

# Current Discussions on Foreign/Second Language Education

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Editors: Mehmet BARDAKÇI • İhsan ÜNALDI



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**CURRENT DISCUSSIONS ON FOREIGN/SECOND  
LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

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## FOREWORD

Turks have been following the Western traditions in the teaching of English, French, German, and other European languages for that matter for at least 200 years. This is especially so in the theoretical framework of language teaching and popular techniques and methods recommended or even imposed. The Grammar-Translation Method was THE method almost until the emergence of the Direct Method towards the end of the 19th century, both in Europe and Turkey. Almost all the major developments in the area of foreign language teaching in Europe and the USA were soon enthusiastically reflected in Turkey. This was the case with the Direct Method, the first breakaway from the Classic Method, as well as with the other subsequent methods. In the 1930s, Lawrence William Faucett, an eminent American linguist, was invited to Turkey to introduce the Direct Method. Later in the 1950s, Edward Vivian Gatenby, a world-famous British linguist, shaped English Language teaching policies and practices in Turkey. His coursebook series *A Direct Method English Course* was used in state middle schools and high schools for more than twenty years. As the needs and facilities changed in the West, so did the approaches and methods. This was only natural, but the methodological changes were always almost exclusively initiated by Western scholars and what Turkish scholars did was to adopt them with little or no adaptation until recently. Now I happily observe that there is a considerable number of well-trained Turkish applied linguists who not only keep abreast with the developments in language education in the world as their predecessors did but also review the alternatives with a critical eye and undertake their own research.

The 14 sections in the book in your hand have all been produced by such Turkish applied linguists representing a wide spectrum of Turkish universities. These scholars, most of whom I know personally either as close friends, colleagues, or ex-students of mine, are all diligent researchers. They have gone through the Turkish educational system as language learners and teachers. They produced many articles and presented numerous online papers during the lockdown and other restrictions due to the Corona Pandemic. This book was also conceived in such a context. The topics they covered are as varied as the authors' educational and professional backgrounds. They introduce and analyze major issues in ELT from teacher training to culture, from CEFR to scaffolding young learners, from vocabulary span to translanguaging, from 21st-century skills to professional development, from integrated skills to distance education, from test anxiety to EMI, from literature to posthumanism. These researchers follow the major applied linguistic trends in the English-speaking countries like the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and the rest of the world on the one hand and study

the actual language teaching practices and problems related to foreign language teaching in Turkey on the other. In other words, they learn and report straight from the horse's mouth.

I have known the editors, Mehmet Bardakçı and İhsan Ünalđı for a long time. They also co-authored the 10th chapter of this book titled "Vocabulary Size of English Language Learners". İhsan Ünalđı got his Ph.D. degree from Çukurova University, which has a long tradition and a good name in English Language Teaching. He is presently employed in Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University. As for Mehmet Bardakçı, he did his Ph.D. in Gazi University, where he took a graduate course from me and chose me as his supervisor. Gazi University has the oldest and probably the largest ELT department in Turkey, at least in terms of professors. I witnessed Bardakçı's devoted and painstaking work and the incredible headway he made at Gazi University. The three of us co-authored an article some time ago, too.

I strongly believe that this book can serve as an invaluable source of information for English teachers, teacher candidates, and young researchers in ELT for it touches upon all the major trends in the field and reveals a panorama of the state of the art techniques, methods, approaches and applied linguistic research conducted in Turkey and abroad.

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## EDITORIAL

Two sentences mark the beginning of the current era: “Mistakes were made.” and “Things will never be the same again.” The contexts in which these sentences were used were highly political. However, strangely enough, these two sentences also fit unbelievably well with other contexts.

It has been over 40 years since language researchers realized the mistakes that were being made in language pedagogy and started discussing linguistic and communicative competence and making inferences based on these discussions for language teaching practitioners.

Compared to today’s digitally oriented world, scientific discussions in those days were more stable, and they extended over long periods of time. If something was in print, it always meant that it was worth printing. There were times when researchers waited for weeks to analyze an article that they demanded from a library located in another city. On the other hand, in today’s world, scientific knowledge also becomes obsolete, sometimes even in the blink of an eye, like everything else.

The plethora of academic research is a stand-alone topic of discussion and concern. As all universities have an inherent research role, publication becomes their fundamental function. As a result of this, millions of research articles and books are published every year. In this respect, researchers in any academic field face a significant problem. Today, it is more challenging than ever to catch up with new scientific development, even in a specific field of study.

The context of teaching English as a foreign or a second language (EFL/ESL) is no exception to this global trend. When we look at the history of language teaching and learning, we can see designer methods coupled with commercial concerns. New and fancy names are given to old and forgotten methods or techniques, and they are pushed into the markets for mass consumption. Obviously, this is a problem not just for researchers in the field but also for language teaching practitioners. At this point, some caution is required. Language teaching researchers and practitioners need to agree on what kind of research and related outcomes are more valuable, practical, and applicable. This book is intended to trigger discussions to overcome this issue to certain extents.

The primary audience of this book is EFL/ESL researchers and practitioners. However, to some extent, it is also accessible for graduate and undergraduate students. With this project, we wanted to provide some pointers as to current discussions in EFL/ESL context. We tried to take a broad and inclusive view to help those interested in catching up with what is new in the field. Therefore, we covered a wide range of topics such as teaching language skills, distance/online teaching, teaching English to young learners, teacher development, CEFR, translanguaging practices, culture capital, vocabulary size, test anxiety, English as a medium of instruction, literature in language teaching and metamodernism.

In such projects, it is always challenging to decide on the order of the chapters. The current order of the topics is based on convenience, and we believe that if the book is to be used as course material, the topics can easily be adapted and reordered depending on course objectives.

Another important point is that this volume is limited to the areas of expertise of the contributors, and it is not a thematic one. The EFL/ESL field is too large to cover in just one volume, which looks like a motivation to project further volumes that will cover other essential topics in the field.

As the editors of this book, we are grateful to the contributors who took part in this small-scale project, and want to mention their names here: Adnan Yilmaz, Akın Gürbüz, Arda Arıkan, Burcu Şentürk, Doğan Yüksel, Eda Nur Özcan, Ercan Kaçmaz, Erkan Yüce, Esim Gürsoy, Fadime Yalçın Arslan, Hüseyin Ateş, Kağan Büyükkarcı, Mehmet Altay, Mehmet Galip Zorba, Şevki Kömür, Sezen Arslan, Timuçin Buğra Edman, and Zekiye Müge Tavail.

We are also grateful to our very own Abdulvahit Çakır, whose support and insights kept us holding on along the way.

Our students Şeyma Çidem and Jahan Babahanova deserve special thanks.

Furthermore, last but not least, we are also particularly grateful to the PEGEM publishing house family for their support and professionalism throughout the publishing process.

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# CHAPTER 1

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: FOCUS ON NOVICE TEACHERS

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### **Introduction**

In the landscape of English language teaching, educational and instructional innovations have often been welcomed and integrated into the teaching and learning processes, which is due mainly to the global status that English has. As underlined by myriad researchers and scholars, today, the English language is spoken by billions of non-native speakers as a second language or foreign language worldwide. The fact that non-native speakers have already outnumbered native speakers has made it the predominant language of various domains. Considering the increasing need for English as a language of international trade and communication and other issues as the outcome of globalization, the considerable impacts of such external factors have reshaped the way English is taught (Richards, 2008). These external factors have led to paradigm shifts, new language teaching policies, different perspectives towards teaching English, and new material designs. From a global standpoint, English is now used and taught as a lingua franca, an additional language, as an academic language, a global language, an international language in different parts of the world. Besides, from mobile phones to social media, various technological devices and software are designed to teach English. All those impose new challenges and areas of competence on English language teachers.

Curricular and instructional changes, planned or sudden, are an indispensable part of education (Collinson et al., 2009). In line with this, the Covid-19 pandemic reminded us all how significant actors that teachers are. Despite online platforms enabling the delivery of courses and the abundance of online teaching materials, it is still the teacher responsible for planning and executing teaching. Another important point the Covid-19 pandemic revealed is that great importance and

care should be attached to teachers' professional development. As underlined in many studies, teacher education programs may fail to train candidates for how to do their jobs in real life (Hartshorne et al., 2020), or, as seen in the case of the Covid-19 pandemic, no teacher education programs should be expected to prepare candidates for how to teach under such unprecedented circumstances (Daniel, 2020). In the aftermath of the pandemic, teachers' flexibility and adaptiveness to new realities come to the fore (MacIntyre et al., 2020) as some of the crucial qualities, among many others. However, teachers gradually gain these qualities through experience and following professional development strategies, which novice teachers lack.

This chapter aims to present an overall picture of novice English teachers' professional development and focuses on the challenges they face and the strategies they employ in light of the recent studies. As professional development is an ambiguous term, first, this term is conceptualized in terms of English language teaching. In the following sections, two core approaches to professional development, the experience of being a novice teacher, and critical strategies for professional development are discussed.

### **Conceptual Framework of Professional Development**

Despite the existence of prior studies, professional development emerged as a distinct area of research around the 1990s with a focus on gathering data about teachers' professional lives and disseminating knowledge and ideas about how to enhance teaching (Evans, 2002). This, inevitably, led to a paradigm shift; once regarded as the ultimate level, pre-service teacher education programs began to be considered the initial step of the teaching profession with the intent to equip teacher candidates with basic field-specific content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and practical skills (Struyf et al., 2011). As Johnson (2006) elaborates, traditional English language teacher education is heavily anchored in the premise that teachers should first learn the content and how to deliver it effectively; then, they improve what they have learned through observation and practice; lastly, they develop pedagogical expertise during the induction years of teaching. Unlike the traditional view regarding professional development as a short-term and stand-alone process, it is now considered a continuing process that covers the teacher's whole career. Associated with effective teaching, the overall aim of professional development is to help teachers sharpen up their knowledge, skills, and abilities and gain new ones when necessary.

In general education, professional development has been gaining currency since the last decade, and the current literature is profound and well-documented, yet it still poses problems impeding the clarity of the term. This term is closely associated with various terms such as teacher development, in-service teacher education, and training, teacher preparation, teacher growth. Despite subtleties and nuances that distinguish one from others (Mann, 2005), it is not always easy to articulate clear-cut distinctions between these terms as they have overlapping meanings (Bolam & McMahon, 2004) and also are used interchangeably (Craft, 2000; Evans, 2002). Furthermore, the literature offers many models, which expands the scope of professional development both in breadth and depth. The need for a more explicit conceptualization is accentuated in the literature (e.g., Desimone, 2009; Mann, 2005; Evans, 2002), yet it also offers a wide range of definitions among which Day's (1997) is considered a working and less problematic one (Bolam & McMahon, 2004). As Day (1997) elaborately defines:

Professional development consists of all-natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group, or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills, and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning, and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives (Day, 1997, p. 4).

Such a conceptualization contrasts with the traditional view towards professional development and reveals its complexity. Day's (1997) comprehensive definition enunciates the ongoing and transformative nature of professional development embedded in teachers' daily lives. This emphasis is significant as it indicates that professional development no longer solely refers to applying theories into practice; on the contrary, it underlines the value of practitioner knowledge, which is socially constructed in specific contexts through first-hand experiences and reflection (Richards, 2008). Additionally, personal and collaborative aspects of professional development are also incorporated as essential aspects. Likewise, the research on English language teachers' professional development portrays a similar picture. Aligning the term with the understanding of language teacher learning, Johnson (2006, p. 239) encapsulates integral features that emerged from research findings as follows: