

## **An analysis of the issues in English language teacher training and development**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The paper aims to provide a systematic review of the studies covering the issues in teacher training and development in the EFL/ESL context between the years 2010 to 2018. Thirty two studies were selected for the analysis after a rigorous search through the Web of Science database. Manifest content analysis was applied for analysing the data according to the following parameters: distribution of the studies based on their context, publication date, sample type (in-service, pre-service), research design, data collection tools, and thematic trends. The results indicate that most of the articles were published between 2016 and 2018 and focused predominantly on the in-service teacher development; qualitative studies outnumbered quantitative ones which could be explained by the nature of the research focus of these articles. Analysis of the findings of the research included in the study, reveal the major problems that teachers or student teachers face during their in-service or pre-service teacher training courses and also the in-service teachers' needs and preferences in terms of teacher development. The authors suggest viewing the process of teacher training and development within a constructivist paradigm highlighting the importance of previous teaching experience and also of the structure and the context regarding the process of teacher learning and development.

**KEYWORDS:** Teacher training, teacher development, ESL teachers, EFL teachers, systematic review

## **Introduction**

### ***Training and Development in Teacher Education***

The fast changing world requires constant upgrading of knowledge and skills in any profession. Teachers are not an exception here. It is argued that initial teacher education programs even of the highest quality “cannot provide teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for a lifetime of teaching” (OECD, 2009, p.12). This brings to the idea that teacher professional education needs to be a life-long goal (OECD, 2009). MacBeath (2012) pointed out:

Traditional criteria that gave a license to teach four or five decades ago, extending from recruitment to retirement, require to be revisited and refined in a fast moving social and economic world in which what it means to be a teacher is changing, and is likely to continue to change over the next few decades. (p. 93)

According to Farrell and Richards (2005), teacher education pursues two broad goals within its scope: training and development. The major distinction between the two lies in the time-span and goals. While teacher training is usually oriented at specific and immediate goals and is short-term, teacher development pursues long-term goals and refers to general professional growth (Farrell & Richards, 2005). Bowen (as cited in Mann, 2005) contrasts training and development as one having the outside view perspective and the other – inside view. Foord (2009) stressed on the bottom-up nature of teacher development. Unlike training, it does not focus on a specific task or job. It aims at reflectiveness through examining different dimensions of teacher practice (Foord, 2009). According to Foord (2009), development involves less knowledge transmission than training, and the latter he treats as a ‘supervised development’.

Due to the scarcity of research that analyse the trends in the research on English language teacher training and development, in the present study, we aimed to provide a systematic review of research on teacher training and development in the EFL/ESL context for the period 2010-2018.

The research questions addressed in the paper are:

1. What are the general thematic trends of the studies on the issues of teacher training and development in the EFL/ESL context?
2. What are the major methodological trends of the studies on the issues of teacher training and development in the EFL/ESL context?
3. What are the general patterns of the findings of the studies on the issues of teacher training and development in the EFL/ESL context?

### ***Language Teacher Training and Development***

Language teacher training as teacher training in general, is realized at two levels: pre-service and in-service. The major goal of pre-service training is equipping student teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to start teaching (Arikan & Turhan, 2009). As it has been discussed earlier, in the world that undergoes constant evolution, qualifications soon become outdated (Farrell & Richards, 2005; OECD, 2009). Activities provided by an institution to its teachers with the aim of upgrading their knowledge and skills are often referred to as in-service teacher training (Farrell & Richards, 2005). Mann (2005) defined the goals of teacher training for language teachers as introducing new trends in language teaching methodologies, teaching

strategies, course design, coursebook materials, familiarizing with terms and concepts that originate in the field. Among some other goals, Farrell and Richards (2005) also mentioned teaching how to use effective techniques in questioning, and giving feedback on performance. Among developmental goals for language teachers, Farrell and Richards (2005) suggested taking a critical look at one's principals, theories, beliefs of language teaching; realizing how the teacher role changes depending on learner types in the classroom; learning about different styles of teaching, understanding how students learn the second language.

Teacher development is an ongoing process, it continues throughout the whole teaching career (Foord, 2009; Hismanoğlu, 2010; Mann, 2005). Freeman's descriptive model distinguishes the following areas of teacher development: skills, knowledge, awareness and attitudes (Foord, 2009). Foord (2009) suggested five circles of teacher development: 1) You; 2) You and your students; 3) You and your colleagues; 4) You and your school; 5) You and your profession. Each of these categories represent practical recommendations of how teachers can develop.

Despite the variety of ways of teacher development, such as peer-coaching, reflective teaching, keeping a teaching journal, mentoring, using critical incidents, doing action research, etc., it is necessary to accept that there is no right or wrong way to develop and that teachers "can benefit from a variety of experiences" (Foord, 2009, p.16).

## **Method**

The manifest analysis model was applied for analysing the content of the articles included in the study. This type of analysis allowed the researchers to convey the content of the articles by staying close to the text (Bengtsson, 2016; Cash & Snider, 2014). Content analysis was useful in conducting "rigorous analysis, examination and verification of the contents of written data" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 563). The following parameters have been distinguished for the analysis of the articles: distribution of the studies based on their context, publication date, sample type (in-service, pre-service), research design, data collection tools. Data were extracted from the texts according to these parameters and then analyzed statistically. Thematic distribution was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Findings were analyzed for each thematic category separately.

### ***Inclusion criteria***

*Timeline.* Articles published between 2010 (the start of a new decade) to 2018 were included in the study.

*Publication type.* Articles available through the Web of Science database were seen as eligible.

*Research design.* Articles of both qualitative and quantitative research design were included.

*Context.* There were no limitations in terms of the context.

### ***Search procedures***

A comprehensive literature search was conducted through the Web of Science database. Various combinations of key words were used to conduct the search. The key words were as follows: English, language, EFL, ESL, teacher training, teacher development, reflective teaching, teaching journals, action research, mentor, peer-coaching. In the result of the search, more than 50 articles were identified. After a more thorough investigation of the contents of the articles, 32 of them were seen eligible to be included in the present study as the rest of the

articles focused on the issues of teacher training and development in fields other than foreign language teaching. For the analysis, we have accessed full versions of most of the articles.

### ***Coding***

The studies were coded by using a code sheet. The data coded included year of publication, sample, context, research design and data collection tools, research focus and findings.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### ***General patterns***

Some general patterns such as distribution of the studies based on their context, publication date and sample type (in-service, pre-service) are presented in the tables below. Table 1 presents contextual distribution of the studies. As it is seen from the table, most of the relevant articles were from Iran (13%), Turkey (13%), Australia (10%) and China (10%). In total, we have identified 21 contexts.

*Table 1.* The Distribution of the studies based on their context

Context	f	%
Iran	4	13%
Turkey	4	13%
Australia	3	10%
China	3	10%
South Korea	2	6%
Canada	1	3%
Chile	1	3%
Columbia	1	3%
Egypt	1	3%
Finland	1	3%
Japan	1	3%
Mexico	1	3%
Morocco	1	3%
New Zealand	1	3%
North Cyprus	1	3%
Norway	1	3%
Philippines	1	3%
Slovakia	1	3%
Thailand	1	3%
UK	1	3%
USA	1	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 presents results based on their publication date between 2010 and 2018. Most of the articles were published in 2018 (44%) and 2017 (28%). We have not found any relevant publication for the years 2011, 2013 and 2014.

*Table 2.* Distribution of the studies based on their publication date

<b>Year of publication</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>2010</b>	1	3%
<b>2011</b>	0	0
<b>2012</b>	1	3%
<b>2013</b>	0	0%
<b>2014</b>	0	0%
<b>2015</b>	2	6%
<b>2016</b>	5	16%
<b>2017</b>	9	28%
<b>2018</b>	14	44%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>

As seen in Table 3, most of the studies on the issues of language teacher training and development were conducted among in-service school teachers (59%). There was a small number of studies (13%) that focused on university in-service teachers. The rest of the studies (28%) were conducted among pre-service teachers.

*Table 3.* Distribution of the studies based on the sample

<b>Level</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>In-service</b>	School	19	59%
	University	4	13%
<b>Pre-service</b>		9	28%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Methodological trends*

The analysis of methodological trends in the reviewed articles revealed that 59% of the studies employed a qualitative research design, which may be partly attributed to the nature of the teacher development research which greatly relies on reflective journals, reports and observations. A mixed research design has been applied in 22% of the articles and a quantitative research design in 19%.

*Table 4.* The frequencies of research design

<b>Research Design</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Qualitative</b>	19	59
<b>Quantitative</b>	6	19
<b>Mixed</b>	7	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 reflects the frequency of data collection tools. Qualitative data collection tools dominated in the studies. Quantitative data collection tools were questionnaires: open-ended, multiple choice and Lickert. As seen from the table, Lickert- type questionnaires were the most frequently used (9% against 5% for open-ended and multiple choice questionnaires each). From qualitative tools, semi-structured interviews were the most popular (22%). The researchers also used unstructured interviews (2%) and focus-group interviews (3%). Among other data

collection tools, the most frequently used were reflective journals (15%), reports (7%) and observations (6%).

*Table 5.* The frequency of data collection tools

<b>Data Tools</b>	<b>Collection Sub-category</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Questionnaire</b>	Open-ended	3	5
	Likert	6	9
	Multiple choice	3	5
	Yes/No	1	2
<b>Interview</b>	Semi-structured	15	22
	Unstructured	1	2
	Focus-group	2	3
<b>Reflective journal</b>		10	15
<b>Report</b>		5	7
<b>Observations</b>		4	6
<b>Documents</b>		3	5
<b>Field notes</b>		3	5
<b>Video-recordings</b>		2	3
<b>Log</b>		2	3
<b>Narrative</b>		1	2
<b>Evaluation sheet</b>		1	2
<b>Artifacts</b>		1	2
<b>Teacher diary</b>		1	2
<b>ePortfolio</b>		1	2
<b>Mentor feedback</b>		1	2
<b>Student e-mails</b>		1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>67</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Thematic trends*

Most of the overviewed studies were related to teacher development while some of the articles focused on the issues in teacher training. This disproportion can be explained by the “shift from traditional in-service training to professional development models” (Uysal, 2012, p. 24). Among the reviewed articles on teacher development, the majority (11 articles) were dedicated to various aspects of reflective teaching. Action-research as a tool of professional development was discussed in 5 articles. Another theme that came up from the reviewed literature was the issue of professional development for working with multicultural students (3 studies). Peer-coaching was discussed in 2 articles. The rest of the research (one article for each topic) were on team-teaching, the use of e-portfolios and the European portfolio in teacher development, mentor-teaching, critical incidents and teacher community.

### *Teacher training*

All of the reviewed articles on in-service teacher training applied a mixed method design to collect the data. Ali (2018) conducted a study with the aim to identify training needs of EFL teachers working in inclusive classrooms with special educational needs (SEN) students in Egypt. The results revealed that teachers needed more specialized training and professional development courses organized by the educational institutions they were employed. According

to the study, most of the teachers preferred workshops and mentor-supported learning that would help them in dealing with problems encountered in their classrooms.

Uysal (2012) undertook an evaluative study of an in-service educational training (INSET) program for primary school teachers in Turkey. Through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and analysis of course materials, she found out that the program did not have enough relevance with practice and contextual needs of the teachers. Uysal (2012) suggested a comprehensive needs analysis to be conducted before launching an INSET. Among the current problems she pointed to were the top-down and transmission-based character of INSET programs (Uysal, 2012).

Vold (2017) in Norway and Yoonhee (2016) in South Korea, reported on the significant positive impact that training programs abroad have on language teachers especially in terms of developing their speaking skills.

Gan and Yang (2018) in Hong-Kong (China), Hall and Townsend (2017) in Japan, Heikkinen, Kiviniemi, Korhonen and Tynjala (2017) in Finland, Moussaid and Zerhouni (2017) in Iran, carried out research in the context of practicum during the pre-service teacher training programs. Their findings revealed that student teachers had difficulty connecting theory with practice. Among the problems that pre-service teachers faced, the authors mentioned lack of pedagogical knowledge necessary to transfer subject-matter into effective teaching, insufficient knowledge in teaching methodology and classroom management problems (Gan & Yang, 2018; Moussaid & Zerhouni, 2017). Hall and Townsend (2017) in their study suggested an ePortfolio design with incorporation of critical incidents in it as a “way to bridge the theory-gap divide” and also promote pre-service teacher reflection skills (p.8).

### *Reflective teaching*

As it has been mentioned above, most of the research in the area of professional development in the context of EFL and ESL dealt with the issue of reflective teaching. Different aspects of reflective teaching were discussed in the works by Ashraf and Zolfaghari (2018), Castañeda-Trujillo (2017), Fakazlı and Kuru Gönen (2017), Farrel (2016), Kheirzadeh and Sistani (2018), Lengeling and Pablo, (2016), Linaker (2018), Motallebzadeh, Ahmadi and Hosseinnia (2018), Pinner (2018), Strakova (2016), Valdez, Navera and Esteron (2018).

Fakazlı and Kuru Gönen’s (2017) study in Turkey, reported reflective teaching to be an effective tool in teacher development. Pinner (2018) through an autoethnography method reflected on his own teaching experience. Farrell (2016) conducted a qualitative case-study among three ESL native speaker novice university teachers in Canada. The study described how participation of these teachers in a reflection group helped them understand and overcome the many shocks of teaching in the first semester at a university.

Lianker (2018) reported on the use of the European Profiling Grid (EPG) in developing teacher reflection. The findings suggested that EPG helped the teachers develop a deeper understanding of their skills and practices. Strakova (2016) in Slovakia, investigated the effects of the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages on the development of reflective skills. Her study suggested that the European portfolio helped the student teachers “break down the complexity of teacher’s job into individual aspects and consider those separately” (Strakova, 2016, p.81).

The findings in the study by Kheirzadeh and Sistani (2018) in Iran, indicated that a positive correlation exists between teacher experience and level of reflectivity. The findings of another study conducted in the Iranian context by Motallebzadeh et al. (2018), showed different results, reporting there to be a weak positive correlation between teachers' experience and their level of reflectivity.

### *Action research*

As a means of professional development, action research has been discussed in the works by Bedir and Petek (2018), Burns and Edwards (2016), Dikilitaş and Tanış (2018), Kebble (2017), Yan (2017). The findings of these studies have proven that action research is an effective tool for teacher development. Dikilitaş and Tanış (2018) argued that action research -is effective in fostering teachers' practical knowledge. The mixed design study by Burns and Edwards (2015) was predominantly concerned with the issue of sustainability of the impact of action research. At the micro-level, among the sustained effects, the authors mentioned the strengthened feeling of confidence and recognition. For some of the teachers, action research experience was one more step in a career "to commence research degrees" (Burns & Edwards, 2015, p. 14). At the macro level, according to Burns and Edwards (2015), the effects of action research could be seen on the school where the teacher works and even more, in publications and presentations on the research results.

### *Teacher development for working in multicultural classrooms*

This subsection deals with the issue of preparing teachers for working in bilingual or multicultural classrooms. The existing research stressed on the need for culturally responsive pedagogy in the world where vast migrations have been taking place.

Several studies covered the issue of teaching in classrooms with culturally diverse students. Ollerhead (2018) conducted a case-study with ethnographic orientation among pre-service students in Australia. In her study, she examined how pre-service teachers developed their knowledge and skills in literacy pedagogy for working with EAL students during a training course and the subsequent practicum field-work. Ollerhead (2018) emphasized the need for explicit training to prepare teachers for working in multicultural classrooms.

Biebricher, East, Howard and Tolosa (2018) carried out a qualitative case-study in New-Zealand among two in-service language teachers facilitated by university researchers. The research showed how these teachers developed their intercultural language teaching skills through reflective inquiry of their own practice. The findings revealed positive results in terms of acquiring necessary intercultural communicative competence among the teachers.

Ariail, Balderas, Mellom, Portes and Straubhaar (2018) in their article raised the issue of prejudiced attitudes of predominantly white teachers towards Latino EAL students in the south of the United States. Their findings proved a culturally responsive conversation pedagogy to have had an impact in mitigating such teachers' negative beliefs and biases towards Latino students.

### *Team teaching*

Little attention has been paid to such a cooperative way in teacher development as team teaching. Despite its obvious benefits such as "collegiality", "different roles" in the classroom,



“combined expertise” etc. (Farrell, 2016, p. 160) there has been little evidence of using team teaching in teacher education and development (Barahona, 2017). The only relevant study we were able to find was one by Barahona (2017). The results of this multiple case-study conducted in Chile among pre-service English language teachers during their practicum indicated to obvious benefits of team-teaching in learning profession and developing collaborative skills.

### *Community of practice*

Similar to team teaching approach, community of practice may be seen as a developmental tool that aims at strengthening of cooperation between teachers. Barley and Shuk-Han (2015) reported on an ethnographic study in Hong Kong among 18 ESL teachers who were involved in close collaboration with each other with the aim of professional development over a period of 10 months. The study based on ethnographic field-notes, reflective journals and evaluative comments revealed the strengths and milestones of a community of practice in teacher development. According to the authors, bringing together teachers of different ages, level of experience and pedagogical approaches may be a challenge in a collaborative work. The authors stressed on the importance of teacher commitment as well as “communal responsibility” for effective teacher development.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

The systematic review has provided a description and analysis of the major issues in teacher training and development in the EFL/ESL context for the period of 2010-2018. The articles were analyzed according to the following parameters: distribution of the studies based on their context, publication date, sample type (in-service, pre-service), research design, data collection tools and thematic trends.

As the findings indicate, most of the reviewed articles were published in 2018 and 2017 and focused predominantly on the in-service teacher development. Qualitative studies outnumbered quantitative ones which could be explained by the nature of the research focus of these articles. Among quantitative studies, Likert-type questionnaire was the most popular. Qualitative studies mostly relied on semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, reports and observations.

Based on the analysis of the findings of research on language teacher training and development, in pre-service teacher training, this study advocates for the importance of overcoming the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed for teaching. With regard to in-service teacher training, needs analysis is required before introducing any teacher training program. Besides, for better developing foreign language skills, both in-service and pre-service language teachers would benefit from training programs abroad. In order to be able to meet the demands of the rapidly changing world, opportunities for teacher development should be created and fostered by the administration of educational institutions through the introduction of various developmental programs such as peer-coaching, team-teaching, mentor-teaching, creating of teacher communities and also introduction of teacher portfolios that would contribute the reflective skills of the teachers. The need for preparing teachers equipped with skills and knowledge for working in multilingual and multicultural classrooms is another challenge that needs to be addressed by teacher educators, school and university administrations as well as education policy-makers.

This study also suggests viewing the process of teacher training and development within a constructivist paradigm. Teachers are active learners throughout their lifespan and learning is

not just accumulation of knowledge. Similar to student learning, teacher learning is situated within a particular context and is built on the previous knowledge and experience (Vygotsky, 1978; Warford, 2011). Moreover, within this paradigm we stress on the importance of the context regarding the process of teacher learning and development (Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers may greatly benefit from interaction with more experienced and competent others such as colleagues, trainers or other persons in the field through teacher training and development programs.

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