A Comprehensive Overview of Foreign Language Teachers' Professional Development: Self-directed and Institutional Professional Development Activities of English Teachers in Türkiye

Çağrı Özköse Bıyık [1], Öner Uslu [2]

Abstract

When the literature on the professional development of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers is examined, professional development predominantly encompasses institutional activities. This study critically examines conventional definitions and practices related to the professional development of EFL teachers, arguing that in line with the demands of the era, teachers' professional development should also include self-directed individual activities. However, for professional development activities to contribute to the ultimate goal of student learning, it is important for the organizational culture in which teachers are situated to be supportive of their professional development. To seek answers to research questions about how the institutional and self-directed activities carried out by EFL teachers in Türkiye and the organizational culture influence these activities, an exploratory sequential strategy was employed in the research. First, qualitative data were collected, and then quantitative data were collected through a survey tool developed based on the qualitative data. Comprehensive individual interviews were conducted with a total of 28 teachers across Türkiye, and survey data were collected from 819 teachers. The findings are presented as self-directed (unstructured) professional development activities (e.g., use of search engines, reading news websites, watching videos/series, etc.) and institutional (structured) professional development activities (participation in national and international conferences, etc.). The necessity of foreign language teachers being involved in many individual activities through self-direction, beyond their participation in activities planned by institutions, for the professional development of a foreign language teacher is discussed. The study proposes a comprehensive perspective on the concept of professional development related to EFL teachers and offers recommendations for the field of foreign language teacher education.

[1] Yaşar University, Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, Department of English Language and Literature, Türkiye, cagri.ozkosebiyik@yasar.edu.tr

[2] Ege University, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Sciences, Türkiye, oner.uslu@ege.edu.tr

Introduction

Since 2012, Education First (EF) has been publishing the English Proficiency Index, where Türkiye ranked 66th among 113 countries in the year 2023. Among the 5 different proficiency bands in the index (e.g., very high proficiency, high proficiency, moderate proficiency, low proficiency, and very low proficiency), Türkiye mostly falls into the "low proficiency" category as observed in the last three years, occasionally dropping to the "very low proficiency" band. The fact that Türkiye lags behind in the index in these annual studies conducted with participants around the age of 25 is thought-provoking despite all the technological opportunities of today.

This study was conducted primarily to understand the challenges in foreign language education in Türkiye and to seek solutions by focusing on teachers' professional development practices. When looking at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) education-related studies (for example: OECD, 2005), it is observed that improving teacher quality is one of the most effective methods to enhance student learning outcomes. Undoubtedly, the most crucial step in enhancing teacher quality is improving the pre-service teacher education practices, followed by the professional development of teachers entering the profession. In a comprehensive review of professional development conducted by Sancar, Atal, and Deryakulu (2021), definitions of professional development in the literature were divided into two approaches as being classical and innovative. In the classical approach, professional development is defined as processes and activities planned to improve teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes with the aim of enhancing learning and increasing student achievement. On the other hand, more recent approaches criticize that individual characteristics, needs, competencies, participation, and prior learning are not sufficiently emphasized in classical definitions of professional development. While the emphasis on the individuality of teachers has gained prominence in more recent studies, as also criticized in the Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) study that addressed how teacher development should be, there is a general tendency in the literature to treat teachers as people who passively wait for opportunities to be presented to them (Bümen, Ateş, Çakar, Ural, & Acar, 2012; Büyüköztürk, Akbaba Altun, & Yıldırım, 2010; Christoforidou & Kyriakides, 2021), and most of the professional development activities aim to improve teachers' in-class practices, instructional approaches, and techniques (El Deen, 2023; Jurasaite-Harbison & Rex, 2010; Li, 2022; Nguyen & Ng, 2020; Sancar et al., 2021; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021; Uslu, 2017).

In professional development theories and models, it is emphasized that one indispensable element is content knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Shulman proposed seven knowledge bases essential for effective teaching, with pedagogical content knowledge being one of them, still maintaining its validity despite its age (Shulman, 1987). Unlike other disciplines, foreign language teaching adds the teacher's "communicative competence" to this content knowledge (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980). According to this concept, knowing a language is not only about mastering its grammatical elements. Sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies are also integral parts of communicative competence. Developing these skills requires engaging with English in authentic contexts. When it comes to the professional development of EFL teachers, the ways and frequency with which a teacher engages with English through individual efforts become crucial. The importance of the teacher's "activeness" in making English a part of his or her life is evident. Due to the unique knowledge domain of a foreign language, recent studies have begun to highlight the need for distinctive models in the professional development of foreign language teachers (Li, 2022).

While non-institutional and informal learning experiences, referred to as "informal learning, autonomous learning," have been increasingly discussed in the literature on professional development (Xianhan, Chun, Mingyao, & Caixia, 2022), when national and international studies are examined, there is a lack of studies emphasizing the importance of informal learning experiences that would enhance the diversity and frequency of contexts in which a foreign language teacher engages with the language he or she teaches. The closest study to this perspective was conducted by Nugroho, Widiati, and Susanti (2022), where the efforts of foreign language teachers to improve their language proficiency were highlighted in the context of their professional development. Despite critical observations and

suggestions in the study, there was no mention of the necessity to comprehensively address the models of professional development for EFL teachers or the importance of individual activities within the scope of informal learning; language proficiency was treated as a specific area under the umbrella of professional development. Similarly, while there are some models that focus on individual orientations in professional development, these models, based on the principles of adult education, mainly emphasize that it is the teachers themselves who can best identify their needs individually in the context of needs analysis. For example, the fundamental message of Sparks and Loucks-Horsley's (1989) self-directed professional development model is to enable teachers to identify their professional development needs themselves, and does not include the self-directed activities referred to in this study. Lan (2022), on the other hand, based English teachers' self-directed professional development on motivation theories and addressed the need for teachers to approach their professional development more tactically by identifying areas in which they are weak; however, did not specify what activities fall within the scope of professional development. For these reasons, this study considers the lack of sufficient inclusivity in existing theories, models, and approaches to professional development for foreign language teachers as a problem and aims to fill this conceptual gap in the literature that has not yet been explored.

When we examine academic studies focusing on the professional development of EFL teachers in Türkiye, we observe that these studies also conceptualize professional development as a participation-based concept in institutional or structured activities aimed at improving teachers' in-class practices, just like others (Babanoğlu & Yardımcı, 2017; İyidoğan, 2011; Karaata, 2010; Korkmazgil, 2015; Korkmazgil & Seferoğlu, 2013; Muyan, 2013; Ozer Ozkan & Anıl, 2014). The institutional activities mentioned in these studies mostly involve participation in conferences, seminars, or certificate programs. Even in studies that investigate whether teachers implement professional development activities related to reflective teaching, which can be considered innovative (Arıkan, 2004; Genç, 2010; Hismanoglu, 2010), individual efforts such as informal learning or teachers' endeavors to engage with English (which actually contribute to their content knowledge) have not found their place among professional development activities. Korkmazgil (2015), while explaining the findings of her research, mentioned EFL teachers' activities to improve their language skills (e.g., reading English books, watching English films, documentaries, etc.) as part of their professional development in a few places; however, when explaining the phenomenon of language teacher professional development, she did not explicitly express that such self-directed activities are part of professional development. Arıkan (2004), in his critical-postmodernist study aimed at understanding the relationship between EFL instructors and professional development programs, concluded that there should be "a shift towards more humanitarian and innovative professional development practices" (p. 40) and suggested that teachers should play a much more active role and their individual needs should be considered when determining the direction and content of the programs. However, the conceptual definition of professional development, as in existing studies, remains centered on "institutionally structured activities" and the researcher did not consider individual or, in other words, unstructured, self-directed activities in the realm of professional development efforts. In another study, Genç (2010), while partially addressing the importance of adopting a lifelong learning culture for EFL teachers, reinforced the perception of professional development existing in our society and the world by stating that "the success of a teacher is possible with the appropriate and timely professional development opportunities provided to the teacher throughout his or her teaching life" (p. 104). In today's world surrounded by technological possibilities, teachers certainly do not need to wait for opportunities to be "provided" to them. Professional development should be seen as a whole, including both institutional (structured) and self-directed (unstructured) activities of teachers. This study examines professional activities both under two categories and as a whole. Institutional professional activities are activities organized and structured by institutions such as the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), publishing houses, presented to teachers in a planned manner in organized environments such as seminars, conferences, or planned in-house activities. On the other hand, self-directed activities are activities that teachers carry out at their own initiative, such as participating in discussion forums, watching films in a foreign

language, which are not subject to any planning and can be carried out individually at any time. Also, the assumptions on which the study is based are: a) EFL teachers are still language learners themselves, b) existing professional development models do not sufficiently cover the sub-criterion of content knowledge when it comes to the development of foreign language teachers, c) the self-initiatives of foreign language teachers in professional development activities, their individual efforts shown in line with these self-initiatives, need to be included. When we focus on the diversity of structured professional development activities attended by EFL teachers in Türkiye, we observe that some of these activities are shaped from the perspective of reflective teaching (Farrell, 2015). The most common of these activities in the literature is action/teacher research (Sönmez Boran, 2018; Tanış & Dikilitaş, 2018). 54.6% of 149 instructors participating in Karaaslan's (2003) study stated that they rarely or never implemented action research. Another noticeable area in doctoral dissertations, especially since 2018, is lesson study (Karabuğa, 2018; Songül, 2019; Uştuk, 2020). Lesson study studies consist of qualitative studies conducted with English teachers in small groups over the long term. Collaborative professional development activities requiring collaboration and communication skills, such as peer observation and peer coaching, are among the least preferred structured professional development activities in studies conducted with EFL teachers in Türkiye (Hismanoglu, 2010; Muyan, 2013). Similarly, in the study by Muyan (2013), more than half of the 122 instructors surveyed were found not to use activities such as analyzing critical cases, teamwork, teacher support groups, keeping a diary, and preparing a teaching portfolio. Although structured professional development activities based on reflective practice occasionally appear in the literature, they are not widely adopted by EFL teachers in Türkiye.

One of the noteworthy studies in the field of foreign language teaching that deserves mention belongs to Firth and Wagner (1997). Firth and Wagner (1997), with their unique approach that sets them apart from other researchers in their field, initiated a genuine social orientation in the second language acquisition by criticizing the insufficient emphasis on the interactional and sociolinguistic dimensions of language learning. The language learner is now perceived as a whole with the environment they are in (Lantolf, 2000; Meskill, 2009; Pavlenko, 2002; Poehner, 2007; van Lier, 2004). During language learning, the learner is responsible for creating and not creating opportunities for his or her own benefit. Prominent socio-cultural approaches in language teaching emphasize concepts such as learner autonomy (Balçıkanlı, 2008; Benson, 2011; Turan-Ozturk, 2016), learner agency (van Lier, 2008), the ecology of language learning (van Lier, 2004), and investment in language learning (Norton Peirce, 1995); however, it is surprising that when it comes to the professional development of English teachers, the self-directed efforts they will show to improve their English skills have not been addressed in the literature of professional development. In studies questioning the problems and mistakes encountered in foreign language education in Türkiye (Coşkun Demirpolat, 2015; Çelebi & Yıldız Narinalp, 2020; Günday, 2007; Işık, 2008), one of the reasons mentioned is that teachers do not receive enough in-service training, and the training they receive does not meet their needs. However, almost no study has examined whether the individual efforts undertaken by teachers for the sustainability of their own English language skills are sufficient and how this situation can affect foreign language teaching in Türkiye. Even in Coşkun Demirpolat's (2015) recommendation that "foreign language teacher candidates should go to the country where the language they will teach is spoken before starting their service (it can be during the semester or summer holidays as an exchange student)," the responsibility of teachers to produce their own solutions has been kept away, and it is emphasized that the overseas experience of teacher candidates should be "provided" by state authorities. When it comes to teachers' professional development, the "passive" language (should be provided; should be sent, etc.) heavily dominates the literature. Only a few studies have based language teacher development on self-development and indicated that language teacher development is more comprehensive than professional development, involving personal and ethical value dimensions (Mann, 2005). However, van Lier (2004), who adopts an ecological approach to language teaching, has stated that, no matter how small or big, every step the language learner takes, every initiative he or she is engaged in, every context in which they come into contact with the target language offers him or her a learning opportunity during the language learning process. These initiatives encompass a range of activities aimed at fostering

contact with English in as authentic and natural environments as possible such as watching videos online, playing multiple interactive virtual games, changing the language of the phone to English, using search engines in English, following English news applications on a smartphone, reading posts in English on social media, making friends with foreigners, writing responses in English in online forums, reading popular culture magazines, and keeping a blog. Therefore, in this study, not only the institutional activities that EFL teachers participate in (such as seminars, conferences) but also the individual activities they undertake with self-direction (such as following English news websites, watching English content videos, reading English blogs, etc.) have been investigated as part of their professional development.

Teachers' work cannot be evaluated independently of the social, cultural, and organizational contexts in which they are situated (Samuelsson & Lindblad, 2015). Therefore, for professional development efforts to contribute to the ultimate goal of improving student learning, it is essential that the organizational culture in which teachers are involved supports their professional development (Nguyen, Pietsch & Gümüş, 2021). Looking at the literature, it is noteworthy that the concept of organizational culture has been addressed by many different fields and dimensioned in various ways. Due to the diversity in defining the concept of culture, there is a scarcity of generally accepted theories related to organizational culture (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). In this study, organizational culture is defined as "values, beliefs, and hidden assumptions shared by organizational members" (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2016, as cited in Karakılıç Yörük, 2019, p. 21). A qualitative approach has been adopted to examine the relationships between teachers' professional development activities and organizational culture. The theoretical framework draws on a) specifically leveraging supportive tendencies (e.g., granting employees initiative in taking reasonable risks), b) teamwork (e.g., encouraging employees to collaborate with each other), and c) professionalism (e.g., providing opportunities for professional development and advancement) trends among the nine dimensions from the organizational culture model of Danışman and Özgen (2003). Guskey (2000) emphasized the need to consider the parameters of organizational culture when evaluating a professional development program. Based on this, this study investigates the views of EFL teachers on organizational culture to understand how institutional and self-directed professional development activities are influenced by the culture of the institution in which they work.

This study is significant in providing a more comprehensive and holistic perspective on the professional development of foreign language teachers. The above discussion leads us to two fundamental observations regarding the professional development of English teachers. Firstly, when it comes to the professional development of foreign language teachers, a more inclusive perspective is achieved by considering teachers' individual and institutional activities together. Secondly, it is observed that professional development studies and studies examining teachers' individual activities are conducted in separate branches, highlighting the need for a unifying approach. Building on these observations, the aim of this study is to redefine the professional development of EFL teachers by considering it in the context of the EFL teachers' self-directed and institutional activities in Türkiye. The study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the existing structure regarding the professional development of foreign language teachers, offering a more holistic approach to it. To achieve this goal, three main research questions are addressed:

1. What types of individual (unstructured) professional development activities do EFL teachers undertake, how frequently, and do these activities vary based on the type of institution they work for?

2. What types of institutional (structured) professional development activities do EFL teachers undertake, how frequently, and do these activities vary based on the type of institution they work for?

3. What are the views of EFL teachers on the impact of organizational culture on their professional development?

Method

In this section, the research design, sample selection, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations are presented under subheadings.

Research Design

This study was conducted using a mixed-methods design, where qualitative and quantitative data were collected consecutively and integrated during the analysis of findings (Tashakkori, Teddlie, & Teddlie, 2003). The exploratory sequential strategy was employed, involving the collection of qualitative data first, followed by the extraction of themes and codes through the analysis of qualitative data. Based on these themes and codes, a questionnaire was developed (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori et al., 2003). After separately analyzing qualitative and quantitative data, they were combined and presented during the writing phase. The objective here is to reveal the self-directed and institutional professional development activities of EFL teachers. In line with this goal, the practices of EFL teachers regarding professional development activities were initially identified using qualitative methods. Subsequently, a questionnaire was prepared to determine the status of the obtained structure among a broader population, and data were collected from 819 teachers. Thus, an attempt was made to determine the prevalence of self-directed and institutional professional development practices identified through qualitative findings in a large sample (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori et al., 2003).

Sample Selection and Data Collection

For determining the qualitative study group in the research, the first level of the Turkish Statistical Institute's Statistical Regions Classification was used (TUIK, 2005). The purposeful sampling method was employed to examine in-depth situations believed to have rich information (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). Filters such as the geographical region where teachers work, the settlement place of the school, the type of institution where teachers work, gender, and age were used.

In the first stage of the research, interviews lasting an average of two hours were conducted with a total of 28 teachers from different geographical regions of Türkiye. Of these teachers, 16 are female. The ages of the teachers range from 24 to 53, and their demographic information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Information about the Geographical Region, Settlement Place, and Institution Type of Participating Teachers in the Interviews

Takma Ad	Cinsiyet	Kıdem	İl	Çalıştığı Bölge	Kurum
T1	Female	3	Ankara	City Center	University
T2	Female	18	Antep	City Center	Private School
T3	Male	11	İstanbul	City Center	University
T4	Female	9	Çanakkale	City Center	Public School
T5	Male	20	İzmir	County	Public School
T6	Female	5	İzmir	City Center	Private School
T7	Male	8	Antalya	County	Public School
T8	Male	11	Eskişehir	City Center	Public School
T9	Male	11	Yozgat	City Center	Public School
T10	Female	6	Giresun	County	Public School
T11	Male	18	Gaziantep	City Center	Public School
T12	Female	2	Van	Village	Public School
T13	Female	6	Zonguldak	City Center	University
T14	Female	30	İstanbul	City Center	Public School
T15	Female	3	Gaziantep	City Center	Public School
T16	Female	2	Sivas	City Center	Public School
T17	Female	5	Niğde	City Center	University
T18	Male	2	Ağrı	Village	Public School
T19	Male	4	Erzurum	Village	Public School
T20	Female	10	Sinop	City Center	Public School
T21	Female	31	Antalya	City Center	Public School
T22	Male	28	İzmir	City Center	University
T23	Male	22	İzmir	City Center	University
T24	Male	9	Bartın	City Center	Public School
T25	Female	15	İskenderun	City Center	Public School
T26	Male	10	Denizli	City Center	Private School
T27	Female	7	Elazığ	County	Public School
T28	Male	8	Edirne	City Center	Private School

Three of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, while others were conducted online. Informed consent was obtained, and all interviews were recorded. All interviews were conducted by the first author, and with the participants' permission, each interview was recorded using two different methods, and interview notes were taken. The transcribed interviews were shared with the participants via email for confirmation. After receiving their feedback and making suggested corrections, the analysis phase was initiated. The analyses were conducted by the second author. During the analysis process, codes and themes were created based on the data. The emerging structure was reexamined through evaluation meetings at which both researchers participated, and updates were made when deemed necessary.

For quantitative data collection, a questionnaire was prepared both online and in print. The online form was distributed to EFL teachers by the researchers, while the printed form was sent to schools by the İzmir Provincial Directorate of National Education. A total of 1002 questionnaires were digitized. Questionnaires with more than three missing data and those with a single option selected repeatedly ten times or more were excluded from the analysis, resulting in 183 survey forms being excluded. Therefore, the analyses were conducted on data received from 819 EFL teachers. Of these teachers, 668 were female, and 151 were male. The teachers' graduation years ranged from 1978 to 2015. Participants included 116 teachers from primary schools, 260 from middle schools, 293 from high schools, and 70 from universities. The study, being a descriptive research aimed at understanding the professional activities and needs of all EFL teachers working in Türkiye, has not excluded instructors working in universities.

Data Collection Tools

Qualitative findings were collected using a semi-structured interview form. The interview questions were prepared by the authors based on the professional development models suggested by Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (2007). After conducting a pilot application with a master's student studying English and making necessary adjustments, the final form was determined, consisting of nine questions. The questions aimed to understand teachers' individual and institutional professional activities. The first question ("What kind of individual activities do you engage in to keep your English alive?") had three sub-items (e.g., "Can you tell us a bit about how you use information technologies for this purpose?"), and these sub-items also had probes (e.g., "What kind of activities related to English do you do on social networks?"). The third question ("Have you had the chance to go abroad for various reasons?") and the fifth question ("According to you, what problems do EFL teachers in Türkiye face?") also had sub-items.

For quantitative data collection, a questionnaire was created based on themes and codes obtained from the qualitative data. The questionnaire, which took its final form through discussions with two participants pursuing a master's degree in the field, was presented to the expertise of four academicians, three in the field of foreign languages and one in research techniques. Adjustments were made based on the feedback received. Subsequently, the questionnaire was piloted with seven teachers who participated in the interviews. Feedback on issues such as the clarity of questions and the duration of the survey was collected, and adjustments were made.

Credibility

In this study, measures such as detailed description, direct quotations, member checking, and data triangulation were taken to ensure credibility (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). For detailed description, participants' demographic characteristics were provided, and details on how the data collection process, interviews, transcription, and analysis were carried out were explained. The themes and codes obtained from data analysis were supported by direct quotations. Coding was partially conducted by the first researcher as well, and qualitative analyses were examined during joint confirmation review meetings attended by both researchers. To ensure data triangulation, both interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data.

Another factor supporting credibility in qualitative research is explaining the researcher's role. The first researcher worked as an EFL teacher in a state school for a year, completed master's and doctoral studies abroad, and started working as a faculty member in 2012 after she returned to Türkiye. In her doctoral dissertation, she approached the concept of language aptitude from a sociocultural theory perspective which had been previously examined cognitively. The study argued that language aptitude is not innate, static attribute that was bestowed upon us at birth, but rather one's "improvable action potential". While the current study was undoubtedly influenced by the researcher's adoption of sociocultural approaches in language learning, efforts were made to minimize any influence during the interviews.

The second researcher worked as a computer and instructional technologies teacher in the MoNE for twelve years and served as a teacher trainer in professional development programs organized by the MoNE. After obtaining his doctorate during this period, he commenced his career as a faculty member and has been teaching for nine years. Due to his main academic focus on teachers' professional development, there were some expectations regarding EFL teachers' professional development initiatives. However, during the data analysis process, efforts were made to minimize the reflection of these expectations on the analysis process.

Validity and Reliability

For the validity and reliability of the quantitative data, the test-retest reliability of the questionnaire was examined, with 31 EFL teachers participating in two separate sessions two weeks apart. The test-retest reliability was calculated as .86. Considering that Gay and Airasian (2003) suggested a minimum of 30 participants for correlational statistical analysis, a pilot study was conducted with 31 teachers. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the 39-item questionnaire was calculated as .92, indicating that the questionnaire is reliable (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2015).

Ethics

Several precautions were taken regarding ethics in the research. The study started with obtaining ethical approval from the ethics committee. The identities of participating teachers and their institutions were kept confidential to ensure that no person or institution would be harmed or benefited. During the presentation of direct quotations, codes such as T1, T2 were used to maintain the confidentiality. In the face-to-face interviews, participants signed a printed informed consent form; in online interviews, participants were asked to sign the forms before the interview and send them via email. During the interviews, the purpose of the research was explained to all participants, verbal consent was obtained again for audio recording, and transcriptions were sent to participants for confirmation. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection processes were based on voluntary participation. On the questionnaire, the purpose of the study and the assurance that results would be shared while adhering to the principle of confidentiality were explained, and the participants were provided with an email address for any further questions.

Data Analysis

For qualitative data analysis, the first step involved transcribing the audio recordings verbatim. Nvivo 10 software was used for the analysis of qualitative data. The interview transcripts were typed into a word processor and then transferred to Nvivo. An example of the transcription process is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Transcription Example

Interviewer:	Do you regularly follow any websites in English? Like news websites?
Teacher 4:	Well, if something significant is happening in Türkiye, I look to see what's being discussed abroad, but I don't follow regularly. For example, I followed it closely during the Gezi events.
Interviewer:	Do you follow any blogs?
Teacher 4:	No, I don't.
Interviewer:	Wiki, do you use any wiki among English teachers?
Teacher 4:	Occasionally, for finding resources. But I don't follow sites regularly. I just type into Google. I choose from what I like.
Interviewer:	Do you follow news or email groups? Do you receive emails in English? It could be from conferences.
Teacher 4:	I receive newsletters from the British Council.
Interviewer:	Are they always in English?
Teacher 4:	No, not always. Sometimes they send them in Turkish, sometimes in English. I also receive from environmental organizations sometimes, global ones.

After completing the transcription process, the data familiarization process was initiated. Since the interviews were conducted by the first researcher and the analyses were done by the second researcher, the data set was read several times to ensure data familiarity. The entire coding process was carried out using Nvivo software. Throughout this process, all analyses were performed manually, and the automated analysis features of the program were not utilized. The codes and themes created based on the obtained data were reviewed and updated by the second researcher several times. Subsequently, the final version was achieved through a confirmation review involving the participation of both researchers. The most impactful direct quotations were selected using Nvivo. The identified themes and codes are presented in the findings section. An example related to coding is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Coding Example

Text	Codes
Even when preparing exam papers and worksheets, I search in English (T7).	Access to Materials
I have an application on my mobile phone. I specifically look at headlines on my phone (T3).	Use of Mobile Technologies
At least there is something our university does, ... We have been regularly participating in them for two years (T22).	Events Organized by Institutions

For quantitative data analysis, MS Excel and SPSS software were used. Frequencies and percentages of responses to each item were calculated. The results were presented in tables in the results section. SPSS was also used for the calculation of the test-retest reliability and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the validity and reliability of the quantitative data. The findings of quantitative data were presented using percentage and frequency analysis.

Results

In this section, the findings obtained through the analysis of data have been classified and shared. Firstly, the graphical representation of the results related to the themes and codes obtained is presented.
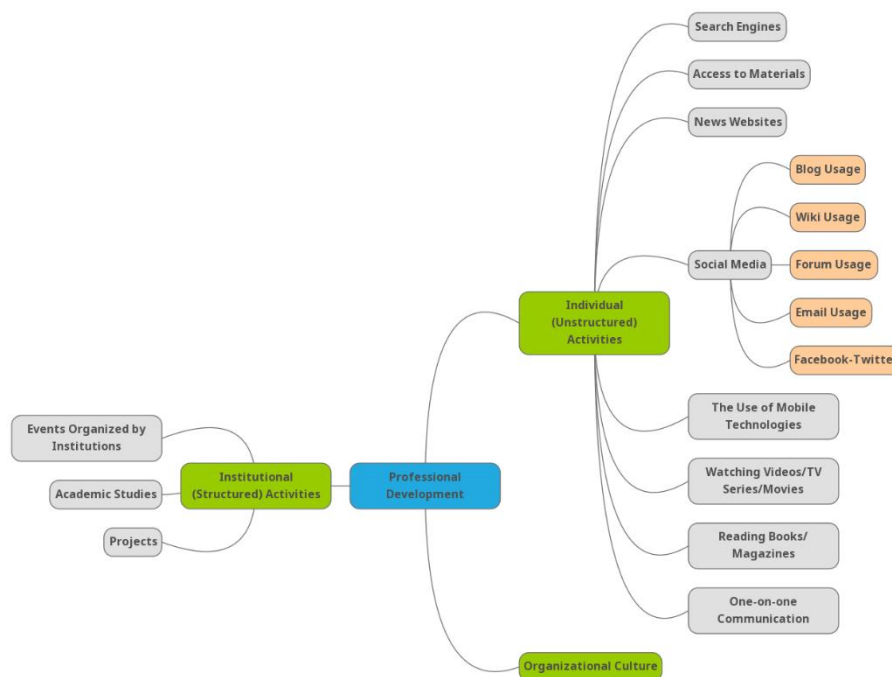

Figure 1. Themes and codes related to qualitative findings.

Individual (Self-directed, Unstructured) Professional Development Activities

The first research sub-question of the study is formulated as follows: "What types of individual (unstructured) professional development activities do EFL teachers undertake, how frequently, and do these activities vary based on the type of institution they work for?" Findings related to this research question are presented first qualitatively and then quantitatively.

Qualitative Findings regarding the First Research Question

Firstly, qualitative findings regarding the individual professional development activities carried out by EFL teachers are presented in line with the first research question.

Search Engines. Teachers' preference for using English when utilizing search engines has been evaluated as an individual activity supporting their professional development in terms of language skills. Some of the interviewed teachers (n=11) stated that they predominantly use search engines in English, while others (n=10) expressed a preference for Turkish. However, eight teachers prefer to use both languages. When examining the reasons, teachers who prefer using search engines in English mentioned that they achieve richer results compared to Turkish. Teachers who prefer Turkish generally stated that they search for information they need in Turkish in their daily lives. Teachers who use both languages frequently mentioned using English for classroom applications and Turkish for their other needs. T11, who stated that he frequently uses both languages, explained this situation as follows:

> *Completely related to mood. If I'm not in the mood for English, not a single word in English comes out of my mouth, nor do I incorporate English into anything I do. But sometimes, there's a situation where the first thing that comes to my mind is in English. Whatever I'm going to search for on the search engine, for example, if I'm looking for a picture of something, I realize I unconsciously write it in English. It usually varies depending on my mood (T11).*

Access to Teaching Materials. One of the individual professional development activities conducted by teachers is accessing search engines in order to attain teaching materials. Almost all of the interviewed teachers stated that they were accessing educational materials through various websites (social networks, content portals, etc.) as part of their individual professional development. These materials can be used in both the teaching /learning processes and the assessment stages.

> *Actually, it varies depending on the topic I'm looking for. But because of our work, I use English more. And there's another thing. It feels like I can access more resources if I search in English. That's why I prefer searching in English (T11).*

News Websites. When their usage of news websites was examined, 14 teachers stated that they regularly follow English news portals, while six rarely follow them, and five almost never follow them. Two teachers did not provide an answer to this question. When the teachers' use of English news websites was examined based on the type of school they work at, a notable finding was that out of 17 teachers working in the MoNE, five (18%) stated that they never follow English news sites. Teachers who follow news regularly access English news through both websites and mobile applications.

Social Media. One of the activities contributing to teachers' professional development is the use of social media. The teachers who participated in the interviews classified their use of social media into blogs, wikis, forums, email, Facebook, and Twitter.

Blog Usage

The first technology examined under the social media category is blogs. It is observed that the majority of the interviewed teachers do not use blogs at all (n=17). However, three teachers mentioned regularly reading English blogs, while some teachers (n=5) stated that they read English blogs when they come across them during searches. Only three teachers mentioned previously writing blogs but not continuing to write them regularly. Two of these teachers stated that they wrote blogs as part of their undergraduate studies, while only one teacher mentioned preparing a project blog as part of a project and updating it occasionally. T3, who mentioned not regularly following blogs but reading them if he comes across them, explains this situation as follows:

> *I don't follow a specific blog. When I'm looking for a topic, for example, if it appears in a blog, I prefer reading the posts on the blog. Personal opinions seem more appealing to me (T3).*

Wiki Usage

In addition to blog usage, the teachers' use of wikis has also been examined. Some teachers participating in the interview stated that they never use wikis (n=10), while some teachers mentioned that they only use wikis for obtaining information, specifically through Wikipedia (n=12). However, only one teacher mentioned encouraging interactive wiki usage among their students through Wikipedia. Two teachers highlighted that teachers in their schools prepare interactive pages using wikis, which are then published to inform students and teachers. The teacher who encourages wiki usage among students works at a university, and the two teachers who use wikis interactively work at a private school. None of the teachers working for the MoNE mentioned using wikis interactively or encouraging students to do so.

Forum Usage

In contrast to blogs and wikis, teachers seem to use forums a bit more actively. Six teachers mentioned using forums interactively, while eleven teachers stated that they only use forums for reading and obtaining information. Teachers use forums to access information related to both their profession and personal lives. Forum usage related to professional concerns includes accessing teaching materials and obtaining information about the English language. Some teachers explained their use of forums for acquiring professional materials in the following way:

For example, I download written exams a lot (T12).

For example, when I needed additional materials, I used to use some websites (forums) (T17).

However, nine teachers mentioned that they don't follow forums. Reasons for not following forums include time constraints, reluctance to use technology, and lack of trust in forums. Regarding the trust issue, T6 explains it as follows:

I guess I don't trust forum sites too much. I don't think they are very reliable sources (T6).

Email Usage

In addition to forum usage, teachers' use of English through email was also examined. The majority of participating teachers (n=20) are members of an English email group. They regularly receive and read emails in English, often related to English teaching portals or project groups. T17 explains this situation, which is expressed frequently, as follows: "*I usually receive emails about professional development or news about conferences.*" However, eight teachers mentioned that they don't have regular email memberships. Among them, only one teacher mentions engaging in regular English email communication despite not having a specific group membership.

Facebook and Twitter

Teachers were also asked about their usage of Facebook and Twitter during the interviews. Most teachers (n=18) follow groups sharing English content on Facebook and Twitter. These groups include material sharing for English teachers, current news, project sharing, and various support groups for English teachers from different institutions. However, four teachers working in the MoNE and an instructor working at a university mentioned that they do not follow any Facebook groups. Additionally, two MoNE teachers reported not having any social media accounts.

Teachers also use Facebook as a significant English communication platform. They frequently communicate in English with non-Turkish-speaking friends they've met through various means. These exchanges are seen to significantly contribute to their English language use and proficiency. T27 expresses this commonly mentioned sentiment as follows:

My speaking has become fluent; well, it was fluent when I worked as a translator, but at least I didn't lose that fluency. I also learned many idioms. For example, what I thought was slang turned out to be normal. I started living in English (T27).

Mobile Technology Usage. It is also examined how teachers use mobile technologies to keep their English skills alive. Dictionaries are the most commonly used mobile applications (n=15). Moreover, many teachers (n=8) allocate time for reading English on their mobile devices. T1, for instance, mentions,

I usually read hocam³...For example, I really love reading books on my iPad. I buy English books, especially things like Sherlock Holmes. I really love them. I download and read them. They're readily available, so I can say it works for me (T1).

In addition to reading, three interviewed teachers use mobile technologies to support teaching. Two of them work in private schools, and the other one is an instructor at a university. None of the teachers working in the MoNE reported using mobile technologies to support teaching. Five MoNE teachers and one university teacher reported not using smartphones.

Watching Videos/TV Shows/Movies. Another activity that teachers engage in to maintain their English skills is watching videos, TV shows, or movies on television or the internet. All interviewed teachers mentioned watching English videos on the internet. These videos include conference recordings, short films, documentaries, educational videos, and shared versions of TV series.

However, only six out of 28 teachers mentioned searching on the internet for videos to present to their students. Besides the internet, the majority of teachers (n=21) follow English broadcasts on television. Meanwhile six of the teachers stated not following English broadcasts on television. Watching English broadcasts on television or the Internet contributes significantly to language skills, as mentioned by some teachers:

I give 4 courses in academic English to undergraduate students. And the content of these courses is based on general culture. So, they contribute to my general culture (T3).

Speaking as correctly as possible, knowing many words, and mastering the language are necessary. These aspects significantly contribute to my improvement in this field. It has a considerable impact on my speaking and listening skills. Every time, I encounter new words. Sometimes I take notes, and even if I don't, encountering them helps me remember. It ensures that I keep the language continuously active. I also guide my students in this area because I want them to experience English in an authentic sense (T1).

When examining teachers' opinions, it is observed that following English publications significantly contributes to their language skills. The tracking of publications is said to contribute to listening, speaking, and vocabulary skills. Moreover, teachers mention that through this, they better understand the culture of the language they teach.

Reading Books/Magazines: One way EFL teachers support their subject knowledge is by reading English books and magazines. More than half of the interviewed teachers (n=16) state that they read English books and magazines, while two of them only read the assigned reading materials they give to their students. About one-third (n=10) mention not reading English books or magazines, citing reasons such as time constraints, difficulty accessing English printed sources, and lack of enjoyment in reading English. T27 expresses this situation as, "*I don't enjoy (reading in English); I read in Turkish.*"

---

[3] In Turkish culture, it is common to address teachers with respect and formality. The most commonly used term to address a teacher is "Hocam" for both male and female teachers, which translates to "My Teacher" or "Teacher" in English. This term reflects a combination of respect and affection.

One-on-One Communication: One way English teachers keep their language skills alive is through one-on-one communication in English. Seven teachers mention frequently communicating with native English speakers. While one of them works within the MoNE, two work in private schools, and four are affiliated with universities. Teachers communicating with native English speakers state that these persons usually work at the same school with them. T26 summarizes this as follows:

> *There is only one teacher (that is a native English speaker.) Next year there will be two of them.*
> *Past years I have always worked with natives. Throughout my academic career.*

Teachers communicating in English with non-native speakers also contribute significantly to their language skills. Eleven of the teachers working at the MoNE, two from private schools, and one from university mentioned communicating in English with non-native speakers. These interactions involve colleagues, friends outside of work, and tourists, contributing to cultural understanding, listening, and speaking skills. The lack of sufficient development in listening and speaking skills during undergraduate education is frequently highlighted, emphasizing the support received through one-on-one communication. T18 summarizes this by stating:

> *In our university days, we had problems with speaking. But I, for three summers, constantly*
> *engaged in dialogue with tourists, be it for work or in different ways. That's why I developed my*
> *English. It helped me in speaking. It was really good in terms of speaking (T18).*

Quantitative Findings regarding the First Research Question

Quantitative findings related to the first sub-problem of the study are presented through frequency and percentage analysis. The quantitative findings regarding teachers' usage of search engines support the qualitative findings obtained. As seen in Table 4, 43% of teachers (n=350) state that they mostly use search engines in English, while 41% (n=331) mention sometimes using English. Additionally, 16% of teachers (n=135) use search engines in Turkish.

Table 4. Teachers' Use of Search Engines

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
I use English as the language to access information on search engines (Google, Yandex, etc.)	123	15	227	28	331	41	83	10	52	6

The quantitative findings related to the usage of news websites also parallel the qualitative findings. When Table 5 is examined, it is observed that some teachers participating in the survey always or often (n=298, 36%) read English news websites, while others indicate that they sometimes read English news (n=315, 39%). The number of teachers who never or rarely read English news is considerably lower compared to the readers (n=199, 25%). Teachers were also asked if they comment on English news websites, and more than half of the participating teachers (n=411, 51%) stated that they never write comments in English on news websites. While a significant portion of teachers sometimes or rarely writes English comments (n=305, 38%), only a small number of teachers (n=84, 9%) mention that they often or always write comments on news websites.

Table 5. Reading Habits of Teachers on News Websites

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
I read English news websites.	101	12	197	24	315	39	135	17	64	8
I write comments on English news websites.	37	5	47	6	115	14	190	24	411	51

The findings from the survey regarding teachers' usage of social media were categorized into blog, wiki, forum, email, Facebook, and Twitter. The quantitative findings related to teachers' blog usage are presented in Table 6. According to Table 6, some teachers indicate that they always or often read blogs (n=177, 22%), while nearly half of the teachers rarely or never read blogs (n=364, 44%). More than half of the teachers state that they never write blogs (n=494, 61%), while only a few mention that they always or often write blogs (n=66, 8%).

Table 6. Teachers' Blog Usage Status

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
I read English news websites.	72	9	105	13	276	34	207	25	157	19
I write comments on English news websites.	24	3	42	5	107	13	145	18	494	61

The quantitative findings support the qualitative findings regarding teachers' usage of wikis. When looking at Table 7, half of the teachers indicate that they rarely or sometimes read wikis (n=410, 50%), while almost a quarter state that they never read wikis (n=186, 23%). However, more than half of the teachers mention that they never contribute to wikis (n=443, 55%), with only 10% expressing that they contribute to wikis always or often (n=81, 10%).

Table 7. Teachers' Wiki Usage Status

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
I read wikis in English.	77	9	140	17	239	29	171	21	186	23
I write to wikis in English.	33	4	48	6	115	14	170	21	443	55

The quantitative findings regarding teachers' forum usage also support the qualitative discussions. When Table 8 is examined, approximately 70% of the participating teachers state that they sometimes or often read forums (n=577, 72%). The proportion of teachers who sometimes or often contribute to forums is about 40% (n=327, 41%). Similar to the discussions, questionnaire results also indicate that teachers prefer to read forums rather than actively participate by writing comments on the websites.

Table 8. Teachers' Forum Usage

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
I read forums in English.	81	10	191	24	305	38	138	17	94	12
I write to forums in English.	46	6	80	10	201	25	204	25	282	35

The questionnaire findings regarding teachers' email usage are presented in Table 9. According to the results, a significant percentage of participating teachers sometimes or often read (n=636, 77%) and write (n=577, 70%) emails in English. Additionally, some teachers mentioned that they rarely read English emails or never read them at all (n=183, 22%), and a similar pattern is observed for writing emails in English, with some teachers indicating that they rarely or never write emails in English (n=242, 29%). In conclusion, it can be stated that the majority of teachers mostly send and receive emails in English.

Table 9. Teachers' E-mail Usage

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
I read emails in English.	142	17	204	25	290	35	115	14	68	8
I write emails in English.	123	15	150	18	304	37	166	20	76	9

The findings obtained from the questionnaire regarding the usage of Facebook and Twitter are presented in Table 10. When Table 10 is examined, it is observed that the majority of teachers read English posts, and some of them also make English posts. In the use of Facebook and Twitter, writing occurs less frequently than reading. The percentages of those who rarely or never read are 15% (n=124), while the percentages of those who rarely or never write are 32% (n=261).

Table 10. Frequency and Percentage Distributions According to Teachers' Facebook/Twitter Usage in English

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
I read shared posts in English on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).	292	36	247	30	152	19	57	7	67	8
I share posts in English on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).	167	21	166	20	220	27	129	16	132	16

The data obtained from the questionnaire on the usage of mobile technologies also complement the qualitative discussions. According to the findings presented in Table 11, the vast majority of teachers indicate that they sometimes or often use mobile technologies (n=649, 79%). The data obtained from the surveys on the use of mobile technologies are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Frequencies and Percent Distributions regarding Teachers' Usage of Mobile Technologies

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
I use smartphone applications with English content.	167	20	251	31	231	28	80	10	90	11

The data obtained from the questionnaire on video watching also supports the qualitative discussions. When Table 12 is examined, it is observed that 42% (n=342) of respondents always or often watch content with English subtitles, while 39% (n=319) prefer watching without subtitles. The percentage of teachers who always or often watch English content with Turkish subtitles is 37% (n=303).

Table 12. Frequencies and Percentage Distributions regarding Teachers' Video/Television Watching Usage

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
I watch TV series/movies/documentaries etc. in English with Turkish subtitles.	109	13	194	24	284	35	145	18	77	10
I watch TV series/movies/documentaries etc. in English with English subtitles.	115	14	227	28	329	40	102	12	45	6
I watch TV series/movies/documentaries etc. in English without subtitles.	109	13	210	26	318	39	138	17	39	5

In the questionnaire, teachers' reading habits of English printed and electronic publications were measured with two separate questions. These results are presented in Table 13. When Table 13 is examined, it is observed that the reading rates of teachers are quite high. The percentages of those who always or often read are calculated as 42% (n=338) for electronic publications and 47% (n=385) for printed publications. The percentage of teachers who rarely or never read electronic publications is 25% (n=203), while this rate is 14% (n=121) for printed publications.

Table 13. Frequencies and Percentage Distributions regarding Teachers' English Reading Activities

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
I read e-books, e-magazines, etc. in English.	135	17	203	25	277	34	132	16	71	9
I read books, magazines, etc. in English.	157	19	228	28	307	38	93	11	28	3

The information obtained from the questionnaire regarding teachers' English one-on-one communication situations is presented in Table 14. When Table 14 is examined, it is observed that the percentage of teachers who always or often communicate with native English speakers is 37% (n=300), while the percentage of those who communicate one-on-one with individuals speaking English as a foreign language is 28% (n=234).

Table 14. Frequencies and Percentage Distributions regarding Teachers' English Communication Situations

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
I speak with people whose native language is English.	138	17	162	20	313	38	162	20	41	5
I speak with foreigners (e.g., French, Japanese) who use English as their foreign language.	109	13	125	15	272	33	201	25	107	13

Institutional (Structured) Professional Development Activities

The second sub-problem of the study is expressed as follows: "What types of professional development activities do English teachers conduct corporately (in a structured manner), how frequently do they conduct these activities, and do these activities differ based on the type of institution they work in?" The answer to this research question is presented first with qualitative findings and then with quantitative findings, as a result of the analysis of the obtained data.

Qualitative Findings regarding the Second Research Question

Events Organized by Institutions. The second sub-problem of the research is formulated as "What types of institutional (structured) professional development activities do EFL teachers undertake, how frequently, and do these activities vary based on the type of institution they work for?" In order to answer this research question, not only the individual professional development programs conducted by teachers but also the types of professional development activities organized and conducted by other institutions or their own institutions have been examined. Many professional development programs are planned and implemented by the institutions where teachers work. The MoNE training sessions that the interviewed teachers took part in categorized into the following themes: technology usage under the Fatih Project, language teaching methods, orientation for newly appointed teachers, and project preparation. While some teachers applied to participate in some of these trainings, others were mandatory for teachers to attend. There are notable doubts among teachers about the effectiveness of these trainings, and T8 explained this situation as follows:

> *I don't think what is done in Türkiye is very beneficial. It is prepared assuming that every school has the same conditions, but it doesn't turn out the same way (T8).*

However, there are also teachers who indicate that training conducted by experts in the field is effective. Particularly, the practices of language educators coming from abroad are observed to be productive. T11 expressed this situation as follows:

> *Again, a woman named Lidia came from the United States regarding these in-class methods and techniques. Just like in method classes, we, the audience, the teachers became students. It was the technique we practiced at the university. The woman was acting as the teacher. She would conduct activities for us, involving papers and various exercises. In this way, I had learned very different and new things (T11).*

In addition to the trainings organized by their institutions, some teachers working at the MoNE (n=7) have stated that they attended trainings organized by different institutions. These trainings can be listed as courses related to English language teaching offered by language institutions, trainings organized by universities, and events organized through the embassies of English-speaking countries. However, T18, who works in one of the eastern provinces, mentioned that institutions outside the MoNE do not organize any activities for EFL teachers in their province. Two teachers working at the MoNE also stated that they participated in professional development programs organized abroad. These activities are found to be beneficial in many aspects. T4 explained this situation as follows:

> *It was good to hear how native speakers speak. I met a lot of English teachers from other countries. Conversations and discussions with them were beneficial, especially regarding education systems (T4).*

The teachers interviewed who work in private schools have provided different explanations regarding the professional development programs implemented by their institutions. Accordingly, compared to the MoNE, private schools purchase more services from experts and different organizations for the development of their teachers. These services can be summarized as publishers' informative and training activities, inviting expert speakers, and organizing conferences within the institutions. Two out of four teachers working in private schools who participated in the interviews also mentioned attending conferences and workshops, aside from the events organized by their own institutions.

For instructors working at universities, professional development activities can be classified as activities carried out by the professional development units in their institutions and events where experts are invited. Some universities' professional development units frequently organize and conduct activities for teachers. T1 explained this situation as follows:

We have a Professional Development Unit in our institution. I try to participate in the activities there. Regularly, events are organized once a month, and I try to be a part of them (T1).

Some of the EFL teachers who participated in the interviews, including two from university settings (n=2), have mentioned that they attended events organized by different institutions apart from the professional development activities organized by their institutions. These events are often related to language instruction and conferences. Some instructors from universities (n=4) also mentioned participating as speakers or listeners in various conferences. Instructors generally found events organized by different institutions to be productive.

Among the interviewed teachers, two teachers from private schools and four instructors from universities mentioned participating as speakers or listeners in scientific conferences, while no teacher from the MoNE provided information about their participation in conferences. Among the interviewed teachers, participation in conferences is more preferred by those working in private schools and universities.

Four teachers among those interviewed discussed obstacles they face regarding participation in professional development programs. These obstacles were listed as transportation to events outside the place of residence, participation fees, and the intensity of work and personal life.

In addition to the programs organized by institutions, meetings attended by teachers and the sharing of experiences with colleagues also contribute to their professional development. Twelve teachers working at the MoNE mentioned department[4] meetings at school. Two of these teachers stated that no department meetings were held at their school either because they were the only teacher in the school or because they were newly appointed. However, seven teachers mentioned that they conducted department meetings on paper and that there was no sharing of professional development during these meetings. T12 explains this frequently mentioned case as follows:

It's not effective. I mean, because it's just a formality, what we actually implement from what we write is very little. It's just to show that we have records when an inspector comes (T12).

Contrary to the teachers who say that department meetings are conducted as a formality and are not effective, three teachers find them productive. These meetings facilitate sharing among colleagues in terms of planning lessons, discussing teaching methods, etc. Even though meetings are conducted as a formality, some teachers have mentioned that they share experiences with their colleagues outside of formal meetings. T4 explains this situation as follows:

So, what we do at the beginning of the year is more of a formality. We do it because we're obligated to. But, usually we would have already come together a thousand times by the time we have that mandatory meeting. Which book are we going to choose? What topics are we going to focus on? What are we going to do? We don't keep meeting notes. That might be the reason why there are more heated discussions. It becomes more beneficial that way (T4).

It is generally stated that department meetings in private schools are productive. Three teachers expressing their views on department meetings have also mentioned that they conduct the meetings seriously. It is observed that school administrations closely monitor department meetings. All three teachers mentioned that they have department meetings every week, where they discuss the evaluation of the week, the feasibility of plans, and the planning of the new week. T6 explains the situation regarding department meetings in their school as follows:

It is very beneficial for us. Department meetings are also highly valued administratively by the school. We can't skip them. We don't say, "Let's skip it this week." We have it every week. Every Thursday, it's our department meeting time. If there is a problem we encountered during the week, let's say there is a plan, we discuss how to proceed with a particular topic (T6).

---

[4] *Zümre* in Turkish.

It has been noted that teacher-to-teacher sharing is also frequently done in private schools, apart from meetings. In contrast to the MoNE, it is observed that in private schools, information technologies are often used in teacher-to-teacher sharing. Four teachers interviewed from private schools mentioned that teacher-to-teacher material and information sharing is done using technologies such as email groups, Moodle, and wikis. T28 explained the use of Moodle for teacher-to-teacher sharing in the school as follows:

> *In terms of sharing, I can say, for example, we use a system called Moodle in our school as teachers... I can see everything uploaded by all our other colleagues there. ... for them to benefit from the documents I share and for me to see theirs, we share... (T28)*

Five instuctors working at universities have expressed their views on department meetings. Four of these teachers mentioned that department meetings are held in their institutions, while one teacher stated that there are no department meetings. Most of the teachers (n=3) mentioned that they have department meetings every week and that these meetings are productive. Discussions in the meetings cover topics such as in-class activities, discussions on maintaining standards in teaching and grading, and the preparation of teaching materials. It is stated that these discussions also contribute to the professional development of teachers. T13 explains this situation as follows:

> *Department meetings contribute to professional development in the following way... For example, on a specific topic, let's say there was a meeting about the speaking exam recently, and a few videos were shown. In those videos, it was asked, "If you were the grader, how many points would you give?" It's good for establishing a general consensus. For instance, speaking is a subjective matter. Some teachers overlook mistakes and give high scores, while others give low scores. It's effective in creating unity, like deciding how many points we would give for a specific video. There is professional sharing. In that sense, it is very important. That's my opinion (T13).*

However, one instructor mentioned that department meetings are not officially held but teachers share information among themselves.

Academic Studies. One of the planned professional development activities for teachers is academic studies. In this context, the postgraduate education of teachers has been examined. Of the interviewed teachers, 13 have completed or are continuing postgraduate education, and the distribution of postgraduate education status based on the institutions they work for is given in Table 15.

Table 15. Institutions Where Teachers Work and Their Status regarding Postgraduate Education

	MoNE	Private School	University
Has Obtained or is Obtaining Postgraduate Education	8	1	4
Has Not Obtained Postgraduate Education	10	3	2

Additionally, an examination has been made into the topics on which teachers write their theses or wish to write. Teachers' needs were also assessed by asking about the topic an EFL teacher should write a thesis on. Classroom management (n=4), technology-enhanced language teaching (n=4), development of teaching skills (n=6), professional development of EFL teachers (n=4), and English literature (n=1) are among the expected subjects for thesis research. When these topics are examined, it is observed that the needs of teachers related to classroom teaching skills are more prominent. This situation also points to the needs in teacher education in our country.

Projects. The projects undertaken by teachers can also be considered as important professional development activities. Through projects, they have both participated in foreign visits, received language education, and organized activities with project partners coming to Türkiye. Numerical data regarding the projects of the interviewed teachers are presented below. Teachers who mentioned participating in foreign projects during their student years have stated that they provided language education to foreigners and participated in international competitions between schools. Moreover, nine teachers stated that they participated in projects to be involved in language education and professional development activities. Some of these teachers participated in language education with the support of international institutions, while others applied and participated in professional development programs for English teachers organized abroad through the National Agency. It is emphasized that professional development programs make important contributions to teachers in terms of getting to know foreign cultures. T20 explains this frequently mentioned situation as follows:

> *The feeling of English being spoken on the streets there is really nice. I really liked that. Also, I stayed with a foreign family there. My host was English. We used to talk on a daily basis and everything (T20).*

Seven of the interviewed teachers have mentioned that they have conducted EU projects with their students. In projects carried out with the participation of multiple countries, visits between countries are made with the participation of students, and information is shared on various topics. It is stated that these visits have significant contributions to students, such as getting to know different cultures and increasing motivation for language learning. However, four of the participating teachers mentioned that they do not have any international experiences.

In quantitative data, teachers' foreign visits within the scope of projects were examined, and out of 819 teachers, it was observed that 320 (39%) had never been abroad, 170 (21%) had been abroad for project purposes, and 330 (40%) had been abroad for other purposes (e.g., tourism, family visits). In the institutional dimension of EFL teachers' activities, the attitude of the institution they work for in supporting teachers' participation in professional development activities, as well as teachers' individual initiatives to participate in these activities, is effective. Based on the above statistics, it can be concluded that despite the increasing opportunities for projects in our country, EFL teachers may not be active enough in participating in these projects.

Quantitative Findings regarding the Second Research Question

Quantitative findings related to the second research question have been presented with frequency and percentage analyses. The quantitative findings regarding teachers' participation in professional development programs organized by different institutions are presented in Table 15.

When the questionnaire findings are examined, the responses of EFL teachers regarding their participation in professional development programs organized by different institutions are presented in Table 16. When Table 16 is examined, it is observed that teachers' participation rates in events organized by publishing houses are at a moderate level. Approximately half of the teachers stated that they sometimes or often participate in professional development activities organized by publishing houses (n=410, 51%). However, although their participation in national conferences is at a moderate level (n=400, 49%), their participation in conferences abroad is quite low. Only 18% of teachers stated that their frequency of participation in conferences and similar events abroad is sometimes or more frequent (n=153, 18%). While 37% of teachers reported that they sometimes or often participate in events organized by universities (n=302, 37%), approximately 75% mentioned that they sometimes or often participate in professional development programs organized in their institutions (n=627, 77%).

Tablo 16. Percentage and Frequency Distributions regarding Teachers' Participation in Professional Development Programs Organized by Different Institutions

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
I attend professional development activities organized by publishing houses.	54	7	119	15	237	29	230	28	177	22
I attend ELT Conferences in Türkiye.	41	5	107	13	252	31	247	30	166	20
I attend ELT Conferences abroad.	18	2	36	4	99	12	133	16	527	65
I attend professional development activities organized by universities.	37	5	76	9	189	23	259	32	252	31
I attend the in-service training courses organized by my institution.	174	21	196	24	257	32	150	18	38	5

Another institutional professional development activity is postgraduate studies conducted at the academic level. Data regarding the postgraduate education status of the teachers who participated in the questionnaire are presented in Table 17. When Table 17 is examined, it is observed that twenty percent of the participating teachers have completed or are currently pursuing postgraduate education. Pursuing postgraduate education can contribute significantly to teachers' professional development.

Table 17. The Postgraduate Education Status of Teachers

	Master's Degree		Ph.D.	
	f	Percentage	f	Percentage
Yes	90	11	5	1
No	688	84	793	97
Still in the process	42	5	21	3

Organizational Culture and Professional Development

The third research question is formulated as "What are the views of EFL teachers on the impact of organizational culture on their professional development?" The qualitative findings obtained to answer this research question are presented first, followed by quantitative findings.

Qualitative Findings regarding the Third Research Question

The impact of organizational culture on teachers' professional development is examined under the headings of supportiveness, teamwork, and professionalism trends suggested by Danışman and Özgen (2003) in the theoretical framework. It includes the school management's support for professional development, classroom observations within the school, the influence of the school culture on the reflection of professional development in the classroom, and systemic issues. Regarding the school management's support for teachers' professional development (n=22), most teachers expressed positive views. Thirteen teachers working in the MoNE stated that the school management generally supports professional development activities, while three teachers expressed negative views about the support from the school management. Two teachers mentioned that the management would support participation in professional development activities depending on the conditions. The prerequisite set by the management for participation in professional development activities is generally expressed as not leaving classes idle by not conducting their classes. T18 explains this situation as follows:

> *They allow it in the afternoon, but they don't allow it much in the morning. It is to prevent students from remaining idle (T18).*

Four teachers among those working in private schools mention that school administrations support them in participating in professional development activities. However, two teachers indicate that they can get permission only on the condition that their classes are not left idle. Similar to the schools affiliated with the MoNE, it is seen as a significant obstacle when teachers do not have their classes. Teachers express that when class schedules are organized in a way that allows for a colleague to substitute or classes to be swapped, they can readily engage in professional development activities. Regarding the EFL instructors teaching at universities, four of them state that their administrations support their professional development activities, while two mention that theirs are not supportive in this regard. T13 explains these differences based on their experience working in different institutions as follows:

In this regard, I have experienced two different institutions, and their approaches were quite different. In my first institution, to be honest, there wasn't much support for professional development. I observed a more monotonous system primarily aimed at keeping teachers entering classes and ensuring that classes were not left idle. However, when I came to this place, I was genuinely surprised. Because, institutionally, I saw that they aim for development. For instance, the encouragement for teachers to pursue master's degrees. They never put obstacles for that. I observed excellent support and a friendly approach here (T13).

Another topic examined under the theme of organizational culture is the reflection of knowledge and skills acquired in professional development in the classrooms. Teachers point out the intensity of the curriculum and the pressure of centralized exams as significant barriers to applying the methods recommended in professional development programs to the classroom. Additionally, the lack of enthusiasm among the existing teachers in schools for professional development and self-renewal negatively impacts the newly appointed teachers to these schools. T17 expressed this situation as follows:

I believe that many are actually unaware of professional development. Upon graduation, they tend to say "okay," close the file, and because they do not ask themselves how they can improve and become aware of innovations to stretch their students' potential even more, I think they gradually distance themselves from the field (T17).

One of the problems related to organizational culture mentioned by teachers is the permission to provide and use instructional materials. Teachers state that there are not enough materials at school, and they are also not allowed to bring materials from outside. T5 expressed this situation as follows:

Because, for example, a teacher needs a resource, but the school doesn't provide it. The teacher says, "Let me bring it myself," but the school doesn't allow it. The use of worksheets is strictly prohibited. That is, using worksheets from outside resources is not allowed (T5).

Another prominent point related to organizational culture is that the conducted professional development programs do not address the needs of teachers. Professional development programs are planned and implemented with the understanding of "one size fits all," independent of the school's culture and conditions. T8 elaborated on this situation by stating the following:

It's a bit more restricted in Türkiye. We always talk about the same topics. The classroom, the school's facilities, or the students' conditions are not cared much. They are prepared assuming that every school has the same conditions, but it doesn't turn out that way (T8).

Finally, one of the most striking findings identified in this study regarding organizational culture is that, despite teachers' efforts to keep their English alive and enhance their professional knowledge and skills, they may not be able to reflect these skills in the classroom. Practices within the school conditions and the education system can hinder teachers from transferring the newly acquired knowledge and skills to the classroom. In this case, it can be claimed that the organizational culture emerges as a factor hindering the reflection of professional development in the classroom. T11 expressed this situation as follows:

No, I don't bother improving myself in the profession. Under these conditions, I would no longer make an effort for this education system. I only do what's expected of me. The English I use in the classroom is very different from the English I use in my social life. Even though I make an effort to keep my English alive, I definitely do not reflect it in the classroom (T11).

Quantitative Findings regarding the Third Research Question

The quantitative findings related to the third research question have been presented along with frequency and percentage analysis. The questionnaire results regarding the institutions' support for participation in professional development programs complement the qualitative data obtained from interviews. The majority of participating teachers (n=569, 70%) indicate that their institutions always or often allow and support their participation in professional development programs. The results obtained from the questionnaires are presented in Table 18.

Table 18. Frequencies and Percentage Distributions of Institutional Support for Participation in Professional Development Programs

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
My workplace allows me to participate in professional development programs.	308	38	261	32	160	20	59	7	24	3
My workplace encourages me to participate in professional development programs.	256	31	224	28	186	23	85	10	62	8

In addition to participation in professional development, classroom observations conducted within the school have also been examined under the theme of the impact of organizational culture on professional development. Data obtained from the interviews indicate that two teachers working at the university and one teacher working at a private school mentioned that their classes were observed. In the administered questionnaire, when asked whether they receive feedback on their professional development through classroom observations, 26% of teachers (n=231) responded always or often, while 33% (n=267) responded sometimes. The results obtained from the questionnaires are presented in Table 19.

Table 19. Frequencies and Percentage Distributions regarding Receiving Feedback Through Lesson Observations

	Always (f)	Percentage (%)	Often (f)	Percentage (%)	Sometimes (f)	Percentage (%)	Rarely (f)	Percentage (%)	Never (f)	Percentage (%)
I receive feedback on my professional development through the observation of my lessons.	74	9	139	17	267	33	195	24	131	16

Teachers' individual professional development activities were examined under the themes of access to teaching materials, news websites, social media usage, mobile technology usage, video and film watching, book and magazine reading, and one-to-one communication. In qualitative findings, the majority of interviewed teachers stated that they accessed teaching materials using the Internet. Similarly, in quantitative findings, it was observed that teachers who sometimes or often used English-language search engines had a high percentage. Regarding news websites, most interviewed teachers mentioned following English-language news websites, while approximately one-fifth of teachers working under the MoNE stated that they did not follow English-language news websites. Quantitative findings also indicate high rates of teachers following English-language news websites.

In terms of social media usage, interviewed teachers were not found to frequently follow blogs, and wikis were mostly followed through Wikipedia. While some teachers working in private schools and universities mentioned using wikis interactively, none of the teachers working under the MoNE followed wikis interactively. Teachers use forums, email, and other social networks more frequently than blogs and wikis. Parallel to qualitative findings, the rates of using social media sources in English are quite high in quantitative findings.

Another individual professional development activity highlighted in qualitative findings is the use of mobile technologies. Teachers use mobile technologies both to keep their English alive and support teaching. While some teachers working in private schools and universities mentioned using mobile technologies to support teaching, none of the teachers working under the MoNE reported using mobile technologies for this purpose. Quantitative findings indicate high rates of accessing English content using mobile devices.

Watching series and films and reading books and magazines are also among individual professional development activities. Parallel to qualitative findings, quantitative findings show that teachers have high rates of engaging in activities such as watching series/films and reading books to keep their English alive. Finally, it is observed that teachers keep their English alive by communicating with non-Turkish speakers. Quantitative findings support the results obtained from qualitative findings regarding one-on-one communication.

Regarding institutional professional development activities, firstly, the professional development activities organized by institutions were examined. In qualitative findings, teachers working in universities, private schools, and the MoNE mentioned frequently participating in professional development activities organized by their institutions. Additionally, meetings and collaborations among teachers also support their professional development. Quantitative findings, in line with qualitative findings, show that the majority of teachers participate in professional development activities organized by both their own and other institutions. Another aspect of institutional professional development activities is academic studies. Graduate studies are seen both in quantitative and qualitative findings as professional development activities.

The impact of organizational culture on professional development was examined within the scope of the last research question. In qualitative findings, teachers working in universities, private schools, and the MoNE stated that school management is mostly supportive of professional development. However, challenges in reflecting the recommended changes in the professional development process into the classroom were observed, especially due to exam pressure and the intensity of the curriculum. There are also problems in the alignment of professional development practices to the organizational context. In quantitative findings related to organizational culture, the majority of teachers stated that institutional administration supports participation in professional development.

Discussion

In this study, the frequency of EFL teachers' participation in self-directed and institutional professional development activities in Türkiye, and their views on the impact of organizational culture on these activities were investigated. Individual (unstructured) activities were examined in dimensions such as "use of search engines, access to teaching materials, use of English in various media, and face-to-face communication," as revealed in the findings. For institutional (structured) activities, themes emerged related to institutionally organized events, academic studies, and projects. Finally, qualitative findings related to the impact of organizational culture on teachers' professional development are presented. Based on themes emerging in the qualitative part of the study, a questionnaire was formulated, and the analysis was conducted by integrating both qualitative and quantitative data. While quantitative findings indicate that the majority of English teachers use search engines in English, follow English news sites, and utilize mobile technologies, it is noteworthy that approximately 16% of teachers reported hardly conducting any searches in English on the internet. Additionally, about 25% of teachers

mentioned not following any English news sites at all. Another notable observation is that most teachers expressed not using Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs and wikis for reading and writing exposure in English.

The amount of time teachers allocate to English in their personal lives emerges as one of the important topics. In a section of his study, Karaata (2010) asked 151 English teachers working in Istanbul about the average number of hours per week they spent on various activities to improve their English skills. Teachers' responses indicated that 29.8% of them never read books/magazines, 62.9% never followed an English daily newspaper, 37.7% never watched English news, and 80.8% stated that they never had the opportunity to practice with a native English speaker. Similarly, Korkmazgil and Seferoğlu (2013) revealed in their study with 98 EFL teachers working at the MoNE in Antalya that one of the EFL teachers stated, "I am an English teacher, but I have never spoken with a native English speaker in my life" (p. 7). These results, obtained in a cosmopolitan city like Istanbul that offers countless opportunities and in a province like Antalya, which attracts a significant number of foreign tourists in Türkiye, are thought-provoking. However, we know from sociocultural approaches to language learning that the interactions a language learner engages in and the opportunities they create for themselves to come into contact with the target language are the backbone of language development (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). Learning a foreign language is a never-ending process. Therefore, foreign language teachers themselves are in a "learner" position at least as much as their students. For their professional development, teachers need to expose themselves to authentic environments where the target language is used, at least as much as their students do.

In the introduction, the importance of individuals taking the initiative to use the target language in various contexts and ways was emphasized. In this context, the use of English news sites can be highlighted as an example. In the study, it was found that 25% of teachers never or rarely read English news (n=199). In a news article published in a national newspaper that pointed out the lower interest of young people in news applications, it was reported that as the level of education increases, mobile applications with news content are used more regularly, with 60% of those using news apps being in the 50-64 age range (Radikal, December 9, 2013). The news article does not specify whether the applications are in Turkish or English; however, considering that the education level of teachers is relatively high, it would be reasonable to expect that fewer English teachers would have claimed not to follow any news websites.

Previous studies have also found limited use of technology in teachers' personal lives. One of the frequently encountered findings in the literature is that teachers predominantly use technology for preparing worksheets and exams (Bozkurt & Cilavdaroğlu, 2011; Yıldırım, 2007). In Alkan and Durmuş's study (2013) regarding the use of information and communication technologies in English language teaching, teachers responded to the question "When you think of information technology, which tools come to your mind?" with answers such as "computer, projector, laptop, desktop, keyboard" (Alkan & Durmuş, 2013). This finding may partially explain why almost half of the participating EFL teachers in this study (n=364, 44%) rarely or never read blogs, and more than half of them (n=494, 61%) never wrote blogs. In the qualitative findings of this study, it becomes evident that teachers, especially those employed by the MoNE, use Web 2.0 tools quite infrequently. It would not be erroneous to conclude that teachers who do not embrace these technologies in their personal lives are less likely to use them in their lessons. On the other hand, the overall picture is positive among the English teachers who participated in the study in terms of their frequency in making and reading English posts on social media (those who selected "always" and "often" options, 66%), predominantly watching English videos/series/movies with or without English subtitles (those who indicated "always" or "often" for watching with English subtitles, 42%, and those who marked "always" or "often" for watching without subtitles, 39%), reading electronic or printed English books/magazines (those who chose "always" and "often" for reading e-books/magazines, 42%, and those who stated "always" and "often" for reading printed books/magazines, 47%), and speaking with native English speakers or those who speak English as a second language. The noteworthy points here include the relatively high percentage of EFL teachers

who rarely or never communicate with foreigners (25%), the surprising prevalence of those who always watch English programs with Turkish subtitles (37%), or the abundance of those who watch these programs with English subtitles either always or often (42%).

Teachers' participation in institutional activities revealed in this study aligns with previous research. In previous studies in Türkiye, participation in institutional activities such as conferences, seminars, and certificate programs stood out. Institutional activities mentioned in this study included in-service programs organized by the MoNE, informational and training activities by publishing houses, invitations of expert speakers, and conferences organized by institutions. One interesting finding in this study is that teachers consider department meetings as an important professional development activity. Research in 48 countries looking at teachers' collective innovativeness found a direct connection between a school's collaborative culture and teachers' perceptions of collective innovativeness. The belief that department meetings support professional development is promising. When we look at the theories and studies mentioned in the introduction section (such as van Lier, 2004), the existence of EFL teachers who still do not widely use innovative tools in their personal lives and those who claim to have never communicated with a foreigner in an age of globalization indicates that teachers, independent of the professional development opportunities provided by the state, should put more effort into increasing the frequency and variety of individual activities they undertake to keep their English alive.

The findings obtained in this study regarding institutional activities parallel the results of the previous research. In previous studies conducted in Türkiye, participation in institutional activities such as conferences, seminars, and certification programs stood out (Babanoğlu & Yardımcı, 2017; Karaata, 2010; Korkmazgil, 2015; Ozer Ozkan & Anıl, 2014). In the interviews conducted in this study, the institutional activities mentioned by teachers included in-service programs organized by the MoNE, informative meetings and trainings by publishers, the invitation of expert speakers in the field, and conferences organized by institutions. One of the findings that emerged in the study and is not commonly encountered in the literature is the perception of the interviewed teachers regarding department[5] meetings as an important professional development activity. Nguyen et al.(2021), who investigated teachers' collective innovation in forty-eight countries, found that having a collaborative culture in schools is a factor directly linked to teachers' perceptions of collective innovation. The belief that department meetings support professional development is promising in this regard.

In terms of the frequency of institutional activities, similarities are observed between the findings of this study and previous research. For example, Karaata (2010) noted that out of 151 English teachers participating in the study, 83 (55%) stated that they did not attend any in-service training programs organized by the MoNE. The teachers were also asked about the last time they read an article on English language education, and the percentage of those who responded "never" was determined to be 33.8%. Similar findings are also highlighted in international studies. de Vries, van de Grift, and Jansen (2013) reported that among the professional development activities that teachers rarely or never preferred to engage in, there were activities such as following scientific literature or reading professional journals, participating in mentoring or coaching programs, attending conferences related to the field, conducting video analyses, visiting colleagues' classrooms or inviting them to their own classroom, administering surveys to students, solving problems they encounter based on the available literature, conducting research projects, teamwork, developing a new curriculum, and planning lessons with colleagues. In a similar vein, in this study, 50% of EFL teachers declared that they rarely participate in events organized by publishers and universities, and 62% stated that they never participate. The rate of rarely or never attending national conferences and seminars is 50%, while the rate of never attending international events is 81%. The high rate of not attending international conferences is not surprising due to the limited opportunities for institutions, including the MoNE, to support such overseas events. However, the fact that only 5% of teachers claim to "always" attend national conferences and similar events clearly reflects the state of professional development activities and the perception of professional

---

[5] Zümre in Turkish.

development in our country. The sole reason for this result is certainly not that teachers are not interested in professional development activities or do not take the initiative to participate. Attention should be given to the attitudes of institutions, especially the MoNE, towards promoting professional development and the factors influencing these attitudes. As Guskey (2000) also pointed out, organizational culture and institutional support are crucial in the professional development and change of teachers.

Karaata (2010) found that when asked about "by whom the in-service trainings should be provided," 45% of English teachers chose British Council experts, 20.5% chose English language trainers[6], and 30.5% chose faculty members. One of the findings obtained from comprehensive interviews with teachers in this study is that they generally do not find the in-service training activities provided by the MoNE productive, and this finding is consistent with the results of the previous studies (Can, 2019; Çelebi & Yıldız Narinalp, 2020). In this context, autonomous/self-directed learning can be a way out. Missoum (2015) emphasized that in the technology age we live in, there is a need for an increase in "autonomous professional development" activities, and teachers' awareness of lifelong learning should be enhanced even during their undergraduate education. Instead of expecting the professional development activities that they need to be "provided" to them, teachers should take the initiative to research and explore online communities and how they can benefit from online professional development activities on the internet.

Developing a teacher's capacity to manage his or her own professional development and fostering a positive attitude towards lifelong learning emerges as the most practical solution in today's world. In the study by Karaata (2010), 50.3% of the teachers participating responded positively to the question of whether they would attend professional development activities solely organized to develop their "English proficiency." A teacher who took part in Korkmazgil's (2015) phenomenological doctoral dissertation shared that the English proficiency level diminished over time, and they needed to practice English, expressing a desire for more opportunities: "I wish more opportunities were provided for us to refresh our knowledge" (p. 121). In this regard, it is not surprising, as observed in the study by Buyruk and Akbaş (2021) examining teacher autonomy, that teachers show the least autonomy in the area of professional development. As seen, teachers tend to believe that professional development should be presented to them by others. Since the autonomy of the teacher is an important factor in initiatives related to education, professional satisfaction, and dedication (Gülşen & Atay, 2022; Worth & van den Brande, 2020), perhaps, in a system where even textbooks are imposed on teachers as a mandatory requirement and their freedom regarding the curriculum is kept as limited as possible, expecting teachers to take initiatives for their own personal development is just unjust.

Reflective teaching-based institutional professional development activities (peer coaching, critical case analysis, action research, etc.), although finding a rare place in the literature (Sönmez Boran, 2018; Tanış & Dikilitaş, 2018), have not emerged in this research. None of the interviewed teachers mentioned these activities. As a result, it can be said that reflective teaching-based professional development activities have not yet been widely adopted in Türkiye.

One of the most striking findings of this study is the statement of the interviewed teacher T11, who, despite making various efforts to keep his English skills alive as a teacher, mentioned that he would not reflect this development in his classes. When asked about the underlying reason for this attitude, T11 mentioned the despair that came with not being able to adapt what he knew to the learning conditions in which he taught. He said that he had struggled a lot for it in the past, but due to the frustration accumulated over the years, he made such a decision. Bunch (2007) noted that novice teachers are motivated to adapt to their environment despite conflicts with their beliefs about teaching and learning. Even if the professional development of foreign language teachers is conceptually addressed more broadly, professional development efforts would not be meaningful unless the institutions that are collaborative and open up space for teacher autonomy increase, and their organizational cultures improve based on the approaches touched upon.

---

[6] *Formatör* in Turkish

Conclusion and Suggestions

This research emphasizes that professional development, as defined by the first-generation professional development concept mentioned by Sancar et al. (2021), is not merely a tool for developing knowledge and skills. Instead, it highlights that professional development is a process in which teachers evaluate their personal and practical teaching knowledge as part of understanding themselves. Even though the accepted understanding in the literature of professional development worldwide and in Türkiye is more focused on teachers' participation in institutional activities, in the context of foreign language teaching, professional development requires more. In this context, looking at the professional development of foreign language teachers from a broader perspective, we propose a new definition: *Professional development for foreign language teachers is the entirety of any unstructured, self-directed activities they are engaged in (such as following news sites in the target language, watching videos, reading blogs, etc.) and structured, institutional activities they participate in (such as seminars, conferences), enabling teachers to engage with the foreign language they teach in authentic contexts and improve their language proficiency.* These individual and institutional activities cannot be evaluated independently of the organizational culture in which teachers are situated. In line with this definition, in the professional development process of English teachers, in addition to participating in institutional activities, a sense of responsibility for improving their own language proficiency should be instilled. In this regard, the MoNE, universities, institutions like the British Council can develop projects to increase awareness about the importance of self-directed activities in professional development. These projects can emphasize the breadth of self-directed activities that teachers can be engaged in, and lesser-known resources and mobile applications can be shared. Experimental studies comparing the language proficiency of teachers who have integrated English into their lives with those who do not use English extensively in authentic environments can yield striking results regarding the necessity of this awareness. Guskey (2000) has defined professional development as "a process and a set of activities that results in the increase of professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which contribute to the improvement of student learning" (p. 16). The ultimate goal of professional development is to enhance student learning. One of the most striking findings in this study is the statement of teacher T11, who, despite making various efforts to keep his English alive as a teacher, claims not to reflect this development in his classroom. In-depth phenomenological and ethnographic qualitative studies are needed to thoroughly examine the subject and its connection to the Turkish education culture for a better understanding of this potentially significant phenomenon.

While in more than fifteen European countries participation in professional development activities for teachers has been made mandatory (Ozer Ozkan & Anıl, 2014), enforcing compulsory professional development activities without conducting a needs analysis is not recommended in this study. Instead, an approach allowing teachers to choose the professional development activities they want to attend, such as the system in China where 240 hours of professional development every five years or in Singapore where 100 hours per year are obligatory (Bakioğlu, 2013), might be more preferable. However, this option comes with risks such as pushing teachers towards extrinsic motivation and prioritizing the quantity of training over its quality. It is essential to remember that countries with high achievements in international student assessment programs place special importance on the professional development of their teachers (Ozer Ozkan & Anıl, 2014).

According to the latest Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) conducted by the OECD (2019) every five years, Türkiye ranked as the second country with the largest difference in the rate of receiving support between teachers working in public and private schools among 48 countries. While 85.3% of teachers in private schools stated that they received at least one type of support while participating in continuous professional development activities, this rate is 67.9% for teachers in public schools. Based on this, comprehensive efforts should be made, particularly in schools affiliated with the MoNE, to improve organizational culture so that professional development activities can impact teachers' in-class practices.

Research using statistical techniques such as multiple regression to explore the relationships among professional motivation in foreign language teaching, teacher identity (Ölmez-Çağlar, 2022), and teachers' self-directed and institutional professional activities can shed light on the connections among these concepts.

This study has some limitations. While qualitative data were collected from teachers across all geographical regions in Türkiye, quantitative data were predominantly collected from the Izmir province, despite the MoNE's nationwide announcement of the questionnaire. To enhance the generalizability of findings, future studies should aim for a more balanced representation of different geographical regions in the country. In addition, since the data in this study were collected before the public release of the artificial intelligence chatbot ChatGPT, they do not reflect whether and how EFL teachers utilize artificial intelligence in their professional development. Future studies on the professional development of EFL teachers should be designed to include the use of artificial intelligence.

This study sheds light on new approaches in the field of foreign language teacher education as well. Awareness that professional development activities are not limited to institutional activities but also encompass self-directed activities for foreign language teachers should be created while teachers are still in preservice education programs. When we look at the eight key competences recommended by the European Commission for lifelong learning, we see that they encompass: 1) literacy competence; 2) multilingual competence; 3) mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering; 4) digital competence; 5) personal, social and learning to learn competence; 6) civic competence; 7) entrepreneurship competence; 8) cultural awareness and expression competence (European Commission, 2019). Many of these key competencies that are considered to be pathways to personal satisfaction, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship, and success in social inclusion/participation contexts are expected to be demonstrated by a contemporary foreign language teacher who keeps up with the times. In light of the findings from this study, the importance of professional development activities for English teachers becomes even more apparent. The necessity for teachers to engage in many individual activities through self-guidance, beyond their participation in institutionally planned events, is increasing every day. For these activities to impact student learning, there is a pressing need for organizational cultures that prioritize collaboration and maximize teachers' autonomy.

Acknowledgment

References

Alkan, A., & Durmuş, D. (2013). İngilizce öğretmenlerinin derslerinde bilişim teknolojilerini kullanma durumlarına ilişkin görüşleri. *Eğitim ve Öğretim Araştırmaları Dergisi, 2*(1), 110-116.

Arıkan A. (2004). Professional development programs and English language instructors: A critical-postmodern study. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 27*(27), 40-49.

Babanoğlu, M. P., & Yardımcı, A. (2017). Devlet ve özel okullarda çalışan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişim üzerine algıları. *Cukurova University Faculty of Education Journal, 46*(2), 789-803. doi:10.14812/cuefd.305210

Bakioğlu, A. (2013). *Karşılaştırmalı eğitim yönetimi: PISA'da başarılı ülkelerin eğitim yönetimi*. Ankara: Nobel Publications.

Balçıkanlı, C. (2008). Fostering learner autonomy in EFL classrooms. *Kastamonu Education Journal, 16*(1), 277-284.

Benson, P. (2011). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. Harlow: Longman.

Bozkurt, A., & Cilavdaroğlu, A. K. (2011). Matematik ve sınıf öğretmenlerinin teknolojiyi kullanma ve derslerine entegre etme algıları. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi, 19*(3), 859-870.

Bunch, K. J. (2007). Training failure as a consequence of organizational culture. *Human Resource Development Review, 6*(2), 142-163.

Buyruk, H., & Akbaş, A. (2021). An analysis on the relationship between teachers' occupational professionalism and their autonomy. *Education and Science, 46*(208), 431-451. doi:10.15390/EB.2021.9996

Bümen, N. T., Ateş, A., Çakar, E., Ural, G., & Acar, V. (2012). Türkiye bağlamında öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimi: Sorunlar ve öneriler. *Milli Eğitim, 22*(194), 31-50.

Büyüköztürk, S., Akbaba Altun, S., & Yıldırım, K. (2010). *Teaching and learning international survey, Turkish national report*. Ankara: MoNE.

Can, E. (2019). Öğretmenlerin meslekî gelişimleri: Engeller ve öneriler. *Eğitimde Nitel Araştırmalar Dergisi, 7*(4), 1618-1650. doi:10.14689/Issn.2148-2624.1.7c.4s.14m

Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In J. C. Richards, & R. W. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and communication* (pp. 2-27). London: Longman.

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics, 1*, 1-47.

Chatman, J. A., & O'Reilly, C. A. (2016). Paradigm lost: Reinvigorating the study of organizational culture. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 36*, 199-224.

Christoforidou, M., & Kyriakides, L. (2021). Developing teacher assessment skills: The impact of the dynamic approach to teacher professional development. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 70*, 1-12. doi:10.1016/j.stueduc.2021.101051

Clarke, D., & Hollingsworth, H. (2002). Elaborating a model of teacher professional growth. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 18*(8), 947-967. doi:10.1016/S0742-051X(02)00053-7

Coşkun Demirpolat, B. (2015). *Türkiye'nin yabancı dil öğretimiyle imtihanı: Sorunlar ve çözüm önerileri*. Ankara: SETA.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Çelebi, D. M., & Yıldız Narinalp, N. (2020). Ortaokullarda İngilizce öğretiminde karşılaşılan sorunlar. *OPUS-Uluslararası Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi, 16*(27), 4975-5005. doi:10.26466/opus.704162

Danışman, A., & Özgen, H. (2003). Örgüt kültürü çalışmalarında yöntem tartışması: Niteliksel-niceliksel yöntem ikileminde niceliksek ölçümler ve bir ölçek önerisi. *Yönetim Araştırmaları Dergisi, 3*(2), 91-124.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives, 8*(1), 1-44.

de Vries, S., van de Grift, W. J. C. M., & Jansen, E. P. W. A. (2013). How teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching relate to their continuing professional development. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 20*(3), 338-357. doi:10.1080/13540602.2013.848521

El Deen, A. A. M. M. A. (2023) The role of educational initiatives in EFL teacher professional development: A study of teacher mentors' perspectives. *Heliyon, 9*. doi:10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e13342

European Commission. (2019). Key competencies for lifelong learning. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/council-recommendation-on-key-competences-for-lifelong-learning_en

Farrell, T. S. C. (2015). *Language teacher professional development*. Virginia: TESOL Press.

Firth, A., & Wagner, J. (1997). On discourse, communication, and (some) fundamental concepts in SLA research. *Modern Language Journal, 81*(3), 285-300.

Gay, L., & Airasian, P. (2003). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and application* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson International Edition.

Genç, G. (2010). Major barriers perceived by English teachers in their professional development process: The case of Malatya. *Electronic Journal of Social Sciences, 9*(31), 103-117.

Guskey, T. R. (2000). *Evaluating professional development*. California: Corwin Press, INC.

Gülşen, E., & Atay, D. (2022). The impact of dialogic reflections on teacher autonomy. *Teacher Development, 26*(5), 609-626.

Günday, R. (2007). Yabancı dil öğretiminde başarısızlığa neden olan etmenler üzerine bir araştırma. *Milli Eğitim Dergisi, 175*, 210-229.

Hismanoglu, M. (2010). Effective professional development strategies of English language teachers. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences 2*, 990-995. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.139

Işık, A. (2008). Yabancı dil eğitimimizdeki yanlışlar nereden kaynaklanıyor?. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 4*(2), 15-26.

İyidoğan, F. (2011). *Personal factors affecting experienced English teachers' decisions whether or not to engage in professional development activities* (Unpublished master's thesis). Bilkent University, Ankara.

Jurasaite-Harbison, E., & Rex, L. A. (2010). School cultures as contexts for informal teacher learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(2), 267-277.

Karaaslan, D. (2003). *Teachers' perceptions of self-initiated professional development: A case study on Baskent University English language teachers* (Unpublished master's thesis). Middle East Technical University, Ankara.

Karaata, C. (2010). Milli Eğitim Bakanlığında görevli İngilizce öğretmenlerinin hizmet içi eğitime ilişkin öneriler. *Milli Eğitim Dergisi, 185*, 107-129.

Karabuğa, F. (2018). *Practicing lesson study with EFL teachers: A social constructivist perspective for EFL teacher professional development* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Çukurova University, Adana.

Karakılıç Yörük, N. (2019). Cameron ve Quinn örgüt kültürü ölçeğinin güvenirlik ve geçerliğinin test edilmesi. *KOCATEPEİİBF Dergisi, 21*(1), 19-30.

Korkmazgil, S. (2015). *An investigation into Turkish English language teachers' perceived Professional development needs, practices and challenges* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Middle East Technical University, Ankara.

Korkmazgil, S., & Seferoğlu, G. (2013). Exploring non-native English teachers' professional development practices. *Boğaziçi University Journal of Education, 30*(1), 1-9.

Lan, Y. (2022). The role of teachers' grit and motivation in self-directed professional development. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2022.922693

Lantolf, J. P. (2000). *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lantolf, J. P., & *Thorne*, S. L. (2007). Sociocultural theory and second language learning. In B. VanPatten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition: An introduction* (pp. 201-224). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Leech, N. L., Barrett, K. C., & Morgan, G. A. (2015). *IBM SPSS for intermediate statistics: Use and interpretation* (5th ed.). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Li, X. (2022). A theoretical review of EFL/ESL teachers' professional development; Approaches, implications and impact. *Frontiers in Pscyhology, 13*. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2022.912365

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mann, S. (2005). The language teacher's development. *Language Teaching, 38*, 103-118.

Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA. Jossey-Bass.

Meskill, C. (2009). Moment-by-moment formative assessment of second language development: ESOL professionals at work. In H. Adrade & G. Cizec (Eds.), *Handbook of formative assessment*. New York: Routledge.

Missoum, M. (2015). Autonomous continuing professional development for Algerian University teachers of English. In *Arab World English Journal* (pp. 164-179). Béjaïa: Bejaia University.

Muyan, E. (2013). *A case study on ELT teachers' perceptions towards professional development activities* (Unpublished master's thesis). Çağ University, Mersin.

Nguyen, D., & Ng, D. (2020). Teacher collaboration for change: Sharing, improving, and spreading. *Professional Development in Education, 46*(4), 638-651.

Nguyen, D., Pietsch, M., & Gümüş, S. (2021). Collective teacher innovativeness in 48 countries: Effects of teacher autonomy, collaborative culture, and professional learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 106*, 103463. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2021.103463

Norton Peirce, B. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *Tesol Quarterly, 29*(1), 9-31.

Nugroho, H. A., Widiati, U., & Susanti, A. (2022). EFL teachers' perceptions on professional development for language proficiency maintenance and improvement. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE), 11*(3), 1585-1594 doi:10.11591/ijere.v11i3.22966

OECD. (2005). Teachers matter. Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. Overview. Retrieved from https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/teachers-matter-attracting-developing-and-retaining-effective-teachers_9789264018044-en

OECD. (2019). *TALIS 2018 teknik rapor*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Ozer Ozkan, Y., & Anıl, D. (2014). Discriminations of variable of teachers professional development. *Hacettepe University Journal of Education, 29*(4), 205-216.

Ölmez-Çağlar, F. (2022). Career motivations as sources of teacher identity in foreign language education. *Participatory Educational Research, 9*(5), 105-126.

Pavlenko, A. (2002). Poststructuralist approaches to the study of social factors in second language learning and use. In V. Cook (Ed.), *Portraits of the L2 user* (pp. 277-302). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD.

Poehner, E. M. (2007). Beyond the test: L2 dynamic assessment and the transcendence of mediated learning. *The Modern Language Journal, 91*(3), 323-340.

Samuelsson, K., & Lindblad, S. (2015). School management, cultures of teaching and student outcomes: Comparing the cases of Finland and Sweden. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 49*, 168-177. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2015.02.014

Sancar, R., Atal, D., & Deryakulu, D. (2021). A new framework for teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education. 101*, 103305. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2021.103305

Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review, 57*, 1-22. doi:10.17763/haer.57.1.j463w79r56455411

Sims, S., & Fletcher-Wood, H. (2021). Identifying the characteristics of effective teacher professional development: A critical review. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 32*, 47-63. doi:10.1080/09243453.2020.1772841

Songül, B. C. (2019). *An examination of the impact of an online professional development program on language teachers' cognition and teaching practices* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Middle East Technical University, Ankara.

Sönmez Boran, G. (2018). Araştırma yapmanın İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğreten öğretmenlerin öğretmen araştırması açısından motivasyonlarına ve yeterliliklerine etkisi. *Eğitim ve Bilim, 43*(195), 193-221. doi:10.15390/EB.2018.7499

Sparks, D., & Loucks-Horsley, S. (1989). Five models of staff development. *Journal of Staff Development, 10*(4), 40-57.

Sparks, D., & Loucks-Horsley, S. (2007). Five models of staff development for teachers. In A. C. Ornstain, E. F. Pajak, & S. B. Ornstein (Eds.), *Contemporary issues in curriculum* (4th ed.). Londra: Pearson Education, Inc.

Tanış, A., & Dikilitaş, K. (2018). Turkish EFL instructors' engagement in professional development. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 4*(1), 27-47.

Tashakkori, A., Teddlie, C., & Teddlie, C. B. (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

TUIK. (2005). *Statistical reagional classification*. Retrieved from http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/DIESS/SiniflamaSurumDetayAction.do?surumId=164

Turan-Ozturk, D. (2016). *The effect of collaborative activities on college-level EFL students' learner autonomy in the Turkish context* (Unpublished master's thesis). Bilkent University, Ankara.

Uslu, Ö. (2017). Evaluating the professional development program aimed technology integration at the era of curriculum change. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 17*(6), 2031-2055. doi:10.12738/estp.2017.6.0116

Uştuk, Ö. (2020). *A critical ethnographic understanding of lesson study as an EFL teacher professional development strategy* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir.

van Lier, L. (2004). *The ecology and semiotics of language learning: A sociocultural approach.* Boston: Kluwer Academic Publications.

van Lier, L. (2008). Agency in the classroom. In J. P. Lantolf & M. E. Poehner (Eds.), *Sociocultural theory and the teaching of second languages* (pp. 163-186). London: Equinox.

Worth, J., & Van den Brande, J. (2020). *Teacher autonomy: How does it relate to job satisfaction and retention?*. Slough, England: NFER.

Xianhan, H., Chun, L., Mingyao, S., & Caixia, S. (2022). Associations of different types of informal teacher learning with teachers' technology integration intention. *Computers & Education, 190*, 104604. doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2022.104604

Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2006). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. Ankara: Seçkin Publications.

Yıldırım, S. (2007). Current utilization of ICT in Turkish basic education schools: A review of teacher's ICT use and barriers to integration. *International Journal of Instructional Media, 34*(2), 171-186.