

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the research background, including the research questions and purposes, the significance of the research, the theoretical framework, and previous studies.

A. Background of the Research

Professional development (PD) is closely tied to teachers' interests, purposes, and learning needs and is viewed as a process in which teachers acquire new knowledge and apply it to their teaching practices for the benefit of students' development (Avalos, 2011). In line with this, Guskey (2002) defines PD as an organized initiative aimed at improving teachers' classroom practices, students' learning achievement, and their beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes. Through these activities, teachers can improve their teaching methods, engage in meaningful peer discussions, and develop teaching strategies that are appropriate to their classroom environments. These opportunities can be formal, including structured events like workshops and seminars, or informal, such as engaging in discussions, learning from peers, reading and research (Li, 2022). Among these, workshops have been broadly acclaimed as formal and common forms of PD among EFL teachers, with the basis of facilitating structured learning opportunities, reflection, and teaching strategy exchange (Bayram & Bıkmaz, 2021).

In the context of English Language Teaching, several studies have shown that EFL teachers in Indonesia hold varied perspectives on professional development, including their experiences in workshops. Research by Sutomo & Siregar (2022) found that teachers in remote locations held different perceptions of professional development, depending on the relevance of the program material to their local teaching situations. In a broader sense, Nguyen & Duy (2022) also indicated that individual goals, teaching needs, and institutional support determined teachers' perceptions of professional growth. However, other results suggest that the involvement of teachers in PD and their experiences are not necessarily the best, as

they can be affected by contextual factors, including the lack of institutional support (Dewi et al., 2024). These differences in opinion among EFL teachers suggest that professional development, particularly in the form of workshops is experienced differently depending on teachers' contexts and needs. Therefore, understanding teachers' perceptions of PD workshops becomes essential.

As educational conditions continue to change, greater emphasis is placed on preparing students for 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving. Therefore, teachers are increasingly challenged to refine their pedagogical practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In response to these changes, professional development plays a crucial role in helping teachers refine their pedagogical practices. Thus, PD programs are one effective way to meet this growing need.

In the context of English Language Teaching, EFL teachers are required not only to demonstrate language competence but also to possess effective pedagogical competence that facilitates communicative and student-centered learning (Sari et al., 2021). One of the strategies to support this need is through participation in workshops. Specifically, the TESOL-oriented workshops can be used as a tool to improve teachers' professional skills and teaching practices, eventually improve student's learning process and performance (Haug & Mork, 2021). As Katrina Herda et al. (2024) noted that teachers also view PD as an opportunity to acquire new knowledge and implement it in their classroom practice, which makes participating in workshops crucial for EFL teachers seeking to improve their teaching methods. This is also supported by Alhoussawi (2022) who found that teachers recognized that professional development is a crucial component of becoming a successful language teacher. Therefore, TESOL PD workshops can be seen as a relevant and practical form of professional development for EFL teachers.

Even though workshops are becoming more widely acknowledged as a useful type of professional development, there is still a lack of research that explicitly looks at how EFL teachers view TESOL PD workshops and how this relates to their actual teaching practices, especially in Indonesian contexts. Most existing literature tends to focus on the design or implementation of PD programs rather than on

teachers' own experiences. This gap is particularly evident in Bandung Regency, where EFL teachers participate in TESOL-related workshops, but their perspectives and lived experiences have not received much attention. Therefore, this research seeks to bridge this gap by exploring EFL teachers' perceptions of TESOL PD workshops and how these perceptions relate to their teaching practices. This research aims to provide deeper insights into how EFL teachers understand TESOL PD workshops and its implications for their professional demands and classroom realities, focusing on their perceptions.

B. Research Questions

In response to the issues above, this study aims to explore the following research questions:

1. What are EFL teachers' perceptions of TESOL PD workshops and their relevance to their teaching practice in the context Bandung regency?
2. What challenges do EFL teachers face during and after participating in TESOL PD workshops?

C. Research Purposes

From the research questions above, this study aimed to gain the two following purposes:

1. To explore EFL teachers' perceptions of TESOL PD workshops and their relevance to their teaching practice in the context of Bandung regency.
2. To identify the challenges experienced by EFL teachers during and after participating in TESOL PD workshops.

D. Research Significances

Theoretically, this study will enrich the existing literature on PD, specifically in the EFL context. The results of this study will also enrich the literature by presenting teachers' perspectives on the workshop and its relevance to their teaching practices. This supports the idea of PD developed by Guskey (2002), in which PD is regarded as a program aimed to bring about changes in teachers' classroom practices, attitudes, and beliefs. Moreover, understanding how teachers interpret their experience, the benefits and challenges after attending the workshop highlights

that teachers' perceptions are important in determining the success of PD in the context of English language learning.

In practical terms, this research contributes to EFL teachers' reflection on the understanding that teacher PD can be used effectively to teach in ways that meet students' needs and characteristics. Furthermore, for TESOL teacher PD workshop organizers, educational institutions, and curriculum developers, the results of this study can serve as a reference, input, and basis for designing future PD programs. This will enable the creation of PD programs that are more responsive to teachers' needs, with relevant, applicable materials aligned with the realities of teaching English as a foreign language.

E. Research Scope

This study aims to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of TESOL PD workshops and their relevance to their teaching practices. The scope of this study is also restricted to junior high school English teacher who are member of MGMP (*Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran*) English subject in Bandung regency, especially in Sub-Rayon 05. This Sub-Rayon is a cluster of schools according to geographical position, and it includes the districts of Cileunyi, Rancaekek, Cilengkrang, and Cimenyan. The participants are limited to teachers who have attended in at least two TESOL PD workshops within the last two years.

The workshops selected in this study are defined based on several criteria. First, the workshops should be related with English language teaching (TESOL) and include aspects of teaching methods, classroom strategies, or language skills development. Second, the workshops should be held by known formal organizations like MGMP, schools, universities or other institutions of learning. Third, the workshop should not consist of theoretical information but discussions between teachers, training, or practical activities.

The MGMP English teachers were chosen as a research scope since MGMP is a formal professional learning community of teachers. In MGMP, teachers also participate in professional discussion, reflection, and sharing of knowledge on a regular basis, regarding their teaching practice and professional development

experiences. This study emphasizes the subjective perceptions and experiences, without measuring the workshop's effect on the student learning outcomes.

F. Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in the issue that, although many teachers have participated in PD activities such as TESOL workshops, the ways these experiences are perceived and relate to classroom teaching practices vary across teachers. Therefore, understanding teachers' perceptions is essential to explore how PD is experienced and interpreted by EFL teachers.

The conceptual framework in this study is built based on two main theoretical perspectives on professional development: those of Avalos (2011) and Guskey (2002). In this study, the concept of teacher PD is defined by Avalos' (2011) perspective, which holds that PD is the continuous learning of teachers aimed at enhancing teachers' knowledge, skills, and teaching practice through professional experience and reflection. This view frames teachers as an active learner who makes meaning out of their own professional experiences.

Moreover, this study refers to Guskey (2002) who highlights that PD is a planned process of promoting change in teachers' teaching practices, perceptions, and professional knowledge. Guskey (2002) suggests that changes in teachers do not occur directly through shifts in attitudes or beliefs, but develop through teachers' experiences in applying the outcomes of PD in their teaching practices. When teachers come to believe that the new strategies or methods they are taught during PD are relevant and valuable to the learning process, their impressions of PD are gradually shaped.

In this study, TESOL PD workshops are defined as a structured and formal professional development that provides teachers with opportunities to participate in collaborative and practice-based learning activities aimed at improving their teaching knowledge and practices (Avalos, 2011; Guskey, 2002; Richards & Farrell, 2005). Through their participation in TESOL PD workshops, teachers gain learning experiences and engage reflective practices that enable them to interpret and apply new knowledge in classroom settings (Avalos, 2011). These experiences play a

critical role in shaping how teachers perceive the relevance of the workshops and how they apply new strategies in their teaching practices.

Based on the theoretical perspectives discussed above, this study conceptualized teachers' professional development as a process that involves participation in TESOL professional development workshops, the application of the knowledge gained from workshops, teachers' experiences and reflection, and their perceptions of professional development. This relationship among these components is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

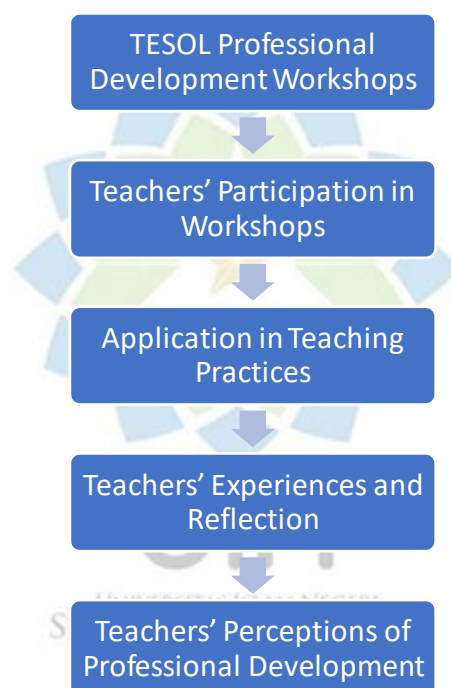


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

G. Previous Studies

Several studies have explored EFL teachers' perceptions of PD in non-English-speaking contexts. Based on a study conducted by Nguyen & Duy (2022) titled "EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Development Activities and Their Effects in a Non-Anglosphere Context". This study used a mixed-methods design and involved 80 EFL teachers at a senior high school. This study used quantitative data collected through questionnaires, while qualitative data were obtained through depth interviews. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic

analysis. This study has explored EFL teachers' perceptions of PD activities in Vietnam. The findings indicate that teachers perceived PD as generally helpful in enhancing their practices and lesson planning. This observation implies that positive perceptions of PD do not necessarily lead to regular professional learning experiences.

Moreover, in the Indonesian context, a study by Nugroho et al., (2022) titled “EFL Teachers’ Perceptions of Professional Development for Language Proficiency Maintenance”. This study uses a qualitative approach and implements a case study design. The participants were six secondary school EFL teachers from the capital city of East Java, selected through purposive sampling. The data were collected using an interview guide and analyzed based on teachers’ responses. This study examined EFL teachers' perceptions of PD aligned with maintaining language proficiency in the Indonesian context. The findings revealed that the teachers believed PD was relevant to sustaining their English proficiency, mainly because of their exposure to English in their everyday teaching situations.

Another study by Wardhani et al., (2024) titled “In-service Novice EFL Teachers’ Perceptions of Self-Initiated Professional Development” discussed about the perceptions of novice EFL teachers of self-initiated professional development in Indonesia. This study used a narrative inquiry approach, and the participants consisted of three novice EFL teachers at a junior high school. The data were obtained through interview focusing on their experiences. Moreover, the study found that teachers viewed self-directed PD as essential. Teachers actively pursued non-formal programs and learning opportunities because some aspects of institutional PD were not that relevant. This observation demonstrates that teachers are participants in their own professional learning.

Another relevant study by Sutomo & Siregar (2022) entitled “Teacher Professional Development in Indonesia’s Remote Areas with Driven Educational Philanthropic Institution”. This study used an interpretive paradigm with a qualitative approach. The data were collected from various sources, including interviews and documents. The research was conducted in three districts across three provinces, Riau, Jambi, and Labuhan Batu. The participants were two

elementary school teachers selected from each province. This study examined teacher PD programs in remote regions of Indonesia, facilitated by philanthropic institutions. The study concluded that mentoring and facilitation courses helped in enhancing teacher professionalism in low-resource settings. Nevertheless, the authors paid more attention to program implementation and outcomes than to teachers' perceptions.

Existing research indicates that EFL teachers generally believe that PD enhances their professional competence and teaching methods. The majority of the literature argues that contextual factors, including program relevance and institutional support, influence PD experiences. There is still limited research discussing PD workshops for teachers of English as a foreign language (TESOL) and how teachers' perceptions of these workshops relate to their teaching practices in a specific local context.

