erasmus was mentioned as another alternative to go abroad and be in a multicultural environment. The teachers also added that applying for scholarships could be an option to put these actions into practice.

Apart from all the aforementioned professional development activities suggested by the participants, watching videos and films, conducting research, creating portfolios, and sparing specific times for professional development were pointed out as ideas that could be used by teachers who would like to improve themselves more.

"Teachers' willingness" was another category that a lot of interviewees commented on, and they thought that it was vital for professional development. They stated that for professional development to be effective, willingness should be the initial step and the key component as it mainly depends on the decisions that the teachers made according to their readiness, needs and interests. About this issue, one of the teachers (T11) added, "… [even] if they [the institutions] find everything for me, if they support me to do this, but if I'm not willing enough, if I'm not interested, ... if I'm not aware of the need enough, then it may not work." In the same vein, the participants mentioned that teachers only learned and improved when they were willing, and this highly depended on whether they believed that professional development would be beneficial for them. In addition, the teachers talked about the

role of willingness in reflective practices as well, and they put forward that professional development should be considered as a regular part of the job, not a separate event or an action to be carried out.

During the interviews, the participants also talked about the impact of motivation on professional development. The comments regarding motivation are presented in Table 23 below.

Table 23

Distributions of Comments on Motivation

Category	Number of Comments
Self-motivation	25
External motivation	10
Demotivation	8
Love for teaching	5
Having fun	3
Seeing results	1

As Table 23 suggests, the teachers pointed out the importance of self-motivation, and included it as one of the components of ideal professional development. They also added that it might take time to become motivated. Addressing this issue, some participants mentioned that love for teaching, having fun, observing positive outcomes of professional development and being aware of the significance of it could increase teacher motivation.

The interviewees drew the attention to the external factors affecting one's motivation as well. For example, one teacher (T11) said, "… it [motivation] can come from the person, but it can be also supported by the environment." Some teachers put forward that teachers should also be motivated by institutional rewards such as giving teachers more autonomy or a pay rise. They thought that this kind of

external motivation could alter teachers' perception towards professional development and might make them place more value and importance in it. On the other hand, the participants talked about demotivational factors, the majority of which were indicated as related to the institutions. For example, one of the teachers (T9) said, "... if the teachers are stuck every day in a monotonous way, nine to five working schedules, then teachers unfortunately, don't develop some motivational drives ... to continue their jobs." The interviewees added not being able to improve oneself, course books and curricula and demotivated students could also affect the motivation of teachers in a negative way.

As regards to reasons of unwillingness, the participants asserted that "the educational system, the level of students or having no rewards" could be some of them. Making a reference to an article she read, one of the participants (T11) added that as teachers got older and more professional, they might not feel the need to improve themselves anymore, which may result in not following the recent trends or less communication with their peers.

Some other comments that the participants made were related to the administration of institutions. Table 24 shows the comments made about this issue.

Table 24

Distributions of Comments on Administration

Category	Number of Comments
Initiation of professional development	29
Obligation	27
Attitudinal support	26
Time-related support	18
Financial support	8

As can be seen in Table 24 above, six categories emerged regarding teachers' views in the role of administration about professional development, and they are *initiation of professional development, obligation, attitudinal support, time-related support,* and *financial support.*

The participants were of the opinion that the initiation of institutions was needed for teachers' professional development. They stated that institutions should provide various professional development opportunities for teachers such as training sessions, seminars or inviting professionals for in-house events. Emphasizing the power of the administrations in making professional development more accessible, one teacher (T7) said, "… there is this institutional part as well. Some other people can provide you with some certain things that you can't personally find…" The interviewees also asserted that even informing teachers about different professional development activities, or sharing magazines or articles could be a good idea, which would also show the enthusiasm and the devotion of the administration. This could play a role in convincing people about the importance of professional development as well and guide them towards it. In addition, the participants pointed out the necessity of an organizational structure. They mentioned that the administrators should make certain people responsible for professional development, an example of which could be the foundation of professional development units.

In terms of obligatory professional development, it was mentioned that many institutions forced their teachers to take part in certain professional development activities. However, during the interviews, most participants stated that professional development should not be mandatory, because they believed that forcing people would not create improvement as teachers themselves were the ones who would apply what they learned in their day-to-day life. They also thought that this kind of

enforcement could generate a negative influence and teachers might feel that professional development was a burden, and they could feel stressed and anxious about losing their job if they did not attend the activities. One of the participants (T9) put an emphasis on the structures in institutions, and said, "… it [PD] shouldn't be a top-down, but it should be a bottom-up kind of experience for the teachers." In addition, some of the interviewees discussed whether it was ethical to impose attendance to professional development activities, and the significance of teachers' consent was underlined. On the other hand, there were some teachers who thought that professional development should be institutionally mandated, especially for some areas of professional development such as material development and believed that forcing people was sometimes necessary.

The teachers also stated that attitudinal support from administrations was needed. They signified the importance of creating a democratic and comfortable atmosphere where everybody felt heard and appreciated for their opinions and efforts. Highlighting the real aim of institutions, one participant (T8) said, "… management should not think of schools … like institutions that has to be managed, but they think about schools as places where you get education, and where … you learn something." As this comment also indicated, the creation of such an environment at a workplace could also encourage teachers for professional development. Moreover, the participants emphasized the administrators' role of being a leader in teachers' professional development process without taking away their independency.

In addition, the interviewees put forward that institutions should support teachers by providing them some time off so that they could focus on their professional development. They valued the concept of this spare time as it could give

them space to be alone and relax. They also added that extreme workload might be a major hindrance for teachers to improve themselves.

Another main obstacle which could prevent teachers to develop was pointed out to be financial issues. In the light of this situation, the participants mentioned that institutional support became more vital and valuable. They suggested that the administrations could either offer financial assistance for professional development activities that teachers would like to take part in or provide some in-house opportunities for free or for a more reasonable price.

Perceptions and Demographics

Independent samples t-tests were conducted in five separate parts representing the five core features of professional development which are content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation (Desimone, 2009, p. 184) to find out if the participants' perceptions differed by their demographics that is their age, the city they lived in, the type of university they worked at, their teaching experience, undergraduate department, master's department, and if they have a post-graduate degree or teaching qualifications. Mann Whitney U tests were also utilized for the core features and demographics which do not meet the normality requirements. These core features were *coherence, duration* and *collective participation*.

According to the Independent samples t-tests, which were run with content focus, active learning, coherence and collective participation, no statistical significance was found regarding the participants' demographics. The only statistically significant result was concerning the core feature "duration" and related to the subject area of the participants' master's degree.

Table 25 below displays the results of the Independent samples *t*-test conducted to learn if the participants' perceptions about the duration of professional development differed according to the subject area of their master's degrees. In this test, the participants having a master's degree obtained from the department of teaching English as a foreign language and the ones who had theirs in other departments or had no master's degree were compared. The mean difference between two groups (*M*=0.32) was found statistically significant, $t(65) = 2.13$, $p = .037$.

Table 25

Independent Samples t-test Findings for Duration

Master's Degree	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	*Upper*
TEFL	3.78	0.50	2.131	65	.037	0.199	0.617
Other or No Degree	3.46	0.65					

As can be seen in Table 25, compared to the teachers who did not have a master's degree or had a master's degree in a non-TEFL program (*M*=3.46, *SD*=0.65), the teachers having a master's degree in the department of teaching English as a foreign language thought that it was more important for professional development not to be short and not to be a one-time-only event (*M*=3.78, *SD*=0.50). The same group of teachers also shared stronger beliefs about the fact that there should be more time for teachers to spend on their professional development.

In addition, Mann Whitney *U* test findings showed that there was no statistically significant result regarding the tests run with the core features coherence

and collective participation and the demographics of the participants. However, there was a statistically significant result regarding the core feature "duration" and related to the subject area of the participants' bachelor's degree.

In Table 26 below, the results of the test conducted to learn if the participants' perceptions about the duration of professional development differed according to their undergraduate department can be seen.

Table 26

Mann Whitney U Test Results Regarding Duration and Undergraduate Department

BA Department	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
TEFL	34	42,65	1450,00	267,000	<.001
Other	33	25,09	828,00		

In this test, the participants having a bachelor's degree in the department of teaching English as a foreign language and the ones who graduated from different departments were compared. According to the results, teachers who graduated from the department of teaching English as a foreign language (*Mdn* = 4, *n* = 34) on average put greater emphasis on the length and continuity of professional development as well as the time that teachers should allocate for their professional development compared to the teachers who graduated from a non-TEFL program (*Mdn* = 3.33, *n* = 33), $U = 267,000$, $z = -3,71$, $p < .001$, with quite a large effect size $r = .45$.

Comparison of Survey and Interview Data Regarding Perceptions

The survey and interview data regarding the participants' perceptions about professional development were alike. For example, the survey data indicated that the teachers wanted to enhance their teaching knowledge and skills and learn different

strategies. The qualitative data supported this view, in that the teachers put great emphasis on becoming better professionally and valued remaining up to date. A similar issue was regarding the practical side of professional development. According to the survey data, most teachers thought that professional development should be integrated into their everyday practice, and they should be able to apply what they learn, which was signified by high mean scores and low standard deviations. During the interviews, the participants also talked a great deal about practice. They highlighted the importance of the ability to use what they learn in their own context and expressed their preference for practical strategies rather than theoretical knowledge.

Reflection was another area of professional development that the participants focused on both in surveys and interviews. The survey data revealed that the teachers believed professional development should create an awareness and encourage reflection. In the same vein, the interviewees asserted that professional development should provide them with a critical approach towards their own practices, which could be a useful way to improve.

As the survey data suggested, the participants thought that professional development should give them a chance to practice new skills, which showed that they wanted to be more engaged in the professional development activities they attended. The interview data also supported this finding since the teachers commented on the importance of active involvement in these activities and expressed their objection to the perception of professional development making teachers passive listeners.

It was also observed that interaction with peers was highlighted both in the surveys and the interviews. The significance of peer feedback and peer observation

were highlighted in the surveys, and similarly, the interviewees made comments valuing them. In addition, the survey data suggested that the participants put a great emphasis on sharing best practices with colleagues, solving problems, and discussing concepts and skills together. During the interviews, the teachers also mentioned that it was important to have a sharing atmosphere at a workplace which could not only promote teachers' job satisfaction and motivation but could also create a platform where teachers encouraged each other.

The survey and interview data both demonstrated similar results regarding students' improvement as well. The high mean score in the surveys indicated that the participants thought professional development should also have positive consequences on the students' side. Supporting that result, during the interviews, the teachers mentioned that professional development should contribute to students' performance, and some teachers even stated that students' improvement was teachers' responsibility. In terms of duration, although their views differed, the survey participants believed that professional development should have a reasonable length. The interviewees were of the same opinion and pointed out that having follow-up sessions could increase the effectiveness of professional development.

In contrast to the aforementioned similarities, there were a few differences between the results of the survey and interview data. One of the issues was about the facilitators taking the lead of professional development. The survey data showed that the teachers had varied opinions about this issue. However, the qualitative data indicated that the participants thought that professional development should give teachers agency and encourage their activeness in the process. In addition, the teachers' views differed in terms of how much time they should spare on their professional development according to the survey data. On the other hand, during the

interviews, most participants said that professional development should be an indispensable part of their lives, which emphasized its continuity. The issues about administration also came forward regarding time-related matters and this underlined their influence on professional development. The teachers mentioned that if they were to spend more time to improve themselves, they needed support from their institutions regarding arrangements in their schedules creating time and space for them, and provision of flexibility about the area, kind, and the duration of professional development that they were going to carry out. It was also asserted that when professional development was obligatory, it usually generated negative feelings and did not facilitate a learning atmosphere for teachers.

Turkish EFL Teachers' Self-Initiated Professional Development Experiences

Quantitative Data Results

In order to find out about the participants' self-initiated professional development experiences, they were asked in the survey to indicate the professional development activities they had experienced by selecting either "yes" or "no" going through a list presented. In Table 27, the numbers along with the percentages of teachers who had experienced the professional development activities in the list are presented in the order of the most experienced to the least.

Table 27

Professional Development Experiences

Professional Development Activities	Experienced	
	n	%
22. Sharing experiences and problems with colleagues	65	97.0
7. Participating in workshops (online or face-to-face)	63	94.0
8. Participating in seminars/webinars	61	91.0
3. Reading ELT books	60	89.6

Table 27 (cont'd)

Professional Development Experiences

Professional Development Activities	Experienced	
	n	*%*
15. Trying out new ideas or suggestions in practice	60	89.6
16. Reflection on own teaching	59	88.1
23. Asking for professional help from colleagues	59	88.1
24. Working on preparing NEW materials with colleagues	59	88.1
1. Reading ELT articles in ACADEMIC JOURNALS	58	86.6
4. Following professional development programs	57	85.1
9. Attending conferences in Türkiye	53	79.1
12. Participating in other teaching related courses (online or face-to-face)	53	79.1
28. Being observed teaching by a more experienced professional (e.g., head, coach, mentor) and getting feedback	53	79.1
26. Creating in-class teaching activities with colleagues	51	76.1
29. Observing a more experienced professional teaching	49	73.1
30. Being observed teaching by a peer	47	70.1
31. Observing a peer teaching	44	65.7
18. Pursuing a graduate degree	43	64.2
13. Attending best practice sessions (online or face-to-face)	38	56.7
17. Conducting classroom research	37	55.2
25. Working on developing NEW teaching techniques with colleagues	37	55.2
2. Reading ELT magazines written for PRACTITIONERS	36	53.7
11. Attending certificate/diploma programs to gain teaching qualifications (e.g., CELTA, DELTA)	30	44.8
19. Preparing portfolios	29	43.3
6. Joining an online ELT discussion group	27	40.3
20. Conducting action research by oneself	24	35.8
5. Joining a teacher association	23	34.3
27. Team teaching	22	32.8
10. Attending international conferences abroad	21	31.3

Table 27 (cont'd)

Professional Development Experiences

Professional Development Activities	Experienced	
	n	*%*
34. Being coached by peers	20	29.9
36. Being a mentee	20	29.9
35. Mentoring peers	19	28.4
32. Training other teachers	17	25.4
21. Conducting action research with peers	16	23.9
33. Coaching peers	16	23.9
14. Attending article discussion club sessions (online or face-to-face)	7	10.4

Overall, it can be inferred from the results that more than two thirds of the activities listed above were experienced by at least half of the participants. It is observed that the top 10 most commonly experienced professional development activities contain activities both carried out alone and the ones that require peer interaction.

As it can be observed in Table 27 above, sharing experiences and problems with colleagues was the activity most commonly practiced by tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers as 65 out of 67 teachers, which equals to 97% of the sample, reported to have experienced it. Having the percentage of 94, participating in online or face-to-face workshops was the second activity the participants were mostly involved in. In addition, 61 out of 67 teachers reported to have participated in seminars or webinars. It was the third most commonly experienced activity on the list.

On the other hand, among the same group of participants, only 10.4% of them experienced attending article discussion club sessions (online or face-to-face), which makes it the least experienced activity.

The participants were also asked to choose at least three of the professional development activities that they had experienced and found beneficial. The column named "Experienced" in Table 28 below shows the number of the teachers who had experienced a certain professional development activity. The column named "Found Beneficial", on the other hand, demonstrates the number and percentage of teachers who found that specific experience beneficial. For example, 30 out of 67 teachers had attended certificate/diploma programs to gain teaching qualifications (e.g., CELTA, DELTA), and 22 of them found it useful, which equals to 73.3 percent of the teachers who experienced that activity.

Due to limited space problem in the tables, the names of the professional development activities are presented in shortened forms in Table 28. The complete version can be found in Appendix A.

Table 28

Most Beneficial Professional Development Activities

Professional Development Activities	Experienced	Found Beneficial	
	n	*n*	%
11. Attending certificate/diploma programs…	30	22	73.3
7. Participating in workshops…	63	36	57.1
10. Attending international conferences abroad	21	11	52.4
16. Reflection on own teaching	59	27	45.8
1. Reading ELT articles…	58	25	43.1
4. Following professional development…	57	21	36.8
15. Trying out new ideas or suggestions…	60	22	36.7
8. Participating in seminars/webinars	61	22	36.1
3. Reading ELT books	60	21	35.0
9. Attending conferences in Türkiye	53	18	34.0
22. Sharing experiences and problems…	65	22	33.8

Table 28 (cont'd)

Most Beneficial Professional Development Activities

Professional Development Activities	Experienced	Found Beneficial	
	n	*n*	%
24. Working on preparing NEW materials…	59	19	32.2
20. Conducting action research by oneself	24	7	29.2
29. Observing a more experienced…	49	13	26.5
28. Being observed teaching by a more…	53	15	28.3
31. Observing a peer teaching	44	12	27.3
13. Attending best practice sessions…	38	9	23.7
23. Asking for professional help…	59	13	22.0
5. Joining a teacher association	23	5	21.7
17. Conducting classroom research	37	8	21.6
25. Working on developing NEW teaching…	37	8	21.6
26. Creating in-class teaching activities…	37	8	21.6
35. Mentoring peers	19	4	21.1
36. Being a mentee	20	4	20.0
30. Being observed teaching by a peer	47	9	19.1
21. Conducting action research with peers	16	3	18.8
33. Coaching peers	16	3	18.8
32. Training other teachers	17	3	17.6
18. Pursuing a graduate degree	43	7	16.3
14. Attending article discussion club…	7	1	14.3
2. Reading ELT magazines…	36	5	13.9
7. Participating in other teaching related…	53	7	13.2
6. Joining an online ELT discussion group	27	2	7.4
34. Being coached by peers	20	1	5.0
27. Team teaching	22	1	4.5
19. Preparing portfolios	29	1	3.4

As it can be inferred from Table 28, with a percentage of 73.3, attending certificate/diploma programs to gain teaching qualifications (e.g., CELTA, DELTA) was found to be by far the most useful professional development activity by the participants who experienced it. The other activity that was found beneficial was participating in online or face-to-face workshops as 57.1% of the participants selected it.

Among all the professional development activities, being coached by peers, team teaching and preparing portfolios were not found very beneficial by the teachers who experienced them, with the percentages of 5, 4.5 and 3.4, respectively.

Qualitative Data Results

The framework of this study suggests that there are five core features of effective professional development, which are "content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, collective participation" (Desimone, 2009, p. 184). The interviews, in which 14 volunteer teachers participated, centered mainly around these core features. The conversations also led to the emergence of further issues.

The participants' experiences about self-initiated professional development will be presented within the framework of this study. Then the emerged categories will be discussed.

The first core feature, content focus, was discussed with the participants during the interviews. Table 29 shows the number of the comments made by the participants regarding the content of professional development.

Table 29

Distributions of Comments on Content Focus

Category	Number of Comments
Become better	43

Table 29 (cont'd)

Distributions of Comments on Content Focus

Category	Number of Comments
Needs	16
Up to date	8
Reflection	7
Theory-based	7
Interests of teachers	3
Context-specific	2

As can be seen in Table 29, based on the interviewees' responses, seven categories emerged throughout the qualitative data analysis, which are *become better, needs, up to date, reflection, theory-based, interests of teachers* and *context-specific.*

In terms of becoming better, the teachers talked about learning and improvement in different areas of teaching. One of the participants (T10) gave a specific example and said "… Our institution organized an event, teacher training event for three days ... It was a great chance for us to improve ourselves, especially in classroom management." Some other areas and practices that the teachers benefitted from were also mentioned, and these were pursuing a master's degree, working in units at their institutions such as curriculum or testing, and joining workshops and courses.

During the interviews, both the teachers' needs, and their students' needs were discussed. The teachers pointed out that professional development does not always take their needs into consideration. They also highlighted the fact that they are the ones who decide on what their needs are. One of them (T5) commented on these issues by saying "… If I don't feel like I need such a kind of professional

development workshop, I don't gain much from that." One other participant (T9) also emphasized the importance of the role of the administrators and stated that a change in the management affected their whole professional development experience. Regarding students' needs, the teachers talked about how they adjusted their level of speech, materials and strategies in order to involve more students and so that their lessons became more beneficial.

The teachers commented on the rapid changes that are happening in the teaching field, their efforts to be aware of these changes and learning more about them. They also shared how certain professional development experiences encouraged them to reflect on their own practices and made them aware of the areas that they needed to work on. For instance, while talking about the CELTA experience, one teacher (T9) said "I learned by doing something, but before that, I couldn't have the chance to see myself, where I am, how well I can do, ... in the classroom."

Although some teachers believed in the importance of theoretical knowledge, others asserted that there was generally a gap between what they learned in theory and their instructional experience. The teachers also mentioned that when the content of the professional development was interesting to them, it increased their level of willingness for attendance. As one of the participants (T5) puts forward, it could also have an opposite effect, "I just hate this type of thing [linguistics] and I'm not willing to learn about it…" In addition, the data suggested that the teachers always looked for a link between what they learned and what they could actually use in their specific context.

The second core feature which was discussed with the interviewees was active learning. The number of comments about active learning can be seen in Table 30 below.

Table 30

Distributions of Comments on Active Learning

Category	Number of Comments
Observation	10
Feedback	10
Active participation	3
Going out of comfort zone	1

As illustrated in Table 30, observation and feedback were the issues that the participants mentioned the most. The teachers commented on both being observed and observing other teachers. For instance, one teacher (T2) highlighted how crucial observations were for a teacher by saying, "Observation was best I must say." The data also revealed that observation and feedback were interrelated as most comments made about feedback were followed by an observation process. The majority of the teachers talked about the usefulness of feedback in general including the negative ones and the ones given by their peers and students. They also added that receiving feedback created an awareness about their instructional performance. In addition, they emphasized how it was equally important to give positive feedback for appraisal and motivational purposes.

The participants also valued hands-on professional development activities. One of them (T10) mentioned benefitting from learning-by-experiencing to self-evaluate. Regarding that, another participant (T11) expressed her awareness of not stepping out of her own context. Moreover, one other teacher (T12) expressed her preference for face-to-face events due to their provision of communication

opportunities by saying "… it's more interactive and whenever you have a question, you can just ... ask it, learn it, share it. It's much better for me."

Coherence was the third core feature that the participants discussed during the interviews. Table 31 demonstrates the number of comments which were made about this feature.

Table 31

Distributions of Comments on Coherence

Category	Number of Comments
Practice	17
Familiar topics	1
Students' improvement	1

The interviewees expressed that they liked the professional development activities during which they had a chance to learn some practical skills. The data also showed that when teachers learned new teaching ideas and strategies, they immediately thought of how they could apply it in their own classroom and try to find ways to adapt them. For example, one teacher (T10) stated benefitting from CELTA in that sense, and said, "CELTA was exactly of the highest impact on my teaching experience because it was full of practice, eight practices I had, supervised by different teachers, accompanied by different students from different cultural backgrounds." In the same vein, another teacher (T8) mentioned that she could observe the positive impact of a change in her classroom practices on students' contentment and attentiveness levels. However, the participants also admitted that it might take some time to use what they learned in their own context as one of them (T3) put forward "I mean, to find it [professional development] beneficial and useful, you need to be able to use it in your class, but most of the time it's not really possible

to apply it very quickly." Moreover, one teacher (T14) suggested that what she experienced in a real classroom might not be the same as what she learned in theory. Similarly, another teacher (T1) asserted that in-class teaching was the most beneficial kind of professional development.

In addition, one of the teachers (T4) pointed out that she found it useful to attend professional development events whose topics she was familiar with in order not to forget about her teaching-related knowledge.

During the interviews, the participants also talked about the duration of professional development, which is the fourth core feature. In Table 32 below, the number of comments which were made about this feature can be seen.

Table 32

Distributions of Comments on Duration

Category	Number of Comments
Amount of time	8
Self-paced	8
Lifelong learning	3
Follow-up	2
Breaks	1

According to the data, it was observed that most teachers mentioned having attended workshops or trainings which lasted for a few hours. However, they added that these events did not contribute to their teaching performance, or they did not learn anything at all. One participant (T5) stated that "They [two-hour workshops] were helpful … to just make me aware of these concepts, but they weren't enough..." Similarly, another teacher (T10) shared how beneficial an experience of attending a three-day-long professional development event was. On the other hand, one other

teacher (T1) expressed a preference of having professional development as short and least energy consuming as possible.

All the comments made by the interviewees regarding self-paced learning were positive. They talked about how convenient it was for them because of the freedom it provided in terms of time and place. Some teachers also defined themselves as lifelong learners.

In addition, the data revealed that having follow-up sessions after professional development events was not common. One of the teachers (T5) mentioned that although most of her experience was attending one-time-only events, she believed it should not be limited to them, and added "… if we had follow-up sessions and I am sure it would work better, and I would remember them in detail..." In terms of being in a development process constantly, one participant's (T2) comments indicated that this could also create feelings of annoyance or anger.

Collective participation was the last core feature which was discussed with the interview participants. Table 33 below shows the number of comments which were made about this feature.

Table 33

Distributions of Comments on Collective Participation

Category	Number of Comments
Peer learning	34
Networking	11
Peer support	8

The data demonstrated that most teachers found learning from their peers valuable a great deal. They asserted that they received help from their colleagues for the problems they experienced in class, taught together, observed one another and

got inspired by each other. One of the participants (T7) emphasized the importance of having a sharing community and a supportive atmosphere and said, "… sharing with colleagues and learning from their experiences and having these meetings with them, and discussing the ... immediate problems and ... the solutions to these problems was the most beneficial..." Another teacher (T14) also pointed out the usefulness of teaching in a multicultural environment.

The interviewees also shared their efforts of creating a network to improve themselves. A few of them mentioned using online platforms such as LinkedIn or Twitter to reach a wider circle of professionals. Others stated benefitting from meeting with teachers working at different institutions across the country thanks to their master's program, which also provided them with diverse perspectives. Regarding that, one teacher (T11) said, "I didn't step out of my comfort zone much. I didn't force myself much, but I realized that when I met other people…" Another teacher (T7) also mentioned the benefit of having a large network in contacting the right people to invite for professional development events at her institution.

With regard to peer support, the participant teachers talked about the comfort of having peers to help them as teaching is not an individual practice. They also stated that peers encouraged each other, and they highlighted the importance of having supportive colleagues at a workplace, which made them feel safer.

Apart from the discussions focusing on the core features of professional development, the interviewees were also asked questions about the role of willingness in professional development. In Table 34 below, the number of comments made about willingness are demonstrated.

Table 34

Distributions of Comments on Willingness

Category	Number of Comments
Self-initiated	240
Institution-initiated	48
Responsibility	34
Teachers' willingness	28
Contentment	27
Unwillingness	24
Motivation	14

As shown in Table 34, during the analysis of the interview data, seven categories were created, and these are *self-initiated, institution-initiated, responsibility, teachers' willingness, contentment, unwillingness,* and *motivation.*

During the interviews, the teachers were asked about their self-initiated professional development journey, including the activities and events they participated in, their plans and the challenges they faced. These also comprise of the sub-categories of "self-initiated" and will be shown in a separate fashion.

First, Table 35 demonstrates the number of comments made regarding the professional development activities the participants attended.

Table 35

Distributions of Comments on Self-initiated Professional Development Activities

Category	Number of Comments
Seminars and webinars	22
Certificate programs	21
Reading	19
Reflective practices	18
Post-graduate studies	15
Technology	13

Table 35 (cont'd)

Distributions of Comments on Self-initiated Professional Development Activities

Category	Number of Comments
Courses	12
Conferences	10
Doing research	9
Feedback	7
Workshops	6
Community building	4
Doing presentations	4
Projects	3
Scholarships	2
Following ELT associations	1
Abroad	1
Training	1
Getting published	1
Practicing English	1
Planning	1

As can be seen in Table 35 above, seminars and webinars were the most mentioned professional development activities by the interviewees. Some teachers stated having joined free online ones and benefitting from them, which was mainly because of the community building opportunity they provided. Regarding that matter, one of the teachers (T11) said, "… when I started to attend webinars … I had a chance to get to know other instructors from other universities …" On the other hand, there were also some teachers who pointed out that they found some of the webinars uninteresting.

The data also indicated that the participants also talked about certificate programs a great deal. Although it was mentioned that certificate programs such as

CELTA or DELTA may not be context-specific, most teachers expressed contentment about the programs that they were part of as one of the participants (T8) put forward, "I started CELTA and of course, my perception changed dramatically about the class, environment, and ... class practice and instruction." They also added that attending these programs had positive outcomes related to their students. On another note, one teacher (T1) stated that he did not benefit from having the English Teaching Certificate, which is a required certificate only in the Turkish educational context.

In addition, the teachers mentioned following ELT journals and reading articles on a regular basis, as well. They also stated that they practiced self-reflection by observing themselves, keeping a journal, taking specific notes on their lesson plans about their strengths and weaknesses, and asking questions to themselves. For example, one teacher (T4) said, "If I have a problem in the classroom when I come back to my room, I think about that lesson. How did it go? Was it good? In what ways it was good?" The teachers also added that they used their mistakes and weaknesses as tools to improve themselves.

The comments made about post-graduate studies showed that the participants had different aims in pursuing them such as improving their English or going abroad. While many of them stated that doing a master's or a PhD contributed to their improvement, some said it did not add much to their undergraduate knowledge.

With regards to technology, first, the teachers talked about benefitting from social media as one of the teachers (T13) put forward, "I think I should also mention about social media … to follow these innovations like also following the articles, latest articles ... on my favorite journals." Moreover, digital tools facilitating watching videos and doing listening in English were pointed out both for teacher

development purposes and as tools which could be used to create better lessons. The interviewees also mentioned that they followed and enjoyed participating in both online and face-to-face courses, conferences, workshops, and trainings.

In addition, there were participants who commented on conducting research, getting published and presenting their studies at events. They emphasized that conducting research in their own context was useful for them because of its personal aspect. They also added that carrying out research was included in their day-to-day practice. However, some teachers complained about the fact that action research was still not a very common practice and people were not very knowledgeable about where to start or how to do it.

In terms of feedback, not only peer feedback, but also student feedback was emphasized by some. The data also revealed that while some teachers followed the events which are organized by educational communities and attended them, others asserted that they were active working members of these organizations.

Some teachers also talked about following, applying for, and receiving scholarships for professional development events or their post-graduate studies, but not being able to use them because of the pandemic. Regarding projects, one teacher (T11) highlighted learning a great deal from being a part of projects by saying, "… it's [preparing a curriculum as a part of a project] a very overwhelming and tedious process, but at the same time, you learn a lot about it." As parts of their professional development, some interviewees also talked about following ELT associations and publishers such as British Council and Cambridge, visiting institutions abroad, and making an effort to use English in their everyday life.

As well as professional development activities, the teachers' professional development plans were also discussed, which is the second sub-category of "self-

initiated". The number of comments made about their plans are demonstrated in

Table 36 below.

Table 36

Distributions of Comments on Professional Development Plans

Category	Number of Comments
Community building	8
Certificate programs	7
Doing research	6
Post-graduate studies	4
Seminars – webinars	3
Conferences	2
Working in units	2
Abroad	2
Workshops	1
Technology	1
Being a presenter	1
Writing about experiences	1
Teaching departmental courses	1
Reading	1
Keeping a diary	1
Reflective practices	1
Courses	1
Being a facilitator	1
Scholarships	1
Initiating activities	1
Interdisciplinary teaching	1

As Table 36 shows above, the most commonly raised plan of the interviewees

was related to community building. The teachers talked about their plans to become

members of educational communities and helping their colleagues to become better.

In that sense, one of the teachers (T11) said, "maybe ... in my new workplace ... if I

can find ... some like-minded colleagues, I can have a support group and we can really think about world of teaching." The participants also expressed their willingness to join certificate programs such as CELTA or DELTA; however, some expressed their financial concerns about not being able to attend them as well. In addition, there were some comments related to conducting action research, writing papers, and having them published. The teachers also stated that they would like to pursue a post-graduate degree.

Attending seminars, webinars, conferences, and workshops were also included in the participants' professional development plans. In addition, one teacher (T7) stated that working in different units in her institution could also be beneficial by saying, "And maybe ... I'll work in the curriculum unit as well and I'm sure it will develop me as a teacher..." Besides these plans, two teachers expressed that they were considering living and working abroad for a while, and one of them (T3) suggested applying for scholarships could be a way to put these plans into practice.

According to the data, the rest of the comments regarding teachers' plans were not commonly mentioned. In other words, some plans were only mentioned by one teacher. For example, one of the participants (T6) put forward that technology was one of the areas that she would like to develop themselves more. Moreover, another participant (T9) mentioned that she was planning to share her experiences with other teachers in a written form or by being a facilitator in a professional development event. In the same vein, initiating activities were emphasized and one other participant (T7) added, "I hope to be able to ... give small scale seminars about my interests, about the topics that I like to read about." Some teachers said they wanted to spend more time on reading and self-reflection, which could also include diary keeping. Moreover, teaching different courses in the departments such as

Translation Studies apart from general English classes were discussed as a part of teachers' professional development plans. Regarding that, one participant (T1) expressed his intention of incorporating general English teaching methodological practices to teaching literature.

During the interviews, the teachers also expressed the challenges they faced about their self-initiated professional development experiences, which is the third sub-category of "self-initiated". Table 37 demonstrates the number of comments made about these challenges.

Table 37

Distributions of Comments on Professional Development Challenges

Category	Number of Comments
Financial	11
Time-related	9
Contextual	1

As can be seen in Table 37, the teachers expressed the financial, time-related and contextual challenges they faced about the professional development activities they attended or regarding their professional development plans.

The participants talked about their willingness to attend courses or certificate programs, but because of financial reasons, they stated not being able to do that. For example, one teacher (T12) said, "… for the last three years ... I have wanted to ... do a CELTA course. And it's so expensive for me, so I need to save some money to do it …" Related to the financial issues, one of the teachers (T11) also added that there can be contextual limitations by mentioning that some online courses required payment through PayPal which is not valid in Türkiye. In addition, not having enough time was pointed out as one of the major reasons preventing the participants

from improving themselves more, portraying a better performance in class, or writing their theses.

Regarding their professional development experiences, the interviewees also mentioned the activities that their institutions initiated. In Table 38 below, the number of comments regarding such activities can be seen.

Table 38

Distributions of Comments on Institution-initiated Professional Development Activities

Category	Number of Comments
Certificate programs	15
Trainings	7
Working in units	6
Workshops	4
Planning	3
Induction	2
Courses	2
Conferences	2
Team-teaching	1
Action research	1
Collaborating with publishers	1
Seminars – webinars	1
Sharing what is learned	1

As Table 38 shows, the teachers mostly talked about the certificate programs they participated in thanks to the initiation of their institutions. For example, one teacher (T8) asserted that CELTA was portrayed as a reward for the teachers, which means that they were encouraged to be a part of that program. She added they were also supported financially by her institution. While some teachers stated that they attended the certificate programs as an institutional obligation, the others expressed

their gratitude and contentment about having been given the chance to choose what they would like to do. In relation to that, one participant (T12) said, "… the school said: 'You can … do a CELTA course this year or this one. You can choose … between them.' And you could do that. And I think this was the best way ..."

Most teachers put forward that they benefitted from the trainings which their institutions provided. These included in-service trainings for new teachers and in-house teacher training sessions that lasted for a few days. The participants also emphasized how beneficial it was to work in different units in their institutions, because by working there, they broadened their horizons, and they were able to help other teachers by carrying out practices such as observations. Regarding workshops, the interviewees mentioned that they were willing to attend them but did not aways find them interesting. One teacher (T11) also highlighted the support they received from the management and said, "… since the manager has a PhD degree in our field, in language teaching, she most of the time participates in a lot of workshops as the trainer."

Regarding other professional development activities that institutions initiated, one of the teachers (T13) stated that the collaborative team-teaching practice she participated in involved individual and group planning. Another participant (T7) expressed that she benefitted from the induction programs of her institution by saying, "I learned about material development processes here [in the induction program], and I learned about … some teacher practices, so that was also very beneficial." The data also revealed that some institutions sent their teachers abroad to attend some courses. They also mentioned that their institutions sometimes organized conferences and seminars as well. To invite good trainers to their institution for professional development events, one participant (T4) stated that they collaborated

with publishers. Another participant (T11) emphasized that after participating in a workshop, she was urged to share what she had learned with her colleagues in both spoken and written forms.

During the interviews, the participants also talked about their experiences on the issue of responsibility about professional development. The number of comments made regarding responsibility are shown in Table 39 below.

Table 39

Distributions of Comments on Responsibility

Category	Number of Comments
Teachers' responsibility	18
Percentage of efforts	17
Joint effort	1

As Table 39 demonstrates, in terms of responsibility, the majority of the participants shared the opinion that teachers themselves were responsible for their own professional development. One teacher (T10) explained his reasons of thinking that way by saying, "I'm the one who is responsible because I know what I can do or what I can't do inside the classroom or for my professional development." In addition, the teachers stated that taking the responsibility of one's own professional development encouraged teachers to take action. However, some of the participants also mentioned that they observed some teachers ignored facing their weaknesses, and therefore, they did not feel the responsibility to develop themselves. Another issue which emerged during the interviews was agency. A few participants complained about not having the right to choose which area of professional development they wanted to work on. One teacher (T5) also believed that teachers' professional development was not only the responsibility of one stakeholder, and

stated that according to her experience, even if the institution provided some opportunities, it was her who decided which ones to choose.

When asked about their professional development efforts, more than 75% of the teachers asserted that the majority of their efforts was the result of their own initiatives. Some teachers said it equally depended on their efforts and their institutions' initiatives. Only one teacher (T10) said that his institution played a greater role in encouraging his professional development rather than his own will.

In addition to the aforementioned issues, the participants also commented on other aspects such as teachers' willingness, contentment, unwillingness and motivation, which are the sub-categories of "willingness".

Regarding teachers' willingness, most of the participants expressed their eagerness to attend different kinds of professional development activities. They also emphasized the role of learning in their professional and personal life, and how it motivated them to learn even more. For example, one participant (T8) said, "If I am an incompetent teacher, I will feel very unhappy in the classroom and classroom is a big part of my life … so I would like to be successful." Being open and being in the search of improvement opportunities were other issues that were highlighted.

During the discussions about their contentment, the interviewees were asked if they were satisfied with their own professional development, and it was observed that more than half of them gave negative answers. While most teachers stated that they believed they could and wanted to do better, some assumed they would never be content with their own professional development. The participants who gave more positive answers thought that they were doing their best to improve. In this sense, one of them (T13) said, "I join lots of other opportunities, so I'm not very satisfied, but I'm happy with my own efforts."

On the other hand, while sharing their experiences, the interviewees stated that they had witnessed a lot of unwillingness towards professional development. They said that teachers' attendance rate to professional development activities were very low, and when they had to be there, they were usually inattentive. While some teachers thought that this could be because the activities were boring or obligatory, others said it may be the result of the culture at their workplace. One of the teachers (T12) explained the issue as such, "I don't think that we [as teachers] in general ... put much effort because I don't think that we are … encouraged to do it [participate in professional development activities] in our institutions."

During the interviews, the participants also talked about on the significance of motivation in their professional development. The comments made regarding motivation are shown in Table 40.

Table 40

Distributions of Comments on Motivation

Category	Number of Comments
Self-motivation	7
Love for teaching	4
External motivation	3

As can be seen in Table 40, the participants emphasized the positive effect of having internal motivation to improve themselves on their own professional development. Some teachers added that the love they feel for their profession keeps them motivated as well. Apart from self-motivation, the teachers also pointed out that sometimes they were tried to be motivated by external factors such as rewards, too.

Although the participants were not asked questions about the administration of their institutions directly, a considerable number of comments were made about this issue. Table 41 shows the number of comments made by the interviewees' experiences on the administrative side of professional development.

Table 41

Distributions of Comments on Administration

Category	Number of Comments
Obligation	37
Time-related support	16
Financial support	16
Lack of support	11
Workload	10
Attitudinal support	9
Activity-related support	9
Appraisal system	5
Verbal support	4

During the interviews, most of the teachers mentioned that joining professional development activities was an obligation in their institutions. Some participants stated that the enforced professional development did not result in learning, and they aroused negative feelings such as the fear of losing their jobs. They also criticized the lack of options provided for them and the structural system in their workplaces. Related to that, one teacher (T6) put forward, "… most of the teachers who are resisting doing those kinds of things is ... not because of 'the lack of the time', but because the professional development things are from top to down. It is forced…"

Most comments made regarding time-related support were negative. Teachers asserted that the administrative units in their institutions did not provide them time

and space to develop themselves professionally and carry out activities such as preparing materials for their classes and pursuing post-graduate degrees, which might cause frustration. The participants added that if teachers wanted to improve themselves, they had to use their off-work time. On the other hand, some other teachers mentioned that they received great support from their institutions as they attended conferences, certificate programs, master's programs, and workshops.

In addition, some of the participants asserted that their institutions supported them a great deal financially, and they talked about those experiences very positively and in appreciation. For example, one of them (T8) said, "Of course, the institution encourages it [doing a master's degree] in a way that they send you and pay for you the whole year, which was great for me." However, others pointed out that this kind of support might be conditional and emphasized they could not receive financial support although they thought finances was required for professional development.

Another issue which the interviewees talked about was the lack of support. They discussed that they were not allowed or encouraged to attend a master's program or a conference in other cities. They thought that the reason behind this issue could be the priority of the institutions in the fulfilment of the duties. One participant (T8) expressed her opinion on this matter and said, "They just want things to be done ... 'OK, classes should be done and then the exams.' Yes, but this is not the whole point of these institutions."

According to the data, the teachers stated having too many hours to teach and a lot of other responsibilities, which could hinder their development professionally and decrease their inner motivation; thus, they expressed their wish to have more flexible schedules. In that sense, one participant (T6) said, "We have got lots of things to do and because we would like to breathe sometimes and have a time to have

a coffee or thing with the others, it is not that much easy to force yourself to have those inner motivation to continuously improve yourself."

Most teachers mentioned that they had attitudinal support from their institutions. In other words, the administration encouraged them to carry out their professional development activities. However, one teacher (T8) pointed out that the attitude of management could differ greatly even in the same organization, as she observed the decrease in the level of encouragement for participating in certificate programs with the new management.

In addition, the participants talked about the professional development opportunities provided by their institutions. One teacher (T11) talked about having been regularly informed by her manager about professional development events. On the other hand, one other teacher (T8) complained about the inactiveness of the professional development unit in her institution about organizing professional development events. Moreover, another participant (T3) expressed her discontentment with the limited focus of her institution on professional development as she stated that the administration was "more interested in the academic publications".

Another issue that was discussed during the interviews was the appraisal systems. The teachers working at state universities stated that there was no reward regarding their development as professionals, which they thought affected the level of motivation and willingness of teachers negatively. One of the participants (T3) expressed the difficulty of having teachers attending professional development activities since the teachers were not offered any kind of promotion or salary increase. She also added that another factor having an impact on teachers' activeness in terms of their professional development was the lack of punishment, which means

that the teachers knew that there would not be a negative outcome such as a job loss even if they did not make an effort to improve themselves.

Lastly, the participants talked about the verbal support they received from their institutions. They stated that they wanted to be appreciated more for their efforts and experience institutional support in action rather than only being supported verbally. For instance, one of the interviewees (T8) emphasized that they were not discouraged from the professional development activities they would like to join. However, another teacher (T3) highlighted the fact that this kind of support was not followed by actions and in financial terms, and said, "Yes, they [the administrators] say that 'we support'. But actually, there is… I mean almost no support… I mean there is verbal support but not financial support."

Comparison of Survey and Interview Data Regarding Experiences

In terms of professional development experiences of tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers, the quantitative and qualitative results mostly supported each other. According to the survey data, sharing experiences and problems with colleagues was found to be the most commonly experienced professional development activity, although it was not on top of the list of most beneficial professional development activities. During the interviews, the teachers talked a great deal about how they valued their peers' support and they learned from them, and this can be indicated by the 42 comments made about "peer support" and "peer learning". They also put forward that peer observation and peer feedback were very useful for them to improve themselves. In addition, while talking about other professional activities such as workshops of graduate degrees, the participants emphasized that they enjoyed those activities because of the community they provided. Community

building also received most comments about the teachers' plans about their professional development.

In addition, the survey findings suggested that teachers found attending certificate/diploma programs (e.g., CELTA, DELTA) the most beneficial among all the professional development activities they had experienced. In the interviews, all teachers having attended such programs stated that they were very useful for them and contributed to their teaching. Some of the participants who had not had a chance to join them also included these programs in their future plans. Reflection was another issue about which both the survey and interview data produced similar results. It was included in the first five most beneficial professional development activities according to the survey findings. During the interviews, reflective practices was the fourth professional development activity that the participants commented on most. Furthermore, their comments were always positive about reflection, and it was the most suggested professional development activity by the interviewees.

Another similar result was regarding the least experienced professional development activities. The survey findings revealed that a very a low number of the participants experienced being coaching peers, coached by peers, mentoring peers, being a mentee, training other teachers, or attending article discussion club sessions (online or face-to-face). Furthermore, coaching, team teaching and portfolios were found beneficial by only one survey participant. These activities were never mentioned during the interviews made with the teachers, either, except for team teaching. One teacher shared her experience about team teaching, but because it was an obligatory practice in her institution and she had to do it for five semesters, she did not comment on the practice very positively.

On the other hand, there were some dissimilarities between the survey and interview data. For instance, although the survey findings showed that workshops were found to be the second beneficial professional development activity; in the interviews, only three teachers suggested them for other teachers, and only one of them included them in her plans. The second difference was about portfolios. None of the interview participants mentioned having experienced it; however, almost 50% of the survey participants indicated having experienced it.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter, the main findings of the current study will be discussed with reference to the relevant literature. Then implications for practice and further research will be presented. Lastly, limitations of the study will be covered.

Overview of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the self-initiated professional development perceptions and experiences of Turkish EFL teachers working at tertiary level and whether their perceptions differed regarding their age, the city they lived in, the type of university they work at, their teaching experience, undergraduate department, master's department, whether they had post-graduate degrees, or teaching qualifications. With respect to the purpose of the study, the following questions were addressed:

1. What are tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions about self-initiated professional development?

1a. Do their perceptions differ based on:

    i.   their age?

    ii.   the city they live in?

    iii.   the type of university they work at?

    iv.   years of teaching experience?

    v.   their undergraduate department?

    vi.   their master's department?

    vii.   having a postgraduate degree?

    viii.   having teaching qualifications?

2. What are tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' self-initiated professional development experiences?

To obtain information regarding the questions, data were collected through an online survey, and following that, one-on-one semi structured interviews were conducted. For the analysis of the quantitative data, descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized, and content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data.

This chapter will first present the major findings of this study with regard to the self-initiated professional development perceptions and experiences of Turkish EFL teachers and references will be made related to the relevant literature. Next, it will move on to implications for practice and further research. Finally, the limitations of the study will be discussed.

Discussion of Major Findings

Perceptions

The Meaning and Qualities of Professional Development

The results of this study indicated a strong connection between professional development and becoming better in teaching. This finding is in line with Mitchell's (2013) definition as he also suggests that professional development is mainly about enhancement of "knowledge" and "practice" (p. 390). It was also found out in this study that professional development meant lifelong learning, which has also been suggested by Villegas-Reimers (2003). Moreover, the results of the current study indicated that professional development was a helpful and encouraging tool to adapt to the rapid changes happening in the field of teaching, practice reflection and learn from peers. In literature, it is possible to find studies having reached similar results. For instance, in the study of Babanoğlu and Yardımcı (2017), it is stated that professional development can be a link between the recent developments and

teachers. Another example could be the study of Hidayati (2018), in which self-reflection is pointed out to be an effective way of developing oneself professionally as it supports one to be a better learner and teacher. Moreover, Timperley (2008) and Richard and Farrell (2010) suggest that collaboration among teachers is necessary for them to share their experiences, and thus, help each other. In addition to the aforementioned results, this study concluded that professional development could be shaped according to one's needs and expectations as well. Similarly, it is highlighted in the study of Merriam et al. (2007) that teachers can determine their own needs and make decisions about their professional development accordingly.

Regarding the qualities of professional development, the results showed that there was a preference both for online and face-to-face professional development activities on condition that they were accessible. It is also emphasized in Çalışkan's (2021) study that teachers value having online opportunities. Furthermore, Korkmazgil and Seferoğlu (2015) suggest that membership to online communities play a significant role in teachers' professional development. It was also concluded in this study that the facilitators of professional development should be experts, have credentials, make an effort to develop themselves in an ongoing fashion and have the ability to generate a safe environment for teachers. Main and Pendergast (2015) reached similar results in their study, and they state that teachers expect professional development facilitators to be aware of their needs and make an effort for teachers' active involvement. On the other hand, for self-initiated professional development, having a facilitator is not perceived as a necessary part of it (Bull 2017; Merriam et al., 2007).

Teaching Profession

The study found out that teaching was a "demanding" profession and it required teachers to improve themselves constantly, and therefore, it was concluded that teaching as a job took up most of teachers' time and affected their overall contentment. In the same vein, Alshaikhi (2020), Yücedağ (2020), and Karakaş and Yücedağ (2020) suggest that professional development is and should be continuous because teachers need to adapt to recent advancements happening in the field of education. Moreover, the results of this study demonstrated that empathy towards and representation of other cultures were part of this profession. In the same vein, McAlinden (2018) indicates in her study that teachers regard empathy as a vital element of being a competent teacher.

Peer Learning

The study showed that tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers believed that learning from their peers and collegiality had a major role in their professional development. They also value community building in professional development. These findings highlight the importance of having a sharing community. In literature, it is also possible to find many studies which promote a collaborative environment and emphasize the necessity of it for the effectiveness of professional development (Abbasi, 2015; Alshaikhi, 2020; Çalışkan, 2021; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; DiPaola & Wagner, 2018; Johnson, 2009; Karaaslan, 2003; Leahy & Torff, 2013; Parhamnia & Farahian, 2021; Richards & Farrell, 2010; Timperley, 2008).

Content of Professional Development

The study found out that the participants gave importance to the content of development activities and believed that they should be interesting and useful. In the

same vein, Leahy and Torff (2013) suggest that teachers are pragmatic and whether they are interested in a professional development activity is contingent on their thoughts about its practicality and specificity to their context. To be more specific, it is pointed out that professional development should provide practical information for teachers which is in line with their day-to-day experiences and give them a chance to practice them in their own context, which could improve their instructional performance (Borko et al., 2010; Ekşi, 2010; Guskey, 2002; Johnson, 2009; Mustafa & Paçarizi, 2021). It is also highlighted in a number of previous works that it is important for professional development to be context-specific so that it becomes more effective (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Fitzpatrick et al., 2022; Korkmazgil, 2015; Louws et al., 2017; Main & Pendergast, 2015).

Willingness and Responsibility

According to the results of this study, teachers' willingness to participate in professional development activities was shown as the initial step to start learning and improving oneself. It can also be observed that in previous studies, the important role that willingness plays in teachers' professional development have also been emphasized (Abbasi, 2015; Karaaslan, 2003; Priajana, 2017; Sarıyıldız, 2017; Sharifzadeh & Khojasteh, 2018; Zerey, 2018).

Although the majority of the participants in the current study believed that the teachers themselves should be responsible for their professional development, there were also some thinking that it was institutions' responsibility as they had more decision-making power and Yüksel's (2021) study is in line with this finding. Yüksel highlights that institutions should also be accountable for teachers' professional development since this may have beneficial outcomes for the institutions as well (2021). However, it is indicated in the study of Zerey (2018) that the teachers are not

provided with many professional development opportunities by their institutions, and the ones that are provided are either mandatory or do not address their individual interests.

The concept of agency was also another major issue that came forward underlying its importance and the belief that teachers needed more independency and autonomy in their professional development process. The matter of teachers having a decision-making role and being more actively involved stakeholders of their own professional development has also been highlighted in previous studies, and agency is indicated to have a necessary element (Casale, 2011; Karaaslan, 2003; Leahy & Torff, 2013; Richards & Farrell, 2010; Smith, 2017). In addition, Irgatoğlu (2021) suggests that this self-initiation aspect also highlights teachers' autonomy, which can have positive outcomes such as increased participation in and eagerness towards professional development.

The reasons why teachers should have more agency regarding their professional development came from the teachers' belief that they were the ones who could determine their needs. The conclusion also suggested that professional development should align with teachers' needs, goals and interests. Similarly, in previous studies, it has been suggested that teachers can make the best decisions about which areas to improve and guide their professional development process according to their needs and aims, thus they favor professional development activities which address their context-specific needs (Alshaikhi, 2020; Casale, 2011; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Zerey, 2018). Moreover, Çalışkan (2021) adds that if teachers think that these activities are not focused on their needs, they are not willing to be involved and express their disinterest. Therefore, it can be said that all these

results show that the "personalized" feature of professional development should be underlined to achieve more effective results (Yüksel, 2021, p. 120).

Administrative Support

In the current study, administrative support was also found out to be an important factor which was needed for teachers' professional development in terms of workload, time, finances, initiation and attitude. In line with this finding, previous studies suggest that for teachers' professional development, administrative support is needed and valued (Abbasi, 2015; Ekşi, 2010; Priajana, 2017; Sarıyıldız, 2017; Sharifzadeh & Khojasteh, 2018; Zerey, 2018). The results also revealed that specific times should be allocated for teachers to spend on their own professional development, which indicates fewer teaching hours. There are several studies that are in line with this result (Abbasi, 2015; Burns, 2009; Çalışkan, 2021; Fitzpatrick et al., 2022; Karaaslan, 2003; Sarıyıldız, 2017; Zerey, 2018).

Observation and Feedback

The results of the study suggested that the teachers valued the opportunities for observation and feedback. They believed that observation might include observing a peer or a more experienced teacher, being observed and self-observation, which were great practices for teachers to develop their teaching skills. In literature, some studies support this finding and observations are suggested to be useful, foster self-reflection, and facilitate a collaborative atmosphere at workplaces (Fitzpatrick et al., 2022; Richards & Farrell, 2010). However, some researchers have reached different results in their studies. For instance, the 2015 article of Abbasi points out that teachers do not consider peer observation as an essential part of professional development. Similarly, Sharifzadeh and Khojasteh (2018) and Zerey (2018) suggest that the teachers are not commonly involved in peer observation and do not think that

it is vital for their professional development. In addition, the study of Sarıyıldız (2017) reveals that the teachers are not certain that peer observation is useful for them. Regarding the distanced stance that teachers take about observations in those studies, Richards and Farrell (2010) put forward that the reason why a lot of teachers may have negative perceptions about observations can be that observations are considered related to assessment and judgement, which could imply top-down structures and highlight the imbalance of involvement between the observer and the teacher. In terms of feedback, the results showed that student feedback was valued a great deal to self-improvement of teachers, which is signified in the study of Sharifzadeh and Khojasteh (2018) as well.

Students' Needs

One other conclusion that can be drawn from the study was about the students' needs. Teachers were found to be wanting to adapt to their students' changing needs so that they could be more helpful for them. Previous studies support this finding and indicate that teachers should be able to address their students' needs, and that can be achieved by improving themselves to provide them a better educational environment (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; DiPaola & Wagner, 2018; Johnson, 2009; Richards & Farrell, 2010; Timperley, 2008;). Some other studies also demonstrate that professional development and student achievement are highly connected (Borko et al., 2010; Campbell et al., 2004; Çalışkan, 2021; Day, 1999; Desimone, 2009; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Guskey, 2002; Leahy & Torff, 2013; Main & Pendergast, 2015; Timperley, 2008). For example, it can be found in Mustafa and Paçarizi's (2021) study that observing positive changes in students' reactions towards teachers' instructional changes makes a positive influence on the teachers.

Being Open to Change and Up-to-Date

The overall findings of the current study proves that the participants highly valued learning and improvement in different areas and forms and believed that being open to change was important. Previous studies have also emphasized this issue and drew attention to developing oneself both theoretically and practically through various ways which can keep one up-to-date and show different perspectives (Abbasi, 2015; Firth, 2019; Karaaslan, 2003; Korkmazgil, 2015; Yüksel, 2021). In addition, the results showed that professional development should also embrace personal development which can take place outside of school, which Desimone (2009) similarly states in her definition of professional development.

This study also concluded that according to the teachers, one of the ways for them to create a better learning experience for students was keeping up with the latest advancements in the teaching field. Teachers put great emphasis on being up-to-date and believed that teaching profession itself demanded teachers to improve constantly, which was seen as a necessary part of professional development. Similarly, Fitzpatrick et al. (2022) mention in their study that professional development should be viewed as an essential component of teaching profession. In addition, other studies have supported the finding that has revealed the fact that professional development should help teachers be up-to-date so that it is easier for them to adapt to constant and rapid changes (Abbasi, 2015; Ekşi, 2010; Johnson, 2009; Karaaslan, 2003; Richards & Farrell, 2010; Sharifzadeh & Khojasteh, 2018; Smith, 2017; Yücedağ, 2020; Zerey, 2018).

Lifelong Learning

In relation to continuous improvement, the conclusions of the study also proposed the concept of lifelong learning, and that professional development should

be ongoing. Previous works in literature support this result which indicates that professional development is a continuous process (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Karaaslan, 2003; Sarıyıldız, 2017; Yücedağ, 2020). The findings of this study also indicated the agreement on the fact that professional development should not be limited to one-time-only events and follow-up sessions were needed. It can be observed that previous studies have reached similar conclusions (Alshaikhi, 2020; Fitzpatrick et al., 2022; Johnson, 2009; Main & Pendergast, 2015; Priajana, 2017; Richards & Farrell, 2010; Yüksel, 2021).

"Duration" and Bachelor's and Master's Degrees

The findings of this study also revealed that the participants' perceptions about self-initiated professional development did not differ in terms of their age, the city they live in, the type of university they worked at, their teaching experience, having a postgraduate degree or teaching qualifications. This shows that regardless of their demographics, the teachers would like to improve themselves professionally. In other words, demographics do not play a major role in shaping teachers' perceptions. However, the study of Sarıyıldız (2017) shows that the years of experience make a difference on the teachers' perceptions of professional development. Moreover, Sharifzadeh and Khojasteh's (2018) study reveals that when compared to the private school teachers, public school teachers have a more negative approach towards professional development and do not take as much responsibility of their own professional development as their peers who worked at private institutions do. In the same vein, Karaaslan (2003) suggests in her study that less experienced teachers are more comfortable with trying new methods and techniques in their classrooms.

Experiences

Sharing Experiences and Problems

In this study, sharing experiences and problems with colleagues was found to be the most experienced professional development activity by the participants. Teachers feel safer and more comfortable when they have peers help them with their problems at work, which emphasizes the importance of having a sharing community and shows the value they place on learning from peers. Having a sharing community is believed to be one of the key elements that can make professional development effective and more beneficial for teachers, especially when they are able to participate in professional development activities with their colleagues. It is also possible to find works in literature having reached similar results (Fitzpatrick et al., 2022; Parhamnia & Farahian, 2021; Priajana, 2017). In addition, cooperation among peers has been suggested to be one of the main elements for professional development (Alshaikhi, 2020; Çalışkan, 2021). Louws et al. (2017) also point out that teachers favor these kinds of collective practices, which could also be one of the reasons for their involvement in professional development activities (Türüdü, 2020). On the other hand, Irgatoğlu (2021) and Sadeghi and Richards (2021) reach different results in their studies and state that individual activities are more commonly practiced when compared to the collaborative activities.

Workshops

This study concluded that participating in workshops is the second most commonly experienced and the second most beneficial professional development activity, which indicates a preference for the professional development activities which are provided by experts. Workshops are also included in the participants' professional development plans. Similarly, Güçlü (2018) suggests that most teachers

prefer to join workshops, especially when they are organized by their colleagues. Korkmazgil and Seferoğlu (2015) state in their study that teachers mostly attend in-house workshops and seminars. The findings of this study also suggested that online platforms enabled teachers to follow and access professional development events more easily, which has also been highlighted in other studies in literature (Alshaikhi, 2020; Çalışkan, 2021; Korkmazgil & Seferoğlu, 2015).

Action Research, Coaching and Team Teaching

As the study revealed, one of the least experienced professional development activities was conducting action research with peers. Teachers do not seem to have enough knowledge about how to conduct it. That may indicate a lack of administrative support, in terms of reduced workload and provision of some time-off for teachers, which this labor-intensive and time-consuming practice would require (Akşit, 2013).

The fact that coaching was another professional development activity that was not commonly experienced and found beneficial can also be supporting evidence which shows that it is not the priority for administrations, and therefore, they do not allocate certain times for this practice for teachers to carry out (Richards & Farrell, 2010).

Moreover, team teaching was concluded to be another professional development activity that the teachers did not benefit from. Buckley (2000) suggests that this could be due to the clash of personalities, or teachers' additional financial expectations from administrations as this process could be demanding.

Administrative Support

Need for administrative support in terms of time, teaching hours, finances, initiation of and attitudes towards professional development was found to be one of

the key elements in self-initiated professional development. The results of the study drew the line between enforcement and support very clearly and showed that the former did not generate positive outcomes; in contrast, it caused negative feelings such as fear of being judged or losing a job. In addition, not receiving enough support from administrations was concluded to be one of the major challenges that teachers faced in their professional development journey and the main difficulty they went through was regarding time-related support, which has also been highlighted in other works in literature (Korkmazgil & Seferoğlu, 2015; Simegn, 2014; Yüksel, 2021). The findings also indicated the individual or institution-related financial challenges teachers experienced, which have been pointed out in Simegn's (2014) and Zerey's (2018) works as well.

Certificate/Diploma Programs

According to the study, attending certificate/diploma programs such as CELTA or DELTA was concluded as to be by far the most beneficial professional development activity. It was also the second most mentioned self-initiated professional development activity and the second most discussed professional development plan. The reasons of this choice were listed as these programs' encouraging reflection and making teachers aware of the areas they need to work on, which were aspects that the teachers value. Similarly, in previous studies, reflection has been pointed out as a significant factor of effective professional development and as a quality that teachers appreciate and could benefit from (Hidayati, 2018; Karaaslan, 2003; Leahy & Torff, 2013; Louws et al., 2017; Priajana, 2017; Sharifzadeh & Khojasteh, 2018; Simegn, 2014; Zerey, 2018).

Portfolios

According to the results of this study, preparing portfolios was among the least beneficial professional development activities, which may be due to teachers' lack of knowledge about this practice and the time and energy consuming nature of it. On the other hand, the previous works in literature indicate very positive outcomes of preparing portfolios. For example, Tucker et al. (2002) put forward that portfolios could portray a wide range of evidence about a teacher's improvement instead of a one-time-only assessment of performance such as observations. Another reason for portfolios to be more favorable could be that they designate teachers as the main decision-makers of the process because it is their choice to determine what should be included in their portfolios, which creates a more purposeful experience for them (Taş & Cengizhan, 2013; Tucker et al., 2002).

Willingness and Responsibility

The participants were willing to learn more about their profession and improve themselves. When they learn something new and observe the improvement in themselves, they feel more willing to learn more, which highlights the cyclical and interdependent relationship between willingness and learning. In addition, the results of this study showed that one of the reasons why the teachers highlighted the importance of willingness in this study was that they witnessed a great deal of unwillingness in their contexts due to the fact that professional development was obligatory, failed to give teachers autonomy and did not address teachers' needs and interests. Similarly, other works in literature point out that unwillingness may create negative outcomes (Çalışkan, 2021; Irgatoğlu, 2021; Sadeghi & Richards, 2021; Sarıyıldız, 2017;).

The study also concludes that teachers should be the agents of their professional development, and they should feel that they are responsible for it as most teachers in this study believe that they should own the main responsibility for their professional development. In the same vein, the studies of Simegn (2014), Abbasi (2015), Zerey (2018) and Alshaikhi (2020) indicate that teachers are aware of their responsibility to shape their own professional development. In addition, the findings of the current study indicated that the professional development efforts of the majority of the teachers was due to their own initiatives. Veen et al. (2012) support this finding as they suggest that teachers' improvement in a professional way usually depends on their own efforts because educational institutions are mostly concerned about their students' learning processes rather than their teachers'.

The results of this study also showed that teachers having decision-making power in their own professional development process made it more purposeful. However, this was not the realistic picture of the current situation as it can be inferred from most teachers' discontentment about professional development being an obligation and not having the right to choose which area of professional development they wanted to work on. This result supports Korkmazgil and Seferoğlu's (2015), Yüksel's (2021) and Yücedağ's (2021) findings and reveals that teachers are not given a chance to be in charge of their own professional development. This situation may indicate how commonly institutions have top-down structures and point out that these may be the reasons behind the passive role of teachers in this process, which signifies the need for bottom-up structures regarding teachers' agency (Korkmazgil, 2015; Richards & Farrell, 2010).

Duration of Professional Development

In terms of the duration of professional development, teachers should be lifelong learners. In line with this finding, Day (1999) suggests that professional development should encourage teachers to be lifelong and autonomous learners. In the same vein, Leahy and Torff (2013) add that professional development should contribute to professionals' lifelong growth. This also sheds light to the importance of having follow-up sessions for professional development activities. However, the results showed that having follow-up sessions was not a common practice, which is also suggested by Casale (2011).

Implications for Practice

According to the results of this study, some recommendations can be made. It was found that although most of the teachers felt responsible for their professional development and took initiatives to improve themselves, there were also others who depended on the activities that their institutions offered. With refence to this finding, initially, it can be said that teachers should be aware that they are the main decision-makers in their professional development journey as they are the ones who can decide on their own needs and interests the best. Therefore, they should be willing to take more responsibility for their professional development. Teachers owning their professional development could not only make the process much more purposeful, but also increase their job satisfaction. In addition, teachers should act against the passive role that has been prescribed for them for a long time and take action to be more involved, which indicates more agency and power to shape their professional development. To make this happen, they need to acknowledge professional development as a part of their daily lives, be open to change and believe in the power of lifelong learning. In the same vein, it can be suggested that teachers become more

involved in practices facilitating self-assessment such as self-observation, self-reflection or preparing portfolios. Their engagement could be an indicator of their self-awareness, autonomy, and willingness to be responsible professionals who are in charge of their improvement. Moreover, it would make them less dependent on other parties or resources.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that teachers value having a community and that they benefit from that. Based on this conclusion, it can be suggested that teachers' effort to participate in professional development activities should not be limited to in-house events. By attending different professional development events outside of their institutions, they can have a chance to meet new teachers who come from different contexts, which can provide them with new angles. Teachers can also use online sources more such as social media platforms to expand their network and to be informed about recent professional development events. Moreover, they can take a more active role and share their experiences through videos, podcasts or blogs, which could reach much more people throughout the country and create a greater chance for communication. Teachers can also join teacher associations, or even found one themselves to help and support each other. It is also important to note that teachers can take initiatives in their institutions, too. As teachers working at the same institution know each other well regarding their needs, struggles, or interests, they can organize workshops or trainings for each other. This could generate a non-judgmental and comfortable learning atmosphere. They can also demand support from their institutions, which was indicated to be one of the most significant aspects shaping teachers' professional development in the current study.

Besides teachers taking initiative for their professional development, the role of administrations should not be neglected. First, their attitude should not be enforcing but encouraging for improvement, which could promote that institutions are not only students' place of learning, but also teachers'. In addition to their attitudinal stance, they should make visible adjustments in their institution's administrative structures and their visions towards professional development. This means that they should support bottom-up approaches to include teachers in their professional development. Moreover, they could look into ways of decreasing teachers' workload and allocating certain times for them in their timetables which they can spend on their professional development when possible. Being aware of teachers' context-specific needs and interests could also be a good idea as it can help the administrators to initiate professional development activities which their teachers could benefit from and enjoy at the same time. Above all these, the administrators should take the responsibility to create a fair, non-critical and non-competitive environment at work where they respect teachers' choices and invite them for more cooperation. They can also encourage non-traditional forms of professional development such as mentoring, coaching and action research. This could give teachers more freedom and autonomy while reinforcing a safe work atmosphere at the same time.

Lastly, some further recommendations could be made for the facilitators of professional development and for those who organize professional development events. As highlighted in this study, they should take personal characteristics and context-specific needs and wants of their audience. They should also pay attention to providing follow-up sessions to increase the effectiveness of professional development. In addition, they should make an effort to make that specific

professional development experience in line with the practical reality of their audience so that teachers can benefit from it the most and make a change in their own classrooms. Last but not least, they should emphasize the importance of self-assessment tools by informing, educating and encouraging their audience about the use of them.

Implications for Further Research

Based on the findings of the study, some suggestions can be made. First, as this study only involved 67 Turkish EFL teachers working at tertiary level, and therefore, used the data coming from teachers working at a limited number of settings, other studies could involve more teachers representing more tertiary contexts in Türkiye, which could produce more comprehensive results.

Second, this study only revealed results regarding tertiary level education in Türkiye. Future research could be done investigating the self-initiated professional development perceptions and experiences of English language teachers working at other school levels such as K-12.

Third, this study reflected the perceptions and experiences of teachers. In order to make comparisons in terms of the perceptions and experiences of all the stakeholders in professional development, data could be collected from administrators, professional development unit members and students.

Finally, in this study, only surveys and interviews were used to collect data. Further research could include other data collection methods such as observations, reflective journals, or diaries to gain more insight of the participants' thoughts and feelings.

Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations of this research. First, snowball sampling was used while the current study was conducted, so the demographic data was not extremely varied. Different conclusions could be reached if it were conducted in different institutions and cities using a different sampling method.

Second, the participants of this study were limited to only Turkish EFL teachers. That is why, other stakeholders such as administrators and students could be included in the future studies to have a broader picture on the perceptions and experiences on self-initiated professional development.

Third, because of the limited amount of participation, there were less than 30 teachers under some demographic categories, which is not enough to run some statistical tests. Therefore, some categories had to be merged. For example, there were a few participants from various cities in Türkiye; thus, while doing inferential analysis, the participants from these cities and İzmir were merged and the tests were run with this group an the other, which was the combination of the participants from İstanbul and Ankara.

The dissemination of the survey could be another limitation of the study. The link of the online survey was sent to the teachers via WhatsApp messages, and they were asked to share this message with other teachers who would fit in the criteria for the target population of this study. However, it is possible that this message did not reach all the participants or was not seen by them.

In addition, it should be considered that both of the data collection tools were used online. There could be more responses if the surveys could be administered face-to-face, or the researcher could reach additional conclusions taking the gestures

and facial expressions of the participants into account if the interviews were conducted face-to-face.

Lastly, the interviews were conducted only with the volunteers. This means that the teachers who were already interested in the topic and improving themselves became the participants, which made it possible that this group of participants does not totally reflect the reality of the whole population. If the interviewees had been chosen according to certain characteristics and demographics, different results could have been obtained.

REFERENCES

Abbasi, F. M. (2015). English language teachers' views on self-initiated professional development. *The Journal of Applied Linguistics, 8*(16), 164–186.

Akşit, T. (2013). Teacher action research: A means of reflection to improve EAP teaching practice. In J. Wrigglesworth (Ed.), *EAP within the higher education garden: Cross-pollination between disciplines, departments and research* (pp. 231-239). Garnet Publishing.

Alshaikhi, H. I. (2020). Self-directed teacher professional development in Saudi Arabia: EFL teachers' perceptions. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 10*(11), 1359– 1369. http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1011.03

Babanoğlu, M. P., & Yardımcı, A. (2017). Turkish state and private school EFL teachers' perceptions on professional development. *Çukurova Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 46*(2), 789– 803. Retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/cuefd/issue/31467/305210

Bala, S. S., Mansor, W. F. A. W., Stapa, M., & Zakaria, M. H. (2012). Digital portfolio and professional development of language teachers. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, 66,* 176–186. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.11.259

Başar, S., Çeliktürk, H., & Çomoğlu, İ. (2020). English language teachers' insights into continuous professional development: A cross-case exploration. *The Literacy Trek, 6*(2), 55–80. https://doi.org/10.47216/literacytrek.793002

Bataineh, R. F., Shawish, L. A., & Al-Alawneh, M. K. (2019). Shaping the way we teach English: Potential effects of a professional development program on Jordanian EFL teachers' instructional practices. *Lublin Studies in Modern*

Languages & Literature / Lubelskie Materialy Neofilologiczne, *43*(4), 115–
125. https://doi.org/10.17951/lsmll.2019.43.4.115-125

Birmingham, P., & Wilkinson. D. (2003). *Using research instruments: A guide for
researchers*. Routledge.

Borg, S. (Ed.). (2015). *Professional development for English language teachers:
Perspectives from higher education in Turkey*. British Council.

Borko, H., Jacobs, J., & Koellner, K. (2010). Contemporary approaches to teacher
professional development. In B. McGaw, E. L. Baker, & P. L. Peterson
(Eds.), *International encyclopedia of education* (pp. 547-556). Elsevier
Science.

British Council & TEPAV. (2015). *The state of English in higher education in
Turkey*. Yorum Basın Yayın Sanayi Ltd. Şti.

Buckley, F. J. (2000). *Team teaching: What, why, and how?* Sage Publications.

Bull, B. D. (2017). *Adventures in self-directed learning: A guide for nurturing
learner agency and ownership*. Wipf and Stock.

Burnard, P., Apelgren, B., & Cabaroglu, N. (2015). Researching teachers: Teachers
researching as teaching practice. In P. Burnard, B. Apelgren, & N. Cabaroglu
(Eds.), *Transformative teacher research: Theory and practice for the C21st*
(pp. 103-111). Sense Publishers.

Burns, A. (2009). Action research in second language teacher education. In A. Burns
& J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Teacher
Education* (pp. 289-297). Cambridge University Press.

Campbell, A., McNamara, O., & Gilroy, P. (2004). *Practitioner research and
professional development in education*. SAGE Publications.

Casale, M. (2011). *Teachers' perceptions of professional development: An exploration of delivery models* (Publication No. 3450417) [Doctoral dissertation, Johnson & Wales University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Check, J., & Schutt, R. K. (2012). *Research methods in education*. SAGE Research Methods. https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781544307725

Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Pearson.

Çalışkan, H. (2021). *Exploring perspectives of EFL teachers about professional development* (Publication No. 674428) [Master's Thesis, Kocaeli University]. Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı Ulusal Tez Merkezi.

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Day, C. (1999). *Developing teachers: The challenges of lifelong learning.* Falmer Press.

Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher, 38*(3), 181–199. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08331140

Diaz-Maggioli, G. (2003). *Professional development for language teachers*. ERIC Digest.

Diaz-Maggioli, G. (2004). *Teacher-centered professional development*. ASCD.

DiPaola, M. F., & Wagner, C. A. (2018). *Improving instruction through supervision, evaluation, and professional development* (2nd ed.). Information Age Publishing.

Dörnyei, Z., & Taguchi, T. (2009). *Questionnaires in second language research* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Ekşi, G. (2010). *An assessment of the professional development needs of English language instructors working at a state university* (Publication No. 552938) [Master's Thesis, Middle East Technical University]. Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı Ulusal Tez Merkezi.

Ercan, B., & Ivanova, I. (2020). Language instructors' perceptions and applications of continuous professional development in higher education institutions. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET), 7*(2), 435–449. http://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/820

Farrell, T. S. C. (2017). *Research on reflective practice in TESOL* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Farrell, T. S. C., & Kennedy, B. (2019). Reflective practice framework for TESOL teachers: One teacher's reflective journey. *Reflective Practice*, *20*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2018.1539657

Firth, J. (2019). *The teacher's guide to research: Engaging with, applying and conducting research in the classroom* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429443121

Fitzpatrick, D., Costley, T., & Tavakoli, P. (2022). Exploring EAP teachers' expertise: Reflections on practice, pedagogy and professional development. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 59*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2022.101140

Freeman, D. (2009). The scope of second language teacher education. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 11-19). Cambridge University Press.

Freeman, D. (2016). *Educating second language teachers*. Oxford University Press.

George, D. & Mallery, M. (2010). *SPSS for windows step by step: A simple guide and reference, 17.0 update* (10a ed.) Pearson.

Glanz, J. & Heimann, R. (2019). Encouraging reflective practice in educational supervision through action research and appreciative inquiry. In S. J. Zepeda & J. A. Ponticell (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of educational supervision* (pp. 354-377). John Wiley & Sons, Inc. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119128304

Gravetter, F. J., & Wallnau, L. B. (2013). *Statistics for the behavioral sciences* (9th ed.). Wadsworth.

Guskey, T. R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching*, *8*(3), 381–391. https://doi.org/10.1080/135406002100000512

Güçlü, B. E. (2018). *Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions towards continuing professional development activities* (Publication No. 534618) [Master's Thesis, İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University]. Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı Ulusal Tez Merkezi.

Hibberts, M., Johnson, R. B., & Hudson, K. (2012). Common survey sampling techniques. In L. Gideon (Ed.), *Handbook of survey methodology for the social sciences* (pp. 53-74). Springer.

Hidayati, S. (2018). Exploring novice EAP teacher's self-reflection as a platform for professional development. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 8*(2), 441–451. https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v8i2.13310

Irgatoğlu, A. (2021). Exploring the relationship between professional development attitudes, activities and self-directed learning readiness of EFL instructors. *International Journal of Progressive Education, 17*(4), 122–134. https://doi.org/10.29329/ijpe.2021.366.8

Johnson, K. E. (2009). Trends in second language teacher education. In J. C. Richards & A. Burns (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 20-29). Cambridge University Press.

Kaivanpanah, S., Alavi, S. M., Bruce, I., & Hejazi, S. Y. (2021). EAP in the expanding circle: Exploring the knowledge base, practices, and challenges of Iranian EAP practitioners. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *50,* 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2021.100971

Karaaslan, A. D. (2003). *Teachers' perceptions of self-initiated professional development: A case study on Başkent University English language teachers* (Publication No. 140159) [Master's Thesis, Middle East Technical University]. Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı Ulusal Tez Merkezi.

Karakaş, A., & Yücedağ, Z. (2020). Professional development: In-service English language teachers' perceptions and activities. In Z. S. Genç & I. G. Kaçar (Eds.), *TESOL in the 21st century: Challenges and opportunities (*pp. 565-590). Peter Lang.

Kırkgöz, Y. (2009). Students' and lecturers' perceptions of the effectiveness of foreign language instruction in an English-medium university in Turkey. *Teaching in Higher Education, 14*(1), 81–93. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510802602640

Korkmazgil, S. (2015). *An investigation into Turkish English language teachers' perceived professional development needs, practices and challenges* (Publication No. 399874) [Doctoral Dissertation, Middle East Technical University]. Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı Ulusal Tez Merkezi.

Korkmazgil, S., & Seferoğlu, G. (2015). Exploring non-native English teachers' professional development practices. *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Eğitim Dergisi,*

30(1), 1–9. Retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/43803

Leahy, N., & Torff, B. (2013). When the teacher becomes the student: Increasing teacher engagement in professional development activities. In Y. Bashevis & Y. Weidenseld (Eds.), *Professional development: Perspectives, strategies and practices* (pp. 99-116). Nova Science Publishers, Inc.

Li, Y. (2019). Constant self-initiated teacher change, factors, and mechanism: A narrative inquiry. *Cogent Education, 6*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2019.1588089

Loucks-Horsley, S., Harding, C. K., Arbuckle, M. A., Murray, L. B., Dubea, C., & Williams, M. K. (1987). *Continuing to learn: A guidebook for teacher development.* Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of Northeast and Islands.

Louws, M. L., Meirink. J. A., Veen, K. V., & Driel J. H. V. (2017). Teachers' self-directed learning and teaching experience: What, how, and why teachers want to learn. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 66,* 171–183. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.04.004

Main, K., & Pendergast, D. (2015). Core features of effective continuing professional development for the middle years-a tool for reflection. *Research in Middle Level Education Online*, *38*(10), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/19404476.2015.11658177

Malderez, A. (2009). Mentoring. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 259-268). Cambridge University Press.

Mann, S. (2005). The language teacher's development. *Language Teaching, 38*, 103–118. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0261444805002867

McAlinden, M. (2018). English language teachers' conceptions of intercultural empathy and professional identity: A critical discourse analysis. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 43*(10), 41–59. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2018v43.n10.3

Merriam, S. G., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Mitchell, R. (2013). What is professional development, how does it occur in individuals, and how may it be used by educational leaders and managers for the purpose of school improvement? *Professional Development in Education, 39*(3), 387–400. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2012.762721

Mitton-Kükner, J., & Akyüz, Ç. (2012). Burrowing into the reciprocal learning collaboration of two instructors in an English-medium university in Turkey. *Teacher Development, 16*(4), 425–442. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2012.717213

Mustafa, B., & Paçarizi, Y. (2021). Exploring teachers' perceptions of professional development: The case of Kosova. *Journal of Language & Linguistics Studies, 17*(3), 1210–1224. https://doi.org/10.52462/jlls.86

OECD. (2019). *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners*. TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris. https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en

OECD. (2020). *Education Policy Outlook: Turkey*. www.oecd.org/education/policy-outlook/country-profile-Turkey-2020.pdf.

Osman, D. J., & Warner, J. R. (2020). Measuring teacher motivation: The missing link between professional development and practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 92,* 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103064

Parhamnia, F., & Farahian, M. (2021). EAP instructors' professional development and their knowledge sharing: A case of nursing courses. *Future Of Medical Education Journal, 11*(1), 32–38. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/45067750/EAP_instructors_professional_development_and_their_knowledge_sharing_A_case_of_nursing_courses

Plank, K. M. (Ed.) (2011). *Team teaching: Across the disciplines, across the academy*. Stylus Publishing.

Priajana, N. (2017). Self and group initiated professional development pursuits of EFL teachers. *IJEE (Indonesian Journal of English Education), 4*(1), 31–48. http://dx.doi.org/10.15408/ijee.v4i1.6597

Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2010). *Professional development for language teachers*. Cambridge University Press. https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/professional-development-for-language-teachers/6CD2038A178603982F4FFE8AFC44A22D

Sadeghi, K., & Richards, J. C. (2021). Professional development among English language teachers: Challenges and recommendations for practice. *Heliyon, 7*(9), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e08053

Sancar, R., Atal, D., & Deryakulu, D. (2021). A new framework for teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *101*, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103305

Sarab, M. R. A., & Mardian, F. (2022). Reflective practice in second language teacher education: A scoping review. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2022.2152316

Sarıyıldız, G. (2017). Novice and experienced teachers' perceptions towards self-initiated professional development, professional development activities and possible hindering factors. *International Journal of Language Academy, 5*(5), 248–260. http://dx.doi.org/10.18033/ijla.3648

Shahim, A. (2021). Relationship between classroom research, teacher research and action research. *International Journal for Research in Applied Sciences and Biotechnology, 8*(2), 147–152. Retrieved from https://www.ijrasb.com/index.php/ijrasb/article/view/73

Sharifzadeh, M., & Khojasteh, L. (2018). Iranian public school and private institute EFL teachers' perception towards self-initiated professional development. *Pertnika Journals Social Sciences & Humanities, 26*(T), 97–122.

Simegn, B. (2014). EFL teachers' self-initiated professional development: Perceptions and practices. *Academic Journals, 9*(21), 1109–1114. https://doi.org/10.5897/ERR2014.1898

Smith, K. (2017). *Teachers as self-directed learners: Active positioning through professional learning.* Springer.

Stewart, T., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2013). *Classroom research for language teachers.* TESOL Press.

Taber, K. S. (2018). The use of Cronbach's Alpha when developing and reporting research instruments in science education. *Research in Science Education, 48*, 1273–1296. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165-016-9602-2

Taş, S., & Cengizhan, L. (2013). Teacher portfolios are on stage for professional development: A qualitative case study. *Social Sciences Research Journal 2*(2), 1–14. Retrieved from

https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ssrj/issue/22492/240518

T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi. (2016, March 23). *Yükseköğretim kurumlarında yabancı dil öğretimi ve yabancı dille öğretim yapılmasında uyulacak esaslara ilişkin yönetmelik.*

https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuat?MevzuatNo=21475&MevzuatTur=7& MevzuatTertip=5

T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi. (2018, November 9). *Öğretim üyesi dışındaki öğretim elemanı kadrolarına yapılacak atamalarda uygulanacak merkezi sınav ile giriş sınavlarına ilişkin usul ve esaslar hakkında yönetmelik.*

https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuat?MevzuatNo=28947&MevzuatTur=7& MevzuatTertip=5

Timperley, H. (2008). *Teacher professional learning and development*. (Educational Practices Series. Number 18). International Academy of Education. Retrieved from

www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Educational_Practic es/EdPractices_18.pdf

Tucker, P., Stronge, J., & Gareis, C. (2002). *Handbook on teacher portfolios for evaluation and professional development.* Routledge.

https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315853703

Tuckman, B. W., & Harper, B. E. (2012). *Conducting educational research* (6th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Türüdü, A. S. D. (2020). *Instructors' reasons for participating in a professional development program and the nature of teacher interaction: A case study in a Turkish preparatory school* (Publication No. 616334) [Doctoral Dissertation, Middle East Technical University]. Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı Ulusal Tez Merkezi.

Veen, K. V., Zwart, R., & Meirink, J. (2012). What makes teacher professional development effective? A literature review. In M. Kooy & K. V. Veen (Eds.), *Teaching learning that matters: International perspectives* (pp. 3-21). Routledge.

Veenman, S., Tulder, M. V., & Voeten, M. (1994). The impact of inservice training on teacher behaviour. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 10*(3), 303–317. https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X(93)E0001-8

Villegas-Reimers, E. (2003). *Teacher professional development: An international review of the literature*. UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.

Walsh, S. (2013). *Classroom discourse and teacher development*. Edinburgh University Press.

Wang, J. (2019). Teacher mentoring in service of beginning teachers' learning to teach: Critical review of conceptual and empirical literature. In S. J. Zepeda & J. A. Ponticell (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of educational supervision* (1st ed.) (pp. 281-306). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Wellington, J. (2015). *Educational research: Contemporary issues and practical approaches*. Bloomsbury Academic. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474236966

Yücedağ, Z. (2020). *A comparative study on EFL teachers' perceptions of and activities in professional development: The cases of Turkey, Germany and*

Spain (Publication No. 655942) [Master's Thesis, Burdur Mehmet Akif

Ersoy University]. Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı Ulusal Tez Merkezi.

Yükseköğretim Kurulu. (2022). *Türlerine göre birim sayıları raporu*.

https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr

Yükseköğretim Kurulu. (n.d.). *Yabancı uyruklu öğretim elemanı istihdamıyla ilgili

usul ve esaslar.* https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Mevzuat/yabanci-

uyruklu-ogretim-elemani-istihdami-usul-ve-esaslar.pdf

Yüksel, B. (2021). *Professional development challenges experienced by language

instructors at a foundation university: A case study* (Publication No. 660298)

[Master's Thesis, Middle East Technical University]. Yükseköğretim Kurulu

Başkanlığı Ulusal Tez Merkezi.

Zerey, Ö. G. (2018). Attitudes and perceptions of EFL instructors regarding self-

directed professional development. *International Journal of Language

Academy, 6*(1), 49–66. http://dx.doi.org/10.18033/ijla.3854

Appendix A

Self-initiated Professional Development Survey

Dear EFL Instructor,

This questionnaire* was designed for my thesis within the scope of İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, Teaching English as a Foreign Language Master's Program, under the supervision of Asst. Prof. Dr. Tijen Akşit. The aim of this questionnaire is to investigate tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' experiences and perceptions about self-initiated professional development (PD) in Türkiye. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. In terms of this questionnaire;

- Your identification will never be disclosed.

- Your data will only be accessed by the researcher, will be kept on a password protected laptop, and will only be used for this thesis and possible related conference presentations, and journal publication purposes.

- Your answers will not be shared with your university and will not affect your working rights.

- You can leave the questionnaire at any time you want.

- The results of this study will be shared with you upon your request. In this case, you can contact me via the e-mail address stated below.

Please check the box below if you meet the criteria and agree to participate.

Criteria:

- I am over 18 years old.

- I have read and understood the information about this study above.

- I understand that I can withdraw from the study without any consequences at any time.

- I understand who would have access to identifying information provided and what will happen to the data at the end of the study.

- I understand that this study has been reviewed by and received ethical clearance through the Bilkent University Ethics Committee.

I meet the criteria and agree to participate.

Thank you very much for your contribution.

Tuğçe Hamamcıoğlu, Bilkent University, MA in TEFL

*Adapted from Main and Pendergast (2015) (based on Desimone's (2009) conceptual framework for effective professional development), Karaaslan (2003) and Ekşi (2010)

Section I – Demographic Information

Please read the questions and choose the option that best represents your personal information.

1. Gender
a. Female
b. Male
c. I prefer not to mention.
2. Age

a. 21-25

b. 26-30

c. 31-35

d. 36-40

e. 41-45

f. 46-50

g. 51+

3. The city you live in

a. İstanbul

b. Ankara

c. İzmir

d. Other (Please specify):

4. The type of university you are currently working at

a. State

b. Foundation

5. English language teaching experience

a. Less than 1 year

b. 1-5 year(s)

c. 6-10 years

d. 11-15 years

e. 16-20 years

f. 21 years and more

6. Undergraduate field of study

a. Teaching English as a Foreign Language

b. English Language and Literature

c. American Culture and Literature

d. English Translation and Interpreting

e. English Linguistics

f. Other (Please specify):

7. If you have any postgraduate degrees, please choose all that apply.

a. MA/ MSc Degree

   i. Teaching English as a Foreign Language

   ii. English Language and Literature

   iii. American Culture and Literature

   iv. English Translation and Interpreting

   v. English Linguistics

   vi. Other (Please specify):

b. PhD

   i. Teaching English as a Foreign Language

   ii. English Language and Literature

   iii. American Culture and Literature

   iv. English Translation and Interpreting

   v. English Linguistics

   vi. Other (Please specify):

c. I do not have a postgraduate degree.

8. If you have any teaching qualifications, please choose all that apply.

a. Teaching Certificate (Pedagojik Formasyon)

b. CELTA

c. ICELT

d. TESOL

e. DELTA

f. TEFL

g. None

h. Other (Please specify):

Section II – Professional Development (PD) Experiences

The items in this section are designed to learn about your overall professional development (PD) experience. Please read the following and select either 'Yes' or 'No' to indicate your experience.

Which professional development activities have you experienced?	**Yes**	**No**
1. Reading ELT articles in ACADEMIC JOURNALS		
2. Reading ELT magazines written for PRACTITIONERS		
3. Reading ELT books		
4. Following professional development programs		
5. Joining a teacher association		
6. Joining an online ELT discussion group		
7. Participating in workshops (online or face-to-face)		
8. Participating in seminars/webinars		
9. Attending conferences in Türkiye		

10. Attending international conferences abroad		
11. Attending certificate/diploma programs to gain teaching qualifications (e.g., CELTA, DELTA)		
12. Participating in other teaching related courses (online or face-to-face)		
13. Attending best practice sessions (online or face-to-face)		
14. Attending article discussion club sessions (online or face-to-face)		
15. Trying out new ideas or suggestions in practice		
16. Reflection on own teaching		
17. Conducting classroom research		
18. Pursuing a graduate degree		
19. Preparing portfolios		
20. Conducting action research by oneself		
21. Conducting action research with peers		
22. Sharing experiences and problems with colleagues		
23. Asking for professional help from colleagues		
24. Working on preparing NEW materials with colleagues		
25. Working on developing NEW teaching techniques with colleagues		

26. Creating in-class teaching activities with colleagues		
27. Team teaching		
28. Being observed teaching by a more experienced professional (e.g., head, coach, mentor) and getting feedback		
29. Observing a more experienced professional teaching		
30. Being observed teaching by a peer		
31. Observing a peer teaching		
32. Training other teachers		
33. Coaching peers		
34. Being coached by peers		
35. Mentoring peers		
36. Being a mentee		
Other (Please specify):		

Which of the PD activities listed above and you ticked YES have you found the most beneficial? Please indicate your top 5 choices by choosing from the drop-down list below. If you think that none of these activities were beneficial, please tick the last box.

The PD activities that I have found the most beneficial are:

☐ Reading ELT articles in ACADEMIC JOURNALS

☐ Reading ELT magazines written for PRACTITIONERS

☐ Reading ELT books

☐ Following professional development programs

☐ Joining a teacher association

☐ Joining an online ELT discussion group

☐ Participating in workshops (online or face-to-face)

☐ Participating in seminars/webinars

☐ Attending conferences in Türkiye

☐ Attending international conferences abroad

☐ Attending certificate/diploma programs to gain teaching qualifications (e.g.,

  CELTA, DELTA)

☐ Participating in other teaching related courses (online or face-to-face)

☐ Attending best practice sessions (online or face-to-face)

☐ Attending article discussion club sessions (online or face-to-face)

☐ Trying out new ideas or suggestions in practice

☐ Reflection on own teaching

☐ Conducting classroom research

☐ Pursuing a graduate degree

☐ Preparing portfolios

☐ Conducting action research by oneself

☐ Conducting action research with peers

☐ Sharing experiences and problems with colleagues

☐ Asking for professional help from colleagues

☐ Working on preparing NEW materials with colleagues

☐ Working on developing NEW teaching techniques with colleagues

☐ Creating in-class teaching activities with colleagues

☐ Team teaching

☐ Being observed teaching by a more experienced professional (e.g., head, coach, mentor) and getting feedback

☐ Observing a more experienced professional teaching

☐ Being observed teaching by a peer

☐ Observing a peer teaching

☐ Training other teachers

☐ Coaching peers

☐ Being coached by peers

☐ Mentoring peers

☐ Being a mentee

☐ Other (Please specify):

☐ I did not find any of the PD activities beneficial.

Section III – Thoughts about Professional Development (PD)

The items in this section are designed to learn your thoughts about professional development (PD). Read each statement and select the box that best represents what you think.

SA   Strongly Agree   = 5

A   Agree   = 4

CD   Can't decide   = 3

D   **Disagree**   = 2

SD   **Strongly disagree**   = 1

	SD 1	D 2	CD 3	A 4	SA 5
Content Focus					
1. Through PD, I should gain new knowledge or skills that are related to my profession.					
2. It is not important for me to be able to integrate PD into my day-to-day practice.					
3. PD should enhance my teaching.					
4. PD topics should make me see areas where I can improve or learn more.					
5. It is important that PD topics should link directly to institutional and/or national goals.					
6. PD does not have to help me meet the needs of more students.					
7. PD activities should take into account the learning needs of all the teachers in attendance.					
8. PD does not have to address my learning goals.					
9. PD should enhance my knowledge and skills.					

Active Learning					
10. PD should give me opportunities to practice new skills.					
11. PD should give me opportunities to observe other teachers modeling good practice.					
12. PD should help me solve the problems I have.					
13. During PD, I should be able to suggest solutions to problems someone else has.					
14. No one other than the facilitators should take the lead in any part of PD activities.					
15. During PD activities, I should be able to give feedback on the ideas of others.					
16. PD activities should encourage teachers to share best practice.					
17. I do not have to be able to explain what I have learned from PD activities to others who did not attend.					
18. I should be able to apply what I have learned.					
19. PD activities should give me opportunities to practice skills under simulated conditions.					
20. PD activities should give me opportunities to receive					

feedback.					
Coherence					
21. PD does not have to address problems with which I have experience.					
22. PD should enable me to put what I learn into practice.					
23. Putting what I learn through PD into practice should improve student outcomes.					
24. I do not have to be able to see a PD activity topic linking to other professional development activities.					
25. PD should not be on topics I feel I already knew about.					
26. Learning about new topics through PD should improve teachers' work environment.					
27. PD should be in an area that teachers have not done any training in before.					
28. There should be a direct link between PD and my day-to-day practice.					
Duration					
29. PD sessions should be long enough for me to engage with the ideas.					

30. There would be a benefit from spreading PD over a greater number of days/sessions.				
31. There should be refresher courses to remind me of the details of the PD.				
32. I prefer spending extended amount of time on PD.				
33. Teachers should do a lot of training in the PD areas in the future.				
34. PDs should have follow-up sessions over time.				
Collective Participation				
35. Peer support helps me apply learnings from my PD experience.				
36. I should be able to develop a common understanding of the knowledge or skill with my colleagues thanks to PD.				
37. All my colleagues should participate in PD activities for me to improve my practice.				
38. During PD I should not do any planning on my own.				
39. During PD I should not do any planning with my colleagues.				
40. I should be able to discuss concepts and skills with				

colleagues with whom I work closely.					
41. There will be a real benefit if several members of a school attend PD together.					

Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding PD? Please indicate below.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

If you would like to volunteer for a short online interview to provide me with further information, please share your e-mail and/or phone number below. Your identification will be kept completely confidential.

e-mail: _____

Phone number: +90 (5__) _____

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. What does professional development mean to you? How would you define it?

2. How important do you think professional development is for a teacher? Why?

    a. (In what ways do you think professional development can be beneficial for a teacher?)

3. In your opinion, what makes professional development effective?

    a. "Willingness is an important factor in successful professional development" (Karaaslan, 2003, p. 135). What do you think about this statement?

    b. How much effort do you think teachers put in their own professional development?

        i. Who do you think is responsible for teachers' professional development? Can you elaborate? Why? Can you give some examples?

            1. (Do you think teachers themselves are responsible for their own professional development?)

        ii. Do you think *you* own the responsibility for *your* own professional development? Why? Can you give some examples?

4. Can you talk about your own professional development experience so far?

    a. What activities have you found the most beneficial? Why?

    b. Is there anything that you do regularly to develop yourself professionally?

    c. Can you describe an ideal professional development experience?

      i. Which characteristics of this experience make it ideal for you?

     ii. Think about this imaginary ideal experience. Is this something that is provided for you or is it something that you do for yourself?

5. Are you satisfied with your own professional development? Why/Why not?

    a. How much of your professional development is the result of your own initiatives?

    b. How much of your professional development is the result of your institution's efforts?

6. What do you think teachers can do more for their professional development?

7. Do you have any future plans for your own professional development?

    a. Is there any activity that you would like to be involved in more?

8. Are there any other comments that you would like to add?

Appendix C

Text Message about the Survey and Interviews

Dear EFL instructor,

I am an MA in TEFL student at İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, and for my thesis, I am currently conducting a study investigating tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' experiences and perceptions about self-initiated professional development. I would be more than glad if you could fill in my questionnaire (the link is below and it will only take 15 minutes of your time) and share it with your colleagues to contribute to my data collection process. I highly appreciate your support in advance. If you have questions at any time about the questionnaire or the procedures, please contact me.

Questionnaire link: https://forms.gle/D9ew5Py9SPy27rNN6

Thank you very much for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Tuğçe Hamamcıoğlu

Thesis Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Tijen Akşit

Appendix D

Consent Form for the Interview

The aim of this research study is to explore what tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' self-initiated professional development experiences and perceptions are and if their perceptions differ in terms of the type of university they work at, their teaching experience, undergraduate department, whether they have a postgraduate degree or teaching qualifications. This mixed-method study will be conducted at four state and four foundation universities in Ankara, Türkiye. The data will be obtained through an online questionnaire and online one-one one semi-structured interviews.

Confidentiality: The responses that you give throughout the interviews will be kept confidential. Your real identity will not be disclosed at any time under any circumstances. You will be assigned a random numerical code. When the recording of the interview is transcribed, it will be deleted. The document of the transcription will be kept by the researcher in a secure coded computer and with a password which only permits the researcher's access to it. This document will not indicate your name. Your responses will never be shared with third parties and will not affect your working rights in your institution.

Agreement:

☐ The nature and purpose of this research have been sufficiently explained and I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without incurring any penalty.