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English Teachers' Perception on the Impact of CPD Practices in Basic Education in Kerala, India

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Abstract

This study investigated the English teachers' perceptions of the role of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) practices in basic education in Kerala, India, focusing on language proficiency, research and reflective practice, teacher beliefs and integrated approach to CPD, pedagogical skills, and emerging technologies. The study employed the convergent parallel research method and collected data from 142 teachers. The analysis revealed that the majority of the teachers agree that CPD enhances their confidence in language use necessary for effective ESL teaching, while the classroom observations confirmed a prevalent use of local language in classroom discourse. Moreover, 65.5% of the teachers engage actively in research due to CPD, covering areas like language skills enhancement, classroom environment improvements, and technology use. Reflective practices revealed that most teachers give constructive feedback, but only a few utilize multiple assessments to gauge student performance. A significant finding is that 52.8% regularly reflect on their teaching strategies, reinforcing self-improvement and student-centered teaching approaches. More than 80% of the respondents agree that they integrate different professional development practices as a result of CPD programs, while actual classroom practices often isolate language skills such as reading and speaking. Pedagogical improvement through CPD was evident, but a notable number of teachers still disagreed on CPD's significant role in student language development. Emerging technologies remain underutilized, with half of the participants lacking confidence in using them, parallel with the observation data indicating minimal multimedia tool preparation. These findings underscore the need for tailored and contextualized programs focusing on comprehensive technology integration, enhanced research skills, and continuous reflective practices to foster effective ESL teaching in Kerala's basic education sector.

Keywords: Basic Education, Continuous Professional Development, Emerging Technologies, ESL Teachers, Language Proficiency, Pedagogical Skills, Reflective Practice, Research Skills

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Teachers are recognized as the most crucial component of any educational system (OECD, 2010), as they are positioned to be "change agents" responsible for facilitating a shift towards constructivist learning approaches (NCTE, 2009). As such, continuing professional development (CPD) is necessary for teachers to refresh their knowledge, expand their horizons, and address the complexities of the classroom (Siregar et al., 2021). However, there is a lack of research on the underlying issues that affect teachers' performance (Rouf & Mohamed, 2018). Bubb and Earley (2007) emphasize the connection between personal and professional development within CPD. According to Day (1999), CPD consists of all learning experiences. Prince and Barrett (2014) claim that effective CPD is supported by research that includes action research, self-reflection, peer observation, mentoring, and in-house training sessions. Moreover, many scholars are of the opinion that embracing CPD shall empower educators to enhance their skills and knowledge to meet the evolving needs of their students and profession (Asmari, 2016; Efu, 2020; Hismanoglu, 2010; Padwad & Dixit, 2013; Rahman & Borgohain, 2014; Tewari, 2016).

In India, the government, primarily through the National Council on Teacher Education (NCTE), regulates Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers, providing recommendations and overseeing teacher education programs. State Councils for Educational Research and Training (SCERT), National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), and other organizations are responsible for program design and implementation, with some flexibility to adapt to local needs. Non-governmental organizations, international bodies, private companies, teacher associations, and higher education institutions also contribute to teacher training. In India, CPD is arranged under the acronym INSET, or in-service teacher education and training (Kapur et al. 2018; Tyagi & Misra, 2017; Padwad & Dixit, 2014a). The recommended agencies or organizations for teacher training are the following; NCERT (National Council of Educational Research Training), SCERTs (State Council of Educational Research and Training), DIETs (District Institution of Education and Training), BITEs (Block Institute of Teacher Education), BRCs (Block Resource Centers), CRCs (Cluster Resource Centers). They provide academic mentoring and support to schools and teachers (Tyagi & Misa, 2017; NCFSE, 2023).

It shows that in India, for instance, teacher training is offered at several levels, including national, state, district, block, and cluster. The State of Kerala where the present study is undertaken has 159 Block/Urban Resource Centers (BRCs/URCs) and 1385 Cluster Resource Centers (CRCs) (MHRD, 2016). The cascade model is the primary CPD model used in India. Several teachers participate in professional development courses run by educational organizations or agencies at the apex level. Later, they return to their own workplaces and impart the training received. There are other models also in operation like reflective teaching model, split model, site based model, and self-directed models (Tewari, 2016, p.47).

Several CPD options are available for the teachers in India. Chaitanya & Bavani (2012) state that CPD activities for language teachers include reflecting on their instruction, attending academic conferences, keeping up with the latest research through reading scholarly journals and books, as well as participating in cooperative activities like teachers discussing their issues, exchanging ideas with their peer groups, and working together in classroom action research or other professional endeavors. Various pathways for effective CPD, such as action research, self-reflection, conferences, seminars, short-term courses, peer observation, peer teaching, in-service training, mentoring, study groups, team teaching, teaching portfolios, and in-house training sessions, have been shown in studies to aid in teachers' professional development (Jaiswal, 2017; Srinivasacharlu, 2019).

Despite the efforts made by the government and private organizations, teacher training and CPD face significant challenges in India (Bolitho & Padwad, 2013; Padwad & Dixit, 2014b; Jaiswal, 2017; Kapur et al., 2018; Tyagi & Misra, 2021). The profession of teaching lacks proper preparation, induction, and ongoing development. The top-down approach to CPD limits opportunities and support for teachers' professional growth (Kapur et al., 2018). The perception of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in India is often limited to in-service teacher education and training (INSET), with attendance in formal programs being the primary focus (Prince and Barrett, 2014; Padwad & Dixit, 2014b; Jaiswal, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to look into the CPD situation in India in order to determine how much teachers comprehend and engage in CPD initiatives (Tyagi & Misra, 2017).

Additionally, CPD programs are often poorly designed and implemented, with little consideration given to the needs and aspirations of teachers. (Tyagi & Misra, 2017). Inadequate CPD programs limit teachers' opportunities

to refresh their knowledge, expand their pedagogical skills, and effectively address complexities within the classroom, negatively impacting student learning and overall educational quality. Therefore, this study investigates CPD by exploring how it impacts the teachers' language proficiency, research and reflective practices, professional identities, and the importance of integrating new technologies and pedagogical skills.

1.2 Research Questions

The study was undertaken to investigate how middle school English teachers from Kerala, India, perceive CPD practices and the role these play in English language teaching. Specifically, the research addressed the following research questions:

- 1.2.1 What is the profile of the middle school English teachers?
- 1.2.2 How do the teachers perceive the role and treatment of the following areas in prevailing CPD practices?
 - 1.2.2.1 language proficiency
 - 1.2.2.2 research skills and reflective practice
 - 1.2.2.3 teachers' beliefs and identities
 - 1.2.2.4 integrated approach to professional development
 - 1.2.2.5 pedagogical skills
 - 1.2.2.6 emerging technologies

These variables are the areas of professional development initiatives for English teachers (Buendia & Macias, 2019) that the study considered and analyzed in relation to English language teaching in Kerala, India, middle school classrooms.

2. Literature Review

Developing teachers' professional skills is still one of the most important ways to raise the standard of instruction and learning in schools (Borg, 2015; Groundwater-Smith et al., 2012). Researches claim that CPD is the best way to teacher change (Guskey, 2000; Buendia & Macias, 2019; Rajendran et al., 2023; Wolde, 2021; Saleem, 2021; Abakah, 2023). However, there are different views on the focus areas of CPD. The CPD literature points to various areas of focus for effectiveness: opportunities for integrating new information into classroom settings (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), continuous duration of CPD (Desimone, 2009), active and collaborative learning (Tannehill et al., 2021), and an emphasis on subject matter (Van Driel et al., 2012). However, Buendia and Marcias (2019) suggest the following focus areas: language proficiency, research skills and reflective practice, teachers' beliefs and identities, an integrated approach to teacher professional development, pedagogical skills and teaching approaches, and emerging technologies which is also the pivotal point of this study.

Numerous studies (Vadivel et al., 2021; Asmari, 2016; Ahmad & Sultana, 2019; Borg, 2018) investigated the connections between the ideas of continuing professional development and English teachers' language proficiency. The study by Nugroho et al. (2022) looks at how Indonesian EFL teachers perceive professional development (PD) activities that are meant to promote language competency. Six East Javan high school EFL instructors with 5 to 30 years of experience were chosen for the research using a purposive sample method to capture a variety of viewpoints based on their teaching experiences. The study employed a case-study approach. The researchers conducted interviews to get insight into teachers' perceptions of the value of participating in proficiency-related professional development activities as well as the activities that they find helpful. The results show that although teachers perceive professional development as a mandatory government-initiated program, they also consider it as a crucial personal responsibility for their own professional development. The study identifies obstacles that prevent teachers from participating in ongoing language competence improvement, such as time limits and a lack of official support. Despite these obstacles, teachers showed autonomy by engaging in a variety of enrichment activities, such as reading books and ELT related journals, going to seminars, and utilizing English-language through media, etc. They indicated a need for more specialized instruction in language proficiency and fair access to professional development opportunities. And to promote sustainable language development, the research emphasizes the value of context-relevant professional development activities and suggests working together between educators and

language institutions. To better understand the professional development needs of teachers, the study also urges more research on language proficiency through CPD at various educational levels.

According to Karolina et al. (2023), action research can successfully close the knowledge gap between theory and practice by involving educators in the process of developing their professional development and creating solutions specifically tailored to their real-world problems. Fongkanta et al. (2021) in their study focus on developing teachers' research skills using Wlodkowski's motivational approach and coaching. It also explores their attitudes towards action research. The participants were 12 teachers from a non-formal education center in Lampang, Thailand. Data was collected using the Research Skill Inventory (RSI) and the Research Attitude Towards Inventory (RATI). Descriptive statistics, Friedman and Wilcoxon tests were used to analyze the data. The findings showed that teachers' research skills improved after the treatment, and their attitudes towards research also became more positive. Teachers faced challenges in conducting research and sought assistance.

The study by Vries et al. (2014) looks at the relationship between teachers' participation in continuous professional development (CPD) activities and their beliefs about teaching and learning. Two hundred and sixty teachers participated in the study, which was conducted in four secondary schools in the Netherlands and showed a representative demographic distribution in terms of gender, age, and educational background. Five constructs—student orientation, subject matter orientation, updating, reflection, and collaboration—were measured in the study using an online questionnaire. Results show that teachers' perceptions about students and subject content are typically just as strong. But rather than participating in reflective activities as much, they prefer to update and work together, maybe because reflective practices are more difficult and require introspection.

Desimone and Garet's (2015) study on best practices in teachers' professional development in the United States highlights the importance of sustained and intensive professional development, collaborative learning, active engagement with the subject matter, and alignment with school goals and contexts. Effective Continuous Professional Development (CPD) practices among seven EFL instructors in West Java are examined in Priajana's (2017) study, which focusses on both institutional and non-institutional activities. In-depth interviews, classroom observations, and documentary analysis are all used in the qualitative design of the study to identify both individual and group professional development activities. Informal conversations, peer observations, and action research are examples of institutional activities carried out in educational settings that have a favorable impact on instructors' subject matter and pedagogical skills. Non-institutional activities include teaching English in courses, attending workshops and seminars, participating in educational forums, and continuing education. Research has demonstrated that these activities significantly contribute to teachers' professional development by giving them access to a variety of perspectives and abilities. The study emphasizes the integrated approach to CPD involving both self-directed and group development activities, emphasizing that group initiatives, such as forums and workshops, significantly improve teaching methods more than do individual initiatives.

Through school-based Continuing Professional Development (CPD), Rauf and Mohamed (2020) examine the pedagogical competencies of secondary-level English Language (EL) teachers in Bangladesh. In addition to input from curriculum experts, head teachers, and teacher trainers, the project collects data from six EL teachers using a constructivist research paradigm and multiple case study approach. NVivo 11 Pro, a qualitative data analysis program, was employed to analyze the gathered data. The results show that teacher-centered approaches, which are defined by lecture-based education and a deficiency of interactive language tasks, are the mainstay of EL classroom practices. The teachers found it difficult to get their students involved in communicative activities, and placed more emphasis on rote memorization of grammatical rules and the contents for exam preparation. The study shows that the teachers did not focus on developing a connection with the students or attending to their specific language learning needs, nor did they use lesson plans or teaching aids successfully and lacked effective classroom management pedagogical abilities. Important difficulties such as overemphasis on exam-oriented teaching, inadequate use of teaching aids, and an undue focus on teacher-centered pedagogy are highlighted by the study. The study recommends a learner-centered pedagogy and suggests the Ministry of Education improve teacher preparation and pedagogical efficacy through targeted CPD.

In a 21-month program supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Pouezevara (2016) investigated the use of mobile phones as a tool for school-based in-service teacher training in rural Bangladesh. The study looks into how well mobile phones can improve teaching methods, especially for instructors who work in remote locations and who serve under-represented groups such as women. It also evaluates the approach's wider educational and administrative benefits as well as its cost-effectiveness. Sessions were conducted remotely using smartphones over a six-week trial training program. The program was successful in terms of participant satisfaction and heightened interest in continuing professional development activities. Focus groups and interviews were part of the research technique. The results showed that participants valued the ease, ongoing contact, and cutting-edge approach provided by mobile-based training, even in the face of difficulties like technological malfunctions and a deficiency of sufficient smartphone training.

In their study, Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010) explore the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching practices. This qualitative study treated the teacher education students at the National University of Tainan as subjects. They examine the factors that influence teachers' technology change, including knowledge, confidence, beliefs, and cultural contexts. The study emphasizes the importance of considering these factors when designing professional development programs that aim to enhance teachers' integration of ICT in their classrooms. According to research findings, the attitude toward integrating information technology and creative teaching practices is significantly and favorably correlated. Teaching behavior that is innovative is significantly predicted by attitude towards information technology integration.

3. Methodology

The study used the convergent parallel method in gathering pertinent data and information from the research participants. This is a mixed-methods design in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously but analyzed separately, and the results are merged or integrated (Alele and Malau-Aduli, 2023). Quantitative data were gathered using a survey questionnaire, while qualitative information was acquired through interviews and classroom observations. Through these, the researchers were able to collect rich and detailed information that allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

3.1 Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in the Idukki District of Kerala, specifically in schools managed by the Catholic Educational Agency (CEA) of the Catholic Diocese of Idukki. The research environment included 44 government-aided and private schools under the CEA. Data were collected from 142 middle school English teachers identified through purposive sampling from the pool of teachers in the district (N=150). They have participated in government-initiated and school-based programs for continuing professional development, with a minimum of five and a maximum of 30 years teaching experience, and consented to participate in the study. They belong to diverse communities with varied socio-economic and religious backgrounds, but all of them are permanent residents of the state of Kerala, India.

3.2 Instrument

Quantitative data were gathered through a survey questionnaire developed by the researchers. Content specialists and language experts were consulted to ensure appropriate and comprehensible language and vocabulary. The first part included questions on the teachers' demographic profile and the second part focused on items pertaining to the six areas of professional development initiatives and their role in English language teaching. A Likert scale was used to determine the teachers' agreement or disagreement on the given statements.

On the other hand, semi-structured interviews were conducted immediately after retrieving the questionnaires from the teacher-respondents. A total of 12 closed and open-ended questions were developed in consultation with experts on continuing professional development. Follow up questions were asked whenever necessary to clarify interview responses. In addition, 15 English language teachers were observed in various research sites using a classroom observation checklist where observation data were documented.

3.3 Procedures for Data Gathering and Analysis

After securing approval from CEA authorities of the Diocese of Idukki, the primary researcher personally administered the survey questionnaire to the target respondents. They were informed of the goals of the study and their right to withdraw their participation if deemed necessary. Immediately after questionnaire administration, select teacher respondents who signed the informed consent forms were asked interview questions aligned with the items in the instrument. This helped maximize the researcher's time in the respondents' schools. However, some teachers were interviewed on a different date and time due to scheduling conflicts; such interview sessions were arranged at the participants' convenience. All interview sessions were recorded with permission from the teachers for easier transcription and enhanced validity of findings. Finally, classroom observations in the English classes of 15 teacher-participants were conducted. An observation checklist was used to capture relevant details in the teaching-learning process, allowing for later review. Each class lasted for 45 minutes.

The quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, calculating the frequency distribution and percentages. On the other hand, textual and content analysis using an advanced language processing tool (Chung & Pennebaker, 2020) was conducted primarily through MAXQDA 24, supported by the process of descriptive thematic analysis (Creswell, 2008). The researchers familiarized themselves with the interview data based on actual transcriptions, as well as the class observation data based on the checklist and field notes. Through the MAXQDA 24 software, initial codes were developed, patterns were identified, and emerging themes were categorized.

To ensure inter-coding and interrater reliability in the analysis, this study followed the process conducted by Flores (2016). First, the researchers sought the assistance of two intercoders in coding the data. Both were oriented on the context of the study and on the coding process done. The researcher gave each intercoder 30% of the data. In the instances when discrepancies were observed, the intercoders discussed such differences by looking back at the data and agreeing on the most appropriate way of labeling the item in question. There were less than five instances where discrepancies occurred, which is relatively minimal. This rendered the inter-coding process highly reliable.

4. Results

The study analyzed the middle school teachers' perceptions of the role of CPD in the pertinent areas of language proficiency, research skills and reflective practice, their beliefs and identities, integrated approach to professional development, pedagogical skills, and emerging technologies. Coded and categorized data from interviews and classroom observations were interpreted in conjunction with survey results. However, prior to the presentation of these data, it is important to provide context for the study by determining relevant details about the basic education teachers who served as the study's participants. The data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Profile of Middle School English Teachers in Kerala, India

Gender	Male	Female			
	57	85			
Education	Diploma	BA, BEd	MA, MEd		
	8	45	89		
School Type	Private	Government-aided			
	43	99			
Teaching Experience	1-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-19 years	20+ years
	23	27	36	29	27
No. of CPD attended	10 days	20 days	20 or more		
	43	90	9		

As can be seen, Table 1 provides the personal details of the teachers who participated in the CPD research. There are 142 basic education teachers who were part of the study, most of whom are female teachers with a relevant

Master's degree. Forty-three of the research participants came from private schools, and 99 participants from government-aided schools. Participants' teaching experiences varied widely; the largest group had been in the 10–14 years range (36), then in the 15–19 years (29), 20+ years (27), 5–9 years (27), and 1–4-year range (23). Nine persons attended CPD programs lasting 20 days or more, whereas the bulk of participants (90) attended sessions lasting 20 days or more and 10-day sessions followed with 43 participants.

These numbers shed light on the CPD practices used by English language teachers in Kerala, India's Idukki district. The group appears to be aware and involved, as seen by the larger percentage of female teachers and the sizeable proportion of highly educated participants. Teachers receiving government assistance had a tendency to engage in CPD programs more, which could be attributed to the support systems already in place in these institutions. The participants' extensive variety of teaching experiences reveals a mixed group of experienced and beginning educators, suggesting a wide range of viewpoints in the CPD activities. Knowing these demographics will enable CPD programs to be more specifically tailored to the requirements and difficulties that teachers encounter in various settings.

4.1 Survey on the Areas of CPD practice and initiatives

The table provides a summary of responses on various areas of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) practices and initiatives based on levels of agreement. It highlights that most respondents tend to agree or strongly agree on the importance of language proficiency, research skills, teachers' beliefs, and pedagogical skills. However, there is notable disagreement regarding the engagement with emerging technologies in CPD.

Table 2. Survey Data on the Areas of CPD practice and initiatives

Areas of CPD practice and initiatives	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Language proficiency	0	0	13	9.2	47	33.1	55	38.7	27	19.0
Research skills and reflective practice	0	0	13	9.2	36	25.4	60	42.3	33	23.2
Teachers' beliefs and identities	0	0	12	8.5	28	19.7	75	52.8	27	19.0
Integrated approach to professional development	0	0	12	8.5	16	11.3	83	58.5	31	21.8
Pedagogical skills	0	0	37	26.1	19	13.4	56	39.4	30	21.1
Emerging technologies	19	13.4	53	37.3	22	15.5	34	23.9	14	9.9

Note: F = frequency

The study investigated the role of CPD in enhancing the teachers' language proficiency. Survey results revealed that 57.7% of the teachers either agree or strongly agree that the CPD trainings they have attended add to their level of confidence in their language proficiency necessary for effective ESL teaching. Research is also a mandatory function among teachers and a great majority of the teachers agree that CPD programs give them opportunities to engage in research activities to improve their teaching practices.

The teachers' beliefs and identities are a product of many factors and are manifested largely in how they manage their classes. A significant factor in forming teachers' identities and belief systems is self-reflection. The teachers' personal beliefs and identity as ESL teachers influence their teaching and interactions with students in various ways, but mostly in adopting a more student-centered teaching approach. On the other hand, the CPD programs

and activities are primarily intended to provide opportunities for teachers to integrate professional development activities toward effective teaching practices. More than 80% of teachers either agree or strongly agree that they integrate different CPD strategies for their professional development. This may suggest that CPD programs are positively influencing them towards self-enhancement, although a small percentage disagree with this notion.

As pedagogy is at the heart of the education process, one of the primary responsibilities of teachers is to enhance their pedagogic skills to improve student outcomes. Data on the teachers' perception of the significance of teachers' role in the language development of students show that one in every four teachers disagrees that they play a significant role in the language development of students.

The last yet one of the most critical aspects of professional development influenced by CPD activities is the use of emerging technologies in the delivery of language and literature instruction. With the advent of advanced educational technologies and artificial intelligence tools, teachers are expected to be confident and comfortable with technology use in the classroom. A glaring finding is that half of the teachers either disagree or strongly disagree that they are confident in using technology tools for classroom instruction. This suggests an emerging need for teacher training on educational technologies and how these can be used in the English language classrooms and in the context of the middle schools in Kerala.

4.2 Classroom Observation in English classes

The table below explores several aspects of teaching practices, with particular attention on language competency, teacher identities, beliefs, reflective practices, and the incorporation of professional development activities and integration of technologies.

Table 3. Classroom observation data on teaching practice

Teaching Practice components	YES	NO
The use of English in the classroom (language proficiency)		
a. English is spoken most of the time with occasional Indian language or local language	6	9
b. Teacher is fluent in speaking English.	11	4
c. Teacher motivates students to speak English	9	6
d. Teacher corrects students' language such as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary	8	7
Feedback and assessment (reflective practices)		
a. Teacher gives meaningful and constructive feedback	10	5
b. Teacher is sensitive to giving reinforcement toward students' positive behavior/achievement	9	6
c. Teacher monitors students' progress and ability	8	7
d. Teacher applies multiple assessments to measure students' performance	4	11
Classroom management (teacher beliefs and identities)		
a. Teacher corrects students' behavior immediately and constructively	5	10
b. All teaching activities are planned	6	9
c. Teachers act as facilitators; the class is more student-centered	8	7
d. Teacher ensures students' involvement	9	6
Integration of professional development activities		
a. Teacher occasionally assigns pair-work and group work activities to reduce anxiety in the class and establish good relationships among the students	8	7
b. Teacher uses games, songs, role-playing or other interesting activities to have an inviting and cheering classroom.	8	7
c. English Language skills, i.e., reading writing. listening and speaking, are taught in an integrated way	6	9
ESL teaching methodology (pedagogical skills & teaching approach)		
a) The English learning objective is clear for the students	8	7
b) The teacher engages the students	9	6
c) English is taught communicatively	6	9
6. Use of information technology		
a. Teacher sets up the class and prepares all media needed before the class begins.	4	11

b. Teachers use variety of multimedia in teaching English to enhance students' English language learning 4 11

The survey results on language proficiency are consistent with class observation data in the same area, where most of the teachers use the English language and motivate their students to speak in English. However, it was observed that despite the teachers' apparent confidence and motivation to use the English language, the Indian or local language is still prevalent in classroom discourse. In addition, the teachers provide corrective feedback on students' language features such as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary only half of the time, providing context on the use of English in ESL classrooms in Kerala. As regards reflective practice, the researcher observed in the ESL classes that many of the teachers give meaningful and constructive feedback to students and remain sensitive to giving reinforcement toward students' positive behavior or achievement. However, only a few teachers apply multiple assessment opportunities to measure students' performance.

As observed, the teachers' beliefs and identities, especially on effective classroom management, lead to a more collaborative and interactive teaching and learning environment, while at the same time allowing them to constantly engage in professional development activities. Some teachers even revealed that their personal beliefs inculcate among students a love for language and literature. In terms of teaching methodology, the observation data suggest that more teachers do not teach English communicatively but rather more directly. Moreover, the survey data on the use of emerging technologies are consistent with the results of the actual classroom observation, where the majority of the teachers do not prepare or use multimedia tools in language teaching.

4.3 Interviews with middle school English language teachers

The teachers were asked if they believe that language proficiency in English impacts their effectiveness as an ESL teacher and what steps they take to enhance their own language proficiency. Their qualitative responses revealed that all teachers believe in the critical role that their own language proficiency plays in their effectiveness as an ESL teachers. They claim that it serves as the backbone in (1) attaining effective and meaningful communication by modelling appropriate language use, and (2) boosting student interest and confidence by offering authentic learning experiences. The single-case model of the teachers' qualitative responses revealed four thematic categories pertaining to the steps they undertake to improve their skills, as shown in Thematic Models (*see Appendix*). It is worth noting that the coded segments with the most number of qualitative responses all pertain to receptive skills: reading, watching/viewing, and listening.

The teachers were also asked in which areas of research they were previously or are currently engaged. It is worth noting that two out of the 15 interviewees said they have not actively engaged in research, but the remaining teachers conducted studies mostly on enhancing general language skills such as grammar and vocabulary. Some of them did research on improving the classroom environment, while few studied improving student engagement and motivation and utilizing technology in language teaching.

Despite a few issues on pedagogic skills revealed by survey and observation data, the teachers still believe that CPD programs are beneficial in enhancing their teaching skills that would consequently translate to student development. As revealed in the interviews, technology integration is the aspect of English language teaching that would benefit the most from further professional development opportunities. Improving multilingualism and regionalism in a global environment and ensuring student success through better instructional delivery are also achieved through CPD programs.

The survey and observation data point to the fact that the teachers do not use emerging technologies in English language teaching. In spite of this, the teachers are still aware of the significant role that technology use in the classroom can enhance their teaching. Those who use advanced technology tools effect student-directed or student-centered changes in their teaching practices, such as the use of online platforms and language learning applications. On the other hand, some changes are directed by experts and professional organizations, while there are a few changes brought about by external programs such as Teacher Empowerment Programs.

5. Discussion

Given these realities, one significant interpretation deduced from the results is that teachers do not rely solely on CPD trainings to enhance their language proficiency. In English classes, there are a few attempts to engage students in actual discourse, yet majority of the efforts done by the teachers are the common ways anyone learns to acquire any language, suggesting a need for further development.

The participants in general responded that language proficiency is very important in their professional lives. One teacher claimed that proficiency in English is very important for a teacher and that continuous reading of English articles and other sorts of books helps a lot to increase their proficiency in English.” (T1). Most of them pursue various ways to become proficient in the English language; read English newspapers (T2, T13), ... reading English literature (T3, T9), .. read English books and novels (T12, T14). These are self-directed CPD initiatives according to Richards and Farrell (2005). In the same vein, Nugroho et al.'s study from 2022, asserts that teachers enhance language proficiency through engaging in online courses, attending, and speaking at national or international seminars or conferences held in English, reading books or journal articles printed in English, or joining the English teachers' groups. The teachers' opinions highlight a common conviction that English language proficiency is essential for efficient instruction. In order to improve language proficiency, teachers stress the value of ongoing engagement with English literature and articles. Some participants are interested in listening and watching; watch English movies... (T 12), News, Ted Talks, YouTube videos...” (T 4), “I engage in conversations with friends in English...” (T 3), listen to English programs from TV...” (T 2). According to Renandya et al. (2018) and Richards (2010), the goal of becoming an effective, competent, qualified, and successful English teacher would be attainable and reasonable if one were to engage in these kinds of regular activities. Though CPD-initiated programs did not target proficiency directly, it is important to note that teachers actively seek ways to improve their skills in English, which in turn adds to their level of confidence and proficiency in instructional delivery.

The quantitative data are consistent with the qualitative responses provided by the teachers during the interview. They were asked how they engage in reflective practice as an ESL teacher and they gave examples of how reflection led to changes or improvements in their instructional strategies. Teachers primarily engage in reflective practice in order to improve instructional delivery, while other reasons are to encourage critical thinking and awareness among students, to improve the learners; language skills, and to make their teaching practices more authentic and responsive to real-world needs.

In terms of the integrated approach to professional development, the survey results are in contrast with actual observation data. While a great majority of teachers agree or strongly agree in the integration of professional development activities in the ESL teaching, this is not always evident in the classroom. This is true especially in the integrated way of teaching English skills, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening, suggesting that these skills are still largely taught in isolation. The observation data are somehow consistent with the teachers' qualitative responses during the interview, which suggest—based on heavily coded segments—that CPD programs enhance their professional interactions and linkages more than these improve actual teaching practices. There are also a few teachers who manifested that CPD programs improve their reflection practices towards self-improvement.

The results on pedagogical skills and teaching approach show that while a majority of the teachers engage students during classroom discussion, students are still not fully guided since some teachers do not clarify lesson objectives or intended topic outcomes prior to instructional delivery, which can be an input to CPD program planning as a skill gap among teachers.

The results show that teachers are broadly in agreement on the significance of linguistic competency, reflective practice, pedagogical expertise, and use of emerging technology. Most teachers understand the need for CPD programs in enhancing their confidence and competency, particularly in language use and research abilities, as well as in reflective practices. As many teachers identify technology integration a key for future CPD, the need for tailored and contextualized programs is also highlighted. The study has its geographical limitations and

therefore the findings may not apply to other regions and educational systems. Additionally, the small sample size and limited classroom observation period may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies and a larger sample size.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes with a thorough examination of middle school English teachers' perspectives regarding the value of continuing professional development (CPD) in advancing the range of professional abilities necessary for efficient teaching. According to the data, there is still a noticeable lack of engagement with emerging technologies, even though most instructors view CPD as helpful for boosting language confidence and assisting with research projects. Survey results are supported by observations in the classroom, which demonstrate that teachers promote the use of English while local languages are still spoken and that multimedia resources are not properly incorporated into the curriculum. Interview insights show that, despite CPD programs not explicitly focusing on language competence improvement, instructors actively participate in self-improvement techniques to enhance their proficiency. The study highlights the significance of tailored CPD programs proper to the teachers' various experiences and evolving requirements, particularly in technology use. The study offers insights into teachers' professional development and adds to the body of knowledge in educational research on CPD. Policymakers and educational leaders can create more successful CPD programs to meet the requirements of teachers by using the study's conclusions.

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Informed Consent Statement/Ethics approval: All research participants gave their informed consent before they participated in the study. They were fully informed of the objectives of the study and were assured of anonymity.

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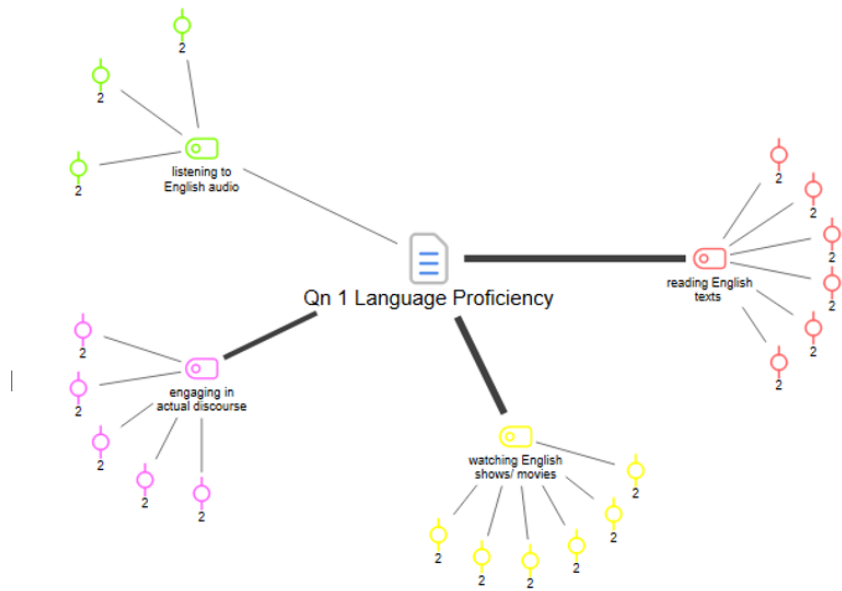
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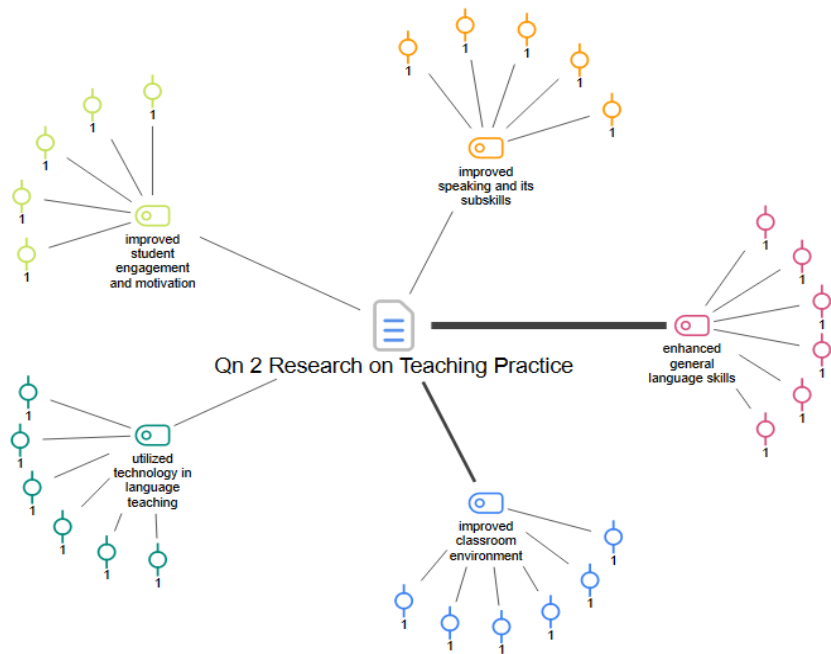
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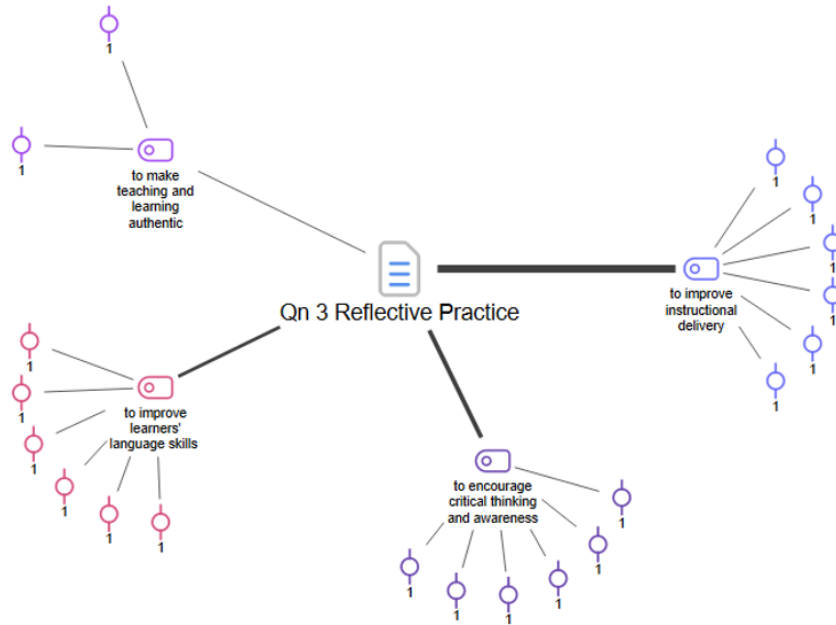
Appendix
Thematic Models based on Interview Data



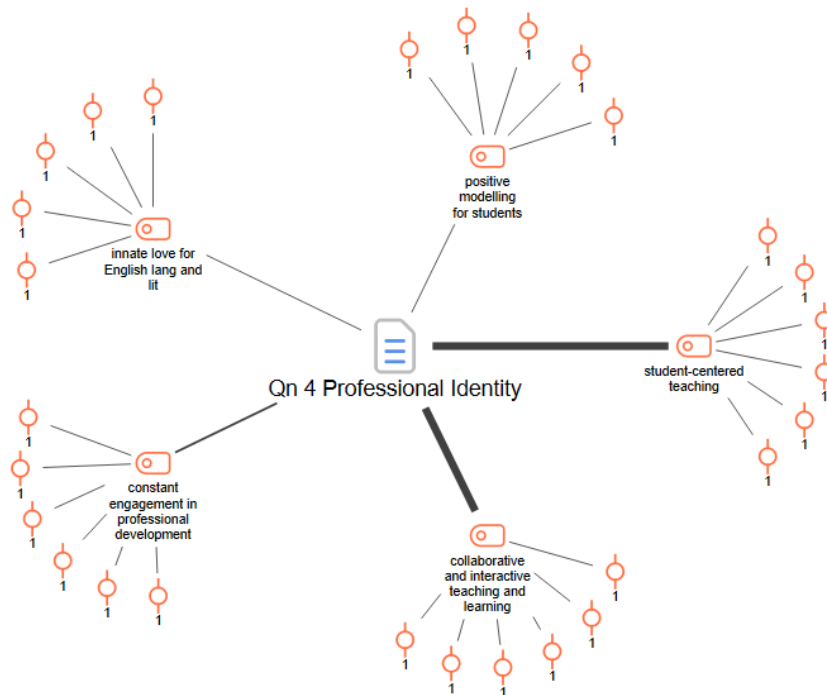
Thematic Model 1. Steps done to improve language proficiency



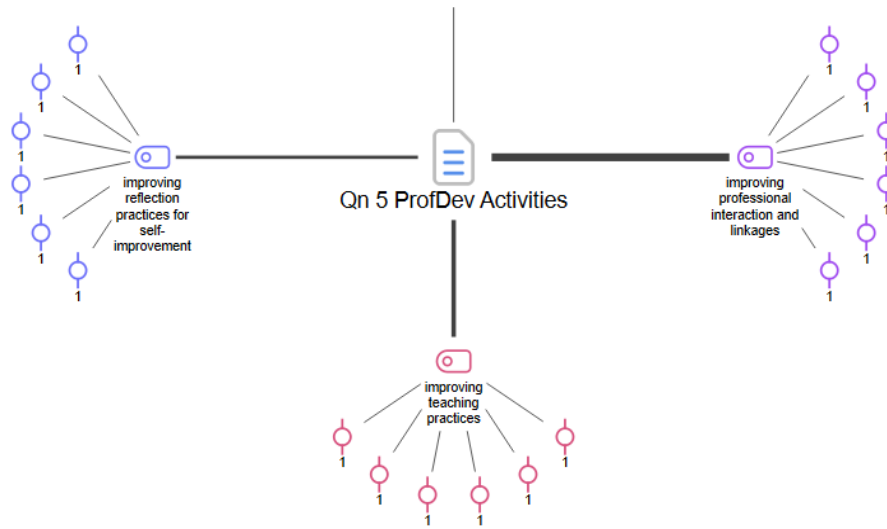
Thematic Model 2. Research conducted on teaching practice



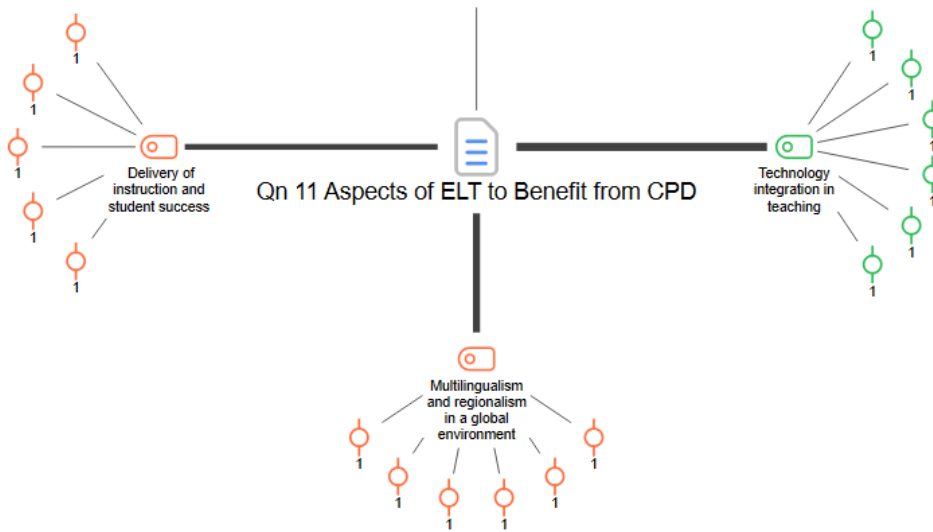
Thematic Model 3. Improvements as a result of Reflective practice



Thematic Model 4. Influence of teachers' personal beliefs and identity to teaching and interaction with students



Thematic Model 5. Integration of professional development activities to enhance practices



Thematic Model 6. Aspects of ELT pedagogy to benefit from CPD activities