A Systematic Review of Professional Development Programs for Language Teachers over Ten Years: Regional Perspectives

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Abstract: The concepts of what it means to be a learner and a language teacher have radically changed with the developments that caused English language to become a lingua franca around the world. In response to such radical changes, language teachers are urged to constantly reconstruct their knowledge, improve their practices, attitudes and beliefs accordingly. Professional Development (PD) programs are a way of improving language teachers' practices. In this systematic review, the qualitative studies about PD programs in the field of foreign language teaching were reviewed according to predetermined criteria. Selected studies were analyzed using MAXQDA software. The analysis of selected articles shows that there are regional patterns in terms of the purpose of PD. While Region 1 focused on framing PD activities around educational policies, the studies in Region 2 focused on integration of technology and collaboration in PD activities. In addition, the studies were diverse in their methodological and theoretical frameworks. It is concluded that there is a need to explore the experiences of language teachers after they attend PD programs.

Keywords: professional development (PD), teacher learning, English language teaching, systematic review, MAXQDA.

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Introduction

The number of culturally and linguistically diverse learners continues to increase, and there is a need to meet the needs of such learners (Hutchinson & Hadjioannou, 2011; Miller, 2011) and the concepts of what it means to be a language learner and a language teacher have radically changed with the historical and current developments that caused English language to become a lingua franca. In response to such radical changes, language teachers are supposed to constantly reconstruct their knowledge, improve their practices, attitudes and beliefs accordingly. In the field of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), there have been methodological shifts from traditional grammar-based methodologies to more communicative approaches and these shifts entail an update on teachers' traditional roles and adoption of new perspectives. In addition, today's complex societal and economic issues necessitate a great number of students to be ready for challenging forms of learning than ever before in history, and preparing students requires teachers' continuous Professional Development (PD) (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005). PD programs are a way of improving language teachers' practices and the importance of teachers' professional development as a means to improve and (re)structure teaching practices, teacher quality, and students' academic attainment has been researched extensively in the literature (Avidov-Ungar, 2016). In addition, teachers' professional development is presented in the relevant literature in varying ways, and the ultimate goal of professional development is that it is about teacher learning, exploring new routes of how to learn, and applying theory into practice to enhance student growth (Avalos, 2011).

Research exploring teachers' professional development presents diverse methodological designs based on sound theoretical frameworks resulting in practical discussions regarding the entire process. Along with this diversity, research in professional development covers a wide range of subjects (e.g. language teaching, mathematics, social sciences, and others), and different geographical locations. In this systematic review, we aim to present a decade of research between 2005-2017 that targets EFL teachers' professional development and teacher learning. In order to systematically review literature, first definitions of key terms are offered. Then, data collection and analysis procedures are elaborated on.

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Definition of Key Terms

This systematic review focuses on EFL teachers' professional development and EFL teacher learning. Based on the foci of this paper, the terms EFL, professional development and teacher learning should be clearly defined. Firstly, according to Cambridge Dictionary, EFL is "English as taught to people whose main language is not English and who live in a country where English is not the official or main language". Similarly, Horwitz (2008) highlights the importance of first language (L1) in EFL settings because EFL is a setting where L1 is predominantly used. Thus, use of L1 can easily influence both language teachers' and students' language proficiency and attitudes about English language (Harmer, 2007). In EFL settings, it is probable that English language learners have difficulty in contextualizing English language learning, and it leads to rethinking of language teaching and language teaching methods on the basis of theoretical and methodological developments in the field (Burns & Richards, 2009). To revisit their language teaching practices, language teachers need to grow professionally throughout their academic career. Hence, professional development is defined as activities that aim to enhance professional growth (Burns & Richards, 2009; Goh & Loh, 2012) helping teachers understand teaching and learning processes better and increase understanding of their learners (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Alternatively, professional development can be defined as continuously developing teachers' knowledge and professional skills throughout their educational career, during which professional teacher identity is shaped and theoretical knowledge is transformed into practice (Bolam, 2002; Kuijpers, Houtveen, & Wubbels, 2010). Also, the focus of professional development is long-term growth of teachers (Hos & Topal, 2013; Richards & Farrell, 2005) and it is an active, practice oriented, and ongoing process that integrates teaching practices and professional development activities (Bolam, 2002; Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010; Doering, Hughes, & Huffman, 2003; Saito, 2012). Professional development activities can include individual professional development, continuing education, collaboration, study groups, and peer coaching and mentoring.

Even though professional development can be defined in alternative ways, and include a variety of activities, two types of language teacher professionalism are identified: sponsored professionalism and independent professionalism. While sponsored professionalism refers to

professional development activities based on institutional and policy requirements, independent professionalism is teachers' autonomous learning to adjust his/her teaching based on the needs of teaching situation (Leung, 2009). In either type of professionalism, teachers are supposed to re-contextualize the knowledge acquired/learned through professional development activities, and integrate them into their own teaching practices and their professional identities to improve their teaching practices, and enhance professional identity (Burns & Richards, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 2008).

Relevant literature on teacher-learning, which is mostly intertwined with professional development, shows that teachers build a theoretical knowledge repertoire in their initial teacher education, and when they start to teach, they evaluate, extend or strengthen their teaching skills accordingly (de Vries, van de Grift, & Jansen, 2014). Yet, teacher learning is not limited to their initial teacher education because teacher learning is considered to be an ongoing professional development process which possibly leads to the changes in behavior (Zwart, Wubbels, Bolhuis, & Bergen, 2008). It is also quite likely that teacher learning can take place in informal settings in day-to-day activities and without planning (van Eekelen, Boshuizen, & Vermunt, 2005). Such a perspective entails that teacher learning is the process of accumulation of knowledge based on formal and informal activities which are socially mediated and unique to particular teaching context (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransfords, 2005).

Consequently, the relevant literature on professional development and teacher learning shows that developing professionally in EFL settings ideally requires teachers' reflection on their own professional goals, and teacher learning can evolve from the experiences which provide different opportunities for active, continuous learning that enhances their understanding of classroom practices (Borko, 2004; Nelson & Slavit, 2008).

Methodology

Researchers in education need to follow relevant studies, evaluate their validity and reliability, and intergrade plausible results with the findings generated from previous research in order to keep up with the developments in the field. Yet, it becomes extremely difficult since

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research findings accumulate rapidly (Corcoran, Pillai, & Littell, 2008). This necessitates analyzing and synthesizing relevant research systematically, and systematic reviews become favorable for the purposes of review of large literatures as opposed to traditional literature reviews. Traditional literature reviews can be easily manipulated to show what the reviewer wants because literature reviewers fail to apply prescribed methodology to the review process (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Such a review can possibly lead to biased conclusions. Another critique of traditional literature reviews is that they mostly summarize study samples without systematic or critical lens.

In contrast to traditional literature review, Gough, Oliver and Thomas, (2012) define systematic review as "a review of the research literature using systematic and explicit, accountable methods" (p. 5). It is clear that a systematic review aims to synthesize research comprehensively in response to a particular question based on several criteria, by using organized, structured and replicable procedures at every step in the process of systematic review. Even though systematic reviews are distinct as a methodology, they are highly compatible with the approaches to synthesizing relevant literature (Corcoran, Pillai, & Littell, 2008).

Systematic reviews can be used for different purposes. On one hand, they can be used for summarizing large amount of empirical and non-empirical research and produce new insights for the relevant field (Jesson, Matheson, & Lacey, 2011). On the other hand, they are used to critically analyze possible trends, directions and variations in the reviewed field, and detect any possible biases or errors (Gough, Oliver, & Thomas, 2012). Regardless of research purposes, each step should be clearly documented so that the readers can trace reviewer's methods and rationale in systematic reviews. In the following sections, the process of identifying relevant studies for the purposes of this systematic review is explained in detail with their rationale. Then, data analysis procedures are discussed.

Identifying Studies

In this study, in order to systematically review relevant literature, several criteria have been determined. Each criterion has been explained throughout this section. In order for an article to be included in this systematic review of literature, the article needs to meet the following criteria:

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1. Be published between 2005-2017 in SAGE Journals Online, ERIC, and Elsevier databases

2. Include EFL teachers' professional development

3. Must be an empirical research study

4. Must be qualitative

4. Represent different geographic locations (three regions)

5. Be published in English

An article is supposed to be published between 2005-2017 because this paper aims to capture recent issues regarding professional development in EFL (settings). The selection of the databases stated above is not random as SAGE Journals Online, ERIC, and Elsevier databases have been selected in order to ensure quality peer-reviewed studies. Journals in the selected databases have clear publication procedures, established academic rigor, and publish their issues regularly, and are accessible via university libraries. Secondly, the focus of this paper is professional development in language teaching, so the studies reviewed in this paper have to include EFL teachers as well as EFL settings. Third, it is aimed to present practical, applicable ideas and issues in EFL professional development in this paper. Thus, the articles that are included in this systematic review have to be empirical and their findings must be grounded on empirical data. Even though there are enactments of educational policies in terms of language teaching and professional development, the application of such enactments takes place in institutions with their focus groups. In addition, it is difficult to assess language teachers' professional development based on standardized measures. Thus, qualitative research is more appropriate for the purposes of this paper and can provide insights from professional development programs and their effectiveness. The articles must be published in English so as to address international readership. Lastly, the articles reviewed are supposed to represent different geographic locations to capture a holistic view of professional development issues across the globe.

In order to identify studies, SAGE Journals Online, ERIC, and Elsevier databases were searched online through using METUnique Search, a service provided by Middle East Technical University's (METU) library. Three Boolean search operators were used: professional development, teacher-learning, EFL Teachers. The search was performed by using keyword function. All databases were searched for the period of 2005-2017 (December, 2016). 233 articles, 125 articles in SAGE Online Journals database, 86 articles in ERIC database, and 22 articles in Elsevier database, were found in total. After reading abstracts of the identified articles, and following identification criteria, 63 studies were identified as related to professional development and/or teacher learning. During the data analysis, it was realized that even though some articles were related to professional development and/or teacher learning, their foci were language teachers in ESL settings (Gleeson & Davison, 2016; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2013), mathematics teachers (Bocala, 2015), science teachers (Hardré et al., 2013; Hoekstra & Korthagen, 2011;), social sciences teachers (Sharkey et al., 2016), or the articles were not empirical (Farrell, 2016; Singh & Richards, 2006), so they were excluded from the data. There were 29 articles that fully met the criteria.

Data Analysis

After identification of the studies, the data were stored in MAXQDA software and analyzed. In the initial stage of data analysis, identified articles were organized according to their context. In order to find possible patterns in the second stage of data analysis, the articles were read and coded according to their participants, methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks. In the third stage, data collection procedures and tools in identified articles were determined. Then, the tools used for professional development, and the purpose of professional development were specified. Lastly, major findings of identified articles were coded. Figure 1 shows the steps of data analysis process.

As illustrated in Figure 1, eight categories emerged from the data analysis. These categories were then used to construct a summary grid of the analyzed studies for further analysis. The summary grids were organized according to contexts of the identified studies to show possible theoretical and methodological patterns as well as overlapping findings.
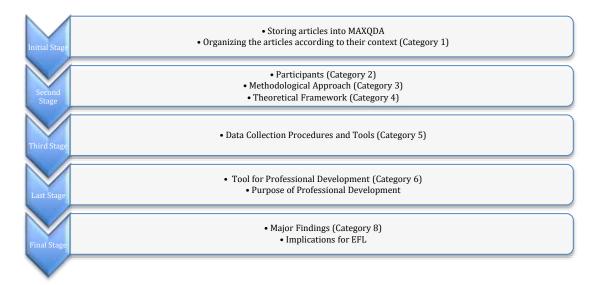
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Initial Stage	• Storing articles into MAXQDA • Organizing the articles according to their context (Category 1)
Second Stage	• Participants (Category 2) • Methodological Approach (Category 3) • Theoretical Framework (Category 4)
Third Stage	• Data Collection Procedures and Tools (Category 5)
Last Stage	• Tool for Professional Development (Category 6) • Purpose of Professional Development
Final Stage	• Major Findings (Category 8) • Implications for EFL

Figure 1: Steps of Data Analysis

Findings and Discussion

Based on the data analysis, the findings are grouped into four regions. Region 1 refers to European countries, Region 2 refers to Middle East and Region 3 refers to studies in EFL professional development in Asian countries. The regional grouping of the studies is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Region 1: European Countries

During the data analysis, 6 studies were included in the European context in this systematic review as illustrated in Table 1 below. Interestingly, majority of the studies do not have a theoretical framework explicitly stated in the articles. Even though initial teacher education provides a wide range of theoretical knowledge, and shape initial teacher education according to this theoretical knowledge (de Vries, van de Grift, & Jansen, 2014), it is noteworthy most of the studies on professional development and teacher learning in Region 1 lack a sound and clearly defined theoretical framework.

All of the studies were small scale, and either part of a project (Kiely & Davis, 2010; O'Dwyer & Atlı, 2015; Zwarta, Wubbelsb, Bolhuisc, & Bergen 2008), or (under)graduate studies

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(Kocaoglu, 2008; Susoy, 2015; Yumru, 2015). The PD programs offered in these articles were of sponsored professionalism. Leung (2009) suggests that sponsored professionalism can frame the content and purpose of PD programs. Similarly, the studies that were a part of a project were based on educational reforms in Region 1, and PD programs were framed according to the educational policies and reforms in their context. It is obvious that the educational policies go hand in hand with the purpose of PD programs, and the outcomes of PD programs were expected to be in similar direction with educational policies in their contexts.
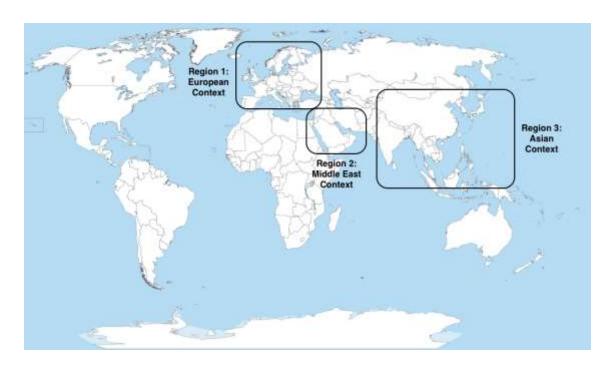

Figure 2: Regional Grouping of the Studies

In addition, the studies in the European context employed a variety of methodological approaches such as case studies, action research and grounded theory, and interviews were predominantly used as data collection instruments along with teacher reports in these studies. These methodological approaches were interpretive in nature, and interpretive research is a great tool for understanding of local contexts (Borko, Whitcomb, and Byrnes, 2008). PD programs in these studies aimed to improve language teaching practices in their contexts. Also, Florio-Ruane (2002) suggests that insiders' perspectives are important sources for understanding processes in natural

settings in PD activities. In similar vein, the studies in Region 1 gave importance to teachers' perspectives to understand PD programs instead of applying top-down processes in language teaching field, which mostly does not take language teachers' perspectives into account. For example, in Zwarta, Wubbelsb, Bolhuisc, and Bergen's (2008) study, a 1-year reciprocal peer coaching trajectory was explored, and it was found out that the chance of PD is low with mere interaction with the colleagues. Instead, observing each other's lessons provided the relevant information for potential teacher growth to the participants in this study, and they acquired insiders' perspectives to offer their suggestions for practical implications.

In addition, PD programs ideally should result in changes in language teachers' teaching practices (Zwart, Wubbels, Bolhuis, & Bergen, 2008). The studies implicated that participants used video-recordings, observations, and their artifacts to see how they professionally grow. Participants' choice for such data collection shows that the participants' search for concrete evidence in their professional development was a way of detecting changes in one's teaching practices. In Yumru's (2015) study, she organized an MA course called Teacher Development in a way that the participants, who were in-service EFL teachers, could record their classroom teaching and present it in the course in order to discuss and provide suggestions for professional growth. It was also found that analyzing video-recordings of the classroom practices were helpful for professional development, yet follow-up discussion is vital in order to assess and ensure PD for teacher learning and growth.

In a similar study, Susoy (2015) explored reflective practices of pre-service EFL teachers through video-recordings. It was recognized that pre-service teachers in this study had various difficulties in constructing their professional identity and ensuring professional development in their initial teaching experiences. These difficulties were reported as English language proficiency, restructuring their language teaching practices, and obtaining constructive feedback. Providing them feedback based on concrete evidence from the video-recordings helped them to grow professionally and realize the challenges regarding the initial language teaching experiences.

Critical analysis of the studies in Region 1 reveal that observations, video-recordings, reflective sessions and PD programs are fruitful in terms of teacher learning and professional

growth, and it is suggested in the literature that professional development should be ongoing and have a long-term effect on teaching (Burns & Richards, 2009; Leung, 2009). However, none of the studies explored long-term effects of PD because data collection process was completed during the professional development activities, and further data after the completion of PD activities was not gathered.

Region 2 & 3: Middle East and Asian Counties

Five studies in the Middle Eastern (Region 2) context and 12 studies in Asian context have been identified and included in this systematic review. Personal narratives and reflection emerged as two central issues in Region 2. Narratives in the field of language teaching can yield societal, cultural and personal issues in one's teaching practices and it is necessary that the context of PD include both the linguistic features of the target language and its individual, social and cultural dimensions (Franson & Holliday, 2009), as a culturally responsive language professional language teacher identity is constructed through time in an EFL context (Cinarbas & Hos, 2016).

Author(s) and Context	Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Data Sources	Participants	Tool for Professional Development	Major Findings
Atai & Nejadghanbar (2016) Iran	Grounded Theory: Blogging	6 in-service teachers	In-service training: Critical incidents	Critical incidents for reflection Documenting critical incidents and reflections as a means of PD
Parsaiyan, Ghajar, Salahimoghadda, & Janahmadi (2016) Iran	Narrative Inquiry: participants' narratives, e-mail correspondences	1 language teacher and 1 material developer	Self-narratives	Need for awareness in local cultures, literature and history Importance of support from experts
Nami, Marandi, & Sotoudehnama (2016) Iran	Social Constructivism: Case Study: Interviews,	5 in-service teachers	Lesson study project	Collective lesson planning as a means of PD Importance of observation

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Author(s) and Context	Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Data Sources	Participants	Tool for Professional Development	Major Findings
Zwarta, Wubbelsb, Bolhuisc, & Bergen (2008) Netherlands	Different types of learning activities: Grounded Theory: Interviews and Teacher Reports	8 high school teachers	The reciprocal peer coaching trajectory	Importance of the context where teacher learning takes place Potential power of learning from observing
Yumru (2015) **Turkey**	Qualitative Research: Professional development portfolio reports	20 EFL teachers working at state schools	MA Course	Self-monitoring through video recording and self-evaluation for professional growth Importance of involvement in systematic and continuous PD activities
Susoy (2015) Turkey	Case Study: Video recording, interviews	3 pre-service EFL teachers	Use of video recordings	Video recordings as a means of constructing professional identity Reflective practice through video-recording analysis
O'Dwyer & Atlı (2015) Turkey	A Model of the In-service Educator Role: Grounded Theory: Interviews and Focus groups	6 EFL in-service educators	In-service education	Importance of establishing clear criteria and carrying out reflective practices Institutional influence on PD
Kocaoglu (2008) Turkey	Case Study: Interviews	5 pre-service teachers	Electronic portfolio	Alternative ways of getting support for PD Portfolios as a source of displaying pre-service teachers' learning Limited reflection on professional learning process
Kiely & Davis (2010) UK	Progressive Action Research: Video Recording, Interview, Written reflections	In-service teachers	The CPD Program	No direct link between scholarly readings and its influence on teachers' PD Determining PD activities based on the teachers' needs Collaboration as a means of teacher learning.

	observation and teacher reflections			Use of technology in PD Difficulty in providing feedback
Avidor-Ungar (2016) Israel	Grounded Theory: Participants' narratives, interviews	43 EFL in-service teachers	Life story narratives	Different sources and worldviews of motivation for PD PD for career growth
Zandi, Thang, & Krish (2014) Iran	Community of Practice: Action Research: Blogging and teacher reflections	7 university teachers	Blogging	Effects of incorporating technology into the teaching of writing Blogging for the purposes of awareness raising & PD

Table 2: Voices from Middle Eastern Countries

Similarly, Parsaiyan, Ghajar, Salahimoghadda, and Janahmadi (2016) explored a language teacher and a material developer's PD experiences through narrative inquiry in Iran. They found that collaboration and support from the professionals are vital for teacher growth, yet there is a need to take local cultures, literature and history into consideration in order to ensure and enrich professional development.

Avidor-Ungar (2016) also explored PD experiences of 43 EFL teachers through personal narratives in Israel. The findings of the study show that PD requires intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and EFL language teachers integrate different sources of motivation during the PD activities. Also, the purpose of PD in this study is dependent upon the worldviews of the participants and PD is considered to be a tool for career growth.

In addition, using technology in EFL classrooms is a recent trend in the field of language teaching, and hence EFL teachers are supposed to learn multiple ways of using technology in the classroom (Hos, Yagci, & Cinarbas, 2016). To learn multiple ways of using technology necessitates that language teachers technologize their professional development (Alimirzaee & Ashraf, 2016) because the advent of technology can be an alternative means of developing professionally (Liua & Kleinsasserb, 2014).

However, even though language teachers try to professionally develop making efficient use of technology, technological equipment of the schools may not suffice for PD activities. Chen

(2012) in the Asian context investigated cyber collaboration between in-service and pre-service EFL teachers and found that using technology for PD purposes has several advantages and limitations. Synchronous and asynchronous collaboration between the participants resulted in language proficiency improvement, enhanced reflection and awareness of social issues. Yet, it is important to consider infrastructure of the institutions where language teachers participating in PD programs are teaching. Otherwise, there will be a mismatch between the purpose of PD programs and language teachers' application of them in the absence of necessary equipment.

Collaboration is an important component of professional development and teacher learning (Johnston, 2009) and the results of reviewed studies in the Asian context (Region 3) focused on importance of collaboration among language teachers in order to professionally develop (Chen & Cheng, 2014; Hung & Yeh 2013; Nami, Marandi, & Sotoudehnama, 2016; Radwad & Dixit, 2008). Collaboration theoretically allows for individual and collegial professional development (Johnston, 2003). In line with Johnston's (2003) reasoning, language teachers in Region 2 and 3 collaborated in lesson planning, teaching and reflection, and they highly benefitted from observing each other's teaching practices. It can be inferred that observing one's teaching practices creates opportunities for reflection which leads to teacher learning.

In Nami, Marandi, and Sotoudehnama's (2016) study, they integrated technology and professional development through collaborative lesson study project. It was found that technology implementation through collaborative lesson plan study is beneficial for professional growth and teacher learning as the participants provide feedback for lesson planning, technology use and other pedagogical dimensions. However, in an educational institution where strict rules are followed to assess teachers' language teaching practices and effectiveness of these practices, providing feedback can be seen threatening. Thus, the participants in this study refrained from providing negative and critical feedback, which can be attributed to culture of the institution or the context the study was conducted (Cinarbas & Hos, 2016; Lewis & Tsuchida, 1998).

Author(s)	Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Data Sources	Participants	Tool for Professional Development	Major Findings

				Minimum use of technology and lack of need to develop professionally
Chen (2012) **Taiwan**	Social Constructivism, Case Study: Weekly logs, interviews, open-ended questions	13 pre-service teachers 13 in-service teachers	Task-based tele-collaboration	Tele-collaboration as a means of two-way beneficial mechanism for PD
Hung & Yeh (2013) **Taiwan**	The Interconnected Model of Teacher Professional Growth Case Study: Group meetings, interviews	1 professor from a public university and 5 EFL teachers	Reader's Theater (RT)	RT as a means of PD School teachers' tendency to inquire classroom practices
Goh & Loh (2013) **Malaysia**	Social Constructivism, Action Research: reflective journals, feedback sessions	26 pre-service teachers	Project	Importance of communication and interpersonal skills in constructing professional identity Experiential involvement enhanced pre-service teachers' learning.
Choi (2012) **China**	Case Study: Participants narratives	1 in-service teacher	Narrative Inquiry	Re-conceptualizing and contextualizing knowledge Turning theory into practice Necessity of sociocultural understanding of PD
Bai (2014) **China**	Case study: Focus group interview, observations	4 in-service teachers	School-based PD program	Positive attitudes towards PD Difficulty in providing constructive feedback

Table 3a: Voices from Asian Context

Instead, peer evaluation and critical constructive feedback should be emphasized in language teaching environments in order to help EFL teachers grow professionally. Similarly, collegial feedback for professional development is considered to be non-threatening due to its personal nature and the participants in Goh and Loh (2013), and Gan's (2014) studies benefitted from it. In Goh and Loh's (2013) study, an undergraduate course was designed to promote professional development of the pre-service teachers in Malaysia, and it was found that reflective activities helped pre-service teachers in the study to be empowered in their profession and the collaboration process served as a scaffold for the pre-service teachers, which resulted in professional growth. Thus, Collaboration and mentoring are indispensable for teacher learning and Malderez (2009) suggests that mentoring establishes a sheltered environment for professional development. The sheltered environment allows teachers to build rapport and trust with each other and supports their collaboration.

Radwad & Dixit (2008) **India**	Participants' narrative	18 in-service teachers	English Teachers' Club (ETC)	Positive influence of ETC on professional development Importance of collaboration among ETC members for PD
Gan (2014) **China**	Sociocultural approach Case Study: Interviews and reflective journals	17 pre-service teachers	Practicum	Sheltered environments for developing professionally Importance of observation Collaboration for constructing professional identity
Chen & Cheng (2014) **Taiwan**	Community of Practice Case Study: Interviews, field notes, focus group interviews	2 in-service teachers	Situated learning	Importance of team-teaching in PD Importance of guidance and support Informal interactions for PD
Sakamoto (2010) **Japan**	Case Study: Interviews, reflective journals, student artefacts	1 in-service teacher	Team-teaching	Cognitive, emotional and collegial awareness for PD Importance of teacher narratives Importance of reflection on PD
Xu (2014) **China**	Narrative Study: Narrative data from 104 teachers and in-depth interviews with 4 teachers	4 in-service teachers	Classroom research	Necessity of professional development in initial teacher education Preparing language teachers to be research competent Policies and institutional support is not enough for professional development
Kong (2016) **Vietnam, China, and Taiwan**	Case Study: Interviews and e-mail correspondences	3 in-service teachers	MA program in TESOL	Importance of MA program as a professional development program Reflection on application of content

				knowledge to teaching practices
				Importance of context for application of professional development activities
Kang & Cheng (2014) **China**	Case Study: Interviews, observations and field notes	1 in-service teacher	Teacher group	Importance of practice based professional development
				Providing feedback
				Individual active professional development

Table 3b: Voices from Asian Context

Conclusions

In this paper, regional differences in language teaching PD activities and teacher learning issues were systematically reviewed. The systematic review was conducted based on predetermined criteria to identify relevant studies. After conducting a systematic literature review, 29, out of 233, studies, meeting the criteria, were identified. The studies were divided into three regions, depending on where the studies were conducted, and analyzed accordingly. The analysis reveals that there are regional differences in terms of the theoretical and practical background and contexts of the studies. While Region 1 focused on framing PD activities around educational policies, the studies in Region 2 focused on participants' narratives and collaboration in PD activities. In Region 3, integration of technology in PD activities were emphasized.

In the European context, video-recordings enhanced reflective practices, helped the participants establish a professional EFL teacher identity, which resulted in professional growth. In the Middle Eastern context, the analysis of the participants narratives revealed that cultural and personal issues should be taken into consideration when planning a PD program because these issues influenced collaboration and feedback activities. In the Asian context, implementation of

technology in PD activities was explored and such activities were found to be beneficial for professional growth. Yet, the infrastructure issues need to be resolved prior to the PD activities and PD activities needs to target potential areas of improvement with the available technological equipment.

From a methodological standpoint, case studies were predominantly used in all regions, and interviews were the primary data collection instruments, yet participants benefitted from observing each other's classes. Thus, data collection procedures can be extended to include such observations and field notes. Also, collaboration as a means of PD was favored in reviewed studies, so methodological pluralism can yield valuable findings of teacher learning through collegial support and guidance.

What is lacking in the reviewed literature is that none of the studies explored experiences of participants after PD programs. As suggested in the literature, professional development should be ongoing and continuous so there is a need to explore the attainment level and the sustainability of the PD programs before, during and after PD activities. In addition, the reviewed literature showed that PD activities can help language teachers construct and improve their professional identity, yet the questions of how and in what ways they can use PD activities to construct their professional identity still remain unanswered.

Lastly, this systematic review has some limitations. Including quantitative research in this kind of systematic reviews can provide a more comprehensive picture of the situation in EFL professional development settings. Also, some other databases can be included to increase the validity of systematic reviews.

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