



Continuous Professional Development for English Language Teachers in Indonesia

Amiruddin

Senior High School 1 Tanjungselor, Bulungan, Indonesia

email: amiruddinmuflih@gmail.com

Article Info

Article history:

Received: February 22nd, 2026

Revised: April 15th, 2026

Accepted: May 10th, 2026

Keywords:

Professional Development

EFL Teachers

Teacher Professionalism

Regional Education

Qualitative Study

ABSTRACT

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is widely acknowledged as a critical component in enhancing teacher professionalism, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. However, disparities between policy expectations and actual practices remain evident, especially in regional areas. This study aims to investigate the types of CPD activities undertaken by English teachers in one district in Indonesia, their perceptions toward CPD, and the challenges they encounter. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentation involving senior high school English teachers. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to interpret the data. The findings indicate that teachers predominantly engage in self-development activities (85%), followed by scientific publication (60%), while participation in innovative work remains relatively low (35%). Teachers demonstrated positive perceptions of CPD as a means of enhancing pedagogical competence and professional identity. However, significant barriers such as time constraints, financial limitations, and limited access to training opportunities hinder optimal participation. The study concludes that while CPD contributes positively to teacher development, a more structured and context-sensitive implementation is necessary. These findings offer practical implications for policymakers and educational stakeholders to strengthen CPD frameworks in regional settings.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a complex professional activity that goes beyond the mere transfer of knowledge, encompassing classroom management, student engagement, feedback provision, and motivation. As highlighted by Nasution (2010), teaching involves various pedagogical actions that reflect teachers' professionalism in responding to learners' needs. However, many teachers still misunderstand the essence of professional teaching, often perceiving professional development as ineffective or irrelevant to classroom practice.

Bachtiar (2023) and Ravhuhali et al. (2015) argue that professional development is frequently viewed as unprofitable, while Blackmon (2013), drawing on the U.S. Department of Education (2000), emphasizes that short-term training programs often fail to produce meaningful impact. These conditions lead teachers to hesitate in engaging in sustained professional development, despite its importance for improving teaching quality.

Teacher professionalism is a crucial element in the success of the teaching-learning process, as it reflects teachers' ability to manage classrooms, deliver instruction effectively, and utilize technology in learning. Musfah (2012) emphasizes that teachers play a vital role in shaping students' character and attitudes, serving as role models in both academic and social contexts. In line with this, Kennedy (2017) underscores the importance of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in enhancing teachers' pedagogical understanding and classroom practices. Furthermore, Murray (2010) highlights that professional development empowers teachers by providing them with opportunities and confidence to implement ideas and improve their professional performance.

Professional development is considered a key factor in improving educational quality, as teachers' competence directly influences student learning outcomes. According to Musfah (2012), teacher quality can be enhanced through continuous professional development, which includes both formal and informal approaches. Garrett (2017) categorizes formal professional development as structured activities such as workshops and training, while informal development includes peer collaboration, mentoring, and reflective practices. Similarly, Craft (2000) identifies various forms of professional development, including staff development, mentoring, action research, and continuing education. These diverse approaches indicate that professional development is a continuous process that extends beyond initial teacher training.

In Indonesia, teacher professional development has been strengthened through government policies such as the Law on Teachers and Lecturers (2005), which requires teachers to possess pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies. Additional regulations, including Permendiknas No. 16 of 2007 and No. 10 of 2009, emphasize academic qualifications and teacher competencies. At a broader level, UNESCO (2008) asserts that teaching is a profession requiring continuous updating of knowledge and skills, while Shoqair and Shaaban (2013) highlight the need for teachers to adapt to 21st-century educational demands. Continuing Professional Development (CPD), formally defined in Ministry Regulation No. 16 of 2009, is therefore essential for improving teaching quality and student learning outcomes, particularly in rapidly changing educational contexts (Richards & Farrell, 2008; Mizell, 2010).

Despite its recognized importance, there remains a gap between the theoretical expectations and practical implementation of CPD, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts (Bachtiar, 2020). Many teachers are unaware of whether their daily teaching practices reflect genuine professional development, and their strategies for improving teaching effectiveness remain underexplored. CPD activities, which include self-development, scientific publication, and innovative work (Guidelines for CPD, 2012), as well as informal learning opportunities such as action research and professional reading,

offer potential solutions to these challenges. Therefore, this study aims to analyze English teachers' professional development strategies in Bulungan, focusing on their practices, perceptions, and challenges in implementing CPD

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Indonesia's Education Framework

The development of education in Indonesia has undergone significant transformation over time, particularly since the New Order era. According to Rosser (2018), education has become a central responsibility of the government; however, its quality remains relatively low, as reflected in the PISA 2015 results where a substantial proportion of students performed below minimum standards. This condition is influenced by factors such as limited teacher quality, inadequate funding, and weak institutional management (Rosser, 2018). Teachers play a crucial role in determining educational quality, as their professional practices, including mentoring and training, directly influence learning outcomes. Therefore, improving teacher professionalism is essential to enhancing the overall quality of education.

Government regulations have been established to strengthen teacher professionalism in Indonesia. The Minister of National Education Regulation (Permendiknas) No. 16 of 2007 and No. 10 of 2009 emphasize teachers' competencies, including pedagogical, professional, social, and personal aspects (Baan, 2012). Additionally, Law No. 14 of 2005 defines teachers as professional educators responsible for teaching, guiding, and evaluating students (Tanang et al., 2014; OECD/ADB, 2015). These regulations also require teachers to engage in reflective practices and continuous professional development, including mastering linguistic and communicative competencies in the case of English teachers.

2.2 Teachers' Competences

Teacher competence is defined as a combination of knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for effective teaching (Bachtiar, 2021; Pahrudin et al., 2016). Mustafa (2013) highlights that competence involves managing information, problem-solving, and effective communication with learners, while Hakim (2015) emphasizes its impact on student achievement. In language teaching contexts, discourse competence is particularly important, as it integrates various aspects of communication such as linguistic and sociocultural competence (Nuridin, 2018; Celce-Murcia, 2007).

Pedagogical competence involves the ability to design, implement, and evaluate instruction, as well as to understand learners' needs (Mulyasa, 2007; Pahrudin et al., 2016; Syahrul, 2016). Personality competence reflects teachers' character and behavior, which serve as role models for students (Supardi, 2017; Taniredja & Abduh, 2016; Kusumawardhani et al., 2017). Social competence refers to the ability to interact effectively with others in educational and social contexts (Heinz et al., 2012; Kanning, 2003). Meanwhile, professional competence includes mastery of subject matter, curriculum, and the use of technology in teaching (Camelo & Angerami, 2013; Astuty, 2015). These competencies collectively determine teacher effectiveness and educational quality.

2.3 Teachers' Professional Development

Professional development is a continuous process aimed at improving teachers' performance and instructional practices (Guskey, 2000; Stewart, 2014). It is particularly important for novice teachers who require ongoing support to adapt to teaching demands. Kennedy (2017) highlights collaborative models such as Professional Development Schools (PDS), which integrate theoretical and practical learning. Furthermore, Richards and Farrell (2008) emphasize that teacher education must respond to constant changes in knowledge, curriculum, and technology, requiring teachers to continuously update their competencies. Labaree (2000) adds that professional development shapes teachers' perspectives, emotional control, and teaching effectiveness.

Professional development activities can be categorized into district-wide, site-based, and individual improvement (Mccarthy, 2016). District-wide development focuses on collaboration and resource sharing through training and workshops (Guskey, 2000). Site-based development emphasizes cooperative learning, action research, and mentoring (Sparks, 2002; Garet et al., 2001). Individual improvement focuses on personal growth, including knowledge, attitudes, and teaching practices (Fishman et al., 2003). These approaches are supported by both formal and informal learning opportunities, enabling teachers to continuously improve their professional competence (Joshi, 2012; Bharati & Chalise, 2017).

Formal professional development includes structured activities such as workshops, seminars, training, and participation in Subject Teacher Working Groups (MGMP). Workshops and seminars enhance pedagogical knowledge and collaboration (Villegas & Reimers, 2003; Dennick & Spencer, 2011; Osamwonyi, 2016), while training programs improve teaching skills and provide practical experience (Richards & Farrell, 2008; Yahya et al., 2015; Rusdin, 2017). MGMP serves as a collaborative platform for teachers to discuss teaching challenges and develop instructional materials (Rahman, 2016; Chang et al., 2014; Marsigit et al., 2014; Depdiknas, 2008).

Informal professional development includes self-directed and collaborative activities such as self-monitoring, peer observation, teaching journals, and action research. Self-monitoring allows teachers to evaluate their own performance (Bruhn et al., 2015; Rispoli et al., 2017), while teacher support groups facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing (Richards & Farrell, 2008; Smith, 2003; Murray, 2010). Reflective practices such as journal writing help teachers improve their professional identity (Goker, 2016; Holly, 2002; Cooper, 2013).

Other informal activities include peer observation (Sparks, 2002), teaching portfolios, and analysis of critical incidents (Mohammed, 2018; Joshi, 2018; Richards & Farrell, 2010). Case analysis enhances critical thinking and student engagement (Bonney, 2015; Herreid et al., 2011), while team teaching promotes collaboration and instructional improvement (Murawski & Dieker, 2008; Conderman, 2011; Jang, 2006). Action research enables teachers to systematically improve their practices through classroom-based inquiry (O'Connor et al., 2006; Ferrance, 2000; Sax & Fisher, 2001).

3. METHOD

3.1 Research Design

The writer will apply qualitative research as a method to gain data on teachers' strategies in developing their professional development. It is defined as qualitative research based on person's experience by empirical meaning, which is explained completely, explains qualitative research. In collecting the data, the researcher will use three kinds of instruments; questionnaires, interview, and documentation. covering three components of CPD: self-development, scientific publication, and innovative work. Interview was used to get information of teachers' CPD activities, teachers' perception of CPD, and the challenges faced by the teachers in improving their professionalism through CPD program.

3.2 Data Collection

In collecting the data, the researcher will use three kinds of instruments; questionnaires, interview, and documentation. The first questionnaire was used to gain the data regarding types of CPD activities that the teachers had undertaken. It will be adopted from attachment 1 of Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform regulation no. 16/2009 (Depdiknas, 2009). Indicators on this questionnaire measure the teachers' CPD activities of the three CPD components, namely self-development, scientific publications, and innovative work. It also designs with column as well as an explanation column if there is necessary information to add by the participants. It will analyse qualitatively; looking at how many ticks given by the participants then qualitatively describing. The second questionnaire will apply to gain the data of the teachers' perception of CPD. It consisted of 16 items, which is adapted from the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform regulation no. 16/2009 (Depdiknas, 2009), covering three components of CPD: self-development, scientific publication, and innovative work.

Interview was used to get information of teachers' CPD activities, teachers' perception of CPD, and the challenges face by the teachers in improving their professionalism through PD program. It will be analyzed using thematic analysis. The documents, namely copy of certificates of teachers' professional development activities, will be analysed by reviewing and grouping them into a table of teachers' CPD activities, needed as the proof of what the teachers had stated and reported in the interview regarding their activities for CPD. To establish trustworthiness, triangulation of methods will be applied in this study. Methodological triangulation, which involves using more than one method to gather data (interview, questionnaire, document), is used to justify the findings and results of this study.

3.3 Data Analysis

The writer will use qualitative data analysis during data collection. To get the answers of the primary and secondary research questions, thematic analysis is used in this term. It provides a systematic way to data analysis. It is important to gain professional development related to English teachers' perception of professional development. The writer collates these meanings into an initial theme named teachers understanding. Lastly, the writer reviews and defines themes in order to analyse the data coherently and distinctly from each theme related to research questions. In addition, thematic analysis guides the writer to analyse the whole data systematically.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This The interview, questionnaire and documents data were analysed to seek the answers of both research questions regarding the teachers' perception and their strategies in developing professional development in teaching experience. The writer used these topics as the guideline to gain the data providing eight questions. There are five questions of teachers' interpretation and three questions for teachers' teaching strategies. After interviewing all participants, the writer found three main themes relating to their answers. Concerning the primary research question, the writer found out three main issues or themes; teachers' perception and understanding of their professional development, teachers' professional development activities, and teachers' obstacles or problem in gaining professional development. The detail of the themes is analysed in the following section.

1. Teachers' Perception and Understanding of Their Professional Development

All participants agreed that professional development is important for the teachers, especially in their teaching-learning process. All participants had the same understanding of professional development that is able to improve the teacher's competence. Teacher DW said "Yes, it's really important, because teachers are a profession that must continue to develop its insights, competence, knowledge, and skills in order to support the task of educating and teaching. Besides, other participants explained how their perspective about professional development.

(Teacher MW)

Absolutely it is. Continuous Professional Development will keep teachers update on educational innovation and it surely will affect the way we create teaching environment in the class.

In addition to the case, there were participants which had a bit different perspective from others.

(Teacher T I J)

Sure, it's important. We can use our knowledge about the strategy or technique we got from CPD to solve any problem we faced in teaching learning process.

(Teacher MB)

Yes very important to me, of course because my English skills will improve

(Teacher AS)

Yes, I think it is important. If the activity in the class is filled by some strategy of teaching in the classroom that it can be referenced by the teacher to their classroom.

Inventing/ creating or development of artworks													
Creating/ modifying of lesson tools													
Drafting standards, guidelines, questions, and in national/ province level													

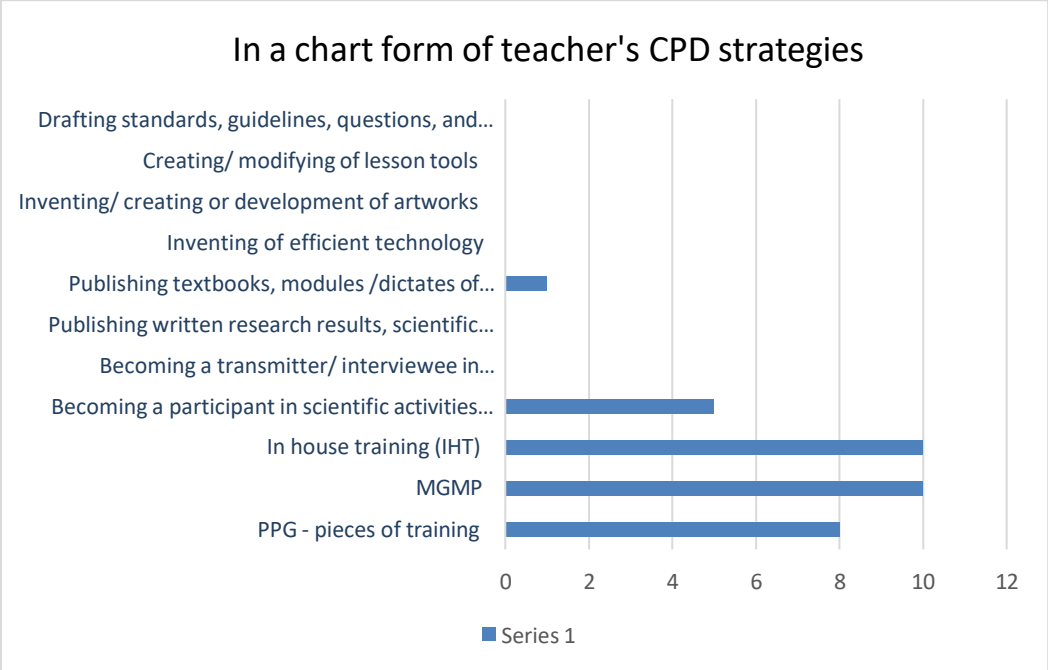


Figure 1. Chart of teacher's CPD strategies/activities

Table and chart 1.1 showed that the ten or all the teachers had undertaken self-development activities. They had participated in functional training activities, like PPG (Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Teacher Profession Education) and other training forms, MGMP (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran, Subject Teacher Discussion Forum), IHT (In-House Training), and also been involved in seminars, colloquium, and workshops as participants. From the interview, it was found that the ten teachers were involved in MGMP. (T1) As long as the interview process, MGMP was often mentioned by the teachers. They asserted that they actively participated in the MGMP activities. The effectiveness of MGMP is still really take the time to organize creative and educated events to improve teacher professionalism. MGMP should have brought more benefits to the teachers. Beside MGMP, the teachers were also involved in professional events, such as seminars, workshops, and pieces of training. Some teachers are even actively involved in seminars. The rest preferred to be involved in pieces of training held at school.

CPD is not always about participating in seminars, workshops, or pieces of training. They believed that reading articles that refer to education and discussing with colleagues

were also included as PD activities. One of the teachers stated that if she wanted to know about CPD, she would try to read and ask information from colleagues who had taken part in CPD activities. Apart from participating in teacher support group activities, professional events, updating information through the internet, and discussion among colleagues, one of the participants was also active in the judging of English contests and also student exchanges. He stated as indicated in the following interview excerpt

I've always been involved in coaching the national English debate. I am also the student exchange coordinator KL-Yes Programme. Although it is in the field of student exchange, it is still educational and cultural, and it supports my profession as a teacher. (T1 and 2).

They even upgraded their educational level as another action of improving their professionalism. In scientific publication activities, there was only one teacher (T10), who had been involved in these activities had written and published his work. One of the participants had been involved in innovative work, Inventing of efficient technology (T9).

Based on the answer of participants above, all participants have been gaining professional activities, especially for the informal term. Participants can involve themselves at any possible activities supporting their professional development. All participants argued that their activities such as using media social and internet for sharing information with others become another way for achieving the professionalism besides doing actions like analysing action research, Publishing textbooks, modules /dictates of learning per semester, books in the field of education, translation works, and Inventing of efficient technology.

3. Teachers' Problem in Gaining Professional Development

Based on the interview answers, all participants have the almost same issues in gaining their professional development about the obstacles found. Participant DW, F, UM, HDS, PA, MB and R said:

(Teacher DW) Underlying issues relating to teacher competence and professionalism in Indonesia include teacher competence, low motivation seeks to develop teacher quality, the disproportionate spread of teachers, a lack of awareness and enthusiasm for sharing knowledge and experience. (F) I find a few obstacles in gaining the professional development, If the activities by offline, it makes me difficulties to do that, because i will leave school and my students, if it's done by online, unstable signal usually found. (UM) Yes, Following the workshop, seminars or anything else to gaining professional development virtual meeting is not literally effective. (HDS) Traditionally, there are two major barriers to implementing effective professional development: money and time. (PA) Yes, I do, according to me the problem is I must find the language that allows me to see professional growth as ongoing. I do not magically become professionally developed. (MB) Yes, because related to time and activities in school must be shared (R) For me personally, very minimal in development because to lack of training for me. In addition, TIJ had another obstacle faced in improving her professional development besides the time issue: (Teacher TIJ) Yes. The most problem is the limitation of time because we have so many works and responsibility in our daily activities.

Furthermore, teacher AS had another reason about the obstacle in involving professional development activities. He said that “I think my big problem is about how to collect my intention in improving my competence. So, it makes me difficult to pass the test”. According to the explanation of participants above, the writer concluded that there were some issues besides the time management consist of the seriousness in contributing itself in the forum and lack of the opportunity to involve teachers in professional development activities

4. CONCLUSION

This From the results and discussion, it could be concluded that the senior high school teachers of English in Bulungan, North Kalimantan knew quite well what CPD was and were involved in CPD activities that had been mandated by the government as one of conditions to increase the teacher’s competence even though their participation was still very low in scientific publication and in innovative work activities. The types of CPD activities that teachers normally carried out were only highly focused on self-development activities, such as MGMP, IHT, and became participants in the seminar or workshop. Furthermore, the lack of understanding of innovative work activities made these teachers not participated in activities that emphasize technology in its application. Tight teaching schedules, family constraints, limited funds, and limited opportunities given by the schools constrained them to participate in CPD program. However, these senior high school teachers of English had good perception of the CPD. They perceived their CPD as activities whose objective was to make them become more effective teachers.

This study concludes that CPD significantly contributes to the professional development of English teachers in Bulungan. Teachers actively participate in CPD and perceive it positively. However, challenges such as time constraints, financial limitations, and limited access hinder optimal implementation.

To improve CPD effectiveness, it is recommended that government provide: (1) structured and accessible CPD programs; (2) schools allocate dedicated time for professional development; and (3) Financial support be increased.

REFERENCES

- Astuty, E. (2015). Implementation analysis of lecturer’s pedagogical competence on student’s academic achievement. *Journal of Management Research*, 7(2), 152-168.
- Baan, B.A. (2012). The development of physical education teacher professional standards competency. *Journal of Physical Education and Sports*, 1(1), 13-21.
- Bachtiar, B. (2020). The Characteristics of Effective Professional Development That Affect Teacher's Self-Efficacy and Teaching Practice. *Eduvelop*, 3(2), 131–144. <https://doi.org/10.31605/eduvelop.v3i2.624>
- Bachtiar, B. (2021). Professional Teaching and Learning Effectiveness: A Case of English Language Teaching in Indonesia. *International Journal of Education*, 14(1), 11–18. <https://doi.org/10.17509/IJE.V14I1.25533>

- Bachtiar, B., Juhana, J., & Pratiwi, W. R. (2024). Indonesian English language teachers' conceptions of critical thinking: challenge and strategy. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, 13(1), 617. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v13i1.26467>
- Bachtiar, & Nirmala, S. D. (2023). Exploring the Role of Professional Learning Community on Teacher's Instructional Fits: A Voice of Indonesian Teachers. *Journal of Innovation in Educational and Cultural Research*, 4(3), 511–522. <https://doi.org/10.46843/jiecr.v4i3.709>
- Bharati, P.L., & Chalise, S. (2017). Teacher development: Strategies and perception. *The Saptagandaki Journal*, (3), 69-78.
- Blackmon, L. (2013). *Teachers' perceptions of professional development activities which result in successful integration of classroom instructional technologies* (Theses & dissertations). Georgia Southern University, Georgia, America.
- Bonney, K.M. (2015). Case study teaching method improves student performance and perceptions of learning gains. *Journal of Microbiology & Biology Education*, 16(1), 21-28.
- Bruhn, A., McDaniel, S., & Kreigh, C. (2015). Self-monitoring interventions for students with behavior problems: A systemic review of current research. *Journal of Behavioral Disorders*, 40, 102-121.
- Camelo, S.H.H., & Angerami, E.L.S. (2013). Professional competence: The building of concepts and strategies development by health services and implications for nursing. *Text Context Nursing Journal*, 22(2), 552-560.
- Chang, M.C., Shaeffer, S., Al-Samarrai, S., Ragatz, A.B., Ree, J.D., & Stevenson, R. (2014). *Teacher reform in Indonesia: The role of politics and evidence in policy making*. Directions in Development. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Conderman, G. (2011). Middle school co-teaching: Effective practices and student reflections. *Middle School Journal*, 42(4), 24-31.
- Cooper, J.E. (2013). Keeping a journal: A path to uncovering identity (and keeping your sanity). *Journal of Educational Perspectives*, 46(2), 40-43.
- Craft, A. (2000). *Continuing professional development: A practical guide for teachers and schools* (2nd ed). New York, NY: Taylor and Francis Group.
- Dabbagh, N., & Kitsantas, A. (2012). Personal learning environments, social media, and self-regulated learning: A Natural formula for connecting formal and informal learning. *Internet and Higher Education Journal*, 15(1), 3-8.
- Dennick, R.G., & Spencer, J. (2011). *Teaching and learning in small groups: In medical education theory and practice* (1st ed). United Kingdom, Edinburgh: Elsevier.