

EFL teachers' perceptions on professional development for language proficiency maintenance and improvement

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ABSTRACT

This case study investigated the phenomenon of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' perceptions of professional development (PD) related to language proficiency, which has become a critical issue in the field of EFL teaching and has played an important role in facilitating students to learn English well. Interview guides were employed as the main instrument to elicit information about PD activities related to language proficiency maintenance and improvement, comprising closed-ended and open-ended items. The participants of the study were six professional EFL teachers who have had 5 to 30 years of teaching experience, selected from high schools in a capital city in Indonesia. Data were analyzed descriptively to result in frequencies of importance levels and qualitatively to explore patterns of PD activities. The results showed that two factors affecting the participants' acknowledgement of the importance of language proficiency PD activities: the need to maintain and improve language proficiency and the benefits of proficiency for teaching and learning. It is recommended that Indonesian EFL teachers develop self-awareness of the importance of improving their skills not only pedagogically but also professionally and realize that PD for language proficiency in particular is imperative to help them keep their professionalism high.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In countries where English is not an official language, the importance of English as an international language has been widely recognized. Those countries around the world have emphasized the needs for English language teaching (ELT) as an essential requirement of education [1]. In some countries, ELT has become a part of both secondary and tertiary education systems as a compulsory foreign language. For teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL), including Indonesian EFL teachers, such a status of English might bring about challenges related to their English competences in the context of the school environment. Indonesian EFL teachers generally do not have rich English environment for them to maintain as well as to improve their English proficiency. Therefore, there is a need to record empirical evidence about this issue of maintaining and improving EFL teachers' language proficiency.

Professional development (PD) activities are widely acknowledged as ways of dealing with EFL teachers' problematic issues [2] as they are to keep up with the current development of innovations and changes in the area of ELT by making efforts to refresh, update and upgrade their competences covering their

pedagogical competences and professional competences [3]–[5]. In the Indonesian context, concerns over Indonesian EFL teachers' language proficiency have been reported in several literature [6]–[11]. The English proficiency of Indonesian EFL teachers has been observed as far from being adequate. This phenomenon might be true partly because the most common and frequent top-down types of PD activities in Indonesia are related to improving teachers' pedagogical competences, dealing with teachers' performances in teaching, skills in developing materials and designing curriculum, and mastery in learning assessment. PD programs administered by The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) consist mostly of developing teachers' pedagogy-related competences [12]. PD programs are regularly offered by the government because they are often related to the launch of national policies in the country, such as the introduction of the new national curriculum. In contrast, teachers' professional competence which deals with their mastery of the subject they teach is somehow not given much attention. For Indonesian EFL teachers, PD for English language proficiency seems to have been considered as the responsibility of individual teachers to develop. EFL teachers often admitted that PD activities for language competence was rarely offered by the MoEC; they seemed to browse relevant programs by themselves [13]. Much research, however, revealed that EFL teachers still expected to get involved in PD programs to maintain and upgrade their English regularly [13]–[15]. The need for having a good mastery of language proficiency is even greater if Indonesian EFL teachers benchmark their standards to the ASEAN EFL teachers, requiring them to have the ability to communicate well in English with their students or their fellow teachers at the regional and international levels [16].

Previous research focusing on EFL teachers' PD activities found that with PD programs teachers experience changes of behaviors, their teaching performances become more effective and efficient, teachers become more observant and interactive to their students, and teachers also experience the increase of their self-efficacy in teaching [17]–[20]. There were also studies on EFL teachers' dealing with their pedagogy-related PD [12], [21], [22]. Yet, more empirical evidence is still needed to uncover information about PD activities which focus on addressing issues related to EFL teachers' proficiency. What types of proficiency-related PD activities are in fact offered to EFL teachers? What are the voices of EFL teachers concerning PD activities for language proficiency? These queries have inspired the current research which aims at investigating the phenomenon of EFL teachers' perceptions of PD activities related to English proficiency. The results will provide better understandings of the PD situations in Indonesia from the points of view of Indonesian EFL teachers as they voice their experiences regarding the maintenance and improvement of English language proficiency.

Professional development (PD) is generally defined as an individual teacher's efforts concerning their professional growth and development and as a responsibility of teacher education or training programs to equip teachers with necessary concepts, relevant skills in teaching and possible ways of professional growth in future career. PD covers several kinds of formally-based or informally-based activities which aim at enhancing teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and skills both within and beyond the initial preparatory stages of teacher education [23], [24]. In other words, according to previous study [25], PD programs might be initiated by teachers as an individual as well as offered through teacher education or teacher training programs for the purpose of teacher professional growth in their career.

In the field of ELT, PD has been understood as a critical process which caters teachers' needs, closely related to their realities and account for teachers as learners of their teaching. Teachers have to actively join activities related to continuous professional development (CPD) if they want to play a significant role at their optimum teaching conduct in helping students learn [26]. Meanwhile, professionalism for second language teachers refers to a combined set of disciplinary-based knowledge of second language teaching, ethical principled understandings, and time- and place-specific second language work practices [27]. It can then be understood that professional teachers are those who can show improvement or development of their related knowledge. For English teachers, having good skills in teaching is very essential; however, another crucial aspect in teaching the English subject is mastering the target language. English teachers are supposed to have good English proficiency. In fact, teacher's lack of English proficiency has been frequently identified as one of the serious obstacles for quality English teaching and learning [28]. In the context of ELT, teachers' language proficiency refers to teachers' ability to make maximum use of the target language to transfer knowledge, provide examples, develop relevant teaching materials, model proficient language users and offer valuable feedback on student learning [9].

Considering the significance of English competency for EFL teachers, it is essential that teachers develop an awareness of how to maintain and improve their language proficiency from time to time. As Richards [29] mentioned, of the 10 qualities or characteristics of exemplary language teachers, one concerns language proficiency. He argues that English language teachers ought to acquire a series of essential skills related to how to use the language. One of the expected skills covers the ability to provide language input at a level that is appropriate for learners, which according to Al-Maqtri and Ahmad [30] might concern the abilities in making sound pronunciation of the target language.

Indonesian teachers of English seem to face a number of problems about how to maintain and improve their English language, one of which is related to how often the teachers are in contact with or use the language in their daily life and job. Many of them might use the language in the most frequency possible only during their pre-service teacher education when their university courses had been conducted in English. After they completed their education, they might teach at schools whereby the environments do not support their active use of English; their school environments offer very minimum use of English [31], [32]. Besides, many EFL teachers in Indonesia are somehow tempted by their surroundings to codeswitch from English to their Bahasa Indonesia when communicating with their colleagues at schools or in academic forums and even when interacting with their students in the classrooms [31]–[33]. Additionally, their own English proficiency, which can generally be categorized in the lower intermediate proficiency range, possibly equal to the levels of B1 to B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale [9], seems to have caused them reluctant to use English more actively. This piece of evidence might imply that those teachers might not be fluent nor confident in using English in and out of the classroom contexts. Many teachers tend to use their Bahasa Indonesia because their English seems limited and also because their students might still have difficulty understanding English.

The aforementioned discussion concerning English proficiency of Indonesian EFL teachers has led to two conclusions. First, the importance of EFL teachers' language proficiency should receive attention from and raise awareness of both the EFL teachers themselves to pursuit PD activities related to language proficiency and the policy makers to provide the teachers with such PD programs to take part in. Second, there are challenges that secondary EFL teachers face which could imperil their beliefs about the significance of maintaining their language proficiency as a part of their professional competence as stipulated in the national standards of teachers so that they can plan to get involved in various PD activities, especially the ones to update, upgrade and refresh their English language proficiency. Thus, an investigation on how EFL teachers perceive the significance of proficiency-related PD activities and their active involvement on the activities needs to be conducted.

This present study investigated a specific area of PD, that is, PD related to language proficiency in a specific context (Indonesia). In other words, this research explores the perceptions of Indonesian secondary teachers of English about their proficiency-related PD activities through finding answers to these research questions: i) What do EFL teachers understand about PD activities?; ii) How do EFL teachers perceive PD activities related to language proficiency?; iii) What types of PD activities do Indonesian EFL teachers take to maintain and improve their language proficiency?

2. RESEARCH METHOD

A case-study design was employed in this research. It explored a more comprehensive and detailed portray of EFL teachers' perceptions about proficiency-related PD activities and the types of the activities they undertake to maintain and improve their English. According to previous study [34], the use of in-depth study of a certain activity, process, program, situation or an individual or small group of individuals as generally found in case studies is expected to result in clearer pictures and information in order to better understand the issues being investigated.

2.1. Participants

The participants of this study were six secondary school EFL teachers from the capital city of East Java Province, Indonesia, having been selected by using professional judgments or purposive sampling. They had been selected with the consideration that they seemed to understand the central phenomenon of the study and have potentials to provide information concerning the research objectives [34]. These teachers were considered exemplary teachers because of their performance and achievements in their teaching and learning activities at their schools as well as outside of the schools as revealed from their accessible data. These selected six teachers expressed their willingness to participate in this study and were then classified into three groups of participants based on the length of their teaching experiences. The first group consisted of two teachers considered the senior members of the subject teachers' association with more-than-25 years of teaching experiences. In addition to having attended several ELT seminars and workshops, these senior teachers were national instructors, that is, teachers who are chosen and selected by MoEC based on certain criteria and then trained to become national trainers to pass their knowledge and experiences to other teachers nationally or locally. The second group consisted of two teachers having teaching experiences between 15 to 25 years. They were also national instructors, had joined the National Olympic for Teachers (a national competition for subject teachers held by MoEC), and had attended a number of ELT seminars and workshops. The last group consisted of two teachers who had been teaching English for five to 15 years. All the six research participants were in fact active members of the subject teachers' association. They were identified as A, B, C, D, E, and F.

2.2. Research instrument

The instrument of this present study was interview guide. Interviews appear to best help us to get more detailed information from the respondents and to deal with the central phenomenon under study [34]. The points in the interview guide were designed to elicit as much data as possible in order to have clearer description of the participants' understandings and experiences concerning proficiency-related PD activities. The first section of the interview guide contains 11 closed-ended questions in order to dig up the participants' perceptions about the importance of activities to maintain and improve their language proficiency. These questions were expressed in the form of scales of very important, important, not important, and not important at all. The second section comprises open-ended questions investigating the teachers' views about PD activities in general, and language proficiency PD activities in particular, as well as about the types of language proficiency PD activities they have taken part.

2.3. Data collection and analysis

A series of interview meetings were carried out in the participants' schools before the COVID-19 pandemic. All the interviews were conducted in English and recorded. Interviews with each research subject took approximately one hour, then continued with informal interactions after the interviews. These interactions were not recorded due to issues of research ethics, but they offered some valuable information for data analysis, functioning as additional information to help describe and understand the phenomenon being investigated.

The data of this present study were analyzed based on the respondents' responses to the closed-ended items and the content of the interviews. The data about the importance of language proficiency PD activities were descriptively analyzed to result in frequencies indicating levels of importance. The data from the open-ended items were then categorized in reference to the themes addressed in the research questions. Indeed, the process of analyzing the data was challenging since the combination between closed-ended and open-ended questions resulted in the categorization of responses that lead to the intertwined data of EFL teachers' PD views and experiences related to the maintenance and improvement of their language proficiency.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. EFL teachers' understandings about PD activities

In general, what the participants know about PD is that it is generally offered and held by the Indonesian government through MoEC, and very often they were obliged to join PD activities. It can be in the forms of socialization of new curriculum and its implementation for the teaching and learning process in the classroom or chances to get scholarship to continue their study. For other PD activities than those offered by MoEC, they would voluntarily take part or not depending on how they perceived the importance of the activities for them. It can be said that the teachers take the position as autonomous learners. Interestingly, in the interviews the participants shared similar views and ideas in understanding PD as a way to improve and update their knowledge and skills in teaching and English proficiency. They perceived PD as a part of their responsibilities as a professional teacher. They viewed PD as an important activity which they have to undergo. For example, Mr. B said *"Not only PD can broaden and refresh our knowledge, but it also can enrich and tighten the social aspects of our professionalism."*

Mrs. A underlined the importance of PD as a means of keeping up with digital era and the latest development in ELT. The participants also reported that they were regularly asked and urged to join PD activities. Related to that, the participants stated that most of the PD activities which had been offered to them by MoEC or by teachers' associations concern areas of pedagogical competences, addressing such issues as understanding the latest curriculum launched by the government and making good lesson plans based on the curriculum. In this case, Mr. F mentioned that PD could refresh and recharge teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills. He also stressed that PD activities enable teachers to meet the demand of the teaching standards. The research participants also acknowledged that the PD activities they had joined generally dealt with pedagogy-related issues.

3.2. EFL teachers' perceptions about the importance of language proficiency PD activities

The results from the 11 closed-ended questions in the interview guide reflect the EFL teachers' perceptions about the importance of PD activities which can maintain and improve their language proficiency. They cover activities related to the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), the use of social media in learning English, taking courses and attending subject-matter seminars or workshops. The participants were asked about the importance of the activities to maintain and improve their language proficiency. The results can be seen in Figure 1.

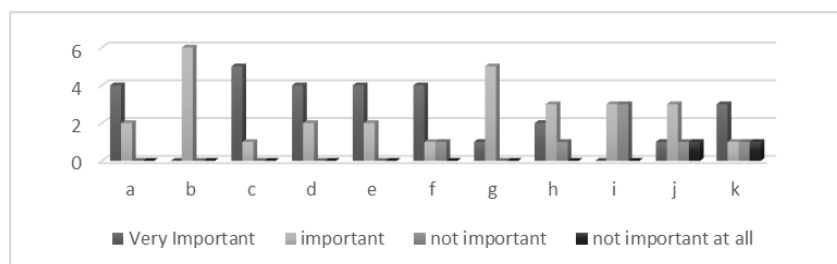


Figure 1. EFL teachers' perceptions about PD activities for language proficiency improvement

Figure 1 shows that for question a (reading books and magazines in English, including ELT materials), there were four teachers stating that the activity was very important and the other two stating important, implying that all of whom seemed to agree on the importance of the activity. For question b (writing diary, journal, including ELT articles for journals), all the participants stated that it was an important activity. Question c (using English as medium of instruction in the classroom), there are five teachers stating that it was very important and one stating important, showing that all of them agreed on the importance of using English as a medium of instruction to maintain and improve their English. Then, for question d (listening to music and news from English speaking world) and question e (watching English-speaking television programs), there were four teachers considering very important and the other two important. In regard to question f (communicating on social media in English), four teachers stated it was very important, one important, and another one not important. Question g (taking English training courses) was responded positively by the research participants as indicated from the data that one teacher stated very important and the other five stated important. For question h (attending regional or national and international ELT conferences), two teachers stated very important, three teachers stated important, and one teacher stated not important. Question i (becoming the presenter in regional, national or international ELT conferences) resulted in quite interesting responses; three of them stated important, whereas the other three stated not important. Question j (taking short courses abroad) was responded quite differently by the participants: one teacher stated very important, three teachers stated important, one teacher stated not important, and one teacher stated not important at all. The last question (joining online courses), three teachers stated very important, and the rest respectively stated important, not important and not important at all.

3.3. EFL teachers' perceptions about PD activities to maintain and improve language proficiency

The last research question for this present study is trying to get information about the kinds of activities that the research participants have joined and done which in their opinion can maintain and improve their language proficiency. The result of the interviews with the participants can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the participants have taken several types of activities which can help them maintain or improve their language proficiency. The responses can in fact be categorized into two major themes: first, activities leading to formal certification such as joining Test of English As Foreign Language (TOEFL), International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English For International Communication (TOIEC), seminars and workshops, and second, activities emerging from personal concerns with language proficiency self-awareness such as reading books and journals on ELT, watching English movies, and listening to music and news. They tried to use the target language as much as possible inside and outside the classroom. For example, they tried using English as a medium of instruction; they also used English when communicating with their students and colleagues, but the English use was very limited. All the participants admitted that even with their fellow English teachers at their schools and at the regular meetings of the subject teachers' association, they said that they rarely used English to discuss teaching plans, share ideas on teaching, or talk about their teaching problems and experiences.

Table 1 also indicates that the participants have some ideas and expectations for themselves as well as for the government or the MoEC related to PD activities which can help them improve or at least maintain their English language proficiency. They realized the importance of keeping their language proficiency in order not to experience proficiency attrition. However, such an awareness of the necessity of their language competence seems to compete with the many working load and activities they have to undertake at schools. Mrs. A in this case, for example, stated: *"Sometimes I don't have much time to do it, because being a teacher is really time consuming and tiring."* Mr. D added: *"The busy administrative work as teachers prevent us from doing so."* Surprisingly, he also acknowledged that EFL teachers should have individual initiatives to allocate their limited time to put their attention to and do some activities related to their language proficiency maintenance and improvement.

Table 1. Indonesian EFL teachers' language proficiency maintenance and improvement activities

No	Name	Language proficiency maintenance and improvement activities	
		Activities taken/done	Ideas on activities need to be taken or provided
1.	Mrs. A	Training of developing English skills, taking courses of TOEFL, TOIEC, and IELTS, becoming presenters in ELT seminars, developing language practice self-awareness	Joining online courses Expecting government to provide more trainings and workshops on English skills
2.	Mr. B	Joining workshops on writing, joining online courses for EFL teachers	Joining regular training and workshops for language proficiency
3.	Mrs. C	Reading books, becoming presenters in ELT seminars and conferences, developing language practice self-awareness	Conducting comparative study to other schools Expecting programs that show more serious attention toward EFL teachers' language proficiency
4.	Mr. D	Reading books and ELT journals, becoming presenters in ELT seminars and conferences, developing language practice self-awareness	Joining more trainings on reading and writing Expecting more PD activities on language proficiency and scholarships
5.	Mrs. E	Reading books and sources of ELT	Expecting more trainings on language proficiency
6.	Mr. F	Taking TOEFL course, attending seminars, developing language practice self-awareness	Suggesting more attention toward EFL teachers' language proficiency

As can be seen in Table 1, there are several comments from the respondents addressed to the government and the MoEC concerning PD activities specifically designed and offered for Indonesian teachers of English. The respondents shared the same ideas that there should be more teacher trainings and practical workshops related to the enhancement of their English language proficiency. Mr. B in particular stated that some kind of regulation to encourage and facilitate or support teachers to take part in various PD programs needs to be enforced. Mr. D suggested that professional support from the government can be in the form of scholarships to further their study, to take short courses overseas, or to join online courses. Meanwhile, Mrs. C highlighted that it is important that MoEC assure equal opportunities for all English teachers to take PD activities not only for those EFL teachers from favorite schools.

3.4. Discussion

The results of this present study suggest that Indonesian teachers of English perceived and shared the same ideas of the necessity of possessing, maintaining, and even upgrading a good mastery of English proficiency from time to time. They mostly have done some activities which can either maintain or improve their language proficiency, such as joining the association for English teachers, reading ELT-related materials or other English-printed journal articles or books, attending and presenting at national or international seminars or conferences held in English, and joining online courses. By doing these kinds of activities on a regular basis, the idea of becoming efficient, good, qualified, and successful teachers of English as mentioned by [9], [28], [29] would be a reachable and reasonable idea.

The participants in general perceived PD activities for language proficiency very important or important. For instance, Mr. B, Mrs. C and Mr. D indicated that such activities are essential because not only can they refresh and update their own knowledge and skills of English, but the activities can also give impacts on their students' English. Similarly, Mrs. A emphasized the importance of language proficiency PD activities because teachers' good language proficiency can influence the success of their teaching and learning processes of English [28] and it can also provide their students with good models on how to use the target language fluently [9]. The use of English as the medium of instruction in the classroom as well as outside the classroom for daily communication would be one of the chances for the students to get more exposure on how to use the target language more actively. Teachers should be the models for their students in learning and mastering the target language. Mrs. E even added that with the fast and vast development of information and technology, many students can get much information more easily by themselves covering relevant materials on how to learn and master English. Therefore, teachers need to continuously keep up with the knowledge development by joining various PD activities especially the ones related to English proficiency. Mr. B and Mr. F also underlined the significance of such PD programs due to the facts that language is dynamic and that language proficiency is not a fixed skill. In other words, language mastery might deteriorate and even become fossilized when the language is not used regularly nor frequently on a daily basis.

It has been reported that PD activities related to their professional competence in the area of English language proficiency have been rarely offered [12], [13] as also experienced by the participants under this study. It is evidenced from the comments by Mrs. A, the leader of the subject teachers' association, revealed during the interview session with her. The idea of doing autonomous activities to keep on maintaining and improving the language proficiency is likely to be one of the ways for the teachers to stay recharged, refreshed and updated with their language proficiency. Mr. D in this case added that he found his English

quality decreasing. He further stated that individual initiatives to maintain language proficiency is highly needed, and therefore he kept his English proficiency through internet browsing and library visits on a regular basis.

The participants of this study have initiated some actions related to language proficiency PD activities based on their own understandings and self-awareness as their attempts to keep their professionalism both pedagogically and professionally high as a part of their individual responsibility. They realized that their ongoing efforts to master the target language knowledge and skills will make them become more effective in their teaching, making their students more engaged in their learning and enabling themselves to become models of good and active language users for their learners. Furthermore, one of the qualities of being good English teachers is in fact having a good mastery of the target language [8], [9].

Sadly, however, these research participants admitted that there are still many other EFL teachers who do not share the same ideas and perceptions on the importance of maintaining and improving their language proficiency. Some appear to have low English fluency and lack of confidence in using English inside and outside of the classrooms which very often ended up with them choosing to use their first language. Previous research [33] found that most of Indonesian EFL teachers have had to deal with unsupportive environment where English was less likely to use; they have low English proficiency and prefer to use their first language (Bahasa Indonesia) to communicate with their colleagues and their students. Besides the issue of their own language proficiency, many teachers face another issue concerning their preferences of not using English, that is, their students' lack of ability in understanding English. These issues then imperil the teachers' motivation to maintain and improve their language proficiency.

The data of this study suggest that Indonesian EFL teachers understand and perceive PD, first as part of their institutional duty and obligation. They have to attend and present in PD activities especially when it is related with the socialization and the implementation of a new curriculum and how to make good lesson plans. Second, they perceive PD as individual calling for their professionalism in the form of skills development, non-stop process of learning and keeping up to date with new learning interests and development. As the manifestation of their perceptions, they have tried to develop themselves professionally in their work, be active in subject teacher association and attend and join professional development activities.

The teachers' determined effort to pursue and be involved in PD activities corresponds to the idea that ongoing professional development has given a clear significance in today's vast, fast and complex technologically changing world. EFL teachers are more likely to try the recent innovations in language teaching theories and education technology with their students [35]. Additionally, PD is a lifelong learning which is believed to last through a teacher's career from the beginning to retirement [36]. Having this understanding and awareness will enable EFL teachers to continue keeping abreast of and in touch with the changes and developments in TEFL by making some adaptations and applications with their ways, techniques, strategies and media for their contextual teaching and learning process.

In line with the positive perception on PD, Indonesian EFL teachers perceive language proficiency PD as an important activity to take and do. They view language proficiency PD activities as an individual responsibility driven by their motivation to abide with the current information in ELT issues and the realization of their needs to upgrade and maintain their teaching and language competency as many PD activities offered by the government generally cover pedagogical issues. PD which focuses on teachers' language proficiency is crucial because it can help EFL teachers to become more confident and competent in using the target language. Teacher's language proficiency, especially the oral proficiency in the target language, plays an important part in classroom practices, effectiveness in teaching, and student learning [37]. Therefore, EFL teachers should have some awareness of the need for keeping their professionalism both pedagogically and professionally. Intrinsically motivated teachers, and sufficiently autonomous teachers, with regard to PD activities, will likely contribute to positive effects on increased motivation among learners [38]. This is where the government and teacher education institutions can share the responsibility in creating and facilitating the teachers to develop through PD activities particularly language proficiency PD activities.

Based on the findings, language proficiency PD activities are rarely offered by the government or the MoEC, yet Indonesian EFL teachers have managed to hold them through their subject teachers' association, or they look for information of the PD activities from private language courses offered by such institutions as British Council, Indonesia Australia Language Foundation (IALF), Regional English Language Office (RELO) or other local language courses. Even though this may have caused them to spend some amount of money to join the PD activities, they would not mind since the activities will be worth more than what they have to pay. Other PD activities which the teachers can join in order not only to practice using the target language but also to deepen and widen their knowledge of ELT and share their experience in ELT is by joining ELT seminars or workshops as participants or even better becoming the presenters at these events. The teachers can also access journal articles, self-reflect on their own teaching, write reflective teaching journals, team-teach the subject, join teacher support groups, and be members of local, national, or even international professional associations for English teachers as mentioned by Murray [39]. A most recent

study by several researchers [40] showed that efforts should be made to ensure the sustainability of PD activities or programs. One of the efforts can be in the form of teacher action research (TAR), which has been proven empirically by previous researchers [40] to offer impacts on EFL teachers' pedagogical as well as professional competences and thus make TPD more sustainable because they can carry out TAR on daily basis without having to leave their students. None of the teachers in our study mentioned research activities as ways to realize PD activities.

Judging from the findings, we managed to see that EFL teachers' involvement and engagement in any target language development activities seem to face some challenges: i) The unsupportive pedagogical environment which fails to trigger teacher's self-awareness; ii) The extent of administrative works and teaching hours; iii) The absence of governmental-aid development activities offered; and iv) The presence of unequal opportunity given to engage in the development activities. Those challenges bring about two important issues; first, teachers may just continue with the current situations and admit the fact that supports to continuously develop are not always available for them, or, second, they may fight and deal with the challenges by striving for the best and taking realistic actions to look for and pursue their PD by themselves.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that Indonesian EFL teachers' perceptions and actions toward language proficiency PD are influenced by two factors. First, they have some understandings that even though not many PD activities are offered by the government regarding language proficiency, they are willing to take actions on their own because they realize the importance of maintaining and improving their language proficiency. Second, they acknowledge some benefits of having good English proficiency for their teaching quality and for their students' learning quality. Based on the research findings, it seems imperative for Indonesian teachers of English to develop their self-awareness on the necessity of enhancing their pedagogical and professional skills and realize that PD activities in general, and language proficiency PD activities in particular, are a lifelong development or growth. They have to, in person or through their association, continue to seek and create opportunities to work together with universities, for example, or with language organizations such as the Regional Language Centre (RELC) Singapore, the British Council, Indonesia Australia Language Foundation (IALF) and Regional English Language Office (RELO) to help them with their language proficiency maintenance and improvement.

As this present study involved English teachers of senior high schools, understanding the experiences of language proficiency PD activities by English teachers of lower education levels such as elementary or junior high schools or of tertiary education level such as universities might be worth considering to help portray the issue in broader contexts. Besides, it is also recommended that future research be oriented toward understanding how EFL teachers from private schools and public schools perceive and take actions for English proficiency PD activities. Additionally, exploring how informal institutions or organizations play roles in the efforts of offering continuous and sustainable language proficiency PD activities to English teachers in Indonesia appears to be worth.

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