

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprises several key components of the research, including research background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, conceptual framework, and a review of previous studies.

A. Research Background

This research aims to explore teachers' experiences and perspectives on the role of TPD in addressing the challenges of student assessment. As the architects of learning, teachers play a pivotal role in shaping student outcomes through their assessment decisions. Promoting teacher performance has a favorable result on student outcomes, and teacher professional development (TPD) is essential to this process. Research indicates that teachers' instructional techniques, classroom management, and overall teaching quality greatly improve as a result of well-designed professional development programs. Therefore, by understanding teachers' experiences and perspectives, this research explores whether TPD programs play an important role in addressing assessment challenges.

Teacher development refers to the professional advancement a teacher achieves through gaining more experience and systematically evaluating their teaching (AbdulRab, 2023). Teacher professional development provides teachers with creative pedagogical strategies that allow them to give more effective instruction (Nasution et al., 2024). TPD improves teachers' skills, knowledge, and attitudes, which in turn improves their teaching practice. It has a positive impact on students' academic achievement, highlighting the need for high-quality, practice-oriented TPD programs tailored to classroom needs (Mohamed, 2024). Additionally, according to Osei-Owusu (2024), teacher professional development (TPD) improves teachers' subject knowledge, self-efficacy, and skills, leading to improved teaching standards. It fosters collaboration and promotes the practice of learned concepts, ultimately contributing to improved student academic performance and positively impacting overall educational outcomes.

However, the quality of teaching and learning also greatly depends on teacher assessment, which is another crucial element of the educational system. As noted by Suwandi (2023), teachers play a crucial role in conducting classroom assessments, which are essential for measuring curriculum achievement and student progress. It contains a range of techniques that enable teachers to assess students' comprehension and modify their pedagogical approaches accordingly. Through performance evaluation and the use of effective teaching strategies, teacher assessment contributes to maintaining high educational standards. Regular assessments provide educators with critical feedback that is essential to their professional development, enabling them to enhance their pedagogical skills (Tursinova, 2024).

Nowadays, the *Merdeka* Curriculum has been adopted extensively in schools since 2022. The curriculum is considered to improve the standard of educational institutions in Indonesia, especially for EFL teachers (Aprilia et al., 2024). The *Merdeka* Curriculum in Indonesia is designed to provide flexibility to educators in structuring learning according to the students' needs. Thus, the purpose of this curriculum is to optimize learning time, enabling students to understand concepts in depth and strengthen their competencies (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Coupled with the application of this curriculum framework, the *Merdeka* Curriculum explicitly identifies and recognizes three types of assessment: diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment. These three types are essential for evaluating students' learning progress and modifying instruction (Shadri et al., 2023).

Although teacher evaluations are essential for improving education, they often encounter various challenges when developing, administering, or interpreting assessments effectively. According to Zerihun and Markos (2015), there are three common challenges in assessment. First, time constraints often lead teachers to find that assessment activities require a significant amount of time. Secondly, inadequate training means that many teachers lack a thorough understanding, resulting in the inefficient implementation of assessments. Third, resource limitations hamper teachers' ability to conduct comprehensive assessments due to limited access to the necessary facilities and resources. Moreover, Hussain et al.

(2019) identified several obstacles in classroom assessment procedures, including the use of tailored assessments, utilizing assessment findings to customize instruction, evaluating students' scores, and grading students' assessments, among others.

Therefore, this study involves the EFL teachers who have participated in an assessment-focused teacher professional development (TPD) program. Those participants are members of the English Subject Teacher Conference or *Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris Sub Rayon 5*, commonly referred to as MGMP SR-5. The MGMP SR-5 is a professional community of EFL teachers from various schools and institutions. This group is one of the eight other English Subject Teacher Conference that became members of the Bandung district level. The existence of MGMP SR-5 as a forum for EFL teachers in sub-districts, such as Cileunyi, Rancaekek, Cimenyan, and Cilengkrang.

In this case, the teachers were teaching in a variety of environments, each with unique challenges. As a result, based on the preliminary research, the teachers face challenges such as the different levels of students' ability, understanding, and interest of students, making grids and forms of questions that suit the diverse skills of the students, the distribution of question difficulty levels, the media to design assessments, and also the limited time to conduct the assessments.

To address these difficulties, TPD is one method of providing teachers with the necessary information and skills to apply effective assessment techniques. The study of assessment and TPD provides important new insight into how TPD programs can enhance assessment procedures and teacher effectiveness in general. TPD programs also significantly improve their formative assessment procedures, especially when linked to teacher expectations of success and self-efficacy (Lam et al., 2024). Empirical evidence demonstrates that context-appropriate training, exceptionally professional development focused on evaluation for learning, enhances pre-service teachers' capacity for self-directed learning (Yigletu et al., 2023).

As a result, the factors that distinguish this research from previous studies include the variables, methodologies, and participants involved. This study

integrates aspects regarding teachers' experiences and perceptions of the role of TPD with another factor focused on addressing challenges in assessment. Additionally, the research will employ narrative inquiry, featuring participants who is an EFL teacher belonging to one of the English Subject Teacher Conference (MGMP) in the Bandung district. Thus, the purpose is to find out how the experiences and perspectives shared by teachers who attend TPD programs can help address teacher assessment issues.

B. Research Questions

The background of the research informs the formulation of the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of an EFL teacher from MGMP SR-05 on assessment practices after participating in the TPD programs?
2. How does an EFL teacher from MGMP SR-05 perceive the role of the TPD programs in addressing the challenges of her assessment practices?

C. Research Purposes

The research questions above guide the development of the following research purposes:

1. To examine the experiences of an EFL teacher from MGMP SR-05 on assessment practices after participating in the TPD programs.
2. To delve deeper into the perspective of an EFL teacher from MGMP SR-05 on the role of the TPD programs in addressing the challenges of her assessment practices.

D. Research Significances

This study has a significant contribution both theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretical Significances

The contribution of this study is a theoretical discussion on teacher professional development (TPD) by exploring its role in addressing assessment challenges among in-service EFL teachers, specifically in the context of the English Subject Teacher Conference (MGMP) Sub Rayon 05. By examining teachers' experiences and perceptions of the TPD program regarding assessment practices, this study fills

an important gap in understanding how professional development shapes assessment literacy and classroom evaluation strategies in an EFL setting.

The findings extend the existing TPD framework by evaluating its applicability to local assessment challenges while bridging theory and practice through narrative inquiry. Furthermore, this study validates or refines current assumptions about the effectiveness of TPD in improving assessment competency. Additionally, it informs future research on responsive TPD design and its long-term impact on teaching quality and student outcomes. Ultimately, this investigation advances theoretical knowledge by linking teacher professional growth to assessment reform, providing a basis for more targeted inquiry into how TPD can address persistent evaluation barriers in language education.

2. Practical Significances

Practically, this research provides recommendations for teachers and emphasizes the importance of participation in the TPD program, in particular, and how it can aid in addressing assessment problems. It enables educators to refine the methods, strategies, and techniques used to conduct assessments, with the goal of enhancing student achievement. In this way, students are likely to achieve a better understanding and graduate with appropriate and practical assessments. Moreover, the results can influence education policies and practices. It can support the development of teacher professional development programs, as well as the implementation of appropriate assessment strategies.

E. Research Scopes

This study focuses on understanding the assessment issues faced by an EFL teacher within the *Merdeka* Curriculum, particularly the member in MGMP Sub Rayon 05 in Bandung District. MGMP is a professional community for English subject teachers in Indonesia, and MGMP SR-05 consists of teachers from the sub-districts of Cileunyi, Rancaekek, Cimenyan, and Cilengkrang. Although the group has 122 members, only 20–30 actively participate in activities. This MGMP has engaged in cooperative training initiatives with institutions such as the Indonesian University of Education (UPI), the State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati (UIN SGD), PELTIN Bandung, and the American Embassy in Indonesia. Several

of these programs have included components related to both classroom assessment and general assessment literacy, aimed at enhancing teachers' professional and pedagogical competencies.

However, this research is limited to the context of MGMP SR-05 and other related activities, with the primary participant being an active member of the MGMP and an IX-grade English teacher at *SMP Negeri Cileunyi 03*. An additional informant involved was the chief of MGMP SR-05, whose role was to provide supporting information regarding the implementation of TPD. Moreover, the research is limited to the types of TPD studied, focusing on activities initiated or facilitated by MGMP SR-05, and included several trainings from other institutions or external parties such as education office. The focus of the research was directed at the challenges of assessment in the context of EFL learning at the junior high school level, without discussing the challenges of assessment at different levels of education. Furthermore, this research used a narrative inquiry method, so that data collection focused on teachers' stories and experiences, as well as interviews with additional informants, rather than on quantitative measurements or statistical analysis.

F. Conceptual Framework

This research examines the experiences and perspectives of EFL teachers regarding the challenges of conducting assessments. Additionally, the study aims to identify the time when they participated in the TPD program and the role the TPD program played in overcoming the challenges experienced in assessment practices. This conceptual framework builds upon the interrelationship between the TPD programs and the challenges teachers face in conducting assessments. The framework aims to determine whether the TPD program can equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, capabilities, strategies, approaches, and methods to address the complexities of teachers' assessment. Moreover, the diagram below illustrates this conceptual relationship.

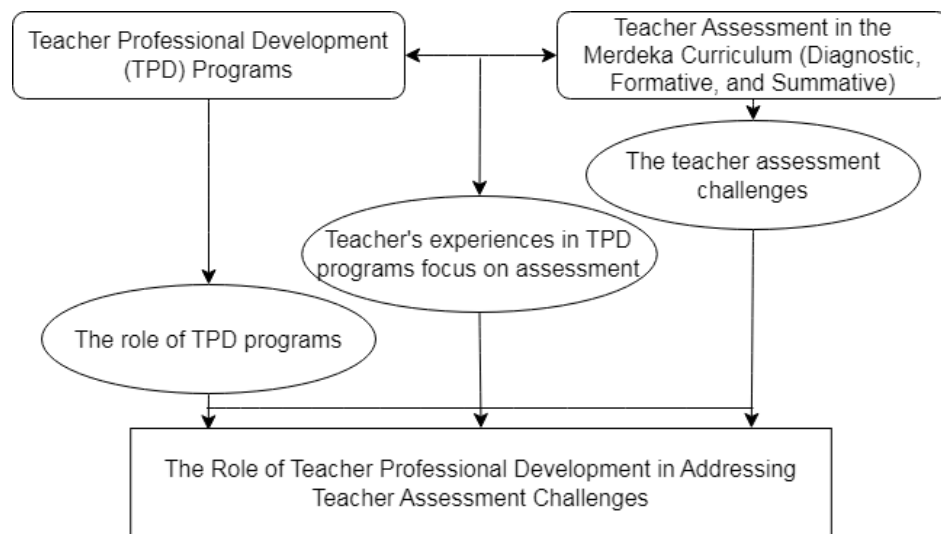


Figure 1.1 *Conceptual Framework*

Teacher professional development or TPD, refers to programs or initiatives aimed primarily at improving teacher qualifications, abilities, and understanding of pedagogy and subject matter (Shrestha & Acharya, 2023). According to Johansen (2023), TPD refers to the educational and training steps that educators undertake to refresh their skills and knowledge. It encompasses various forms of learning, including workshops, continuous learning, courses, and collaborative practices. The areas of focus include the impact of technology on teaching and learning, innovative teaching strategies, an understanding of applied linguistics, and an understanding of the students' needs. The aim is to support teachers in enhancing their teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes. Nasution (2024) also states that TPD refers to targeted initiatives that enhance educators' competencies through acquiring new knowledge, pedagogical techniques, and innovative strategies. These programs are essential for continuous professional growth and enhancing the quality of teacher performance and student learning achievement.

Another statement is that participating in a program focused on professional development helps teachers utilize their time and resources more effectively (Adipat et al., 2023). This is due to the existence of professional development programs attended by teachers, which enable them to adjust their lesson plans and syllabi to meet the different requirements of their students (Falk-Ross et al., 2017). Additionally, professional development programs for educators enhance the quality

of presentations and course assessments by introducing them to various delivery techniques, evaluations, and record-keeping practices (Adipat et al., 2023).

Moreover, several experts have proposed various concepts related to assessment and its types. According to Brown (2004), assessment is an important term that is often misused, particularly in the field of education. However, the assessment is an ongoing process, as it spans an extended time frame. Every time a student answers a question in a topic, gives a response, or attempts a new word or structure. Instinctively, the teacher will assess their performance. There are three types of assessments in *Merdeka* Curriculum: diagnostic assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments.

A diagnostic assessment is intended to identify specific linguistic features that may hinder student performance. These assessments typically provide a feature checklist that teachers use to detect areas where students struggle. For example, students produce a writing sample as part of a writing diagnostic, which enables the teacher to pinpoint the linguistic and rhetorical elements that require extra attention in the course. Typically, a diagnostic test provides more comprehensive and subcategorized information about the student (Brown, 2004).

Hughes (2003) states that assessments are formative when teachers use them to monitor their students' progress. Teachers assess how effectively students have acquired the intended learning outcomes and use the results to revise and improve subsequent instructional plans for their future teaching. It is also helpful in providing feedback to the students. Informal examinations and tests, such as quizzes, are often considered a part of formative assessments, but so are basic observations (such as performance in learning tasks) and the assessment of student portfolios. Students may be encouraged to conduct self-assessments to track their progress and adjust their learning objectives.

Additionally, summative assessments are conducted at the conclusion of a fixed period, such as the end of a term or year, to evaluate learners' performance. However, formal examinations are often necessary in this context for various reasons, because educators should avoid interpreting the results in isolation. Instead, they should gather evidence from multiple sources to form a more

comprehensive picture of student achievement. Moreover, information from all sources, including formal testing, should be consistent and reliable. If they are not, the potential causes of the inconsistencies must be investigated (Hughes, 2003).

Furthermore, there are several challenges for teachers in implementing assessment practices within the *Merdeka* Curriculum. According to research, this is attributed to a lack of adequate training on the new curriculum, leading to inadequate comprehension and ineffective application of its assessment concepts and methods (Hanayanti et al., 2023; Wardana, 2024). Related to this, there is often a shortage of teaching materials and technology needed to conduct informative assessments (Hanayanti et al., 2023). There is a strong assumption that professional training, combined with resources such as books, will significantly improve curriculum outcomes (Wardana, 2024).

As explained by Hasani et al. (2024), measuring students' holistic development presents a significant challenge, considering that most assessments still emphasize cognitive skills over affective or psychomotor dimensions. Moreover, according to Wardana (2024), teachers also face difficulties in designing authentic assessments that serve as benchmarks for student performance in a student-centered learning environment.

In addition, Kyriakides et al. (2021) state that the relationship between teachers and assessment is fundamental to the educational process. The idea of assessment practice directly relates to how effectively a teacher understands and implements it, as this has a direct impact on student outcomes and the overall effectiveness of teaching provided. Effective professional development aims to deepen literacy practitioners' understanding of assessment practices, enabling them to design appropriate assessments that support active teaching and meet the needs of all students. In their study, Rahman et al. (2023) discovered that educators enhance their skills in evaluating student learning when they receive continuous professional development support focused on formative and summative assessment techniques.

Ultimately, professional development that emphasizes assessment promotes reflective teaching and the effective use of assessment data, enabling informed instructional decisions (Charalambous & Philippou, 2024). This development

enhances teachers' skills in conducting assessments and encourages them to adopt more innovative, student-centered, equitable, engaging, and responsive teaching strategies (Xu & Brown, 2023). Given this context, enhancing teachers' assessment skills through targeted TPD is vital for creating effective educational systems.

G. Previous Studies

In selecting the subject for this research, many researchers conducted a thorough review of numerous previous studies. Several of these studies are directly relevant to the current research and serve as a foundational basis for selecting this research topic. The reviewed literature suggests a significant relationship between the TPD program and teacher assessment. These findings provide essential justification for further exploring this topic.

The first study, conducted by Lam et al. (2024), examined the impact of professional development (PD) on teachers' formative assessment techniques in Vietnam at both primary and secondary levels. The researchers employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating surveys, interviews, and observations with 5,546 primary school teachers. They found that effective PD influenced the use of formative assessment along with increased teachers' self-efficacy and outcome expectations. The findings suggested that when teachers felt confident in their abilities and anticipated positive results, PD led to significant improvements in classroom practices. This emphasized the importance of tailoring PD programs to teachers' specific needs to maximize their educational impact.

The second study, Ammasi (2024) explored the relationship between teacher performance and professional development. This study involved teachers and administrators in India across K–12 and higher education, utilizing quantitative and document analysis methods. The research emphasized the importance of effective assessment strategies in evaluating teacher competencies and demonstrated how sustained professional development contributed to enhancing teaching standards. By analyzing multiple assessment frameworks, Ammasi showed that systematic evaluation informed professional development initiatives and contributed to improved educational outcomes for students. The study added valuable insights to

the discourse on optimizing teacher effectiveness through targeted developmental initiatives.

The third study, carried out by Yan (2021) in secondary schools in Hong Kong, employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. Yan investigated the barriers teachers faced in implementing Assessment-as-Learning (AaL) in the classroom. These included entrenched beliefs about traditional assessment, insufficient understanding of AaL, poor classroom control, limited time, and conflicting curriculum policies. The study highlighted the impact of professional development in addressing these issues. The results indicated that effective PD helped teachers deepen their understanding of AaL, provided guidance on practical implementation, fostered collaboration and reflection, and equipped them with strategies to integrate AaL into lessons to enhance learning.

The fourth study, investigated by Christoforidou and Kyriakides (2021), involved primary school teachers in Cyprus and used a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test control group design. The study examined the effects of a dynamic TPD approach on the development of assessment skills. They emphasized the importance of active teacher participation in collaborative, practical teaching and learning settings. The study found that this model improved teachers' assessment literacy, enhanced classroom assessment practices, and increased their confidence in assessing. The evidence showed that when teachers engaged in dynamic TPD, they became more proficient assessors who strategically used assessment to improve student learning outcomes.

The fifth study, by Berisha et al. (2023), examined the effectiveness and challenges of formative assessment PD programs for primary school teachers in Kosovo, employing a mixed-methods approach. The study revealed improvements in teacher knowledge and some changes in classroom practice, although the impact on student performance remained unclear. Barriers such as counterproductive beliefs, time constraints, large class sizes, limited resources, resistance to change, and sustainability issues were identified. The researchers emphasized the importance of school-based mentoring and supportive school environments in

overcoming these challenges and ensuring the successful implementation of formative assessment.

The sixth study, conducted by Li et al. (2023), further explored the impact of professional development programs on the formative assessment literacy of Chinese primary school teachers. Using a mixed-methods design, pre-post tests, surveys, and interviews. The researchers reported improvements in teachers' knowledge, classroom practices, confidence, and attitudes toward formative assessment. They identified ongoing support and collaboration as key facilitators, while challenges included time limitations and large class sizes. The study concluded that collaborative, ongoing, and context-responsive TPD programs were more effective in enhancing formative assessment literacy and positively influencing student engagement and learning.

The seventh study, Pastore and Mincu (2024) investigated the role of TPD in enhancing assessment literacy among Italian secondary school teachers, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Using qualitative methods, the researchers explored how teachers perceived assessment literacy, practices, and professional development. They found variations in teachers' assessment practices and identified challenges in balancing assessment responsibilities with other duties. The study highlighted the need for systemic support, including high-quality PD, clear policy guidelines, and a supportive school culture. It also emphasized teachers' preference for collaborative and practical training.

Additionally, Faryabi et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study with EFL teachers in Iran, employing teacher journals and classroom observations to explore the challenges of learning and applying Dynamic Assessment (DA) during professional training. The study framed PD as a social model involving iterative cycles of action, reflection, and change. It aimed to identify the challenges teachers faced in understanding and implementing DA concepts in writing classes. The findings offered suggestions for making PD activities more purposeful and effective in supporting EFL teachers' successful integration of DA into their instructional practice.

In another study, Zuhri (2022) employed action research with EFL teachers in Indonesia to investigate the integration of Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) into TPD for improving assessment practices. The study examined how TPD programs could be structured to combine English language pedagogy, content, and technology to enhance assessment design skills and teacher self-efficacy. The findings underscored the need for comprehensive TPD that incorporated TPACK principles to support more effective assessment in English language education.

Finally, a longitudinal quasi-experimental study by Christoforidou and Χριστοφορίδου (2013) in Cyprus evaluated the impact of TPD on K–12 classroom assessment practices. The research began by identifying the challenges that teachers faced in organizing and conducting assessments effectively, regardless of the time investment required. The study demonstrated that well-designed professional development significantly improved assessment practices and teaching effectiveness. The findings suggested that enhancing teachers' evaluation skills through structured training could lead to improved educational outcomes.

Therefore, based on the research mentioned, existing studies on TPD emphasize the importance of refining assessment practices. There is limited research exploring how EFL teachers specifically experience and perceive TPD programs as a tool for addressing their real-world assessment challenges. Notable gaps include the focus on the general effectiveness of TPD or broad-level assessment methods, as well as the consideration of local, specialized contexts, such as the Indonesian MGMP, particularly the English Subject Teacher Conference.

Furthermore, although the challenges of time and resource constraints have received considerable attention, few studies examine teachers' perceptions of TPD's role in addressing these challenges. Therefore, the study aims to fill these gaps by exploring the lived experiences and perspectives of an EFL teacher, a member of MGMP Sub Rayon 05, regarding how the TPD program was designed to assist them with assessment-related challenges. Ultimately, this study aims to provide practical knowledge on how TPD should be structured to address the real needs posed by EFL educators' challenges.