An investigation into the Professional Development of English Teachers in Syrian Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Despite continued interest and research into teacher professional development (TPD), as an important topic within English language teaching, the researcher identified some areas where there is much still to reveal. These include: teachers' customary engagement with different TPD activities aside from when a researcher imposes some TPD activity on them for a study (normal TPD practices); whether teachers are aware of the notion of TPD, and, if so, what they think it is; what TPD activities they would ideally like to follow: and what they and other stakeholders in a particular context see as the effects of TPD on teaching (beliefs about TPD).

I interviewed twenty secondary school teachers of English in provincial Syria, of varying backgrounds (e.g. years of experience, training, rural or urban teaching location) and eighteen other stakeholders with a range of relevant roles in the same context (e.g. head teachers, trainers, ministry officials). The data was analysed thematically and showed that individually the teachers exhibited beliefs that lack fully formed knowledge of the concept of TPD, though between them most of the key features were mentioned. Teachers reported engaging in a number of TPD activities not prompted from the outside (e.g. reflective) and evidenced a broad view of TPD by wanting to pursue many different types of it, not just the same types as what they already did. Obstacles to TPD included many things that would exist even without the war, such as rural location. There was evidence that teaching experience, prior TPD in the form of training courses, and contextual factors affect TPD. Teachers and other stakeholders exhibited points of both agreement and disagreement concerning the impact of TPD on teachers and teaching, though the vast majority of both stakeholders and teachers reported a positive impact, including on teacher affect as well as teacher beliefs and practices with respect to teaching.

Implications are suggested both for teachers and other stakeholders.

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List of abbreviations

T: Teachers

S: Stakeholders

ELT: English language Teaching

ITE: Integrating Technology into Education.

TPD: Teacher Professional Development

PD: Professional Development

RP: Reflective Practice

ELT: English language Teaching

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

PS: Private Schools

TM: Teaching Methods

ICDL: International Computer Driving License

MoE: Ministry of Education

MoHE: Ministry of Higher Education

INSEt: In Service Training

PRESEt: Pre- Service Training

TALIS: Teaching and Learning International Surve

Chapter one: Introduction

1.1 The general importance of TPD

According to the Department of Education, UK, there are three key stages of a teacher's professional development (TPD): initial induction (the first year of teaching); early professional development (EPD) (the second and third years of teaching); and continuing professional development (CPD) (the next years). Of these stages, the present study is concerned mainly with the third.

During the last two decades the concept of teacher professional development (TPD), over the span of teachers' careers following any pre-service training they may have received, has become one of the most important topics within the field of English language teaching and teacher education (Guskey, 2009; Malderez & Wedell, 2007; Supovitz & Turner, 2000). Interest in the theories and practices associated with this concept have grown significantly as indicated by the increase in teacher education programmes and publications on teacher professional development. This has led to a growing interest in the importance of enhancing TPD, which entails studying teachers' beliefs and attitudes concerning it, the different ways in which they try to improve themselves, and how far TPD impacts on their practices (Eraut, 1972; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Richardson, 1994b; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997; Harris, 2000; Wedell, 2009). Throughout the ELT literature, teachers' professional development is often represented and promoted as a universally appropriate and realizable educational aim which can be achieved in a variety of ways.

Pursuing their professional development is intended to help teachers become aware of and learn the different skills and strategies that they need to cope with different teaching situations and contexts. Professional development applies to teachers, but of course ultimately affects their students' learning and educational achievement. It may be a means to distinguish effective from less effective teachers since usually, students' outcomes depend greatly on teacher teaching quality. Hence, governments, ministries of education and school managers need to foster teachers' continuous professional development in order to cope effectively with

the ongoing changes in ideas about effective teaching and improve the quality of education. Sstrengthening internal school conditions to promote teachers' professional development is also considered as an important prerequisite for addressing a continuous stream of changes in teachers' environments.

Furthermore, the knowledge base of teaching is constantly changing, as has been clearly stressed by many researchers (Richards and Farrell, 2005; Farrell, 2007). Hence, the need for ongoing teacher development has been a recurring theme in the field of second language teaching. Mark and Ager (2016:10) stressed that: "It is increasingly recognized that opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD) are needed to support teaching as lifelong learning".

TPD should be seen as an active and constructive process that takes place throughout teachers' lives. As a consequence, many researchers have emphasised the notion of ongoing and lifelong professional learning embedded in schools as a natural and expected component of teachers' professional activities and as a key component of school improvement (Putnam and Borko, 2000).

 As will be discussed in chapter two, there are two main views concerning the issue of TPD and studying the incidence of these, and teacher beliefs concerning this dichotomy, is therefore important. It is sometimes viewed as teacher-centred: teachers themselves should autonomously take the responsibility for their own actions and use a repertoire of activities within or outside the school context to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to improve their participation in the school workplace environment. As Mann (2005: 105) says: "There has been increasing interest in recent years in bottom-up teacher development". In other words, some educators believe that teachers are supposed to act according to the concept of "reflective practitioners" (Schön,1983), which will help them consider which type of professional activities can improve their practices and which type of teacher learning they need to engage in. Furthermore, teachers should have a responsibility to extend the boundaries of their professional knowledge through a commitment to reflective practice. In this view, professional development should be considered as a professional duty for teachers in different countries and regions. According to Wallace (1991), an important aim of the reflective approach is to empower teachers to manage their own professional development. A second aim is to enable

teachers to be more effective partners in innovation. In this way, teachers themselves should be recognized as the possible agents of change.

On the other hand, there is the view of TPD as organised top down from outside, which is not a teacher-centred view. Many Ministries round the world (including the MoE in Syria) still believe in top down TPD imposed in terms of required attendance at workshops, training courses etc. and of course many teachers may also think that way. In this view, it is teacher educators who are key actors in maintaining and improving the quality of education and training systems.

Finally, it may be said that studying TPD is important since, if effective, it should help teachers to:

- Gain a better sense of self-awareness, knowledge of self as a teacher, of one's principles, beliefs and values, strengths and weaknesses.
- Make informed decisions during the lesson.
- Have a good idea of how the process of second language development occurs.
- Be fully aware that teachers should be flexible and change their roles according to the learners' different needs and interests and improve their ability to teach different skill areas to learners of different ages, needs, interests and backgrounds and reflectively review their beliefs and principles as far as language teaching is concerned.
- Enhance the level of students' learning; an important goal is to raise the achievement levels of students in the institution, a goal that is not only important for its own sake, but that also adds to the reputation of the institution and its teachers. (adapted from Farrell, 2008).

1.2 The research gap

Many teachers and educators in different parts of the world have tended to be receptive of the concept of TPD and related ideas. However, the growing interest in TPD has revealed some research gaps regarding its theorization and practices. As this study reveals (ch2), many aspects of TPD in many teaching contexts lack sufficient investigation. At the heart of this research are the questions of whether teachers are even properly aware of the notion of professional development, and, if so, what they think it is, what types they pursue and why, what they would like to follow ideally and what are the effects of TPD on teaching from teachers and other stakeholders' points of view.

Studies of the TPD of in-service teachers such as ours, moreover, seem to be far less common than those of initial training of teachers. Furthermore, in this area TPD is a topic which is perhaps more written about from a theoretical or armchair standpoint, by its providers, rather than explored in research studies that gather real data from practising teachers, as ours does. Along with this, the rather greater focus on researching pre-service language teacher education programs has not always found that they fully prepare teachers for the realities of the classroom. This indicates again a need to investigate in-service TPD since a greater understanding of TPD in that phase may help teacher educators to make more sense of their work, to better understand the factors which facilitate or hinder teacher professional development, and ultimately contribute to the provision of more effective teacher education.

In addition, previous research in the area of in-service TPD indicates that teachers in a second language teaching context may face some problems in pursuing and maintaining their professional development which deserve more investigation. Yet I, after combing the literature, have found there is little reference to TPD encompassing all the kinds of activities mentioned in the current study, or indeed including consideration of the views of a wider range of relevant stakeholders than just the teachers themselves.

I have further found few studies in any context of teacher beliefs about what TPD is, though teacher beliefs are in other areas a large topic in current research (e.g. their beliefs about how to teach, about how learners learn, but not about how they themselves do or should

learn/develop) (chapter 2, Sect. 2.5). In particular, there is insufficient attention to the view that teachers adopt with respect to the distinction mentioned above (and ch2) between teacher centred or bottom up TPD, initiated or at least chosen by teachers themselves to meet their own needs, and that provided or imposed by educational institutions like ministries and schools which is done to make sure the teacher meets certain external standards of teaching.

Furthermore, the context of the current study (see next section and ch3) is an example of one found quite widely in the world, but under-researched, where teachers can start teaching English in fact with little or no pre-service training in English teaching, but just with a BA in English. Clearly in-service TPD is especially important to know about in such contexts (teacher beliefs about it, use of it, etc.) as it has to compensate for lack of PRESET, not just build on PRESET. It may be worth here highlighting the difference between the two: "PRESET is the training and education one receives before starting to work as a teacher. INSET is the training and education that one receives during one's career as a teacher." (Mann & Edge in Edge & Mann, 2013:6)

Finally, due to the well-known current situation in Syria, my study may have wider interest to researchers in capturing something of how TPD can actually go on in such circumstances. Indeed, echoing the title of a famous early book for teachers (West, 1960), the current study might be called 'Doing TPD in difficult circumstances' and is surely unique in investigating how well TPD manages to thrive in extreme conditions such as those in Syria. In pursuing this, I respond then to the call from Wright (2010: 289) for 'more studies of TPD from less well documented contexts'.

1.3 Local Syrian gap

In my experience, there was a general view among teachers and other stakeholders even before the current crisis in the country that there exist problems with in-service TPD in Syria. I believe that a sensible first step to dealing with such problems is to find out in rich detail all the things the current study is focused on, such as what TPD actually occurs and teacher attitudes to

different types of TPD and the obstacles faced. Only then could sensible interventions to improve TPD be planned and implemented.

The most obvious problem, which is a matter of recorded fact, is that there is in Syria no obligatory PRESET for secondary school teachers in the full sense of the term.

As we shall see in chapter three, there are some elements of PRESET in the English BA program in Syria, and there are available optional fuller PRESET courses. However, while intending teachers who take these courses may receive some preparation for teaching, such courses do not provide much in the way of preparing teachers for future TPD, especially of the teacher-centred reflective type. Hence no solid foundation is laid for a range of TPD activities later. Teachers who lack PRESET may have different beliefs about what TPD is or different uses of it, attitudes to it etc, compared with those who had had PRESET. Yet, the environments in which Syrian teachers work, and the demands placed upon them by society, are increasingly complex. Usually, teachers strive to equip learners with a wide range of skills that they will need to take their place in a world that is in constant evolution. So, teachers are really challenged and called upon not only to acquire new knowledge and skills, but also to develop themselves continuously. Therefore, this makes our study of what TPD happens in-service in Syria all the more timely.

Moreover, in the Syrian context, in my experience and from casual contact between me and secondary school teachers, it seems that teachers in service are usually not fully aware of the importance of pursuing their professional development. These teachers may also face some challenges and difficulties in pursuing and enhancing their professional development. As emphasized by Fullan (2016:16) "the cellular organisation of school means that teachers struggle with their problems and anxieties privately, spending most of their time physically apart from their colleagues." In this way, I want to see if in fact my casual impression or Fullan's view is correct about Syria by studying teachers' actual beliefs about, engagement in, and attitudes to TPD.

To the best of my knowledge, there is almost no research on TPD in Syria, and specifically none on TPD of in-service secondary school teachers and embracing the range of stakeholders' views that my study encompasses. Studies in the Syrian context such as Issa (2011), while

valuable, are more usually set at university level and concern aspects of English teaching rather than English teacher TPD. I therefore feel that my study fills a noticeable gap in information needed in Syria to inform future policies concerning TPD, by finding out information which is prerequisite for any later interventions which hopefully will be implemented when the country emerges from the current crisis.

In conclusion, this study could be important, as far as the Syrian context is concerned, particularly for being carried out by a Syrian researcher who herself has personal teaching experience in Syrian secondary schools and who comes from the same linguistic and cultural background of the participants. This is more likely to lead to a greater understanding of the context of the study and better interpretation of the findings than if it were conducted by any other outsider researcher.

1.4 The aims and motivations of the study

In order to tackle the various kinds of gap and problem suggested above, the study aims to investigate the different ways (if any) in which in-service language teachers in Syrian secondary schools engage with any form of professional development. Moreover, this work aims to shed light on the different ideas of the concept of TPD as provided by the teachers. The study also aims to illuminate the TPD activities that teachers would like to have/ follow ideally and the obstacles that affected that. Furthermore, the study will examine whether any of these issues differ according to teachers' background especially novice vs experienced teachers. Finally, the study aims to present teachers' and other relevant stakeholders' views on whether pursuing TPD has any impact on teachers teaching, beliefs and practices.

The study should not be classified as an evaluation or criticism of the Syrian teachers or other stakeholders with respect to the TPD that occurs, but rather as exploratory and descriptive research gathering information which would be needed by anyone with an aim of intervening in the context later on. Having said this, it may be observed however that what are termed 'evaluation studies' of CPD often include, or even stop short at, gathering teacher attitude data of the sort which the current study does (Harris et al, 2006). As Guskey (2000), however,

points out, a true evaluation would need to gather data on wider matters such as what teachers actually learn from CPD, whether and how they use it in their teaching, and whether as a consequence their students do better. That is all outside the current study's scope although the participants may report their beliefs about such matters in the open interview responses.

The current research on teachers' professional development is motivated by an ultimate desire to inform the wider world of research, and especially to provide a foundation for change within the local educational context, primarily because uncovering teachers' attitudes about their professional development is the first step towards pursuing reform.

My own position within the research context further means that three other aims should be noted:

1- I embarked on this research with an aim in my mind to intervene in the context of the study and create some changes. At the time the research was carried out, however, I could not intervene in the current context due to the unstable conditions at that time, which meant I had to do the research from a distance and without any intervention.

2- I am looking forward to making some changes in the context since after the study, when the situation permits me to return to Syria, I would have a particularly clear view of what is going on with respect to TPD, so be able to prepare the best kind of methods/ways to intervene in the context.

3- I was a scholarship student, and after obtaining the required qualification of PhD, and when the current conditions in Syria are sorted out, I will be working in the Higher Institutes of Languages and at some universities in Syria, where I will, hopefully, be in charge of running courses including supervising/ encouraging TPD-related support for teachers of English willing to improve their own professional development in schools, and special training centers. I will be particularly well placed to provide such TPD support, offered at the crucial time when all will be working with purpose of rebuilding Syria.

Thus, all the above mentioned issues have motivated me to conduct this study, which I believe will be an essential step in bringing about a positive change.

1.5 Statement of the Research Questions

The current research is an attempt to answer the following research questions, with respect to state secondary school English teachers in Syria:

1. What do teachers think teacher professional development is?
2. What types of professional development activities do teachers say they engage in, if any?
3. Why are they engaged or not engaged in TPD of this or that sort?
4. What types of professional development would they ideally like to pursue? and what are the current obstacles?
5. Do any of the above differ according to teacher background, esp. novice vs experienced?
6. What effects do teachers or stakeholders think any TPD teachers have engaged in has had on their teaching beliefs, practices or affects?

The research will, hopefully, provide researchers, and potentially teachers and other stakeholders with effective means to understand in-service TPD better, to make teachers critical of themselves and their behaviour, and to maximize the effects of innovation within the educational system.

1.6 Definitions of some key terms

For the purpose of clarity, I introduce here definitions of the main terms and concepts in this study.

Teacher professional development: TPD can be defined as a continuous process of learning that involves activities and strategies intended to develop teachers' beliefs, skills, practices, affects, attitudes, job-related knowledge and increase their awareness.

Teachers' professional development activities: They are the deliberate actions engaged in by teachers to achieve desired TPD goals and objectives such as developing their professional

skills and practices. Examples of these are reflection, peer observation, self-monitoring, participating in workshops…etc

Novice teacher: A novice teacher is a teacher who does not have many years of experience (less than five years) and who may have greater need for his/her professional development.

Experienced teacher: An experienced teacher is someone with five or more years of teaching experience.

Attitudes: Generally speaking, the concept of attitude refers to an expression of favour or disfavour in some respect toward a person, place, thing, or event.

1.7 Organization of the thesis

This thesis is organized into six different chapters, as follows:

Chapter one: Introduction. This chapter has paved the way for the following chapters of the thesis, situated the study and provided a framework for the reader to follow.

Chapter two: Literature Review. This will review the literature on TPD. There will be a focus on theoretical arguments and empirical studies related to TPD in English language teaching.

Chapter three: Context. This will provide the reader with fuller background information about the context of the study.

Chapter four: Methodology. This will be concerned with describing the research methodology adopted in the present study: the participants, the instrument used, the data gathering procedure, and the data coding and analysis.

Chapter five: Findings and Discussion. This will recount the findings and provide justifications, discussion and explanations of the data as well as connect the findings to the literature review when possible.

Chapter six: Conclusion. This will provide a summary of the main ideas in the thesis, present pedagogical implications, limitations of the present study and suggestions for future studies.

Chapter two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will first shed light on different definitions of TPD, review them and arrive at the one that will be adopted in this study in order to establish its scope. Next, I will focus on the different activities and aspects of TPD. I will present relevant studies that have been conducted in these areas as well as studies of teachers' attitudes in relation to their PD and other factors that might affect how far teachers engage in TPD. Finally, I will review the role of beliefs in relation to practices with respect to TPD and other stakeholders' views.

2.2 The nature and definition of teachers' professional development

2.2.1 Professional definitions of TPD

Within the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), the term 'development' has been applied to different kinds of activities such as skills training, materials development, test design, classroom research, curriculum development and continuing teacher professional development. In this research, I am only concerned with professional development for second language teachers. Nowadays, there is a growing interest in teachers' professional development (TPD), a term which, with CPD, is largely superseding earlier terms with similar scope such as teacher training, teacher education and teacher learning. When reviewing the literature, one can find that while some research has been done in this area, this term has been defined in various ways by different researchers.

Firstly, TPD has been viewed by some simply as activities. For example, TALIS (2009) adopted a broad definition of professional development among teachers: "professional development is defined as activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher." Day and Sachs (2004) viewed it as all of the activities

that teachers engage in during their careers to improve their work. For Kelly (2006) such activities are intended to result in a process, ongoing teacher learning, through which teachers become experts. Compared with those sources and many cited below, it must be noted however that Shawer (2010) slightly limits the scope of TPD in that he views it as career building activities that teachers engage in only after initial training and while in-service. While I accept the broader definition, the present study is in fact focused on TPD in that in-service sense. These definitions seem sound, but they do not elaborate on the word *activity* to say fully what kinds of things might lead to the developments described. In particular, they do not really highlight the mental side of TPD such as the role of teacher reflection as a key activity. By contrast, others characterize the 'activity' of TPD more richly as a complex learning process that requires teachers' cognitive and emotional engagement and their willingness to investigate where each one stands (Burbank & Kauchak, 2003; Reis-Jorge, 2007; Romano, 2006; Sandholtz, 2002).

Furthermore, these definitions do not make it clear that such professional development is also commonly seen by experts as being a continuous, life-long process that does not really happen overnight (Harmer, 2007) and that it is (ideally) related to the needs of the individual teacher, has open ended outcomes, involves problem solving and has a flexible agenda (Harmer, 2007). Similarly, Gravani & John (2005) viewed TPD as lifelong learning that lasts throughout a teachers' career from beginning to retirement. As also indicated by Harwell (2003:106) "Teacher professional development: it's not an event, it's a process." Similarly, Villegas-Reimers (2003: 12) defines TPD as "a long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in the profession". Dehvari (2015) defined TPD as a consistent cycle of teacher learning beginning with initial training and lasting for as long as a teacher remains in the profession. In other words, the professional development of language teachers is as described by Rose (2006), who likens it to a journey which starts with inexperience, then undergoes further study until the teacher gets the feeling of having arrived as a professional.

An example of official recognition of the widely recognised importance of ongoing TPD is the USA where, in New York State, teachers are required to have 175 hours of TPD every 5 years to ensure that their teaching certification remain valid (Troff & Sessions, 2008). This was

interestingly described by Alibakhshi & Dehvari (2015:38) with the idea that: "Teachers' learning never ends. That is, teachers' teaching lives consist of two poles: teaching and learning, and they are always moving from one pole to the other."

A third strand in the definition of TPD is that it is often seen as crucially concerned with pedagogical innovation. For teachers, such TPD is much needed these days especially when considering the rapid changes that the world is witnessing not only in the field of education but also technology (Allwright, 2005). Similarly, Mizell (2010) stressed the need for ongoing TPD activities that empower teachers with the best teaching methods that will positively improve students' learning. Hence, TPD is seen as life-long learning that aims at improving teachers' own skills and keeping them up-to-date with the most recent resources and methodologies (Friedman & Phillips, 2004; Richards and Farrell, 2005; Guskey, 1994, 2002; Killion & Hirsh, 2001; Little, 1993; Bransford et al, 2000; Torff & Sessions, 2008).

Undoubtedly, such innovation is an important feature of TPD: "innovation will offer new ways to approach some aspects of teaching-learning for teachers and the prospect of improved outcomes for learners in that specific context". (Mann and Walsh, 2017: 5). Innovation can also be a motivation to engage in TPD: "of course teachers do not simply engage in CPD for the love of it; there has to be a reason, a purpose, a goal, an innovation, something driving what essentially might well result in a change to practice." (Mann and Walsh, 2017:102). And of course, innovation is not a simple process, "but an evolving, complex, and recursive process. Innovative practices start out uncertainly and to be successful, must be sensitive to local context at multiple level." (Burns and Edwards: 84 in Mann and Walsh, 2017)

Indeed, following on from TPD as innovation, for many such as Bailey et al. (2001), TPD is seen in terms of what aspects of the teacher improve as a consequence, i.e. TPD is a means to improve teachers' own skills and acquire new knowledge. Similarly, Craft (1996) and Johnson & Golombek (2011) defined TPD as an attempt that aims at increasing teachers' knowledge during and after the initial training that they receive. Alibakhshi & Dehvari (2015:38) however suggested more widely: "In addition to external motivation, teachers learn for their own interests. .... EFL teachers can revitalize their profession and avoid becoming burnt out."

Fourthly, other researchers have focused more on the agency of the growth and viewed TPD as a matter of teachers' responsibility towards their own learning, rather than something

imposed by trainers etc. Some researchers focused on the terms profession and professional (the P in TPD) as entailing that component of autonomy and responsibility. For instance, Dean (1991) states that the most widely accepted definition of the term profession is "an occupation which requires long training, involves theory as a background to practice, has its own code of behaviour and has a high degree of autonomy" (Dean, 1991:5). Similarly, Craft (2000:7) stated that "being a professional means taking responsibility for identifying and attempting to meet the professional development needs of oneself and one's institution". In similar vein, Bell and Gilbert (1994: 102) stated that "teacher professional development can be viewed as teachers learning rather than as others getting teachers to change. In learning, the teachers were developing their beliefs and ideas, developing their classroom practices and attending to their feeling associated with changing." Thus, adopting a teacher rather than trainer centered approach, they characterise the process as learning, and emphasise the mental aspects that are affected. Arguably this is the difference between teacher training or education and TPD. The former emphasises that change is delivered or managed by others, whereas development arguably is something that can be done only by and for oneself.

In defining TPD, both Glatthorn (1995:41) and Keiny (1994:158) also emphasised the word professional, and framed their definitions more in terms of what might lead to the development/growth rather than what exactly grows. For Glatthorn (1995:41) "Teacher professional development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experiences and examining his\her teaching style systematically." And for Keiny (1994:158) "It is a process that involves teachers' investigating their practices to construct their own theories of teaching." In this connection Riding (2001: 283) further suggested more comprehensively that TPD should be: "on-going, include opportunity for individual reflection and group enquiry into practice, be based and embedded in teacher work, be collaborative and allow teachers to interact with peers, be rooted in the knowledge base of teaching, be accessible and inclusive." Johnson and Golombek (2002:3) also recently called for a new approach within second language education that recognizes teachers as "Legitimate knowers, producers of legitimate knowledge and as capable of constructing and sustaining their own professional practice over time".

Many institutional bodies (such as TALIS - the Teaching and Learning International Survey) however clearly see TPD as predominantly trainer driven, i.e. teacher training under a different name. In the end, many consider that TPD should really be considered as a shared responsibility among all teachers and other stakeholders, including not only peers and trainers, but also other relevant administrators such as managers, supervisors, ministry of education, etc. It is part of such stakeholders' role to promote TPD by raising teachers' awareness, offering TPD activities and facilitating teachers' uptake of all types of TPD. Teachers should also be trained to work on improving themselves professionally. Teachers can easily have access to information through a touch of a computer key. Day (1999) similarly, combined the teacher and trainer stances in viewing TPD as properly consisting of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are aimed at benefiting the individual, group or school, as well as the quality of education in the classroom.

Finally, another important aspect that may need to be considered as part of the concept of TPD is the context. TPD is context-specific and there is no one or ideal approach to professional development. This includes teachers' experiences of professional development as well as the needs of the organisation/ school, where the teachers work (Day, 1991; Goodall, et al., 2005; Guskey, 1994, 1995; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Considering teachers' need is pivotal, as "teachers at different career levels have distinct needs: novice teachers need more practical, down-to-earth training, mid-career teachers need to be given choices and senior teachers teachers' need new challenges." (Richards et al: 105, in Hayes, 2014). In this way, ideal TPD would take into account the particular contextual issues related to a particular school, students and teachers, considering the influence of time, collaboration and leadership.

In the end, effective TPD is not a list of "best practices" but rather an accumulation of elements adapted to a certain context (Guskey, 1994). Guskey (2009:229) stressed that:

 "we need to be honest about the real world of schools and the powerful influence of context. School contexts differ drastically, and what works well in one setting may not work equally well in another. Improvement efforts at all levels of education need adaptation to a wide variety of contexts. The particular educators involved, the characteristics of students with whom they

work. A seemingly powerful professional development activity poorly suited to a particular context will likely fail miserably".

In conclusion, while many sources like those cited above pick on certain characteristics of TPD to typify it, a useful more comprehensive characterization of TPD is that of Al-Lamki (2009:40):

"First, CPD consists of various activities and experiences which are practised individually or collaboratively. Second, CPD aims to increase knowledge and understanding of teachers and it also promotes teachers' performance and reflection. Third, CPD learning experiences are not limited to one particular place such as the classroom or the school setting. Rather, they go beyond that as some may be practised for example in the school, at the training center, on the net or even at home. A major element of CPD is that, as the term suggests, teachers' professional development is viewed as a continuous process. This element of continuity helps teachers develop through accumulation of knowledge and skills related to their own field through formal and informal experiences and activities. Another element of CPD is that the teachers become responsible for their own learning. It is not enough to wait for courses to be offered by the institution. Instead, various activities of professional development could be engaged in by the teacher. A fourth element is that CPD is flexible in two ways: the number of different activities that a teacher engages in and the frequency of those activities."

None of these definitions, alone, provide complete explanations of what is really understood by professional growth / TPD. Based on the above mentioned definitions, however, I formulated the following definition, which will be adopted in this study: Teacher professional development can be defined as a lifelong learning process that involves activities or strategies initiated either by the teacher or by others, intended to develop teachers' skills, beliefs, attitudes, awareness, job-related knowledge and affective state, in ways suited to a particular teaching context.

2.2.2 Teacher perceptions of / beliefs about the nature of TPD

In this study, I am interested not only in what trainers and academic professionals think TPD is, but also particularly in what teachers themselves think it is. This appears to be a neglected topic. Yet teacher beliefs about TPD are surely a key component in whether or how much teachers conduct their own TPD, or just sit and wait to be given it. This is analogous with learner beliefs about language learning: learners will not become more autonomous while they remain with a mental definition of learning only as 'being taught'.

Notably, however, I only managed to uncover one qualitative study that dealt clearly with this issue for teachers of English in any context. The study is by Alibakhshi and Dehvari (2015) who interviewed 20 Iranian high school EFL teachers with at least 10 years of experience about what they thought TPD was. The teachers represented both genders and a variety of BA and MA qualifications. Apart from the country, this is close to the population I plan to target in my study. I identified just five themes in the data, of which skills development was the most mentioned (90%), followed by continuous learning (70%), keeping up-to-date (65%), learning for pleasure (50%), and teachers' professional revitalization (40%).

Comparing these findings with my review of expert definitions, I can see that these teachers seemed to define TPD largely in terms of its purposes or effects, not the kinds of activities it involved. Although effect on skills dominated, including specific references to teaching methods, testing, materials preparation and use of technology, the last two themes also indicate awareness of the affective impact of TPD which is not so stressed in the expert literature. Two themes notably refer to learning, implying that these teachers see TPD as teacher centered, though elsewhere in the article it is clear that they also regard peer or trainer input in workshops as TPD. One theme refers to the continuity of TPD which was prominent in the expert definitions.

2.3 Strategies or activities for professional development and their claimed effects/benefits

There are many techniques, strategies or activities through which teachers can seek to develop their teaching skills and practices. Strategies that teachers can consider for their PD, or which trainers can supply, should help them to turn the problems that they may face in their professional career into positive rather than negative experiences.

In order to understand what different strategies can facilitate teachers' professional development, I referred to many sources. TALIS (2009:49) for example noted that TPD "can be provided in many ways, ranging from the formal to the informal. It can be made available through external expertise in the form of courses, workshops or formal qualification programs, through collaboration between schools or teachers across schools (e.g. observational visits to other schools or teacher networks) or within the schools in which teachers' work. In this case, development can be provided through coaching/ mentoring, collaborative planning and teaching, and the sharing of good practices." In addition, Richards and Farrell (2005) also identified a list of PD activities that includes the following: workshops, self-monitoring, lesson reports, peer observation, and action research. Also, TPD programmes are delivered in the form of workshops, seminars, conferences or courses (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Collinson & Ono, 2001; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Schwille & Dembélé, 2007; Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

The list of strategies/activities in Table 2.1 will be a corner stone in this study as it will be the basis for the means of analysing what the teachers say in the interview especially with respect to RQ2. Hence every strategy is going to be reviewed in detail in the following sections both as to its nature, and its claimed benefits.

Table 2.1 Agents involved in different types of TPD activities

Sources of input to the PD → Strategies (may be self-chosen or externally imposed) ↓	Experts (cf. Applied science)	Peer teachers (cf. Craft)	Self (Reflective)	Others (e.g. pupils, parents)
Attend training courses, conferences, workshops, do supervised teaching practice	yes	usually	possible	
Read teaching manuals, journal articles, TEFL guide websites/ online websites	yes		possible	
Observe other teachers or be observed by them, discuss good practice in staffroom, join teacher network online, be mentored, teach collaboratively		yes	possible	
Record own lessons, keep diary about what happened in lessons, track student marks		possible	yes	possible
Carry out action research, identify teaching problems and try to deal with them	possible	possible	yes	yes
Think back critically over past remembered teaching experiences, think about own beliefs, theories, attitudes and practices			yes	
Hold parent teacher evenings, get feedback from pupils			yes	yes

2.3.1 Reflection and the training of teachers to be reflective

Reflection can be defined as a "process of critical examination of past experiences that are recalled, considered and evaluated for the purpose of future decision-making and actions; a process that can lead to a better understanding of one's own teaching practices and routines. Reflection is a process that leads to a thoughtful, mediated action." (Clift, Huston and Pugach, 1991: 23). Reflective thinking is no more than a triumph of reason over instinct and impulse. In another view, reflection is an inner dialogue process and a 'conversation with self' that involves deliberate looking and hunting in search for an external basis on which to rest a belief (Prawat, 1991; Lyons, 2010).

Many benefits are claimed for teacher reflectiveness. Dewey (1933, in Farrell, 2007) identified three main attributes of the reflective teacher: open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness. Reflective teachers are characterised by open-mindedness as they show readiness to listen to more than one side of an issue and to give attention to alternative views. Reflective teachers are responsible ones as they show careful consideration of the consequences of their actions. On the other hand, wholeheartedness implies that teachers can transcend their worries and uncertainties by critically evaluating their practice as a way to make meaningful change. As Bill Templer (in Harmer 2007: 410) says: "we need to hold up mirrors to our own practice, making more conscious what is beneath the surface."

Kumaravadivelu (2003:7) clearly highlighted the idea that second language teachers should enter into "a continual process of self-reflection and self-renewal" in order for them to "construct their own personal theory of teaching." Brandt (2008) also emphasized the idea that an effective teacher is a reflective one. In addition, reflection is said to enable teachers, especially the novice ones, to approach the ELT classroom with a degree of self-confidence. Reflection helps teachers develop critical thinking skills rather than blindly following their routine way of teaching; teachers will carefully consider what happened, why it happened, and what else could have been done to reach their goals. Reflection helps increase the professional competence of teachers by noting their own teaching strengths and weaknesses. Although experience as a teacher may be a good starting point for development, it is necessary to examine such experience systematically in order to learn from it (Richards and Lockhart,

1994). Thus, it is important to note that experience alone does not count as TPD. Rather, reflective practice will lead to professional development where reflective language teachers will be seen as those who are "discovering more about their own teaching by seeking to understand the process of teaching and learning in their own and others' classroom." (Wajnryb, 1992:9). Reflective practice gives teachers the chance to develop their critical skills and attitudes, where they eventually become a part of good teaching (Burt and Keenan, 1998; Crandall, 2000). Reflective teachers are better able to monitor their practices, make informed decisions, respond to the changing needs of learners, and make appropriate judgements about their own teaching behaviours more than less reflective teachers (Valli, 1997; Yost et al, 2000; Bolton 2010; McMeniman et al, 2003; Hedberg, 2009). In addition, reflective teachers are characterized by being better able to:

- Carefully describe and analyse situations and problems.
- Decide what they want to learn as well as their learning goals.
- Show a deeper understanding of the teaching-learning process.
- Evaluate their current stage on the way to their professional growth.
- Effectively use self-reflection and critical thinking to serve their ends.
- Demonstrate more elaborate pedagogical reasoning skills than less reflective teachers.
- Make a good use of questioning techniques when evaluating their classroom practices.
- Demonstrate a strong feeling of self-confidence, personal security and efficacy.
- Make more informed decisions that are based on their reasoning skills. (Adapted from Korthagen and Wubbels, 1995 and Farrell, 2007)

As highlighted by Farrell (2007), reflective thinking helps teachers pose critical questions about their teaching, bring underlying beliefs to the level of awareness, realize that there is no simple solution or answer. Richards (1990:5) maintains that such type of self-inquiry and critical thinking can "help teachers move from a level where they may be guided largely by impulse, intuition, or routine, to a level where their actions are guide by reflection and critical thinking." By systematically reflecting on their classroom teaching and their students' learning, language teachers can develop better awareness and understanding of not only their own instructional processes, but also the different agendas that are being pursued by their students (Richards and Farrell, 2005 and Farrell, 2007).

Hence, as stressed by Brookfield, (1995) teachers should develop critical reflection as an essential habit as far as their teaching is concerned. By contrast, non-reflective teachers do not show a great deal of self-confidence, they even tend to blame themselves if students are not learning well or if they cannot meet all their students' needs and interests all the time. Reflective teachers develop a more accurate understanding of their abilities and skills as teachers. They also have a good control of their emotions. By contrast, non-reflective teachers may simply throw up their hands and place a great amount of trust in the role of chance or Fate in shaping educational process rather than human agency. However, teachers should be aware that "critical reflection isn't the answer to every problem in life. It can't remove the taste of failure from our mouths or the light of fears from our eyes. But what it can do is considerable." (Brookfield, 1995:236)

While much of what is said about the benefits of reflection, e.g. by some of the sources cited above, is founded more on theory and belief than hard facts, some empirical studies have been done to provide support for such claims. One study was conducted by Atay (2008) to explore the importance of reflection in education, at an English preparatory school at a state university in Istanbul (Turkey) during the academic year 2004–5. At the time of the study, there were 923 students at different levels and 110 EFL teachers. Teachers were encouraged to critically reflect on their own teaching practices. During the study, teachers showed a greater sense of awareness and development in the ways they dealt with different teaching/learning aspects.

On the other hand, it should be admitted that there also exists a considerable volume of less positive thinking concerning reflection. First, reflection is not an easy process as it "requires critical thought, self-direction, and problem solving coupled with personal knowledge and self-awareness." (Chant et al. 2004: 25). So, in order to help teachers develop into reflective practitioners, reflection is a skill that has to be fostered right from the beginning of the learning-to-teach process. In short, reflection is a form of TPD that requires prior TPD to train teachers in how to do it. Akbari (2007: 204) stressed the idea that: "effective reflection…. would be impossible unless a sound grasp of its basic principles is established and a mastery of the discourse norms and features of the community established".

Reflection may occur spontaneously as a natural response to day-to-day teaching experiences and of course some teachers may become reflective because they are just naturally more

reflective. However, for many, the power of reflection must be facilitated and developed through TPD itself, in the form of the training process, as in Wallace's (1998) 'reflective model' of teacher education. Teachers need to be directed in the way they reflect: most often they reflect on things they do "wrong" or "bad" while in order to make the best out of reflection, teachers need to reflect on interesting things (Allwright, 2003).

El-Dib (2007) also stressed the idea that reflective thinking should be developed through mentoring and scaffolding rather than develop naturally. Kabilan again (2007) indicated that reflection should be taught in an atmosphere of collaboration as a pivotal element of PD course.

Thus, there are some concerns related to reflection, and some researchers have even called for new strategies, feeling that there is a need today to move "beyond reflective practice" (Bradbury et al, 2010:55). In a recent book Mann and Walsh (2017: 15-18) usefully summaries some criticisms of reflective practice (RP) as follows. It should be noted from the start, however, that these are largely not objections to RP itself, as a form of TPD, but rather to aspects of the way in which teachers are often trained to do it.

First, they refer to the dominance of models of reflective practice. By this they mean that trainers (and books about RP) tend to dwell too much on the different theoretical frameworks of RP, which may lead to problems. "First is the impression that models and frameworks usually suggest a necessary order and linear progression. The second is simply the space that is routinely given to going through the various models, instead of providing exemplification and detail about 'how to'. Probably one of the main problems with RP training is that teachers are not in actual fact shown examples of doing it, it is more likely to be just theoretically talked about. Associated with this is the "lack of data-led account: data-led accounts are essential since they provide the kind of evidence which promotes understandings of reflection." Mann and Walsh (2017) in fact provide just such data-led accounts which demonstrate exactly how real RP actually occurs, and how it may not adhere to the supposed models. They make the point about the benefits of data and evidence of "reflection in the wild": when teachers collect data from their own experience then they will reflect on their own beliefs and practices which may inform their own future decisions and behaviour. Any form of data can be helpful in providing opportunities for reflection. "However, our argument is that a teacher's own data is

a particularly rich resource. To be a change in teaching behaviour, since teachers are more engaged when they use data from their own context and experience."

Secondly, they refer to "Focus on the individual: RP is often presented as an individual process which does not foreground collaboration or participation in a community of practice." In fact, reflection is supposed to be more like a shared act or done in collaboration with others, as clearly emphasized by Zepke et al. (2003:17) who defined reflection as: "a process to help us learn from our own or others' experience and to turn that learning into action." It could be said that understanding requires dialogue: reflection may need dialogue with others including fellow teachers or trainers. It gives teachers the chance to exchange ideas and discuss issues of mutual interest. Reflection needs to be collaborative as "the process can become more enjoyable and more beneficial when undertaken with others working in a similar context." (Mann and Walsh, 2017: 107).

 The third issue concerned dominance of written forms of reflection. When training emphaises written forms of RP the focus of attention becomes the actual writing itself and in this way teachers will be mainly interested in completing the reflective task and this may lead to inauthentic type of reflection (Roberts, 1998) and even 'faking it', since written reflection is especially difficult for novice teachers (Hobbs, 2007).

Fourthly, there is an issue over assessment for RP tasks. It could be that if trainers assess teachers' reflection, teachers may be demotivated, discouraged or even stop doing it as an integral part of their profession (McCabe et al., 2011).

Fifthly, training may not introduce appropriate reflective tools: RP is not limited to a certain tool or activity and every tool should be chosen in a way that would be suitable to certain contexts as well as teachers' different needs, levels, development and experiences. So, tools should be chosen in a way that leads to "timely reflection" (Mann and Walsh, 2017: 21).

Finally, there can be a problem of trainers not practising what they preach. It is problematic that while teacher educators promote reflection among teachers, they "seem to have less tendency to consider reflection as a method for their own practice" (Moon, 1999: 57). Academics can only facilitate reflective practice if they themselves use reflection in their own

professional development. When reflection is merely preached, it is more likely that it will not be embraced and subsequently pursued by the participants (Leather and Popovich, 2008).

2.3.2   Self-monitoring

Self-monitoring or self-observation refers to activities in which information about a teacher's own teaching related thoughts and activities are documented, from memory or by being recorded, in order for the teacher to review or evaluate it, typically involving reflection. In this way, self-monitoring is a systematic approach to the observation, evaluation and management of one's own behaviour in order to achieve a better understanding and control over the behaviour. While reflection, as you saw in 2.3.1, can be based purely on remembered experience, awareness of beliefs, and thought, it is arguably enhanced if is also directed at the sort of self-observation data discussed in this section.

 Farrell (2008:138) strongly highlighted the idea that "self-monitoring a sample of one's lesson is often a good starting point in planning personal professional development because it can be used to identify issues that might later be further explored." As pointed out by Farrell (2008:139), "They may have some irritating speech mannerisms, such as over frequent use of "yes" "Uh-huh" or "Right"."

There are different types of self-observation which can constitute the basis for TPD and these are: writing or recording retrospective lesson reports, writing or recording teacher diaries, audio-recording or video-recording one's own lesson for consideration later. These means can help teachers develop a more reflective view of teaching that is to "move from a level where they may be guided largely by impulse, intuition, or routine to a level where their actions are guided by reflection and critical thinking." (Richards 1990:5)

Audio-recording of one's own lesson which is afterwards played and reflected upon is a simple approach to self-monitoring. The purpose of recording of a lesson is to identify aspects of one's own teaching that can only be identified through real-life recording. An additional advantage of a lesson audio-recording, as emphasized by Farrell (2008), is that the recording can be played and examined at any time and can capture different details of a lesson that cannot

be easily observed during the lesson. Teachers do not often have the opportunity to hear or see themselves teach. As a result of audio-recording a lesson, the teacher might find evidence of a problem that he or she was unaware of. For example, the teacher might discover that students tend to shift to their native language during group work, or that students make an unacceptably high level of pronunciation errors. Also, after listening to the audio recording of the lesson, the teacher may be surprised and find out that he may seem to speak far too quickly a lot of the time or that he/she doesn't give students much of a chance to speak. So, "the fullest account of a lesson is obtained from an actual recording of it, using an audio cassette or video recorder" (Richards, 1996: 11)

During the recording process, it would be more useful to have more than one recorder, placed in different locations. For example, placing a recorder on the teacher's table will usually provide a reasonably good recording of the teacher's voice. On the other hand, placing the recorder on the students' desk will permit a clear audible recording of the students' contributions and participations during the lesson.

By comparison, **videotaping of a lesson** provides a very different account of a lesson than that of an audiotape. The audio recorder captures most audible things about the lesson. By contrast, the video recorder allows the teacher to hear as well as observe a great deal of student-to-student interaction that teachers usually would not have an opportunity to notice. Brookfield (1995:80) clearly stressed the importance of video-recording a lesson, "As a way of helping us improve our modelling of what we want students to do, video is irreplaceable." In addition, a videotaped record account of the lesson allows a choice of focus and allows the teacher to make appropriate judgments on different aspects of the lesson such as how much time is allocated to teacher's talk and how much to students' speech during the lesson, how much time they spend on giving information and directions and how much time they allow for students to analyse, reflect or practice. So, video-recording allows teachers to observe "how visual their teaching is –do they use gestures well, move around a lot, show overheads, draw graphics on the board, or do we stand in one spot and talk in a monotone?" (Farrell, 2008:46). Therefore, once a problem has been identified, through video recording the lesson, the teacher can begin to examine it in more detail and try out strategies for addressing it and finding appropriate solutions.

A study involving video-recording was carried out into teacher development by Ryder (2012). The research took place in France and he wanted to see how teachers reflect on their teaching practices. Teachers were teaching different languages such as Czech, Chinese and English to different groups of students (company management, unemployed and factory workers). The classes took place both during the day and in the evening in different locations such as in company, in technical colleges, and community centers. Lessons were recorded and transcribed for the study and one lesson was filmed and there was a post-observation discussion. The results of the study revealed that most teachers used to reflect on their work; they exhibited a critical way in dealing with and analysing their teaching practices which led to improvements in their thinking skills.

A **lesson report** is a written account of the lesson after it has occurred, that aims at describing its main features. The process of committing details to paper is a useful means of stimulating observational skills as well as recalling seemingly meaningless details; which may assume greater meaning upon reflection. Indeed, without reflection, such a report has little TPD value. Whereas a lesson plan describes what the teacher decides to achieve in a lesson, a lesson report documents what actually happened during the lesson, and may of course refer back to the lesson plan, which in turn may entail reference to the textbook. It is usually completed after the lesson and records as many different aspects of the lesson as possible, based either on teacher memory or lesson recording as just described. Lesson reports are considered the cornerstones of the reflective practice.

Jasper (2005) found lesson reports to be a means that facilitated creativity, critical thinking, analysis and discovery. Different aspects of the lesson can only be revealed to the teacher through self-inquiry and lesson reports. By means of the lesson report, the teacher may like to consider the following features of the lesson: the most and least effective parts of the lesson, departures from the lesson plan, the main goal of the lesson, students' learning problems encountered and difficulties learners experienced at the different stages of the lesson. Also, a lesson report includes asking evaluative questions such as; what aspects of the lesson worked well? What aspects of the lesson did not work well? What aspects of the lesson should be changed next time? So, as Bartlett (1990) pointed out, teachers' lesson reports "may document

routine activities in the classroom, conversations with pupils, incidents, beliefs about teaching, views about language learning and teaching and much more." (In Richards, 1996)

Nowadays, there are many research studies supporting the idea that lesson reports can help language teachers in various aspects of their reflective development .These research studies (Bailey, 1990; Elliott, 1991; McDonough, 1994; Richards and Farrell, 2005; Zeyrek, 2001) found that lesson reports help both experienced and novice teachers and that they help achieve different purposes such as presenting detailed account of teachers' classroom practices, providing feedback on one's own teaching by looking at the records, generating questions and hypotheses about the teaching and learning processes, fostering a sense of responsibility for one's own professional practices, giving teachers the chance to express their doubts, worries and needs. In addition, writing reports on classroom teaching practice is considered as the most natural form of TPD. It also increases teachers' self-confidence as well as their awareness of their teaching actions. As Valli (1992) pointed out, "writing about one's own beliefs and practices is a good way of encouraging awareness and reflections." According to a survey conducted by Richards and Ho (1998 cited in Farrell, 2007) on the usefulness of lesson report, the majority of teachers (71%) found it useful, while 25% found it fairly useful and only 4% did not enjoy it. Similarly, the results of another study conducted by Richards and Ho (1993) showed that most teachers reported that writing lesson reports helped them explore themselves and their practices as teachers, enhanced their thinking skills and guided them towards more effective teaching. So, teachers are expected not only to learn from other experts, but also from themselves.

Teacher diaries, a teaching diary or reflective journal, is a document that can contain observations, feelings, reactions, interpretations, reflections, hunches, hypotheses, explanations' all together (Elliott, 1991). Unlike a lesson report, entries can be made at any time and relate to any aspect of teaching, not just the lessons, such as preparation, marking, teaching rooms, dealings with administrators, or indeed TPD etc. Diary-writing in an educational context has become a popular technique, with several different types of application, though I am only concerned here with it as part of TPD.

A study was conducted by McDonough (1994), where he examined the teaching diaries of four teachers, including the author/his diaries, working on the same language programme in terms

of a variety of topic headings. The researcher examined three diaries of his colleagues working on the same course. The class in question had eight participants and lasted for about nine months. It was English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programme. The researcher wanted to see whether teaching diaries can help teachers improve themselves as far as their professional development is concerned. After a careful examination of the teachers' diaries, the researcher found out that writing teaching diaries made them aware of day-to-day behaviours and underlying attitudes, alongside outcomes and the decisions that all teachers need to take. It helped the teachers' document and formalize the everyday working experience that might otherwise be lost and increased teachers' awareness. Nevertheless, in order for their diaries to be usefully reflective, training of teachers may again be needed (Wright, 2010).

2.3.3   Classroom Observation and collaboration involving colleagues

Observation other than self-observation involves visiting a class to observe different aspects of teaching or having one's own class visited by another (peer or superior). This may involve recording again, as above. A teacher or other observer intends to closely watch and monitor a language lesson in order to gain an insight of some aspects of teaching, learning or classroom interactions. Classroom observation of this sort used as TPD is a way of gathering information about teaching, rather than a way of evaluating teaching (Richards, 1996 and Farrell, 2007). In this way, classroom observation that includes peer observation for the purpose of PD rather than evaluation can help teachers develop their critical thinking skills. It makes them more confident in knowing that they are providing optimum opportunities for their students to learn in that classroom. In addition, when classroom observations are handled in a non-judgmental manner where development is the goal, then they become something, as Farrell (2007:129) described, which "teachers look forward to and which they see as time well spent rather than something to be dreaded and avoided." In other words, if classroom observation takes a developmental rather than an evaluative approach, the teacher, "knows that the visit is not a test, but a mutual problem-solving experience," (Williams, 1989:87). When engaging in a non-evaluative classroom observation, the responsibility of professional development can shift from others to the individual teacher himself. The observer should provide feedback in a non-

judgmental manner and offer a trusty relationship. Otherwise, the experience would be "threatening, frightening and regarded as an ordeal." (Williams, 1989:86) Thus, in order for observation to be viewed as a positive rather than a negative experience, the observer's function should be limited to that of gathering information.

The observer may consider the following aspects of the lesson: activities, questioning techniques, students' responses, classroom language, organization of the lesson, teacher's time management, learners' performance on different tasks and classroom interaction. The observer should be an experienced teacher who has a wide variety of experiences as a teacher in the area of second language teaching. Otherwise, feedback and comments will only serve to give offence. The value of the observation is increased if the observer knows what to look for. It is, extremely important for both the observer and the observed to be fully aware of the reason behind conducting classroom observation, and the spirit in which it should be carried out. It should be carried out with commitment and reflection. (Cosh, 1999:22)

Observation is an effective way to promote TPD. Mentors help mentees step outside the box of his/her job and personal circumstances, so they can look in at it together. It is like standing in front of the mirror with someone else, who can help you see things about you that have become too familiar for you to notice (Clutterbuck and Megginson 1999:17). Teachers may comment on the important role of the observer as the following: "I realize the power of having another pair of eyes in the room to help me see better. I should always say that the observer was a trusted friend and this helped me a lot too." (Eric Harmsen, a teacher in Korea in Farell, 2008).

Based on his involvement in the field of ELT as a teacher and a teacher trainer for about 20 years, Gun (2010) believed that conducting classroom observations and giving feedback to teachers is undeniably useful yet insufficient in itself to help teachers reach a level of reflection that will optimize their professional development.

In his study, Gun (2010) wanted to investigate how 'reflection' can become more effective through systematic training and practice. The reflective teaching and learning project was carried out in an intensive English language teaching programme in Turkey. The project aimed at helping teachers to 'reflect critically' on teaching in order to increase their ability to identify strengths and weaknesses and take action towards becoming more effective teachers. Four

teachers participated in the project; two Turkish, one American and one British teacher. Two teachers had 7 years teaching experience and two had 3 years teaching experience. During the training project, teachers received feedback from different sources including, teachers, learners, trainers and colleagues. Three trainers, including the author were involved in providing the input sessions and doing the classroom observations. Learners were asked to take on the role of observer and feedback provider. The entire process took 8 weeks including eight input sessions and five focused classroom observations. The training project was characterized by the 'friendly atmosphere' in the input session room where the teachers and trainers sat down in a circle and had informal discussions about their classes, reflections as well as many other related issues. After completing the 8 weeks of input sessions and observations, the teachers were given a feedback questionnaire. Analysing the questionnaire showed that all teachers felt that watching themselves in the video was very helpful as a basis for reflection, the input sessions provided awareness and self-criticism, the training process helped them understand students better and know what is good for their learning. Because teachers knew that these observations were aiming at professional development rather than performance evaluation, they felt more comfortable from the very beginning. So, the value of videos in nurturing reflective thinking was confirmed and any reflection training programmes should make reflection an integral part of classroom practice.

A further interesting study was conducted by Farrell (2001) on teachers' observation. A teacher (Poh) asked the author to observe her class. They are colleagues working in the same institution, the National Institute of Education Programme (NIE). Both of them teach female teachers of English for Academic Purpose (EAP). Poh (the teacher) asked the observer to observe an Academic Writing Skills class of mixed abilities. Poh, a confident teacher, was already reflecting on her work and wanted an outsider's view on what she was doing in the classroom. After the observation process and from a reflective point of view, the observer was surprised that Poh addressed most of the issues that the observer raised without having seen his observation notes. That was not planned and the observer believed that Poh's continuous reflection gave her an opportunity to apply changes to her teaching behaviours. The process of observation seemed to be beneficial to both the observer and the observed teacher. The teacher got further insights into her teaching of Academic Writing while the observer could further enhance his understanding and insight into the reflective/ collaborative process.

When teachers see their practice through others' eyes, they are in a much better position to speak and behave in ways, as stressed by Brookfield (1995) that ensure a consistency of understanding between teachers, students, and their colleagues. Similarly, Cosh (1999) and Borg (2006) emphasized the importance of observation as a valuable strategy since it provides evidence of what actually happens in classrooms. Because the aim of the observation is to help improve the skills of the observed, therefore and as stressed by Fullerton (1993) quality feedback is essential. As highlighted by Moon (1994), observation provides a channel for reflection and professional dialogue which may otherwise be missing from the careers of many teachers.

Collaboration is another important component of TPD, because it involves teachers sharing their personal and professional knowledge with other teachers in a friendly environment. Also, collaboration usually implies working together eg making materials, or lesson plans, even jointly teaching a class. Based on this, teachers can change their thinking about their work and as a result will become more confident practitioners. It will facilitate dialogue, sharing and the exchange of ideas, information and expertise. Collaboration will offer "hope to others wishing to break out of the shells of isolation separating teachers from their colleagues as well as from teacher educators," (Oprandy, Golden and Shiomi, 1999:5). In any school or institution, there are teachers with different levels of experience, knowledge and skills. This will provide an opportunity for novice teachers to learn from the experience of the experts. Collaboration with colleagues will provide a non-threatening environment in which teachers can develop new knowledge and skills and gain supportive feedback from peers (Atay, 2008). A teacher from Philippines (Ali) demonstrated the crucial role collaborating with others can play in a teachers' development. He pointed out that "researching and collaborating with members of the group was very enriching. From my more experienced colleagues I have learned the importance of considering students' interests and proficiency level in preparing lessons and the need to use feedback from students to make necessary adjustment in my teaching." (in Richards and Farrell, 2005:12).

2.3.4   Action research

Action research is a process in which participants examine their own educational practice systematically, often involving methods I described in 2.3.2 and 2.3.3, with critical reflection, then plan and execute some teaching innovation (the action) designed to improve something, and observe the effects. As its name suggests, action research concerns actors – those people carrying out their professional actions from day to day - and its purpose is to understand and to improve their actions. All this is done carefully using the techniques of research (Ferrance, 2000). Action research is therefore a valuable method of self-development which involves the systematic collection and analysis of data related to practice, and carrying out what in mainline research would be called an experiment. During the process of action research, teachers will begin a cycle of posing questions, gathering data, reflection, and deciding on a course of action which is then executed and its effects examined. In this way, action research "entails a change in the former, relatively passive role of teachers to a more active, reflective knowing and problem solving one." (Richard et al: 114 in Hayes, 2014)

Teachers may be concerned that things might not be going as they wish, or they may want to sort out a problem or issue in practice or implement a new initiative. So, action research is a strategy that is expected to accelerate and enhance teachers' expertise and professional skills in order to progressively develop as they continue in their chosen occupation (Wallace, 1998).

Successful outcomes of engaging in research might include the development of teachers' research skills, increased awareness of the teaching/ learning process, renewed enthusiasm for teaching, greater collaboration with colleagues (Atay 2008), enhanced self-efficacy (Henson 2001), as well as continuing commitment to professional development with a view to improving their own practices.

A simple example of action research is given by Wyatt (2011). Sarah, an EFL teacher in the Sultanate of Oman, was worried about the idea that her Grade 9 students did not get enough meaningful speaking practice, since the course book was 'based on drilling and repetition'. Therefore, she decided to conduct action research in her own classroom with the aim of enhancing students' performance. She designed oral communicative tasks to supplement each unit of the course book. Sarah evaluated the effectiveness of the communicative tasks that she

designed by audio recording lessons where, they were used and observation notes. This provided evidence that the use of communicative tasks supported the acquisition process. Sarah also found that the communicative tasks could highly motivate her learners and encourage them to express their feelings fluently in English in new situations. She noticed her learners' increased engagement in speaking activities and production of more authentic speech. She clearly found the action research rewarding: "Really, it is wonderful if all the time you're doing something for your students, observing them and seeing what their difficulties are and trying to solve them."

From this study, one can easily notice that action research helps teachers speak more freely about their work and address important concerns that relate to their teaching contexts. The teachers themselves express positive attitudes toward conducting action research.

Like with all the TPD activities there are nevertheless some negatives. Most teachers need prior TPD in the form of training courses or workshops or mentoring in order to be equipped to do it (Borg 2009a). Otherwise, they may struggle with concept of action research, fail to identify a problem or fail to find a potential solution to the problem to try out. Furthermore, because it is treated as research, the whole activity requires more time than many teachers have, to conduct it in an appropriate way. In short, issues of time constraints, teachers' workload, their attitudes towards research and unsupportive school environment may stand as barriers that prevent teachers from engaging in action research,(Richards et al, in Hayes, 2014).

2.3.5 Workshops and training courses

Workshops can be defined as intensive short-term learning activities where the ultimate goal is to enable teachers to acquire specific knowledge and skills that will help them perform better as teachers. They often occur close to where teachers work and typically focus on a specific theme and are designed for in-service teachers. Workshops are one of the most common, powerful and useful forms of professional development activities for teachers (Richards et al, 2001; Richards and Farrell, 2005; Farrell, 2008). They are usually led by a person who is

considered as an expert in the field and who has relevant experience in the workshop topic. That could be a fellow teacher, but often is someone from a university or training institution or the ministry of education in a country. Workshops are often the best way of throwing light on what a particular professional activity consists of, what its pros and cons are, and whether it might be of interest to teachers in a specific teaching context or not.

In a workshop, participants are expected to learn something which they can later on apply in their classrooms as well as get hands-on experience with the topic, where relevant.

In the field of ELT, there are several benefits of workshop-based learning for language teachers. For example, workshops can provide teachers with an input from experts; a workshop can provide an opportunity for an expert in an area to share his knowledge and experience with teachers in a comfortable non-evaluative learning environment. In addition, a workshop is intended to enhance teachers' practical skills and help resolve problems, rather than simply focusing on improving teachers' theoretical abilities. As stressed by Richards and Farrell (2005), workshops take teachers out of the classroom to forums where they can share problems and concerns with colleagues or teachers from different schools and motivate them to share their experiences and ideas with colleagues.

A study was conducted by Teng (2016) at a university in Northeast China in China which interestingly illustrates how successful workshops can be combined with reflection. Twenty Chinese English teachers participated in the study. The aim of the study was to investigate whether there was any change in these teachers' beliefs as a result of attending a TPD project for teaching writing and to see if the change in belief could affect their practices. Twenty English teachers were invited to participate in the project where they were introduced to different theories and strategies of writing, they attended a weekly workshop (3h per week) for one month. After the workshop, teachers reflected on their own teaching practice. Semi-structured interviews were used as data collection method before and after the program. The data showed evidence of a change in the two teachers' beliefs concerning L2 writing theories and strategies. As Teng (2016:109) put it: "findings of the study showed a change in teachers' belief and readiness to change some of their own practices. The project gave teachers a good idea of the nature, theories and strategies of writing, a change in their role from the dominant to the facilitator one with emphasis on students' sense of autonomy."

Although it is difficult to generalise, what are termed **teacher training courses / teacher education courses** are typically longer than workshops, more formal, cover many topics rather than one theme, and may take place further away from a teacher's school. They also often yield a qualification (degree or certificate of proficiency) while workshops are more likely just to yield an attendance certificate. They range from degree courses such as an MA in Applied Linguistics, through diploma courses, one-month teacher training courses, down to short in-service courses which are close to workshops. Teacher training/education courses are often designed for pre-service trainee teachers (PRESET), and these typically include not only taught components but also **teaching practice**, which is 'the application of the practical pedagogical knowledge acquired during the lessons and workshops' (Leshem and Hama, 2008:257). Mann (2005:104) stressed the idea that: "The role of teacher training is to introduce the methodological choices available and to familiarise trainees with the range of terms and concepts that are the 'common currency' of language teachers. The trainer typically demonstrates the range of models and techniques available". Nowadays, there is a significant focus on the process of training teachers of English as a Second/Foreign Language. Therefore, there are many short training programmes or certificate courses where the ultimate goal is to give teachers hands on experience and equip them with the practical classroom skills that would enable them to teach effectively.

PRESET teachers' educational courses are intended to prepare teachers for the reality of the classroom. Teacher training courses have many advantages, including the opportunity to reconsider the roles of tutors and language learners, the place, the nature and the context of the teaching process. Brandt (2006:362) clearly stressed the idea that "Allowing for practice would provide new teachers with opportunities to experiment and make errors free of the burden and distraction of assessment." In this way, the main focus of trainee teachers is to learn the best possible ways to enhance students' learning process. This non-evaluative environment will give teachers the chance to improve their abilities, to cope with learners' different needs and interests as well as the different learning and teaching contexts.

It is necessary for teachers to be well-equipped and well-trained. Otherwise, lack of adequate training and preparation for teaching will lead to teachers' lack of self-confidence and inability to deal with the problems that may occur in the teaching context. Britten (1988:5) however

suggested the idea that: "since in practice, working teachers seldom have the kind of peer group support which they usually find helpful in training courses, training should help to prepare teachers, as trainees, to make their own decision and adjustments, and to be better equipped to support themselves after the training." This means training teachers not just to teach but also to perform their own TPD later. In short, a good teacher is a life-long learner.

Many researchers, emphasized the idea that one of the main conditions to be met if learners are to successfully learn a second language is that teachers must be adequately trained and have hands on experience (Enever, Moon & Raman, 2009, Emery, 2012). Yet in reality some training courses are still rather traditional and devoted to what Wallace (1998) called the applied science kind of teacher training, through research based lectures, with insufficient hands on teaching practice or attention to training teachers to train themselves.

For some countries teachers are obliged to follow certain training courses. In others, it is up to the teacher to undertake training courses or not. Unfortunately, some countries do not even consider providing such courses. So, as stressed by Harmer (2007), it is teachers' responsibility to improve their theoretical and practical skills to avoid being "stale".

Wilson (2002) described an example of a successful training course that was set up to improve the standards of English language teaching in black primary schools in rural areas in South Africa. The Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English (COTE) is an early in-service training programme aimed at giving training and support to teachers working in a locally-defined context. Teachers from five regions in South Africa attended a part-time in-service training. Then a small group drawn from the teachers attended a 12-week materials development course in the UK. The materials developed by these teachers were evaluated and modified to be adopted in the primary classes in South Africa. A total of 120 teachers, at the rate of 40 per year, attended the in-service training course during the three-year lifetime of the project. The participating teachers were asked to complete a series of written assignments, the teachers attended a series of lectures and workshops on different areas of language awareness, learning and learners, classroom management, materials and resources, syllabus and course design in the local context, and testing and assessment. The lectures were given by a team made up of local tutors and two tutors from the UK institution. The regional co-ordinators were responsible for holding seminars and workshops at local schools, observing the teachers'

classes, and helping them with their assignments. The COTE assessment procedures require each teacher to be assessed on their practical teaching abilities and on their understanding of ELT as expressed through a series of written assignments. The data about the success of the program were collected by means of analysing teachers' teaching practice profiles and by interviews. The teachers interviewed expressed an increased confidence and pleasure in their work, and a substantial increase in students' interest and motivation. They also noted one unexpected effect of the in-service training course, which was a sense of collegiality and cooperation between teachers and they suggested that this might be a powerful and sustainable way to spread the benefits of a training course. The researcher reported that series of in-service training courses was viewed by the participants, the team members, and the project evaluators as having a positive impact on teachers' professional development.

On the negative side, however, a study was conducted in Greece, by John & Gravani (2005), to evaluate a university in-service training program targeted at secondary school teachers and reveal teachers' views of it. The participants of the study were 12 university tutors and 22 secondary school teachers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for two months. The focus was on two aspects: reaction evaluation and learning evaluation. Regarding their reaction, the program helped teachers to work together (sense of collegiality and cooperation) and break out of the shell of isolation and routine. With respect to learning, however, there was a gap between theory and practice due to lack of teacher involvement in decisions related to the program.

This illustrates some problems which may be encountered in practice with training courses (and workshops). They may be given by people who do not know the context, so what they say is inapplicable. Or they may be given on topics that are too 'theoretical' and teachers cannot see how to make use of the information. Or they may involve no communication among participants, though that was clearly not the case in this last instance.

Nevertheless, some recent studies of top-down TPD present a more positive view of it, so long as its providers are prepared to adapt and modify it in the light of feedback from results and participants, and indeed include in it encouragement of bottom up TPD activities (cf. end of 2.3.1). Prince and Barrett in Mann and Walsh (2017) talked about an interesting innovative experience in India where since 2008 both the government and the British council has been

trying to introduce and implement innovation in in-service language teacher education courses with the aim of improving teachers' and teacher educators' potential, their English language and English teaching. First, short in-service courses were provided by British council, but then it was realised that long ones can better lead to change and impact on practices, so two to five years projects were adopted. There were three main challenges represented by: poor quality of in-service training courses, lack of non-training CPD offered as part of in-service training programmes and lack of a mandated framework for CPD that could be adopted to serve institutional ends. These challenges were all addressed essentially by a modified top-down approach. First, quality trainers were selected, and teachers and educators had opportunities to discuss problems and solutions together, and teacher educators were provided with ample resources to use for training teachers such as training notes, self-study books, portfolios etc. and these trainers were encouraged to practise any new skills before training teachers on them.

Second, concerning the lack of non-training CPD, the project aimed at raising stakeholders' awareness (though workshops) of the importance of CPD and its impact on teachers and teaching and the importance of providing support and resources for teachers during and after training. To further support teachers and trainers, a handbook on CPD was written for use in India which can be used over 12 months: it could be used as a guidance and it included different topics, including bottom up activities, such as learning from others, motivation and raising awareness.

Regarding the third challenge, teachers need to have a sense of commitment and responsibility in order for CPD to be effective and they need enough support. Therefore, an Indian-specific CPD framework was developed which may help enhance teachers' learning and PD at the same time.

2.3.6 Online sources

It is undeniable that the world is currently witnessing accelerating developments in technologies and this has opened the door widely to the emergence of another source for teachers to improve themselves professionally. There are varieties of online sources, "today professional development based on electronic technologies increasingly refers to web-based,

interactive experiences combining text, video, and sound." (National Research Council, 2007:16).

There are some advantages of these types of TPD sources. For example, "with new media and technologies have come new opportunities for teacher learning and development. Interactive websites provide opportunities for teachers to share their work……You Tube provides teacher-made videos of their classrooms, as well as captured videos and presentations." (Liberman & Miller, in Martin et al, 2014:17).

Also, "professional development delivered by technology offers some promise for district that may not have access to other forms of delivery. A study by Fisher, Schumaker, Culbetson, and Deshler (2010) demonstrated that there was no difference in the results for teachers enrolled in a virtual workshop and teachers enrolled in actual face-to-face workshop. The researchers measured teacher satisfaction, teacher knowledge, and student achievement. A follow-up study showed that computerized programs have the potential for changing teacher behavior but can also improve student outcomes and student satisfaction." (Quatroche et al, in Martin et al, 2014:434).

Probably another important feature of online-provided type of TPD is convenience, teachers do not need to travel long distances, nor they need to pay for child care (if it applies). In this way it would be cost effective (Holmes, Singer &Macleod, 2010). In this way, it can save all teachers' time, money and effort which are really needed for teachers who might be overwhelmed by teaching and already lack time. I can also add another feature which is timing as teachers can decide when to watch or start the online PD search/ learning.

An interesting innovative approach was conducted in delivering CPD opportunities to English teachers in Oman in 2012-2013 online. The project was in collaboration between the British council and the MoE in Oman. Three online modules were delivered to almost 200 primary and secondary school teachers. The online project was a novelty in Oman, as it would also be in Syria. It was intended to provide some extra support for teachers with their CPD in addition to the face-to-face CPD in the form of workshops or training courses etc. In Oman, most traditional CPD is directed to novice teachers, so this project presented a good opportunity for experienced teachers to engage in CPD and it was also a chance for teachers who live in remote regions in Oman where distance may affect their attendance of face-to-face training (which

again can be an issue in Syria as we shall see in chapter 3). There were three online modules which were delivered to almost 200 primary and secondary school teachers. The modules were in the form of top-down video recorded lectures on language learning and teaching, lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching, and managing the teaching and learning process. Means of assessment were short written assignments, including more bottom up reflective portfolio activities and contributions to forums. The whole experience proved to be successful and teachers were motivated and excited. It provided new learning opportunities for teachers. Teachers who benefited from it requested MoE staff to enroll them on any future online CPD and those who could not attend asked for the same.

All in all, teachers' engagement in TPD through ICT is widely claimed to improve education, however as indicated by Tondeur et al (2016:118): "it is not the mere presence of, or access to, ICT-resources that will transform education. Transformation will be effected through what teachers do with the technology that is available to them."

However, there are certain obstacles that may affect online TPD as represented by:

"Knowledge about online technologies and programs; support from administrators; access to technologies; time, financial support, and parental support; materials; support from higher education; and teachers' beliefs and practices" (National Research Council, 2007:16).

2.3.7   Teacher engagement in different types of TPD activity

As we have seen in the account above, some studies exist of the benefits and effects of TPD in various specific contexts, and of how much teachers liked them. However, each study generally has focused on one type of TPD activity, e.g. writing lesson reports, or observing other teachers, or doing action research, and taken place in contexts where either the targeted activity occurred as a matter of course, or was introduced deliberately by a researcher for the purpose of a study to measure its effects. There are relatively rare references to teacher spontaneous engagement in any form of TPD, and they are often impressionistic. An example is the claim that although there are various benefits that teachers can gain from researching

their own practice through action research, teachers rarely engage in such research unless encouraged to do so by a training course, or the like (Borg 2009a).

What is relatively lacking, then, is comprehensive surveys, across the full range of TPD strategies/activities, of which activities teachers are in the normal course of events actually engaging in, especially in-service. Yet this is valuable to know if we are to understand the working of TPD in practice, as the current study aims to do, and potentially make suggestions for improvement.

Once again, it is hard to find studies of this. A closed questionnaire based survey of this type was conducted by Garet et al. (2001) to investigate the views of 1027 US teachers of mathematics and science about what effective PD would be. This also covered what kinds of TPD activity respondents engaged in. However, that part was limited to activities provided by the TPD program which the survey was associated with (the Eisenhower Professional Development Program): within that, 79% of TPD activities engaged in were 'traditional', meaning either training courses, workshops or conferences. While the results of this survey are too distant from my context to be relevant, the study did prompt us to decide that a questionnaire of this sort was not for us the primary instrument of choice, since it would not allow teachers to reveal unprompted the forms of TPD they really engage in, unconstrained by a detailed set of questions following a researcher agenda.

Slightly closer to my interest, in Mexico a needs analysis study was carried out to check the effectiveness of an educational reform aimed at preparing teachers, the National English Program in Basic Education (NEPBE), implemented in public schools in Mexico in 2009. The focus of the study was on teachers' previous TPD experience as well as their attitudes toward it. The findings showed that the main TPD experiences of teachers were stand-alone and degree courses. On the other hand, the majority of the participants were not familiar with other aspects of TPD such as mentoring, peer observation, attending conferences, or networking.

The most relevant source I found, however, both in terms of method and context, was again Alibakhshi and Dehvari (2015), who I cited above in 2.2, and also included this dimension. They identified from interviews just five loose types of TPD which participants were engaged in, distinguished primarily by the location where it took place (e.g. in the classroom, at university, at a TPD event in their local city). They found that, of their 20 teachers, all claimed

to be involved in TPD which they loosely categorised as professional development through work (in class). On closer examination this turns out to include a mixture of my categories above, including learning through being required to use computers in teaching, which led to raised awareness of how they could be used (cf. reflection), and observing and being observed by peers, and using feedback from students. 70% named formal education, meaning university BA or MA courses. 60% referred to attending CPD events and workshops organised by the local education department or the Teaching English and Language Society of Iran conferences, as participants, and 20% presenting at such CPD events. Finally, 50% mentioned informal self-studies, which are not further described. While this study is quite brief and uses broad categories of TPD activity which I will investigate in fuller detail in the context chapter, it nevertheless is suggestive of what I may find in a context not too dissimilar.

A further issue that arises if we study teacher actual engagement with TPD is *why* teachers engage or do not engage with this or that type of TPD. This is also part of my study to investigate since it seems to have attracted relatively little attention, though is clearly important to know. Logically, it is a function in part of what is available, which in my context I expect may turn out to be a crucial factor, though self-reflective TPD is in a sense always available. Also, it must depend in part on how far teachers are obliged by Ministries and other authorities to engage in this or that TPD.

However, participation must also depend on teacher attitudes and preferences for different types of TPD, which I will be including in my study. There were some mentions of these in studies cited above. For instance, Richards and Ho (1998 cited in Farrell, 2007) reported that 71% of teachers found writing lesson reports useful. However, it is doubtful how far such information is a valid reflection of teachers' true opinions. Such studies gather opinions in the context of a study focused on just one type of TPD, and often where that activity was introduced especially for the study, and was not a normal element in teachers' PD repertoire. This means that the activity is not really being judged in comparison with the all the other TPD activities/strategies, and that there likely exists novelty effect, and/or a desire to please the researcher, which may lead to unduly favourable responses.

A study closer to my concern was the NEPBE study in Mexico cited above, which looked at teacher attitudes across whatever TPD activities occurred in the context. It found that some

teachers showed a positive attitude especially towards the impact of PD practices that include autonomy, reflection and collaboration, which are the opposite features to those found in the types of TPD they mostly engaged in.

A study of attitudes was conducted by Al-Qahtani (2015) in Saudi Arabia. The study focused on the following issues; EFL teachers' attitudes towards TPD, Teachers' needs for TPD, the obstacles that EFL teachers may face as far as their TPD is concerned, any differences among the participants regarding their age, qualification, material status, years of experience, students level being taught and teachers' attitudes towards TPD. Forty EFL teachers participated in the study. The study was descriptive qualitative. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaire were used for data collection. The findings revealed that teachers viewed TPD as important and needed, especially after adopting the new English syllabus. TPD was viewed as positively affecting all of teachers, teaching and students learning and achievement. Also, teachers expected TPD to; improve their English, add to their knowledge and teaching skills, prepare them for using the syllabus, classroom management, testing and use of technology in their classes of English. Concerning the obstacle, teachers talked about different issues: TPD not being obligatory, timing, transportation, teachers' needs are not considered. Finally, the study revealed no significance difference among teachers with respect to their age, experience teaching level, qualifications, material status and teachers' attendance of TPD.

In Hong Kong, a study was conducted by Hung (2003), the purpose of the study was exploring teachers' beliefs of CPD needs especially after implementing a new curriculum and the change in their roles that occurs as a result of that. Nine teachers participated in the study. Data were collected by interviews, document analysis and observations. The findings showed teachers' positive attitude toward change. However, they complained about their lack of involvement in the process of decisions making which resulted in considering the CPD program is inappropriate and activities are not related to their needs.

An innovative project took place in Brazil. Boas in Hayes, 2018 shed light on a TPD project that took place in a large language teaching institute in Brazil (Casa Thomas Jefferson). The project aimed at moving away from a top-down traditional CPD towards a more teacher-centered one. It lasted for twelve years. The project focused on seven innovations; TEFL

seminar, mentoring, workshops, senior teacher projects, peer mentoring, mini courses and blogging. Interestingly, teachers' different needs, interests and personalities were all taken into consideration. They were also involved in making decisions related to their CPD. Teachers' feedback was very positive, the project was very useful in the sense that it increased teachers' motivation, their performance at school as well as their CPD.

In England, a study was conducted by Bums (2005) where he explored teachers' views on CPD in a number of rural primary schools. Data were collected by questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The findings of his study revealed a gap between what CPD is and teachers' views of it. The teachers opted for a personal type of PD that is to address teachers' own needs and interests rather than one of the school needs. Moreover, they expressed a lack of control and sense of ownership over their own PD as decisions were made by school management and other stakeholders without considering teachers' involvements.

A final important issue impacting on engagement is teachers' lack of time. As stressed by Guskey (2009: 230): "Professional development advocates have long lamented the lack of time teachers and school leaders have to engage in high-quality professional learning experiences. Obviously, educators need time to deepen their understanding, analyse students' work, and develop new approaches to instruction."

2.4 Differences between novice and experienced teachers with respect to TPD

An important dimension of understanding TPD in a particular context is appreciating differences that may arise because of teachers' individual differences (IDs). Hence it is part of the agenda of my study to explore how such teacher IDs may impact on what they think TPD is, what TPD they engage in, what TPD they would like, and so on.

One ID which has received particular attention in the TPD literature is the difference between a novice teacher and an experienced teacher. The experienced teacher is usually characterized as being a professional, with autonomy and independence; she/he does not depend on others to enhance his/her TPD. Cosh for example suggested that the experienced teacher is (1999:121), "the initiator of his/her own development". By contrast, novice teachers are seen

to need TPD especially of the type supplied to them by others which is seen as especially important for them: they are argued to need continuous supervision and feedback, otherwise they may be less effective and become frustrated (Dehvari, 2015). Moreover, "in certain circumstance veteran teachers have higher uptake of more "traditional" practices, whereas, novice teachers might be more adept at reform-oriented professional development. It might also be that novice teachers are more open and flexible about new approaches, whereas veteran teachers are less likely to change easily because they have ingrained, established practices." (Desimone Stuckey in Martin et al, 2014: 470). Tsui (2003: 245) further suggests that there exists a wide range of differences between novice and experienced teachers. Some of these directly indicate TPD differences, like the first in the following list, which suggests experienced teachers are more reflective. So, also the seventh suggests that experienced teachers are more likely to engage in action research. Others, like most in the following list, simply propose that experienced teachers are better teachers than novices, in that they have better knowledge, understand the students better, teach better, etc. However, even this has implications for TPD. If more experienced teachers are better teachers than novices, how did they learn to be better teachers if not through engaging in some form of TPD?

- ❖ Experienced teachers have: greater awareness of the learning context in which they teach.
- ❖ A deeper and more elaborate knowledge base.
- ❖ Ability to make use of background and current knowledge to serve his ends.
- ❖ Ability to make sound initiative judgments and informed decisions based on past experience.

- ❖ Possessing knowledge derived from the classroom and are familiar with typical students' behaviours.
- ❖ Use their knowledge to make predictions about what might happen in the classroom.

- ❖ Readiness to investigate and solve a wide range of teaching problems.
- ❖ A deeper understanding of students and students' learning, needs and interests.
- ❖ Better understanding and skillful use of language learning strategies.
- ❖ Greater fluidity and independence as far as teaching is concerned.

However, there is insufficient real evidence on this point. After all, it may be that some experienced teachers believe they 'know it all' and do not need further TPD of any sort. This idea was indeed cleverly put by Bolton (2010:8), referring specifically to TPD in the form of reflection: "reflection makes the difference between twenty years of experience and one year of experience repeated twenty times." That is, an inexperienced teacher who reflects a lot may be more engaged in TPD, and so probably a better teacher, than an experienced teacher who does not. Consequently, the present study will aim to find out whether the suggested TPD differences between the novice and experienced teachers are true in the Syrian context or not, for instance whether experience makes a difference to how much a teacher engages in reflection or other types of TPD.

2.5 Teachers' beliefs about their professional development

2.5.1 Teacher beliefs

Besides what TPD teachers report engaging in, my study is centrally concerned with what teachers (and in some cases other stakeholders) *believe* TPD to be, their attitudes to different types of TPD, and what they *think* its effects are. Hence it falls in the area of research on teacher cognition (Borg, 2006) or teacher beliefs.

Beliefs are defined most generally as "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (Richardson, 1996:103). This definition is broad enough that what are often called attitudes fall within the scope of beliefs.

For Richardson (1994a: 91) a belief is also "an individual's understandings of the world and the way it works or should work, may be consciously or subconsciously held, and guide one's actions". In the world of teaching this means that beliefs may affect practices. Similarly, Borg (2001: 186) defined a belief as: "a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour". Others see beliefs

as unobservable (S. Borg, 2003) and subconscious (Donaghue, 2003), and as able to be elicited or inferred (Pajares, 1992, Kagan, 1990).

Teachers' beliefs therefore represent the mental and the hidden side of the teacher. When talking about teacher beliefs or cognition, the main focus is on teacher's "mental lives", or what Freeman (2002) describes as the "hidden side" of teaching.

For the purposes of my study I need to draw a distinction between teacher beliefs about teaching and teacher beliefs about TPD. The former have been a considerable subject of discussion and research, but the latter, my concern, rather less so. The former type of belief is exemplified by definitions of beliefs such as "unconsciously held assumptions about students, teaching and learning, classrooms, and academic material to be taught," (Kagan, 1992:65). However, as stressed by Al-Lamki (2009:57): "Teachers may hold personal attitudes and beliefs about all possible aspects of their professional practices, from the subject matter to teaching methods, from what constitutes a good teacher to what constitutes a good student." That therefore includes beliefs held about TPD as well as directly about teaching.

As Richardson (1996:29) put it "what teachers do is a reflection of what they know and believe." In other words, teachers' knowledge and teachers' beliefs provide the underlying framework or schema which guides most of the teachers' classroom actions. Exactly the same can be claimed for teacher beliefs about TPD with respect to the TPD actions they perform. Furthermore, just as a teacher's classroom actions may be influenced not only by how they believe should teach, but also by what the prescribed textbook, syllabus or exams require them to do, so also the TPD that teachers actually engage in may be influenced not only by their beliefs about what TPD is most suitable, but also what courses etc. the Ministry requires them to do. Contextual factors, as indicated by Kagan (1992), may interact with teachers' cognitions in two ways: they may either lead to changes in their cognitions and attitudes or they may lead them to change their practices directly without changing the cognitions underlying them. That is true of a teacher who still believes in communicative tasks even though the required textbook has none; it is equally true of the teacher who believes in self-observation as the most effective for his TPD, even though he is required to attend a training course.

Furthermore, I must suppose that beliefs about TPD are not just in certain ways parallel to beliefs about teaching, but also directly influence them. If beliefs affect practices, I must suppose a potential sequence of effects of the type:

Beliefs about TPD > TPD practices > Beliefs about teaching > Teaching practices

In other words, teacher beliefs about what TPD is, and which types are effective, which they prefer etc. may affect what TPD they engage in (within the constraints of what is available or imposed, see 2.3.7). The TPD they engage in then potentially affects, amongst other things, their beliefs about teaching (and language learning etc.) which in turn impact on their teaching practices in using teaching materials, conducting actual classes, evaluating student work, and so forth. It is debatable perhaps whether the TPD they engage in only affects beliefs about teaching and does not also directly affect teaching practices. However, from this standpoint, TPD may be seen as not just hopefully yielding teacher learning, but yielding change in teacher beliefs about teaching. I can therefore agree with both Tsui (2003) and Farrell (2007) who share the view that teachers' beliefs (about TPD as well as teaching) are considered as a major source of teachers' effectiveness, which will undoubtedly influence their pedagogical practice.

Interestingly, in the realm of research on teacher beliefs about teaching, many researchers identified five main characteristics as the ones that have an effect on teachers' beliefs and attitudes (Barron-Cohen, 2003; Calderhead, 1996; Fang, 1996; Hollingsworth, 1989; McGillicuddy-De Lisi & De Lisi, 2001; Nespor, 1987; Richardson, 1994, 1996). These characteristics are: years of teaching experience, age, grade level, gender, and educational qualification. It is perhaps surprising given what I have just argued that this list does not explicitly include the kind and amount of TPD (or training) that the teacher has had. I must suppose that this factor is subsumed under teaching experience or educational qualification.

2.5.2 The importance of studying teachers' beliefs about TPD

Research in this area pays less attention to teacher beliefs and practices with respect to TPD than that with respect to teaching, I can nevertheless find some often oblique references to it, for instance, it is argued (Knezedivc, 2001) that awareness of beliefs and practices (with respect to teaching) is a crucial step: teachers cannot develop and improve their teaching skills unless they are fully aware of who they are and what they do.

Furthermore, Lin (2013: 72) stressed that: "there is a complex relationship among teachers' attitudes, beliefs and professional knowledge." According to Richard et al. (2001:41), there are three main issues related to teachers' beliefs and professional development as represented by the following:

- ➢ Teachers' beliefs play a central role in the process of teacher development.
- ➢ Changes in teachers' practices are the result of change in teachers' beliefs.
- ➢ The notion of teacher change is a multidimensional and is triggered both by personal factors as well as by the professional contexts in which teachers' work.

Though not entirely explicit, these points imply again that TPD must be at work to change the teacher beliefs (about teaching), which in turn affect teachers' practices (in the classroom).

At the other extreme from studies of beliefs about teaching, some of which have implications for TPD, I have studies of beliefs about TPD, which surely have implications for teaching. Those few that are relevant to us have already been considered in 2.2.2 (beliefs about the nature of TPD), and 2.3.6 (attitudes to TPD /preferred types). Though it is beyond the scope of the current study, clearly at some time I need studies that trace the effects all the way through from beliefs about TPD to what occurs in the classroom.

I conclude this review of beliefs with the suggestion that insufficient attention has been paid to teacher beliefs about TPD in a range of areas I will address: teacher beliefs about the nature of TPD, teacher attitudes to TPD, and teacher beliefs about what effects TPD has, on beliefs about teaching or anything else. Especially the last is crucial in the chain which I have suggested may exist from beliefs about TPD down to what actually occurs in the classroom. My study will consider beliefs about TPD in one specific context (country and school level),

mindful of Borg (2006: 275) who emphasized the importance of the teaching setting on teachers' beliefs and practices related to their professional development, where he pointed out that "The social, institutional, instructional and physical settings in which teachers' work have a major impact on their cognitions and practices."

Some studies highlighted the importance of considering teachers' beliefs to ensure the success of any reform/ TPD programs. A study was conducted in Libya by Orafi & Borg (2009), which investigated teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the new English curriculum. The findings showed a mismatch between the principles of the curriculum and that of teachers' practices. Ignoring teachers' beliefs resulted in teachers' practices that are mainly influenced by their own beliefs of themselves, their students and the context where they teach.

In England, a study was conducted by Bums (2005) where he explored teachers' views on CPD in a number of rural primary schools. Data were collected by questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The findings of his study revealed a gap between what CPD is and teachers' views of it. The teachers opted for a personal type of PD that is to address teachers' own needs and interests rather than one of the school needs. Moreover, they expressed a lack of control and sense of ownership over their own PD as decisions were made by school management and other stakeholders without considering teachers' involvements.

2.6 The perspectives of other stakeholders than teachers

As reflected in the above sections, this study is primarily concerned with the teacher perspective on TPD. Nevertheless, as indicated in chapter 1, I also to a lesser extent focus on the other stakeholders in any TPD. These typically include figures with some sort of managerial responsibility for it, such as head teachers or ministries or provincial educational authorities, and often those, quite legitimately, do not see the key purposes and issues of TPD in the same way that teachers do. I therefore review here two common themes voiced in the literature which are ones that managers rather than teachers would typically be concerned with: TPD as a means to implement educational policy, and the evaluation of TPD in terms of impact.

First, then, the goals of educational managers may be based on factors way beyond those that seem obvious to teachers. They may involve national, political, and economic aspects as well as purely educational ones. This is exemplified by the Taiwanese government education policy, which sees English "as one of the most important tools for establishing Taiwan as the Asian-Pacific center for transportation management, technology, and humanities" (Lo, 2006:25). This then shows itself in the Ministry of Education implementing a whole range of initiatives including starting the teaching of English in school at an earlier grade, introducing different textbooks at secondary school, and encouraging universities to require that students, regardless of their majors, have to pass the international TOEIC test at a certain level in order to graduate. In such a scenario, TPD is often just one part of the policy or strategy, and is often seen by the authorities as the means to make sure that English gets taught in what they see as being the most effective way to achieve the ultimate language goals: e.g. in Taiwan, as in Saudi Arabia (Oyaid, 2009), this involves encouraging use of technology in language teaching. This all obviously favours a top down approach to TPD, and can, for example lead to it being simply used by managers as an instrument to make sure all teachers follow the approved methods rather than to foster teacher self-development. Consequently, their views on the definition of TPD, what its typical activities are, what constitutes desirable or effective TPD etc. all might differ very much from those of teachers.

It should be noted, however, that managers who treat CPD in an extreme top down way are unlikely to achieve educational changes that last, i.e. that are sustainable. As indicated in 2.3, a balance between top down and bottom up CPD, including communities of practice (Hoban, 2002) is needed so that teachers themselves are involved actively in taking on board an innovation. Furthermore, some kind of interaction or even partnership between teachers, academics, trainers, and managers, which Kennedy (2005:246) calls 'communities of enquiry', could be needed to ensure true sustainability.

Another concern of managers is with evaluation of CPD in general and its impact in particular. Researchers also want to measure effectiveness or impact but, the desired impact might be seen as something different by managers concerned with government policies, compared with TEFL researchers. Evaluation of impact is a useful technique as it helps in changing and improving practices and eventually informs future plans for CPD (Kelley, 2006 & Muijs and

Lindsay, 2008). As stressed by Muijs and Lindsay (2008:209): "without these evaluative approaches, gauging the relative effectiveness of different forms of CPD will remain elusive and, by implication investing in forms of CPD that have little or no impact on the teacher and learner will remain a real possibility." The word *investing* here draws attention to the financial aspect which managers often stress: they usually want the most effective learning outcomes for the least expenditure (Muijs and Lindsay, 2008; Goodal et al, 2005).

A great deal is written about how best to evaluate TPD, much of it similar to what is written in the general program evaluation literature (e.g. Weir and Roberts, 1994). As mentioned in chapter 1, this study is not claimed to be a TPD evaluation, but rather an exploration of teachers' experiences of, and beliefs about, and attitudes to, TPD in their context. Furthermore, formal evaluation is often done in relation to particular TPD innovations, projects or programs introduced at some particular time.

In addition, a good practice is to consider the intended impact before a CPD program takes place and to be part of the planning for it (Kelley, 2006). For Harris et al (2009: 91) it is important that: "any evaluation of CPD needs to take careful account of the important relationship between purposes and outcomes in order for the evaluation to be meaningful." For the process of evaluation to be most useful, two issues should be considered; data should be collected from different participants including teachers and other stakeholders (Smith, 2002) and they should be given the feedback on the evaluation process. Harris et al (2006: 92) "evaluation of CPD will usually want to serve two main purposes: summative evaluation (does the program improve outcome?) and formative assessment (how can the program be improved?)".

One of the main problems of impact evaluation is that it takes place at one time and it does not really take into account how useful the PD activity was as far as teachers, students or schools are concerned. Often, evaluation of impact depends on participants completing a satisfaction questionnaire and, as indicated by Goodall et all (2005), it is common and easy to collect, "in many ways it is also least informative as participants' reaction to CPD tend to be impressionistic and highly subjective." In addition, Goodall et al (2005:28) criticized it as: "in practice, most evaluative strategies used to gauge the impact of CPD are frequently low level and do not take into account the different purposes, outcomes and levels of impact associated

with various forms of CPD." Though evaluation of impact is crucial: "unfortunately, as is so often the case in education, systematic evaluations of professional development programs are rarely undertaken." (Clare, 1976:1). Similarly, Muijs and Lindsay (2008: 196) stated that: "while the importance of CPD is widely acknowledged by the professions, evaluation of the impact of CPD is rarely undertaken in a systematic and focused manner."

Guskey (2000) highlighted three points of weakness in evaluation of programs. The first is giving a general summary of the main activities rather than how effective and useful they were. The second is a focus on participants' satisfaction with the program rather than what they learned from it and how it was useful to them and their students and they are often one-off events while in fact it should take place concurrently with TPD activities.

Interestingly, Guskey (2000) talked about five ways for evaluating the impact of CPD and these are represented by participants' reactions which is usually achieved by completing a questionnaire of participants' satisfaction, participants' learning from CPD, organisational support and change, participants' use of new knowledge and skills and students' outcome.

As may be seen, the present study avoids some of the strictures above by not relying on questionnaires, and by gathering data from other stakeholders as well as teachers.

2.7 Chapter conclusion

In this literature review I have attempted to shed light on some key themes in the study of TPD. In the process, I provide support for my choice of research questions and pave the way for the following chapters by giving the reader a clear idea of the main features of TPD.

Necessarily, the account has focused on various kinds of TPD of the top-down, externally provided, type, esp. courses of various sorts. It has not been able to throw much light on the occurrence of the wide range of other TPD activities that may go on (as described in chapter two), of the type that involve contact with peers or others who are not trainers/supervisors etc., and of the type that is more purely teacher centred (e.g. reflective). Though in principle these are always available to teachers, since I have not found any studies of the incidence or impact of these in Syria, I have to rely on my own study to fill this gap in information.

Chapter Three: Context

3.1 Introduction

The context chapter aims to provide valuable background information which I can use later to illuminate the different aspects of teachers of English PD as reported in our data. I will provide as much contextual information as possible which was known to us prior to the interviews from official sources or personal experience in relation to the factors that may play a pivotal role in shaping TPD in Syria. Firstly, this chapter will sketch the status and importance of English language in Syria. Next, it will include some information about the educational system in Syria, focusing on state secondary schools. After that, I will shed light on the different resources for TPD in Syria.

3.2 The Importance of English language in Syria

In today's world, the importance of English cannot be ignored as it is the most common internationally spoken language. For a variety of reasons, English is a means to find the best way to a good life and to learn what is useful and interesting. That is why the importance of English language is no longer in doubt in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Oil was found in Syria in the 1930s which has led to foreign investments. It witnessed economic development and the growth of the private sector (Othman, 2009). As a result, the importance of the English language in Syria increased dramatically as many job opportunities arose which necessitate a good command of English on the part of local workers.

The government realized the importance of English as a means of development and a window to the world (Othman,2009). Syrians have become more aware of the importance of English as demonstrated by the increased amount of people who want to learn and improve their English either personally or by going to private institutes or having private English tuition at home. Most of them realize that English is a key instrument to face the challenges of modern life and is an essential requirement for access to a number of different fields such as science, modern technology, computers, communication and travel. Travelling abroad whether for business, studying or tourism is almost impossible without a reasonable command of English.

Moreover, many Syrian students travel abroad to different English speaking countries like Canada, U.S.A and United Kingdom for study purposes which require advanced English language skills. Furthermore, English is the international language of diplomacy, business, banking, medicine, commerce, industry, trade, media, computing, aviation and engineering. English is undoubtedly the key instrument of globalization and for conducting higher scientific research and technological studies. In this way, learning English can help Syrians to break out of their own ethnocentric shells and open a window into the international world.

English is the pre-dominant language of the Internet and it still remains the core language for most internet users. Most of the information and websites are available in English with the growth of the internet in the fields of education and E-commerce. This has encouraged the spread of different types of internet cafes all over Syria and in turn necessitates a good mastery of the English language. Hence, this has increased Syrians' awareness that learning English is the first step towards belonging to the present and having access to the internet with its wealth of information.

Nowadays, there are many bookshops in Syria where dictionaries, encyclopaedias and reference books in English are sold. Therefore, access to new knowledge in this medium is available through the English language. Besides, the English language has become an important medium of the, TV, satellite, cinema and press. *Syria Times* is an example of a newspaper that is issued weekly in Syria and is written in English and it also has an online website.

In addition, a good command of English is an essential requirement to pass the National Test of English. This test is set for all Syrian holders of bachelor degrees, higher institute degrees and university degrees who wish to apply for any of the various government job opportunities. It is also important for the university test to apply for Masters' degree at Syrian universities. "The Ministry of education recently decided that teaching of English must begin in elementary school." (Othman, 2009:16).

As a result of the above, English is a means to find good posts and job opportunities, both in Syria and abroad. In Syria, high quality jobs which are well-paid require a good understanding and mastery of the English language, for example, working in banks or in the airport or in the oil sector. Moreover, with a good command of the English language in Syria, the possibility

of promotion is even higher. On the other hand, finding a well-paid job opportunity in any of the Gulf countries is an irresistible temptation for some Syrians especially the young, and that also requires mastery of good English. Therefore, learning English will not only open the door for good posts and job opportunities, but will also increase peoples' standard of living.

3.3 The educational system in Syria

Education in Syria has developed greatly over the last few decades. Since 1960, education has been considered as a top priority and as a means for ensuring development. The Syrian government has made a significant investment in the educational sector where a great deal of effort has been exerted to improve the quality of the educational system taking into consideration the importance of foreign language teaching and learning. "The main slogan of education in Syria was education for all." (Gharib,2009:3)

"One of the most important achievements in the past 40 years was the provision of free primary and secondary-school level education" (Othman, 2009: 14). Education made compulsory from grade 1 to grade 9: education is free and compulsory for grades 1-9, then it is free but not compulsory grades 10-12. Then university after that is not free, though tuition fees are almost affordable to everyone. In addition, there has been a considerable increase in the number of schools and universities in different Syrian governorates, (Othman, 2009). Also, considerable efforts were made to invest in educational training and research as represented by sending university graduates and in-service teachers abroad to gain knowledge and experience through taking MAs and PhDs or even for training courses and experiences in English speaking countries (see further section 3.4).

Furthermore, computer literacy has been made compulsory subjects in state education being taught for students from grade 7. Arabic is the mother tongue taught from grade 1 and the medium of instruction. In Syria, "English has been integrated and included in the curricula as a foreign language which aims to develop the four skills" (Issa, 2011: 11). As of grade1 up to grade 12 English is taught as the first second language whereas students can choose either French or Russian as their second foreign language.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the lower level of education including secondary schools. The Ministry of Education's responsibilities consist of outlining the curriculum, setting the teaching aims and outcomes, providing the teaching materials, and different types of training for teachers. On the other hand, the Ministry of Higher education is in charge of higher levels of education including universities and higher institutes.

Recently, in 2014, the MoE has been working on updating and producing a new curriculum for secondary school level. One of the most important achievements is the production of an electronic version of the curriculum. This includes electronic versions of the school syllabus with year by year syllabuses of what is supposed to be taught including the actual text of the textbooks of every subject which are available online to anyone. It is hoped that such electronic version of the books will make them more desirable and accessible, especially when considering students who are fond of computers and the fact that we live in the age of informatics.

In the public sector another important achievement was the establishment of the Higher Institute of Languages (HIL) in all of the four Syrian state universities (Gharib,2009). The HIL offers privately-paid English courses to university students independently of their majors with the aim of improving their language skills. One of the main aims of the HIL is also to offer training programmes and courses that are intended to enhance teachers' skills (Gharib, 2009) and improve their professional development (see 3.4).

3.3.1 The secondary school level

This covers grades 10-12 where students are aged between 15-17 years old. At the beginning of the 11th grade, students who study at the general secondary school have to choose to continue their studies in either the literary or the scientific stream (Gharib, 2009) where in both branches English is taught as a compulsory course. The final exam of the 12th grade (the baccalaureate) is set nationally (Issa, 2011). These exams are crucial for the future lives of most Syrian students, because the result of these exams determines which university, institution, college and faculty the students will study in (Othman, 2009) depending on their overall marks and

branch of study (literary or scientific). It is important to highlight that almost the majority of students aim to study at university level as that is affordable to almost everyone, and there are many universities ranging from state to private ones spread all over Syria to accommodate the high demand. Holding a university degree means securing a better kind of job, since for example almost all civil sectors would prefer BA degree holders as employees.

A great deal of effort has been exerted in Syria not only to improve the quality of the educational system in general but also to improve foreign language teaching and learning. Therefore, many private English language institutes were established all over the twelve Syrian governorates to satisfy the increased demand for English; they cater for all the way from kindergarten to university level learners of English. These would be attended by students who also attend regular state school. In fact, the majority of students whether in the scientific or the literary branch take additional private English tuition, because of its importance at secondary school level, helps prepare students for the same exams they take in state school, and because they realize its importance at university almost for all undergraduate studies, English is taught as a compulsory subject (Issa, 2011) and for some branches such as medicine, pharmacy, science they study subject specialist vocabulary in English) and in post-university life. Such English tuitions are usually given at either language institutes or at the house of the teacher of English where a special teaching room is specified for this purpose (a room that well- equipped with white board, desks and chairs almost similar to school class). This last is the case in the countryside as well as town.

At state secondary school level, students usually receive about 4 sessions of English every week where each session lasts for about 45 minutes and the majority of secondary schools are provided with the internet and relevant hardware.

3.3.2 The English course book and teaching at secondary level

The course book is *English for starters* by Liz Kilbey printed by York press, specifically for use in Syria and is entirely in English. This is required by the Ministry to be used everywhere. The course book is considered as the main source of knowledge (Gharib, 2009). This series is introduced into education from an early stage, year one *English for starters 1* up to year twelve

English for starters 12. At the secondary level, this series includes a Teachers' Book, a Student's Book, and listening material on cassette, an Activity Book and Supplementary Book (for eleventh and twelfth grade only). It is a comprehensive language course. "English for starters provides a wide range of regional and topic based content and the latest in methodology, designed to appeal to the educational needs and interests of Syrian students at this level" (Kilbey, 2011:10). There is a great focus on grammar and vocabulary and the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The the nonlinguistic topics of reading texts etc. are universal and local. It encourages both learner-learner and learner-teacher interaction.

Students' book: it is divided into different modules where each focuses on certain non-linguistic topic or theme and each module contains different units, each unit seems to have a specific focus on certain language topics announced at the start for each of the four skills plus grammar and vocabulary.

Activity Book: this is often mainly related to the students' book, develops topics and language skills. It contains activities such as reading passage, language practice and writing tasks. It is often used in class but sometimes teachers set a homework for students to do.

Supplementary Book: this includes some extra materials for students differentiated according to their branch of study. For example, it includes pure literary materials for students in the literary stream and pure scientific materials for those in the scientific one (not available at 10th grade where all students study the same syllabus and textbooks.)

Teachers' Book: the teachers' book plays an important role for teachers as guidance. It helps them to successfully prepare and plan for their lessons. It includes guidance on the following matters: review units, complete transcripts of listening material, full answer keys for student and activity books; timing for each stage of the lesson; techniques of using the board, classroom management, giving instructions, presenting and practising new language, listening to students during their pair or group work and making notes; and an assessment guide that provides examples of suitable tests and advice for teachers to prepare their own tests.

3.4 Resources for teacher professional development in Syria

It is worth mentioning the fact that "The literature about TPD in Syria is very scant" (Dayoub & Bashiruddin, 2012:593). Although there is a limited volume of policy documents and materials, I will shed light on these when possible.

I now review the known formal training programmes and official resources that are available to Syrian secondary level English teachers together with those known to me based on my own prior experience, surfing the internet for official information, and previous casual contact with teachers of English in Syria. In developing countries such as Syria there are different models of TPD which are not systematic. (Dayoub & Bashiruddin,2012). For instance, a study was carried out by Dayoub & Bashiruddin (2012) to investigate EFL secondary school teachers' PD in developing countries. For this purpose, one case study was taken from Syria and the other one from Pakistan. The study revealed interesting findings; teachers mainly adopted self-directed (teacher-centred) TPD. In-service education enhanced their PD as represented by workshops and training courses. The school and home represent enabling and supporting context for teachers to develop professionally speaking.

Other forms of TPD may emerge from the data that I gather later.

➢ **Bachelor Degree in English**

This is a pre-service resource. In order to teach at the secondary school level, a teacher of English should have a BA in English "In Syria the Ministry of Education passed a governmental verdict in 1999 in which all teacher education was put under the supervision of public universities." (Dayoub& Bashiruddin, 2012:590).

In Syria, this course lasts for four years with eight academic semesters. It takes place at the department of English language and literature in the faculty of Arts and Humanities at the university, (there are about 24 universities in Syria). During this degree program, students study different types of subjects such as: comprehension and composition, translation, drama, prose, novel, short stories, poetry, literary criticism, comparative literature, American literature, grammar and linguistics, basics of researching, teaching methods and foreign language. All these subjects are compulsory except foreign language where they can study

either French or German. The degree program does not really equip teachers fully in terms of either PRESET teacher training or preparation for continuing professional development later. "Unlike in developed countries where teachers go through pre-service, induction and in-service opportunities, teachers in the developing countries enter the profession without any training." (Dayoub& Bashiruddin, 2012:605). The main focus is on improving students' own English language, literature and linguistics: there is almost no focus on teaching practice/ micro teaching. The most relevant subject is teaching methods, but sadly students only study this subject during their fourth and last year, for two terms almost two hours weekly. The importance of this subject comes from the fact that it consists of two parts: a theoretical part where students learn about teachers and their characteristics, students and their different needs and the best ways of dealing with them, teaching theories/ strategies etc. Concerning the practical part, students have the choice of either going to schools and apply what is learnt there and then talk about their experience in front of their colleagues, or write something like an assignment and make a presentation in front of colleagues. In both cases students receive comments and feedback from colleagues and the university academic lecturer. In some other subjects there are also practical sessions where students are asked to choose a topic related to the subject they study (linguistics, literature), do some research via reading books or surfing the internet and make a presentation in front of their colleagues using modern technology if possible (projectors, power point slides… etc). This can enhance students' researching skills, their self-confidence in speaking to an audience and computer and technological skills, so arguably has some small training benefit for a future teacher.

In fact, most of EFL teachers in Syria start teaching just after graduation without following any form of teacher education (Gharib,2009)

➤ **Courses in the Higher Institutes of Languages: the MA TEFL**

There are four of these institutes based in the cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Lattakia, and Homs. Recently, a ministerial decision was issued to initiate the fifth HIL in the city of Deir-Ezzor (the context of this study), but unfortunately the current problems affected putting the decision into practice. Though the HIL could be useful as far as improving teachers' English is concerned, and in its provision of teacher training through the Master's Degree in Teaching

English as a Foreign Language, the absence of such an institute in the context of the study makes it difficult for teachers there, considering issues of travel distance, cost and effort as well as lack of time.

One function of such institutes is to offer language courses and tests:

- The national tests of languages (English/ French). These tests are designed for graduates of Syrian universities and institutes and are a pre-requisite for job opportunities in the public sector.
- The test for entry to Masters' Degree. All university graduates wishing to study MA at any of the Syrian state universities must take this.
- Language courses for Syrian scholarship students wishing to complete their higher studies abroad.
- Courses in various languages such as Arabic, English, French, German, Russian, Spain and Italian.

The Master's Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, however, is the main programme of interest to us since it aims to professionally train and qualify teachers to teach English as a Foreign Language. There are certain requirements for applying to this course: to hold a BA in English with no less than 65% and to pass a certain test. The course, set up in 2008/9, is two years full time and intended to equip teachers of English with theoretical and practical knowledge that may improve their teaching and themselves professionally. It carries a pay increase afterwards for teachers who have this. It is delivered in English by specialized lecturers who are usually holders of PhDs in English. There is no dissertation, but rather a graduation project.

This master's degree is considered as a professional qualification rather than a higher study one due to its qualifying and professional nature. It is optional rather than obligatory for secondary school English teachers: some student-teachers may like to take it pre-service while others like to take it in-service. However, in both cases, teachers should not be employed, because successful completion of the course requires 90% attendance. Unlike the teachers' diploma in education (see below), teachers have to attend during the working days (not in evenings or at weekends).

During the course, students are trained in the use of computers for teaching and learning purposes. Students are also encouraged to do some research such as looking at other textbooks or at websites for other ideas of how to teach or materials to use so as to not only depend on the course books, so the program enhances students' researching skills. Its components are as follows. Methods of TEFL, Teaching linguistic skills, Linguistics, Psycho-Socio Linguistics, English for Specific Purposes, Second Language Acquisition, Applied Linguistics, Teaching Practice and Observation in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Teachers' Diploma in Education

This diploma is provided by the Syrian MoE to professionally and educationally improve teachers' level. It is probably the main form of teacher education for teachers in Syria (Gharib, 2009). It aims at equipping teachers with the necessary skills, and enrich their theoretical, educational, professional and practical knowledge which may enable them to do their jobs in the best possible way and which will be positively reflected in students' achievement level. It is an optional course for teachers and can be taken either as pre or in service course. The programme takes place at the Syrian universities, in the Faculty of Education, during the Syrian weekends (Fridays and Saturdays) so can be taken by teachers who are in work. It lasts for one year and consists of two academic semesters starting in September and ending in June. As clearly stated by Dr Shaaban (2010), the Dean of the Faculty of Education in Lattakia, "the importance of the teachers' diploma in education qualification comes from the fact of being the stage that participates in educationally qualifying university graduates from non-educational faculties (faculties of science or arts and literature) and preparing them for the profession of teaching". Thus, this diploma is for all university graduates who wish to work in the profession of teaching except for graduates from the faculty of education, including teachers of different subjects at the primary, intermediate and secondary school. The medium of delivery and textbooks are in Arabic. Incentives offered to teachers include that holders of this diploma will benefit from the following: 3% salary increase, eligibility to do MA in the Faculty of Education (which offers this diploma), priority to find job opportunities at private schools and above all priority to be selected for MoE job opportunities, or as educational inspectors as well as priority for working in the Gulf countries. Most importantly, holders of this diploma can later on apply for higher studies that are offered at the Faculty of Education.

During this course all teachers study the same subjects and course books except one speciality subject (teaching methods) chosen according to the teachers' university degree. For example, teachers of English can study the speciality subject of English and so French for teachers of French etc. There are twelve subjects studied through this programme, approximately 2 hours each week. These are: Teaching methods, Educational psychology, General education and philosophy of education, Comparative education and education in the Arabic world, Philosophy of growth and adolescence, Measurement and evaluation, Mental health, Educational computing, Pedagogy of teaching, Educational curriculum, Practical education

Again, though the name of the course suggests a matter of training and preparation for teachers, it is not a prerequisite for having a post as a teacher. It is considered as in-service rather than pre-service training (Dayoub& Bashiruddin,2012). It is however available in our context since a decision was made in 2009 to offer this diploma in the city of Deir-Ezzor to save teacher time, effort and money travelling elsewhere. Teachers may find it generally useful, however a component that appears to be missing is raising teachers' awareness of how to conduct their own self-development through reflection and other means.

➢ **Visits by educational and subject-specialist supervisors**

These supervisors can provide a kind of in-service support for teachers. As stated by Minister of Education Dr Waz (2014), the aim is support for TPD rather than inspection/evaluation: "Educational supervision is a comprehensive, cooperative, humane process that aims at improving education, the teaching process and all of its aspects, enhancing confidence among all those concerned with the educational process and improving teachers' skills." Supervisors are usually selected by the central MoE depending on certain personal, educational, scientific characteristics; being experienced teachers of the subject they supervise and well-qualified for this position. Usually, these supervisors attend special training courses where they will be introduced to different issues such as, the concept of supervision, supervisors' roles and responsibilities, methods of teaching, classroom management, ways of evaluating teachers' performance, and equipped with educational knowledge and kept updated with the educational field. They also receive training on informatics and use of technology in education. Supervisors can attend educational conferences where they can meet experienced and knowledgeable

people such as PhD holders and lecturers from the faculty of educational and officials from the MoE. They can then pass the information to teachers.

Concerning teachers' supervisors, there are some articles, documents and books that are used as a source of training, which I will briefly present here.

There is a document entitled Information and Communication Technologies in Teacher Education by Khvilonet et al (2002). This document focuses on the importance of using information and communication technologies (ICT) in today's education, moving away from a teacher-centred to a student-centred approach. Moreover, this document focuses on useful resources in order to help teacher educators better apply ICTs to teacher education programs. The document also focuses on conditions that ensure successful integration of technology into education. It consists of many topics:

-ICTs and teacher education, a shift from teaching to learning.

-The rational and framework for ICTs and teacher education.

- ICTs in teacher education; curriculum planning and development.

-Essential components to support ICTs in teacher development.

- ICTs professional development for teacher educators, organizations and countries.

-Developing the strategic technology plan.

-Managing innovation and change.

-ICT supported teacher education; Images and scenario.

Another training material is an article entitled Educational system in Japan by Khaled Refai (2008). The article focuses on the following topics:

-Original root of education in Japan and how it developed throughout history

- Changes in the educational system in Japan.

-Aims and levels of education in Japan.

- Educational supervision and its development in Japan.

-Aspects of modern educational supervision in Japan.

-Things we could make use of from the Japanese experience.

Another source of training material is an article entitled: Teacher professional Development and Modern Trends by Amal Alsharki (2010). The article shed light on the following topics:

Definition of TPD, TPD as defined by professionals, reasons behind adopting TPD, aims of TPD, aspects of TPD.

It is worth noting, that these supervisors do not teach they work at local education center and their job is dedicated to supervise, improve teachers' teaching, and make their voices heard. Their role is to be a guide and role model as far as the professional development of teachers is concerned. One thing they do is to hold educational seminars (on a non-obligatory basis) in schools with the aim of encouraging exchange of experiences among teachers, improving teachers' thinking and management skills, improving the teaching-learning process through continuously training teachers and equipping them with the needed skills. They also discuss issues of teaching methods, the syllabus of English, the best way to deliver information to students as well as students' satisfaction with it. They also ask teachers for any suggestions and feedback and write them down for consideration. They hold such meetings termly, after school time in the evening. They often make unplanned visits to schools, at least in towns, and observe classes which will make them aware of teachers' problems, points of strength and weakness. As stated by Mr AlKurdy (2008) one of the educational supervisors "In all of his visits to school, the educational supervisor represents the Education Center, he should care for all educational, teaching and social issues." Such visits may provide teachers with information to professionally improve themselves. Supervisors may suggest updated books, resources or any relevant training or workshops available for teachers. Also, they may suggest taking a course on computer skills. In this way, they aim to make teachers more confident, enhancing teachers' abilities to identify the problems they may face, analyse them, find solutions and work on their self-professional development. By the end of each term, they have to send a detailed report to the local education center (which is in direct contact with the MoE) about the schools and every teacher they are in charge of and a copy of the report will also be sent to the teacher to sign. Teachers may get a certificate of thanks/ appreciation if he was doing well.

All in all, supervisors play an undeniable role as far as TPD is concerned, since all their comments and feedback are for development, on a non-evaluative basis. However, they do not focus on the teacher as an autonomous agent in his/her own TPD, but represent another top-down external agency of TPD.

> ➢ **The Syrian Educational satellite channel**

This was first launched by the Ministry of Education on 14 October 2008. It broadcasts programmes for 14 hours from 10 am till 12 am on a daily basis. Its programmes are produced in cooperation between the MoE and Ministry of Information. Syrians widely have satellite dishes and decoder boxes that will receive it, as it is affordable. In general, the channel is intended for/addresses all Syrians and Arabs whether in Syria or abroad and broadcasts material for all levels subjects, students, teachers and educationalists, in particular. It broadcasts different kinds of educational, documentary, cultural, scientific and entertaining programmes that are designed to be useful and interesting. It also broadcasts programmes related to the educational curriculum of English with sample lessons of English for secondary school level which is an opportunity for teachers to watch and improve themselves.

One of the main aims of the channel is enhancing the educational process and promoting positive changes as far as the methods and concepts of teaching are concerned. Also, it aims at improving teachers' skills, competence and professional level as far as the educational field is concerned.

The channel also broadcasts educational seminars, introducing teachers to the school curricula and course books. It often broadcasts live interviews with educationalists and experts such as the Minister of Education, supervisors…etc where teachers can have direct phone calls with them to share ideas with them, ask questions, present problems or even suggest changes.

The channel also presents programmes on the most updated technological, technical and scientific developments. Such educational channels have obvious importance in transmitting information in general and in teaching and education in particular. In short, this Syrian channel is designed to enhance the relationship between all teachers and stakeholders in the field of education. It may increase an awareness of teacher's pivotal role in society and education,

introducing new technological developments in the field of education, educational and informatics technologies.

> ➢ **Training Workshops for teachers of English**

There exist certain training workshops for teachers of English where they are trained by a foreign expert from United Kingdom, U.S.A or any other experts. From my experience, such training may last for two days and takes place locally in each city. Supervisors usually select teachers to attend the training and they themselves attend and supervise it. This kind of training takes place in cooperation between the MoE and the local education center and supervisors. They are not assessed, but usually teachers are awarded attendance certificates. Teachers should attend such workshops once selected.

There are both theoretical and practical aspects of such workshops. In the theoretical part, the expert may talk about different teaching methods and techniques and/or the use of technology in teaching, and he/she uses PowerPoint slides, projector, etc. He/she encourages teachers of English to ask questions and invites them to participate in discussions. By comparison, in the practical part of the workshop some teachers will typically be asked to prepare and teach a lesson (micro lesson) which would be a great opportunity for teachers to present "snapshots" of the way they teach, and an opportunity for other teachers to reflect on the different aspects of the lesson, giving their feedback and comments on what seems to be successful or unsuccessful and learn from that. Then, the expert will provide his own comments, suggestions and feedback. The expert encourages teachers to frequently share ideas and experience and make class visits to each other. Though this training could be useful for teachers, as they are specific to the teacher's needs, my experience in my district, it does not really happen very often.

> ➤ **Training programme for teachers on integrating technology into education (ITE)**

Syria is a country that is "currently pursuing the technological track in education" (Albirini, 2006: 374). In 2005, the Syrian Ministry of Education set up its first project for integrating information and communication technology into the Syrian educational system, realizing its undeniable role in education and for advancing into the information age. It is a professional development program providing in-service training courses in the field of technology for all elementary, intermediate and secondary school teachers aiming to eradicate the danger that is represented by teachers' electronic and PC illiteracy. The programme is a step towards continually updating the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers as far as ICDL (International computer Driving license) is concerned. Following the new Syrian initiative of introducing technology in education, a study was conducted by Albirini (2006) to explore EFL teachers' attitudes toward information and communication technology (ICT) at secondary school level. The study revealed that teachers have positive attitudes toward ICT and readiness to apply it as a means of TPD. Of course, Teachers' attitudes have a pivotal role as enabling or disabling factors regarding the use of technology (Bullock, 2004).

As indicated by one of the main coordinators of the project: "The project of incorporating technology into education aims at the professional development of teachers and improving Syrian teachers' skills in the use of technology in their classrooms" (Khoder, 2010).

The delivery team of the training project consists of coordinators, trainers and teachers who work on the project in the different Syrian governorates, including Deir-Ezzor. Usually, the training lasts for three weeks in the form of workshops that take place in local training and qualification centers in all of the Syrian governorates (SANA, 2009). The training is offered to teachers of different subjects; not subject specific.

Teachers are usually trained in the skills of using the internet, designing webpages, asking for experts' help, searching Webpages, and in how teachers can communicate with each other and with students. In addition, teachers learn about initiating email groups, managing them and employing them to serve the educational process. According to the Syrian national report (2000), the aim of integrating technology into education is to "keep pace with progress and to

reach efficient levels of education." Notably, some of what is covered is directed at supporting teachers' continuing PD rather than just being concerned with how they can use IT directly in the classroom. They are for instance trained to initiate their own personal websites and electronic portfolios that include the innovative and creative things that were achieved as a proof of his/her developments and improvement on the professional level throughout the time, such as samples of his/her students work as well as their overall impression about teaching which can be achieved through thoughtful reflection. Teachers are also trained to initiate discussion forums which are a means for exchange of ideas and experiences and a means of communication between all parties that are involved in education including teachers, students and trainers. They even initiate Facebook groups for teachers as a means of communication and exchange of ideas and experiences.

According to the main co-ordinator of the project in Syria, Mrs Roumia (2012) "The aim behind such training courses is to continually train and qualify teachers and increase the number of trained staff members". The project encourages collaborative work of teachers, opens channels of discussion between them, and makes them aware of the updates and changes of the international education systems as the basis for their CPD. The project also aims at creating an educational content or data network and connecting the Syrian teachers with a national and international Arab education network to facilitate exchange of experiences and ideas. Another feature of the ITE program is that trainers attend classes given by participants when they are back in school after the ITE course, to give further support. Generally, the project proved to be successful in equipping teachers with information and communication skills, as was clearly reflected in their classrooms in use of technology, computer, and internet. As a result, the project was greatly expanded in 2007-2008 where the project was sponsored by both the Ministry of Education and the Syria Trust for Development.

Concerning the training materials, usually teacher trainers use some power point slides, websites, articles and documents as a source of training materials. For example, teacher trainers usually refer teachers to a website called Discovery Education. It combines scientifically proven, standards-based digital media and a user community in order to empower teachers to improve student achievement. Also, it includes free lesson plans written by teachers for teachers. Teachers can find hundreds of original lesson plans for elementary, middle and

high school students. They can modify them to create their own. lesson plans show teachers how to integrate technology into education and they are organized into different steps:

-The main objectives of the lesson

-Materials to be used in class (papers, pencils, markers, worksheets, dictionaries, power point slides and computers with internet access).

-procedures: explaining to teachers what they should do in class a step by step.

-evaluation of students' work during the lesson.

- list of new vocabulary to be learnt.

On the other hand, books can also be a source of training materials such as a book entitled Theory and Practice of online learning by Terry Anderson (2008). The book contains topics that are of interest to teachers such as:

- o Role and function of theory in online education development and delivery

- o Foundations of educational theory for online learning

- o Infrastructure and support for content development

- o Technologies of online learning (E-learning)

- o Characteristics of interactive online learning

- o Meeting the needs of today's new generation of online learners with mobile learning technology

- o Design and development of online courses

- o The quality dilemma in online education

- o Delivery, quality Control, and student support of online courses

- o Teaching in an online learning context

- o Team skills and accomplishing team projects online

➢ **International Computer Driving License (ICDL)**

This is an in-service obligatory type of training, not subject specific to English, and an internationally acknowledged certificate. It shows that the certificate holder is well-qualified in the field of computer skills and information technology. The Syrian Computer Society (SCS) supports and supervises ICDL in Syria. The training usually requires a two-month course to successfully complete the course and pass the test. Also, it can be done part time while working as a teacher. There are many computer training and testing centers spreading all over the Syrian governorates where there are about 93 testing centers. Learners will be trained and introduced to the following aspects: basic concepts of information and technology, using the computer and managing files, Microsoft word and Word-processing, Microsoft Excel and spread sheets, Microsoft Access and databases, Microsoft PowerPoint and presentation, information and communication.

It is a course that was available for teachers before the ITE program. However, once the ITE program was adopted there seemed to be less emphasis on the ICDL. What distinguish the ITE program from the ICDL one, is that the former involves a greater sense of cooperation and support for teachers where teachers who follow the program are often supported by trainers visiting and observing their own classes and offering suggestions and feedback in a friendly, non-evaluative basis. On the other hand, ICDL training does not entail this feature: it is up to the teacher to apply what is learnt or not.

3.5 Conclusion

At this point it is worth mentioning the fact that there are other things that are available for teachers, such as that internet resource covering a number of Middle Eastern countries (World links Arab Region programme), and other internet resources that are based outside Syria, as well as things like the Egyptian Educational TV channel. However, I do not have space to cover them so have limited the account to ones within Syria. I may expect more to be revealed about the actual use of and effects of these resources in the Results later which may add to or alter the picture here.

Provisionally, however, it appears that while quite a wide range of resources/courses are available within Syria, only the BA in English and the ICDL are obligatory for secondary English teachers, and apart from the ITE course none of the provision appears to focus much on training the teacher to pursue his/her own TPD autonomously.

Necessarily, the account has focused on various kinds of TPD of the top-down, externally provided, type, esp. courses of various sorts. It has not been able to throw much light on the occurrence of the wide range of other TPD activities that may go on (as described in chapter two), of the type that involve contact with peers or others who are not trainers/supervisors etc., and of the type that is more purely teacher centred (e.g. reflective). Though in principle these are always available to teachers, since I have not found any studies of the incidence or impact of these in Syria, I have to rely on my own study to fill this gap in our information.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the research paradigm and methodology used in this qualitative study. First, I will describe the main characteristics of the chosen paradigm, its strengths, and justifications for implementing it in the current research. Next, I will describe the data gathering method with all its advantages, the rationale for using it and its limitations. The chapter will also present the two phases of the research: the pilot study and the main study.

4.2. Background on the research paradigm and interview methodology

4.2.1 Constructivism and qualitative research

The term paradigm is defined as the philosophical framework that can greatly influence the researcher's choice of the research methodology (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). In the literature, several different types of research paradigms are commonly recognised, where each one reflects different beliefs about the nature and purpose of research. In the social sciences, four types of paradigms may be distinguished: positivist, transformative, pragmatic and interpretive or constructivist (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). The constructivist/interpretative perspective is the one that is adopted in the current study as it is concerned with understanding the research topic based on the participants' own views and the meanings which they give to situations (Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2007). It aims at presenting an "emic perspective" rather than "etic perspective", meaning that it aims to "interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people attach to them" (Mackey and Gass, 2005:136). Participants develop such meanings through interacting with others in a particular context and in this paradigm researchers try to understand the context as a way to understand the participants. Likewise, Cohen and Manion (1994:36) stressed the idea that interpretative approaches to research have the intention of "understanding the world of human experiences" taking into consideration that "reality is

socially constructed" (Mertens, 2005:12). This contrasts with a positivist approach where it is believed that the researcher can access some objective reality that is independent of our knowledge of it.

In this constructivist paradigm, qualitative rather than quantitative means of collecting the data are often employed (Creswell, 2003). In qualitative research, data is typically gathered and interpreted in the form of what participants say or do, rather than as numbers derived from tests or closed questionnaire responses (quantitative). Qualitative research is indeed often spoken of as more or less synonymous with the constructivist approach, so it is also said that it "consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible." (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 3). Qualitative research is usually conducted when the researcher needs to explore a problem in the natural setting and when he needs to study a group of people and hear their "silenced voices" (Creswell, 2007:40). In my case, I am interested in understanding issues related to the teacher and teacher development from the inside rather than from the outside, i.e. where the voices and views of the participants themselves are heard in a natural and unprompted way, and these form the basis of our understanding. Hence for this research, constructivist qualitative data gathering is more appropriate than positivist quantitative.

Qualitative research is constantly developing and is currently used in almost all fields of social science inquiry including applied linguistics (Heigham and Croker, 2009). Qualitative research conducted within the constructivist/interpretative paradigm, which is the type I am concerned with, is characterized by the following:

It is descriptive in nature, where the researcher focuses on the meaning that comes from the participants' understanding, interpretation, experience and interaction with the phenomena under investigation rather than on the meaning that the researcher himself bring to the research and they make an interpretation of what they see, hear and say (Creswell, 2007). Holliday, (2007:19) stated that "qualitative researchers portray people as constructing the social world and researchers as themselves constructing the social world through their interpretation of it." (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:11). Every act of "seeing" or "saying" is unavoidably conditioned by cultural, institutional and interactional contingencies.

Moreover, it is also explanatory. The focus is on the process rather than the outcomes: it is concerned with "how" and "why" things take place, not just describing what takes place. For example, in my study it is based on giving reasons why the beliefs and practices are as they are, as well as what they are (descriptive). Sherman and Webb (1988) commented on the role of the qualitative researcher as being interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they explain their world and the experiences they have in the world. Also, qualitative research in the constructivist framework encourages the researcher to study certain subjects, phenomena/ problems and related issues in their real natural settings and their own world which will in turn result in a natural picture of the issue under investigation (Rossman and Rallis, 2003).

Furthermore, such research is characterised by its flexibility and exploratory nature. As stressed by Fan (1995), it enables researchers to elicit beliefs freely on issues under study, without being bound by a pre-decided agenda of questions.

As stressed by Borg (1998b:34), the use of qualitative methods allows for large amounts of data to be collected.

In addition, constructivist qualitative research is inductive in the sense that any themes or categories will emerge from data during the process of data collection and analysis rather than being designed prior to the research and imposed on data during analysis (Creswell, 2009; 2013).

Farrell and Kun (2007) is an example of a study that uses the qualitative approach (interviews) to investigate teachers' beliefs and practices, though it concerns use of English in the classroom rather than TPD. Borg's (1998b) study is another qualitative one that used interviews and observation to examine L2 teachers' beliefs and practices (regarding grammar in Malta). Holliday (2005) also supports the need for qualitative research in academic and professional areas. Given the above, a review of the literature on teachers' beliefs and mainstream educational research reveals a growing use of qualitative research within the interpretive/constructivist paradigm. The current study aims to investigate and understand the participants' own beliefs, attitudes and practices as far as their professional development is concerned. It also aims to understand how and why these arise in a particular context,

provincial Syria. The data needs to include views and meanings given by the participants about the issue under investigation. Furthermore, investigating the context of the study (ch3) is pivotal in interpreting teachers' practices concerning their professional development and will help the researcher in understanding the data. In short, constructivist qualitative research is, as described by Holliday (2002:5-6), a means by which "we can explore, catch glimpses, illuminate and then try to interpret bits of reality…this places less of a burden of proof on qualitative research, which instead builds gradual pictures." So, the present study aims to build "gradual pictures" regarding teachers' perceptions and practices with respect to their own professional development

In conclusion, all the above justifications suggest that qualitative research within the constructivist paradigm is particularly suitable for investigating teachers' professional development, their beliefs, attitudes and practices. Consequently, a qualitative method for collection of the research data was used in this study: the interview.

4.2.2 Choice of Interviews and Skype

The interview is defined as "a conversation between interviewer and respondent with the purpose of eliciting certain information from the respondent" (Monser and Kalton, 1971:271). I will depend on interviews as the method of data collection. In order to counteract bias or distortion of the researcher's picture of the particular slice of reality, interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders, not only teachers. In this study, the interview is chosen as the main instrument for collecting the research data for the following reasons.

It has a pivotal role in revealing important views and information from the participants themselves. Participants can have the chance to talk about their own experiences, ideas, practices and interpretations of the world around them. Robson (1993) further emphasized the idea that the interview can be informative when the interviewees control the interview issues and stay focused, which allows for the emergence of participants' views. In addition, interviews are crucial to make the voices of other stakeholders as well as teachers heard and gain insights

into their self-perceptions, their past and present experiences and their context to reveal any relationship between them.

Moreover, where more than one person is interviewed, interviews enable the qualitative researcher to put on different lenses and view the world as well as human experiences from different angles "regarding knowledge as generated between people rather than as objectified and external to them." (Hyland, 2004: 254).

In addition, interview data gathered in a somewhat unstructured way is characterised by depth and richness. Using the interview will help in painting a very rich and descriptive picture not only of the participants, but also of the setting and the major and minor events that happen there which should give the researcher as well as the readers a sense of entering the participants' own world and sharing their experiences. As indicated by Arksey and Knight (1999:32) qualitative interviews "examine the context of thoughts, feelings and action and can be a way of exploring relationships between different aspects of a situation."

Furthermore, I must admit that one reason for choosing interviews was that it was possible to conduct them at a distance, through Skype, as demanded by the current situation in Syria. That situation rather ruled out observation and focus groups, both of which have merits, but cannot be used effectively without the researcher and participants being present in the same place. The qualitative instruments that could be used at a distance, other than Skype interviews, are open questionnaires, reflective essays and diaries. Interviews were deemed better than these alternatives, however. Those three alternatives can, like interviews, all be used in a relatively unstructured way, posing very general questions, with no suggested answers, and with spaces where the respondent is asked to add anything else they want to say that was not covered in the questions. The crucial difference from the interview however is that there is no interaction with the researcher: they are not a conversation. Hence there is no opportunity to clear up misunderstandings, ask follow-up questions to clarify an answer or to explore some new idea that came up, etc. Interviews then allow the researcher to seek information at a deeper level than these instruments (Cohen et al., 2000).

Hence that crucial capability made interviews, through Skype, for me the best choice. Using Skype as a method of data collection can help the researcher "reap the well documented benefits of traditional face-to-face interviews in qualitative research." Hanna (2012:239)

There are many advantages in using Skype interviews for research. For example, Deakin and Wakefield (2014: 604) have argued that 'online interviews can produce data as reliable and in-depth as that produced during face-to-face encounters'. In addition, Skype interviews are characterized by being convenient and flexible especially when considering busy participants (such as teachers and other stakeholders in my study). Given the current condition in Syria, Skype interviews provided "an opportunity to talk to otherwise inaccessible participants." (Deakin and Wakefield, 2013: 5). So, "a great advantage of using Skype as a qualitative research tool is that it allows researchers to transcend geographical boundaries." (Lacona et al., 2016: 1) with no need "to visit an agreed location for interview." (Rowley, 2012: 264). Skype interviews can break the barrier of "time and place" (Burkitt, 2004: 222). In this way, the participants can choose time and place appropriate for them which can help establish a sense of rapport and ease with the setting. Hence, the participants are less concerned with time and may talk for longer (Lacona et al, 2016). Also, with Skype, researchers can conduct inexpensive interviews (Saumure, 2009). In this way, an online interview using a medium such as Skype overcomes boundaries of time, place, money which could affect face-toface interviews (Cater, 2011).

On the other hand, when using Skype as a research tool, researchers need to take technical issues into consideration in order to ensure the success of interviews (Sullivan, 2012).

Another potential limitation is that, although a Skype allows for oral interaction between the researcher and the participants which is pivotal during the interview process, there is some limitation in access to non-verbal cues in the Skype interview. A Skype video call, such as I used, makes it possible to see participants face-to-face online. During the Skype video interview non-verbal form of communication including eye contact, facial expressions and gestures can help in interpreting the data and richness and more revealing than what they say (Gillham, 2005, Rettie, 2009, Barr,2013). However, usually the whole person is not seen so there may be some loss of information derivable from a person's overall posture, hand gestures, general body language and so forth. Nevertheless, it is widely felt that Skype can add a

considerable sense of authenticity similar to that of face-to-face interviewing (Sullivan, 2012, Jaghorban et al, 2014). As a research tool, it is agreed that video Skype can offer synchronous interaction between the researcher and the researched and avoid the complete loss of non-verbal aspect of the interaction (Evans et al, 2008).

It might also be suggested that Skype is limited simply by the loss of immediacy which comes from interviewer and interviewee not actually being in the same room. It has been argued, however, that this is actually an advantage rather than a limitation. "In comparison to face-to-face interactions, Internet interactions allow individuals to better express aspects of their true selves- aspects of themselves that express but felt unable to (Ellison, et al., 2006:418)." In this way, "using a communication program like Skype mimics face-to-face interactions, including the presentation of self in an authentic way, almost as well as those face-to-face exchanges" (Sullivan, 2012: 56).

In short, overall "the benefits of using Skype and other communication programs as a method of data collection, especially in place of face-to-face interviews, definitely outweigh the drawbacks" (Sullivan, 2012: 59).

4.2.2.1 Types of interviews

In terms of structure, there are three main types of interview ranging from structured interviews to semi-structured interviews to unstructured interviews. First, I will highlight why structured and unstructured interviews were not used in this study. Structured interviews are characterised by being the most formal type of interview. In this interview "the agenda is totally predetermined" by the researcher (Nunan, 1992: 149). It looks like a questionnaire where the interviewee has to strictly follow the order of questions and provide the answers. So, this sort of interview is not suitable if you have the constructivist approach. By, contrast the unstructured interview is characterized by being unpredictable where the focus is not on any specific interview questions, but on the topic in general and the interviewee responses are the ones that will affect the direction of the interview. Hence this particularly fits extreme constructivism/interpretativism. If an unstructured interview was used, some deviation from

the interview issue will be almost certain. Bell (2010) even stressed the idea that in unstructured interviews the researcher does not follow a checklist. Furthermore, many researchers such as Borg (2006) and Kagan (1992) warned against the unstructured type of interview because it does not allow the researcher to gain much access to details of the phenomena under investigation; such an interview will give full rein for participants to talk about issues of their own interest, with almost no guide. In this study, I therefore used a semi-structured type of interview which is characterized by the following.

The semi-structured type of interview was used in order to keep the main issues of the interview in focus and follow the main ideas of the interview schedule. In the case of semi-structured interviews, the researcher has an idea about the direction of the interview and he/she has a schedule of questions but he/she may expand on those or deviate depending on the interviewees' willingness to give answers and depending on the importance of the elicited information as far as the research is concerned. Thus, flexibility is one of the main features of this type of interview in the sense that the interviewer has the freedom to change the order of questions and ask follow-up questions to obtain potentially important or interesting ideas as far as the research questions are concerned. In this way, semi-structured rather than structured interviews are the most suitable ones to serve the aims of the research and to have access to participants' ideas and practices, to "allow for richer interactions and more personalized responses" (McDonough and McDonough 1997:184).

Borg (2006) highlighted that the semi-structured interview is the most common type used for collecting information in the field of teacher cognition research. Mangubhai et al. (2004) clearly stated that this type of interview gives teachers both the opportunities and time to express their idea without the need of following a strict schedule of questions. In addition, the semi-structured type of interview gives priority to the interviewees to speak rather than focusing only on interviewer's ideas (p.249 cited in Borg, 2006:204). For example, Gahin and Myhill (2001) explored Egyptian teachers' beliefs about language learning and teachers' roles through using the semi-structured interview as it provided an important source of information about beliefs, many other studies used semi-structured interview such as John & Gravani (2005), Teng (2016) (please see chapter two, section 2.3). As emphasized by Richards (2003), the semi-structured type of interview will give the researcher the chance to elicit information

on other broader issues and topics and motivate the participants to express their ideas, beliefs and practices freely and smoothly.

4.2.2.2 Limitations of the interview and how they were addressed

Like all other instruments, the interview, regardless of whether it is conducted face to face or via Skype, has its limitations as well as strengths, which any researcher should be aware of before and while conducting the interviews. As stressed by Finlay (2008: 15) "practitioners need to be critical and reflexive about the tool they are being given and not use it blindly". I, however did take certain steps in order to find solutions to the limitations of interviews as follows.

First and foremost is bias, as stressed by Bell (2010). The influence that the researcher herself may have on the interview due to inequality of status is one source of bias. During the interview, it is believed that the researcher may sometimes enjoy a stronger position than the interviewee which may affect the direction and the outcomes of the interview. This is what Nunan (1993) warned against as the "asymmetrical relationship". In my study, there was perhaps a difference of social status with respect to some of the teachers who had been my students; as a teacher assistant at the university, I had been teaching them different subject while doing their BA in English. However, this was not the case with interviewing some of the other stakeholders, who held superior positions as trainers or in the Ministry, where I might seem subordinate. Also in most interviews I have had to rely on a good deal of goodwill and persuasion to get the person to agree to be interviewed, so that also puts the interviewee in a superior position. In order to try to avoid effects of this sort of bias I conducted a semi-structured type of interview giving the participants the chance to talk about their ideas guided by the topic freely and in a relaxing atmosphere.

The second important issue that I should watch for is what Wilson and Sapsford (2006) described as "the procedural activity" which is the influence that the context may have on the interview and may affect the interviewees' answers and as a result can be another source of bias. This could be related to the place where the interview is conducted (distractions,

interruptions or even being overwhelmed by other issues to complete after the interview or tiredness). In my study, it was preferred to conduct the interview not at work place, but most of the time at home so nothing may affect the flow of the interview.

Also, many researchers warned against bias that may be introduced during or after the interview, because the researcher may be selective and subjective in terms of data recording and data interpretation as he may be only interested in views and answers that may serve the aim of his research, ignoring other important or related issues that the participants may talk about or refer to (Hall and Rist (1999) cited in Mackey and Gass, 2005). This in fact is a risk with all qualitative instruments, not just interviews. However, my experience in conducting the interview with several interviewees during the pilot study should have reduced the likelihood of bias through my exposure to the range of points that interviewees might make, and practice in the skill of interviewing (Bell, 2005). Moreover, I also consulted my supervisor and another colleague to have a look at samples of interview transcription and check if there is any subjectivity.

Another important issue is the danger of forgetting certain parts of the interview or memory loss. To avoid this danger, the data was audio-recorded and saved to avoid any loss of data by the passage of time.

In addition, there is always some risk that interviewees do not remember accurately everything relevant to the issues at hand. I was necessarily asking them to generally retrospect about their TPD experiences and there is always a chance that they either forgot about some relevant TPD that they had engaged in or some relevant details. I attempted to combat this with a list of prompts for types of TPD that they did not spontaneously mention.

 Also, the interviewees may be interested in pleasing the interviewer rather than revealing facts or giving true answers. They may tend to pick up certain cues from the researcher as to what she wants to hear and as a result provide distorted answers that do not represent reality and so affect the data collected. I greatly benefited from the pilot study and tried to not give too many cues to interviewees and did my best to ask follow-up questions and show a neutral kind of feeling toward their replies.

In contrast with questionnaires, interviews cannot be conducted with a large number of respondents and they are really time-consuming. However, I attempted to set a rigorous schedule for interviews and their analysis to enable as many as possible to be conducted and analysed.

Due to the unstable conditions in Syria, the interviews had to be conducted remotely. However, while ordinary telephone interviews lose non-verbal aspects such as facial gestures, I used Skype video. The recording made was however only of the audio channel, so I tried at the time of the interview to write some notes of any relevant visual reactions.

Another important issue is the language used. Since using the English language (L2) may cause embarrassment and reluctance or even difficulty to answer the questions or even to participate in the study, to avoid this problem the questions were all asked in Syrian Arabic (L1). The responses were all in Arabic, however at sometimes the respondents may use some expressions or sentences in English.

Finally, using a semi-structured type of interview can lead to falling into the trap of conducting a structured type of interview as will be the case with participants who prefer giving short answers or who are unwilling to give full answers, but rather ones as described by Nunan (1986:33) "yes, no, I don't know, I am not sure". In order to avoid falling into structured type of interview, I prepared some prompts that were used to encourage and motivate informants who are unwilling to give full answers.

4.3 The pilot Study

The pilot study took place between August 2013 and September 2013.

4.3.1 Purpose of the Pilot

Conducting a pilot study is usually of invaluable importance as far as the main study is concerned and of course "piloting and planning will help establish an interview guide" (Mann. 2016: 138). There are many well-known advantages. It is a chance for me to see if m questions

are clear enough for the respondents, considering all their wordings. The pilot study helps establish matters of procedure like how long to allow for the interview, when to have it and where/how to hold it and check the recording works. In this study, this was especially important as I was contacting them at home, in free time, via Skype. Also, the Pilot allows me to have hands on practice using the instrument that I prepared for collecting the data, which can draw attention to any points of strength or weakness in my interviewing technique and allow me to work on further improving it. It may enable me to have access to some crucial or interesting information in a way which suggests making some amendments or changes to the questions to get in-depth data and keep my eyes open to the research aims during the main study. In addition, the pilot study enabled me to practice doing data analysis. The pilot study should be helpful in examining the efficiency and the suitability of the research tool in collecting a desirable type of data. Through the pilot study, I may get some insights on the validity of the instrument used, as stressed by Cohen et al. (2007).

4.3.2 The Pilot interview questions

All interviews were conducted in Arabic for all teachers and other stakeholders. For teachers, the first part of the interview included some background and general questions about the participant such as his/her experience, training, qualifications. This was intentionally placed at the beginning of the interview, to serve as warm up questions which are easy to answer and that can prepare the participant for the main interview questions. The second part of the interview included questions on the topic of TPD, designed to obtain data to answer the research questions, including what they thought TPD was, and some PD activities that teachers may or may not follow and why. Also, there were questions on the types of TPD they would ideally like to follow. The last part of the interview included questions on teacher attitudes to the activities and the successfulness of the activities that he may follow; including the effect of TPD on teacher, beliefs and ideas, emotions and choice of supporting materials. There were also question on any suggestions and recommendations for future, TPD in Syria. (please refer to appendix C2 to view teachers' interview questions in English)

Concerning other stakeholders, the first part of the interview questions also included some background information such as qualifications, experience, and profession. The second part elicited information on PD including its definition. Then, each participant had certain questions prepared depending on his profession and in relation to the topic of TPD (please refer to appendix E2 to view stakeholders' interview questions in English).

In fact, the interview questions were organised in such a way that almost every question led to the next one. And as stressed by Mann (2016: 38): "thinking about the sequence and type of questions that you are going to ask will help develop your interviewer repertoire too." In addition, I considered the importance of adding one last question in the interview asking the participants to give their own final comments or suggestions as "It is certainly helpful to offer the interviewee the chance to ask their own questions or make a final comment." (Mann,2016:127).

4.3.3 The Pilot participants and their selection

Although the study took place during the difficult time that Syria is going through, there were still places at this time where life was not much affected by what was happening in Syria, such as certain places in the governorate of Deir-Ezzor where the study took place. It is located in the east of Syria and is notable for oil production (led by foreign oil companies increasing the importance of English) and agricultural productivity. In addition, the city is known for its industrial productivity, and is one of the tourist destinations in Syria as there are many attractive archeological sites nearby. Concerning education, a great deal of effort has been exerted to improve education in Deir-Ezzor. There are many schools spread all over the province, as well as educational institutes (e.g industrial, agricultural, medical). Recently, in 2006 Al-Furat University was found in the city which made it easier for students to study locally rather than travelling to other cities, saving their money, time and effort.

This area was chosen in part for its interest as a developing provincial area within Syria and in part for convenience, because I live there and has contacts that facilitated the study. My mother is an experienced teacher of English at one of the Syrian secondary schools, my sister is a

teacher assistant of English at university, and my colleague is a novice teacher of English. They were all extremely helpful in facilitating my work and recommending people to participate in my research. They helped to facilitate communication with participants and kept me updated on PD issues. Also, it should be mentioned that I myself have teaching experience in different Syrian secondary schools which makes me familiar to some extent with the context as well as with some participants in this study.

In the pilot study, I aimed to conduct interviews with four participants, each with certain chosen characteristics. They were thus intentionally chosen from certain populations, albeit as samples of one from each population. They came from two groups of people: teachers (experienced and inexperienced) and other stakeholders (a teacher trainer and an educational supervisor both employed by the local education center). Being selective in the pilot study was extremely helpful in serving the main objectives of the research and paving the way for the main study.

The teacher trainer was female, in her late fifties, with BA in science and about 33 years teaching experience. She had followed the ITE course and was not in fact a specialist in English teaching, but simply concerned with technology training in all secondary school classes/subjects. Her role is to observe teachers' classes and how they can integrate technology into education and provide some feedback and comments.

By comparison, the educational supervisor was aged in the mid-fifties, with twenty-nine years of teaching experience and BA in maths. He had followed a special training for supervisors in the capital of Syria, Damascus. He is not an English specialist but covers all subjects and his role is also to make unannounced visits to teachers' classes to monitor teachers' performance and provide comments and feedback on the positive as well as negative features and suggest any training needed.

Teacher of English A was female, in her early twenties, an inexperienced secondary school teacher of English, with 3 years teaching experience. She has a Bachelor degree from the department of English language and literature in Al-Furat University followed by the ITE course (Integrating Technology into Education). Teacher of English B was a female secondary school teacher of English in her forties with 17 years of teaching experience. Her qualifications

are a bachelor degree in English language and literature, and a teachers' diploma in education as well as the ICDL and ITE courses. (Please, refer to chapter 2 section 3.4

4.3.4 Conducting the Pilot interviews

To the best my knowledge, conducting research on TPD in Deir-Ezzor is considered as a novelty. Hence, teachers and stakeholders in that particular place are not really used to/familiar with the idea of research and researchers. I was therefore worried that my job might not be an easy one and I was really concerned about the teachers' reaction or readiness/willingness to participate in the research.

The first step was that I gave a detailed overview of the research to my mother, sister and a colleague who suggested some teachers and other stakeholders to participate in the pilot study. I first got in touch with them by their mobile phones or telephone and briefed them on her research, and explained some important issues to them such as: the purpose of my research, how they will be involved in the research, permission to be interviewed through Skype and for the interviews to be recorded, and some other ethical issues (see further section 4.6). I also explained how this research will be helpful for them and how their help will be highly appreciated. They all expressed their appreciation and interest in the research and showed a sense of motivation to participate in it. I also gave them the chance to ask some questions whether by email or through their Facebook accounts where some of them asked where the information they gave will appear and whether there will be any evaluative aspects of the research. So, I explained and clarified all these issues to them and assured them that this research does not involve evaluation of individual participants themselves, but it will involve evaluation of things they report for research purposes. After that, I sent them the consent form in Arabic (see appendix B, consent form in English) by email and asked them to read it carefully, sign it and email it back.

As the interviewee number was not big, it was easy for me to arrange suitable times to conduct the interviews. Three of the interviews were conducted in the evening while one of them was conducted in the morning. Before conducting the interviews, I did ask the participants to

choose a quiet place with no unwanted noises or distractions that may affect the interviews. The interviews were conducted through Skype video and were recorded using a special Skype audio-recording programme. Teachers of English were asked if they preferred to be interviewed in Arabic or English: they were slightly hesitant and showed some signs of embarrassment and I understood that they preferred it to be conducted in Arabic. The young teacher did say that speaking in Arabic will give her the chance to express her ideas freely, easily and more confidentially. So, all interviews were conducted in Arabic.

During the interview, I first started with very general and background questions, then moved to more specific and in-depth ones as described in 4.3.2. Three of the interviews lasted about 30-45 minutes. However, one of the interviews lasted for about one hour as the teacher trainer was very willing to talk and express her ideas on the topic and on unwanted issues and I had difficulty in keeping her focused and on track. Also, it should be mentioned that during one of the interviews the participant's mobile phone was a source of distraction and she was asked to switch it off.

During the pilot study, I also asked the participants for suggestions and comments about the interview questions to make them clearer and more effective.

4.3.5 Analysing the Pilot interview data

First, all four interviews were initially transcribed, where each interview took me four-six hours to transcribe. Then, I had to translate each interview into English for the benefit of the supervisor. This was a really daunting and time-consuming task. After that, a colleague who is also doing her PhD at the Department of language and linguistics was consulted to check the translation of the interview from Arabic to English in order to ensure the validity of the translation.

After that, I read through the interview transcriptions many times. When reading through the transcription I kept in my mind the main research questions and objectives, so that this could inform the process of choosing suitable codes and themes. Next, interview data were segmented into separate chunks where each one is on a different theme. After that, I initially

coded the chunks into different types that are related to distinct themes. Then followed the process of cycles of recoding, going through the data again and again and making modifications where appropriate. In order to check the validity of the coding, I consulted my supervisor, showing him samples of the analysis and discussed possible classifications with him. In this way, content validity was achieved by consulting an expert in the area of research. At the final coding stage, all emerging themes and subthemes were classified. Finally, a colleague was also consulted to check the reliability of my coding.

4.3.6 Implications of the Pilot for the main study

There is no doubt that the pilot study was crucial and very helpful as far as conducting the main study is concerned. "Any professional activity can be better understood through attempts to reflect on practice and this is no different in the case of qualitative interviewing. Ongoing commitment entails adopting a reflective approach early and sustaining it" (Mann, 2016: 2). Reflection was an important step to arrive at certain modifications of the main study. These are described in what follows.

The pilot study helped in reducing the time that is usually spent in obtaining permissions from the local education center to conduct the main study and to access the participants, including both stakeholders and teachers, since these did not have to be obtained a second time for the main study.

For recording the interviews, I decided to depend not only on the special Skype recording software, as the recorded sound was not of the desired quality. I, additionally used a high-quality recording machine borrowed from the department of language and linguistics, at Essex. As stressed by Mann (2016: 115): "recording the interview properly is absolutely essential. Most researchers are not able to recall the important details of an interview after the event without a recording. It also ensures that the research process is transparent."

Furthermore, some interview questions were modified or added to make them either clearer or to motivate the participants themselves to elaborate on whatever issues were of interest or importance to them as far as the research is concerned. For instance, concerning clarity, one of

the participants in the pilot study drew the researchers' attention to an important problem with the wording of teacher *development* in Arabic. I had used the word similar to advancement, in Arabic. However, in Arabic it was more suitable to use a word meaning development, so that was used instead in the main study.

Concerning the issue of obtaining teachers' own responses, an example is:

Do you observe a colleague teaching to get ideas to try?

Changed to: Do you observe colleagues teaching?

And if yes, then I will ask: Why?

In order to avoid any bare "Yes" "No" or "textbook type of replies" (Rubin and Rubin, 2005: 51), I prepared some extra prompts that may encourage the participants to elaborate on their answers if initially they only give a simple response. For instance, teachers were asked:

Have you ever travelled abroad?

Prompts: if yes: Where to? For how long and why?

Have you ever followed any training whether pre-service or in-service?

Prompts: if yes: How long was the training? Who offered it? Where did it take place? And what was it about?

Another lesson from the Pilot was that I became aware of the importance of asking the participants to switch off their mobile phones during the interview and to choose a quiet place in order to avoid any possible distractions.

Furthermore, I found it better to memorize some of the interview questions rather than keep referring to them as this will make the interview look more natural.

In addition, I learnt to be careful about timing and how to keep the participants focused on the interview main topics. But at the same time, I considered the importance of not interrupting the participants and allowing them enough time to think and give their own opinions.

It was agreed with the supervisor to analyse the interviews in Arabic in order to save time and effort in the main study and because of course some nuances of meaning probably get lost in

the translation, so more valid data comes from coding the original language version. Only key parts which would be cited needed be translated. Undoubtedly, the pilot study represented a good opportunity for me to familiarize myself with the process of data analysis.

Additionally, it was helpful to check the suitability of the interview in terms of its capability of collecting relevant data and the ability of the pilot study to answer the research questions. The interview questions did provide reasonably rich data. That is why, based on the pilot study, it was agreed to depend only on interviews for collecting the research data and dismiss the option of also administering questionnaires to the participants.

Finally, I obtained a more detailed understanding of the context of the study in secondary schools in Deir-Ezzor. The researcher's familiarity with the context and the participants can be seen as "double sword" one (Berger, 2013: 13). "The researcher's familiarity may enable better in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions and interpretations of their lived experience" (Mann,2016:75). On the other hand, I took careful consideration of the fact that the researcher must stay "constantly alert to avoid projecting his/her own experience and using it as the lens to view and understand participants' experience." (Berger,2013: 13).

For example, in practice while I was interviewing the participants, I was careful not to mention anything that I know about the context of the study as I myself used to teach in the same context of the participants. In other words, I interviewed them as outsider, a researcher who knows nothing about the context of the study. I asked questions related to the schools where they teach, types of PD available in the context, the textbook that they teach, and things that may hinder/ facilitate TPD. So, I used the information that they themselves provided to understand, interpret and enter their own world.

4.4 The Main study

The main study took place from October 2013 up till December 2013

4.4.1 Main study participants

Some general points about the location and selection of participants are the same as in the Pilot (4.3.3) so will not be repeated. However, there was an additional challenge of asking people who were not so well known to me as those in the pilot.

I planned to involve a wide range of participants with different backgrounds with two aims in mind which are: to enrich the data with different viewpoints from different people and to involve participants who collectively can be more representative of the whole context where the study took place. Thus, I intentionally selected the participants to participate in my research not only depending on their willingness and readiness to participate, but also depending on other background characteristics.

Conducting the interviews in the main study was not an easy process when compared with the pilot study due to the following reasons: increased number of the participants and time limits due to the fact that the participants were very busy with their demanding jobs whether teachers or stakeholders. Thus, one intended participant could not participate as she was busy preparing for her English language test.

Another important issue that should be mentioned here is that some of the participants were not really aware of the concept of TPD. This will emerge more clearly in the next chapter, but it also impacted on participation in that two teachers did not wish to participate in the research, telling me that they do not really have an idea about the topic of the research. One of the participants clearly stated that she wished she could participate, but she thought that she was not sufficiently knowledgeable to take part in the research and she was worried that her participation may provide distorted, or incorrect information that may negatively affect the research. All in all, however, most of the targeted participants expressed their appreciation of the research and a high level of interest and readiness to participate in it.

The main study included twenty teachers with different backgrounds. They varied on the following variables:

- Educational Level achieved: Bachelor degree, Masters' degree, Diploma in teaching qualification.

- Experience: some of them were experienced teachers, others were novice teachers with less than five years of teaching experience.

- Location of experience: in the city versus in the country.

-Training: some of them were untrained, others had followed some kind of training such as training in their diploma or masters' degree, the ITE or ICDL courses.

-Age, gender.

Concerning stakeholders, I conducted her interview with 18 stakeholders with different professions, training, age, experience and qualification such as head teachers (3), educational and subject-specialist supervisors (6), teacher trainers on ITE (4), and trainer of trainers (1), academic lecturer (1), staff from the central MoE (1), staff from local education centre (2).

Please refer to appendices G and H for background details of each individual participant and the numbering that will be used to refer to them (T2, S6 etc.).

4.4.2 Conducting the main study interviews

Before the interviews took place, the participants received information and encouragement as described for the Pilot (4.3.4), together with what was needed to meet the ethical requirements (section 4.6).

I sent them the consent form via the participant's email address or through their Facebook accounts and asked for it to be read carefully, signed and returned back. I asked the participants not to hesitate in asking any questions related to the research or to their participation in it. The importance of building rapport in qualitative research is undeniable (Mann,2016, Bernard,

2012). So, contacting the participants before conducting the interview proved to be very useful as it established a sense of rapport and encouraged them to talk more.

Some of the participants contacted me whether by email or through their Facebook accounts with questions on what will happen to the recorded information and will there be any evaluative nature of the research and how they will be informed of the research final results and implication, or how it will be useful for them. After clarifying all of these issues and gaining their consent to participate in the research, I started to prepare a schedule for the interviews. Each interviewee selected a convenient time for him/her to participate in the interview. However, this process was not as easy as with the pilot study due to the increased number of the participants and how busy they were. Some interviews were cancelled and had to be rearranged again due to participants' personal circumstances. Just as stressed by Kvale and Brinkmann, it "seems so simple to interview, but it is hard to do well." (2009: 1)

I asked the participants to choose a quiet place for conducting the Skype interview with no possible noises that may affect the flow of the interviews (Gillham, 2005). This is really important as it can give the participants a feeling of ease where the majority of them had the interview at home. And as stressed by Mann (2016: 63): "one of the first decisions to make is where the interview will be held. It is important to make sure that it is a comfortable physical environment with minimal background noise and distractions."

Therefore, I emphasized the fact that the participants should switch off their mobile phones before conducting the interview in order to avoid distraction during the interviews.

The participants were fully aware that the interview was recorded, However, I tried to keep the recording machine out of the area captured by my camera in order to make the interview look more natural and to avoid any feeling of anxiety on the part of the participants, as "It is occasionally the case that interviewees can feel discomfort being recorded, although this feeling usually passes very quickly." (Mann, 2016: 64)

Based on the experience gained from the pilot study, all interviews were conducted in Arabic just to avoid embarrassing the participants and to give them free rein to express their ideas and talk on issues related to the research as freely and as confidentially as possible. I was aware of

the fact that using L2 "may well effect how much detail the interviewee can give or if he/she is able to express ideas effectively. Certainly, interviewing in L2 is often limiting for the interviewee." (Mann,2016: 64)

 Based on careful reflection and consideration of the pilot study, I kept timing in mind and encouraged the participants to keep on track as much as possible. Each interview lasted between 30-45 minutes.

I used probes in order to elicit as much information as possible before moving to the next questions which proved to be very useful with participants who may give short or yes/no answers, so they can provide further clarification or explanation. I used the insight that this can be "achieved through a question of some kind but can be achieved through non-verbal means (e.g. eye contact, gestures, pauses." (Mann, 2016: 128)

Since "listening is the most important aspect of an interview" (Mann, 2016: 116), I listened carefully to what the participants were saying and I gave them the chance to reflect upon their ideas. I was careful of the fact that: "consciously allowing for some pause or wait-time communicates your commitment to being in a listening mode and giving the interviewee space." (Mann, 2016: 118). At the same time, I did my best to show neutral reaction to what they said. Three main elements were considered while conducting the interviews, following the advice that "successful interviewing boils down to three main elements: developing rapport, eliciting and listening." (Mann, 2016: 118)

However, there was a challenge where some of the participants were not familiar with the concept of TPD and in that case I provided a brief definition of it, before heading to the next relevant questions. The interview questions were arranged in a way where each question led to the next one, with the possibility of asking in-depth questions where appropriate, depending on the importance and interest of the respondents' replies as far as the research questions are concerned. I avoided interrupting the participants as much as possible giving them the chance to express all their ideas and views on the topic, since one of the main aims is to elicit emic rather than etic types of answer, hence listening carefully to what they say rather than forcing the researcher's own ideas.

Moreover, conducting the interview through Skype video proved very useful as it helped in maintaining eye contact with the participants in a very similar way to that of a face-to-face interview. Mann (2016: 87) stressed the idea that "obviously Skype 'mimics' face-to-face interactions, at least to some extent, whereas telephone and e-mail can't have this element."

Most importantly, in the main study using Skype video calls was pivotal as it helped in adding richness to the data, in the form of clarification and interpretation where the participants were unwilling to talk more about an issue or answered a question with a short answer or with a gesture. As stressed by Hesse-Biber and Griffin (2012: 56): "tone of voice, and gestures, all provide a certain richness to qualitative data." Similarly, Talja and McKenzie (2007: 102) point out that "paralinguistic cues such as gesture, facial expression, and tone of voice can both convey emotion and provide the hearer with clues for interpreting the meaning of an utterance".

Also, at certain points where it was felt that the participants were unable to provide an answer or felt confused, in this way I interacted with the participants to arrive at an answer together. For example, for many of the participants it was difficult to provide a definition of the concept of TPD, so I provided some help to arrive at a definition together. My experience confirmed that: "all interviews are always already sites of social interaction, where ideas, facts, views, details, and stories are collaboratively produced by interviewee and interviewer." (Mann,2016:6). Many other researchers have emphasized the interactional nature of the interview (Hepburn, 2005, Sarangi, 2004).

Generally, the teachers' interviews included four main parts which I have described in 4.3.2 above. The specific Main study interview questions and additional prompts for teachers and other stakeholders were as described and improved in the Pilot (4.3.2 and 4.3.6). They are fully listed in appendices C2 and E2. An audio recording was made of each interview, with my observation notes, as described earlier.

4.4.3 Transcription and data analysis

4.4.3.1 Overall procedure

Undoubtedly, the main study resulted in a very rich type of data from the interviews as most of the participants were interested in the research and were willing to provide information, and it proved to be useful to interview teachers and stakeholders as well.

However, due to the greater number of participants and to the fact that I aimed at more in-depth analysis than in the pilot study, a more elaborate analysis procedure was used and some categories were modified whereas other categories and subcategories were added.

First, in order not to forget any details about the interviews, I transcribed every interview just after it was conducted. Almost every interview took 4-6 hours for transcription. As agreed with the supervisor, the interviews were transcribed in Arabic so as to retain the essence of the meaning and to save me some time. However, during the analysis process I translated some of the main data for the supervisor, so as to obtain useful comments, insights and feedback from him with respect to developing the categories into which the data was organised.

Next, I started the process of analysis. This process in general involved repeatedly rereading, comparing and classifying segments of the responses of the different participants regarding the same issue. During this process, I was looking for points of similarity as well as differences among the response data. However, not all of the respondents' replies were in the right place, in the sense that participants might mention when answering one interview question something that from my point of view was really answering another question. Hence, I had to make up my mind and figure out which answers shared a common theme regardless of what interview question they were giving as an answer to. In this respect, attention was paid to Clarke and Braun (2013:9) who comment that 'A common feature of a weak TA is using the data collection questions as themes.'

Due to the richness of data in the main study, the coding process was challenging as well as time consuming, and in many instances, I referred to my supervisor for his insightful feedback, and suggestions for the analysis process. During the coding process, the main focus of the analysis was on the main themes, categories and subcategories to be generated from the data

itself rather than imposing them on the data, so as to serve the constructivist perspective as stated earlier. As stressed by Flick (2002), the researcher needs to discover the theory implicit in the data rather than impose ideas coming from the literature or the researcher and his/her expectations, letting the categories and themes emerge from the data. Nevertheless, there was some top-down element in the process as well, for instance informing the categorisation of types of TPD which participants said they engaged in from the categories of TPD I had distinguished in the literature review. For ease of understanding, efficiency and to make the analyzed data more relevant and consistent, the coding was also informed at the highest level by the research questions. For instance, I looked for and considered together all data related to teachers' definitions of the concept of TPD, since one of the RQs of the study focused on this. This therefore was again an element of top-down analysis, since an extreme constructivist would decide all the themes bottom up from what the participants said. However, the definitions that were actually offered were classified much more based on what the teachers said in a more constructivist way.

Overall, the process of data analysis was a cyclical one (Tesch, 1990: 95) and a developmental one where I go through my data many times and moves back and forth with the aim of developing categories, refining existing ones and making connections between these categories to reach a satisfactory organization system (Tesch, 1990: 96). I followed Corbin and Strauss (2008:143) who argue that this process needs to continue until the researcher reaches the point of "saturation" where no more new properties, dimensions and variations of the categories emerge during the analysis process.

4.4.3.2 Examples of the Process of Data Analysis

In detail I followed broadly the pattern recommended by Clarke and Braun (2013:4) for thematic qualitative data analysis. I present the procedure in their 6 steps although, as stated above, I worked recursively, following Clarke and Braun who say: 'This should not be viewed as a linear model, where one cannot proceed to the next phase without completing the prior phase (correctly)'.

1) Familiarisation with the data:

I transcribed the text of each interview verbatim in the original Arabic and read this repeatedly to gain familiarity with the raw data, as well as listening repeatedly to the recordings. What I read is illustrated in Appendix D.

While I read, I naturally formed initial impressions of what separate stretches or segments of speech seemed to be devoted to a distinct point, and what some of those points might tentatively be labelled as being.

2) Coding: .... this involves generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the (broad) research question guiding the analysis.

The first step was to tentatively chunk the transcripts into sequences which seemed to make a single point, and assign a comment (which could be considered a provisional code) to each, characterising what kind of point it was making. For example, from one teacher (T13) the following part of their transcript appeared to relate to the theme of 'what they understood TPD to be / their definition of TPD' (and so related to answering RQ1). The initial comment/code is shown in angle brackets after each chunk.

R: ok, and can you please define the concept of teacher professional development in your own words?

T: emm… I think that teacher professional development is a practice of training certain subject teachers <TPD as training> before or through the period of teaching <TPD as INSET as well as PRESET> in order to equip them with the necessary skills and necessary experience for managing their classes <TPD focuses on improving pedagogy>. These skills may be related to the same subject that the teacher teaches or it may be general skills of teaching and learning <TPD content>.

R: ok, nice and can you please give me any example of that?

T: emm…there are many examples of that. For example, observing the teacher while teaching <being observed>. A novice teacher may have his class monitored by an experienced teacher followed by feedback given by the experienced teacher <observation by a peer teacher>. Or in some cases the head teacher can be the observer <observation by head teacher>. Another

example is, attending presentations delivered by more experienced teachers and these teachers may talk about their teaching experiences, especially if they taught in different contexts, cultures or levels < attending presentation>.

R: That is nice.

T: Also, there is the possibility of the novice teacher attending lessons of more experienced teachers and then they may have a meeting after the lesson to talk about it < observing other teacher>. Also, there are "technical workshops" < attending workshop>.

R: and what do you mean by that?

T: they are workshops that aim at introducing teachers to modern technologies and how to use them in class <TPD content>.

R: Nice words and in your opinion what is the aim of teacher professional development?

T: I think… to equip the teacher with the necessary skills and needed experience for managing their classes and as I mentioned earlier these skills may be related to the same subject that the teacher teaches or it may be general skills for teaching and learning. <not coded: repetition of points already made>

By the end of the coding, the chunking decisions largely remained the same but the codes were refined and reassigned as described below. In this instance, for example, initial codes such as <TPD as training> and <TPD focuses on improving pedagogy> came eventually to be regarded as falling within a subtheme of 'General nature/defining features of TPD', within the major theme of 'What teachers think TPD is'. On the other hand <TPD as INSET as well as PRESET> came to be regarded as part of the subtheme of 'The rate and the timing of TPD'. The references to types of observation and presentation, on the other hand, ended up as part of a subtheme of 'Medium of delivery of TPD'.

The next step was to identify in all the transcripts all those chunks of transcript which seemed relevant to one of the major themes such as 'What teachers think TPD is'. These were then extracted and listed separately from the interview transcripts. This then assisted the process of going over them and refining the codes assigned to smaller chunks. Here is an example of some such chunks translated.

T2 "I am not familiar with TPD"

T4 "No as a concept no, but I heard that the teacher who does not know how to teach is called 'illiterate'. I do not know if this is related to it but I do not remember that I have heard of the concept of teacher professional development before."

Both those became coded as 'Claiming not to be familiar with the concept of TPD' within the major theme of 'What teachers think TPD is', and so in the end are discussed together in the Results.

Similarly, the following, when considered alongside each other, all ended up with the underlined chunks coded as 'Training' within the subtheme of 'General nature/defining features of TPD' within the major theme of 'What teachers think TPD is'. They were also assigned codes for the type of training activity, where it was mentioned (e.g. course, workshop, observation etc.) which came to be regarded as falling within the subtheme of 'Medium of delivery of TPD' within the major theme of 'What teachers think TPD is'.

T3 "It is a training course where teachers are encouraged to follow in some countries to make teachers more effective in the field of English language teaching and to improve students' skills and abilities."

T1 "I think it is training those working in the field of teaching through workshops or lectures that introduce teachers to the best techniques or teaching methods. The purpose: improving skills for dealing with students and delivering information in a more effective and easy to understand way which goes in accordance with the all the intellectual levels of the students and to improve creativity for both the teacher and the student."

T7 "Not sure. But it may be training courses that the teacher may follow for 'updates' in the field of teaching. For example, I myself during the training courses that I followed previously, noticed that trainers usually call people back according to their subject area and update them on what is new in their field of work."

3) Searching for themes: A theme is a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data

relevant to the research question.

Continuing with 'What teachers think TPD is' as an example, my work illustrated above ended up with a list of themes, within which there were numerous more specific subcategories or codes.

The majority of teachers were not fully aware of the concept of TPD, and they provided very different characteristics of TPD using words such as *training process, continuous process, improvement, updates, new teaching skills, better outcomes, workshops, higher degree, lectures, change teacher feeling, move from teaching to learning, integrating technology into education, update on what is new*. Since they provided very mixed up characteristics the challenge was to go through the data more than one time, carefully examine their definitions, trying to find any points of similarity and differences, in order to classify these wordings and group them into categories and subcategories depending on the themes they represent/ belong to. For instance, words like *new* and *update* seemed to share the idea of TPD having the purpose of keeping teachers familiar with what was current. Words like *workshop* and *lecture* seemed to refer rather to a theme of types of TPD activity, or means of delivery, and so on.

Hence, initially, five subthemes emerged, with rather wordy and overlapping codes within them (Table 4.1)

4) Reviewing themes: Involves checking that the themes 'work' in relation to both the

coded extracts and the full data-set.

After much reviewing of the original data, including the lists of themes and subcodes, with input from the supervisor, the final lists of themes emerged, and were reflected in the account in the Results chapter. To assist this, each segment of data (Miles and Huberman, 1994:57) was examined independently and in relation to other segments grouped under the same heading. The aim this time was to sort the data into an "organizing system" (Tesch, 1990) consisting of clear and exhaustive categories and subcategories.

For 'What teachers think TPD is' here it can be seen (Table 4.1) that a subtheme was added to the original list and some other changes were made to the low-level codes.

Table 4.1. Development of codes for Major theme: 'What teachers think TPD is'

Early stage codes under development		Final codes		
Subthemes	Specific codes	Subthemes		Specific codes
Do not know term / Not familiar		Claiming not to be familiar with TPD		
Nature/defining features	Training before or during teaching Teacher to be aware Improve / develop Self-improvement Positive improvement Continuous professional process Self-evaluation Update on scientific developments New teaching methods and skills	Able to provide a definition of TPD	1. General nature/ defining feature of TPD	Training Awareness Self-improvement Change Keeping up to date
Medium of delivery/reception (…through…)	Course, incl. INSET or PRESET Lectures Higher degree Books and useful resources Workshop incl. 'technical workshops 'forum' T presentation to other T after school (by T with experience maybe in other context) Depend on other good T experiences (e.g. ask students who is best T and get in touch with that T), incl. attend classes by other T Observation of T by more experienced teacher or reverse Use internet / modern technology Exchange ideas with colleagues incl. from different countries …and with students		2. Medium of delivery/ reception of TPD	Training courses Lectures Higher degree Books etc. Workshops Experienced peers Classroom observation Internet and modern technology Students and parents Reflection

	… and with parents			
Purpose (… in order to…)	Update on what is new and interesting for T Change T performance, practices, abilities in fields of knowledge education, admin and technology Update T methods incl. strategies in teaching Improve T skills/process/ performance incl. subject specific Give info to students effectively and simply suited to level Develop student skills and abilities Best ways to manage class Improve creativity of T and S Non-traditional class activity Manage class Scientific and modern Make use of time effectively Change T feelings… T feels qualified Students benefit		3.Purpose/ aim of TPD	Improve teaching in general Improve teacher skills/per-formance Improve classroom management Manage time better Student benefit Change teacher beliefs Change teacher morals Change teacher educational knowledge Change teacher admini-strative ability Change teacher Technical ability
Examples of what a teacher might do better (not examples of TPD but of aspects of teaching that the TPD might change)	Change from teaching traditional grammar rule plus practice to work out the grammar rule Teacher give 50% of info, studenst get it; better than give 100% and they get 10% Distance teaching Move from teaching to learning Integrate technology Educational process and modern age demand		4. The effect of TPD on teaching	More bottom up teaching Adjustment of teaching based on students' level More integration of technology
			5. The rate and timing of TPD	Continuous Either PRESET or INSET Only PRESET

At this point there was extensive crosschecking between the relevant chunks of transcript of each participant, and the themes. For instance, Table 5.5 in the Results illustrates the outcome of this for the four main themes identified in relation to the major theme of 'Effects which teachers or stakeholders think any TPD they have engaged in has had on their teaching beliefs, practices or affects' (cf. RQ6): each of the four themes is crosstabulated with each participant.

The codes and sub-codes within each theme were also recursively refined, producing lists such as this for theme 4 within that major theme: 'The effect of TPD on teachers' feelings'.

> *1. Types of feelings that changed*
>> a) Importance of teaching/ appreciation of teaching
>> b) Fun
>> c) Liking/love
>> d) From hatred to love of teaching
>> e) A feeling like parenthood.
>> f) Self-confidence
>> g) Intellectual challenge
>
> *2. The type of TPD where the changes of feeling originated*
>> a) Staff workshops
>> b) Observation by others
>> c) Observing colleagues
>> d) Use of the internet for contacting distant fellow teachers

5) Defining and naming themes:

This was achieved recursively during all the above steps, with supervisor input. For instance, initially I listed all the following as themes relevant to the main theme of 'Types of professional development activities which the teachers would ideally like to pursue' (cf. first part of RQ4).

1- Training courses on teaching methods.

2- Learn more about the methods of teaching English from professionally experienced teachers.

3- Pursue higher academic studies at university.

4- Transfer the TPD experiences of the private schools to state ones.

5- Download the Syrian curriculum on tablets.

6- Have available more TPD activities in the context.

7- Integrate technology into education.

8- Watch the Egyptian educational channel.

9- Observe Syrian colleagues teaching colleagues with different nationalities and experiences.

10- Travel abroad.

11- Take diploma in neuro-linguistic programing.

12- Do audio-video recording of lessons.

13- Have available TPD activities in the countryside.

14- Have language laboratories in schools.

15- Decrease the number of students in the class.

16- Subject of teaching methods should be taught in the first year at university.

17- Adopt an English-English approach in the English classes.

18- Teachers should be a role model with devotion.

However, in the process of reflective reviewing, when I examined more closely how I would define 'PD activities which teachers would like to pursue' I realised that some of the items in the list did not fit that definition. They were not by any stretch of the definition types of TPD but rather should be regarded as belonging in a separate category of 'Pedagogical innovations that teachers would like to see in school'. Those items were 7, 14, 15, 17, 18.

6) Writing up: Writing is an integral element of the analytic process in TA (and most

qualitative research).

This was done in the end, resulting in chapter 5. In the process, a number of tables were produced in Microsoft Word which summarised in various ways the correspondences between

codes, themes and participants, which appear in the account of Results. Indeed, I generated tables for every research question adding teachers' numbers in one side and what they said on the other to ensure ease of analysis. Actually, this process proved to be efficient in terms of data analysis, data management, and organization and I did not feel the need to put everything into qualitative analysis software such as NVivo for this purpose.

4.5 Validity and Reliability

When conducting qualitative research, researchers should always pay attention to the concepts of validity and reliability as much as in quantitative research, so as to be able to convince readers with the results of the research. They are very important aspects in any research. In this section, I will present a definition of them and show how reliability and validity were established in the current research.

Reliability can be defined as "the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions in all occasions." (Bell, 2006:117). In qualitative research this importantly extends to similar results with different coders. Similar results are consistent, but not necessarily correct. Hence, by comparison, validity in qualitative research, which is sometimes referred to as credibility, refers to the extent to which the research gathered accurate information relative to its aims and objectives. So, in the current study, valid data is data which genuinely throws genuine light on targeted aspects of teachers of English PD in a particular context (Deir-Ezzor).

In the current study, both validity and reliability were no doubt enhanced by the improvements consequent upon the piloting (see 4.3.6), and by the fact that I referred to previous studies in the literature and to my supervisor who is an expert in the area of research both in relation to designing the interview and its questions and to analysing the data gathered.

Validity is well known to be enhanced by triangulation (e.g. Mackey and Gass, 2005). This is usually regarded as achieved when multiple instruments are used to target the same phenomenon. In the current study this could have been, for example, use of observation in addition to interviews, to see the effects of TPD on teacher performance, rather than relying

solely on teacher reports of the effects of TPD. In this study, however, due to the conditions in the country, observation was not feasible. Hence, I do not have that kind of classic triangulation in the study. However, I can nevertheless say that I approached my target topic from several directions in an attempt to ensure that the account is not biased by relying only on one perspective. For example, I thoroughly investigated what kinds of professional development training/activities are available in the context (as reported in chapter 3) rather than solely relying on what participants said about this in interview. I also investigated the issues related to TPD, especially their effects, not only by interviewing teachers, but also by interviewing other key stakeholders so as again to get multiple perspectives on the same topics. Furthermore, I have already described in 4.2.2.2 how I attempted to combat the various known limitations of the interview method which I extensively relied on.

Internal validity was partly gained by showing some pieces of coding to an expert, my supervisor, followed by discussion of the codes, during the process of establishing the best set of codes. This was an important step to ensure content validation by an expert in this area. Validity of translation was also achieved by asking an Arabic colleague who is also doing her PhD in the Department of language and linguistics to check some translated data from Arabic to English.

External validity was addressed by the increased number of participants selected to participate in the main study. This allowed us to gather as much rich data as possible and makes the study more representative of a wider range of relevant teachers and stakeholders in the context of the study.

Validity, in the form of credibility, has been drawn attention to by researchers such as Holliday (2002) who described this as "showing the workings". In other words, a study may be seen as validated by presenting in details every aspect of how it was conducted, so that readers may judge for themselves that the researcher was careful in conducting it (Robson, 1993). I claim to have achieved this by the full and frank account offered throughout this chapter on all aspects of my study.

Finally, I attempted to achieve reliability through asking a PhD colleague in the department of language and linguistics to apply the final coding scheme to three of the transcribed interviews.

I then checked if she coded it in a similar way mine, and a great deal of agreement was found (90%).

4.6 Ethical issues of the current study

Right from the beginning, I was extremely aware of the importance of the ethical issues which should be taken into consideration. First, permission was obtained from the University of Essex to conduct the current research after submitting an application for ethical approval, giving an idea about the main issues of the research, the method to be used, and the precautions to be taken to ensure the research is ethical.

I devised a consent form for the participants including the following points (all in Arabic, see appendix A):

- The main objectives of the research and issues to be investigated.

- How the participants will be involved in the research: to be interviewed and their interviews will be recorded, after gaining their permission to do so.

- How all the data will be safely stored in a password-protected computer and no one other than me and my supervisor will have access to the information and the research data.

- Confidentiality was assured for all participants. Although I knew their names, I promised not to present in the write up any information that may lead to identifying the participants: only non-traceable information will be mentioned and the participants referred to in the write-up by numbers like T6. Note that since some of the other stakeholders held more or less unique positions in the Syrian educational world, I have not specified their precise position in the description of the background of each participant: if I stated such a person's exact role then their identity would be identifiable even without stating their name.

- They were also given the right to withdraw from the research at any time without giving any reasons or justifications.

- They were promised that there would be no harm arising from participating or declining to participate (e.g. negative evaluation of individuals passed on to the Local Education Center).

Before, contacting the participants in the target context (Deir-Ezzor), I also got permission from the local education center (each Syrian city has its own local education center which is a place that represents the MoE that is concerned with the different issue of teachers in a particular city). Permission was also obtained from head teachers who facilitated the process of nominating and contacting the participants.

After contacting the participants to take part in the current study, they were all briefed on the main and other ethical issues related to the main research. Participants, who agreed to take part in the research, were all asked to read carefully through the consent form, sign it and return it. All this was done in order to make sure that all participants were fully aware of the ethical issues of the research. I ensured that participants had the chance to ask any questions related to the research itself or on any other ethical issues.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented a thorough account of the chosen research paradigm as well as the method used for collecting and analysing the research data. It focused on the different aspects and procedures of both the pilot and the main study and paves the way for the next chapter which gives the findings.

Chapter five: Findings and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present and interprets the beliefs, opinions and reported practices of teachers of English in Syrian secondary schools concerning different issues that are related to their own PD at the secondary school level. As described in chapter 4, the primary data comes from twenty teachers of English and eighteen stakeholders with different experiences, gender, age, training and other backgrounds characteristics. I will present the data following the order of the six research questions.

5.2 RQ1 what do teachers of English think teacher professional development is?

5.2.1 Teachers who claimed not to be familiar with the concept of TPD

Overall, it is reassuring that most of the informants (16 teachers out of 20 teachers) showed familiarity with the concept of TPD and they provided their own definitions of it. By contrast, only four of these teachers (teachers 2, 4, 6, 12) said during the interview that they have never heard of the concept of TPD. Nevertheless, three of these teachers tried to make suggestions of what TPD might mean. For example, when he was asked whether he had ever heard of the concept of TPD, T4 said that:

"لا كمصطلح لا وكن سمعت بأن المدرس الذي لايعرف كيف يدرس يسمونه illiterate لأعرف ان كان هذا ه علاقة وكن لا أذكر أنني سمعت بمفهوم التنمية المهنية من قبل."

"No, as a concept no, but I heard that the teacher who does not know how to teach is called "illiterate". I do on not know if this is related to it, but I do not remember that I have heard of the concept of teacher professional development before."

So, there is a clear evidence in his quotes that he has never heard of the concept of TPD, but he maybe guess that it was something to do with teachers 'knowing how to teach' and therefore thought lack of knowledge about it was something similar to being illiterate. Likewise, two other teachers tried to offer speculative definitions of TPD as follows:

T6 mistakenly took it to be a sub-field of what is taught in practice within teaching English as a foreign language when he stated:

"لا ﻤﻜﻦ أن يكون ﺜلا كما في ﺍﻟﻐة الانكليزية هناك ﺠال يدعى ESP فيكون هناك شيئ ﻤﺍ ﻟ ﻤدرس ﺍﻟﻐة الانكليزية. ﻫذا فهي تتعلق بشيء عملي. عند ﻤﺍ درسنا ﺍﻟﻐة الانكليزي فقد كان شيء نظري, أﻟيس كذﻟك؟ ﻫذا فهي قد تتعلق بشيء عملي."

"no… it could be for example as in English there is a field called ESP; it could be something for teachers of English. So, it is related to something practical. When we studied English, it was something theoretical, right! So, it could be related to something that is practical".

T12 was closer when he stated:

"لا بصراحة ﻟﻢ أسمع بمفهوم ﺍﻟتنمية ﺍﻟمهنية ﻟلمدرس لا كمصطلح ولا كموضوع بحث. وﻟكن اعتقد انه يتعلق بطرق جديدة في اعطاء ﺍﻟدروس و ﻤناقشتها ﻤع ﺍﻟطلاب. وأنه يهدف ﺍﻟى تطوير ﺍﻟمهارات والاسﺍﻟيب ﺍﻟتدريسية ﻟلمدرس."

"no, honestly speaking, I did not hear of the concept of TPD neither as a concept nor as a research topic. But, I think that it is something related to new methods for delivering lessons and discussing them with the students. And it aims at improving the teaching skills and techniques of the teacher".

It is worth noting that although these four teachers were not familiar with the concept of TPD, they were in fact pursing some types of PD as teachers of English (as we will see later on in this chapter). However, they were not aware of the fact these activities are called types of TPD.

In trying to understand why these four teachers were not familiar with the concept of TPD, it might be a good idea to refer to their own background information as this may help the reader to understand why they were not familiar with it. See appendix (full table of the informants' background appears in appendices G and H).

Table 5.2 Background of teachers not familiar with TPD

Teacher	Sex	Age	Years of experience	Place of teaching	Qualification	Travelling abroad	Experiences and any kind of training / courses
T2	M	20s	4yrs	city	BA	No	ICDL
T4	M	20s	3yrs	countryside	BA	Australia educational cultural exchange 6 mths	MED: one-week training
T6	M	20s	3yrs	countryside	BA	No	No
T12	M	20s	1.5 yrs	countryside	BA	No Affected by war	No

As the table 5.2 clearly shows, teachers T2, T4, T6 and T12 represent some of the youngest teachers among the informants who were interviewed. All these four teachers are in their early twenties. They are all novice (i.e. with less than 5 years' experience) and inexperienced teachers. Furthermore, all those four informants are male teachers and they all only hold a Bachelor degree (BA in English). Concerning training experience, they had not had any kind of teacher training either pre-service or in-service (except for T2 and T4). Moreover, three of these teachers were teaching in the countryside while only one teacher was teaching in the city (T2). For three of these teachers there are therefore two main reasons behind their unfamiliarity with the concept of TPD and lack of training:

First and foremost, and as mentioned earlier, three of those teachers were teaching in the countryside. As they declared later, the countryside generally suffers from neglect as far as TPD organized for the teacher from outside, like training days and courses, since most of those

TPD activities take place at the city. Presumably, teacher self-development can be done by any teacher anywhere, but of course it is not likely to happen if the teacher has not been introduced to the ideas of self-observation, reflection, action research etc. which again requires training i.e. self-TPD needs training too and these teachers had not had any.

The other reason behind their unfamiliarity with the concept of TPD and lack of training was the fact that most TPD including teacher training courses had been affected by the terrible conditions in Syria which were taking place at the time when the interviews were conducted.

The only place for training courses is located in the local education center which is in a regional city. Training in those days was still actually going on in the cities, but sometimes each journey to the city could last up to one hour and a half and is not safe. However, this does not mean that every teacher who lives in the countryside will not be aware of the concept of TPD. For example, T5 lived and taught in the countryside, but was aware of the concept of TPD and attributed that to personal effort, which could be via finding out things on the internet as the internet was still accessible in the countryside.

On the other hand, the fourth teacher who was not familiar with the concept of TPD was T2 who was from the city and teaching in the city. I can attribute his unfamiliarity to several reasons. First, he is a young and inexperienced novice teacher. Second, although he was living and teaching in the city where most PD activities take place, he did not receive any kind of teacher professional training and that could be because of the terrible conditions that were prevalent at the time when the interview with him was conducted. Also, though some types of TPD training were taking place at the time of the interview, it may be that the school where he was teaching was not yet chosen for it.

To sum up this section, it is notable that all these four teachers who were not familiar with the concept of TPD shared lots of characteristics with regards to their background including: sex (all are male teachers), age (all are in their early twenties), years of experience (less than five years of teaching experience), place of teaching (3 of them were teaching in the countryside, but one in the city), qualification (BA degree, none with any higher/other degree), and lack of training (none of them had followed an appropriate kind of initial teacher training). So, I can say that they are all novice teachers. Furthermore, these teachers have not had any dedicated initial teacher training beyond academic courses in a BA: these courses might cover teaching

methods and language learning as academic subjects, but not much linked to practical classroom teaching or teaching practice.

5.2.2 Teachers who could provide a definition of the concept of teachers' professional development

In this section, I will present the data related to teachers who were familiar with the concept of TPD and who could offer some sort of a definition of it. It is reassuring that these teachers represent the majority of the informants (sixteen teachers out of twenty teachers).

The informants' different definitions of the concept of TPD revealed or focused on five main aspects of TPD:

1. General nature/defining features of TPD.
2. Medium of delivery/reception of TPD.
3. Purpose/aim of TPD.
4. The effect of TPD on teaching.
5. The rate and the timing of TPD

I will in the following sections, shed light on what the teachers said about each of these in turn.

5.2.2.1 General nature/defining features of TPD

Many of the teachers offered what could be seen as the defining characteristics of TPD which I can compare with and relate to those in our literature review.

Many of these informants spoke of TPD as a training process. Eight of these teachers, so half of those who claimed to know what TPD was, referred to this characteristic. In this way, these teachers showed that they viewed TPD as provided by others rather than as primarily a teacher-centered activity. For example, T1 stated:

"أعتقد أنه تدريب العاملين في مجال التدريس من خلال ورشات عمل أو محاضرات تعريف المدرسين بافضل الأساليب وطرائق التدريس."

"I think it is training those working in the field of teaching through workshops or lectures that introduce teachers to the best techniques and teaching methods."

 T8 also defined TPD as training:

"اعتقد بأنه تدريب مدرسين يكونوا درسين جيدين. وأنا كنت دائما اتمنى أن أكون كذلك وان نطور أنفسنا من أجل الابنا."

"I think it is training teachers to be good teachers." but did also in a way recognize the active role of the teacher in the TPD by adding: "And I always wished to be like that and to improve ourselves for the sake of our students."

Another teacher drew a comparison between TPD and training that takes place in companies, especially for new staff (cf. PRESET). T19 clearly stated that:

"اعتقد بأنه شيء شبيه ما أعرفه عن الشركات. ففي كل شركة قسم ختص بتطوير وتدريب الكوادر الجديدة بشكل نظري وعملي. واعتقد أن هذا ينطبق على درسي اللغة الانكليزية من حيث تأهيلهم وتدريبهم خوض عملية التدريس."

"I think it is something similar to what I know about companies. In every company, there is a special department concerned with improving and training new working staff in theory and practice. And I think this is applied for teachers of English with regards to qualifying, and training them in order to start the process of teaching."

These teachers then viewed TPD as a sort of training, though they did not for the most part elaborate on what they thought that training should focus on. T19 above did however refer to training in "theory and practice" which does echo a broad distinction in the literature between what Wallace (1998) called the "applied science" model where training is done by academic experts in lectures delivering research or theory based guidance, and the more experiential training found for example where trainers have trainees observe experienced teachers teaching or personally engage in teaching practice on which feedback is provided.

By contrast, some teachers spoke of TPD in a more teacher-centered way, focusing on the following aspects.

Increasing teachers' awareness: some teachers spoke of TPD as something that leads to increased teacher awareness (3 teachers). For example, this idea was clearly emphasized in what T5 said:

"اعتقد أن التنمية المهنية للمدرس تعني أن يكون المدرس على اطلاع كامل باسلوب تعامله مع الطلاب وطريقة تدريسه."

"I think teacher professional development means that a teacher should be fully aware of his way of dealing with his students and his method of teaching."

This is widely seen by experts as a key component of TPD: teachers who are more conscious of their teaching practices and have reflected on them are also in a better position to evaluate what aspects of their practices they may need to adjust or change. That is because these teachers are more aware of what stage they have reached in their PD. T5 did not however say how the awareness would be generated, e.g. prompted by an outside trainer or from the teacher's own introspection, or other activities.

Several teachers thought of TPD as a means to improve and develop the teachers' own self in some relevant way, i.e. self-improvement or self-development, as a process of change by ones' own self. This goes with what was emphasized by some researchers. For instance, Bell and Gilbert (1994) stated that "teacher professional development can be viewed as teachers learning rather than as others getting teachers to change." (See further, chapter two, section2.2) T8 voiced this in general terms, making clear that while the focus was on teacher improvement, but the ultimate purpose is to help the students:

"أعتقد بأنه تدريب مدرسين ليكونوا مدرسين جيدين. وأنا كنت دائما اتمنى أن أكون كذلك وان نطور أنفسنا من أجل طلابنا"

"I think it is training teachers to be good teachers. And I always wished to be like that and to improve ourselves for the sake of our students."

T1 voiced the idea in terms of teacher skills:

"تنمية مهارات في التعامل مع الطلاب وايصال المعلومات بطريقة أكثر فاعلية وسهلة الفهم."

"improving skills for dealing with students and delivering information in a more effective and easy to understand way"

as did T9:

" اعتقد بانه التطور الايجابي الافضل من اجل تحسين عملية التعليم واستخدام مهارات المدرس لتطوير عملية التعليم نحو الافضل."

"I think it is the positive development toward the best in order to improve the teaching process and employ teachers' skills to improve the teaching process towards the best."

T16 similarly referred to skills, but with a clearer indication that the teacher is in charge of the TPD process:

"التطور المهني للمدرس هو قدرة المدرس على قل هاراته وتطويرها بما يتناسب ويتلائم ع عملية التربوية و تطلبات العصر."

"teacher professional development is the teachers' ability to improve and develop his skills to fit in with the educational process and modern demands."

T11 spoke similarly, but referred to teacher strategies rather than skills:

"ان التنمية المهنية للمدرس هو أ ر حتمي حيث يعمل المدرس على تطوير نفسه ن ناحية الاستيراتيجيات المتبعة لتدريس اللغة الانكليزية."

"Teacher professional development is something inevitable where the teacher works on improving himself with regards to the strategies adopted for teaching English language." Likewise, T17 shared the view of T11, saying:

"ان التنمية المهنية للمدرس هو تطوير الذات و العمل ن خلال اتباع اخر الاستيراتيجيات الحديثة في التدريس التي تواكب العصر و المتبعة بشكل واسع."

"teachers' professional development is improving one's self and one's work by employing the most modern strategies in teaching which are up to date and widely used".

While all these teachers share the idea that the teacher is responsible for his/her improvement through TPD, they mostly do not indicate how the teacher achieves it (e.g. through seeking training or through reflection on experience, etc.)

Finally, the majority of these sixteen informants, when asked about their own definitions of the concept of teachers' professional development, used words like *improve, develop, growth, new, modern, better, best updates* which imply a positive process. I would analyse these perspectives as falling into three categories.

A few teachers such as T16 talked about the idea of TPD as change and development with words such as *develop, growth*. Likewise, some researchers defined TPD as leading to growth

and development. For example, both Glatthorn (1995:41) and Keiny (1994:158) respectively emphasized the idea that TPD refers to teacher professional growth. For Glatthorn (1995:41) "Teacher professional development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experiences and examining his\her teaching style systematically." And for Keiny (1994:158) "It is a process that involves teachers' investigating their practices to construct their own theories of teaching. Teacher professional development can be seen as a process of professional growth." Likewise, Rose (2006) compared PD to a journey which starts with inexperience, then undergoes further study until the teacher gets the feeling of having arrived as a professional.

Several teachers talked about the aim of TPD as in terms of keeping up with contemporary ideas using words like *new, modern, updates*. For instance, T17 defined TPD as:

<div dir="rtl">"العمل من خلال اتباع اخر الاستيراتيجيات الحديثة في التدريس التي تواكب العصر و المتبعة بشكل واسع."</div>

 "work through following the most modern strategies in teaching which are up to date and widely used."

 Also, some teachers defined TPD as a way of "updating" teachers on scientific development, incidentally implying that new ideas come from outside rather than the inside: not from the teachers' own self. For example, when she was asked for her definition of TPD, T7 stated that:

<div dir="rtl">"ربما هو عبارة عن دورات يخضع لها المدرس بخصو updates التي تطرأ في مجال التدريس. على سبيل المثال قد لاحظت بنفسي خلال الدورات التي خضعت لها سابقا ان المدربين يستدعون الناس كل حسب اختصا ه ويخضعونهم دورات يطلعونهم فيها عما هو جديد في مجال عملهم."</div>

"it may be training courses that the teacher may follow for 'updates" in the field of teaching. For example, I myself during the training courses that I followed previously noticed that trainers usually call people back according to their subject area and update them on what is new in their field of work."

 By comparison, T12 referred to TPD with regards to *new teaching methods*:

<div dir="rtl">"اعتقد بانه يتعلق بطرق جديدة في اعطاء الدروس و مناقشتها ع الطلاب وانه يهدف الى رفع المهارات والاسا يب التدريسية للمدرس."</div>

"I think that it is something related to new methods for delivering lessons and discussing them with the students. And it aims at improving the teaching skills and techniques of the teacher."
For T18, TPD means following what is new and interesting in the subject:

<div dir="rtl">"نعم هو□تابعة كل□اهو جديد و□متع في□جال الاختصا □."</div>

"Yes, it is following all that is new and interesting in the subject area."

Many teachers talked of TPD as aiming at *quality, better, best* things or particularly *improving* (which means 'making or becoming better'). For example, T1 stated:

<div dir="rtl">أعتقد بانه تدريب□عا□لين في□جال□تدريس□ن خلال ورشات عمل أو□حاضرات□تعريف□مدرسين بأفضل الأس□ايب في □رق□تدريس."</div>

"I think it is training those working in the field of teaching through workshops or lectures that introduce teachers to the best techniques to teaching methods."

Also, for T14 it means making *better* outcomes of the educational process:

<div dir="rtl">"هو□مراحل و□عو□ل□تي تحقق انتاجية أفضل□لعملية□تعلمية."</div>

"it is the stages and factors that result in achieving better outcome of the educational process."

5.2.2.2 The Medium of Delivery of TPD activities

Some of these informants talked about the medium of reception or delivery of TPD. In their answers, these means by which they understood TPD to be delivered were often indicated by the keywords *through, by*. I will summarize here the media they mentioned since this theme will be revisited later when covering the types of TPD activity which teachers report they have actually experienced (answering RQ2). For ease of understanding, the list of what they said will be organized, and presented moving more or less from external providers to collaborative and then teacher centered means.

It is worth mentioning that these teachers did not spontaneously mention all of the list of activities suggested in chapter 2. For instance, none of them mention looking for problems, and/or keeping a journal, and reflecting on that. Most of the ideas seem to involve outside input

of some sort, such as another person or a book etc. This may in fact suggest that the teachers are inclined to view TPD as more provided by others rather than done by one's own self.

-Training Courses: half of these informants (8 teachers) believed that TPD can be achieved through courses whether in-service or pre-service. For instance, T3 stated that:

<div dir="rtl">"هو عبارة عن دورة تدريبية يتم تشجيع مدرسين على اتباعها في بعض دول."</div>

"It is a training course which teachers are encouraged to follow in some countries."

Similarly, T17 said:

<div dir="rtl">"ان كل دورات تدريبية تي اتبعتها بالاضافة ى دبلوم تأهيل تربوي اهي الا اشكال ن تنمية مهنية لمدرس."</div>

"All training courses that I followed in addition to the teacher qualification diploma are nothing but forms of teacher professional development."

Many researchers have emphasized the importance of training courses, with the idea that one of the main conditions to be met if learners are to successfully learn a second language is that teachers must be adequately trained (Enever, Moon & Raman, 2009; Emery, 2012). Indeed, this is important not only for improving the teacher's teaching, but even mastering the strategies of TPD itself can be enhanced by training. However, from my knowledge of the sort of courses that the participants might have come across (refer to chapter 3, section 3.4), I would imagine that the sort of training these teachers are referring to is probably not training in reflective CPD, but in ideas or techniques to use in class, or they may mean the ones on ITE, general teacher training courses, training on how to use the new English Syllabus and ICDL.

-Lectures: three of the informants spoke of lectures as a medium of TPD. For example, T1 declared that:

<div dir="rtl">"أعتقد بانه تدريب ع لين في جال تدريس ن خلال ورشات عمل أو حاضرات تعريف مدرسين بأفضل الأس يب في رق تدريس."</div>

"I think it is training those working in the field of teaching through workshops or lectures that introduce teachers to the best techniques and teaching methods."

Likewise, T10 spoke of lectures on English teaching methods given by him to novice teachers as a good way of delivering TPD. These lectures would be ones given in the regional city, or

maybe at the same school where experienced teachers teach or in some cases can be delivered at teacher training centers. Also, T13 believed that TPD can be achieved by:

من خلال حضور presentation يعطيها مدرسون اكثر خبرة. قد يتكلم هؤلاء المدرسين عن خبرتهم في التدريس وخصوصا ان كانوا قد درسوا في contexts مختلفة وثقافات أو حتى مستويات مختلفة."

"attending presentations delivered by more experienced teachers and these teachers may talk about their teaching experiences especially if they taught in different contexts, cultures or levels."

- Higher degree course: On the other hand, some teachers spoke of pursuing higher studies as aspects of TPD. For instance, T11 believed that TPD can be achieved by:

"العمل على رفع مؤهلي العلمي......متابعة الدراسات العليا"

 "working on better improving the educational qualification…. Pursuing higher studies."

Most probably this teacher refers to doing an MA at one of the Syrian universities as this would implies, upon graduation, eligibility to give lectures at the universities, so he would be better paid and enjoy a better social and probably administrative position. By comparison, T17 stated that:

"ان كل الدورات التدريبية التي اتبعتها بالاضافة الى دبلوم التأهيل التربوي ماهي الا اشكال من التنمية المهنية للمدرس."

"all training courses that I followed in addition to the teachers' diploma in education are nothing, but forms of teacher professional development."

- Books and similar resources: some of the informants considered reading books and similar resources a good means for enhancing their own TPD. For example, T12 clearly stated that:

"قد اقتصرت على اطلاع بسيط على أساليب تدريسية من خلال قراءة بعض الكتب بالاضافة الى الاطلاع على الوسائل التقليدية لبعض المدرسين."

 "I just had a brief idea of some teaching methods by reading some books in addition to being aware of the traditional teaching methods of some teachers."

Similarly, T15 regarded:

"دورات تدريبية, ندوات, ورشات عمل وقراءة مصادر مفيدة."

"training courses, attending seminars, workshops and reading useful sources" as important aspects of TPD.

- Workshops: four informants referred to workshops while giving their definition of the concept of TPD. One of them mentioned the "technical" kind of workshops where teachers will be introduced to different types of technological resources such as: computers, projectors and how to use these in the classroom. T13, stated that:

"وهناك ايدعى technical workshops والتي تهدف الى تعريف المدرسين بالتقنيات الحديثة وكيفية استخدامها في الصف."

"there are technical workshops…that aim at introducing teachers to new and modern technologies and how to use them in the class." T1 referred to general teaching workshops:

"أعتقد بانه تدريب العاملين في مجال التدريس من خلال ورشات عمل أو محاضرات تعريف المدرسين بأفضل الأساليب في طرق التدريس."

"I think it is training those working in the field of teaching through workshops or lectures that introduce teachers to the best techniques to teaching methods."

Indeed, experts regard workshops as one of the most common, powerful and useful forms of PD activities for teachers (Richards, Gallo and Renandya,2001; Richards and Farrell, 2005; Farrell, 2008). As stressed by Richards and Farrell (2005), workshops take teachers out of the classroom to forums where they can share problems and concerns with colleagues or teachers from different schools and motivate them to share their experiences and ideas with colleagues.

- Consulting experienced teachers and exchanging ideas with colleagues: for one of the teachers, TPD can be delivered by depending on other good teachers' experience. For example, T5 stated that:

"المفروض ان يعتمد المدرس على تجارب المدرسين الافضل لانه في كل مدرسة.........المدرسين يعتبرون من اعمدة المدرسة."

"the teacher should depend on the experiences of better teachers …. Because in every school, there are teachers who are considered as the cornerstone of the school." Moreover, T20 referred both to colleagues who are in Syria and those who are in other countries:

"اعتقد ان التنمية المهنية للمدرس هي تبادل المعلومات مع المدرسين في بلدان اخرى حول التدريس وذلك في مجالي المعلوماتية وطرائق التدريس."

"I think teacher professional development is .... exchanging information with teachers in other countries on teaching and in both the field of informatics and teaching methods."

T16 also believed that TPD can be pursued by:

" تبادل الافكار مع الزملاء والمدرسين."

"exchanging ideas with work colleagues, and teachers."

- Classroom observation: For some teachers another way for receiving TPD is the observation of the teacher by a more experienced teacher (or the head teacher) or vice versa. Then, the teacher can get feedback, suggestions or ask the experienced teacher some questions after the class. The idea was clearly emphasized by T13:

"ان المدرس الجديد قد يتم مراقبة درسه من قبل مدرس خبير وهذا عادة يكون متبوعا باعطاء feedback من المدرس الخبير. في بعض الاحيان يكون مدير المدرسة هو المراقب."

"a novice teacher may have his class monitored by an experienced teacher followed by feedback given by the experienced teacher. Or in some cases the head teacher can be the observer." This teacher refers to the teacher deciding he wants someone to observe him and give feedback. T13 went on to say that:

" كذلك هناك امكانية ان يحضر المدرس الجديد دروسا لمدرسين أكثر خبرة ومن الممكن ان يكون لديهم مقابلة بعد الدرس للتحدث عن الدرس."

"Also, there is the possibility of the novice teacher attending lessons of more experienced teachers and then they may have a meeting after the lesson to talk about it."

- Using the internet and modern technology: for the majority of teachers, an interesting medium of delivering TPD is the use of modern technology and the internet and this includes both the use of modern technology as an external source of higher wisdom to read articles, online books, ELT journals as well as using it as a collaborative source of idea sharing between teachers. For example, T9 believed that TPD can be achieved by:

"استخدام الحاسوب بتطوير العملية التعليمية للبحث عن طرق واستيراتيجيات التدريس من خلال الانترنت."

"using the computer for improving the educational process and searching for modern techniques and strategies through the internet."

Likewise, T11 stated that TPD can be attained by:

"استخدام‏‏‏‏حاسوب والانترنت‏‏‏‏لاطلاع على كل‏‏ماهو جديد و‏‏فيد‏‏لمدرس ويواكب‏‏التطور‏‏العلمي‏‏لتعا‏‏ل‏‏ع‏‏طلاب."

"using the computer and internet to be updated on all that is new and useful for the teacher and is in accordance with scientific research for dealing with students."

- Consulting students or parents for their opinion was indicated by T16 who believed that TPD can be achieved by:

"تبادل الاراء‏‏ع........‏‏طلاب والاباء."

"exchanging ideas with... students and parents."

T5 interestingly stated that:

"‏‏مدرس...... ب‏‏كانه ان يسأل‏‏طلاب‏‏ن هو أفضل‏‏درس بنظرهم‏‏م ب‏‏كانه‏‏توا ‏‏ل‏‏ع‏‏ذك‏‏مدرس او حتى حضور دروس‏‏ه‏‏لاستفادة‏‏نه..... لانه في كل‏‏درسة‏‏درسين يعتبرون‏‏ن اعمدة‏‏مدرسة."

"the teacher .... can ask his students who is the best teacher in their own opinion, then he can get in touch with that teacher or even attend classes of that teacher to benefit from him. …. because in every school, there are teachers who are considered as the cornerstone of the school."

Here, however the students are not so much considered as themselves a source of valuable information for the teacher, e.g. through their own comments on the teacher's lessons, but simply as a means to access a better teacher.

-Teacher reflection. The closest that a teacher comes to mentioning this is perhaps T11 who stated that:

"ان‏‏تنمية‏‏مهنية‏‏لمدرس هي...... حيث يعمل‏‏مدرس على تطوير نفسه‏‏ن حيث الاستيراتيجيات‏‏متبعة‏‏ن اجل تدريس‏‏ادة‏‏لغة الانكليزية."

"Teacher professional development is ....where the teacher works on improving himself with regards to the strategies adopted for teaching the subject of English."

It is not clear however whether T11 refers to reflective self-improvement or self-improvement by some of the means mentioned above such as reading, or choosing to attend workshops etc. TPD can be achieved by reflective practice where teachers use their critical skills applied to their experience (Burt and Keenan, 1998; Crandall, 2000; Burnett and Lingam 2007).

5.2.2.3 Purpose of TPD

 Next, I will talk about the third important aspect of TPD, as revealed by the informants in their definitions of the concept of TPD, about what they think the purpose to be of adopting TPD. Many of the informants defined TPD in part at least by reference to its purpose, or what aspects it might change beyond just general change or improvement. The informants often referred to the purpose of TPD with the words *in order to, to, aims at*.

T10 gives the most comprehensive list:

"هي عملية تنمية مستمرة تستهدف المدرسين تغيير وتطوير ارائهم ومارساتهم وقدراتهم المعرفية والتربوية والأخلاقية والادارية والتقنية..... والهدف هو العمل المثالي للمدرس وتقييم هذا العمل والارتقاء به، اذا يشعر المدرس بانه مؤهل . وهذا الشعور يولد لديه الاحساس بالتميز والتفوق والاستقرار."

"It is a continuous development process aiming for teachers to change and improve their beliefs and practices as well as their educational, knowledge, moral, technical, and administrative abilities....the purpose is the ideal work of teachers, giving more importance to this work and improving it, so the teacher feels that he is well qualified. This feeling results in the teacher experiencing a distinct sense of success and security."

It is notable that experts like Borg would argue that TPD needs to change teacher beliefs, not just practices. However, apart from T10 teachers mostly think of it as working directly on practices, not via beliefs. Furthermore, none of the other teachers mentioned anything to do with morality or administration, or teacher feeling/affect, though all those are mentioned by experts (see section 2.5). It may be interesting to refer to his background for explanations for why he managed to provide this especially rich definition of TPD. In fact, he is a male teacher in his late fifties who has more than 35 years of teaching experience. Unlike the four teachers who were not able to provide an appropriate definition of TPD, T10 had followed two kinds

of training courses; a teacher qualification course and ITE course. Furthermore, he is a well-known teacher of English in the city where the interviews were conducted. On many occasions, T10 has given workshops, seminars and TV talks that were organized for novice teachers. Therefore, when comparing the definition that T10 offered with those who were unfamiliar with the concept of TPD, I may conclude that there may be a relationship between external training experience, and being an experienced teacher, and familiarity with the concept of TPD.

Most of the other teachers mentioned all sorts of aspects of teaching practices either in general 'the teaching or educational process' / methods / 'field' of teaching or more specifically under the following 4 subcategories: teacher delivery skills/ strategies/performance, classroom management, time management and students benefit. This is consistent with researchers such as Bell and Gilbert (1994) who defined TPD as a learning process aiming at developing the teachers' own classroom practices.

-Improving teaching and education in general was for example indicated by T9:

"ن اجل تحسين عملية تعليم واستخدام مهارات مدرس تطوير عملية تعليم نحو الافضل."

".... in order to improve the teaching process and employ teachers' skills to improve the educational process towards the best."

As was stated by T13, perhaps prompted by the fact that a number of training courses in Syria are not specific to English teaching (e.g. ICDL, ITE), TPD can be both general and subject specific:

"تزويد مدرسين ب مهارات ضرورية........ وكما ذكرت سابقا قد تكون هذه مهارات تعلقة بنفس مادة تي يدرسها مدرس او قد تكون هارات ع ة عن تعليم و تعلم."

"to equip the teacher with the necessary skills .... and as I mentioned earlier these skills may be related to the same subject that the teacher teaches or it may be general skills for teaching and learning."

- Improving teachers' skills, strategies and performance in English teaching (7 teachers emphasized this idea). Teachers gave examples of these such as T11:

"ان التنمية المهنية للمدرس هو أمر حتمي حيث يعمل المدرس على تطوير نفسه من ناحية الاستيراتيجيات المتبعة لتدريس اللغة الانكليزية."

"Teacher professional development is something inevitable where the teacher works on improving himself with the regards to the strategies adopted for teaching the subject of English."

T1 further stated that the purpose of TPD is:

"تنمية المهارات في التعامل مع الطلاب وايصال المعلومات بطريقة أكثر فاعلية وسهلة الفهم."

"improving skills for dealing with students and delivering information in a more effective and easy to understand."

T1 here seemed to be thinking particularly of teacher skills in presentation of material to the student, without the student being actively involved. However, he added:

"من اجل تطوير الابداع لدى كل من المدرس والطالب."

"....and to improve creativity for both the teacher and the student."

Thus, he comes closer to the notion that TPD should involve the teacher "seeking to understand the process of teaching and learning in their own and others' classroom." (Wajnryb, 1992:9).

-Mastering the skills of dealing with students or classroom management was stressed by T13 who saw TPD as:

"تزويد المدرسين بالمهارات الضرورية والخبرة التي يحتاجونها لادارة صفوفهم."

"to equip teachers with the necessary skills and needed experience for managing their classes"

- Making use of time effectively to get good results. T18 highlighted the idea that:

"الهدف هو تحسين أداء المعلم واستغلال الوقت بشكل مثمر وتحقيق أفضل النتائج."

"the aim is to improve teacher performance and exploiting time in an effective way and achieving best results."

- Students' benefit: only one teacher mentioned that the purpose of TPD was ultimately for the students' benefit (without referring to the teachers' benefit). T8, stated that:

"اعتقد بأنه تدريب المدرسين ليكونوا مدرسين جيدين. وأنا كنت دائما اتمنى أن أكون كذلك وان نطور أنفسنا من أجل ابنا."

"I think it is training teachers to be good teachers. And I always wished to be like that and to improve ourselves for the sake of our students. "

5.2.2.4 The effect of TPD on teaching

Some responses, in effect, suggested what actual changes to teaching the teachers thought TPD might change, in their views. In other words, they are thinking of what specific methods of English teaching any training might or should promote. The focus on change in practices rather than beliefs fits with the focus on teacher delivery skills / performance in the Purposes section. It is notable that the professional definitions of TPD do not typically define it as promoting any specific way of teaching. Indeed, since ideas about what constitutes effective TEFL teaching keep changing as research and theorizing on learning and teaching progresses, it might be felt to be a considerable mistake to associate TPD with any particular techniques or methods of teaching English. The main ideas that the teachers thought TPD should be promoting were as follows.

- Bottom-up teaching: change from traditional teaching of a grammar rule followed by practice to having students work out the grammar rule from examples (if their level is suitable). In this way, there is a reference to top down deductive teaching (rule > example) vs bottom up/ inductive teaching (example>rule) also known as data driven learning (DDL). This idea was clearly implied by what T5 said:

"اعتقد ان التنمية المهنية للمدرس تعني ان يكون المدرس على اطلاع كامل باسلوب تعامله مع الطلاب و طرق تدريسه. فمثلا اسلوب التدريس العام هو ان يشرح المدرس القاعدة و الدرس ثم يعطي تمارين و تطبيقات مطبقين هذا الاسلوب التقليدي. الاسلوب الذي امح تطبيقه في الصف هو ان يستمتع الطلاب بالدرس ويستنتجوا القاعدة استنتاجا بعد اعطاء الطلاب امثلة.ولن يتحقق هذا الشيء الا اذا كان مستوى الطلاب أفضل و هناك فرق بين مستوى الطلاب في المدينة والريف."

"I think teacher professional development means that the teacher should be fully aware of his way of dealing with his students and his methods of teaching. For example, the general method of teaching is that the teacher provides the grammatical rule and the lesson, then he gives students some practices or exercises, applying this traditional way of teaching. The method that I wished to apply in my class is that students enjoy the lesson and conclude the

grammatical rules after giving some examples. But this will not happen unless the students' level is better as there is a difference in the level between students in the city and those in the countryside."

- Adjustment of amount of information delivered to what the learners can cope with: This idea was stressed by T8 who said that:

"كما اعتقد يجب ان يعمل المدرس على طريقة اعطاء المعلومة. على سبيل المثال يتم اعطاء الطلاب 50 % من المعلومة وترسخ بذهنه هو افضل عندي من اعطائه 100% ولايستوعب الا 10 %."

"as I think, the teacher should work on the way he delivers the information. For example, if the students are given 50% of the information and they understand it, that is for me better than giving 100% of the information and the students get only 10% of the information."

-Integrating technology into education: (2 teachers) Examples of this are the use of computer, projector, Internet as well as teaching aids. T5 highlighted this idea by stating that:

"من يرغب بتنمية نفسه هنيا فعليه ان يستخدم الأسلوب التفاعلي مع الطلاب, أعني ادخال التكنولوجيا في التعليم. اغلب المدرسين الذين التقيت بهم كانوا يتمنون ادخال التكنولوجيا بالتعليم ولكن كان شيء نظري ليس له صلة بالواقع. حيث كان معظم المدرسين يدرسون الطلاب باسلوب تقليدي وهم يتمنون اسلوب افضل."

"whoever wants to improve himself should adopt the interactive way with his students; I mean integrating technology into education. Most teachers I met were wishing to integrate technology into education, but this was something theoretical not related to reality as most teachers were teaching in a traditional way whereas they opted for a better way."

All the above suggestions share a broad movement away from the teacher being the center of decision and delivery of what is taught to consideration or involvement of other agencies, such as the learners or technology. These are indeed current themes in TEFL, which these teachers might have heard about. However, they are by no means uncontested. The last approach for example conflates the use of technology with more student interaction though of course the two are not necessarily linked. Indeed, a very common use of technology in teaching is for the teacher to use PowerPoint presentations, and these, unless handled carefully, can in fact be quite 'traditional' and non-interactive leaving the students as passive receivers of excessive information about language rather than active participants in language learning and use.

5.2.2.5 The Rate and the timing of TPD

Although many teachers saw TPD as a process, only one mentioned an important aspect of the expert concept of TPD (see chapter two, section 2.2.1, Harmer, 2007; Harwell, 2003:106) which is that it should occur continuously. That teacher is T10, who we saw earlier was especially well informed:

"هو عملية تنمية مستمرة."

"It is a continuous development process …"

By contrast, some other teachers saw TPD as occurring only at a certain time. Training courses can either be a pre-service or in-service as indicated by T13:

"التنمية المهنية لمدرس هي تطبيق بتدريب المدرسين بمادة محددة قبل أو حتى خلال فترة التدريس وذلك تزويدهم بالمهارات الضرورية والخبرة التي يحتاجونها لادارة صفوفهم."

"Teacher professional development is a practice of training certain subject teachers before or through the period of teaching in order to equip them with the necessary skills and needed experience for managing their classes."

Most probably, this teacher mean that it is training that occurs on repeated occasions, e.g. once every few years, but not continuously all the time as T10 says.

By contrast, one teacher viewed training as something that should take place just before starting the profession of teaching in order to prepare the teachers for the realities of the classroom. T19 clearly stated that:

"اعتقد بأنه شيء شبيه لما اعرفه عن الشركات. ففي كل شركة قسم خاص لتطوير وتدريب الكوادر الجديدة بشكل نظري وعملي. واعتقد أن هذا يطبق على مدرسي اللغة الانكليزية من جيث تأهيلهم وتدريبهم لخوض عملية التدريس."

"I think it is something similar to what I know about companies. In every company, there is a special department concerned with improving and training new working staff in theory and practice. And I think this is applied for teachers of English with regards to qualifying, and training them in order to start the process of teaching."

5.2.3   Conclusion on RQ1

Comparing what teachers say with the expert characterizations of TPD (see chapter two section 2.2), I find the following:

Only one of the teachers (T10) mentioned the important aspect of TPD as being a continuous process that should take place throughout the whole career as a teacher. Probably this is due to lack of an important aspect of TPD in Syria; absence of pre-service training courses.

On the other hand, some of the teachers defined TPD as a matter of development, and growth; as a process of change, and this in fact voices some researchers' definitions of the concept of TPD, such as Glatthorn (1995) and Keiny (1994). Some teachers however augmented the notion of change with further characteristics using words such as *new, modern, update, improve, better, best*, which were not used by researchers in their definition of TPD.

Also, very few teachers defined TPD as a matter of teacher learning, there were indications from the means of delivery of TPD that were mentioned that the majority of teachers considered it as more likely to be something provided by other stakeholders (probably in the form of training, workshops. etc., or advice from more experienced teachers). This idea goes against what was emphasized by Bell and Gilbert (1994), which is that TPD is or needs to be essentially a teacher centered activity.

While both the experts and teachers agree that TPD should impact on teachers' practices, the experts recognised a wider range of things affected, such as teacher beliefs and emotions, which only one teacher (T10) recognised. Hence there seems to be an implication that none of these teachers see that a change in belief should occur first so to change practice, where by contrast TPD might be seen by experts as needing to affect teacher beliefs about teaching first so as then to impact on teacher classroom practices.

Finally, some of the teachers seemed inclined to associate TPD with the promotion of certain specific methods of teaching, which is not part of the expert view of TPDAll in all, I might say that most of teachers exhibited beliefs about the nature of TPD which show they have only some partial knowledge of its characteristics as understood by experts. We will see later, however, that in practice they reported pursuing a wider range of activities that are, in fact, TPD, without it seems being aware of them as being able to be regarded as TPD.

5.3 RQ2: What types of professional development activities do teachers of English say they are engaged in? and RQ3 Why are teachers of English involved in a professional development activity of this or that type/sort?

For convenience, I will present findings relevant to RQ2 and RQ3 together, as they are intimately connected. To start with, Table 5.3 (see appendix I) attempts to summarize some basic recurrent themes in the responses that are relevant to answering RQ2

5.3.1 Reflection after class

From Table 5.3 it may be observed that the majority of teachers interviewed (17T) declared during the interview that they currently had the habit of reflecting after delivering their classes, as a spontaneous, self-chosen practice. For instance, T4 stated that he focused on the negative side; what was wrong:

"ﺍﺃﻓﻌﻠﻪ ﻫﻮ ﺗﺬ ﻛﺮﺍﻭﺍﻗﻊ ﺣﻴﺮﺓﺍﻃﻼﺏ ﻭﺃﺣﺎﻭﻝ ﺃﻥ ﺃﺗﺬﻛﺮ ﺃﻳﻦ ﻓﻌﻠﺖ ﺷﻴﺊ ﺧﻄﺄ. ﺃﺣﺎﻭﻝ ﺍﻥ ﺃﺗﺬﻛﺮﺍﻭ ﻛﻨﺖ ﻓﻌﻠﺖ ﻛﺬﺍ ﻭﻛﺬﺍ ...
ﻭ...ﺃﺑﻘﻲ ﺍﻻﺷﻴﺎﺀ ﻓﻲ ﺑﺍﻱ."

"what I do is remembering where my students seem confused, or I try to remember where I did something wrong. I try to think if I did so and so…. I keep things in my mind".

Similarly, T8:

"ﺍﺛﻼ ﺑﻌﺪ ﺍﻋﻄﺎﺀﺍﺩﺭﺱ ﺍﺭﺟﻊﺍﻟﻤﻨﺰﻝ ﻭﺍﻗﻮﻝ ﻳﺎﺭﻳﺖﺍﻭ ﺭﻛﺰﺕ ﻋﻠﻰ ﻫﺬﻩﺍﻧﻘﻄﺔ ﺃﻛﺜﺮﺍﻦ ﺗﻠﻚ. ﺃﻭ ﺭﺑﻤﺎ ﺃﻧﻨﻲ ﺃﻋﻄﻴﺖ ﺃﺍﺛﻠﺔ
ﻛﺜﻴﺮﺓ."

"For example, after delivering the lesson I go back home and I say I wish I gave more emphasis to this point more than that one, or I may have given too many examples."

Reflection is often seen by experts as important for 'problematizing' teaching, so as to see where improvements can be made, and has been widely promoted as a means of TPD.

It is notable that both these teachers refer to reflection primarily on where they themselves may not have performed optimally. They do not for example blame the learners for any

shortcomings. This could be taken as a sign that they hold effective beliefs and many studies have underlined the importance of effective teacher beliefs. Effective teachers 'act on the belief that all students can learn' (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2007) meet the needs of diverse learners (Darling-Hammond, 2011), and believe that teachers can intervene to make a change. In this way, effective teachers have interventionist beliefs about students; a set of beliefs that lead to effective teacher practice, and improved student performance and self-esteem (Jordan, Lindsay, & Stanovich, 1997). Ineffective teachers, on the other hand, hold what have been called 'pathognomonic' beliefs, and simply blame students for anything that is not successful rather than reflecting on what they themselves could improve.

More teachers, however, (T1, T12, T16 and T19) reported that they reflected on both the positive as well as the negative sides of their lessons. For example, T12 stated:

<div dir="rtl">"أ⬚ضي بعض⬚وقت بعد اعطاء⬚درس⬚لتأ⬚ل في⬚جوانب⬚ناجحة وغير⬚ناجحة في⬚درس."</div>

"I spend some time after delivering the lesson to think of the successful and unsuccessful aspects of my lessons".

Also, T19 said:

<div dir="rtl">"لا شك أن كل⬚درس ينظر⬚لجوانب الايجابية و⬚سلبية⬚لدرس."</div>

"It is undeniable that every teacher considers the negative as well as the positive aspects of the lesson".

Interestingly, one of the teachers mentioned reflecting mainly on the positive features of the lesson T16 stated:

<div dir="rtl">"أنا دائما أحاول⬚تركيز على⬚جوانب الايجابية⬚لدرس و أتجاهل⬚جوانب⬚سلبية⬚تي واجهتني خلال⬚درس. وأعمل على تطوير⬚جوانب الايجابية⬚ن شخصيتي كمدرس."</div>

"I always try to focus on the positive sides of the lesson and neglect the negative ones that faced me during the lesson. And I work on improving the positive side of my personality as a teacher."

Some teachers importantly made explicit the additional point that reflection on the lesson before could inform the lesson that followed. T16 for example said:

"نعم غ⬜ابا⬜ا أتأ⬜ل ⬜ا⬜جوانب الايجابية و⬜اسلبية⬜⬜ن⬜⬜درس. أقوم بذ⬜ك بينما أحضر⬜لدرس⬜⬜تا⬜ي."

"yes, quite often I think of the positive as well as the negative parts of the lesson. I do this while I am preparing for the next lesson"

and T8 said:

"حسنا قد أ⬜بق هذه الأفكار في⬜⬜دروس⬜⬜مقبلة"

"ok, I may apply these ideas in the next lessons".

The above evidence therefore shows that at least some of these teachers are aware of the idea that teacher reflection plays a pivotal role in the process of their PD/learning in the sense that teachers continually reflect on and examine their practices to make informed decisions as far as their instruction is concerned (Carpenter, Fennema & Fanke, 1996, Ball, 2009).

It is important to further note that all these seventeen teachers who reported reflecting after delivering their classes stressed the idea that it is something that they do "currently. Some teachers however pointed out that they reflected more when they first started teaching:

"⬜⬜قد تأ⬜لت في دروسي خصو ⬜ا خلال⬜⬜فترة الأو⬜ى⬜⬜ن تدريسي"

"I reflected on classes especially at the beginning of my own career as a teacher" (T5),

background information shows that this teacher did not follow any kind of training, so this might be his own idea that came as a result of the need of change or act differently. Teachers also varied considerably in how often they claimed to engage in after class reflection at the present time: T7 reported reflecting after every lesson, T8 reported

"نعم اتأ⬜ل في 80%⬜⬜ن دروسي."

"yes, I reflect on 80% of my own lessons",

whereas T11 stated:

"أتأ⬜ل دروسي بين⬜⬜حين والأخر."

"I reflect on my own lessons every now and then".

I may interpret the teachers' points of view as showing, for the most part, that they see reflection as a continuous timeless and lifelong process: they reflected after their classes in the past, "present" and they intended to reflect on their classes in the future, combined with what T8 and T16 said earlier about using reflection on a previous lesson to prepare for the next lesson. This agrees with what was stressed by Butler & Schnellert (2012:1208) that teacher inquiry is recursive in that "inquiry is nested within cycles of deliberate, self-regulated attempt to advance their own learning." This same idea was highlighted by many researchers such as Jaccobs and Yendol-Hoppey (in Martin et al, 2014) who stressed the idea that teacher inquiry should focus on teacher's concern where reflection is cyclic, teachers go through the process of data collection, observation, reflection and making decision about the results of their inquiry, then they go through the same process of inquiry again. As indicated by T4 who showed evidence to make a change:

"أحاول ان أتذكر اين فعلت شيئ خطأ و أحاول أن أتذكر و كنت فعلت كذا وكذا...أبقي الأشياء في ذهني. حتى ان درست في السنة المقبلة اتذكر بأن علي تغير الأشياء التي تبدو غير مناسبة"

"I try to remember where I did something wrong. I try to think if I did so and so…. I keep things in my mind. Even if I teach next year, I remember that I have to change things that do not seem appropriate." Also, T8 said:

"مثلا بعد اعطاء الدرس ارجع للمنزل واقول ياليتني ركزت على هذه النقطة أكثر من تلك. أو ربما أعطيت أمثلة كثيرة. حسنا قد أطبق هذه الأفكار في الدروس المقبلة "

"after delivering the lesson I go back home and I say I wish I gave more emphasis to this point more than that one. Or I may have given too many examples. Ok I may apply these ideas in the next lessons."

T12 said:

"مثلا كم اكن اسأل الطلاب فيما اذا كانوا قد فهموا الأفكار والمعلومات. بدأت أشعر ان طلابي شعروا بالملل لذلك غيرت طريقة تدريسي وبدأت اخصص وقت محدد بعد كل قسم من الدرس وذلك لتنشيط الطلاب من جهة ومن أجل التأكد فيما اذا كانوا قد فهموا ذلك الجزء من الدرس أم لا."

"For example, I was not asking the students whether they understood the ideas and the information at all. I started to feel that my students felt bored, therefore I changed my teaching method and I started to allocate certain amount of time after each part of the lesson to activate students on one side and to double check whether they understood that part of the lesson or not."

Reflection after class was something chosen by the teacher not imposed on the teachers by other outside agencies, as we see from table 5.3.

Turning now to the reasons for teachers so widely adopting reflection after class (RQ3), many of the teachers said explicitly that reflection after class is a means that helps improve their own teaching and their teaching methods. For example, T1 said:

" نعم أنا أفكر في جوانب مختلفة درسي وذلك لأحسن دروس مستقبلية."

"yes, I consider the different aspects of my lessons to improve my future lessons".

As stressed by Kumaravadivelu (2003:7) second language teachers should enter into "a continual process of self-reflection and self-renewal" in order for them to "construct their own personal theory of teaching". Also, as I said above, an effective teacher is a reflective one (Brandt 2008). T9 also said that one of the main reasons for reflection on his class is:

"حتى أحسن ستوى دروسي ستقبلا أتمعن الذي وجده الابي سهلا لفهم و الذي وجدوه ن عوبات وكيفية التغلب عليها ستقبلا".

"to improve my future lessons, I consider what parts of the lesson the students find easy to understand and what difficulties they face and how to overcome them in the future".

Similarly, T19 stated that:

"أتأل ان كان هناك جوانب غير همة في درس واعطاء أوية وتركيز أكبر لجوانب مهمة نه. "

"I consider if there are any unimportant parts of the lesson and give priority and more emphasis to the important aspects of it".

T11 pointed out that:

" ينبغي على كل درس تأل بدروسه بعد اعطائها يرى ان كان درس ناجح وهل فهم طلاب فكرة.أم أن هناك شكلة في اسلوب اعطاء فكرة.أو أن طلاب ديهم شاكل عينة ذا يعمل مدرس ن أجل تغيير ما هو أفضل."

"every teacher should reflect after delivering his classes to see if the lesson was successful, did the students understood the idea, or whether there is a problem in the way the idea was delivered, or the students have certain difficulties. So, the teacher can work to a better improvement".

In this way, reflective practice will lead to PD where reflective language teachers will be seen as those who are "discovering more about their own teaching by seeking to understand the process of teaching and learning in their own and others' classroom" (Wajnryb, 1992:9).

Reflection can definitely lead to actions and changes in teacher practices as stressed by many of these teachers. Two detailed examples are provided by both T5 and T7. T7 gave an example of a good reflection:

"في فترة عينة ادركت بان الطلاب لم يحبوا فكرة ترديد قا لفظية بعدي لذلك عمدت الى ايجاد بعض المقا ع الصوتية المسجلة وكنا كلنا نردد بعد الاستماع اليها قد استمتع الطلبة فعلا باستخدام التكنولوجيا في الدروس وقد علمت الطلبة technique متع بالنسبة لهم وذلك بان يعودوا للمنزل ويستمعوا الى نفس المقا ع الصوتية التي كنا نستمع اليها باستخدام you tube مقا ع تعليمية بعا."

 "At a certain point I realized that the students did not like the idea of repeating pronouncing things after me. I made the effort to find some audio recordings of passages and we all repeated after listening to them. The students really enjoyed using technology in the lessons and I taught my students an interesting technique for them which is to go back home and listen at home to the same voice passages that we were listening to, using the YouTube….Educational ones, of course."

This is in accordance with what was stressed by many researchers: "reflection is a process that leads to a thoughtful, mediated action." (Clift, Huston and Dugach, 1990: 23). Reflective teachers are better able to monitor their practices, make informed decisions, respond to the changing needs of learners, and make appropriate judgements about their own teaching behaviors than less reflective teachers (Valli, 1997; Yost et al, 2000; McMeniman et al, 2003; Hedberg, 2009). I could say that many of these teachers are perhaps engaging in a form of action research, though without being aware of it, since none of them mentioned this by name or talked in terms of a research procedure of trying out new ideas and then reflecting on the

outcome I.e. they are reflecting, thinking of a possible change in practice that might improve teaching, implementing it, and, presumably, reflecting on its success afterwards.

By contrast, for T5 who taught at the countryside, his example of reflection is a questionable one:

"أذكر انني كنت أدرس الانكليزية لصف حادي عشر اناث. اعطيتهم درسا عن الازمنة وشرحت درس. شارك بعض الطلاب في درس. بعضهم أعطى اجابات صحية وبينما بعضهم أعطى اجابات خاطئة. على أية حال عندما عدت للمنزل تذكرت ان مدارس ثانوية في ريف تتميز بشكل عام بالاهمال ,وان مستوى طلاب ضعيف. في درس تاي طلبت من طلاب ان ينسوا كل شيء عن درس ماضي و أخبرتهم انني سوف اعطيهم ومدة سبعة ى عشرة أيام اساسيات اللغة الانكليزية لأنه من صعب أن نبني شيئ صحيح على أساس خاطئ. ينبغي على مدرس تخصيص وقت معين تلبية حاجات طلاب."

"I remember that I was once teaching English to the eleventh-grade female students. I gave them a lesson on the tenses. I explained the lesson and some of the students participated in the lesson; some gave right answers whereas others gave incorrect ones. Generally, there was increased participation on the part of the students. However, once I returned home, I remembered that secondary schools in rural areas are generally characterized by negligence and the students' level is weak. Next lesson, I asked my students to forget all about the previous lesson. I told them that I will give them for seven or ten days the basics of English, because it is difficult to build something right on something that is wrong. Teachers should allocate certain time to meet students' need."

Usually, the reason for doing reflection is to teach better. Hence usually if something goes well, teachers would not change it. Here the teacher says there was increased participation (surely good), but nevertheless he decided to undo the lesson by telling students to forget about it. He does this based not so much on reflecting on what occurred in the lesson, but rather on some general stereotype view he has of students in rural schools. But maybe that class did not fit the stereotype of being weak. Thus, one might argue that this was a rather questionable example of reflection used to change practice, arguably not appropriate. Possibly he may need an appropriate type of training in reflective self TPD which in this thesis I have mentioned the lack of.

I turn now to responses with a focus that went beyond reflection simply with a focus on teaching methods. Many teachers commented on for example other aspects such as improving teachers' critical skills and their PD more generally as well. T16, stressed the idea that:

"ان‬تفكير بشكل انتقادي بعد اعطاء دروسي ساعدني في‬عمل على تطوير‬جوانب الايجابية‬ن شخصيتي كمدرس وساعدني على‬نمو‬هنيا."

"critically reflecting after my own classes helped me work on improving the positive sides of my personality as a teacher and help me grow professionally speaking".

Reflective practice therefore gave some of these teachers the chance to develop their critical skills and attitudes and grow professionally (Burt and Keenan, 1998; Crandall, 2000; Burnett and Lingam 2007; Ryder, 2012).

These teachers consider positive or and negative aspects and then they may act, but none of them referred explicitly to their beliefs or echoed what Farrell (2007) stressed, how reflective thinking helps teachers bring underlying beliefs to the level of awareness, and realize that there is no simple solution or answer.

Finally, Table 5.3 shows that only three teachers reported that they do not reflect after delivering their English classes and we need to understand why they might say this. T6 said that it did not occur to him to reflect on classes after delivering them. T13 justified himself by saying:

"لا, أنا لا اقوم بذ‬ك بعد‬درس و‬كنني أقوم بذ‬ك بشكل فصلي."

"no, I do not do that after the lesson, but I do that termly".

On the other hand, T14 highlighted an important reason for not reflecting on his classes of English, saying:

"لا بسبب ضيق‬وقت وضغط عمل‬تدريس"

"no, because of the lack of time and because of the work load of the teaching".

Such reference to lack of time is justified by the fact that some teachers are overwhelmed by teaching. Being a teacher involves lots of responsibilities ranging from preparing and delivering the lessons to invigilation and marking coupled with personal and family

commitments and in some cases having another kind of job (working at banks, oil companies, private language institutes, tutoring). Nevertheless, this did not hinder the vast majority of teachers from claiming to engage in frequent reflection.

5.3.2 Reflection on previous term

From Table 5.3, we can see a fairly similar pattern of response to that just described in 5.3.1, albeit with a smaller number of teachers. Only around half of the teachers interviewed (11T) said that they reflected termly on their own English classes. When compared with reflection after classes, it is very clear that reflection on a whole term is not a technique that is reported to be used so often by Syrian teachers of English at secondary schools. Probably because the majority of them reflect on teaching almost

on a daily basis, they do not feel the need to reflect on it termly, as indicated by some teachers such as T1, T8 and T11. For example, T1 said:

<div dir="rtl">

"لا, لأنني أتأمل في دروسي بشكل شبه دوري ذا لا داعي لتأمل بها بشكل فصلي."

</div>

 "no, because I always reflect on my lessons almost periodically, so there is no need to reflect on them termly."

By contrast, T13 has a different view; he explicitly stated that he reflects termly as he did not reflect after every lesson that he delivered, T13 declared:

<div dir="rtl">

" لا , لا أقوم بذلك بعد الدرس ولكن بشكل فصلي."

</div>

"no, I do not do that after the lesson but I do that termly."

On the other hand, some other teachers indicated the reason behind not conducting a termly type of reflection due to lack of teaching experience, as stated by T4:

<div dir="rtl">

"ليس لدي خبرة تدريس طويلة."

</div>

"I do not have a long teaching experience."

This goes against what was mentioned by T5 who said:

"قد جربت ذلك في بداية تدريسي وذلك يتأتأل على أساس فصلي."

"I experienced that at the start of my teaching, reflecting on a termly basis."

Moreover, some of the teachers who reflected on their classes on a termly basis, referred to the reasons or the benefits for adopting that. For instance, T7 felt that:

"أعطتني شعور الثقة بالنفس."

"it gave me self-confidence." whereas for T9 and T10 there is a focus on teaching methods, T9 stated:

"تطوير تدريسي والتعلم نحو الأفضل والابتكار بطريقة مناسبة للطلبة."

"to improve my teaching and learning towards the best and innovate in a way suitable for students."

Concerning the time when reflection after class was conducted, as in 5.3.1, all those eleven teachers said that reflection on a term was something which they did at present and was self-chosen.

5.3.3 Keeping a diary/ lesson report

During the interview, the minority (8T) of teachers said that they kept a diary/lesson report to write their ideas, views, feelings and reflections in. Probably, the majority of them are not in fact interested in writing things, but just keeping them in their mind for later consideration at home, school...etc.

For some of these teachers, the diary was closely linked to reflection on their own teaching for example. T1 said:

" نعم دائما الكتابة ما أراه جوانب ابجابية أو سلبية للدرس."

"yes, always to write down what I see as positive or negative aspects of the lesson." Likewise, T18, expresses almost a similar view:

"عادة أحتفظ بمدونة حيث أكتب عليها كل الملاحظات المهمة مثلا معرفة فيما اذا كانت طريقتي الجديدة في التدريس تحرز تقدما أم لا."

"Usually I keep a notebook where I write on it all important notes such as to see if my new method of teaching is making any progress or not."

However, these teachers using a diary in a clearly TPD related way, written after a lesson, as a basis for reflection, were the small minority.

For others, the diary had a purely teaching related function, and was conceptualised more as written before a lesson (signalled by *should*) rather than after: e.g. T8 said:

"تبعا لمستوى الطلاب بالنسبة لمرحلتي الابتدائي والاعدادي أحتفظ بالافكار في مخيلتي أو قد أكتب الملاحظات عن جملة أو مفردات يجب التركيز عليها. أما بالنسبة للمرحلة الثانوية لدي دفتر أدون عليه بعض النقاط : نقطة واحد ... نقطة اثنين... نقطة ثلاثة. لان ضغط الشغل أكبر بالمرحلة الثانوية."

"depending on the level, for the primary and intermediate level I keep the ideas in my mind or I may write down note about a sentence or vocabularies that I should focus on. Whereas for the secondary school level, I had a notebook where I write down certain points...point one, point two... point three, because the workload is greater at the secondary school level."

An entry in such a diary is then closer to a record of teaching points or observed learner weaknesses that might be used as a rough lesson plan. This was more explicitly stated by T10 who said:

"كتابة الملاحظات عن الطلاب لتقييم مستواهم وتحسين أدائهم ومن أجل التحضير للدرس."

"writing down notes about students to evaluate their level and improve them, to prepare for the lessons,"

Likewise, T14 said:

"مخطط الدرس, معلومات اضافية للطلاب مثل مفردات جديدة."

"lesson plan, extra information for students such as new vocabularies"

and T8 described what she wrote as:

"vocabulary items‏ثلا‏بعض‏الصفحات اكتب‏المفردات‏التي يجب ان أعطيها. فعلى سبيل‏المثال نختار كلمة‏من ‏النص ونشتق‏منها‏الفعل,‏الظرف أو حتى idioms بطريقة يحبها‏الطلاب."

"vocabulary items for example for some pages I write down the vocabulary that I should give, or for example we choose a word from the text and derive, the verb, adverb or even the idioms in a way that the students like."

Concerning the time, all of these eight teachers said that they wrote and kept their diaries "in the past" not at the time when the interview was conducted. Also, all these teachers (8T) said that it was something self-chosen not imposed by other stakeholders to do that. However, in fact usually other stakeholders (head teachers and supervisors) may encourage teachers to keep what is called in Syria a "Teachers' Notebook" to write down a lesson plan or any other issues to be viewed by both teacher and stakeholder. It seems the focus of this diary encouraged by some stakeholders is meant to be lesson plans or the like, hence that may be why most teachers who kept diaries did so for this function.

However, some of the teachers did not keep a diary as a habit and they provided different kinds of justifications for that. For instance, one of the teachers did not think of that, T5 said:

"بصراحة‏لم يخطر ببا‏لي."

"honestly, it did not come to my mind."

By contrast, some other teachers were aware of it, but they did not adopt it for different reasons. For instance, T6 stressed that:

"لا انا عادة أحب أن أحتفظ بالاشياء بعقلي و‏ليس بكتابتها. با‏لرغم أن‏الموجهين يطلبون‏ذلك و‏لكن لا أؤ‏من با‏لتحضير وباستخدام دفتر‏الملاحظات و‏لست‏معتادا على‏ذلك."

"no, usually I like to keep things in my mind and not to write them. Although subject supervisors ask for that, I do not believe in preparing or using a diary book and I am not used to it."

This explanation again shows that the teacher is in any case thinking of the lesson plan kind of diary rather than a reflective journal.

In short, hardly any of these teachers thought of, or in fact used, diaries as reflective journals, in part perhaps due to the encouragement by head teachers and supervisors of the forward-looking lesson plan related kind of diary. This goes against what many researchers have emphasized regarding the importance of reflective lesson reports: Jasper (2005) found these a means that facilitated creativity, critical thinking, analysis and discovery. Also, as Bartlett (1990) pointed out, teachers' lesson reports (written retrospectively) "may document routine activities in the classroom, conversations with pupils, incidents, beliefs about teaching, views about language learning and teaching and much more." (In Richards, 1996). Lesson reports of this sort often serve as a useful record of many important features of past lessons that helps teachers regularly monitor and reflect on what actually happened during a lesson. Probably some of the teachers are missing something here and may not make the most of their reflection of 5.3.1 due to not writing diaries/journals of this sort.

5.3.4 Self-recording of lessons

Overall, nearly half the number of teachers (9T) who were interviewed said that they audio-recorded themselves teaching English or had done in the past, but mostly not in state school. It is interesting to point out, however, that many teachers who reported not doing this were really surprised when they were asked whether they made recordings of themselves while teaching English. Some of the teachers felt that recording themselves while teaching was something odd or unnatural. Other teachers, declared during the interview that they never audio/ video recorded themselves teaching, however those teachers were really motivated, liked the idea and even promised to apply it as a future technique. So, this research process could be seen not just as gathering data about TPD for research, but also as being in a way a form of TPD, having a pedagogical role. The interviews here are making teachers aware of ideas that might change their TPD practices (see further chapter 6).

Some of the teachers did not record their own classes, because they claimed they did not think of that before. T4 stated that:

"بصراحة م يخطر ببالي و خطر ببالي كنت بقتها أنا تأكد بانها ن خطوات مهمة تي ستساعدني كمدرس."

"honestly speaking, it did not come to my mind. If it had come to my mind, I would have applied it. I am sure that it would be one of the important steps that would help me as a teacher."

On the other hand, some teachers mentioned making recordings, but not at state school and not all clearly for TPD purposes. For instance, T5, T7 and T8 had audio recorded their presentations (similar to microteaching) which they made at university during their undergraduate English study. T5 indicated a TPD function:

"أكيد أفادني بطريقة الاعطاء،معرفة الأخطاء وتلافيها في،مستقبل.،معلو،ات هي بشكل عام ،حيحة و،حضرة و،كن ،ايهم هو ،ريقة الاعطاء, سرعة،كلام... انخفاض،صوت..،خ"

"Surely it benefited my method of teaching to know the mistakes and avoid them in the future. The information was usually correct and well prepared, but what matters is the method of teaching such as speed speech, low voice. etc.".

T7 however said:

،قد سجلتها لانني تعبت عليها كثيرا وعن،ا استمعت،ايها سررت كثيرا."

"I recorded it because I exerted a great deal of effort on it, and when I listened to the recording I was very happy."

And when asked what did she likes, she said:

" وقوفي أ،ام،طلاب،،م أكن،رتبكة على الا،لاق،تمكنة،ن،معلو،ة, قدرتي بالايجابية على الأسئلة،اتي ،رحت...،ع ،راعاة ان كنت أتكلم بسرعة."

"my standing in front of the students, I was not confounded at all and well equipped with information, my ability of answering the questions that were asked… also considering if I was speaking quickly."

This perhaps suggests the recording served for T7 more to remind her of the successful event than to serve as a basis for reflecting and learning to improve as a teacher.

On the other hand, T5 and T6 recorded their own private home classes clearly with TPD in mind. Thus, there was evidence of similarity of purpose, despite the difference in the place. For instance, T5 (university) and T6 (private classes) both recorded themselves teaching to

consider their mistakes. So, also both T8 (university) and T19 (private class) recorded so as to improve their own pronunciation. T8 said:

"كي اسمع صوتي واحسن لهجتي لأن الطالب يحب أن يسمع اللفظ الصحيح كي لايلفظ خطأ ويصعب جدا تغيرها فيما بعد."

"To hear my voice and improve my accent. Because, the student must hear the correct pronunciation so he does not pronounce things incorrectly, which will be very difficult to change later on." T19 said:

"كنت أسجل الدرس ثم أدقق به فيما بعد وسجلت بعض الملاحظات عن اللفظ والقواعد وذلك في دروسي الخاصة."

 "I was recording the lesson then considered it later on and I made some notes on pronunciation and grammar and it was for my private classes."

 Only one teacher (T15) said that she recorded her classes at Syrian state secondary schools. I asked some of the teachers who had recorded their teaching in places other than state schools, why they did not also record their own classes at state schools and some of their replies were like what T8 said:

"ربما لانه في المدرسة كنت مشغولا بفكرة ايصال المعلومة للطالب أكثر من تفكيري بالتسجيل."

"Probably, because at the school, I was overwhelmed by the idea of delivering the information to the students more than thinking of recording." On the other hand, T19 put it down to the different content of the lessons:

"لأن دروسي الخاصة مختصة بالمحادثة واللفظ."

 "because my private classes are concerned with conversation and pronunciation."

From the researcher's point of view, there could be another reason behind this not directly stated by the teachers. At university level, teaching presentations or micro teaching are often assessed; students are given marks based on how well they did, so this could explain why they were interested in recording it. Usually, students majoring in English take a subject where they are assessed on a practical part as well as a theoretical one. For the practical part, they had to prepare a topic and it is something very similar to micro teaching and at the end, students (colleagues) can ask questions and the lecturer will give his feedback at the end. Or on some occasions students go to school and give lessons to students there and give a presentation about

that experience. All this could be considered as initial teacher training (PRESET) and the recording is used by students themselves for self-development.

For private home classes, they may also want to improve themselves to be more competent teachers, so as to compete with other teachers who are giving private classes, and so be more attractive to students and so to earn more money. This incentive is not present in state school.

Interestingly, one of the teachers recorded himself practicing/pretending to teach at home with the purpose of improving his teaching at state school, as matter of preparation:

"كنت دائما أسجل نفسي في المنزل ,استمع الى طريقتي في الكلام والشرح وذلك معرفة اذا اكانت طريقتي الائمة والشرح وافيا أم لا."

"I was always using audio recording at home and listening to my way of speaking and explaining and that is to know if the method was suitable and the explanation is enough or not." (T12)

Concerning the time when self-recording was conducted, table 5.3 clearly shows that five teachers said that it was something which they did in the past and at present and that they will continue doing it in the future. By contrast, four teachers (T2, T5, T7, and T8) reported that self-recording was something that happened in the past and that it was no longer done in their current English classes. It is worth mentioning that all these four teachers were among the youngest ones and all graduates of the same year. So, they all reported to do it.

Finally, none of these teachers reported video recording him/ herself while teaching, only audio-recording, although video-recording one's own self-teaching, is stressed by many researchers as a good technique in the sense that it helps teachers see and consider many different aspects/ features of their own classes. "how visual their teaching is – do they use gestures well, move around a lot, show overheads, draw graphics on the board, or do we stand in one spot and talk in a monotone?" (Farrell, 2008:46). Furthermore, for some researchers video recording one's own classes is much better even than observation by someone else. So, a good tool to involve teachers in reflection could be to video record their lessons. Brookfield (1995:80) clearly stressed the importance of video-recording a lesson, "As a way of helping us improve our modelling of what we want students to do, video is irreplaceable." Probably, there could be some reasons for not video-recording their own classes such as unavailability

of video-recording equipment at school, or that it is something considered odd and not part of the policy of the school system. In addition, teachers may not think of it.

5.3.5 Being observed by a colleague

Table 5.3 clearly displays that the majority of teachers (15T out of 20) declared during the interview that they were or had been observed by colleagues. Such observation could take two forms: observation for the benefit of the observed teacher, or of the observing teacher. For example, referring to the former, T1 said:

"نعم كنا نقوم بذلك أحيانا للاستفادة من الخبرات وتقديم بعض النصائح."

"Yes, we were sometimes doing that to share experiences and get some pieces of advice." Also, T12 gave a good example of colleague observation:

"نعم قد كنت أحرص على أن يحضر لي دروسي بعض من أصدقائي المدرسين وأطلب منهم ابداء ارائهم وملاحظاتهم حول الدرس."

"Yes, I was interested in the idea that some of my colleagues observe my classes and I ask them to give their opinions and feedback on the lesson."

and when asked about examples of feedback received, he said:

"أن أتكلم ببطئ , كنت أحيانا أتكلم بسرعة ,ان أعطي الطلاب الفرصة لطرح الأسئلة والمشاركة بالدرس."

"to speak slowly - I was sometimes speaking quickly - and give students the chance to ask questions and participate in the lesson."

As emphasized by many researchers, much can be learned by having teachers serve as second sets of eyes and ears for one another. Sometimes this model is referred to as peer coaching or collegial supervision (Sullvan & Glanz, 2009). Therefore, administrators need to honor the fact that this model is intended to provide exclusively formative, nonthreatening, growth-inspiring opportunities, completely separate from teacher evaluation and summative assessment by a superordinate (Tallerico, 20l4). Classroom observation can be a way of gathering information about teaching for TPD, not only for evaluative purposes (Richards,

1996 and Farrell, 2007). This research focus only on its use for TPD, which would be information gathering and non-evaluative.

On the other hand, some of the teachers were observed for the benefit of the observer as indicated by T9:

"نعم أحيانا يحضرني بعض الزملاء وخاصة المبتدئين في مجال التدريس وذلك يستفيدوا من خبرتي."

"Yes, sometimes some of my colleagues observe my lessons, especially the novice ones in the field of teaching to benefit from my experience."

However, some of the teachers were not observed by their colleagues T11 said:

"لم يفعل ذلك أحد من قبل."

"no, nobody has ever done that."

Turning to issue of time place, ten of these fifteen teachers said that they were observed by a colleague in the past. By contrast, six teachers out of these fifteen teachers said that being observed by a colleague was a technique that they adopted at "present". Also, eleven teachers said during the interview that they were observed by a colleague at Syrian secondary school level which means that nearly half of the number of teachers interviewed were at some time observed by a colleague. On the other hand, some teachers of English said that their classes were observed at places/ settings other than Syrian state secondary schools. For instance, three teachers said that they had been observed by colleagues at university level, where they were asked to do micro teaching in front of their own colleagues, receiving feedback and comments from their peers and their university tutor. That was part of doing BA in English.

Furthermore, it is interesting that one teacher (T6) said that his classes of English were observed by another teacher when he was delivering his private classes of English at his home as well as at a private language institutes. T6 said:

"لا ليس في المدرسة قد حضر لي درسي زميل الذي رغب في أن يطور نفسه قد كان خلال دروسي الخاصة في المنزل."

"no at school no, I was observed by a colleague who wanted to improve himself. It was during my private home classes."

On the other hand, only one of these teachers said that his/her classes of English were observed by a colleague at a private secondary school.

Moreover, five teachers emphasized that being observed by a colleague was something that was imposed on them by other agencies. On the other hand, the majority of teachers (11T) stressed the idea that it is something self-chosen.

 In addition, when classroom observations are handled in a non-judgmental manner where development is the goal, then they become something, as Farrell (2007:129) described (see chapter two section, 2.4.4): "teachers look forward to and which they see as time well spent rather than something to be dread and avoided." In other words, if classroom observation takes a developmental rather than an evaluative approach, the teacher, "knows that the visit is not a test, but a mutual problem-solving experience," (Williams, 1989:87).

Observation provides an opportunity for the sharing of experiences and ideas, as well as a chance to find out solutions to mutual problems and concerns.

5.3.6 Being observed by someone in authority/other stakeholders

During the interview, most of the teachers (18T) said that their English classes, particularly in the state secondary school, had been and were still subject to imposed observation by other stakeholders including head teachers, staff from the local education center, supervisor, or teacher trainers including trainers on integrating technology into education. Almost none of them saw such observation as purely done to assess the teacher, but as having a non-evaluative purpose. Cosh (1999) and Borg (2006) emphasized the importance of observation as a valuable TPD strategy since it provides evidence of what actually happens in classrooms, provided that the aim of the observation is to help improve the skills of the observed, and as stressed by Fullerton (1993) quality feedback is given. As highlighted by Moon (1994), observation provides a channel for reflection and professional dialogue which may otherwise be missing from the careers of many teachers.

Surprisingly, two teachers said that their classes had never been observed by PD providers. These teachers were T8, and T12. For example, T8 said:

"لا لأنني بدأت⬚تدريس ضمن فترة الأحداث وبدون اهتمام⬚ن قبل⬚دو⬚ة تجاه⬚ريف."

"No, because I started teaching during the problems and with no state attention for the countryside."

This reflects the fact that these teachers teach in the countryside: such places are generally characterized by being neglected and not receiving government attention which affects teachers' development. On very rare occasions, their classes may be observed by head teachers or subject supervisors, but probably these novice teachers did not experience that yet. Furthermore, when asked if the head teacher observed her teaching T8 reported:

"⬚ستواه في⬚لغة الانكليزية⬚يس جيد"

"his level in English is not good."

Many of the teachers described the feedback they received after observation by PD providers at state secondary school. For instance, some of the teachers such as T9, T11, T14 and T18 said that their classes are observed by educational and specialist supervisors (see chapter 3 section3.4), and they talked about the importance and the focus of such unplanned visits as indicated by T9:

"أ⬚ثلة على⬚ك, كضرورة⬚تحضير⬚لدرس وأحيانا ينصحوننا باتباع⬚تدريب⬚متوفر في⬚مدينة."

"examples, the importance of preparing for the lessons and sometimes they advise us to follow training available in the city."

Also, T11 said:

"كيفية اعطاء فكرة, استخدام⬚سبورة,⬚تركيز على نقطة⬚ا. أن تمنح فا⬚ل⬚لطلاب⬚كتابة⬚اهو⬚وجود على⬚سبورة وذ⬚ك⬚كي ينتبهوا⬚ى⬚ا تقو⬚ه."

"How to give an idea or to use the whiteboard, to focus on an idea, to give students a break to write down what is written on the board, so they focus on what you say." He went on to comment on the unplanned visit as:

" قد تكون نقطة ايحابية اذ أن على⬚معلم أن يكون⬚ستعدا دائما⬚زيارات⬚مشرفين."

"it could be a positive point as the teacher should always be ready for supervisors' visits."

Also, T18 gave examples of the importance and types of feedback received:

"نعم خصو ⬚ل⬚لمدرسين⬚لجدد فهم يعطون نصائح عن ⬚رق⬚لتدريس, ⬚رق جذب انتباه⬚لطلاب⬚لدرس و⬚ا⬚تعا⬚ل⬚عهم وكذ⬚ك يوجهون⬚نا بعض⬚لنصائح عن أي نقا⬚ ضعف⬚لدينا كمدرسين.⬚ثلا⬚لفظ تصحيح ⬚فظ بعض⬚لكلمات وقد يطلب ⬚نا⬚راجعة⬚واقع انترنت⬚عينة أو حتى⬚ثلا اسلوب كتابة, تنسيق⬚لكتابة على⬚لوح."

"Yes, especially for novice teachers, they give pieces of advice on teaching methods, how to attract students' attention, and how to deal with them, also they provide pieces of advice on our points of weakness as teachers...…. For example, pronunciation, correcting some of our pronunciation and we may be asked to refer to certain online websites, or even the method of writing and organizing the writing on the whiteboard."

Other teachers talked about being observed by PD providers at different other places, such as private language institutes as indicated by T4, T6 and T7. T6 who taught in the countryside teaching said:

"⬚ا⬚مدرسة لا⬚كن في دوراتي⬚لخا⬚ة. حضر⬚ي⬚وجه⬚ختص بمعهد خا ⬚⬚تعليم⬚لغات. جاء⬚يقيم دروسي. أعطى بعض⬚لملاحظات عن أنني اتحدث بسرعة, أنني ⬚أزج بين⬚لهجة الأ⬚ريكية و⬚لبريطانية وأستخدم كلمات ⬚عبة ⬚ا⬚نسبة ⬚مستوى⬚لطلاب. أ⬚ا ⬚ا⬚نسبة⬚لنقا⬚ الايجابية قال بأن⬚فظي قريب⬚ن native وكذ⬚ك حسن تدبير⬚لوقت."

At school no, but a subject specialist observed my private course in a private language institute, he came for evaluating my lessons…. He made some comments on me speaking quickly, mixing between American and British varieties, using difficult words for students especially the beginner ones. Among the positive points, he said my accent is very close to a native one and I have good time management".

It is notable that this observer appears to have mixed positive and negative points, otherwise, the experience would be "threatening, frightening and regarded as an ordeal." (Williams, 989:86). T7 also gave an example of observation at a private institute:

"نعم ⬚كن في⬚عهد خا ⬚⬚لغات. حيث حضرت⬚شرفة درسا⬚ي كانت⬚علمة⬚ها خبرة في⬚لغة و⬚لتربية بنفس⬚لوقت و⬚ديها⬚علو⬚ات جدا رائعة عن⬚لتدريس و⬚رائق⬚لتدريس حيث ⬚لبت⬚ني أيضا حضور دروس⬚ها. بعد⬚ادرس ح⬚ثتني عما يجب ان أفعله أو لا افعله, ق⬚ت⬚ي أفضل شيء اني كنت جزء⬚ن⬚لطلاب ⬚كن بنفس⬚لوقت⬚سيطرة عليهم ⬚كن أعطيت فقرة , فقرة, فقرة⬚م تطبيق⬚كل⬚لفقرات. بدلا عن ذ⬚ك كان يجب ان تعطي فقرة⬚تبوعة بتطبيقات و فقرة⬚تبوعة بتطبيقات⬚كي اتجنب تشتتيت فكر⬚لطلاب. كذ⬚ك نبهتني ان 80%⬚ن⬚لدرس كان تركيزه علي فق⬚ات يجب أن يكون 60 ⬚ن⬚لدرس⬚لطلاب و40 %⬚ك."

"Yes, but at a private language institute where a supervisor observed my lesson, she was experienced in language and education at the same time and she had very great ideas on teaching, and teaching methods and she also asked me to observe one of her lessons. After the lesson, she told me what I should have done or should not have done; she told me that the best thing I did was that, I was part of the students, but could have control over them. She said that I gave part1, part2, part3 then exercises for all these parts. Instead, she said I should have given part1 followed by exercises, part2 followed by exercises in order to avoid confusing the students. She also drew my attention to the fact that 80% of the lesson was centered on me: she said, 60% of the lesson should be for the students and for you 40%."

Referring to the countryside, some teachers (T4 and T5) gave examples of what they reported as questionable types of observation in state school which they may not find useful. For instance, T4 said:

"نعم ﺑ�عادة يأتي�شرف�مرة واحدة ﺑ�اسنة�وجه اختصا �...�ا أتذكره هو أنه قد جاء وتكلم أ�ام�طلاب ﺑ�لغة الانكليزية ﻭ�كن�م أفهم شيء. ان أغلب�وجهي الاختصا � هم كبار في�اسن ﻭ�يس�ديهم�علو�ات جديدة ﻭ�فيدة. بصراحة لايمكن الاستفادة�نهم."

"Yes, usually a subject supervisor may come once a year… What I remembered is that he came and talked in front of the students in English, but I did not understand anything. The majority of subject supervisors are old and do not have new and useful information, we cannot benefit from them, honestly speaking."

 T5 contrasted the contribution of the two types of supervisors:

"نعم�موجه�تربوي غير�مختص. حضر�ادرس وكنت اتكلم ﺑ�لغتين�عربية والانكليزية. أعتقد أن�الموجه�تربوي يجب أن يكون تعا�له�ع�طلاب ويجد حلولا�مشاكلهم. أ�ا�موجه�مختص هو�امفروض�الذي يهتم بطريقة تدريس�مدرس . ﻭ حضر�ي�وجه�ختص ﺑ�تأكيد سيعطي�لاحظات جيدة أ�ا�اتربوي يدقق على�شكل أكثر��ن�المضمون حيث كان ﺑ�كاني�اتكلم ﺑ�لغة الانكليزية ﻭ�ن يفهم عما اتكلم."

 "Yes, the educational supervisor; non-specialist, he attended the lesson and I was speaking both Arabic and English. …I think the educational supervisor should deal with students or try to find solutions to their problems. The subject specialist supervisor however is the one who should be concerned with the teacher's teaching method. So, if specialist supervisor attends he

will give good feedback. The educational one is more concerned with the form rather than the content; I could speak English only and he would not understand what I said."

When asked about feedback received, he said:

" أخبر الطلاب أنه ينبغي عليهم المشاركة بالدرس وبالنسبة لي لب ني أن أركز وبالتساوي على الطلاب الذكور والاناث وينبغي علي ان أظهر جرأة أكثر وتفاعل ع الطلاب.كانت زيارته خلال الفترة الأو ى ن تجربتي بالتدريس."

"He told students that they should participate in the lesson and for me he asked me to give an equal focus to those who participate in the lesson, male and female students, and I should show more courage and interaction with students. His visit was during at the start of my teaching experience."

All in all, it is noticeable that although the quality of the contribution of the supervisors in the state schools was questioned by some of the teachers, and the examples of feedback given were all of negative comments, nobody voiced a view that they were in any way threatening or oppressive.

As we have seen, sixteen teachers stated that their English classes were observed at Syrian state secondary schools. On the other hand, three teachers (T4, T6, and T7) said that they also used to have someone else to observe their classes which they delivered at Syrian private language institutes. However, only one teacher (T4) said that his English classes were observed in a Syrian private secondary school. As T4 declared, this could be either the head of the language institute, an experienced teacher of English or even a PhD holder who may be involved on the basis of their experience and knowledge and on a paid basis.

Concerning time, Table 5.3 shows that seventeen of these teachers said that it was something current whereas three teachers said that they used to do so in the past and they were no longer observed by a PD provider at the time when the interviews were conducted. It seemed that that the official schedule of observation was affected to some extent by the troubles that were going in Syria at the time when the interviews were conducted.

In addition, T1 said that his teaching was observed by someone who is a Ph.D. holder at university and at the time when the interview was conducted. This is due to the fact that he was a Master's degree student who was doing his MA in English at Damascus University when

he was interviewed. He referred to microteaching, using the audience as the class and a university tutor. Then, he received feedback and comments from them afterwards.

5.3.7 Observing a colleague

We may observe from table 5.3 that the majority of teachers (14T) mentioned that they observed a colleague at some time during their life. This occurred mostly in the past (11T) and mostly at state school (11 T) and the majority of these teachers (12 T) said that it was self-chosen; by contrast only four teachers said that it was something imposed.

Some teachers such as T1, T9 and T12 explicitly referred to the idea that they observed colleagues when they first started with their profession as teachers, which may indicate that the teachers were worried during the first days of teaching and that is probably due to the lack of PRESET. T1 expressed that:

"نعم , حضرت بعض دروس زملائي خلال فترة الأولى من مهنتي."

 "yes, I attended some lessons of my colleagues during the first period of my profession as a teacher."

Similarly, T12 stated:

"نعم ,كنت في البداية أحضرباستمرار دروسا عند أحد زملائي المدرسين وهو ذو خبرة واسعة وقد استفدت منه كثيرا."

 "Yes, at first I was continuously attending classes of one of my colleagues and he was very experienced. I greatly benefited from that."

Consistent with this, was the types of teachers whom they liked to observe. The majority of them talked about observing experienced teachers or at least a wish to do so. For example, T5 expressed his wish to observe experienced or distinguished teachers:

"لأنه في كل مدرسة مدرسين يعتبرون من أعمدة المدرسة."

"because in every school there are teachers who are considered as the pillars of that school."
T8 gave two examples of observing competent or experienced teachers/lecturers, the first example being even before her graduation from university:

"نعم, عندﻣا كنت ﻃاﻟبة في ﻟسنةﻟرابعة كنت أحضر ﺣاضرات يلقيهاﻟﺣاضرونﻟطلاب سنة أوﻟى وﺛانية. وذﻟكﻟكي اراقب كيفية اعطاءﻟدرسﻣن قبلﻟمحاضر.ﻣثلا ان أعجبني أسلوب أو ﻃريق تدريس استاذﻣعينﻟﺑاشرة اكتبها وأركز علىﻟﻃريقة حتى تعطيﻟﻧتائج."

"Yes, when I was a year four student, I was attending lectures given to first and second year students, and to observe the way the lesson is delivered by the lecturer. For example, if I liked a teaching method or strategy of a certain lecturer, I immediately write it down on notebook and I focus on that method to give good outcomes."

T8 also gave another example of observation after graduation; while teaching, by saying:

"نعم غﻟﺑا جدا. اﻟﻠبﻣنﻟﻣدرسين ان كان ﺑاﻟﻣكاني حضور دروسهم وﻣراقبة تدريسهم."

"often, I attend classes; I ask teachers if I can attend their classes, and observe them teaching."

Though most observation was of other teachers at secondary school in fact three teachers said that they observed a colleague during their undergraduate study (micro teaching and presentation) at university level. This could greatly benefit the observers to reflect on what strategies/ aspects of the lesson were effective or less effective and also benefit from the feedback and comments made by colleagues and the subject tutor.

Some of the teachers also referred to the purpose or benefit of observation as: teaching methods, dealing with students, getting new ideas, and student interaction. For instance, T8 stated:

"أذكر انني حضرت درسﻟﺧريج كليةﻟﺗربية واستفدتﻣن أسلوب اعطاءﻩﻟﺗدريس حيث كان يهتم ﺑاﻟطلاب بشكل عام وينظرﻟﻟى كتاباتهم ان كانت ﺻحيحة. خريجي كليةﻟﺗربيةﻟﺪيهم خبرة جيدة فيﻟﺗعاﻣلﻣعﻟﻂلاب."

"I remember that I once attended a class of a graduate of the Faculty of Education, and I benefited from his teaching method, as he was looking after the students in general and looking at their writing and see if they were right. Graduates of the faculty of education have good experience of dealing with the students."

Also, T13 gave a good example of the benefit of observing experienced colleagues teaching, more explicitly mentioning the reflection that it engendered:

"نعم ان ان□راقبة□درسين أكثر خبرة□ني يعطيني فكرة عن كيفية تطوير□وادي□تدريسية. وجودي كمراقب في□صف يسمح□ي أن ادقق في□جوانب الايجابية و□سلبية□لدرس ويجعلني أفكر بموادي□تي أحضرها□صفي.ان□راقبة ز□لاء أخرين وهم يدرسون زاد□ن□قتي بنفسي□قد سنحت□ي هذه□تجربة ان أشعر وانا outsider أي استراتيجيات تعمل بشكل أفضل□لطلاب وكذلك ساعدني ان□أغي بعض الأ□ور□تدريسية□تي كنت أعتقد أنها □حيحة و□فيدة."

"Yes, to benefit from their experiences. Yes, observing teachers who are more experienced than me gives me ideas on how to improve my teaching materials. My presence as an observer in the class allows me to consider the positive and the negative aspects of the lesson and makes me think of the materials that I should prepare for my class. Observing other teachers teaching increased my self-confidence. This experience gives me the chance, as an outsider, to feel which teaching strategies work best for the students and it also helped me to give up some teaching issues that I thought they were right and useful."

However, T19 observed that not all observations are useful, nor are all experienced teachers in fact, good teachers:

"على□الرغم□ن أن□مدرس كان□تمكنا و□كن□و كنت □اا□ا وجدت □عوبة في□فهم.أحيانا يكون□مدرس فهمان□ا فكرة □ا 100% فيعتقد أن□طلاب يفهمون□ثله وهذا خطأ. يجب أن يضع□مدرس نفسه□كان□طاب كانسان□يس□ديه أي فكرة □سبقة عما يقو□ه□مدرس نفسه على عكس□مدرس وكذلك كان أسلوبه تقليدي ب□تدريس."

"Though the teacher was competent, but if I was the student I would find it difficult to understand it. Sometimes, the teacher may be understanding an idea 100% and he may think that students understand it like him. This is wrong. The teacher should put himself in the shoes of the students, as someone who does not have any idea of what he is going to say, contrary to the teacher. Also, he had a traditional method of teaching."

Concerning the time, most of these teachers (12 teachers out of 14) said that observing a colleague was something they did in the past only and that they no longer observed a colleague at the time when the interviews were conducted. By contrast, two teachers (T1, and T19) all said that they currently observe a colleague. Most of these teachers (12 teachers out of 14) also declared that they observed a colleague who is usually an experienced one at the state secondary school.

5.3.8 Attending workshops

As Table 5.3 shows, a majority of teachers interviewed (13T) said that they had attended workshops during their careers as teachers. The majority of these teachers (9T) reported that they attended workshops only in the past and they no longer attended workshops. By contrast, four teachers said that they still attend workshops "currently". So, it was not something that they did in the past and that they no longer did it probably, difficult to get to nowadays. These workshops are usually delivered by PD providers (IT engineers, trainers, supervisors, foreigners) at the local teachers' qualification center. The focus ranges from giving teachers ideas on TM, syllabus changes that the central ministry introduced, ITE and ICDL.

Some of the teachers attended workshops and found it useful, for instance T7 said:

"نعم كثير نها فعلى سبيل مثال احداها كانت عن communication skills وكانت لاسبوع واحد وركزت على ريقة ايصال معلو ة body language and gestures."

"Yes lots, for example one on communication skills, it was for one week, it focused on the way to deliver the information, body language and gesture."

 T20 also said:

"نعم فهناك ورشات عمل تقد ها ديرية تربية محلية."

"Yes, there are workshops offered by the local education center."

 Also, T13 talked about the workshop that he attended and its impact on his teaching:

"نعم ثل تلك اتي تكون عن تقانة وأسا يب تدريس حديثة... في احدى مرات حضرت ورشة عمل عن وضعيات الجلوس في الصف و قد أهمني كلام مدرسين في اندوة كثيرا حيث ان هناك وضعيتا جلوس تناسب لاب بمستويات ختلفة وكذ ك تناسب أنشطة ختلفة. حا يا اتبع وضعيات جلوس ختلفة في فوفي."

"Yes, such as the ones on technology and the modern method of teaching…. once I attended a workshop on the class seating arrangements and the teachers' talks at the workshop greatly inspired me that there are two seating arrangements that suit students with different levels and also suit different activities. Now, I have different seating arrangements in my classes."

On the other hand, teachers teaching in the countryside expressed a different view:

"لا�م احضر ورشات عمل و�ذ�ك بسبب عدم توفرها وانعقادها في�نا�قنا�ريفية فهي عادة تقتصر على�مدن�البعيدة فلا نحضرها�بعد�المسافة. بالاضافة�الى�الظروف�الراهنة في سورية و�التي تحد�من�السفر�مسافات �ويلة�مثل ذ�ك�المكان."

"no, I did not attend workshops, because they are not available or held in our countryside places, they are usually available in the distant city, so we do not attend due to the long distance, and in addition due to the current conditions in Syria which affect traveling long distances to that place." (T12)

Regarding the places of the workshops, nine of these teachers said during the interview that they attended workshops while teaching at Syrian state secondary schools. By contrast, one teacher said that she attended workshops at Syrian private secondary schools. On the other hand, three teachers said that they attended workshops held while studying at university level.

Moreover, the majority of these thirteen teachers (ten teachers) said that it was something imposed by other stakeholders whereas three teachers said that it was something self-chosen at the university level.

Workshops are one of the most common, powerful and useful forms of PD activities for teachers (Richards, Gallo and Renandya, 2001; Richards and Farrell, 2005; Farrell, 2008). As stressed by Richards and Farrell (2005), workshops take teachers out of the classroom to forums where they can share problems and concerns with colleagues or teachers from different schools and motivate them to share their experiences and ideas with colleagues.

5.3.9 Staff room talk

It is noticeable that the majority of teachers (18T) said that they shared their experiences, views and ideas in the staff room regarding different issues to TM or indeed PD itself. Clearly, most of these teachers expressed the view that sharing their views, ideas and experiences in the staff room was part of their everyday habit at school. Indeed, the majority of teaches used words such as "very often", "almost every day", "often", "always" "very much" to refer to frequency of their talk in the staff room which could be a positive indication of the importance of such a strategy.

They also gave examples of the issues they discussed. For example, T8 said:

"نعم غالبا جدا. اطلب من المدرسين ان كان بالإمكاني حضور دروسهم ومراقبة تدريسهم."

"Yes, very often. I ask teachers if I may attend their classes and observe them teaching."

On the other hand, T9 said:

نعم غالبا انقوم بذلك. كنا نقترح أفكار للتعامل مع الطلاب العنيدين أو مثلا كيفية تبسيط فكرة للطلاب أو قد نتحدث عن أي
أمور أخرى تتعلق بالمدرسين, التدريس أو الطلاب أو كيفية حل مشكلة معينة."

"Yes, we often do that. We were suggesting ideas for dealing with stubborn students, or for example how to simplify an idea for students or we may talk on any other issues related to teachers, teaching or students or how to solve a certain problem."

T11 added that they were:

"الطلب من أولياء الأمور بالحضور أواقتراح مصادر مفيدة على الانترنت. "

"asking for parents to come, or suggesting useful online websites."

Also, T18 gave some examples:

"قد نتحدث عن أسلوب بسيط لجعل الطلاب يفهموا الأزمنة أو كيفية التعامل مع الطلاب ذوي المستوى الضعيف أو
المهملين."

"we may talk about a simple way to make students understand the tenses or how to deal with low-achieving and careless students."

This goes in accordance with what many researchers have argued, that PD activities that meaningfully engage teachers in sustained inquiry with colleagues are likely to support continued teacher learning in and from practice over time, implementation of ambitious instruction, and engagement of students in high-level learning (Martin et al, 2014).

Moreover, T12 identified who usually gave the advice:

"ان المدرسين القدامى ذوي الخبرة هم من يعطون النصائح . عادة ما تكون تلك النصائح مفيدة وخاصة للمدرسين الجدد.
أتذكر ان مدرس خمسيني نصحنا بأن نقوم بحفظ أسماء جميع الطلاب وليس فقط أسماء المتفوقين وذلك لتحسين ادائهم
وتعزيز الثقة بانفسهم."

"the old experienced teachers are the ones who give pieces of advice and usually those pieces of advice are useful especially for novice teachers. I remember that a teacher in his fifties advised us to memorize all the students' names and not only those of the outstanding ones, so as to improve themselves and increase their self-confidence."

In sharp contrast, teachers in the countryside shed light on their worse situation. For example, T5 said:

"كن قليلا جدا حيث أنه في كل المدارس كنا فقط ثلاثة مدرسين أنا ومدرسين اثنين وكان مستواهم أضعف من مستواي. وسوء الحظ أنا كنت أسأل المدرسين عن رأيهم ولكن سوء الحظ كان وضعهم أسوأ مني."

"but very few, as in the whole school we were only three teachers me and two other teachers whose level is lower than mine. Unfortunately, I was asking for teachers' opinions, but unfortunately their situation was worse than mine."

Likewise, T4 expressed a very similar view:

"ان في معظم المدارس التي درست فيها كنت الاكثر خبرة من المدرسين البقية وكانوا يلجأون الي ويستشيروني."

"In the majority of schools where I taught, I was more experienced than the other teachers and they were resorting to me and consulting me."

All these teachers said that sharing ideas, experiences and views in the staff room was something that they did at present. It was not something that only happened in the past and no longer happened. Probably, sharing ideas and views in the classroom was a continuous process that they would not stop doing it and that they would continue to do it in the future. It is perhaps the most readily available and easy to implement form of TPD, not requiring any special arrangements like observation or courses etc.

Regarding the place, all of these teachers said that they shared ideas, feelings, and experiences in the staffrooms of Syrian state secondary schools. Surprisingly, only one of them (T4) said that he exchanged ideas and experiences in the staff room at a private language institute. None of them mentioned sharing ideas in the staff room in private secondary schools. Probably, this is due to the fact that the majority of teachers who are chosen to teach at such places are characterized by being distinguished, well-qualified, trained, confident or probably experienced ones.

Also, all these teachers reported that it was something self-chosen and no one else urged them to do it. This implies perhaps that the authorities do not actually recognize that it constitutes a valuable form of TPD at all, they just think of courses and training and observation by a supervisor as TPD.

5.3.10 Cooperative/ collaborative teaching

Exactly half the number of the teachers interviewed (10T) stated that they experienced a cooperative type of teaching at some point during their career as teachers. Concerning the period when some cooperative type of teaching was conducted, it is important to highlight that T15 was the only one who claimed to be teaching cooperatively at the time when the interview took place. By contrast, all the other nine teachers said that they only experienced a cooperative type of teaching in the past which meant that it was something that was no longer used at the time when the interviews were carried out.

The majority of teachers experienced cooperative type of teaching in places other than state schools, this could be due to what some of the teachers such as T10, T12, T14, and T18 expressed. For instance, T14 said:

<div dir="rtl">

"لا. بسبب ⬜بيعة نظام⬜مدرسة , كل⬜درس يعطي درسه."

</div>

"No because of the nature of the school system, every teacher gives his own lesson." This means that in SS it is not allowed to give lessons jointly.

On the other hand, other teachers experienced cooperative teaching in various places. For instance, T4 and T16 experienced it as part of training. T4 said:

<div dir="rtl">

"با⬜نسبة⬜لمدرسة⬜خا ⬜ة كانت هناك أنسة أعطت⬜قسم⬜نظري⬜ن⬜درس وأنا اعطيت⬜قسم⬜عملي . كان نوع⬜ن ⬜تدريب قبل⬜باشرة عملي و⬜مدة أسبوع."

</div>

"concerning the private school, there was a teacher who gave the theoretical part of the lesson and I gave the practical part, it was a matter of training before starting my job and for one week." Also, T16 said:

"ان التدريس التعاوني هو مفيد جدا و ممتع خلال ورشات العمل."

"cooperative type of teaching is very useful and interesting in workshops."

So, when they (practitioners) work collaboratively, they develop shared maps: these maps become what Schon calls "theories in use" that they apply to their work. Cooperation with colleagues will offer "hope to others wishing to break out of the shells of isolation separating teachers from their colleagues as well as from teacher educators," (Oprandy, Golden and Shiomi, 1999:5). Collaboration with colleagues will provide a non-threatening environment in which teachers can develop new knowledge and skills and gain supportive feedback from peers (Atay, 2008).

Also, some of the teachers expressed their opinions and feelings towards it. For instance, T5 who experienced it during his university studies said:

"ان التدريس التعاوني يعتمد على عدد المدرسين. عندما اعطيت حلقة بحث مع زميلي كان أمرا جيدا فالتفاعل وتبادل الأراء يكون افضل بين المدرسين وبين الطلاب فأحدنا يعطي الدرس والأخر ينظم المشاركات أو أي شيء ثاني. سواء كان هناك projector أو أي نوع من التكنولوجيا في الدرس. كل منا يدرس و لكن بدوره. و لكن عندما كان هناك اربعة مدرسين اعتبر ان النتائج سلبية. هذا يسبب تشتت الطلاب وخصوصا ان كانت مستويات الطلاب المقدمين presenters من مستويات متفاوتة قد يكون اعطاء المدرس الأول ممتاز والثاني ممل فيفقد الطلاب اهتمامه"

"Cooperative teaching depends on the number of teachers. When I gave a connective presentation with one colleague, it was good. Interaction and exchange of opinions would be better between teachers and students if one of us delivers the lesson and the other organizes participation or something else such as a projector or any type of technology used in the lesson. Both of us teach but each in turn. However, when there were four teachers I consider the outcome as negative. This may distract students' attention especially if the level of the presenting students is different: the first teacher may have excellent or interesting delivery whereas the second one could be boring and the students may no longer pay attention."

Here the teacher referred to micro teaching a real English lesson, but to fellow trainees at university.

Concerning the place, three teachers (T16, T17, T20) claimed to have engaged in co-operative teaching at Syrian state secondary schools. By contrast, only one teacher (T4) taught cooperatively at a Syrian private secondary school. Moreover, four teachers (T1, T2, T5, and

T6) mentioned that they only practiced cooperative teaching during their undergraduate study at the university level. Also, T15 stated that she taught cooperatively at a private language institute.

Also, seven teachers said that it was something imposed whereas only three teachers stated that it was self-chosen. In particular, those who experienced it during their undergraduate study or during teaching at private school said it was something imposed by lecturers, head teachers, etc. rather than spontaneously chosen to improve one's own self.

5.3.11 Parents' Evening

The majority of teachers 12T reported that they obligatorily had parents' evenings at the Syrian schools where they were teaching. As they stated during the interview, holding parents' evenings was something which took place maybe twice or at least once a year, depending on the school system/ discipline. Such meetings, as mentioned by teachers, open channels of discussion between parents, teachers as well as the school head teachers to discuss and share ideas, receive suggestions, comments and feedback to further improve students' learning, teachers' performance, personality and the school level.

For instance, T9 said:

"نعم , نعقد أمسيات مع أولياء الأمور كل فصل مرة ويتم تبادل الاراء مع الاهل والاستماع الى مقترحاتهم وكذلك مناقشة مستوى الطلاب أو حتى أحيانا نقيم تكريم للطلبة الاوائل وبحضور الاباء ويكون أمام الزملاء."

"Yes, we hold parents evening once every term. We exchange opinions with parents and we listen to their suggestions and we discuss issues related to students' level and we may sometimes celebrate distinguished students in the presence of their parents and colleagues."
Similarly, T14 said:

"عادة ما نناقش أمور تتعلق بالطلاب ومشاكلهم واحتياجاتهم. واقتراحات أولياء الأمور بخصوص بعض المدرسين الايجابي منها والسلبي."

"We usually discuss issues related to students, their problems, needs and parents' suggestions about some teachers both positive and negative."

Probably the main focus of such evenings is students. In this way, there is strong evidence that the main focus is on students rather than teachers, which may be regarded not enough source of TPD.

Again, the situation in the countryside is different where such evenings are almost unavailable, T5 stressed the idea that:

<div dir="rtl">"لا غير وجود في ريف. ريف وضع سيء في دارس ريف حتى قبل الاحداث في سورية."</div>

"It is not available at the countryside. The situation is bad in the schools in the countryside. Even before the start of the problems in Syria." Similarly, T8 stated:

<div dir="rtl">"لا أبدا. ان ريف همل بينما وضع في مدينة أفضل بكثير."</div>

"honestly never, the countryside is neglected whereas the situation in the city is much better."

Regarding the issues of time and place, almost all of the city teachers (11 teachers out of 12) claimed that they attended parents-teacher evenings frequently. They took place regularly at the time when the interviews were conducted. By contrast, only one teacher (T4) who had teaching experience at a Syrian private secondary school reported that parents-evenings were something that took place in the past, but were no longer taking place at the time when the interview was conducted.

5.3.12 Watching TV

Surprisingly, almost all teachers interviewed denied that they watched TV as a source of enhancing their own PD. Only, one teacher, T10 believed that watching TV is a good means for improving himself and his PD as a teacher of English in Syrian secondary school. He said that he chose to watch the Egyptian Educational channel where there are lots of workshops, model lessons and other programmes for teachers. T10 stated the idea that he kept watching T.V at "present" the time when his interview was conducted. However, the current conditions in Syria has greatly affected watching it.

Maybe the teachers did not think of watching English language TV even just as a way to improve their own English, as being a form of TPD. Another possible reason, is that the majority of teachers seemed to follow online sources to improve their own TPD (see section 5.3.15).

5.3.13 Training courses

The majority of teachers interviewed (18T out of 20T) declared during the interview that they had followed some kind of training during their profession as teachers. It is important to draw the readers' attention to the fact that the majority of them referred to in-service type of teacher training, rather than a course dedicated just to PRESET. In Syria, teachers are allowed to start the profession of teaching once they graduate, teachers are not obliged to follow any kind of pre-service teacher training. This goes against what was noted by Sevtap (2011), that it has become compulsory for teachers, in many countries, to have professional teaching practice, and theoretical knowledge alone is no longer considered sufficient in the teaching field.

Almost all the teachers reported that the training was something that took place in the past, and only one teacher declared that the training is something current that took place when the interview was conducted, probably due to the disruption in the country.

The teachers reported following various kinds of in-service training with different purposes including training on the international computer driving license (ICDL), integrating technology into education (ITE), teacher training abroad, teacher training at language institutes, and teachers' diploma in education. Obviously, teachers talked about different types of training experiences and due to limitations of space I will only mention the main ones here. For example, T17 described the training that she followed on teaching English:

"قد اتبعت دورة تدريبية أقامتها ديرية التربية المحلية بدير الزور واستمرت مدة ثلاثة أيام قد كان التدريب يخص الطرق والاساليب والاستراتيجيات الحديثة في التدريس واتباع طرق تدريسية جديدة من شأنها رفع مستوى التعليم ونقل حور العملية التعليمية من المعلم الى المتعلم وتدعى دورة المناهج."

"I followed a training course that was offered by the local education center in Deir-Ezzor, it lasted for three days. The training was on modern methods, means and strategies of teaching and following new teaching methods that would improve the level of education and moving

the core of the educational process from the teachers to the learners. It was called training on the syllabus."

On the other hand, T15 talked about a different kind of training:

"اتبعت دورة عن دمج التكنولوجيا بالتعليم كانت مدة أسبوعين. بشكل عام كان التدريب عن كيفية تطبيق أحدث الوسائل التقنية في التعليم لان هذا سينعكس ايجابا على الطلاب ... وكانت النتائج رائعة."

"I followed training on integrating technology into education for two weeks. Generally, the training was on how to apply the most modern technological methods in teaching as this will have a positive impact on students…and the outcomes were wonderful."

In general, as T14 said, one of the aims of the training is to:

"من أجل تجنب الاعتماد على طرق تدريس تقليدية."

"to avoid depending on traditional teaching methods."

Another type of training was as highlighted by T13 who talked about a teachers' diploma in education:

"كان تركيز هذا الدبلوم هو تدريب مدرسي المواد المختلفة على كيفية التعامل مع الطلاب و الصفوف المختلفة. وكذلك يقدم هذا course للطلاب theoretical foundation مثل نظريات التعلم والتدريس واعطينا دروس عملية في المدارس بحضور الزملاء والمشرف ثم حصلنا على feedback منهم."

"it focuses on training teachers of different subjects about how to deal with students and different classes and this course offers theoretical foundations such as theories of learning and teaching and we give practical lessons at schools with the presence of colleagues and supervisor and then get feedback from them."

An important finding concerns the training related to teachers in the countryside. Some of the teachers talked about the unavailability of training courses in the countryside as indicated by T6 and T8. For instance, T8 justified her inability to follow training courses by stating:

"وبصراحة الأوضاع أقصد وضعي لأنني أعيش في الريف وان وجد مثل هذا التدريب فسيتوفر في المركز المدينة فاجد صعوبة بالتنقلات. المسافة طويلة تصل الى 3 ساعات لذلك اعتمدت على نفسي."

"to be honest the conditions, I mean my condition because I live at the countryside, and if there is any such training, it would be at the city center, and I find difficulty with transportation … it is a long distance could be for three hours. Therefore, I depended on myself."

T4 also talked about lack of training courses in the countryside, however also claimed that if anything is available nearby, it would not be suitable:

"قد اتبعت دورة تدريبية مدة أسبوع قدمة من قبل ديرية التربية المحلية كان التدريب في ديرية التربية المحلية بأقرب من الريف قد كان التدريب ذو مستوى ضعيف لم يضف لي اهو جديد, لأن المعلومات كانت تعطى بالغة العربية والمعلومات التي أخذناها في الجامعة كانت أفضل.أي طالب درس مادة طرائق التدريس في السنة الرابعة لن يحتاج مثل هذا التدريب. بالفعل لم يضف لي كثير من المعلومات. كان نظري وكنا فقط مستمعين."

"I followed a one-week training course offered by the Local Education Center, the training was in the Local Education Center near the countryside area. The training was of a low level; it did not add anything new, because the information was delivered in Arabic and the information that we got at university was better. Any student who studied the subject of teaching method in the fourth year would not need such a training; it really did not add lots of information. It was only theoretical and we were listeners."

The training took place in different settings ranging from university (nine teachers including T9), Syrian state secondary schools (5 teachers), Syrian language institutes (2 teacher), to special teacher training and qualification centers (3 teachers including T9).

Moreover, a good number of teachers said that they decided to follow the training by themselves (11 teachers). By contrast, eight teachers said that the training was imposed by other stakeholders. One teacher (T9) said that he followed two kinds of training during his career as teacher of English; one of the courses was imposed while the other was self-chosen.

Britten (1988:5) suggests that: "since in practice working teachers seldom have the kind of peer group support which they usually find helpful in training courses, training should help to prepare teachers, as trainees, to make their own decision and adjustments, and to be better equipped to support themselves after the training." This voices what one of the teachers said when he referred to presentations at university as a form of training that greatly helped him:

"بالاضافة الى أن حلقات البحث التي كنا نقوم بها على مدى أربع سنوات ساهمت في اعطاءنا الجرأة والثقة بالنفس والوقوف أمام الطلاب وأيضا ساعدتنا في التحضير للدروس."

"In addition, presentations which we were presenting during the fourth year helped and gave us courage and self-confidence to stand in front of students and helped us in preparing for the lessons." (T1)

The teachers could not report taking any PRESET course since none was available in Syria when they were preparing to teach. This contrasts with views I reported in ch2 that one of the main conditions to be met if learners are to successfully learn a second language is that teachers must be adequately trained beforehand, and with hands on experience (Enever, Moon & Raman, 2009; Emery, 2012). In some countries, teachers are obliged to follow certain PRESET courses. In others, it is up to the teacher to undertake training courses or not. Unfortunately, some countries do not even consider providing such courses. Hence, teachers referred to following INSET and as stressed by Harmer (2007), it is teachers' responsibility to improve their theoretical and practical skills to avoid being "stale".

5.3.14 Attending conferences

Notably, and as table 5.3 shows, none of the teachers stated that they had ever attended any conference. As indicated by them, this is due to the fact that most of these conferences take place in the capital city of Damascus and each journey from the city of Deir-Ezzor (where the study took place) to Damascus takes almost five-six hours by bus or car, which also may not really be safe journey these days for teachers. Hence, it would be both time consuming and costly for teachers to attend such conferences, especially when considering the already demanding nature of their job as well as their work load. For instance, T5 said:

"لا ولكنها توفرة في دمشق."

"no, but they are available in Damascus." Likewise, T6 expressed a similar view:

"أن مثل هذه الانشطة غير توفرة... يعاني الريف من نقص مثل هذه الأنشطة."

"such activities are not available.... the countryside suffers from the lack of such activities."

5.3.15 Using the internet

There were two main ways whereby the teachers made use of the internet to serve to improve their own development: as a source of information from more knowledgeable sources (surfing websites, sometimes from within Facebook) and as a means of communication with peers (Facebook and WhatsApp).

A. Surfing internet websites for relevant information:

Table 5.3 shows that all these twenty teachers resorted to surfing the internet and looking at websites as a good source of teacher development. All these teachers said that this strategy is something that they resorted to at the time when the interviews were conducted. None of these teachers said that checking information and websites was adopted only in the past. It was something they applied in past, at present and they will continue doing it in the future. It is a continuous process. Furthermore, all of these teachers said that it was something they chose to pursue by themselves.

Concerning the place where they were conducting this strategy, teachers varied in their responses and said that they adopted it whenever and wherever an opportunity arose: at home, school, university, internet coffee shop... etc.

The majority of teachers were interested in surfing the internet as a means of self-improvement. For instance, T6 gave some examples:

"ﺜﻞe-learningﺜ ﺗﺎﺑﻌﺔ ﺑﺮاﺟ و ﺎﺋﻘﯿﺔ ﻣﺘﻌﻠﻘﺔ ﺑﺘﻌﻠﻢ اﻟﻐﺔ ﺜﻞeconomic English Business English,

English for starters, English for doctors, YouTube."

"e-learning, watching documentary programs on teaching English such as business English, economic English, English for starters, English for doctors and You tube."

T9, similar to T11, gave the purpose:

"ﺎﺑﺤﺚ ﻋﻦ ﺮق واﺳﺘﺮاﺗﯿﺠﯿﺎت ﺣﺪﯾﺜﺔ ﻟﺘﺪرﯾﺲ ن ﺧﻼل اﻻﻧﺘﺮﻧﺖ. اﺳﺘﺨﺪام اﻻﻧﺘﺮﻧﺖ ﻻ ﻼع ﻋﻠﻰ ﺎﻫﻮ ﺟﺪﯾﺪ ﺗﻄﻮﯾﺮ
ﺗﺪرﯾﺲ."

"to look for modern strategies and methods of teaching through the internet: I use the internet to be updated on what is new to improve my teaching."

On the other hand, experienced teachers may be less keen to use the internet for TPD: T10 who is an experienced teacher said that he "rarely" did so. Actually, teachers in the countryside showed a great deal of interest and depended a lot on the internet for improvement, perhaps due to lack of other TPD resources T4 said:

"المصدر الوحيد للأفكار التي ابحث عنها هو You Tube . أشاهد بعض دروس مدرسين خبيرين أو ا بحث عن كيفية معالجة فكرة عن طريق Google أو واقع و وقة . قد استفدت كثير من الأفكار ثم أقوم بتعديلها حسب context تدريس ودائما كنت أبحث عن أور تزيد من تفاعل طلاب."

"the only resource for information is YouTube, I watch some lessons of experienced teachers or I look for the way for dealing with an issue by searching Google or other trustworthy websites. I benefited from lots of the ideas and then I adopt them according to my teaching context and I was always looking for things that increase students' interaction." Likewise, T12 said:

"نعم أحاول أن أطور نفسي كمدرس من خلال متابعة مقاطع فيديو لمدرسين مختصين بتعليم اللغة الانكليزية. وأنا اتابع موقع تعليمي يدعى Engvid وذلك يجعلني اتعلم منهم أسلوبهم الشيق في الشرح والكلام وتوزيع الأفكار ."

"I try to improve myself as a teacher by watching videos of experienced teachers of English… I watch an educational website called Eng Vid where I can learn from them their interesting methods of explanation, talk and organizing ideas."

T8 expressed how the internet could be a source of unanticipated ideas:

"بصراحة عندما ادخل الانترنت اشعر بانه سلسلة شيء يقود الى شيء ثاني. هناك مواقع عن creative ideas, teaching methods,. في بعض الأحيان توحي لي مشاهدة الافلام بفكرة معينة مثلا هناك فيلم أحبه كثير ا اسمه Monalisa Smile هي كانت مدرسة ولها اسلوب جديد كانت تدرس طلاب بشخصية قوية. استفدت من طريقة تعا لها مع الطلاب تحترم يهم و لكن بنفس الوقت كيف تسيطرين على المدرس وتعطيهم الأفكار."

"Honestly, when I surf the internet I feel it is like a series of related things, one thing leading to another. There are websites on teaching methods and creative ideas. Sometimes movies may inspire me with an idea. For example, there is a film I liked very much called "Mona Lisa Smile": she was a teacher who had a new technique; she was teaching students with a strong

personality. I benefited from her way of dealing with the students, how to respect them, but at the same time how to have control over the lesson and how to deliver the ideas."

Also, some of the teachers talked about the impact of internet on them as teachers. For example, T5 admitted:

"نعم ا‌لعت على الانترنت وذ‌ك بعد‌رحلة‌تدريس وأحسست بالاخطاء‌اتي ارتكبتها خلال‌رحلة‌تدريس."

"Yes, I surfed the internet after starting teaching and I recognized the mistakes that I committed during teaching." T16 on the other hand felt a positive impact:

"‌ن خلال‌ابحث في الانترنت أ‌بحت أحب‌هنة‌تدريس وأ‌بحت‌بدعا حيث أ‌بحت‌درسا‌شهورا."

"Through surfing the internet, I started to love the profession of teaching and become creative until I became a well-known teacher."

B. Using WhatsApp and Facebook:

This includes the modern use of the internet for interaction and social networking. Surprisingly, all the teachers interviewed (20T), stated during the interview that they depended on WhatsApp the messaging software or/and Facebook as a source of enhancing their own 7PD and/or their teaching methods. Interestingly, all of these teachers stressed that they used this strategy "currently". None of these teachers said that it was something done in the past and that she/he no longer did it, most probably due to the recently, the sense of interest and benefit of these facilities.

For instance, T8 talked about two means of improvement. One involved Facebook:

"هناك‌وقع على‌افيس بوك وفي كل فترة ينشرون فكرة‌عينة عن أسلوب في اعطاء‌ادرس. بصراحة لأركز على اسم ‌اموقع بل على فكرة‌عينة اكتبها وأبحث عن‌علو‌ات أكثر."

"there is a Facebook website which always posts a certain idea on a method of delivering a lesson, honestly I do not focus on the name of the website, but rather on a certain idea, I write it down and search for more information." She also talked about WhatsApp:

"وجايا قام أحد‌ا‌ز‌لاء بانشاء‌جموعة Whats Up اسمها only English وتعتمد على نفس‌ا‌مبدأ‌ا‌سابق نناقش افكار بالانكليزي‌ثلا‌درس ‌لب اقتراحات‌تزين‌ا‌صف, ‌ور, اقتراحات أخرى..‌ا‌خ"

"Currently, one of my colleagues initiated a WhatsApp group called *Only English* and it is based on the same mentioned principle, to discuss ideas in English. For instance, one of the teachers asked for help with ideas on classroom decoration, posters, and suggestions...etc."

Similarly, T5 talked about Facebook. T5 said:

"اⵏمتاح هوⵏطⵏاعة الانترنت هناكⵏواقع يقوم فيهاⵏدرسون خبيرون ببعضⵏانصائحⵏعاⵏةⵏثلا ⵏفحات Facebook ⵏلمدرسين professional teachers أو ⵏفحات شخصيةⵏمدرسين."

"What is available is surfing the internet; there are websites where experienced teachers offer some general pieces of advice. For example, Facebook pages for teachers. Professional teachers' or personal web pages of teachers."

Regarding whether using Facebook and WhatsApp was something self-chosen or imposed/urged by other outside agencies, all these twenty teachers said that it was something they chose by themselves no one else asked them to do it.

Concerning the place where they were doing it, teachers stated different places where they were making use of the internet to improve their own PD. These places could either be the internet café, teachers' own home, at university or even at the school, or by using their own mobile phones, whenever and wherever they have access to the internet.

5.3.16 Consulting students for feedback

From table 5.3 it is clear that only four teachers declared during the interview that they consulted their own students for their feedback (T4, T5, T6, and T12) as a source of teacher development. Concerning the time when this strategy was adopted, two teachers (T4 and T5) said that it took place in the past only whereas two teachers said that they still consult students for their feedback at the time when the interview was conducted. The typical reply of teachers for not asking students for their opinions was as indicated by T13:

"لاⵏⵏم يخطر بⵏاⵏيⵏسبقا."

"no, it did not come to my mind before."

Surprisingly, two of the countryside teachers adopted this strategy to improve themselves, maybe due to a lack of other TPD resources being available. T12 pointed out:

"نعم أعمل باستمرار على معرفة ارائهم سواء كان خلال الحصة التدريسية أ وأحيانا كنت أقوم بتخصيص حصية درسية في منتصف الفصل الاستماع الى أراء الطلاب بخصو رق واستراتيجيات التدريس."

"I always work on finding out students' opinions whether during the class or sometimes I allocate one teaching class at the middle of the term to consult students' opinions on teaching methods and strategies." T5 also stated:

" قد كان تدريسي خلال الفصل الأول أساوي و كن أحد الطلاب كان من أقاربي وهو تميز فسأته عن رأيه. كان ن مفروض أن أسأ ه بعد كل درس و كن م يخطر ببا ي كن خطر ببا ي أن أسأ ه بنهاية الفصل وذ ك عن أ عب و أسهل الأشياء خلال تدريسي. و ا أخبرني به ساعدني على تطوير نفسي في الفصل الثاني."

"my teaching during the first term was tragic, but one of my students was my relative and he was an outstanding student and I asked for his opinion. I should have asked for his opinion after every lesson, but it did not come to my mind. But it came to my mind to ask him at the end of the term what were the difficult and easy things during my teaching period. What he told me benefited me to improve myself in the second term."

And when asked about an example, T5 said:

" ريقة الكتابة على السبورة. ثلا كنت أكتب أ ثلة كثيرة حو اي خمسة أ ثلة عن الفكرة الواحدة فنصحني أن أكتب ثالا أو ثا ين فقط."

"The way I write on the board, for example, I was writing lots of examples on the board about five examples for every idea and he advised me to write only one or two."

In addition, all these four teachers said that they chose and decided to ask for their students' feedback by themselves. They were not asked nor urged by someone else to ask for their students' feedback and comments. Concerning the place where these students asked for their students' feedback, table 5.3 clearly displays the fact that two teachers (T5 and T12) said that they applied this strategy at the Syrian state secondary schools. By contrast the other two teachers consulted students for their feedback in places other than the Syrian state secondary schools; one teacher adopted this strategy at a Syrian private secondary school (T4), whereas the other teacher adopted that strategy at private classes of English at his own home (T6).

5.3.17 Summary of section 5.3

Overall, the teachers reported doing quite a lot that is not prompted from the outside, more than what was expected. Also, the data showed that background issues played a pivotal role with certain issues. For instance, teachers at the countryside reported depending more on self-chosen issues to improve themselves as teachers including online resources/ self-recording and this is due to the lack of other PD resources in the countryside. Even colleagues and head teachers were not necessarily seen as a good source of support for TPD. By contrast, there was clear evidence in the data that there were lots of thing available for teachers in the city, such as training, workshops, and unplanned classroom visits made by PD providers.

Moreover, novice teachers showed more interest in engaging with modern ideas through training, workshops, and higher studies, whereas experienced teachers may seem to resort to experience sometimes. In addition, the data showed clearly that some teachers depended on certain TPD activities (such as observation) when they first started teaching and after that they no longer did it which may also shed light on an important issue: the lack of preservice training which some teachers referred to. Also, teachers referred to obstacles that affected TPD such as the problems in Syria and issues of safety and distant travel.

There is also a general point that some TPD activities were disused due to teachers being unaware of them, eg recording lessons, and asking for students' feedback.

5.4RQ4: What types of professional development activities would the teachers ideally like to pursue? And what are the obstacles?

Table 5.4a Summary of teachers' responses relevant to RQ4

Things the teachers would like to follow ideally for TPD or which they think should be available	The place where the TPD would occur	The obstacle / Who or what is needed to facilitate it
Training courses on teaching methods. (1)	The British council and the American cultural institutes.	Problems in Syria
Pre-service training (1)	Teacher training and qualification center	In the hands of other stakeholders to make available
Continuous training (1)	Teacher training and qualification center	In the hands of other stakeholders to make available
Workshops (1)	Teacher training and qualification center	In the hands of other stakeholders to make available
Subject of Teaching methods in the first year at university (3)	At the university level for students whose major is English	In the hands of university to provide the course
Watch the Egyptian educational channel. (1)	At home	Problems in Syria
Higher academic studies at the universities (MA/ PhD). (2) MA in ESP (1)	Universities.	Lack of time, money Unavailable in Syria

Diploma in neuro-linguistic programming. (1)	Illaf Train the HR development leader, Damascus	Travel distance, expense
More TPD activities in the countryside (3)	Schools and Teacher training and qualification centres.	In the hands of other stakeholders to make available
Benefit from a PD provider in every school	State schools	In the hands of other stakeholders to provide
Consult experienced teachers. (1)	State schools	Lack of time
Transfer the TPD experiences of the private schools to state ones. (2)	State schools	In the hands of other stakeholders
Observe Syrian colleagues and colleagues with different nationalities and experiences teaching	State schools	Lack of time Unavailability of Teachers with different nationalities
Research on more teachers concerning the issue of TPD in the context.	State schools	In the hands of decision makers to support such research
Integrate technology into education. (2)	State schools	In the hands of decision makers
Travel abroad (2)	Foreign countries	Expense, problems in Syria
Audio-video record lessons. (1)	State schools	Teachers own choice and lack of equipment
Work on improving themselves as teachers. (3)	State schools	Teacher's own choice

Table 5.4b Summary of other stakeholders' responses relevant to RQ4, suggestions for TPD to be done ideally.

Suggestions about TPD to be done by teachers ideally. These could have been suggested also by the teachers, and in the starred instances they were	The obstacle / Who or what is needed to facilitate it
*Watch the educational and satellite channels (1)	Problems in Syria
*Travel abroad (2)	Expense/problems in Syria
*Continuous training courses (6)	Other stakeholders
*Workshops (1)	Other stakeholders
*Pursue higher academic studies (MA/PhD) (2)	Lack of time, money
*TPD activities in the countryside (1)	Other stakeholders
*Exchange ideas among teachers (2)	Teachers
*Work on improving themselves as teachers (2)	Teachers
*Consult qualified staff members concerned with TPD (1)	Other stakeholders
Conferences/seminars/ forums (3)	Other stakeholders
*Create cooperative /collective teaching environment (4)	Teachers
Suggestions concerning what the respondent thinks other stakeholders should do/provide to support TPD in general	
Increasing teachers' awareness of TPD (2)	Other stakeholders
Consideration of teachers' need and individual differences	Other stakeholders
Attracting good students to the profession of teaching (2)	Other stakeholders
Adopting the reward and punishment technique (6)	Other stakeholders

In this section, I will present the findings related to the fourth research question so as to shed light on the types of PD activities which teachers would like to have ideally in the context of the study (the city of Deir-Ezzor and nearby countryside). I also cover the obstacles affecting them, which correspond to the people or circumstances which would facilitate them, if altered. Answers which I obtained in effect reveal something of the participants' attitudes to different

kinds of TPD activities, since what they ask for is presumably what they see as valuable. Also, where necessary comparison/contrast will be drawn with other stakeholders' data relevant to these issues, showing some points of similarities and difference between teachers and other stakeholders.

The findings are summarized in table 5.4a for the things that teachers said they wish to have ideally. The table also includes further details on where the desired TPD would occur and the current obstacles to it, which of course might become facilitating features if the relevant circumstances and people changed. Table 5.4b shows the parallel information from the other stakeholders, and shows that almost everything they mentioned which might reasonably have been suggested by the teachers themselves was in fact also suggested by the stakeholders themselves, which indicates that they think to some extent along the same lines. There were however some things suggested by the teachers which did not come to the mind of any of the other stakeholders and a few ideas of the other stakeholders which were directly about their own role rather than what the teachers might want.

Among the different TPD ideas in tables 5.4a and 5.4b I identified three general types which I use to organise the interpretation of the information in more depth in the following sections. Many teachers sought some kind of training from TPD providers in authority, whereas some teachers refer seemingly to some sort of input from other teachers, while others refer to teacher self-improvement. So, it is also the case with stakeholders.

5.4.1 TPD as offered from professionals

Looking first at the ideas involving training by some kind of professionals, we can see that many of the teachers talked about a range of kinds of outside training, workshops and other resources that they wish to exploit ideally as a source of TPD. This showed itself in the following ways.

- A wish to follow training courses on teaching methods at the British council as well as the American cultural institute which are both based in Damascus. T1 clearly expressed:

"أرغب باتباع دورات في ⬚رائق⬚تدريس و⬚اتي تقدم⬚ن قبل أساتذة نا⬚قين با⬚لغة الانكليزية. و⬚اتي تقام في⬚ا مراكز⬚ثقافية ⬚ثل⬚ا مركز⬚ثقافي⬚ا بريطاني أو الأ⬚ريكي وهي دورات خا ⬚ة⬚لمدرسين."

"I would like to follow training courses on teaching methods which are delivered by native speakers of English at cultural councils such as the British and the American cultural councils. These are special training courses for teachers."

This is something self-chosen not recommended/imposed by other stakeholders. Attending such a course could be a good opportunity for teachers to improve themselves and their professional skills by observing a native speaker of English teaching and reflecting on it. The teachers may also benefit from the way technology is being integrated during the training courses or they may get some pieces of advice and the best websites to go for helpful teaching tips or other professional issues.

- Pre-service training should be provided by MoE for teachers just after graduation and before starting with the profession of teaching. In fact, teachers in Syria can start teaching just after graduation which could be challenging for some teachers who may not really be fully prepared for the realities of the classroom, nor professionally well-prepared. T5 emphasized his wish by declaring that:

"أتمنى أن يتوفر بعد التخرج دورات تدريبية بحيث وكان المدرس لديه نقا ط ضعف خلال الجا معة سيكون با كانه تعويض النقص باتباع مثل هذه الدورات. نأمل بشدة ان تتوفر مثل هذه الدورات."

"I wish that after graduation there will be training courses available for teachers to follow. So, if the teacher had some points of weakness during his undergraduate study, he will be able to make up for that lack by following such training courses. We do hope that such training courses will be available."

In this way, he did not suggest they should be obligatory, but a choice of the teacher.

- The availability of continuing training courses. Some of the teachers believed that training should be available for teachers throughout their careers as teachers, not just once every couple of years. For example, T7 stated that:

"أتمنى أن يخضع المدرسون لدورات مستمرة لا طلاعهم على ماهو جديد حتى لو كان المدرس الأول على دفعته سيتراجع مستواه ولا هكذا دورات. مثلا نحن في دراستنا ماجستير الترجمة دائما يطلعوننا على الكلمات الجديدة التي اضيفت مؤخرا للقا موس. وبا لمثل يكون المدرس على ا طلاع بـtechnique جديدة تطبق في أنحاء العام, كيف يطور جا ه ويطور غيره لأن المدرس يبني جيل."

"I wish teachers follow continuous training courses that will update them on all that is new, even if the teacher was rated the first one of his colleagues during his undergraduate study, his level will deteriorate if there are no such training courses. For example, in our studies for Master's degree in translation, we are always updated on new words that were recently added to the dictionary. Likewise, for teaching, teachers should be updated on the new techniques that are applied all over the world, how to improve himself and improve his students as the teacher builds a generation."

This idea may come from the fact that this teacher was doing her MA at the time when the interview was conducted with her. Similarly, T8 suggested the availability of:

"دورات تدريبية دائمة للمدرسين ثلما يتم تدريس طلاب يجب أن يتم تدريس مدرسين يكونوا درسين."

"continuous training courses for teachers, exactly as students are taught, teachers should be taught to be teachers."

In the same vein, some of the stakeholders also referred to the need for continuing training courses for teachers as indicated by S8:

"لابد ن وجود واستمرار دورات تدريبية و ندوات لانها تساعد على ذك وأن يكون تزام مدرسين بها بشكل جدي و تابع ن قبل مسؤ ين."

"Training courses and seminars should be available and continuous as they help that<TPD>. Teachers' commitment toward it should be serious and supervised by people in charge."

Similarly, S9 suggested:

"تكثيف دورات مستمرة لمدرسين و اهو جديد ن تطوير هني"

"Increasing the continuous courses for teachers and all that is new in professional development."

In fact, training courses and other externally provided TPD activities are not often available in the city of Deir-Ezzor; even in normal times they are not often available. Even when they are available in the context, stakeholders are usually selective in their choices for who to attend or follow the PD activities; selection of teachers could be based on their ages, experiences, schools …etc. So, most often, this is not a teacher's choice of TPD, rather he/she has to be

invited. For example, more experienced teachers may be chosen to follow or attend certain high level of training courses or workshops at the capital city of Damascus. By the completion of these TPD activities, they will be awarded certificates and can supervise novice teachers on certain TPD issues, not only at the schools where they work, but also at other different schools or at teachers' local training centers. On the other hand, novice teachers may be selected to follow training courses that are offered locally in the city where they teach at the local teacher training and qualification center that is available in every city.

-In this connection, some of the stakeholders mentioned the need to make available seminars, forums as well as conferences that are almost unavailable in the city of Deir-Ezzor. For Example, S7 expressed the need for:

" عقد ؤتمرات خا ة... اجراء حلقات بحث و نتديات لمدرسين."

"holding special conferences…. holding seminars and forums for teachers."

Also, S16 stressed that conferences need to be made available in the context of the study:

"أتمنى توافر ؤتمرات حلية وعا مية لمدرسين في دينة ديرا زور ثلهم ثل باقي محافظات كبرى حتى يتم ا لاعهم على كل اهو جديد و فيد في جال عملهم كمدرسين أو في جال وضوع ا تنمية ا مهنية لمدرسين."

"I wish that national and international conferences would be available for teachers in the city of Deir-Ezzor like those in the rest of big governorates in order to update them on all that is new and useful in their field of work as teachers or in the field of teacher professional development."

- A wish to attend workshops that are offered for teachers. This is more likely to be recommended, but not obligatory for teachers by other stakeholders. For instance, T15 wished:

"حضور ا كثير ن ورشات عمل لا لاع على كل اهو جديد. وتطبيق الأفكار ا جديدة هو اساس عمليهة تطوير أداء ا معلم."

"To attend lots of workshops ... to be updated on all that is new. …and applying new ideas is the basis of the process of development of teachers' performance."

This wish was also emphasized by stakeholders, S9 stated that:

"ان‮⁦‬متدربين‮⁦‬الذين خضعوا‮⁦‬دورات أو أي شكل‮⁦‬من أشكال‮⁦‬التنمية‮⁦‬المهنية خارج‮⁦‬قطر با‮⁦‬كانهم عقد ندوات أو ورشات عمل حيث يستطيعون نقل هذه‮⁦‬الخبرات وا‮⁦‬مهارات‮⁦‬الى ز‮⁦‬لائهم."

"Trainees who followed courses or any form of professional development outside the country can hold seminars or workshops where they can transfer these experiences and skills to their colleagues."

- The subject of teaching methods should be taught right from the first year for students who are studying at the department of English and who are expected to be teachers of English. In this way, they are suggesting here something that would be obligatory in these degree schemes, rather than a teacher choice. Although, students of English find the subject of teaching methods as a very useful and interesting subject, they study this subject only in the final year during their own undergraduate study. In fact, not only this teacher, but also many other teachers talked about this point at different occasions during the interviews. For example, T5 said:

" خلال‮⁦‬الدراسة‮⁦‬الجا‮⁦‬عية ان أهم‮⁦‬ادة كنا ندرسها أذا أخذنا بعين الاعتبار أن اغلب‮⁦‬الطلاب سيكونون‮⁦‬درسين هي‮⁦‬ادة ‮⁦‬رائق‮⁦‬التدريس ......‮⁦‬الطا‮⁦‬ب يدرس هذه‮⁦‬المادة فقط في‮⁦‬السنة‮⁦‬الدراسية‮⁦‬الرابعة."

"During university study, the most important subject that we studied especially when considering the fact that the majority of students will be teachers was the subject of teaching methods…. The student will only study this subject in his fourth year."

-In addition, some of the stakeholders, but not the teachers, talked about the importance of involving supervisors, e.g. S17:

"أتمنى قيام زيارات بشكل‮⁦‬تكرر‮⁦‬من قبل‮⁦‬الموجهين."

"I wish that there would be frequent visits by supervisors."

Another suggestion of a stakeholder, although not heard from teachers as well, concerned involving input to TPD not only from above, or from teachers themselves, but also, in a sense, from below. S15 suggested:

"واشراك أو‮⁦‬ياء الأ‮⁦‬ور وا‮⁦‬طلاب بشكل أو بأخر. فهي‮⁦‬يست‮⁦‬سؤ‮⁦‬ية‮⁦‬المدرسين فحسب حيث تتضافر‮⁦‬الجهود‮⁦‬من أجل‮⁦‬التغيير وا‮⁦‬تطور نحو الأفضل في‮⁦‬جال‮⁦‬العلم,‮⁦‬التعليم وا‮⁦‬لتنمية‮⁦‬المهنية‮⁦‬لمدرس. "

"the involvement of parents and students in one way or another. It is not only the responsibility of teachers to exert efforts for change and development towards the best in the field of knowledge, teaching and teacher professional development."

- A wish to watch the Egyptian educational channel at home (T10). There are usually seminars, workshops, model lessons, and many other things that are broadcasted on that channel which the teachers can reflect on and learn from. His idea is more likely to be a self-chosen one rather than as something imposed\recommended by other stakeholders. By referring to this teacher's background I can find out that he is an experienced teacher who is interested not only in TPD issues in Syria, but also in places abroad. This teacher demonstrates that for him pursuing TPD is a journey that should take place throughout the teachers' career, it is not something that the teachers should stop once the teachers becomes experienced.

Similarly, watching TV educational channel was also mentioned by other stakeholders, for example, S4 stated that a source of TPD should be:

"استخدام افضائيات و اقنوات اتي تبث برا ج تعليمية تعنى با معلمين."

"Making use of the satellite T.V and channels that broadcast educational programs concerned with teachers."

- A wish to pursue higher studies at university level, which of course is something self-chosen rather than something that is recommend by other stakeholders. They are not required to do that as teachers at the secondary school. However, teachers who consider pursuing their higher studies can upon graduation get better positions and can even teach English at the university and they will be well-paid. T11 said:

"أتمنى ان أكمل اتأهيل اعلمي و اتابعة دراسات عليا."

"I wish I could complete my educational qualification and follow my higher studies."

Also, T5 pointed out that:

"أتمنى أن أدرس اجستير احدد...... هو اجستير ESP نوع ان دراسة اماجستير اتي تركز على اجموعة اعينة ان الاشخا ."

"I wish I could do a certain MA…. it is MA in ESP. It is a specific kind of MA that is focusing on a specific group of people." Due to his mention of ESP, most probably, this teacher has an ambition to teach at the university.

Likewise, stakeholders expressed a desire that teachers do MA or PhD as a form of TPD like T11, S9 specifically mentioned specializations that may not be available in Syria:

"هناك إ‍كانية ارسال‍مدرسين‍ى دول أجنبية أو حتى ن‍قة ب‍لغة الانكليزية و‍ك‍لحصول على شهادات عليا سواءا ب‍ماجستير أو‍دكتوراه أو باتباع اختصا ‍ات‍تنوعة قد لاتتوافر في بلدهم."

"There is also the possibility of sending teachers to foreign or even English-speaking countries in order to get higher degrees, whether MAs or PhDs, or following varied specialties that may not be available in their countries."

- A wish to do a diploma in neuro-linguistic programming. This is very much a self-chosen type of self-development desired by one teacher. This kind of program usually takes place at Illaf Train, an HR development leader based in Damascus. It is a private training institution where people have to pay and it is not education specific, but aims at general improvement of skills and abilities, developing ones' own self which may to some extent help in TPD. T18 stated that:

"‍دورة‍خصصة لأي يشخص يرغب بتطوير ذاته. هي دورة تكون ب‍شق في سورية وهي تابعة وباشراف شركة Illaf Train تنمية‍موارد‍بشرية. هذه‍دورة تهدف‍ى اعطاء‍متدربين فكرة عن‍هارات الانسان,سلوكه,‍قيم و‍عوائق ‍اتي تقف في ‍ريقه وتمده ب‍وسائل‍مناسبة لاحداث تغير في سلوكه تفكيره و‍شاعره و‍ك‍تحقيق أهدافه و‍تركيز على تقنيات‍تعلم.‍دة‍دورة هي خمسة أيام وتستمر‍مدة خمسة ساعات يو‍يا يقد‍ها أساتذة‍ختصون‍ثلا اذكر أن ‍دكتور ‍حمد يحمل شهادة دكتوراة في هذا‍مجال و‍حاضر بج‍عة ‍شق."

"The training is available for any person wishing to improve himself. The training is in Damascus in Syria. It is delivered by Illaf Train Company for improving human abilities. These training courses aim at giving the trainee an idea of human skills, his behavior, performance, value, and the obstacles that may face him. It equips the teacher with the suitable means to make a change in his behavior, thinking and feelings and to achieve his goals and focus on teaching techniques. The training is for five days five hours daily. It is delivered by specialist teachers. For example, I remember that teacher Mohammed holds a PhD in human

ability development, he is a well-qualified consultant and trainer in this field and lectures at the University of Damascus."

- A wish that some TPD and technological training would be available for teachers who were teaching in the countryside like that available for teachers in the city. Actually, these teachers are asking for TPD in the form of following ITE or any other type of teacher training. T4 stated:

"أتمنى أن الأمور الجيدة التي جربتها في المدارس الخاصة يتم تطبيقها في المدارس الثانوية خصوصا في المناطق الريفية المهملة."

"I do wish that the good things that I experienced in the private school will be applied to the state secondary schools especially to the neglected rural area."

T5 put it:

" ان أغلب المدرسين الذين التقيت بهم كانوا يتمنون دمج التكنولوجيا بالتعليم ولكن كان شيئ نظري ليس له صلة بأرض الواقع. أغلبهم كانوا يدرسون الطلاب باسلوب تقليدي وهم يتمنون أسلوب أفضل لم أدرس في المدينة ولكن سمعت عن توافر الكمبيوتر و الانترنت أما بالاريف فقطعا لا."

"Most teachers I met wished to integrate technology into their lessons. But, it was something theoretical that did not relate to reality. Most of these teachers were teaching in a traditional way whereas wishing to teach in a better way." He went on to say that: "I did not teach in the city, but I heard that internet and computers are available, but in the countryside definitely there is neither."

Also, T6 said:

"أطمح أن تدخل التكنولوجيا في التعليم مثل استخدام الراشق الالكتروني projector أو مشاهدة شخص native يقرأ الدرس حيث سيستمتع الطلاب بالدرس ويكون الدرس E-learning is a top choice, fun to learn"

"I wish to integrate technology into education such as using projector and students listening to or watching native speakers reading the lesson where students will really enjoy it and the lesson will be fun to learn, E-learning is in reality a top choice."

Very similarly, there was a reference to the importance of offering and facilitating TPD (in the form of externally provided training) in the countryside as indicated by S17 who worked as a head teacher in the countryside:

"توافر دورات تدريبية مدرسي الريف مثل دورات دمج التقانة ودورات المناهج ودورات الكمبيوتر....أتمنى أن يحظى الريف باهتمام أكبر مقارنة مع المدينة وأن يعطى المدرسون فر صة متابع تنميتهم المهنية."

The availability of training courses for teachers in the countryside, such as courses on integrating technology into education, syllabus and computers…. I hope that the countryside would be given more importance compared with city and teachers should be given the chance to pursue their professional development."

- In every school, there should be a PD provider, someone who is in charge of offering, supervising and maintaining PD of the teachers at the school where he works. His job will also be to advise teachers to follow/ attend TPD activities that are taking place outside the school premises. T8 expressed this idea by stating that:

"في كل مدرسة يجب أن يعين أستاذ يختص بهذا الأمر. على سبيل المثال مرتين با الشهر. حيث ينسق للتدريب حيث يستطيع المدرسين الحضور وفي كل مرة يتم طرح فكرة جديدة أو اسلوب تدريس مثلا طريقة تفاعلية وشرح أمور المدرسين عن طرق التدريس."

"at every school, there should be a teacher specifically assigned for this purpose. For example, twice a month, he can arrange for training where teachers can attend and every time a new idea is presented or teaching method such as the interactive method and explain things to teachers about teaching methods."

-On the other hand, some of the stakeholders talked about the necessity of raising teachers' awareness of TPD. S1 suggested:

"زيادة الوعي لدى كل من المعنين والمدرسين بأهمية وضوع التنمية المهنية للمدرس والعمل على أنها مسؤلية الجميع. "

"Increasing awareness among all teachers and stakeholders concerning the issue of teacher professional development, considering, as the responsibility of all."

This represents a general strategy which the stakeholders could use to promote TPD regardless of its type (top down, collaborative, individually autonomous). We saw in answering RQ2 that, while collectively teachers were engaged in a reasonable range of types of TPD activity, it was

by no means the case that they were all engaged in many of them. In some instances, this was clearly because of lack of awareness of them. It could therefore be a useful strategy of the stakeholders in various training and managerial positions in the first place not to simply provide more courses etc. but rather to heighten teacher awareness of the full range of TPD activities, including those that do not simply involve attendance at courses and workshops.

-Interestingly, some of the stakeholders also mentioned the idea of attracting outstanding students and young people to work as teachers. This is represented by what S2 said:

" اختيار الطلبة المتفوقون في شهادة الثانوية وتوجيههم الى مهنة التعليم واغرائهم بميزات خاصة أفضل من الأخرين في المهن الأخرى."

"Choosing outstanding students who scored high marks in the Bachelor degree and directing them to the profession of teaching and tempting them by special privileges better than those in other professions."

The implicit idea here seems to be that if better teachers are selected in the first place then the role of INSET TPD later becomes less crucial. This is however somewhat simplistic. For instance, it does not take any account of a need for PRESET. Those who get good marks in a BA English may have better English proficiency, but are not necessarily good teachers on the basis of that qualification. Furthermore, it is widely seen by experts as a mistake to assume that initial qualifications mean that no later INSET is required. Changing conditions, both in terms of students and syllabuses, will always create new challenges to be met. Hence teacher ability which might serve her initially will not necessarily be successful throughout her career. Continuing TPD is therefore always needed.

-Adopting a rewarding and punishment technique as an incentive is another general strategy for TPD suggested by stakeholders. Their judgment criteria would be teachers' performance, students' outcome, teachers' interest/ neglect of their TPD. For instance, S12 said:

"منح جوائز مادية معنوية للمدرسين الأكفاء وتشجيعهم يكونوا قدوة زملائهم المدرسين.الاطلاع على مردود العلمي للطلاب والنتائج والعمل على تطوير أية اثواب والعقاب."

"Awarding material and symbolic rewards for competent teachers and encouraging them to be role   models for their colleagues. To be updated on students' outcomes and results and work according to the principle of reward and punishment."

This then shows a concern of some stakeholders to promote TPD by an indirect route. If good teachers are rewarded then that motivates other teachers to improve themselves. The best way for them to do that is to engage in some TPD, of whatever sort.

Moreover, stakeholders believed that teachers need continuous support, help and consideration of their needs and individual differences. For instance, S18 stated:

"نعم أعتقد أنه يجب أن تكون هناك تابعة ستمرة لاداء مدرسين وتقديم دعم مستمر هم."

"I think that there should be continuous follow up to teachers' performance and offers of continuous support. "

Also, S2 pointed out:

" تثقيف مدرسين بالأفكار وا مصادر جديدة, تنمية جوانب الابداعية لمدرسين والأخذ بيدهم و ساعدتهم لانجاز."

"Educating teachers with new ideas and resources. Developing the creative sides of teachers and supporting them and helping them towards achievement."

-Most importantly S1 and S18 focused on teachers needs and individual differences that may ensure the success of any PD program. S1 stated:

"أتمنى أن...... يتم اخذ احتياجات مدرسين بعين الاعتبار فهم الأساس في عملية تنمية مهنية."

"I wish … that teachers needs would be taken into consideration as they are the basis of the process of teachers' professional development."

In the same vein, S18 stated:

"أعتقد أن أي نظام يهدف ى رفع ستوى مدرس ويهدف تسهيل تنمية مهنية لابد وأن يأخذ بعين الاعتبار الاختلافات وا فروقات وخصو يات مدرسين.... فعلى سبيل مثال لايمكن تطبيق نظام تدريبي نفسه على درسي ريف وا مدينة. كما تعلمين ان درسي ريف ى دعم أكبر ن درسي مدينة.....حتى وبرأي ان درسي مدرسة واحدة يختلفون .... يحتاج مدرسون لكثير ن دعم."

"I think that any system aiming at improving teachers' level and facilitating their professional development should take into consideration differences, divergences and personal characteristics among teachers….. For example, it would not be possible to apply the same

training system in schools in the city and the countryside. As you know, teachers in the countryside may need more support than those at the city…..even in my own opinion teachers of the same school differ…… teachers need lots of support."

5.4.2 TPD as input from other teachers

In this part the TPD which is desired is seen as something externally provided by the help of colleagues rather than higher stakeholders:

- Consulting experienced teachers about the methods of teaching English, presumably in Syrian state secondary schools. This is more likely to be a self-chosen strategy rather than something imposed/ recommended by other stakeholders. T3 stated that:

"أرغب بأن أتعلم أفكار أكثر عن تدريس اللغة من مدرسين خبراء مهنيا المساعدة في تطوير قدرات التلاميذ."

"I would like to learn more about the methods of teaching English from experienced teachers to help in improving students' abilities."

The aim of such a strategy could be for getting some pieces of advice from experienced teachers in order to improve the teaching methods. So, like the set above the teacher is expecting to obtain wisdom from outside not inside himself. Also, communication among teachers in the countryside in the form of sharing opinions and views is almost unavailable especially when we consider the need of this novice teacher for advice and sharing of experiences with experienced teachers, as indicated by T5 himself:

"و سوء الحظ أنا كنت أسأل المدرسين عن رأيهم و لكن سوء الحظ كان وضعهم أسوأ مني."

"Unfortunately, I was asking for other teachers' opinions but, unfortunately other teachers' situation was worse than mine."

  The reader can notice how T5 used the word "unfortunately" twice to express his sadness and regret about the absence of opportunity for sharing of views among teachers, as he believed that they were all struggling on their own with almost no guidance nor support.

Similarly, consulting teachers and exchanging ideas with them was also stressed by other stakeholders as a source of TPD. For instance, S9 stated that:

"بﷺكانهم تبادل الأفكار والأراء حتى تتكون بيئة تعليميةﷺلمدرسين تقوم على أساسﷺتشارك وﷺعملﷺجماعي. "

"They exchange ideas and opinions so that a learning environment will be created for teacher that is based on mutual and collective work."

- Transferring both TPD practices and teaching methods that take place at the private schools to the state ones. Two teachers who had teaching experience in PS referred to TPD in the form of experienced teachers observing other teachers' classes and providing comments and feedback, and weekly workshops/ meetings, as well as actual teaching methods such as use of technology in classes. For example, T4 stated in general that:

"أتمنى أن الأﷺورﷺجيدةﷺتي جربتها فيﷺمدارسﷺخاﷺة يتم تطبيقها فيﷺمدارسﷺثانوية خصوﷺا فيﷺمناﷺقﷺريفية ﷺمهملة."

"I wish that the good things that I experienced in the private schools will be applied to the state secondary schools, especially in the neglected rural areas."

Again, there is a reference to the countryside areas as he himself was teaching in the countryside. By comparison, T8 seemed to focus on TM, saying that there should be a consideration of:

"ﷺوضوعﷺتدريس فيﷺمدارسﷺخاﷺة,فيها دائماﷺاهو جديد.ﷺمكن أن نأخذﷺن عندهم شيء وأن نضيف عليه ونعﷺهﷺم نطبقه فيﷺمدارسﷺحكوﷺية.يجب أن يستفيدﷺمدرسﷺن كلﷺاهو جديد وتطبيقه في دروسه."

"the issue of private schools teaching; there is always what is new there. So, it is possible to take some ideas from them and add or change them to be applied at state secondary schools. Teachers should benefit from what is new and apply it to his lessons."

- Conducting classroom observation, observing Syrian colleagues teaching which is more likely to be a self-chosen strategy. This same teacher wished to observe not only his Syrian colleagues while teaching, but also colleagues with different nationalities and experiences. T13 stated that:

"أعتقد أن المدرسين بأي مكان يجب أن تتوافر لديهم فر ة مراقبة مدرسين أخرين بمستويات وخبرات مختلفة. لا ت زت أرغب بمراقبة ز لاء ي في ال مهنة وكذ ك يكون متعا و سنحت ي ل افر ة ستقبلا بمراقبة ز لاء ي ن جنسيات ختلفة."

 "I think that teachers everywhere should have the opportunity of observing other teachers with different levels and teaching experiences. I still wish to observe my colleagues in the profession. Also, it will be interesting if I have the chance in the future to observe colleagues of different nationalities."

- One teacher implied that the sort of research I was doing on TPD served in fact as a form of TPD, since he learned something from it. Therefore, T2 called for more research to be conducted on teachers of English and other teachers on issues related to their own PD. He was impressed by the researcher's topic and showed a great deal of willingness to participate. T2 stressed the idea that:

"أتمنى أن يخضع أكبر عدد ن درسي ال لغة الانكليزية خصو ا و ال مدرسين عمو ل مثل هكذا دراسة. ع أ يب ت نياتي ك ب ال توفيق و ال نجاح."

 "I wish that the majority of teachers of English in particular and teachers in general should undergo such a study as this and wish you all the best and success."

As far as I know, no such study has been conducted before on TPD issues in this same context, or is planned to be in future. In Syria, research on teachers would most likely be conducted in the Syrian main cities where there are the oldest Syrian universities. Also, this same teacher may be someone who is also interested in research and feels the importance of conducting such research as it will be useful and interesting to be conducted in this context. Probably, conducting such research may open the researchers' eyes to important issues of TPD and the outcome and implications of such could greatly benefit teachers to change certain practices, beliefs and act different to improve their own TPD. It is worth mention that this same teacher wished to pursue his higher studies, a wish that has been affected by the terrible conditions in Syria. Furthermore, it might be that the current research has also raised teachers' awareness about the issue of TPD and its various types, as implied by his suggestion.

- In addition, there was evidence in stakeholders' data of the idea that teachers need to work in cooperation or collectively, in a way that enhance feeling of belonging to a supportive community of practice. S9 clearly stated:

"بﺍ كانهم تبادل الأفكار والأراء حتى تتكون بيئه تعليميةﺍلمدرسين تقوم على أساسﺍتشارك وﺍعملﺍجماعي لا على أساسﺍعملﺍفردي وﺍمعاناةﺍشخصية في بعض الأحيان وهذا الأﺍر ضروري جدا خصو ﺍﺍلمدرسينﺍجددﺍذين يحتاجونﺍلدعمﺍمستمر. "

"They can exchange ideas and opinions. In this way, an educational environment will be established that is based on mutual and collective work rather than individual work and personal suffering, in some cases. This is very necessary especially for novice teachers who need continuous support."

5.4.3 TPD by self-improvement

The following represent the rather few instances where the teachers wished to follow some form of self-improvement not involving peers or training by professionals:

- A desire to travel abroad as a source of enhancing one's own self. One of the teachers spoke of a wish to travel to an English-speaking country and when asked about the reason behind that, T17 said:

"ﺍلانﺍاج بتلكﺍمجتمعات وﺍتعرف علىﺍقافتهم عن قرب واكتسابﺍلهجةﺍحقيقيةﺍلغة الانكليزية."

"To be integrated into these societies and to be closely introduced to their culture and to acquire their real English accent."

Another teacher spoke of his wish to travel abroad to different countries such as England, Japan, France, and America. T16 said:

"أرغب بﺍقيام برحلات علميةﺍى بريطانية,ﺍيابان ,ﺍمانية وأﺍريكﺍمدة لاتقل عن شهر. وذﺍكﺍمراقبة ﺍرق ووسائل ﺍتعليمﺍمتطورة عن كثب والاستفادةﺍن تجاربهمﺍتطبيقها فيﺍدارسنا."

"I would like to go for educational trips to Britain, Japan, Germany, and America for no less than one months. That is to closely observe the developed and modern methods and techniques of teaching and benefit from their experiences and apply them to our schools."

Both these can be construed as self-chosen and self-supplied TPD, presumably involving personal reflection and experience, rather than as TPD imposed or supplied by others.

Very similarly, some stakeholders mentioned a wish for teachers to travel abroad in order to improve their own TPD. S5, clearly said:

"أن أفضل الأساليب تطوير أداء المدرسين هو اشراكهم في دورات في كل من بريطانية أو أمريكا وتفاعلهم مع تلك المجتمعات تقويتهم لغويا والتعرف على ثقافتهم عن قرب. "

"The best way to improve teachers' performance is involving them in courses in Britain or America and in interacting with those societies to improve themselves linguistically speaking and closely know their culture."

In the same vein, S16 stated that:

"ارسال مدرسين متميزين للخارج لاكتساب مهارات ومعارف التي بامكانهم نقلها الى زملائهم."

"Sending prominent teachers abroad in order to gain skills and knowledge which they can transfer to their colleagues."

- Audio or video recording of ones' own classes in the Syrian state school is clearly a self-chosen and self-provided TPD strategy. T20 declared that:

"أتمنى أن أقوم بتسجيل درسي صوتا و صورة وعرض الدروس بواسطة الماسح الضوئي."

"I wish I could audio-video record my lessons and to present my own lessons using computer-based projectors."

This implies a TPD purpose, but does not say it clearly. Probably, the purpose is to review the lesson later and reflect on what went well, the successful and unsuccessful aspects of the lesson. Interestingly none of the other stakeholders mentioned this one.

- Teachers should work on improving themselves, professionally speaking since TPD is something provided internally, by ones' own self, rather than as something that is externally provided by other stakeholders. This was most explicitly stated by T4:

"أعتقد أن التغير يجب ان يبدأ من ان المدرسين انفسهم تطوير أنفسهم قبل الاعتماد على الأخرين أو الدولة. و مع توفر الانترنت يكون التطور المهني هو مسؤولية المدرسين."

"I think that change should begin from teachers themselves to improve themselves before depending on others or on the government. With the availability of the internet teacher professional development will be the responsibility of teachers."

So, there is a clear evidence that he refers to teachers as the ones who are in charge of pursuing and improving their own TPD. Likewise, T18 stated that:

"ان المدرس الناجح يحب المعرفة وهو متعطش للمعرفة ويجب أن يسعى لتطوير نفسه."

"the successful teacher loves knowledge and he is thirsty for knowledge and should also work to improve himself."

So also, a few stakeholders believed that teachers themselves should work on improving themselves professionally speaking as indicated by S2:

"يجب أن يشمل التطور المهني على التعلم ضمن المدرسة و التعلم بشكل فردي وشخصي."

"Teacher professional development should include learning in school and personal self-learning."

5.4.4 Obstacles affecting fulfilment of teachers' wishes for TPD

We have seen that both teachers and other stakeholders talked about different types of TPD activities which they wish to be available ideally, and undoubtedly the majority of what they wished for could be useful and important as far as the process of TPD is concerned. However, they also highlighted some issues that may hinder or negatively affect TPD at the time when the interviews were conducted, or in some cases mentioned things that would facilitate certain kinds of TPD. Obstacles and facilitators are really two sides of the same issue: if an obstacle is removed, then there is facilitation; if a potential facilitator is not present, then that constitutes

an obstacle. These factors were classified in our coding system in terms of who or what it is that is creating/not removing the obstacle, i.e. conditions such as the current state of upheaval Syria, the central MoE in Damascus, the local Education Center in Deir Ezzor, the Universities, issues of time and money, teachers themselves, etc.

The unstable conditions in Syria represent, hopefully, a temporary type of obstacle and once the problems have stopped, many TPD activities would be available again. Some aspects of TPD issues were originally taking place, but have been affected by the problems, including:
 Following training courses in the British as well as the American Councils as indicated by T1:

"الأوضاع غير مستقرة في سورية. ان المراكز الثقافية هي حاليا غلقة منذ لاة سنوات وذلك بسبب الأوضاع غير مستقرة في سورية."

"The unstable conditions in Syria. The Councils are currently closed for about 3 years due to the unstable conditions in Syria."

-Watching the Egyptian educational channel, as stressed by T10:

"بسبب ظروف والأحداث قاسية تي تمر بها بلادي."

"because of the difficult circumstances and events which my country is passing through." I interpret this to refer to the continuous electricity cuts for a couple of hours daily.

Other stakeholders also held a similar view and clearly stressed that the war has negatively affected TPD in Syria. For Example, S16 stated that:

"كن في حقيقة أرت الأحداث تي تشهدها حاليا سورية على تنمية مهنية لمدرسين "

"But in fact, the problems that Syria is currently witnessing affected teachers' professional development."

-Moving now to specific human agents, head teachers were seen as a source of obstacle by one of the other stakeholders, though surprisingly none of the teachers mentioned that as an obstacle. S3 pointed out that:

"عرقلة تكمن ن خلال ادارات مدارس غير تعاونة أو قد تكون حدودة. "

"The obstacle is represented by uncooperative school administration or it may be limited cooperation"

Furthermore, according to teachers the central MoE can represent an obstacle. There could be ulterior reasons such as policy priorities or financial considerations. MoE negative effects are represented by the lack of implementation of broad initiatives such as:

- Pre-service training should be available for teachers just after graduation and before starting in the profession of teaching (T5).

- Lack of continuing training courses, or workshops available locally, since the majority of these are mainly available in Damascus where travelling could be a waste of time, money and effort of teachers who are already overwhelmed by lack of time. Instead, they should be available locally. For example, T12 clearly stated that:

"لايتوفر كثير من ورشات عمل لمدرسين. أو قد تتوافر في العا مة دمشق ما يجعله أ را عبا. حيث يتوجب على مدرس السفر مدة خمسة ساعات كل رحلة."

"there are not many workshops … available for teachers. Or they may be available in the capital city of Damascus which makes it difficult since teachers have to travel about five hours each way."

Likewise, from the point of view of stakeholders, the MoE was mentioned as an obstacle again in the lack of pre-service training for teachers which is seen as challenging for teachers, as was indicated by S14 and S15 respectively:

"عمل خريجي الجامعة مباشرة با تدر يس ن دون أي تدريب ما يجعل المدرس يجد عوبة في التكيف ع حاجات طلبة و يو هم."

" University graduates start the profession of teaching immediately after graduation, and without any training, which makes the teacher face difficulty in adapting to students' needs, and preferences".

"ان عظم دورات التدريبية في سورية تكون خلال باشرة هنة التدريس وقد يجد المدرسون وخا ة الجدد نهم تحديا كبيرا خلال السنوات الأو ى ن تدريسهم بين التركيز على التدريس وادارة الصف و واجهة الصعوبات وبين التركيز على وضوع تطوير نفسه و تابعة تطوره المهني."

"The majority of training courses in Syria are available after starting the profession of teaching. Teachers, especially the novice ones, may find it challenging during the first few years of their teaching to concentrate on teaching and classroom management and facing the obstacles on

one hand and concentrating on the issue of improving themselves and pursuing their professional development ."

In addition, universities were regarded by some teachers as an obstacle. An example is that the subject of TM is only taught in the last year for students of English. T5 said:

"خلال دراسة جامعية ان أهم مادة كنا ندرسها أذا أخذنا بعين الاعتبار أن اغلب الطلاب سيكونون مدرسين هي مادة طرائق تدريس. الطالب يدرس سنة الاولى والثانية والثالثة ولايعرف أي شي عن طرق التدريس .الطالب يدرس هذه المادة فقط في السنة الدراسية الرابعة."

"During university study, the most important subject that we studied, especially when considering the fact that the majority of students will be teachers, was the subject of teaching methods. The student studies his first, second and third year and does not know anything about teaching methods. The student will only study the subject of teaching methods in the fourth year."

Hence, this implies that it is the university which needs to change this. T5 even went on to talk about his wish for who should teach that subject:

"ان الشيء الثاني هو.....يجب ان تدرس مادة طرائق التدريس من قبل أستاذ محاضر مؤهل. بالنسبة لنا درسنا اياها استاذ انكليزي فهذا أثر علينا. على الرغم من وجود أستاذ جامعي يدرس مادة أدبية في القسم بذلك الوقت."

"The second issue is that …. the subject of teaching methods should be taught by a well-qualified lecturer. For us, it was delivered by a teacher of English which really affected us, although there was a PhD holder who was teaching another literary subject in the department at that time."

Also, T5 believed that what prevented him from completing his higher studies was that an MA in ESP was not available in Syria. This again could be something that the Syrian universities should take into consideration one day: it is the university decision as to what MA to teach/ offer. By contrast, none of the stakeholders mentioned universities as a source of obstacle.

The local education center was also reported by some teachers as an obstacle, since example it should be in charge of:

- Transferring PD activities from private schools to state ones, as was indicated by T4 and T8, which is an issue in the hands of headmasters as well. T4 stated:

أتمنى أن الاشياء جيدة تي جربناها في مدارس خا ة يتم تطبيقها في مدارس ثانوية حكو ية وخصو ا في منا ق ريفية مهملة."

"I do wish that the good things that I experienced in the private school will be applied to the state secondary schools especially to the neglected rural areas."

- Also, it should be responsible for providing TPD, ITE programs as well as technological facilities in the countryside, T5 put it:

"اغلب مدرسين لذين تقيت بهم كانوا يتمنون ادخال تكنو وجيا ب تعليم... م أدرس في مدينة و كن سمعت عن توافر كمبيوترو الانترنت أ ا ب اريف فقطعا لا."

"Most teachers I met wished to integrate technology into their lessons. ... I did not teach in the city, but I heard that internet and computers are available, but in the countryside definitely there is neither." Also, T6 said:

"أ مح أن تدخل تكنو وجيا في تعليم ثل استخدام راشق الإ كترونيprojector أو شاهدة شخص ا native يقرأ درس حيث سيستمتع طلاب ب ادرس ويكون درس E-learning is a top choice, fun to learn ".

"I wish to integrate technology into education such as using a projector and students listening to or watching native speakers reading the lesson where students will really enjoy it and the lesson will be fun to learn, E-learning is in reality a top choice."

What these teachers want are both training on ITE and the relevant hardware and the internet, which are unavailable in the countryside.

- A notable facilitating factor would be if the local education center placed a PD provider in every school, who would be in charge of offering, supervising and maintaining PD of the teachers at the school where he works as well as that taking place outside the school premises, as was indicated by T8.

Very similarly, some other stakeholders considered local Education centres as obstacles due to the lack of PD activities and technology provided in the countryside. For instance, S17 stated that:

" قلة وارد أو وسائل تنمية مهنية في ريف قارنة ع ثيلاتها في مدينة وضعف الإ كانيات متاحة. قلة أو عدم توافر تكنو وجيا في دارس ريف ثل كمبيوتر والانترنت."

"Lack of resources and teacher professional development in the countryside compared with those in the city and weakness of available possibilities. Lack or unavailability of technology in countryside schools, such as computers and internet."

In addition, the MoHE can be considered as an obstacle. For instance, more research should be conducted on teachers of English and other teachers concerning their own PD. T2 voiced the idea that:

<div dir="rtl">"أتمنى أن يخضع معظم مدرسي اللغة الانكليزية خصوصا والمدرسين عموما مثل هكذا دراسة."</div>

"I wish that the majority of teachers of English in particular and teachers in general should undergo such a study as this". This is an issue that is in the hands of MoHE.

Issues of time and money may also be an obstacle to TPD, although indirectly they are controlled by those who pay teachers and control teacher time. For instance, following a course in neurolinguistics programming, travelling abroad or audio video recording ones' teaching may all be affected by that. For example, things that T11 reported as affecting pursuit of higher studies were:

<div dir="rtl">" أمران رئيسيان: الوضع المادي بالاضافة الى انشغالي بالتدريس."</div>

 "mainly two things; the financial situation in addition to being overwhelmed by teaching."

By comparison, the long travel distance and material issues affected T8's pursuit of neurolinguistics programming:

<div dir="rtl">" ان التدريب متوفر لمن يرغب في أن يطور نفسه. ان التدريب في دمشق بسورية."</div>

 "The training is available for any person wishing to improve himself. The training is in Damascus in Syria." There is an indirect implication in these examples for the educational authority since that decides pay and working hours (the MoE).

In addition, financial issues may hinder audio/ video recording a teacher's own classes. T20 clearly stated that:

<div dir="rtl">" ان العائق هو الامكانيات المادية المحدودة."</div>

"the obstacle is limited financial capabilities."

It is headmasters' responsibility to provide that at their schools, but the amount of money the school has available to spend is decided by local education center.

Consulting experienced teachers was also affected as teachers were more concerned with delivering their classes and sticking to the curriculum plan set by the Syrian MoE. Teachers may be overwhelmed by teaching and lack of time. T3 said:

"أرغب بأن أتعلم أفكار أكثر عن تدريس اللغة من مدرسين خبراء هنيا."

"I would like to learn more about the methods of teaching English from professionally experienced teachers."

Furthermore, observing Syrian and international colleague teaching is affected by the fact that the presence of teachers with different nationalities in the city of Deir-Ezzor is very uncommon. Again, teaching is a demanding kind of job and obviously lack of time constitutes another obstacle very common among the Syrian teachers. T13 said:

"كوني مشغول با لتدريس وكذلك قلما نجد مدرسين من جنسيات مختلفة في هذه المدينة."

"I am overwhelmed by teaching. Also, it is very rare to meet teachers with different nationalities in this city"

Issues of time, money and travel distances were also referred to by other stakeholders as obstacles that affect TPD in Syria. For instance, concerning the issue of time S16 clearly stated that:

"يعاني الكثير من المدرسين من ضيق الوقت وقد نجد أن بعضهم يعمل في مجال عمل ثاني."

"Many teachers suffer from lack of time and we may find that some of them work in another field of work."

In the same vein, S8 mentioned lack of time as an obstacle:

"نعم عدم التفرغ لان هذه الدورات تكون أثناء الدوام المدرسي فيكون هناك ضغط ..."

"Yes, lack of time as these courses will be during school working hours so there will be a pressure…."

In addition, issues of time, money and travel distances are evident in what S5 said:

"نعم هناك بعض العوامل التي تعرقل التنمية المهنية للمدرسين مثل بعد أماكن عمل بعض المدرسين عن مراكز المدن ما يحرمهم من اتباع هذه الدورات أو اضطرار هؤلاء للعمل بأعمال أخرى بعد الدوام الرسمي لتأمين العيش الكريم لاسرته."

"Yes, there are some factors that hinder professional development such as teachers' places of work that are distant from the city centre, which prevents them from following these courses, or they have to work in other different jobs after official working hours to secure a decent living for their family."

-Finally, it is undeniable that the teachers themselves may have some responsibility for hindering their own TPD: teachers should consider and work on improving themselves, as was indicated by T4 and T18. Probably lack of TPD awareness may affect that or the fact that teachers are overwhelmed by teaching and in some cases have another type of job, as described above, leaving teachers with almost no time for reflection and considering issues related to their own TPD.

The teachers themselves were also named by some other stakeholders as an obstacle: undoubtedly teachers' reaction, mentality, attitudes, feelings, and beliefs about TPD may negatively affect their uptake of or interest in TPD. Teachers may evidence their lack of facilitation through their unawareness/ lack of interest in group/ collective work or unawareness of TPD itself. In addition, teachers may show fear of or resistance to change. For instance, S18 stressed that:

"..خوف بعض المدرسين من التغير أو مقاومته.... عدم رغبة أو معرفة المدرسين بأهمية العمل الجماعي سواء داخل المدرسة أو خارجها."

"...Some teachers fear of change or resistance to it…. teachers' disinterest or ignorance of the importance of collective work whether inside or outside the school."

Similarly, S15 stated:

"نعم هناك بعض المدرسين الذين لايبدون اهتماما بمتابعة ماهو جديد من حيث التدريب أو تكون لديهم رغبة بالاعتماد على ماهو تقليدي وقديم. "

"Yes, there are some teachers who do not show interest in pursuing all that is new regarding training or they may be interested in depending on what is traditional and old."

Furthermore, S16 indicated that teachers' feelings could affect TPD:

"قد تتمثل عوائق ب.......عدم شعور بعض المدرسين بالرضا تجاه الدورات التي نقدمها لهم."

"Obstacles may be represented by…. some teachers' lack of feeling of satisfaction with the courses that we offer."

In addition, some stakeholders talked about lack of teacher awareness of TPD (which was not mentioned by any of the teachers).

Concerning the obstacles, S1 stressed that:

"حسنا... أعتقد أن أهم هذه الأمور هو قلة الوعي تجاه التنمية المهنية للمدرس"

"Well…I think that the most important thing is lack of awareness about teachers' professional development."

S10 expressed a very similar view:

"أعتقد أن أسوأ العوامل التي تعرقل التنمية المهنية للمدرس بشكل عام هو قلة وعي المدرس بأهمية هذا الموضوع.... وقد تؤثر على ردة فعله تجاه الدورات المتوفرة."

"I think that the worst factors that generally hinders teacher professional development is lack of teachers' awareness of the importance of this topic. It may affect his reaction towards the available courses."

5.4.5 Conclusion/discussion for RQ4.

There is a great deal of similarity between teachers and other stakeholders' data in answering RQ4. The result here seems to suggest that teachers specially value TPD in the form of some sort of input from professionals in the form of training, since that dominates the suggestions. Also, the majority of stakeholders' suggestions indicate their view of TPD as provided top-down.

Probably, teachers asked for training from professionals primarily here, because they may trust their self-development abilities or their own ability to develop by reflection on experience and they feel they can do all that already, so it is not something they lack at present.

There was no mention of a wish to make more use of internet or TV resources probably because they have no problem using that already.

Also, none of the teachers referred to action research, at least not mentioned by name, probably because they are not aware of that or because of lack of time.

On the other hand, stakeholders, due to their different perspective, suggested important general policies or strategies which naturally were not mentioned by teachers, e.g. adopting reward and punishment techniques, considering teachers' individual differences, and generally raising awareness of TPD.

5.5 RQ6 what effects do teachers or stakeholders think any TPD they have engaged in has had on their teaching beliefs, practices or affects?

5.5.1 Teachers' views on the effects of TPD

In this section, I will present the teachers' reports of the effect that TPD activities had on their teaching, beliefs, ideas, feelings and practices etc. Then, I will shed light on other stakeholders' views on the same issues. We found a wide range of reported effects, consistent with Bell and Gilbert (1994) who stated that "teacher professional development can be viewed as teachers learning.... In learning, the teachers were developing their beliefs and ideas, developing their classroom practices and attending to their feeling associated with changing."

Table 5.3 teachers reporting yes/ no effect of TPD

T	Teaching materials	Teaching methods	Ideas/ beliefs	Feelings
T1	no,	yes	yes	yes
T2	yes	yes	yes	no, still love teaching
T3	yes	yes	yes	yes
T4	yes	yes	yes	yes
T5	no	yes	yes	yes
T6	yes	yes	yes	yes
T7	yes	yes	yes	yes
T8	yes	yes	yes	yes
T9	yes	yes	no	no
T10	yes	yes	yes	yes
T11	yes	yes, sometimes	no	no
T12	yes	yes	yes	yes

T13	yes	yes	yes	yes
T14	no	yes	yes	yes
T15	yes	yes	yes	yes
T16	yes	yes	yes	yes
T17	yes	no	yes	yes
T18	yes	yes	yes	no, still love teaching
T19	yes	yes	yes	yes
T20	yes	yes	no	no

5.5.1.1 Overall Positive and negative effects of TPD

When asked about the effect of TPD activities, teachers mostly responded by "yes", indicating that pursuing TPD has positively affected some aspect of their teaching, feelings, beliefs and ideas. This perhaps implies that their TPD experiences are of the sort indicated by Harmer (2007) who indicates that TPD ideally relates to the needs of the individual teacher, has open ended outcomes and involves problem solving. By contrast, only a few teachers said "no" to indicate no change or effect of pursuing their own TPD. Furthermore, of those, several indicated that "no" applied only because no change was needed. In other words, teachers' responses can be categorized for polarity as follows:

    a- Yes: to indicate that a positive kind of change took place.

    b- No: this can be classified into two categories:

       1-No change with negative implication; no change occurred.

       2- No change with a positive meaning; no change needed

Overall, then, it is notable that the vast majority of teachers expressed experiencing some kind of change as a result of pursuing some type of TPD activities. These changes were viewed by teachers as a change for the better. It is reassuring that none of the teachers expressed any change with negative effects, which is a good sign of the perceived value of the effect of pursuing different kinds of TPD in the context of the study.

In the following sections, for the ease of understanding on the part of the reader, the data will be presented in four sections. In the first part, I will shed light on the reported influence that pursuing TPD activities has on teachers' design and choice of new teaching materials. In the next section, light will be shed on the reported effect of TPD on the teachers' teaching methods. Then in the following section, I will present teachers' reported influence of TPD on their beliefs and ideas as teachers. The fourth section will be on the effect of TPD on teachers' own feelings.

5.5.1.2 The effect of TPD on teachers' teaching materials

As table 5.5 clearly shows, a great number of the participants (17T out of 20T) stated that pursuing some form of TPD had influenced their choice, preparation, as well as the use of new teaching materials for the class.

In sharp contrast, only three teachers (out of twenty) said that pursuing TPD did not in fact lead to any change with regards to their choice and design of teaching materials. It is notable that all these three teachers had one thing in common: they believed that "lack of time" as well as "the extensive syllabus" were the main obstacles behind their inability to design and apply new teaching materials for their own classes. This implies that in fact, following TPD, they wanted to introduce changes to materials, but were stopped by these constraints. In that case the TPD did have an effect, but the effect was not realized in practice for these reasons.

T1 for instance said:

"لا,لأن هناك واد تدريسية قررة ويجب الإلتزام بخطة دراسية وضوعة ن قبل وزارة تربية....ضمان انهاء مقرر في وقت محدد."

"No, because there are teaching materials prescribed and we must follow the teaching plan set by the Ministry of Education... ...to ensure finishing the syllabus within the time limit." Likewise, T5 put it:

"كلا... بسبب ضيق وقت و منهاج كثيف. كنا نقوم بمراجعات لطلاب. أذكر أنه كان دي كتاب عن أساسيات لغة فكرت رة أن أ بعه وأعطي نسخة نه لطلاب و كن وبسبب ضيق وقت أغيت فكرة."

"No because of the lack of time, and the extensive syllabus. We were doing revisions for students. I remember that I had a book on the basics of language, and I once thought of making copies of it and giving copies of it to students but due to the lack of time I gave up that idea."

So, three teachers seem to be really obsessed by the issue of time which negatively influenced their ability to choose and apply new teaching materials for their own classes of English. There are no rules that stop them using extra/new materials of their own. In some countries, secondary level teachers could only introduce new materials if they first submitted them for official approval, which of course rather discourages doing that. So, Syria is more 'open' in this respect.

At this point, clearly, I might raise the question why these three teachers, unlike other teachers, expressed the view that lack of time and the burden of the syllabus stood as a barrier affecting their choice of new teaching materials, whereas seventeen other teachers who were teaching the same syllabus within the same preset time did not mention these factors as a barrier affecting their choice of new teaching materials. In trying to answer this question, it would be informative to refer to these three teachers' backgrounds. T1 was a novice teacher and he was also a first year MA student studying at Damascus University and he was teaching in the city of Deir-Ezzor at the same time. For sure, doing both will be a daunting task and demanding for this teacher. This teacher might be overwhelmed by all his responsibilities as a teacher where just being a teacher is a time-consuming job and being a first year MA student implies the fact that he had some modules to attend, assignments and essays to write. So, these factors put together would leave the teacher with almost no time to think of or prepare new teaching materials for his own classes. In short, for this teacher, it will be a real struggle to gain a balance between being a teacher and being an MA student at the same time.

T5 is also a novice teacher, but one teaching at the countryside where TPD activities are almost unavailable (at least the ones provided by others). In addition, students' level is generally weaker when compared with those in the city which might mean that they might not easily accept any extra materials provided by the teacher, so this could be another reason not directly stated by the teacher. So, there are many factors that can significantly influence the way teachers approach their work and the particular strategies that they adopt to grow professionally and to achieve their goals. The context in which teachers work, teachers' own

working conditions and their own teaching contexts have an undeniable influence on teachers, as emphasized by Farrell (2007).

By contrast, T14, the third teacher who reported no TPD effect on materials is an experienced teacher with 10 years of teaching experience, who had received training, and got a teachers' diploma in education. There may therefore be rather different reasons for her to report no change as far as using new teaching materials is concerned. There was no evidence that she reflects on her own classes and the role of reflection as a process of critical examination of past experiences that are recalled, considered and evaluated for the purpose of future decision-making and actions cannot be underestimated; this process can lead to a better understanding of one's own teaching practices and routines. "Reflection is a process that leads to a thoughtful, mediated action." (Clift, Huston and Dugach, 1990: 23). Likewise, Bolton (2010:8) expressed a similar view by stating that "reflection makes the difference between twenty years of experience and one year of experience repeated twenty times."

Also, it was found that she said that she did not follow some types of TPD and this might imply that she is an experienced teacher who, although perhaps open to change earlier in her career, has become resistant to change and who is interested in following what is available and her by now established way of teaching. Possibly she can be seen as one who thinks that by now after so many years and earlier training she 'knows it all' and needs no more TPD, one who thinks TPD is not CPD (continuing) but finishes. However, good teachers need not only knowledge and experience, but also enthusiasm, confidence, self-value, a desire to question, experiment, and grow professionally. So, experience alone is not sufficient for TPD as stressed by Cosh (1999).

5.5.1.2.1 Types of materials affected by TPD

Another theme that emerged from the data relevant to this section concerns the types of materials that were affected.

Some teachers spoke somewhat vaguely of preparing some posters for their own lessons. Others, like T6 prepared:

"بعض‬‬مواضيع‬‬طلاب‬‬صف‬‬ثانوي."

"some topics for secondary school students."

In these instances, I do not know the content of the material, but may surmise that it could be asking students to think and write about general topics such as shopping so to improve their own skills.

Some teachers referred specifically to the idea of preparing some grammar lesson handouts, as generally students are not that good at grammar. That is why more than one teacher mentioned the idea of preparing some grammar materials for their own students. For example, T8 stated:

"‬ثلا با‬نسبة‬لقواعد استفدت‬ن كتبي‬‬جا‬عية‬ع الانترنت لاعطاء فكرة شا‬لة‬ثلا عن ز‬ن‬حدد‬ثل‬‬حاضر‬‬بسيط وأقد‬ها‬لطلاب بطريقة‬بسطة وباستخدام‬ر‬‬وز‬ثلاN+V+S. وأحيانا أ‬‬بع بعض الأوراق وأعطيها‬لطلاب‬‬يقرأوها قبل‬‬درس."

"For example, for grammar I made use of my university books and the internet to give a comprehensive idea, for example, on a certain tense such as the simple present and I delivered the information to students in a simple way and by using symbols, such as: S+V+N. Sometimes, I print some handouts for the students to read them before the lesson."

Power point slides were also used as teaching material for students, again in relation to grammar, as stressed by T16 who stated that:

" قمنا بتطبيق ورشة عمل في‬‬صف وذ‬ك بتقسيم‬‬طلاب‬‬ى‬‬جموعات واعطائهم‬‬همات‬‬حددة‬‬ع وجود عرض power point‬تقديم درس‬‬جمل‬‬شر‬‬ية. وحقق نجاحا جيدا وكان انطباع‬‬طلاب‬‬متاز."

"Yes, we did a workshop with the class by grouping the students and giving them certain duties and I used power point slides to present conditional sentences. And it achieved a good success and the students' impressions were excellent."

This teacher is referring to what he did later in his normal classes, as a consequence of following TPD activities. Some of the teachers made explicit mention of grammar more than anything else (e.g. vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, writing...). There could be two main reasons behind that: probably grammar is what has first place in the syllabus, and teacher and student minds, and generally in Syria students' points of weakness is grammar.

Teachers also showed evidence of considering their students' needs and interests as far as their choice of extra teaching material is concerned for their own English classes. T19 makes this clear when talking about extra examples:

<div dir="rtl">"نعم وذلك تبعا لنقاط ضعف وقوة الطلاب. أتذكر أنني أحضر أمثلة اضافية لكل درس."</div>

"Yes, and depending on the students' points of weakness or strength…. I remember that I prepare extra examples for every lesson."

Though not directly stated this also could be a reference to grammar or could be vocabulary.

5.5.1.2.2 The type of TPD where the changes in materials originated

Another important issue to talk about and present here is the source of the ideas: where the ideas for choosing and using new teaching materials come from. In other words, what sort of TPD was it that affected the teachers' choice of new teaching materials. The following were mentioned.

Consulting fellow teachers for their own opinions and experiences was indicated by T2 who said that:

<div dir="rtl">"وقد استفدت من تجارب وأراء المدرسين الأخرين للوصول إلى افضل النتائج."</div>

"I also made use of the experiences and opinions of other teachers to get better outcomes." Though not directly stated, there could be a reference to reflection.

Making use of books studied at the university level and surfing the internet are sources of ideas for using new materials as mentioned by T8 who pointed out, as we saw above:

<div dir="rtl">"مثلا بالنسبة للقواعد استفدت من كتبي الجامعية مع الانترنت لاعطاء فكرة شاملة."</div>

"For example, for grammar, I made use of my university books and the internet to give a comprehensive idea."

Observing other teachers teaching is another source of ideas which inspired teachers to invent new teaching materials for their own students. T13 clearly sums up the whole story by stating:

"ان راقبة درسين أكثر خبرة ني يعطيني أفكار عن كيفية تطوير وادي تدريسية. وجودي كمراقب في صف يسمح ي أن أدقق جيدا با جوانب الايجابية وا سلبية لدرس ويجعلني افكر بموادي تي احضرها صفي."

"observing teachers who are more experienced than me gave me ideas on how to improve my teaching materials. My presence as an observer in the class allowed me to carefully examine the positive as well as the negative aspects of the lesson and makes me think of the materials that I prepare for my lesson."

So, this implies that the teacher is resorting to reflection for improvement. This illustrates that when classroom observations are handled in a non-judgmental manner where development is the goal, then they become something, as Farrell (2007:129) described, which "teachers look forward to and which they see as time well spent rather than something to be dreaded and avoided."

On the other hand, attending training courses and workshops also positively influenced teachers' choice and design of new teaching materials that are not only useful as far as students' needs and levels are concerned, but also that will be fun and interesting for the students. T18 stated that:

"حضوري دورات تدريبية افادني كثيرا.فقد كنت احاول ابتكار بعض مواد تدريسية اعتمادا على ذك ا تدريب."

"attending training workshops greatly benefited me as I was trying to create some teaching materials based on that training."

5.5.1.3 The effect of TPD on teaching methods

In this section, I present the second feature of teaching that may be positively influenced as a result of teachers' following certain types of TPD activities. All in all, and as the table 5.5

shows, almost all teachers (19 out of 20) reported a change as far as their own teaching methods are concerned.

Once again it is interesting to explore why one of these teachers did not report a change as far as her teaching methods are concerned. T17 is in fact an experienced teacher who might be someone who is resistant to change or someone who is interested in following what is traditional or available rather than thinking of new methods for the classes. So, "in certain circumstance veteran teachers have higher uptake of more "traditional" practices, whereas, novice teachers might be more adept at reform-oriented professional development. It might also be that novice teachers are more open and flexible about new approaches, whereas veteran teachers are less likely to change easily because they have ingrained, established practices." (Desimone Stuckey in Martin et al, 2014: 470). In other words, experience alone may not be enough for the PD of language teachers.

5.5.1.3.1 The way the methods changed

A rich variety of effects were mentioned by the teachers, spanning class management as well as presentation and practice, assessment, and involvement of technology.

T5 spoke very generally about change in the method of teaching as well as of dealing with students:

"عند ا أقارن تدريسي في السنة الأولى بالسنة الثالثة أشعر بفرق حتى أسلوب التعا ل ع الطلاب قد اختلف و الطلاب أنفسهم عند ا سألتهم قالوا ان تدريسي با فعل اختلف كثيرا عند قارنته بالسنة الاولى ن تدريسي. فهو وضوع خبرة."

"When I compare my teaching in the first year and the third year, I feel a difference. Even the method of dealing with students has changed and the students themselves when I asked them they said that my teaching really changed a lot when compared with the first stage of my teaching. It is a matter of experience."

At this point, I may however argue that experience alone may not be enough for the PD of language teachers as described by Rose (2006) who likens PD to a journey which starts with inexperience, then undergoes further study until the teacher gets the feeling of having arrived

as a professional. In other words, probably T5 engaged in some reflection along the way, leading to change.

One of the teachers referred to changes in classroom management, rather than anything specific to ELT. For instance, T16 said:

"قد قمت بتغير بعض عاداتي وسلوكي في تدريسي مادتي ثلا عند ا كان يشاغب بعض الطلاب م أعد أوجه هم كلام قاسي.وانما أتجاهلهم فترة بسيطة ذك يشعروا با ذنب ويتصرفوا بشكل جيد بعض أتجاهل وجوده في صف فترة وجيزة حتى و لب مشاركة وبعدها أعود يه."

"I changed some of my habits and practices in teaching my subject. For example, when some of the students misbehave I no longer tell them off, but I ignore them for a short period of time. Therefore, they feel guilty and behave well. For others, I ignore their presence at the class for a short period of time, even if he/ she asked to participate in the lesson then I go back to him."

T16 further developed strategies to improve participation:

"في بعض الأحيان أشجع بعض الطلاب على المشاركة با درس حتى و م يكونوا يعرفوا الحل."

"I sometimes encourage some students to participate in the lesson even if they do not know the answer."

Changing students seating arrangements as emphasized by T13 who pointed out that:

"في احدى المرات حضرت ورشة عمل عن وضعية الجلوس في الصف و قد أ همني كلام المدرسين في الندوة كثيرا كيف ان هناك وضعيتا جلوس تناسب لاب بمستويات ختلفة وكذ ك تناسب أنشطة ختلفة. حا ايا استخدم وضعيات جلوس ختلفة في فوفي."

"once I attended a workshop on the class seating arrangements and the teachers' talks at the workshop greatly inspired me that there are two seating arrangements that suit students with different levels and it also suits different activities. Now, I have different seating arrangements in my classes."

Changes in such class management issues likely attest to the fact that some of the workshops and courses the teachers attend as TPD are not specific to English, but teaching in general.

Also, adopting the method of grouping students/ students' group work was clearly indicated by T1 who said he learnt about:

"تقسيم الطلاب الى مجموعات تتألف من 5-6 طلاب تختار كل مجموعة شخص يتحدث باسمها ثم اطلب منهم اضاء
عشر دقايق لاعطاء تعريف لمفهوم معين أو كتابة اذا يمثل مصطلح معين بحسب وجهة نظرهم."

"dividing the students into groups consisting of 5-6 students and then every group will choose someone to talk on its behalf. Then, asking them to spend ten minutes to give a definition of a specific concept or writing about what a specific concept represents in their own opinions." This method could encourage peer-work/interaction as well as motivate students and increase their participation.

Moving to presentation, T4 stressed the idea that:

"كنت أكتب كميات كبيرة على اللوح في السنة الأولى من التدريس ثم بدأت أختصرها. كتابة فقط عناوين وأمثلة."

"I was writing a big amount of writing on the board during the first year of my teaching then I started to shorten it, writing just titles and examples."

The use of modern technology in the classes, presumably for presentation, was also mentioned by four of these teachers. This included and but was not limited to the use of laptops, computers, cassettes, recording machine and videos. T12 interestingly highlighted that:

"نعم استخدمت أحيانا تسجيلات الفيديو فمثلا كنت أشرح درسا عن المبني للمجهول فقمت بتنزيل فيديو من الموقع الذي
ذكرته انفا وقلدت المدرس تماما بطريقته الشيقة في الاعطاء."

"yes, sometimes, I used some videos, for example, I was giving a lesson on the passive voice so I downloaded a video from the website that I mentioned earlier and I copied the teachers exactly in the same interesting way of delivering the lesson."

Here the technology was not used directly in class. He learnt how to teach the passive from the video and performed that method in class himself without the video. By contrast, other teachers used technology directly to present material. T7 pointed out that:

"أنا دائما أستخدم laptop and cassettes."

"yes, I always use laptop or cassettes."

Also, T16 stated that:

"قمنا بتطبيق ورشة عمل في الصف وذلك بتقسيم الطلاب الى مجموعات واعطائهم مهمات محددة مع وجود عرض power point slides لتقديم درس الجمل الشرطية. وحقق نجاحا جيدا وكان انطباع الطلاب ممتاز."

"Yes, we did a workshop with the class by grouping the students and giving them certain duties and I used power point slides to present conditional sentences. And it achieved a good success and the students' impressions were excellent." Most probably, he was using his laptop in the class for this purpose.

Also, some teachers claimed they learned new feedback methods to correct students' papers. T13 stated that:

"قد تعلمت من زملائي ذوي الخبرة استخدام الورقة حيث يكتبون عليها اختصارات لتصحيح أوراق الطلاب ويعطون لطلابهم نصائح عن كتاباتهم. استخدمت هذه الصيغ وكانت ناجحة."

"I learned from more experienced teachers the use of paper where they write on them abbreviations for correcting students' papers and they give their students feedback on their writing. I used these and they were successful." This same teacher went on to say that he successfully managed to invent his own correction method that was adopted by other teachers, as stressed by T13:

"فيما بعد صممت بنفسي اسلوب تصحيح وقد استخدمه زملاء أخرين لتصحيح أوراق طلابهم فكان شيء ممتع ومفيد جدا."

"Later on, I designed my own correction style and my colleagues used it to correct their own students' papers. It was something interesting and very useful."

5.5.1.3.2 The type of TPD where the changes in methods originated

I am also interested in where the ideas come from that influenced the teachers' teaching methods. Some of the sources were mentioned very clearly by some of the teachers.

- workshops, T13 explicitly refers to this:

"في احدى المرات حضرت ورشة عمل عن وضعية الجلوس في الصف وقد أهمني كلام المدرسين في الندوة كثيرا كيف ان هناك وضعيتا جلوس تناسب الطلاب بمستويات مختلفة وكذلك تناسب أنشطة مختلفة. حاليا استخدم وضعيات جلوس مختلفة في صفوفي."

"once I attended a workshop on the class seating arrangements and the teachers' talks at the workshop greatly inspired me that there are two seating arrangements that suit students with different levels and it also suit different activities. Now, I have different seating arrangements in my classes."

As stressed by Richards and Farrell (2005), workshops take teachers out of the classroom to forums where they can share problems and concerns with colleagues or teachers from different schools and motivate them to share their experiences and ideas with colleagues. Undoubtedly, workshops are one of the most common, powerful and useful forms of PD activities for teachers (Richards, Gallo and Renandya, 2001; Richards and Farrell, 2005; Farrell, 2008).

- Reflection as an activity for improvement. T5 pointed out that:

"عندما أقارن تدريسي في السنة الأولى بالسنة الثالثة أشعر بفرق."

"when I compare my teaching in the first year and the third year, I feel a difference." Due to the importance of reflection, Kumaravadivelu (2003:7) clearly highlighted the idea that second language teachers should enter into "a continual process of self-reflection and self-renewal" in order for them to "construct their own personal theory of teaching". I infer that, for this novice teacher, experience must have triggered reflection and Brandt (2008) emphasized the idea that an effective teacher is a reflective one.

- Consulting students for their opinions as a source for improvement on issues related to teaching. T5 highlighted this interesting idea by stating that:

"الطلاب أنفسهم عندما سألتهم قالوا ان تدريسي بالفعل اختلف كثيرا عندما قارنته بالسنة الأولى من تدريسي. فهو موضوع خبرة. فعندما أسأل طلابي من هو المدرس الجيد ذلك أفضل عندي من قراءة كتاب عن التدريس."

"the students themselves when I asked them said that my teaching really changed a lot when compared with the first stage of my teaching. It is a matter of experience. When I ask my

students about who they think is a good teacher it is better for me than reading a book on teaching."

- Use of technology and surfing the internet. T12 pointed out that:

"استخ‮‬ت أحيانا تسجيلات‮‬فيديو فمثلا كنت أشرح درسا عن‮‬مبني‮‬لمجهول فقمت بتنزيل فيديو‮‬ن‮‬ن‮‬الموقع‮‬ذي ذكرته انفا وقلدت‮‬مدرس تم‮‬ا بطريقته‮‬شيقة في الاعطاء."

"I sometimes used some videos, for example I was giving a lesson on the passive voice so I downloaded a video from the website that I mentioned earlier and I copied the teacher exactly in the same interesting way of delivering the lesson."

These teachers are most probably those who followed the ITE training course. Their classes were sometimes attended by well-qualified trainers who could give the teachers some feedback and useful insights on that. Undoubtedly, the growth of teachers' professional knowledge and competence is enhanced by teacher training, followed by 'the application of the practical pedagogical knowledge acquired during the lessons and workshops' (Leshem and Hama, 2007:257).

- Learning from/ consulting experienced teachers was evidenced by T13:

"‮‬قد تعلمت‮‬ن ز‮‬لائي ذوي‮‬خبرة استخدام‮‬ورقة حيث يكتبون عليها اختصارات‮‬تصحيح أوراق‮‬طلاب ويعطون ‮‬لابهم نصائح عن كتاباتهم."

"I learned from more experienced teachers how to write certain abbreviations for correcting students' papers and they give their students feedback on their writings."

T3 also said:

"‮‬قد كان أ‮‬را‮‬فيدا جد‮‬قد عملنا بشكل تعاوني‮‬ع‮‬ز‮‬لاء وتباد‮‬نا الأراء."

"it was very useful, we worked collaboratively with colleagues and we exchanged our ideas."

Certainly, collaboration with colleagues will provide a non-threatening environment in which teachers can develop new knowledge and skills and gain supportive feedback from peers (Atay, 2008).

-Consulting parents and subject of English supervisors for their opinions on teaching methods. T20 shed light on this idea by declaring that:

"نعم عادة استفيد﷽ن أراء﷽﷽طلاب وأو﷽ياء الأ﷽ور وأراء﷽وجهة الاختصا ﷽ فهي﷽فيدة جدا في هذا﷽﷽مجال."

"often I make use of students' opinions and their parents and the subject supervisor as they are very useful in this field."

5.5.1.4 The effect of TPD on teachers' beliefs and ideas

Next, I consider a third feature that might be affected/ changed as a result of pursuing certain type/s of TPD activities: teachers' beliefs and ideas.

Both Tsui (2003) and Farrell (2007) share the view that teachers' beliefs are considered as a major source of teachers' effectiveness, which will undoubtedly influence their pedagogical practice. Hence arguably it is the task of TPD to first influence teacher beliefs, as a route to then influence practices in use of materials and methods. In trying to understand how teachers deal with the different teaching dimensions, it is necessary to examine the beliefs and thinking processes which underlie teachers' classroom actions. According to Andrews (2007:72) these beliefs "continue what has been termed the culture of teaching." Teachers' beliefs do not only have an impact on their classroom practices, but they can also significantly lead to educational innovations as well as PD. Furthermore, awareness of beliefs and practices is an inevitable step in reflection: teachers cannot develop and improve their teaching skills unless they are fully aware of who they are and what they do. Also, teachers need to develop in awareness that aims at reducing the discrepancy between what they actually do in their classrooms and what they think they do (Knezedivc, 2001).

By referring to the table 5.5, I can say that it is reassuring that the majority of the responding teachers (17 out of 20) reported a noticeable change to their ideas and beliefs as a result of pursuing certain types of TPD. However, it could be interesting to explore why three of these teachers reported not experiencing a change in their beliefs and ideas. This can best be done by referring to their individual backgrounds. It was found that T9, T11 and T20 are all experienced teachers, had followed training, reflected on their teaching and followed some

types of TPD. These three teachers are the same ones who expressed no change achieved as far as their feelings are concerned either.

5.5.1.4.1 Kinds of beliefs that changed

Next, I present the kind of beliefs/ ideas which get changed, with reference to the settings where the teachers teach. Borg (2006: 275) emphasized the importance of the teaching settings on teachers' beliefs and practices related to their PD, where he pointed out that "The social, institutional, instructional and physical settings in which teachers' work have a major impact on their cognitions and practices." Teachers did not very often unambiguously refer to changes in what they believed or to ideas, rather than to what they did, and I focus here only on instances where they were reasonably explicit, using words like *ideas* or *believe*. However, I might argue that, in reality, all the changes they reported about above in materials and methods were first in fact belief changes, before becoming changes in practice, even though the teachers do not report them as being so.

-Change in ideas concerning the use of the internet. There seems to be an increased appreciation of the importance of using the internet for teaching purposes as indicated by T18, who said:

"اⵏ بحت أؤن اكثر باهمية الانترنت فيⵏجالⵏتدريس. "

"Yes, I started to believe more in the importance of internet in the field of teaching."

T1 also said:

"تغيرت افكاري فاⵏبحت ابحث دائما وعبر الانترنت عنⵏاورⵏتطوير تدريسي."

"my ideas changed, I become continuously surfing the internet for issues to improve my teaching."

This quote however is ambiguous. Is the reference to a change in ideas about how to teach (use the internet more in teaching) or to a change in ideas about how to do TPD (surf the internet for teaching ideas more). The latter would however have an indirect effect on the teacher's beliefs about actual teaching, and so probably on practices.

-change of ideas regarding teaching. This was expressed by T12 who stated that:

"قد تغييرت افكاري كثيرا. كنت اعتقد ان □تدريس يعتمد على □خبرة فقط و□كن بعد ان □□لعت على بعض □□تقنيات □□تي قد تستخدم في □□صف وجربتها عمليا تغييرت هذه □□فكرة. "

"my ideas changed greatly, I was believing in the idea that teaching depends on experience only, but when I became aware of some techniques used in class and I practically tried them in class, this idea was changed."

In fact, the idea that changed here seems to be not directly an idea about teaching, but an idea about what affects teaching. ie TPD. Instead of believing that TPD comes from experience he now realizes it comes from awareness.

-Change in beliefs about specific teaching techniques. T4 for instance referred to teacher elicitation from learners instead of simply presenting material to them:

"نعم كانت هناك □□ادة في □□سنة □□رابعة عن □□رائق □□تدريس وتضمنت قسمين نظري وعملي. با□قسم □□عملي يذهب □□طلاب □□لمدارس ويحا□□ون تطبيق □□اتعلموه. □ثلا اسلوب elicitation . "

"Yes, there was a subject in the fourth year on teaching methods and it included theoretical and practical parts. For the practical part, the students go to schools and try to apply what they learnt. For example, the technique of "elicitation".

Then, they present what they taught as a presentation in front of their colleagues at the university. It greatly affected me. It was a nice method instead of adopting traditional methods or grammar translation method in teaching." This teacher seems to be talking about training in university before becoming a career teacher. T4 also referred to students' influence on the way a lesson is conducted:

"واعتقد بشكل عام ان □□ا يؤ□ر على □ريقة الاعطاء وادارة □□درس هم □طلاب انفسهم."

"Generally, I believe that what affects the way of delivering and managing the lesson is the students themselves."

Both, T16 and T3, by contrast just referred to unspecified general change in ideas:

"و □ع □رور الايام و □ن خلال □□تعمق في □□تدريس و □□بحث عن □ريق الانترنت و □اتوا □ل □□ع ا □□دقائي □□مدرسين في انحاء □□ختلفة □ن □□ □ام و □□تأ□ر بافكارهم ا □□بحت احب □□هنة □□تدريس."

"by the passage of time and by being engaged further in teaching and surfing the internet and communicating with my colleagues in different parts of the world and being influenced by their ideas, I started to love my profession." (T16)

5.5.1.4.2 The type of TPD where the changes in beliefs originated

The sort of TPD activities that led to the change as far teachers' beliefs and ideas are concerned were as follows.

- Exchanging ideas with colleagues. This teacher may mean both the collaborative kind of learning the teachers may experience during training courses and those when talking and discussing different issues related to teaching most probably in the staff room. T3 clearly stated the idea that:

"بخصو العمل المشترك أو الجماعي ع المدرسين فهو يعطي نظرة أفضل عن أفضل طرق فاعلية تدريس اللغة الانكليزية."

"concerning the mutual or collaborative work with teachers, it gives me a better idea of the most effective methods for teaching the English language."

Undoubtedly, collaboration with colleagues will facilitate dialogue, sharing and the exchange of ideas, information and expertise. This will offer "hope to others wishing to break out of the shells of isolation separating teachers from their colleagues as well as from teacher educators," (Oprandy, Golden and Shiomi, 1999:5).

- Observation as a teacher, as indicated by T8 who sums up her story by stating that:

" قد ررت بتجربة متعة غيرت نظرتي لتدريس. في صيف سافرت ى تركيا حيث كانوا يطبقون تجربة تحميل مناهج على tablets واعطائها الطلاب. كانت ميزة واستمتع الطلاب و فتت انتباههم. النص كتوب بجهة و ترجمة بجهة اخرى وهناك زر لاستماع وقد وسعت اداركي هذه التجربة. و لب ني كتابة تقرير عن الجوانب الايجابية وال سلبية تلك التجربة."

"I went through an interesting experience that changed my ideas about teaching. In summer, I traveled to Turkey where they were conducting an experiment of downloading the curricula on tablets and giving them to students. It was something unusual and students enjoyed it and it attracted their attention. The text was on one side and the translation was on another and

there was a button for listening. That experience widened my perceptions and I was asked to write a report on the positive and the negative aspects of that experience."

This experiment took place during summer time at a Syrian refugee school in Turkey where the Syrian curriculum was downloaded on tablets. Similarly, T13 stated:

"نعم..... ان□راقبة ز□لاء اخرين وهم يدرسون........ ساعدني في□تخلي عن بعض الا□ور□تدريسية□تي كنت اعتقد انها □حيحة و□فيدة."

"Yes... observing other colleagues while teaching…helped me to give up some teaching ideas which I thought to be right and useful."

- Conducting action research (in effect, if not by name). T12 clearly implied this when he said:

"□قد تغييرت افكاري كثيرا. كنت اعتقد ان□تدريس يعتمد على□خبرة فقط و□كن بعد ان ا□لعت على بعض□تقنيات□تي قد تستخدم في□صف وجربتها عمليا تغييرت هذه□فكرة."

"my ideas changed greatly, I was believing that teaching depend on experience only, but when I became aware of some techniques used in class and I practically tried them in class, this idea was changed."

It is unclear where he became 'aware' of different techniques: it could be from observing one of his colleague's classes. This is a very interesting example since it illustrates the interplay between beliefs and practices and between TPD and teaching. He starts with the belief that ideas for teaching come from experience. Then he hears about or observes a new teaching idea (referred to as techniques), and tries it in his class (in effect doing action research). As a consequence, he probably changes his teaching practices, though that is not stated, but clearly changes his idea about where teaching ideas come from (i.e. the nature of TPD): he now sees them as coming not so much from experience alone as from what he calls awareness, which in this case might be observation or talking with other teachers and obtaining ideas to try out in practice.

- Following a teacher training course. T14 expressed the source of changing her ideas and beliefs as follows:

"نعم وخصو □ا بعد حصو□ي على دبلوم ي□تأهيل□تربوي."

"Yes, especially after obtaining the teachers' diploma in education."

5.5.1.5 The effect of TPD on teachers' feelings

As the table 5.5 clearly displays, the majority of teachers expressed a positive kind of change in their own feelings. Teachers' negative replies in this category are of two types, however.

1- Yes indicates a noticeable kind of change as far as teachers' own feelings are concerned.

2- No with a positive meaning (2 teachers). Although these two teachers felt there was no change in their own feelings, this carries a positive rather than a negative meaning; it is not bad because they were already positive, so a change was not needed. Both T3 and T18 expressed the same view respectively:

"كلا, لازلت أحب مهنة التدريس."

"no, I still like the profession of teaching."

"كلا لازلت أحب هذه المهنة "

 "no, I still like this profession."

3- No with a negative meaning (3 teachers) expresses their views that no noticeable change for the better occurred to their own feelings as teachers. These three are the same ones who expressed no change occurring as far as their ideas are concerned either, and were discussed earlier.

5.5.1.5.1 Types of feelings that changed

The types of new feelings or changes in affect, as a result of pursuing some types of TPD, were as follows.

- Feeling of importance of teaching/ feelings of appreciation of it as a vocation were spotlighted by T4:

"قد تغييرت نظرتي من ان نظرة دونية للاستاذ الى مستوى افضل."

"Yes, my view of teachers changed from an inferior one to a better one." T1 even went to the extent of considering it as a holy kind of profession:

"نعم اصبحت اقدس مهنة التدريس اكثر من قبل."

"yes, I become sanctifying the profession of teaching more than before."

- Feelings of fun were emphasized by T3 who stated:

"قد ساعدت في اعطائي فكرة اوضح عما يعتقد به التلاميذ وفي هذه الحالة اسعى الى جعل تدريس اللغة الانكليزية نوع من المتعة لكي لايشعر الطلاب بالملل او الروتين."

"Yes, it helped in giving me a clearer idea of what the students believed in and in this case, I work to make teaching the English language a matter of fun, so the students do not feel bored or a sense of routine." This quote interestingly illustrates how a change in teacher emotions was reported as transmitted straight through to the students.

- Feeling of liking/love was stressed by T7:

"بدأت احب التدريس اكثر."

"I started to love teaching more." Likewise, T16 expressed a similar view:

"وبمرور الايام ومن خلال التعمق في التدريس والبحث عن طريق الانت والتواصل مع الاصدقائي المدرسين في انحاء مختلفة من العالم والتأثر بافكارهم اصبحت احب مهنتي حتى اصبحت مدرسا مشهورا والله الحمد."

"by the passage of time and by being engaged further in teaching and surfing the internet and communicating with my colleagues in different parts of the world and being influenced by their ideas, I started to love my profession and being innovative until I become a well-known teacher, all praise to God."

- Change in feelings from hatred to love as far as teaching is concerned. T8 clearly pointed out that:

"كنت وانا طالبة أكره التدريس وأكره كل ما هو اسلوب قديم قد مررت بتجربة ممتعة غيرت نظرتي للتدريس."

"When I was a student, I hated teaching and I hated all traditional methods, but I went through an interesting experience that changed my idea towards teaching."

- A feeling like parenthood. This interesting idea was voiced by T4 who had previous teaching experience at a private school.:

"وعندⵏا درست فيⵏمدرسة خاⵏةⵏارت بي كثيرا. كنت لأحب حتى سماع ⵏوتⵏاطلبة ⵏكن عندⵏا تركتⵏمدرسة ⵏⵏارت كثيرا شعرت بأنها اشبه بمشاعر الأبوة."

"When I taught in a private school it greatly affected me. At first, I did not even like to hear the voice of the students, but when I left the school I was deeply touched I felt it was like parenthood feelings."

- Feeling of self-confidence was stressed by T13:

"انⵏراقبة زⵏلاء أخرين وهم يدرسون زادⵏنⵏقتي بنفسيⵏقد سنحتⵏي هذهⵏتجربة ان أشعر وأنا outsider أي استراتيجيات تعمل بشكل أفضلⵏلطلاب وكذⵏك ساعدني انⵏأⵏغي بعض الأⵏورⵏتدريسيةⵏتي كنت أعتقد أنها ⵏحيحة وⵏفيدة."

"Yes, observing other colleagues while teaching increased my self-confidence. This experience allowed me to see as an "outsider" which teaching strategies work better for students and also helped me to give up some teaching ideas which I thought to be right and useful."

- Feeling of intellectual challenge was pointed out by T14:

" نعم اⵏبحت اعتبرⵏتدريسⵏهنة بناءⵏعقول."

"Yes, I started to consider teaching as the profession of brain building".

5.5.1.5.2 The type of TPD where the changes of feeling originated

I identified the following reported TPD sources of teacher affective changes:
- Staff workshops and observation by others in the context of formerly working at a private school where there were different types of TPD activities taking place. T4 stated that:

"ا□بحت اشعر ان□□تدريس شيء جيد عند□ا درست بمدرسة خا□□ة و□□رت بي كثير."

"I started to feel that teaching is a good thing when I taught in a private school and it greatly affected me."

In this instance, the observation had in some ways an unexpected impact, motivational/confidence boosting. This is unusual as most often observation is seen by the teacher being observed as emotionally negative, because it is based on evaluation, or even if it is fact finding (Richards, 1996 and Farrell, 2007) and he is not being evaluated, he still worries about not performing well. So, if classroom observation takes a developmental rather than an evaluative approach, the teacher, "knows that the visit is not a test, but a mutual problem-solving experience," (Williams, 1989:87) and this may even lead to a positive affective impact.

- Observing other colleagues was pointed out by T13:

"ان□راقبة ز□لاء أخرين وهم يدرسون زاد□ن□□قتي بنفسي."

"observing other colleagues while teaching increased my self-confidence."

This of course normally would be expected to be positive for the observer... as he does not have to do the work, may even be able to feel 'I could do that just as well' As indicated by Stilwell (2000), observation is a powerful means.

- Use of the internet for contacting distant fellow teachers for advice and opinions. T16 sum it up by stating that:

"□□بحث عن □□ريق□□انت و□□توا □ل□□ع ا □□دقائي□□مدرسين في انحاء□□ختلفة□□ن□□ع□ام و□□تأر بافكارهم ا □□بحت احب □□هنة□□تدريس."

"by surfing the internet and communicating with my colleagues in different parts of the world and being influenced by their ideas, I started to love the profession of teaching."

5.5.1.6 Conclusion on this RQ

For materials and teaching methods there seem quite a broad range of the types of TPD that affected the change from the list. But, for feelings they all seem to involve peers / colleagues. There is no mention of TPD in the form of pure self-development having this effect, nor in the form of training/workshops etc. by higher trainers, supervisors etc. This is also largely true of the types of TPD I give that affect beliefs, though there is one mention of training there. This could be linked to social theories of learning, Vygotsky (often talked about for students learning to speak English better, but here we are thinking of teachers learning to teach English better): this highlights the social element in learning, involving fellow learners. Tentatively maybe one could suggest that beliefs and feelings seem to change more through social TPD experiences with peers, while the fuller range of things can affect practices.

5.5.2 Findings from other stakeholders concerning the effects of TPD on teacher beliefs and/or practices

The data used in this section came as a response to the second part of other stakeholders' interview question number 7: Do you think teachers show interest in pursuing their own TPD? Is there any noticeable kind of change?

I meant by the question to refer to all TPD activities they do, whether they do it themselves with reflection, or obtain it from outside, e.g. by visiting websites, or have it imposed on them. And the word *change* in the question was kept vague so as to allow respondents (as they indeed did) to mention any sort of consequent teacher change, not just change in teachers' teaching practices. What they mentioned here is then the effect which the existing TPD in Syria was claimed to have.

5.5.2.1 Whether TPD had any effect, positive or not

Table 5.4 Other stakeholders reporting yes/no effect of TPD

Stakeholder Number	Any influence of TPD on teachers or teaching
S1	Yes
S2	Yes
S3	Yes
S4	Yes
S5	Yes
S6	Yes
S7	No
S8	Yes
S9	Yes
S10	Yes

S11	Yes
S12	Yes
S13	Yes
S14	Yes
S15	Yes
S16	Yes
S17	No
S18	Yes

As the table 5.6 clearly shows, the vast majority of stakeholders (16 out of 18) said that there are some noticeable changes that occurred as a result of TPD. It is worth mentioning that none of these stakeholders suggested that any negative kind of change occurred as a result of teachers' pursuing TPD. Their replies can be classified in the following three categories:

a- No, indicating that no change occurred at all (only 2S)

b- Yes, indicating that there is a completely positive kind of change toward what is better (14S)

c- Yes, indicating a conditional change; with two different aspects, or two faces of the same coin. (2S)

As mentioned earlier, the majority of these respondents said yes indicating that a positive kind of change occurred as an outcome of teachers' pursuing TPD. For example, S3 clearly stated:

" نعم , عظهم تغير فنحن نلاحظ ذلك ن خلال حصصهم درسية تي نتابعها."

"yes, most of them changed and we notice that through their own classes which we attend".

S3 is a teacher trainer on the ITE program and usually he is responsible for attending classes in school given by teachers who followed the training to provide some feedback and comments on a friendly non-evaluative basis. This could be a factor in the success claimed for TPD in this instance since when classroom observations are handled in a non-judgmental manner where development is the goal, then they become something which, as Farrell (2007:129) described, "teachers look forward to and which they see as time well spent rather than something to be dreaded and avoided." In other words, if classroom observation takes a

developmental rather than an evaluative approach, the teacher, "knows that the visit is not a test, but a mutual problem-solving experience," (Williams, 1989:87). Hence more beneficial changes in teacher practices might occur. On the other hand, two respondents said that there is no noticeable kind of change. It may be useful to refer to their backgrounds in order to find an explanation of why they said "No". S7 believed that teachers do not usually show interest in pursuing TPD and this perhaps led him to a generalization that there is no change either. He pointed out that:

"لاأشعر أن المدرسين يبدون اهتماما بمتابعة تنميتهم المهنية ولا أعتقد أنه سيكون هناك أثر ايجابي نوع على تدريسهم."

"I do not feel that teachers show interest in pursuing their own TPD and I do not think that there will be a positive kind of impact on their own teaching."

Interestingly, he is an IT engineer who is in charge of training teachers on the ITE program, but he may not be in a position to attend teachers' classes afterwards like S3 and so may not have the chance to judge whether any change occurs. His words *I do not think that there will be...* make him sound like someone who has no direct knowledge of the effects of the training and is speculating. Possibly he knows about IT, but not about teaching, i.e. is more of a technician, while maybe S3 was one who knew about both. In sharp contrast, the majority of teachers and other stakeholders gave very positive feedback regarding the important role and influence of ITE program. The other negative respondent was S17, a head teacher of a secondary school in the countryside: who said:

"بصراحة لايوجد تطور ملحوظ كي يحدث تطور لابد ان توفر الأمور التي تيسره وهذا ليس هو الحال في المدارس الثانوية في الريف. وكما تعلمين تعاني مدارس الريف وبشكل عام من نقص الاهتمام ونقص الأنشطة المتعلقة بالتطور المهني للمدرسين. في بعض الأحيان نحضر بعض دروس المدرسين وكذلك يتم حضور دروسهم من قبل الموجهي المادة ولكن هذا يحدث نادرا لذلك نلاحظ أن المدرسين الذين يدرسون في الريف يتبعون غالبا طرق تدريس تقليدية. وكذلك ان مستوى الطلاب ليس جيدا في الحقيقة بالغة الانكليزية."

"no, honestly there is no obvious change. For a change to take place there should be something that facilitates it. This is not the case with secondary schools in the countryside. As you may know, schools in the countryside generally suffer from lack of attention as well as lack of activities that are related to TPD. Sometimes, we attend some classes of teachers and their classes can also be attended by subject supervisors. However, this rarely happens. Therefore,

we notice that teachers teaching in the countryside most often follow traditional methods of teaching and they rarely think of pursuing their own professional development. Also, the students' level is not really good in English."

Here S17 is reflecting a view that generally the countryside suffers from a lack of many types of TPD activities which in turn negatively affects the teachers, their teaching, and so the students' progress. In reality of course, teacher-centered TPD is still available for them since reflection is always possible, e.g. based on a teacher journal, and if the internet is available then so are online TPD resources. This view therefore reflects a notion of effective TPD as primarily consisting of things provided for teachers, e.g. by outside experts, rather than TPD activities coming more from within the teacher. Also, the last sentence of the quote is intriguing as it might be interpreted as implying that S17 thinks that TPD cannot be effective if students are weak. Possibly he believes that students' level in the countryside may be discouraging for teachers and means that students may be resistant to any change whether regarding teaching methods or extra materials or any impact arising from teachers' pursuit of TPD.

The third group of respondents (2) gave rather a relative kind of yes which was conditional, not fully positive. For example, S11 is a teacher trainer on the ITE program, who pointed out:

"يمكنني قول أنه اذا كان البرنامج أو الدورة التدريبية تلبي حاجة لدى المتدرب فانه غالبا ما تكون لديه استجابة ايجابية. وهذه الاستجابة تحددها احيانا الحوافز التي يحصل عليها المتدرب وهي تختلف من شخص الى أخر. فالبعض يسعى للحوافز المادية والبعض الاخر يسعى لمنا صب مختلفة بما فيها منا صب الادارية بينما يسعى البعض الاخر للحصول على الشهاة والمؤهل العلمي .بشكل اجمالي طالما ان هناك دافع ايجابي وحفز نفسي فان الاستجابة تكون لدى المتدرب وهذا مؤشر ايجابي يجب ان يضعه معد البرنامج أو الدورة التدريبية نصب عينيه."

"I would say that if the programs or training courses satisfy a certain need of the trainees, most often he has a positive reaction. This reaction may also be influenced by incentives that the teachers may get which may differ from one person to another; some may seek material incentives, others look for different positions, including administrative positions, while others look for a certificate and scientific qualification. In general, as long as there is a positive motive and psychological incentive there will be a response within the trainee and this is a positive indicator which the initiator of the programs or training courses should take into consideration."

This shows an awareness of an important condition for TPD analogous to that of learner language needs. Just as learners will learn English better if they can see that the English they are exposed to meets their likely future needs for English, which has led to widespread use of 'needs analysis' in TEFL, so a teacher may be more likely to learn from and exploit what he is exposed to on an ITE course if he perceives that what he is exposed to there meets his needs as a teacher. As we see, such stakeholder perceived needs are wide ranging and do not just relate to teaching. S11 refers for example to material incentives, by which he probably means giving teachers gifts or money. In actual fact teachers are usually asked to follow training such as ITE based on schools where they work, rather than any consideration of their own motives or needs, and they are not free to self-select whether to take the course or not. It is noticeable that S11 started by referring to teacher *needs,* but quickly switched to talking in terms of *incentives*. While the former are conceived as coming from within the person that latter are more like needs created in people or imposed on people from outside. S12, who is a supervisor of English, talked very clearly in the latter way about what might make TPD effective as being incentives or created needs rather than the natural needs of an autonomous teacher. He stated that:

"تختلف ردود افعال المدرسين منهم من يأخذها كطريقة ويلتزم باتباع المستجدات باهتمام كبير بهدف تطوير قدراتهم المهنية وهم العدد الأكبر من المدرسين وهناك من لايلتزم وبكلا الحالتين ان وزارة التربية تعتمد أسلوب الحوافز للذين يتابعون تنميتهم المهنية وبالعكس تماما للذين يستمرون في الطرق التقليدية المعتادة."

"teachers' reactions differ some of them pursue TPD and show a commitment towards following updates with great interest in order to improve their abilities and they represent the majority of teachers. And there are those who do not show commitment towards it. In both cases, the Ministry of Education depends on the strategy of incentives for those who pursue their TPD and vice versa for those who continue with following usual traditional methods."

This quote reveals a number of interesting beliefs of S12. First, commitment of teachers and the effectiveness of TPD is seen as arising not from the needs and motivation of teachers themselves, seen as owning their personal TPD choices based on their individual needs, but as managed from above by the Ministry through incentives applied to teachers from above. The reference to *vice versa* possibly means that the Ministry treat teachers who do not attend external TPD that they provide, like ITE, in some negative way; e.g. they get paid less. This

carrot and stick approach to getting teachers to learn non-traditional methods of teaching contrasts markedly with what we hear below about what those methods of teaching involve. They clearly include the idea of getting learners to be more at the center of their learning of English which is clearly not compatible with a view of language teaching as being a traditional carrot and stick imposition of material from the teacher onto the learner. There is then a mismatch between the approach of stakeholders like S12 to teacher learning /TPD and the message/content of the TPD about student learning:

<div dir="rtl">"م يعد دور الطالب هو فقط عبارة عن تلقي سلبي بل يطلب منه البحث عن المعلومة."</div>

"the role of the student is no longer considered as a negative receiver of the information, but rather he is asked to look for information" (S14).

5.5.2.2 The areas on which TPD was claimed to have an impact/effect

Next, I shed light on the types of changes that occurred because of teachers following certain types of TPD, termed in this study as the effects of teachers pursuing TPD. According to the other stakeholders, there are the following benefits/ effects of TPD (Table5.7).

Table 5.5 The benefits/ effects of pursuing TPD according to the other stakeholders

A. **General benefits**	B. **Specific effects of TPD on**
-General self-improvement	-Teachers' own beliefs and ideas
-Improving teachers' skills	-Teachers' own teaching methods
-Problem solving	- Teachers' classroom materials
- Teacher self-confidence	-Teachers' own way of doing TPD
-Get new skill	-Teachers' career progression
-Improve his profession and gain lots of skills	-Teachers' emotional side and feelings
	-Impact on students

A. General benefits

Some respondents gave answers which did little more than show a general opinion that TPD had some positive effects, which we may consider "vague" replies. Most of what they claimed was some form of general teacher self-improvement that occurred as a result of teachers pursuing some types of TPD. It is a positive kind of development that may lead to teachers' growth. Both Glatthorn (1995:41) and Keiny (1994:158) respectively emphasized the idea that TPD refers to teacher professional growth. For Glatthorn (1995:41) "Teacher professional development is the professional growth a teacher achieves ....."   And for Keiny (1994:158), "Teacher professional development can be seen as a process of professional growth."

Some participants simply referred vaguely to skills, e.g. S8:

" نعم☐ن خلال اتباع دورات تدريبية☐لحصول على أفكار و☐رق جديدة. وقد تم تزويد☐مدرسين بمهارات جديدة. وهذا عزز☐قة☐مدرسين بانفسهم وساعدهم على تخطي☐مشاكل☐تي تواجههم في☐مدرسة أو خلال☐تدريس "

"yes, through attending training courses to get new ideas and methods, teachers were equipped with new skills and increase teachers' self-confidence which helped in facing problems teachers may experience at school or while teaching."

S6, believed that pursuing TPD positively affected the way teachers approached their own profession, but again in a general way rather than specifying:

"ان اتباع بعض أنواع☐تنمية☐مهنية انعكس ايجابا على☐طريقة☐تي اتخذها بعض☐مدرسين ازاء☐هنتهم."

"Pursuing some types of teachers' professional development positively affected the way some teachers approached their profession."

S2 by contrast referred more to who gained the benefit of the impact rather than what the impact was exactly:

" بعض☐مدرسين أظهروا وبشكل عام اهتما☐ا بمتابعة تنميتهم☐مهنية ونلمس☐مار ☐ك☐تطور عليهم وعلى☐لابهم وكذ☐ك في علاقاتهم☐ع الادارة وأو☐ياء الأ☐ور."

"some teachers showed interest in pursuing their own TPD and we feel the fruits of this improvement in them, their students and through their relationships with their school administration and students' parents."

B. Specific effects of TPD

By contrast, may other stakeholders gave more specific information, which I have categorized as in table 5.7. There are effects of pursuing TPD on:

- **Teachers' beliefs about teaching and students** as claimed by 4 stakeholders. This was clearly stated by S14, for example:

"قد تغيرت بعض أفكارهم وأرائهم فمثلا لم يعد دور الطالب هو فقط عبارة عن تلقي سلبي للمعلومة بل يطلب منه البحث عن المعلومة. وكذلك تغيرت نظرة بعض المدرسين للتدريس نفسه على أنه انتقال من التعليم الى التعلم."

 "some of their ideas and points of view changed; for example, the role of the students is no longer considered as a negative receiver of the information, but rather he is asked to look for information. In addition, some of the teachers changed their views towards teaching itself where it is considered as moving from teaching to learning."

S3 who is one of the teacher trainers on the ITE project, linked this belief change specifically with that program:

"ان برنامج دمج التكنولوجيا بالتعليم له عديد من الفوائد أولا يجعل المعلمين يعيدون النظر في طرق التدريس القديمة التي اتبعوها."

"The program of integrating technology into education had many benefits for teachers; first it makes teachers reconsider their old teaching methods which they adopted."

It seems that following such a training course may help in opening the teachers' eyes to different ways of teaching which they were not really aware of, beyond simply applying IT in class. The word *reconsider* in the above quote implies the claim that IT training such as the ITE program may engender important TPD in the form of teacher reflection on their beliefs about teaching methods in general. Likewise, S16 expressed a very similar point of view showing the positive effect that TPD had on teachers' awareness/beliefs as well as teaching methods:

"أما على الصعيد المهني والتعليمي...فهناك وعي متزايد بين المدرسين ازاء العمل بشكل مستمر لتطوير تدريسهم وأنفسهم وتجنب الطرق التقليدية في التدريس."

 "On the professional, educational level, ... there is an increased sense of awareness among teachers about working continuously to improve their own teaching and themselves and avoid the traditional way of teaching."

It is important to highlight that these stakeholders are echoing government policy as it is one of the main principles/aims of the ITE program that teachers adopt such ideas and apply them to their classroom by asking students to search for information, and ask for each other's' help and opinion rather than themselves just pass information to passive students. The course is clearly claimed to have an impact on teacher beliefs about teaching that goes way beyond the mere use of technology.

In these ways the stakeholders talked about a noticeable kind of change in teachers' beliefs about what is better, and of course, there could be a strong relationship between teachers' beliefs and their practices as beliefs may affect teachers' practices (e.g. Tsui 2003; Farrell 2007): see the next subsection. Finally, I should note that this same idea of "change of teacher beliefs towards what is better" was also mentioned and stressed by the teachers themselves earlier in this chapter.

- **Teachers' teaching methods, including use of new technology**. Although many stakeholders mentioned change of teaching methods as an effect of TPD, as with beliefs above, hardly any referred to it without connecting it to new technology. Two such were S5:

<div dir="rtl">" نعم ان بعض مدرسين يهتمون بتطوير ادائهم في صف."</div>

"Yes, some teachers are interested in improving their own performance at the class". Similarly, S9 pointed out that:

<div dir="rtl">"بالنسبة بعض مدرسين ان اتباع بعض أنواع تنمية مهنية ساعد في تطوير .....ادائهم و قدراتهم."</div>

"For some teachers, pursuing certain types of teacher professional development helped in improving .... their performances and abilities."

Of the majority who referred to technology, some gave examples of the change in teaching methods. Naturally there was reference to the introduction of technology into the class: "the program of integrating technology into education is a professional development program for teachers. It equipped teachers with technological skills which they applied to classes and passed the experience to their own students." This could refer to the use of computer, internet, word document etc... (S18). So, also S16:

"أ.ا على الصعيد المهني والتعليمي اكتسب المدرسون الكثير من المهارات وتعرفوا على وسائل التكنولوجيا الحديثة ... التطبيق ما تعلموه في دروسهم."

"On the professional, educational level, teachers gained lots of skills and learnt about modern technological means and .... to apply what was learnt to their own classes."

Many however indicated broader effects of technology on making teaching methods less "traditional" and more learner-centered (S15). For instance, S3 referred to technology having the effect of teachers:

"الانتقال من التعليم الى التعلم واستخدام البحث للوصول الى المعلومة واستخدام التقنيات الحديثة والمواد التدريس."

"moving from teaching to learning and use of search to get the information, use of modern techniques and teaching materials." This refers to search by learners both in class and at home using modern technology such as the internet. It is also made available for some schools where the ITE program was applied. There were even certain projects that both teachers and students worked on and communicated online as well. Usually, every teacher has a weekly class which he can deliver in a special room provided with the internet.

A slightly different claimed effect of IT training was that on classroom communication and dealing with students' individual differences. This idea was referred to by S18 who stated:

"فقد تعلموا طرق جديدة ومفاهيم ومهارات كثيرة والتي ساعدت في تطوير تدريسهم والسيطرة على دروسهم والتعامل مع الطلاب بمختلف المستويات و الاهتمامات والخلفيات."

"They <the teachers> learnt new methods and many concepts and skills and it helped in improving their teaching, managing their own classes and dealing with students with different levels, interests and backgrounds." Similarly, S3 claimed:

"ان استخدام الكمبيوتر جعل من الغرفة الصفية بيئة تعليمية تمتاز بالتفاعل المتبادل."

"The use of computers makes the classroom an educational environment that is characterized by mutual interaction."

This reflects perhaps the view that "teachers' most important job is to create conditions in which learning can best take place. The skills of creating and managing a successful class are

not easy to master and they would be the key to the whole success of a course" (Farrell, 2007: 34).

- **Teachers' classroom materials**. One effect of TPD that was mentioned was on the teachers' choice of extra supporting materials for their own students to satisfy students' needs and interests. S9 and S16 expressed a similar point about the effect of pursuing TPD more generally: it was seen by teachers:

"أظهروا اهتماما بدروسهم وبالتحضير للدروس وباستخدام لمواد تعليمية."

"showing interest in their lessons, planning for the lessons, and the use of educational materials." (S9). As an educational supervisor, S9 is someone who was in in a position to know, by visiting schools and observing teachers' classrooms.

- **Teachers' TPD itself**. Interestingly, some of these stakeholders (5) claimed that pursuing one or more types of TPD positively affected teachers own doing of other types of TPD, in a variety of ways.

S16 for example specifically referred to the effect of training in use of technology as equipping teachers

"للتو لل ىالمعلومات والأفكار والمواد ليس فقط للتدريس ولكن أيضا لتطوير أنفسهم مهنيا كمدرسين."

"to have access to information, ideas and materials not only for teaching, but also to improve themselves professionally as teachers." Presumably this refers to teachers consequentially being able to use the internet as a TPD resource.

A particularly interesting impact of TPD on TPD that was also claimed was that teachers who followed certain types of TPD transfer or 'cascade' what they learn to other teachers who did not follow that training. For example, S5 stated that:

"ان بعض المدرسين من اتبعوا الدورات التي ذكرتها سابقا قاموا باعطاء دروس نموذجية ... أمام عدد من المدرسين الذين لم يتبعوا أي دورة وذلك لنقل الخبرة التي اكتسبوها لهم."

"some of the teachers who pursued training that I mentioned earlier, gave model practical lessons ... in front of a number of the teachers who did not follow any kind of training in order to transfer the experience that they get to them".

Thus, one teacher's learning from TPD through a course is passed on to other teachers by peer observation, which is another type of TPD. The training referred to here that was passed on is

probably general training courses that are offered to teachers by the MoE and delivered by experts and such courses focus on teachers' general teaching skills and methods.

More broadly there was reference to TPD generating increased communication and cooperation between teachers and others including and not limited to other teachers (colleagues), students, students' parents, head teachers, subject supervisors, teacher trainers, involving sharing and the exchange of ideas, information and expertise. For example, S1 gave some examples of how teachers communicated with colleagues in different countries and how they worked together as a result of following the ITE program. S1 claimed that:

"توا ل معلمون في سورية ع نظرائهم في كل ن فلسطين وغزة والأردن و ايمن وتعاونوا في تنفيذ شاريع تعلم با مشاركة عن بعد. كثير ن معلمين استطاعوا تعرف على كثير ن أدوات تكنو وجيا مختلفة عبر الانترنت وشاركوها ع ز لاء ونظراء هم."

"Teachers in Syria communicated with their peers in all of Palestine, Gaza, Jordan, Yemen and they worked together to initiate projects on distance learning. Lots of teachers could discover many different technological tools through the internet and they shared them with their colleagues and peers."

Collaboration with colleagues can be seen as a form of TPD which will provide a non-threatening environment in which teachers can develop new knowledge and skills and gain supportive feedback from peers (Atay, 2008). Collaboration will offer "hope to others wishing to break out of the shells of isolation separating teachers from their colleagues as well as from teacher educators" (Oprandy, Golden and Shiomi, 1999:5).

Moreover, according to S2 and S4, TPD, by its availability, had the effect that teachers then showed more interest in pursuing their own TPD:

"ان غا بية مدرسين يبدون اهتما ا بمتابعة تنميتهم مهنية حال وجود برا ج مفيدة هم. "

"the majority of teachers showed interest in pursuing their teacher professional development whenever the programs are available" (S4).

This refers to TPD in the form of courses and workshops organized by the authorities and implies that if these are laid on, they engender interest in taking them. Thus, there is an indirect reference to continuity which is an important aspect of TPD as also indicated by Harwell

(1995:106) "Teacher professional development: it's not an event, it's a process." Since professional development is a continuing process (Richards and Farrell, 2005), it should not stop once teachers have acquired their professional qualifications. S12 illustrated this by stating that: "teachers' reactions differ: some of them pursue TPD and show a commitment towards following updates with great interest in order to improve their abilities and they represent the majority of teachers." S16 also spoke of:

"مدرسين......يعمل بشكل متوا صل لتطوير تدريسهم وأنفسهم وتجنب طرق تقليدية في تدريس"

"teachers .... working continuously to improve their own teaching and themselves and avoid the traditional way of teaching."

Interestingly, when we compare his idea with teachers' data, we can notice that also one teacher (T10) also focused on the "continuity" aspect of TPD.

- Teacher career progression. S4 pointed out that some teachers worked for a professional upgrade as a consequence of engaging in TPD:

"وكذلك سعى مدرسون الى الارتقاء بالسلم وظيفي."

"So, teachers worked for an upgrade as far as the profession ladder is concerned."

S4 meant that some teachers may look for getting a better administrative position like becoming subject supervisors, head teachers, or using TPD in the form of higher studies at the university to give them, upon graduation, the chance to give lectures at the university.

- **Teachers' emotional side and feelings**. It is undeniable that the emotional side of every human being can play a pivotal role in his/her practices and in the case of teachers, the emotional side is an inseparable part of his personality which can positively affect his teaching, himself and his students. A range of such effects of TPD were mentioned, often again with reference to the technology related training.

Sense of happiness with the TPD itself, as stated by S14:

"قد عبر معظم مدرسون الذين خضعوا دورات تدريبية مثل دورة دمج التقانة بالتعليم عن سعادتهم بتلك التجربة."

"the majority of teachers who followed certain kinds of training such as integrating technology into education, expressed their happiness with that experience."

Love of the profession of teaching and career satisfaction. This idea was clearly stated by S4:

" اظهر المدرسون نوع من الحب والتقدير تجاه مهنة التدريس."

"Teachers showed a sense of love, appreciation towards the profession of teaching." S6 shared a very similar view:

"ان اتباع بعض أنواع التنمية المهنية ينعكس ايجابا على الطريقة التي يمارسون بها مهنتهم وتقدير دورهم التعليمي وزاد من شعور الانتماء اليها."

"Pursuing some types of teachers' professional development positively affected the way some teachers approached their profession, appreciating their educational work and increased their sense of belonging to it." S10 saw this as mediated by student satisfaction:

"وهذا بدوره زاد من رضا الطلاب عن المدرس وتعزيز التفاعل مع المدرس وبالتالي هذا أدى الى شعور المدرس بالرضا الوظيفي."

"…. this, in turn, increased students' satisfaction with the teachers as well as enhanced interaction with the teachers. As a result, this led to teachers' sense of career satisfaction."

Interest and motivation. S9 talked about teachers, following TPD,

"أظهروا اهتماما بدروسهم وبالتحضير للدرس وباستخدام مواد تعليمية."

"showing interest in their lessons, planning for the lessons, and the use of educational materials." Similarly, S13 claimed:

"كذلك ان بعض المدرسين متحمسين لمعرفة ماهو جديد في مجال طرائق وتقنيات التدريس ."

"Some of the teachers are motivated to know what is new in the field of teaching methods and techniques." S16 expressed the same sentiment in terms of enthusiasm:

"أما على الصعيد المهني والتعليمي اكتسب المدرسون الكثير من المهارات وتعرفوا الى وسائل التكنولوجيا الحديثة حيث اظهروا احساسا بالحماسة لتطبيق ماتعلموه في دروسهم."

"On the professional, educational level, teachers gained lots of skills and learnt about modern technological means and they showed a sense of enthusiasm to apply what was learnt to their own classes."

Good teachers need not only knowledge and experience, but also enthusiasm, confidence, self-value, a desire to question and experiment, and to grow professionally.

Sense of belonging to a 'community of practice'. Although not stated in those words, this idea was clearly indicated by S16 who stated that:

" وعلى⬜صعيد⬜نفسي ان اتباع نوع⬜من أنواع⬜تنمية⬜مهنية⬜أر بشكل ايجابي على⬜جانب⬜نفسي⬜لمدرس⬜قد زاد⬜ن احساسه وشعوره بانه⬜يس وحيدا ان واجه اي ⬜عوبة. وهذا بدوره زاد⬜ن شعور⬜اتعاون."

"On the psychological level, pursuing certain types of teacher professional development positively influenced teachers psychologically speaking. It increased his sense and feelings that he is not alone if he faces any difficulty…. This in turn greatly increased a sense of cooperation." According to Andrews (2007:72) such an effect would "continue what has been termed the culture of teaching."

Increased sense of self-confidence. S8, S10 and S15 all held a very similar view. In S8's words:

"⬜ن خلال اتباع دورات تدريبية⬜لحصول على أفكار و⬜رق جديدة فقد تم تزويد⬜المدرسين بمهارات جديدة وهذا عزز⬜قة ⬜مدرسين بانفسهم وساعدهم على تخطي⬜المشاكل⬜التي تواجههم في⬜مدرسة أو خلال⬜تدريس."

"yes, through attending training courses to get new ideas and methods, teachers were equipped with new skills and this increased teachers' self-confidence which helped in facing problems teachers may face at school or while teaching."

Impact on students. One of the other stakeholders talked about a positive impact of TPD on students, as a consequence of change in teachers, in the form of general improvement:

"⬜اقليل⬜ن⬜المدرسين يبدون وبشكا عام اهتما⬜ا بمتابعة تنميتهم⬜المهنية ونلمس⬜مار ذك⬜التطور عليهم وعلى ⬜لابهم."

"A few teachers showed interest in pursuing their own TPD and we feel the fruits of this improvement in them and their students ...." (S2).

Increased students' satisfaction with the teacher, is another interesting and important aspect reported as a result of teachers' pursuing TPD:

"با⬜نسبة⬜بعض⬜المدرسين ان⬜تابعة بعض أنواع⬜تنمية⬜المهنية ساعدت في تطوير⬜هاراتهم في⬜المجالات⬜مهنية و⬜اعلمية. وزاد⬜ن⬜قة⬜المدرس بنفسه وبادائه وكذاك⬜قدراته. وهذا بدوره زاد⬜ن رضا⬜اطلاب عن⬜المدرس بالاضافة ⬜ى تعزيز⬜اتفاعل⬜ع⬜المدرس."

"For some teachers, pursuing certain types of teacher professional development helped in improving their skills in the professional and scientific fields and increased the teachers'

confidence in himself, his performance and abilities. This, in turn, increased students' satisfaction with the teachers as well as enhanced interaction with the teachers." (S10).

5.5.2.3 The type of TPD claimed to have led to the positive change/effect

The third important issue that emerged from other stakeholders' responses is the type of TPD that may have led to the claimed positive change/effect, summarized in Table 5.8.

Table 5.6 Types of TPD having beneficial effects, as claimed by other stakeholders

The TPD activity that led to the effect	Stake holder number
Pursuing/ participating in certain types of TPD (not exactly specifying the type)	S6, S10, S11, S12, S15, S16
The ITE training program	S1, S3, S11, S14, S18, S2, S7
Training programs/ courses	S4, S5, S8, S16, S2, S9, S13
Watching Educational TV channel	S2

As table 5.8 clearly shows, some of the stakeholders just mentioned in general terms that pursuing/ participating in TPD activities had an effect on teachers, without specifying what type of TPD they had in mind. For example, S6 said:

"ان اتباع بعض أنواع تنمية مهنية ينعكس ايجابا على طريقة تي يمارسون بها هنتهم وتقدير دورهم تعليمي وزاد ن شعور الانتماء يها."

"pursuing some types of teachers' professional development positively affect the way they approach their profession, appreciating their educational work and increased a sense of belonging to it."

By contrast, some stakeholders did specify the type of TPD activity that led to the change and as table 5.8 shows, four different types of TPD were mentioned.

- The ITE program as we already saw above, a great number of stakeholders believed that the ITE program was one of the most effective TPD activities that led to a change in teacher's beliefs and practices and other aspects. The ITE program was perhaps seen as especially effective, because of its highly practical nature, full of opportunities for the teachers to practice using IT including computers, internet and projectors and because of the way it helped teachers apply what was learnt in their English classes.

It was one of the most effective programs and a great deal of efforts were exerted to make it available for teachers who enjoyed it and applied it in their own classes. Brandt (2006:362), also talking about teacher training in general, clearly stressed the idea that "Allowing for practice would provide new teachers with opportunities to experiment and make errors, free of the burden and distraction of assessment." Many researchers have emphasized the idea that one of the main conditions to be met if learners are to successfully learn a second language is that teachers must be adequately trained and have hands on experience (Enever, Moon & Raman, 2009, Emery, 2012).

- The ICDL course. Another technology-related source of TPD claimed to lead to a good impact on teachers is the international computer driving license course in Syria. S7 claimed that:

"ان هناك دورات ICDL والتي تقدم تدريبا للمدرسين ودروسا عن الكمبيوتر وقد أفادت المدرسين كثيرا في مجال تنمية مهاراتهم المعلوماتية ما انعكس ايجابا عليهم وعلى طلابهم."

 "there are ICDL courses that are available for teachers and they provide teachers with training and lessons on computers and it was of a great benefit for teachers in the way of improving their informatics skills and was positively reflected on the teacher as well as his students." Probably there are some reasons for why only one stakeholder mentioned ICDL as ITE was more available than other types and it has more coverage of application to teaching which ICDL does not, and in addition teachers are supported during classes by experts who observe their classes and provide non-evaluative feedback and comments in a friendly way.

- Other training courses. Seven further stakeholders claimed that training courses played a pivotal role in bringing about a positive effect on teachers. For example, S8:

"ن خلال اتباع دورات تدريبية لحصول على أفكار و رق جديدة فقد تم تزويد مدرسين بمهارات جديدة وهذا عزز قة
مدرسين بانفسهم وساعدهم على تخطي مشاكل تي تواجههم في مدرسة أو خلال تدريس."

"yes, through attending training courses to get new ideas and methods, teachers were equipped with new skills and increased teachers' self-confidence which helped in facing problems teachers may face at school or while teaching."

He did not specify what specific training courses he meant, but from the nature of the participants who said this I can surmise that he was probably referring to ones other than those above, introducing teachers to new teaching methods, and to the ones that were designed to prepare teachers for the new/ updated curriculum of English. We would indeed expect teachers' professional knowledge and competence to be enhanced by teacher training through "the application of the practical pedagogical knowledge acquired during the lessons and workshops" (Leshem and Hama, 2007:257).

- Educational TV programs. Finally, only one stakeholder referred explicitly to watching an educational TV channel as a form of TPD that may positively impact on teachers. S2 said:

" هناك كثير ن الأ ور متاحة لمدرسين في سورية وفي دينة دير زور تحديدا ولاتزال وزارة تعمل على اضافة
اهو جديد في هذا مجال."

"there are lots of things that are available for teachers in Syria and in the city of Deir-Ezzor specifically, and the Ministry is still working to offer what is new in this field". He went on to give an example of that as

"فعلى سبيل مثال هناك قناة تلفزيونية تابعة وزارة تربية."

"For example, the educational TV channel that belongs to the Ministry of Education." This same idea was mentioned by one of the experienced teachers (T10) as a beneficial source of TPD although he talked about the Egyptian educational channel not the Syrian Ministry one as a source of TPD. This may in fact suggest that the stakeholders are unaware of such resources in the world outside Syria and think only in terms of what Syria provides, so are 'behind' the teachers, some of whom (but not many) are aware of a wider range of resources.

5.5.2.4. Conclusion/overall discussion for RQ6

Comparing the teachers and other stakeholders' findings concerning the effects of TPD, I can confirm that there are some of points of agreement and disagreement between them. These are represented by the following points.

The vast majority of both stakeholders and teachers reported a positive impact of TPD. Only three teachers and two other stakeholders felt no impact of TPD on teachers/ teaching for reasons mentioned earlier.

Also, they all talked about the impact of TPD on teachers' beliefs about teaching methods, and ideas related to teaching.

They all talked about a change in teaching methods where they shared views on use of technology, classroom management, dealing with students and avoiding traditional teaching methods. They both shed light on the importance of ITE program. In addition, teachers talked in greater detail including students' group work, seating arrangement, presentation, correction and feedback methods.

Stakeholders and teachers referred to the impact of TPD on classroom materials considering students' needs and interests. Teachers again gave more details about the nature of the materials: posters, topics, grammar rules and examples.

Stakeholders and teachers shared the view of impact of TPD on teachers' feelings including love of teaching, feelings of appreciation of it as a vocation, feeling of self-confidence, of interest and fun. Stakeholders also talked about teachers' feeling of belonging to a community of practice and sense of motivation. On the other hand, teachers talked about feelings of parenthood and intellectual challenge.

Stakeholders talked about some interesting effects that the teachers did not refer to. One was the impact of TPD on TPD itself in various ways, others were the effect of TPD on teacher career progression as well as its impact on students.

Overall, then, I could say that while the teachers were perhaps naturally able to talk in more detail about effects on classroom teaching and materials, which is their domain, the other

stakeholders suggested some effects that were less obvious, but which I suspect the teachers would nevertheless agree with.

Concerning the type of TPD that led to change there were more marked differences between the teachers and the other stakeholders. Some of the stakeholders talked in rather general terms about TPD having an effect without indicating what type, whereas the teachers were more often specific. Most noticeably, whereas other stakeholders, when they were specific, referred only to four types of TPD as having an impact, the teachers indicated a much wider range. Particularly telling is that almost all the TPD activities specifically mentioned by stakeholders as having an impact involved some sort of externally provided training course with one reference to the Syrian Educational TV channel. None of them talked about activities done by teachers themselves nor the ones offered by other teachers (e.g. observation). That means they are revealing that their idea of TPD is very much as something provided for teachers, probably by the Syrian authorities that they represent, driven top down. They do not seem to make much mention of more teacher-led TPD such as self-access use of the wide range of online and TV resources, nor of teacher reflection based on experience or on what fellow teachers, students or parents can generate. Either they do not think of this as TPD, or they do not credit it with having any real beneficial impact.

On the other hand, teachers talked about the effects of a very wide range of types of TPD as a source of effect ranging from self-chosen ones to ones offered by others (including professionals or other teachers), including reflection, consulting experienced teachers, other stakeholders, students, and parents, the ITE program, observation, training courses/ programs, action research, workshops. The teachers' responses showing greater awareness of the fuller range than the other stakeholders. For instance, one of the teachers mentioned the Egyptian Educational TV channel not the Syrian one, it seems that other stakeholders may not be aware of it as source of TPD or they may prefer teachers to follow the ones that are offered in Syria only. Indeed, it is noticeable that there was very little or no mention by any participants in either group of any effects a number of valuable resources that I uncovered as relevant and available and which I would argue could also have beneficial effects. This is presumably because, as we saw in answering RQ2, they did not report using these/were unaware of them.

On the other hand, the majority of teachers and other stakeholders agreed in reporting the same widespread positive impact of the ITE program and probably this is due to the fact that the program was the most prevailing one at that time, recently adopted in Syria (2010) and great deal of effort had been exerted to implement it even during the problems in Syria. Actually, none of the previous studies of TPD reviewed in this thesis looked at the impact of TPD empirically from such a range of viewpoints, including points of agreement and disagreement between teachers and other stakeholders. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is not something researched before, so the results could be considered as novel.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter marks the end of the thesis, I will present a brief summary of the main findings of the teachers as well as of the other stakeholders. Finally, I will shed light on the implications of the study, limitations of the study as well as suggestions for future research.

I will present summary of the main findings answering each of the six research questions.

6.2 RQ1 what do teachers think teacher professional development is?

Only four of the teachers were not familiar with the concept of TPD. This seems to be due to these teachers' being young, untrained novice male teachers, three of them are from countryside and the current conditions affected them.

By contrast, the majority of teachers showed some familiarity with the term (in Arabic), though their understanding of the concept proved to be limited. Their definitions focused on the general nature of TPD, medium of delivering TPD, purpose of TPD, the impact of TPD on teaching and the occurrence rate of TPD.

Concerning the general definition of TPD, some of the teachers viewed TPD as a training process. By contrast, some of the teachers spoke of TPD in a more teacher-centered way, for example as a way for increasing teachers' awareness, that TPD can be based on teachers' self-reflection, independent of external training.

TPD was also viewed by many teachers as leading to change and self-improvement. Furthermore, teachers spoke of the quality of what CPD heads towards as something that is better or best and that TPD meant keeping up with contemporary ideas.

In addition, some of these informants talked about the medium of delivering TPD, often indicated by the keywords *through, by*. These are represented by:

Training courses, workshops, classroom observation, lectures, pursuing a higher degree, reading books and useful resources, consulting experienced teachers, exchanging ideas with colleagues, attending presentations made by experienced teachers, using the internet and modern technology and consulting students or parents for their opinions.

Furthermore, some of the teachers talked generally about the purposes or effects of TPD, such as the affective side of the teachers, change in teachers' practices. On the other hand, some teachers reported specific effects of TPD on teaching such as adopting a bottom-up approach to teaching, change from traditional teaching of a grammar rule followed by practice to having students work out the grammar rule, adjustment of amount of information delivered to what the learners can cope with, moving from teaching to learning and integrating technology into education.

Moreover, three informants defined TPD in terms of its rate. One teacher saw it as being a continuous, life-long process. By contrast two teachers viewed TPD as taking place at a certain time only (before or during teacher's career).

Summing up teachers' beliefs about the nature of TPD, only one of the teachers mentioned the important aspect of TPD as a continuous process that should take place throughout the whole career of a teacher. Probably this is due to lack of pre-service training. On the other hand, some of the teachers defined TPD as a matter of development, improvement and growth or with reference to words such as new, modern, update, quality, better and best, which implies an awareness of the important role of TPD. However, there was no real stress on these issues by researchers in their definitions of TPD.

Also, none of the teachers defined TPD as a matter of teacher learning, but rather there were indications that the majority of teachers considered it as more likely to be something provided by other stakeholders. Unlike experts' views, none of these teachers mentioned that a change in belief should occur first so as to change practices. Generally, they exhibited beliefs that lack fully formed knowledge of the concept of TPD, and only provided partial definitions of TPD as a concept.

6.3 RQ2 and RQ3: What types of TPD strategies are engaged in and why are they are/ they are not engaged in TPD strategy of this or that sort?

Overall, the teachers reported doing quite a lot of TPD activities that are not prompted from outside. Interestingly, the majority of these teachers were considering these activities as a means of improving themselves, and their own TM. The majority of teachers reported adopting multiple types of TPD activities as represented by the following, in descending order of number of mentions.

Using the internet as a source of TPD, almost all the teachers reported surfing the internet, websites and using the internet through social groups including WhatsApp and Facebook, as a means for improving themselves and their teaching.

Reflection after class, the majority of teachers reported an interest in reflection after delivering their own classes. Some teachers reported reflection on the negative or the positive aspects of teaching, whereas others focused on both the positive as well as the negative aspects. Also, the majority of teachers, saw reflection as a continuous timeless process.

Talk with colleagues in the staff room, it is noticeable that the majority of teachers reported sharing their experiences, views and ideas in the staff room, mostly on a daily-basis.

Attending training courses, the majority of teachers interviewed reported following some kinds of training during their profession as teachers. Almost all the teachers talked about in-service teacher training, rather than preservice one.

Being observed by PD providers, during the interview most of the teachers said that their own classes of English had been and were still being observed by PD providers; supervisors, headmasters, trainers...etc. Surprisingly, three teachers said that their classes had never been observed by PD providers. Most probably this is due to the fact that these teachers teach in the countryside where such matters are, to some extent, neglected and not much attention is paid from above to teachers' development/ teacher training.

Observing a colleague: the majority of teachers mentioned that they observed a colleague teaching at one time during their life. Also, the majority of teachers reported being observed by a colleague.

Attending workshops, the majority of teachers referred to that.

Holding parents' evening, the majority of teachers reported having parents' evening at the schools almost twice or at least once a year.

Reflection on a previous term, almost half of the teachers reported reflecting termly on their own English classes. It was not adopted too often as teachers reported reflecting often after delivering their own classes, so may not be interested in a termly type of reflection.

Cooperative/collaborative teaching, exactly half of the teachers reported experiencing a cooperative type of teaching at some point during their career as teachers.

Audio-recording of lessons, almost half the teachers who were interviewed, reported audio-recording themselves teaching English and reflecting on it. However, some of the teachers considered it as something odd or unusual. Others, liked the idea and even promised to apply it as a future technique.

Keeping a diary, the minority of teachers reported keeping a diary/lesson report to write their ideas, views, feelings and reflections after giving a lesson. That could be due to not being interested in that.

Consulting students for their feedback and opinion: only few teachers, used this strategy and it might be interpreted from the teachers that this simply did not come to their minds.

Overall, the teachers reported doing quite a lot that is not prompted from the outside. However, they were not adopting certain type of activities (such as video recording their classes) as it did not come to their mind or it was considered as something odd. In addition, the majority of these TPD activities are intended to improve their own teaching methods and TPD as well.

6.4 RQ4: What types of professional development would they ideally like to pursue? And what are the obstacles?

Their answers fell into the following three categories.

Some of the teachers looked for TPD as training from professionals, most of which would be chosen by teachers rather than required of them to participate in. These are represented by the following with a reference to the source of the obstacle.

- Training courses on teaching methods at the British Council as well as the American Cultural Institutes in Damascus. Due to the unstable conditions in Syria, the councils are now closed.

- The availability of pre-service, in-service and continuous training throughout their careers. Again, in the hands of decision makers. (central MoE)

- A wish to integrate technology into education. The problems in Syria affected that.

- Higher studies at the university level. The obstacle is the unstable conditions in Syria in addition to the lack of time and financial issues. In addition, MA in ESP is currently unavailable in Syria.

-A diploma in neuro-linguistic programming. The obstacles are issues of time, money and effort.

-The subject of teaching methods should be taught right from the first year for students majoring English. (university)

-Research should be conducted on teachers of English and other teachers on issues related to their own PD. (MoHE)

-In every school, there should be a PD provider. (local education center)

- The Egyptian educational channel as a source of TPD. This is often unavailable because of continuous power cuts/ affected by the problems.

- TPD and the technology equipment/programs should be available for teachers in the countryside. (local education center)

On the other hand, some teachers wished for TPD as input from other teachers. This covers what fellow teachers can do to improve other colleagues and included

-Consulting more experienced teachers. (lack of time)

- Transferring TPD practices and TM issues from the private secondary schools to the Syrian state ones. (local education center)

-To observe Syrian and non-Syrian colleagues teaching. The obstacle could be lack of time, and colleagues with different nationalities are almost unavailable in the context of the study. (lack of time/issue of unavailability)

On the other hand, some of the teachers wished for TPD as achieved by self-improvement.

-Traveling to different countries as a source of enhancing their TPD/ TM. However, there are two obstacles: such trips are expensive in addition to the unstable conditions in Syria as well as issues of time and money.

-Audio or video recording ones' own classes. Some schools may not have recording facilities available for teachers there. (financial issue and lack of teachers' consideration.)

-Teachers should generally work on improving themselves. I.e. TPD is something provided internally, by ones' own self, not by others. An issue that requires consideration by teachers themselves.

To sum up, we have seen that teachers talked about different types of TPD activities which they wish to engage in ideally, and undoubtedly the majority of what they wished for could be useful and important as far as the process of TPD is concerned. The teachers showed a broad view of TPD by wanting to do many different types of TPD activity, not all the same type as what they already did. Some of what they want is new (e.g, PD providers, travelling abroad) others are echoed in the literature that I reviewed. Moreover, most desire TPD which involves some other person/source providing it, whether authorities/trainers or other teachers, and very little shows evidence of wanting to engage in reflection as a major source of TPD. Mostly, they want to be able to self-choose TPD which is available rather than have it imposed. Finally, the obstacles include many things that would be there even without the war.

6.5 RQ5 Do any of the above differ according to teacher background, esp. novice vs experienced?

Background issues may play a role regarding TPD. There was strong evidence in the data that teaching and training experience, and contextual factors such as place of teaching (countryside vs the city) affect TPD.

There was a strong evidence in the data that contextual factors can greatly affect TPD, such as the place where the teachers work. For example, on many occasions teachers working in the countryside complained of lack of TPD activities in the countryside in the form of training programs, the ITE course etc., and the majority of these teachers were not able to provide definitions of the concept of TPD. Teachers at the countryside reported depending mainly on self-chosen issues to improve themselves. Even colleagues, supervisors and head teachers may not be seen as a good source of support on their way to TPD. By contrast, there were lots of externally provided TPD available for teachers at the city.

There was a difference between experienced and novice teachers regarding engaging in/ not engaging in TPD, and experienced teachers exhibited a great sense of confidence than novice ones. In other words, TPD had a greater impact on the confidence of novice teachers than of experienced ones. On the other hand, there were certain instances where experienced teachers resorted to their experience only and showed no interest in pursuing some type of TPD and no effect on their teaching practices which goes against many researchers' view who stressed that experience alone is not enough and does not ensure teachers' effectiveness. On the other hand, there was a clear evidence in the teachers' data that novice teachers show a great sense of interest and enthusiasm toward pursuing different types of TPD and they seem to be more interested in modern technology. By contrast, experienced teachers showed a great sense of confidence concerning issues related to teaching and classroom management, despite not engaging in TPD.

6.6 RQ6 What effects do teachers or stakeholders think any TPD they have engaged in has had on their teaching beliefs, practices or affects?

6.6.1 Other stakeholders' views on the effects of TPD compared with teachers'

All in all, teachers and other stakeholders' findings showed some points of simialrities and differences between them concerning the impact of TPD on teachers. The vast majority of both stakeholders and teachers reported a positive impact of TPD. Only three teachers and two other stakeholders felt no impact of TPD on teachers/ teaching for reasons mentioned earlier.

Also, they all talked about the impact of TPD on teachers' beliefs about teaching methods, and ideas related to teaching, in a similar way. They all talked about a change in teaching methods where they shared views on use of technology, classroom management, dealing with students and avoiding traditional teaching methods and stressed the importance of the ITE program. In addition, however, teachers talked in greater detail on issues related to TM. Both stakeholders and teachers referred to the impact of TPD on classroom materials considering students' needs and interests. Also, they both shared the view of impact of TPD on teachers' feelings including love of teaching, appreciation of it, a sense of self-confidence, interest and fun. Stakeholders also talked about teachers' feeling of belonging to a community of practice and sense of motivation, whereas, teachers talked about feelings akin to parenthood and intellectual challenge.

In addition, stakeholders talked about some interesting effects that the teachers did not refer to. One was the impact of TPD on TPD itself in various ways, others were the effect of TPD on teacher career progression as well as its impact on students.

Concerning the type of TPD that led to change there were more marked differences between the teachers and the other stakeholders. Unlike teachers, almost all the TPD activities specifically mentioned by stakeholders as having an impact involved some sort of externally provided training course with one reference to the Syrian Educational TV channel. None of them talked about activities done by teachers themselves nor the ones offered by other teachers (e.g. observation). That means they are revealing that their idea of TPD is very much as

something provided for teachers, probably by the Syrian authorities that they represent, driven top down.

6.7 Implications for Teachers

Based on the findings from the teachers and other stakeholders, I can say that there are some implications that teachers need to take into consideration to further improve and facilitate the uptake and sustainability of TPD as a process, which are represented by the following points.

The data provided very strong evidence that though the majority of teachers were in fact pursuing certain types of TPD, almost the majority of them were not very familiar with the concept of TPD and they offered rather partial definitions. There were many instances where it was felt that the current research could successfully raise teachers' awareness of the concept of TPD in its full breadth which may lead them to engage in a wider range of its forms.

Although many researchers have emphasized the importance of audio and video recording ones' own classes as very useful techniques that will give the teachers a very clear picture of their own classes and practices, and stimulate reflection, very few teachers reported audio recording their own classes. Sadly, none of the teachers reported video-recording their own classes. These methods need to be more used by teachers, and stakeholders may have to facilitate this by offering recording facilities for teachers. Such a feature is however already available to many teachers, in that they could audio record a lesson on their phone.

Furthermore, teachers themselves should also work more on improving themselves rather than looking mainly for externally provided types of TPD. Teachers should be the main agents of change as far as their own TPD is concerned. Improving themselves could be represented by working by themselves on improving their technological skills, surfing the internet for updates, as well as reading and reflecting on the content of useful books and watching educational channels.

Finally, it is desirable that teachers work more in cooperation and increase a sense of interaction between them and other teachers to avoid being fossilized and isolated. Almost all

teachers reported sharing ideas with colleagues in the staff room. However, more types of cooperation are required probably in the form of mutual observation, working together in terms of arranging lesson plans, initiating WhatsApp or Facebook groups for consulting fellow teachers.

6.8 Implications for other stakeholders

One of the main important roles of other stakeholders is facilitating TPD and providing better conditions in which TPD could develop and improve. These could be enhanced by paying attention to the following issues.

From my point of view, stakeholders may need to open teachers' eyes widely to the importance of TPD and pave the way for them to pursue and sustain their own TPD by themselves with some help of other stakeholders including head teachers, trainers and subject supervisors. In particular, the common view of TPD as provided top down by other stakeholders, rather than as generated or at least chosen by teachers, should be replaced by a more inclusive view that allows a place for the autonomy of the teacher as learner.

During the interviews, teachers talked about certain obstacles affecting their pursuit of TPD. Among these are the lengthy syllabus and lack of time, so probably one of the main issues that stakeholders should address is to free up some time for teachers to work on improving themselves probably by decreasing the working hours for teachers. Also, teachers should be well-paid enough to avoid the problem of teachers needing to be engaged in other kinds of job and as a result leaving them with not much time to work on their own TPD. This issue is in the hand of the MoE.

Awarding scholarships for teachers to study abroad or follow training abroad in one of the English-speaking countries and being updated on what is new in the fields of teaching and TPD. This issue is in the hand of MoHE.

Syrian universities may play a pivotal role by introducing the subject of Teaching Methods and coverage of what TPD is right from the first year for students studying in the department of English and who are expected to be teachers of English. From this the teachers could get to

know the types of TPD that exist, both as INSET and PRESET in Syria. This issue is in the hand of the universities.

Availability of PRESET should be improved. Probably, one of the most beneficial and important aspect of training courses is when they occur prior to obtaining a teaching post and allow teachers to practice in a friendly way, preparing teachers for the realities of the classroom. The findings of the study show strong evidence that the majority of teachers show interest and felt the importance of pursuing some types of training programs, especially PRESET, and some of them called for pre- service training to be available for teachers and indeed that it should be made mandatory for English language teachers. Such training is hoped to raise teachers' awareness of TPD as well as of teaching directly, and so lead to teachers engaging in TPD later differently and in the best possible way. This issue is in the hands of the MoE.

In Syria, PRESET is not a prerequisite for teaching English at secondary school level. Teachers can start the profession of teaching straight after graduation in English. This may in turn create a gap and a challenge for novice teachers between the imagined view of teaching and the realities of the classroom and they may start teaching with almost no idea about TPD and self-improvement. Therefore, training for language teachers should be made by the central MoE a prerequisite qualification for job opportunities in schools. To achieve better results, training courses are supposed to focus on learners of a specific age range, needs, interest or level rather than providing general teaching courses, which may not be useful (Emery, 2012).

Availability of continuing training is another issue that needs careful consideration by the MoE, as TPD is a continuous process that does not take place only at one time during a teacher's career, as indicated by the participants. Also, such training should focus more on making teachers more aware of the issue of self-chosen and self-created TPD.

Also, it was felt through the interviews that almost the majority of teachers were not fully aware of the concept of TPD, although they were in fact pursuing certain types of it. Hence, it is really hoped that TPD programs in Syria should introduce a fully rounded concept of TPD for trainee teachers, including the teachers' responsibilities to pursue it.

Involvement of teachers in decisions related to TPD and teaching issues rather than considering them as mere recipients of change. Since teachers are in effect, the executors of change, they need to be given full rein to make their voices heard as they are the most important and pivotal part in the process of TPD. This issue is in the hand of head teachers, trainers and subject supervisors.

The study strongly recommends that all other stakeholders should encourage and facilitate more interaction between teachers and other stakeholders and among teachers themselves as this will in turn create a friendly school environment, where all work for a defined objective: improving TPD will definitely positively affect students.

Pay more attention to the countryside TPD problems, since teachers in the countryside suffered from lack of many types of TPD there which are almost unavailable (e.g. training courses, workshops etc.) and even when they are available, they find teacher training programs below their own expectations and not really useful. (local education centre)

 Availability of recording facilities for teachers and encourage teachers to record themselves teaching as part of their own TPD. (head teachers in cooperation with the local education center).

It was felt that the focus of the teacher's diary encouraged by some Stakeholders is meant to be lesson plans or the like, hence that may be why most teachers who kept diaries did so for this function. Stakeholders should promote not just dairies for lesson planning with entries written before a lesson, but also for retrospection and reflection with entries written after lessons. (Supervisors' role).

Concerning the issue of conference, it is recommended that the local education center in Deir-Ezzor might arrange local regional conferences there.

The Stakeholders and teachers need to be made aware of the wider range of resources/TPD types (e.g there were several Ed TV channels available in Syria either by satellite from various countries, or online, since a lot of TV is online nowadays). In addition, they also need to be made more aware of / value more TPD types that do NOT consist of sources of information (eg websites, training courses), but are based in teacher reflection on experience.

6.9 Limitations of the study

Like any other studies, there are some limitations of this study. Overall, the research method used in the current study proved to be very effective for the purpose of the study: semi-structured interviews, despite having to be conducted via Skype rather than face to face in person, yielded unexpected data that are characterized by wealth and richness. Interviews with both teachers and other stakeholders were really useful and due to the richness of data a questionnaire was not used as was initially planned for. In particular, the pilot study was really an important step as it helped in changing some questions of the interview to make it clearer and to yield more information. It also gave me the chance to practice the interviewing technique with an eye to time management. The research would however, have benefited from conducting some classroom observations of teachers so as to see any effect of pursuing TPD on their own teaching practices. However, for practical reasons that was impossible due to the unstable conditions in Syria that were taking place at the time of data collection. Also, involving a small number of students in the research, by interview or questionnaire, could have illuminated the effectiveness of the teachers and the actual impact of teachers' pursuit of TPD on teaching.

Moreover, with respect to the choice of participants, I was able to successfully maintain a good relationship with the participants, which was pivotal to provide valid and authentic type of data, since some of the participants were students of mine and some of the other stakeholders were colleagues or someone who I knew. It is however debatable how far a sample chosen in this way is truly representative of secondary teachers in Syria generally. Nevertheless, the research benefited from this approach in that the majority of the participants expressed a very positive attitude towards conducting such research and showed a great sense of enthusiasm, devotion and readiness to participate in the research and I am still in touch with them. Furthermore, I would claim that through my knowledge of place, people, setting and acquaintances, I was able to select participants with a suitable range of different experiences and background information. This may have yielded more varied and interesting data than a strictly random sample would have. Moreover, my personal knowledge of the participants and

their context helped to provide more precise interpretations and justifications of participants' replies.

However, one of the sampling problems faced was that some potential participants I approached refused to participate in the current research. This could be attributed to the following reasons. Teachers and stakeholders in that context are not really familiar with the idea of research, though they were assured of the confidentiality of the research. Also, some of them were not familiar with the concept of TPD which made them lack confidence to participate. Probably another issue is the unstable conditions there and some of the other stakeholders who refused to participate probably were worried to talk about things which they may consider sensitive issue to talk about such as problems or any other issues affecting TPD. This did however unavoidably impact on the representativeness of the sample to some extent.

6.10 Suggestions for future action in the context

Something that became apparent during the study was that the majority of the participants themselves showed a great sense of interest and enthusiasm to participate in this research on this novel (for them) topic: TPD. They highly appreciated its importance for their own TPD and some of them called for more research to be carried out in this area and more teachers to be involved in it. The majority of the participants felt the value of conducting such research as it could hopefully lead ultimately to important changes in their own practices. This augurs well for more work of this type in Syria both in terms of need and interest. Indeed, I would argue, given the paucity of literature I was able to uncover reporting actual studies of TPD of in-service EFL teachers round the world, that this could be useful in many countries (chapter two section 2.3).

Four types of such research suggest themselves. Firstly, such studies could echo ours in being designed to find out basic information about in-service TPD and teachers' attitudes to it, but be done in different settings such as primary, intermediate or university level, and not only with teachers of English, but teachers of different subjects as well. Such further studies could, in addition to teacher interviews such as ours, use observation and interviews with some

students, as I suggested above. Furthermore, given the importance afforded to beliefs in current research on teachers (ref to chapter two section.2.5), but the small amount of information I uncovered from other studies with respect to what in-service teachers understand TPD really to be, I feel much more needs to be done on this in a range of contexts, given that teacher TPD beliefs may be the key to understanding and changing teacher TPD practices. In short, what teachers believe TPD to be needs to be afforded an equal place in research importance with currently better covered areas such as what TPD teachers engage actually in and what the effects of that are on their beliefs about teaching and their actual teaching practices, and so ultimately on students' learning.

Secondly and importantly it is worth noting that, as I conducted this study, I became aware of the fact that the research instrument (interview) was really serving two purposes, not one. Its planned purpose was of course the research purpose of finding out about teachers' ideas of what TPD was, what TPD they did, whether they thought it to be effective and so forth. However, it became apparent that the interviews were themselves also behaving like a form of TPD. The interview questions exhibited an ability to raise teacher awareness of the nature and types of TPD, possible factors affecting it and so forth, which very likely could in some way affect teachers' own beliefs and practices concerning their own PD. Some of the participants explicitly emphasized the fact that the research highly motivated them to think and act differently and with more awareness about their own TPD. For example, with respect to self-recording their lesson, some of the teachers were really motivated, liked the idea and even promised to apply it as a future technique, T4 stated that: "honestly speaking, it did not come to my mind. If it had come to my mind, I would have applied it. I am sure that it would be one of the important steps that would help me as a teacher."

Hence, more research is needed in this area of the possible role of interview questions such as ours on the TPD beliefs and practices of interviewees. This is particularly important since, for in-service teachers such as ours who have largely entered teaching with little or no PRESET, the TPD they do engage in appears to focus primarily on the teachers' beliefs and practices with respect to teaching methods, and not their beliefs and practices with respect to TPD itself. Such a research project could take the form of action research to try to measure how far

teachers became more aware of TPD and/or changed their TPD practices after an interview-type intervention.

Thirdly, a more ambitious kind of intervention would be one that engaged more with promoting teacher TPD autonomy. Probably one of the most important achievements of the current research is that it made the voice of teachers heard. In my context, and no doubt many others, teachers are often viewed as recipients of TPD and executors of change in teaching methods rather than as agents of change. Hence more involvement of them in decision making concerning their views and suggestions about TPD should be considered. While much is talked about concerning the desirability of learner autonomy both inside and outside the classroom, it can be overlooked that teachers may in some areas, such as TPD, lack such autonomy. Hence, another kind of action research project that might be considered, when one day hopefully Syria returns to some form of normality, would be that of engaging teachers in bottom up involvement in TPD. This could for example be based on focus group discussion of what sort of TPD they would really like (elaborating on RQs on this issue), and then enabling them to pursue it (e.g. by organizing their own teacher mutual help workshops, observations locally and further afield, online forums and suchlike) and seeing what kinds of TPD they choose and the effects. Clearly, such a project would however require extensive cooperation between a researcher and other agencies such as head teachers, supervisors and education authorities (see implications for stakeholders above). we found that views and roles of stakeholders other than the teachers are still under researched, and almost no studies exist. I therefore call for more research to be conducted in this area in general and more specifically in the context of the study, since this study showed that valuable information can be gained from such sources.

My intention is that, once the situation has settled down in Syria, I will send a summary written report of the research and its implications to local Education centres, the MoE, and the Higher Institute of Languages (HIoL). Furthermore, I will myself be working in the HIoL in Deir-Ezzor. As mentioned in (3.4), the HIoL is in charge of offering different types of / resources for TPD. Hence, I will hopefully be in a position of supervising, recommending and offering different types of TPD activities there and based on my current study, and the implications drawn from the findings, certain interventionist procedures will be put into action, as presented in the following paragraphs.

First, I aim to set up awareness-raising programs on the pivotal role of TPD and the importance of pursuing it, and of incorporating the wider concept of TPD into PD/teacher education programmes, addressed to all concerned with TPD. This would include both teachers and other stakeholders.

Second, there was clear evidence in the data that the majority of the other stakeholders viewed TPD as provided top-down, while teachers were more aware of different types of TPD. Hence, one of the main aims of me will be to raise awareness among stakeholders and teachers, through workshops and seminars, to encourage greater teacher autonomy through teacher-centred activities, and ones shared by peers. This is an instance where teacher educators/ PD providers themselves need to learn and take into consideration.

Third, there is a need for setting up/facilitating TPD activities that emphasize the importance of creating a school environment that is based on collaboration, cooperation, collective work and a sense of belonging to a community of practice among all concerned with TPD, that includes teachers themselves and PD providers, stressing that TPD is the shared responsibility of all. Furthermore, PD providers, the MoE and local Education centre, should be made aware, probably through written report of this thesis, that any PD reform should take into consideration teachers' needs, beliefs, interests and individual differences concerning their PD as these can greatly affect their reaction towards it. There is no 'one size fits all' TPD. In this way, teachers' involvement in decisions related to their PD is indispensable. The report of the present study should also be used to inform decisions related to PD activities in general, and to emphasise the need to pay special attention to raising the awareness of teachers who show resistance/fear of change and to stressing that change is the first step to success and that TPD is a life-long process.

Fifth, this study highly recommended making pre-service teacher education obligatory. For this purpose, the Higher Institute of languages can offer such training courses that can prepare teachers for the realities of the classroom and should be the first step to set them off on the road of their personal PD journey. Integrating teaching practice/ micro teaching is an important element of such initial training. Incentives should be offered for teachers upon completion of such training; certificates, pay-increase...etc.

Sixth, given the utmost importance of reflection, HIoLs in different Syrian governorates, in cooperation with local education centres, can offer training courses and workshops on how to reflect, as a form of TPD for teachers to engage in as long as they are teachers. These could take place either on the site of the course provider or in schools or universities. Teachers can be introduced to the importance of reflection and trained through requiring them to write reflectively about notable events in their day to day teaching, or on the training just received and how they could or could not use it in their own teaching. If necessary, this could be guided by a checklist of questions to answer. Other techniques are that the trainers give feedback on teacher activities during an INSET course in a way that prompts the teacher to reflect. Aside from transmitting their chosen content (e.g about IT in the classroom) INSET courses can be used to get teachers reflecting about the course, their day to day teaching, and the connection between the two, rather than just be told theoretically about reflection or left without guidance to reflect on their teaching.

The written report of the research should also encourage cooperation between the PD providers including local education centres and MoE, HIoL, and trainers to make available online types of TPD (seminars, workshops, forums, training) so as to transcend the difficulties affecting TPD arising from contextual constraints, lack of time, travel distances... etc. It was clear in the data that teachers resorted to these when needed as they find it accessible, flexible, convenient and effective in terms of time, location and money.

One final and very general implication which I feel emerges relates to those stakeholders who are in charge of provision of top-down CPD in the context. This includes the Ministry of Education, the local authorities in Deir-Ezzor and to an extent school headteachers. To all of these I would suggest that more attention need to be paid to the evaluation of the effectiveness of whatever TPD occurs. Only in that way, TPD can be developed and improved in a rational way. Following the occurrence of TPD, Guskeys' (2000) five levels of impact evaluation need to be considered. Not only does participants' reaction need to be considered, but also what participants actually learned from TPD activities and any implications for organisational support. Most importantly, change in teacher practices and consequent improvement in students' learning are in many ways the really crucial indications of CPD effectiveness.

6.11 Conclusion of the chapter

To the best of the researcher's knowledge mine is the first piece of research on TPD of secondary English teachers conducted in the context of study (city of Deir Ezzor) or the larger context which is Syria. In addition, the study aims to raise teachers' awareness and understanding of the importance of pursuing and enhancing their PD in their career with a particular focus on EFL teachers in Syrian secondary schools. In other words, the experience of the interviews that I conducted for her research may raise the participants' awareness. This may, in turn, help teachers become more self-critical of themselves, find their way on the road to their and improve their classroom practices.

It is hoped that the implications arising from this research prove useful and would be seriously taken into consideration not only by researchers, but also by teachers, and other stakeholders as well as decision makers, especially at the time where this research would be most needed: at the time of the rebuilding of the beautiful Syria.

Furthermore, in the wider world of EFL teaching quite little research has been conducted on TPD with regards to in-service teacher beliefs and its different types and from the points of view of all teachers and other stakeholders. In other words, research often is limited to TPD provided top down by TPD providers while ours explored the full range of TPD activities. So, while more research in this area is needed I hope that this study has done something to fill the gap in this area. It is hoped that a report of this study would be given to other stakeholders and decision makers in Syria including MoE, MoHE, local education center, who will in turn make teachers aware of the report (through head teachers and supervisors).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Form of consent to take part in a research project in Arabic

جامعة اسكس

قسم اللغة الانكليزية

العنوان: **البحث في وسائل التطور المهني لمدرسي اللغة الانكليزية في سورية**

الزملاء الاعزاء:

بداية اود ان اشكركم جزيل الشكر لموافقتكم على المشاركة بالبحث واتمنى من الله عز وجل ان تكون نتائج البحث مفيدة لكم كمدرسين للغة الانكليزية في سورية كما أود التنويه بان اجاباتكم الصريحة هي وحدها الكفيلة بنجاح هذا البحث.

لمحة موجزة عن البحث:

ان هذا البحث ماهو الا محاولة لالقاء الضوء على الوسائل المختلفة التي يتبعها مدرسوا اللغة الانكليزية لتعزيز ومتابعة تطورهم المهني وذلك في المدارس السورية المختلفة.

وسيركز هذا البحث على مواضيع اخرى كتلك المتعلقة باراء ومعتقدات المدرسين المتعلقة بتطورهم المهني ونوع استراتيجيات التطور المهني التي يتبعها المدرسون أو التي يرغبون باتباعها. كما ويهدف البحث لتقصي الأسباب التي تكمن وراء اختياريهم استراتيجية تطور مهني معينة دون غيرها بالاضافة الى تقصي العوامل التي قد تساهم اوتعرقل التطور المهني للمدرسين في سورية. كما ويهدف البحث الى معرفة ما اذا كان المذكور أعلاه يختلف تبعا لخلفية المدرس(مثلا كونه من ذوي الخبرة أو لا).

علاوة على ذلك يسعى البحث لتقصي رأي المعنين والمسؤلين عن التطور المهني للمدرسين باالأمور المذكورة أعلاه. سيتم الاعتماد على كل من المقابلات وتحليل الوثائق والمستندات كمصادر لجمع البيانات المتعلقة بالبحث.

أود التأكيد على السرية والخصوصية التامة للمشاركين بالبحث اذ انه سيتم الاحتفاظ بالمعلومات الشخصية المتعلقة بالمشاركين بكمبيوتر محمي بكلمة مرور خاصة ولن يتم ذكر اسمائهم مع اي شي

يدلون به. كما أود التنويه بان ليس هناك أي جوانب سلبية تنجم عن المشاركة أو عدم المشاركة بهذا البحث وكما يحق للمشارك الانسحاب من البحث باي وقت وبحرية مطلقة.

الباحث: بتول محمد النجرس   قسم اللغة الانكليزية

الايميل:bmoham@essex.ac.uk

المشرف على البحث: السيد فيل سكولفيلد

الايميل:scholp@essex.ac.uk

من فضلك اختر الاجابة المناسبة:

-لقد قرأت وفهمت المعلومات المتعلقة بالبحث والمذكورة أعلاه□

-لقد تم منحي الفرصة المناسبة للاستفسار عن البحث□

-أوافق على المشاركة بالبحث و لما يترتب على ذلك من اجراء مقابلة معي وتسجيلها. □

-أنا على علم تام بأن مشاركتي في هذا البحث هي على أساس تطوعي. □

-أدرك بأنه بامكاني الانسحاب من هذا البحث في اي وقت دون اعطاء أي مبررات ومن دون عقوبة□.

-أنا على علم تام بانه قد يتم اقتباس كلامي في منشورات,تقارير, مواقع انترنت أوفي اي شيئ ينتج عن البحث□

-لقد تم اطلاعي وبشكل كامل على كل التفاصيل المتعلقة بخصوصية البحث وبأنه لن يتم افشاء معلوماتي الشخصية لأي شخص خارج نطاق البحث□.

اسم المشارك:

الايميل:

التاريخ:

التوقيع: **شكرا جزيلا لكم**

Appendix B: Form of consent to take part in a research project
UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

    Department of Language and Linguistics

<u>**CONFIDENTIAL**</u>

Title of project / investigation:

An investigation into the Professional Development of English Teachers in Syrian Secondary Schools

Brief outline of project, including an outline of the procedures to be used:

This project is an attempt to shed light on the different ways teachers try to promote their professional development at different Syrian secondary schools. This research will address issues related to the teachers' beliefs about their professional development, the types of professional development activities they actually engage in or may ideally like to pursue, the reasons behind teachers' choice of certain types of activities and the factors that may facilitate or hinder their professional development and whether any of the above will differ according to teachers' background (novice vs. experienced etc.). Stakeholders and professional development providers will also be asked for their view on teachers' professional development.

Interviews and document analysis will be adopted for data collection. Confidentiality is assured for the participants. All personal data will be kept in a password-protected computer and no names will be associated with anything anyone says in the written report of the research. There is no risk of negative effects involved in the research and participants can withdraw at any time freely.

The name and contact Details of the Researcher:

Batoul Mohammed Alnijres   - Department of Langunage and Linguistics- PhD student

Email address: bmoham@essex.co.uk

Signed .... Date..

Name and contact details of the supervisor:

Mr Phil Scholfield   email: scholp.essex.ac.uk

Please Tick the appropriate boxes for you	**Yes**	**No**
I have read and understood the project information given above.	☐	☐
I have been given the chance to ask any questions related to the project.	☐	☐
I agree to take part in the project. Taking part in the project will include being interviewed and audio-recorded.	☐	☐
I understand that my participation is on a voluntary basis.	☐	☐
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving reasons and without any penalty.	☐	☐
I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs.	☐	☐
Details relating to anonymity and confidentiality of the information I provide have been fully explained to me and I understand that my personal details will not be revealed to people outside the project.	☐	☐

Name and contact details of the participant:

Participant name……………….. Signed…………………….. Date……/……/….

Participant contact details:

Thank you

Appendix C1: Teachers' interview questions in Arabic

العنوان : البحث في أساليب التطور المهني لمدرسي اللغة الانكليزية في سورية

بداية: أشكركم جزيل الشكر لمشاركتم ببحثي واود ان انوه انه ان كل ماسيتم ذكره هو مفيد للبحث(وكل الاجابات صحيحة) لذا ارجو التوسع بالاجابة قدر الامكان جزاكم الله كل خير.

المعلومات العامة :

1- منذ متى وأنت تعمل كمدرس للغة الانكليزية؟

2-هل سبق لك وأن سافرت الى الخارج؟

- إن كانت الاجابة نعم ؟إلى أين تحديدا؟كم من الوقت بقيت هناك؟ وماذاسافرت هناك؟

3-هل أنت تعطي دروسا في مدرسة واحدة فقط أم في مدارس أخرى أيضا؟

- إن كنت تعطي دروسا في دارس أخرى ,وماهي المرحلة التعليمية وكم من الوقت درست هناك؟ وهل تدرسون نفس النهاج؟

4-هل سبق لك وأن اتبعت دورة تدريبية سواءا قبل أو خلال مهنتك كمدرس؟

إن كانت الاجابة نعم:

- كم من الوقت استغرق التدريب (ماهي المدة)؟وهل يقام بشكل متكرر؟
- من الذي يقدم هذه الدورات؟ من المسؤل عنه؟ واين حدث(عقد)؟
- ماذا كانت طبيعة التدريب\ تركيز المواد التدريسية ؟

5-ماهي مؤهلاتك؟

-شهادة ثانوية -بكالوريوس   -شهادة ماجستير   -دبلوم تأهيل تربوي   -أخرى,اذكرها لوسمحت؟

الأسئلة الرئيسية:

1- هل سبق لك وأن سمعت بمفهوم التطور المهني للمدرسين؟

2-إن كانت الاجابة نعم للسؤال الأول

أ-هل بإمكانك تعريف التطور المهني بكلماتك؟

ب-هل بإمكانك اعطاء أمثلة على ذلك؟

ت-ماهو برايك الهدف من التطور المهني للمدرس؟

3-هل تسعى لتطوير نفسك مهنيا؟ ان كانت الاجابة نعم, فكيف, هل بإمكانك اعطاء أمثلة من فضلك؟ وان كانت الاجابة لا؟ فلماذا؟ ما السبب وراء ذلك؟

.

4-من فضلك , هل تقوم بأي من وسائل التطور المهني التالية:

أ-أن تمضي بعض الوقت بعد الدرس للتفكير فيه؟لماذا؟

ب - أن تتأمل وتسترجع ماحدث خلال فصل أو منهاج معين وذلك بنفس الطريقة المذكورة سابقا ؟لماذا؟

ت- الاحتفاظ بمذكرة\دفتر لتدوين ملاحظاتك وأفكارك بعد الحصص التدريسية ؟لماذا؟

ث - أن تسجل (صوتيا أو مرئيا) أجزاء من درسك ؟لماذا؟

ج - مراقبة زميل لك وهو يدرس ؟لماذا؟

ح-أن تتم مراقبة درسك من قبل زميل لك ؟لماذا؟

خ- التحدث و بشكل غير رسمي في غرفة عن التدريس؟لماذا؟

د - أن يكون لديك شخص أخر يراقب تدريسك ؟لماذا؟

ذ -التدريس بشكل تعاوني\مشترك مع الزملاء ؟لماذا؟

ر - حضور ورشات عمل أو مؤتمرات ؟لماذا؟

س- قرأة المجلات المخصصة للمدرسين أو مصادر على الانترنت عن طرق تدريس اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة ثانية ؟ لماذا؟

ش- عقد أمسيات بحضور المدرسين وأولياء الأمور أو تبادل الاراء مع الطلاب ؟لماذا؟

ص – هل هناك أي شيْ أخر تقوم به بغرض تطوير تدريسك\ نفسك كمدرس؟

5- هل سبق لك وأن استخدمت\اعتمدت على أي من المذكور سابقا لمساعدتك في اختيار أو تصميم مواد تدريسية مختلفة وتجريبها في الصف؟ان كانت الاجابة نعم اعط مثالا من فضلك؟ وان كانت الاجابة لا لماذا؟

6- هل سبق لك وأن اعتمدت على أي من المذكور أعلاه لتصميم و ابتكار وسائل تدريسية حديثة والتدبر بها؟

7--هل سبق وأن تغيرت أي من أفكارك ومعتقداتك عن التدريس كنتيجة لأي من المذكور سابقا؟

8- هل حدث وأن تغيرت مشاعرك تجاه التدريس نتيجة لأي من المذكور سابقا؟

9-هل هناك أي شيء أخرقد ترغب بأن تقوم به أو قد ترغب بمتابعته وبشكل مثالي لمساعدتك للتطور كمدرس ؟ ان كانت الاجابة نعم, فمن فضلك اذكره؟ومالذي يمنعك من القيام به حاليا؟

10- هل هناك أي شيء أخر قد ترغب في أن تضيفه\تدلي به فيما يخص هذا الموضوع؟ أي توصيات أو مقترحات؟

شكرا جزيلا لكم

Appendix C2: Teachers' interview questions in English

Background questions:

1-How long have you been teaching English?

2- What is your qualification?

*Propmts:

    a- Bachelor's degree. B- teachers' diploma in education c-MA degree d-others

3- Have you ever travelled abroad?

*prompts: If yes:

- Where? have you ever been to any English-speaking county?

-How long did you stay, and why?

4-Have you been teaching in this school only or also in any other schools?

*prompts:

If yes, where? How long? What level? same / different material?

6-Have you ever followed any pre or in service training course?

*prompts: if yes;

-how long was the training? Who delivered it? who was responsible for it? where was it?

 –what were the nature/ focus of the materials? How often you have such courses, training…etc

The main interview questions for teachers

1- Have you ever heard of the concept of teacher professional development?
*Prompts. (if the interviewee said no, then I would paraphrase it as simple as possible. For example, I mean the different ways teachers may adopt to improve their teaching or themselves as teachers in or outside the school context.)

2- If yes, as a teacher, what do you think teacher professional development is?

*Prompts: - can you please define it in your own words?

-can you please give me examples of it?

3- Do you try to improve yourself professionally?

*Prompts: -If yes, how, please give me examples?

-If no, why, what is the reason behind that?

4- Can you please tell me whether you do any of the following Professional development activities:

a-Spend some time after a lesson thinking about it? why?

b-Think back generally over a term or course when it finishes in the same way? why?

c-Keep a diary of your thoughts after classes about how the class went? why?

d- Audio or video record your whole lesson or certain parts of it? why?

e-Observe a colleague teaching? why?

f-Be observed by a colleague? Why?

g-Talk informally in the staffroom with colleagues? why?

h-Someone else observe you teach?

i- Teach collaboratively with other colleagues?

j-Attend workshops or conferences?

k. Read teacher journals or online sources about TEFL teaching?

l-Hold parent-teacher evenings or share ideas with students?

m. is there anything else you do to improve yourself?

5-Have you ever used any of the previously mentioned activities to help choosing or designing different teaching materials and try them out with the class?

6-Have you ever used any of the previously mentioned activities to try new teaching techniques and see how they work?

7-Have your ideas about teaching (beliefs) ever changed as a result of any of the previously mentioned activities?

8-Have your feelings about teaching ever changed as a result of previously mentioned activities?

9- Is there anything else that you might like to do or may ideally like to pursue? If yes, please state it?

*Prompts: what stops you from doing it at the moment?

10-Is there anything else that you might like to add?

*prompts: any recommendations or suggestions?

Thanks for your cooperation and help

Appendix D: An example of teachers' interviews(T13)

Transcription of the first Teacher interview

R: refers to the researcher

T: Refers to the teacher.

R: first, I would like to thank you for participating in my research. Are you ready now?

T: Yes. Of course.

R: Okay. Can you please tell me how long have you been teaching English?

T: for about six years.

R: have you ever travelled abroad?

T: No, I did not.

R: have you been teaching at one school or at different schools?

T: I have been teaching at different schools.

R: what are the levels that you have been teaching?

T: well... during the first year of my teaching I taught different levels, at primary and intermediate schools, then I taught at secondary school. Also, I taught at a private English language teaching institute.

R: great. And how long did you teach there?

T: for about two years.

R: Ok, as a teacher, have you ever followed any training course whether before or during your career as a teacher?

T: em…. Yes.

R: what type of training was it?

T: I did a teacher's diploma in education.

R: Great and can you please tell me more about it? Where and how long was it?

T: of course, it was at the University of Aleppo and it lasted for one year.

R: who supervises and delivers this Diploma?

T: The Ministry of Higher Education supervises it and it is delivered by university lecturers, who are PhD holders and most of them are from the Faculty of Education.

R: nice, and can you please give me an idea of the subjects or the nature of this diploma?

T: emm…… (thinking for few seconds). Yes, the focus of the diploma is on training teachers of different subjects on how to deal with students of different levels. In addition, the course introduces teachers to "theoretical foundations" such as the theories of teaching and learning.

R: great, where there any practical aspect of it?

T: yes, giving, in practice, lessons in schools in the presence of colleagues and the supervisor and then get some feedback from them.

R: That is nice. What is your qualification?

T: I hold a Bachelor Degree in English and a teacher's diploma in education.

R: great, have you ever heard of the concept of teacher professional development?

T: yes

R: where did you hear about it?

T: when I went to study the diploma that is available in Syria, called a teachers' diploma in education as this diploma is studied by teachers with different specialisations and lasts for one year.

R: ok, and can you please define the concept of teacher professional development in your own words?

T: emm… I think that teacher professional development is a practice of training certain subject teachers before or through the period of teaching in order to equip them with the necessary skills and necessary experience for managing their classes. These skills may be related to the same subject that the teacher teaches or it may be general skills of teaching and learning.

R: ok, nice and can you please give me any example of that?

T: emm…there are many examples of that. For example, observing the teacher while teaching. A novice teacher may have his class monitored by an experienced teacher followed by feedback given by the experienced teacher. Or in some cases the head teacher can be the observer. Another example is, attending presentations delivered by more experienced teachers and these teachers may talk about their teaching experiences, especially if they taught in different contexts, cultures or levels.

R: that is nice.

T: Also, there is the possibility of the novice teacher attending lessons of more experienced teachers and then they may have a meeting after the lesson to talk about it. Also, there are "technical workshops".

R: and what do you mean by that?

T: they are workshops that aim at introducing teachers to modern technologies and how to use them in class.

R: Nice words and in your opinion what is the aim of teacher professional development?

T: I think… to equip the teacher with the necessary skills and needed experience for managing their classes and as I mentioned earlier these skills may be related to the same subject that the teacher teaches or it may be general skills for teaching and learning.

R: Wonderful and as a teacher do you try to improve yourself professionally?

T: in general, I tried all the things that I mentioned as examples of teacher professional development especially, I attended technical workshops and seminars given by colleagues and I also attended lessons of more experienced teachers.

R: you have good ideas. Now we will move to talk about a list of activities and I would like to know if you do any of them.

T: Ok, that is fine.

R: Do you spend some time after a lesson considering what went well or badly during it or anything interesting that happened?

T: No

R: why?

T: no, I do not do that after the lesson, but I do that termly.

R: did you find it useful?

T: yes. It helped me consider which part of the lesson worked well and which one did not, so I work to improve it in the future.

R: do you keep a diary of your thoughts after classes about how the class went?

T: no, because I do not like writing down everything.

R: and what about audio or video recording your whole lesson or certain parts of it?

T: No, it did not come to my mind before.

R: do you observe a colleague teaching?

T: yes

R: why?

T: to benefit from their experiences.

R: and have you ever been observed by a colleague teaching?

T: yes

R: why?

T: to get feedback and suggestions to improve my teaching

R: do you talk in the staffroom with colleagues?

T: yes, almost every day.

R: and why?

T: in order to share ideas, experiences and suggestions.

R: can you please give any example of these, please?

T: well… for example we may talk about how to give a certain grammatical rule in a simple way for students, how to manage the classroom and how to increase students' participation and we may even talk about certain training such as integrating technology into education or any other issues related to teachers or the school.

R: do you teach collaboratively with other colleagues?

T: No

R: why?

T: because of the school system, as every teacher should teach his own class by himself. I do not think that we are allowed to teach collaboratively.

R: and have you ever attended any conferences?

T: No

R: why?

T: unfortunately, there are not any conferences for teachers in the city of Deir-Ezzor. And probably the current problems in Syria may make it difficult to travel somewhere else.

R: and what about workshops?

T; Yes, such as the ones on technology and the modern method of teaching.

R: Do you read teacher journals or any online sources about TEFL teaching?

T: yes, often, there are lots of specialized websites for teachers and Facebook websites.

R: and do you usually hold parent-teacher evenings at school?

T: yes, we have them almost twice a year.

R: and what do you usually do during such evenings?

T: different issues, good teachers and students with good performance may be awarded certificates, teachers and parents may discuss issues related to students' achievement and may also get some feedback from the parents as well on their teaching or the subject they teach.

R: do you get feedback from the students on your teaching?

T: no, it did not come to my mind.

R: No problem and have you ever depended on any of the mentioned activities to help choosing or designing different teaching materials and try them out with the class?

T: mm…Yes, observing teachers who are more experienced than me gave me ideas on how to improve my teaching materials. My presence as an observer in the class allowed me to carefully examine the positive as well as the negative aspects of the lesson and makes me think of the materials that I prepare for my lessons.

R: great, and have you ever used any of the mentioned activities to try new teaching methods and see how they work?

T: (…thinking) yes, once I attended a workshop on the class seating arrangements and the teachers' talks at the workshop greatly inspired me that there are two seating arrangements that suit students with different levels and also suit different activities. Now, I have different seating arrangements in my classes.

R: lovely and have your ideas about teaching ever changed as a result of any of the activities that you mentioned?

T: emm…yes, I learned from more experienced teachers the use of papers where they write on them certain abbreviations for correcting students' papers and they give their students feedback on their writing. I used these and they were successful. Later on, I designed my own correction style and my colleagues used it to correct their own students' papers. It was something interesting and very useful.

R: great and have your feelings about teaching ever changed as a result of depending on any of the activities you mentioned?

T: yes, observing other teachers teaching increased my self-confidence. This experience gives me the chance, as an outsider, to feel which teaching strategies work best for the students and it also helped me to give up some teaching ideas which I thought to be right and useful.

R: Is there anything else that you might like to do or may ideally like to pursue and which may not be available at the moment?

T: yes

R: can you please mention it?

T: well…I think that teachers everywhere should have the opportunity of observing other teachers with different levels and teaching experiences. I still wish to observe my colleagues in the profession. Also, it will be interesting if I have the chance in the future to observe colleagues of different nationalities.

R: lovely, and what prevent you from doing it now?

T: I am overwhelmed by teaching. Also, it is very rare to meet teachers with different nationalities in this city.

R: Any suggestions?

T: no

R: Thank you so much for your time and wish you all the best.

Appendix E1: Interview questions for stakeholders in Arabic

أسئلة للمعنيين بالتطور المهني للمدرسين في ديرالزور

(ملاحظة : أقصد بالتطور المهني للمدرس: الامور التي يقوم بها المدرس أو التي تفرض عليه وذلك بهدف تطوير ذاته وتحسين ادائه كمدرس)

بداية: أشكركم جزيل الشكر لمشاركتم ببحثي واود ان انوه أنه كل ماسيتم ذكره هو مفيد للبحث لذا ارجو التوسع بالاجابة قدر الامكان جزاكم الله كل خير.

أرجو التكرم بالاجابة على الأسئلة التالية من فضلك :

1- وسمحت اهي ؤهلاتك و اهي هنتك؟

2- كم ن وقت عملت بهذه المهنة وبأي هنة أخرى؟

3- هل سبق ك وان سمعت بمفهوم تطور مهني لمدرسين؟إن كانت الإجابة نعم فهل بإ كانك اعطاء بعض الأ ثلة على ذ لك؟

4- هل أنت على علم بأي ن طرق متبعة بهدف تطوير مهني لمدرسين في سورية ؟ واذا كانت اجابتك نعم فماهي هذه طرق؟

5- هل تسعون عادة تعزيز تطور مهني لمدرسين ولأي شكل ن أشك ه؟ اذا كانت الاجابة نعم ,كيف؟ اذا كانت الاجابة لا ماذا؟

6- هل تعتقد أن تطور مهني لمدرسين هو أ ر اختياري لمدرسين أم انه أ ر فروض عليهم؟

7- هل تعتقد بأن مدرسين يبدون وبشكل عام اهتما ا بمتابعة تطورهم مهني؟وإن كانت الإجابة نعم,فهل هناك أي تطور لحوظ؟

8- هل هناك عو ل تساعد أو تعرقل تطور مهني لمدرسين بدير زور؟إذا كانت الاجابة نعم, فماهي هذه عو ل ن فضلك؟

9- ⬚اهي أس⬚ايب أو وسائل⬚تطور⬚مهني⬚اتي ترغب ان يتبعها⬚امدرسين بشكل⬚⬚ثا⬚ي⬚تعزيز تطورهم⬚مهني و⬚اتي قد لاتكون⬚توفرة في⬚اوقت⬚⬚ا⬚ي او سابقا ؟

10- هل⬚⬚ن تو⬚يات⬚قترحات أو اي أفكار أخرى ترغب أن تضيفها بخصو ⬚⬚اتنمية⬚⬚مهنية⬚لمدرسين بدير⬚زور؟

وشكرا جزيلا لكم

Appendix E2: Interview questions for stakeholders in English

1-What is your qualification and occupation?

2-How long have you been in this profession?

3-Have you ever heard of the concept of teacher professional development?

*Prompts: examples please?

4- Are you aware of any of the ways/ strategies adopted to improve TPD?

 5- Do you usually try to improve teacher professional development?

If yes, how?

6- Do you think that teacher professional development is optional or obligatory?

7- Do you think teachers generally show interest in pursuing their professional development? any noticeable kind of improvement?

8- Are there any factors that may facilitate or hinder teachers' professional development? If yes, please state them?

9- Are there any TPD strategies that you would like teachers to follow ideally to improve their own TPD?

10- Any recommendations or suggestions with this regard?

Many thanks for your time and participation

Appendix F: An example of other stakeholders' interviews
S2

R: refers to the researcher

S: refers to the stakeholder

R**:** first of all, I would like to thank you for participating in my research, and I would like to assure you of the confidentiality of the research and the concealment of your identity.

S: ok

R: can you please tell me what is your qualification?

S: I hold a Bachelor Degree in Arabic.

R: can you please give me an idea about your work experience?

S: first I worked as a teacher in primary schools, then I was appointed as a head teacher, after that I worked in the Department of <not stated to ensure identity cannot be traced>in the local Education Center.

R: and how long have you been working at these jobs?

S: well….as a teacher, I worked for about ten years and as a head teacher, I worked for about 15 years, and I have been working at the local Education Center for about 13 years.

R: great, you have a good working experience in all of these jobs. So, during this long working experience in all of these fields, have you ever heard of the concept of teacher professional development?

S: yes, I heard of this concept before.

R: wonderful, and could you please give some examples of it?

S: well… such as the model practical lessons given by experienced teachers and the use of educational methods and technology in practice at school.

R: ok nice, as someone who is in charge of teacher professional development, are you aware of any of the ways that are currently available for teachers of English to engage in professional development in the city of <not stated to ensure identity cannot be traced>.

S: yes, there are lots of things available for teachers in Syria in general and in <xxx> in particular. And the Ministry is still working to add what is new in this field.

R: great, can you please give some examples?

S: emm…For example, there are ministerial training courses offered by the Department of Training and Qualification in accordance with the Department of the Curriculum. Reading books and sources on teaching methods, training in modern educational technology, being updated on all that is new concerning methods of assessment and new methods for oral and written tests, and improving teachers academically, professionally, personally and educationally speaking.

R: great, you have mentioned "ministerial training courses" can you please talk more about them?

S: yes…usually these courses last for about three days, they are delivered by English subject superintendents and sometimes foreign experts may also deliver them.

R: where and when do they usually take place?

S: usually they take place at schools and during the weekends.

R: and what is the purpose behind such training?

S: well…. to introduce teachers to the new English syllabus and how to teach it in a simple way to the students with a focus on teaching methods and as you know the Syrian syllabus has recently undergone many improvements and changes.

R: great and does the local Education Center try to sustain teachers' professional development in any way?

S: yes, through planning for teacher professional development.

R: great, how, could you please explain more?

S: yes, the local Education Center aims to encourage head teachers and superintendents to effectively work on and sustain teacher professional development and work on facilitating and offering teacher professional development activities.

R: how, could you please specify more please?

S: well .... it is through involving people who are well-qualified and experienced in teacher professional development activities, ensuring the availability of resources and materials of high quality, holding the teacher professional development activities in a friendly environment, showing the relationship between what is theoretical and practical, actively involving teachers in teacher professional development activities and applying them.

R: and what do you mean by "practical professional learning"?

S: emm…there are lots of examples of that: for instance, observation of teachers in classrooms by superintendents, encouraging working in groups and mutual respect, holding workshops to exchange ideas on knowledge gained from professional development activities, rewarding those who participated in and performed well in teacher professional development activities.

R: wonderful and I would like to ask you about two things, what do you mean by "materials of high quality"?

S: for instance, providing schools with the internet, special rooms equipped with computers, LCD projectors and offering teachers workshops on technology, or ICDL, for free. Also, there is an important matter pursued by the Ministry of Education in the field of teacher professional development: it is evaluating professional development.

R: and how?

S: through collecting data and analyzing it, on the participants' reactions and then taking decisions based on that.

R: Ok and do you think that teacher professional development is something optional or obligatory for teachers?

S: well... some teachers attend training courses by their own choice because they respect themselves and love their own profession and want to improve themselves. And I think that teacher professional development should be obligatory so they can work in the best way.

R: and do you think that teachers generally show interest in their own professional development?

S: a few teachers show a noticeable interest in pursuing their own professional development.

R: and is there any noticeable improvement?

S: a few teachers showed interest in pursuing their own teacher professional development and we feel the fruits of this improvement in them, their students and through their relationships with their school administration and students' parents.

R: wonderful, and do you think that there are factors that may facilitate or hinder teacher professional development?

S: yes, what might facilitate teacher professional development is holding workshops at schools, initiating practical learning groups where they identify a certain problem or issue and then discuss the possible solutions to solve it and deal with it, initiating discussion groups to discuss new requirements, policies and teaching methods and how to apply them in schools.

R: great and in your opinion what are the things that may hinder teacher professional development?

S: emm.... the things that may hinder teacher professional development may be represented by: weakness of the teacher professional development programs themselves, connecting teacher professional development with promotion, lack of strong leadership, fear of change or opposing it because of the challenges that it may entail, lack of information on teacher professional development programs, lack of the desire to work collaboratively, lack of material and moral incentives.

R: great, and do you have any suggestions or recommendation concerning teacher professional development?

S: emm…. I suggest the following:

The availability of trustworthy critical colleagues who can ask questions, and make comments so the teacher may benefit from them. Initiating ways for working in cooperation with other teachers, exchanging ideas and experiences with other schools, keeping teachers updated with new ideas and sources. Improving the creative side of the teachers and helping them to put into practice their ideas. Qualifying staff who will be concerned with the issue of teacher professional development through offering them scientific and academic scholarships to the developed countries in this field, emm.. giving more importance to the profession of teaching and teachers. Choosing the outstanding students who performed well in their baccalaureate exam and directing them to the profession of teaching and tempting them with certain incentives better than those of other professions.

R: you have just mentioned the word "tempting" can you please give an example of this?

S: emm... for example offering for them to study for free at the university and to be paid monthly salaries during their study, to be employed immediately after graduation, offering them tempting material incentives to buy books and magazines, and life-long medical insurance, shortening their working hours and giving them full salary once they retire.

R: and what is the aim behind your last suggestion concerning "tempting outstanding students?

S: the aim is to find the teacher who is characterized by being serious, loyal and who works by himself to improve himself and his profession and who will be a role model to his students and his society because investment in the field of education is the best treasure of the home country.

R: great and very nice suggestions and I hope that they will all be taken into consideration and it is a pleasure for me that you participated in my research.

S: thank you and wish you all the best.

Appendix G: Teachers' background information

Teacher ID code	Sex	Age	Years of experience	Qualifications	Travelling abroad	Any kind of training/course
T1	M	20s	4years	BA MA (doing it at the time of the interview)	No	4 months training at Damascus University
T2	M	20s	4years	BA	No	ICDL
T3	M	30s	3years	BA, applyied for MA degree	Yes: America: worked at oil company, 6 months	English language course at the H.I.L(Higher institute of Languages)
T4 countryside	M	20s	3years	BA	Australia: educational cultural exchange, 6 months	-On week training (MoE) -Language institute: 6 mths
T5 countryside	M	20s	3years	BA MA student	Egypt: 1mnths. ECE	No, affected by the problems
T6 Countryside	M	20s	3years	BA	No	No: affected by the problems
T7	F	20s	8years	BA MA student		No, affected by the problems -TOEFL course -3weeks general training

T8 countryside	F	20s	5years	BA, applied for MA	no	No affected by the problems
T9	M	40s	14 years	BA teachers' diploma in education	no	-Integrating technology into education 3mnths - training course on TM of the new syllabus of English:3days
T10	M	50s	35years	BA	Lebanon and Egypt tourism visit	-Teacher qualification training course: 20 days -Integrating technology into education
T11	M	50s	18 years	BA Teachers' diploma in education	Yes to U.A.E for working: 3yrs	
T12 countryside	M	20s	1year and a half	BA Student doing teachers' diploma in education	No Affected by war	No training affected by the war

T13	M	30s	6years	-BA -teachers' diploma in education	no	Workshop on use of technology
T14	F	30s	10years	-BA -teachers' diploma in education	Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan: tourism	Integrating technology into education.
T15	F	40s	20years	BA MA	To K.S.A: work 5yrs	Integrating technology into education: 2wks
T16	M	30s	11 years	-BA And teachers' diploma in education	no	- Integrating technology into education: 2wks - Training course for the new English syllabus
T17	F	40s	14yrs	-BA -teachers' diploma in education	Lebanon: tourism	- Training course for the new English syllabus -TEFL course at the British council in Dams
T18	M	30s	16yrs	BA	Kuwait: 5yrs work	-training course in Kuwait: 2 weeks -TOEFL course -ICDL

						-Language course of English, French, German -Integrating technology into education.
T19	M	30s	7-8 months	BA	No	-English language courses in the American institutes in Damascus for 2 months
T20	F	40s	17 years	BA	no	ICDL

Appendix H: Other stakeholders' background information

ID code	Position (Note that some roles are deliberately left vague to preserve confidentiality)	Qualifications and year of experience in the current position
S1	Trainer of trainers on the ITE program	BA in Maths, Higher diploma in technology and information, more than 11 years
S2	Important position in local education center	BA in Arabic, 13 years
S3	Superordinate of informatics and Trainer on ITE program	BA in science, 10 years
S4	Lecturer in Faculty of Education at a university	PhD in education, more than 25 years
S5	Important position at central MoE	BA in English and teachers' diploma in education, more than 10 years
S6	Superordinate of English	BA in English and teachers' diploma in education, 9 years
S7	Trainer on ITE program	BA in informatics engineering, more than 6 years
S8	Educational superordinate	BA in education, more than 5 years
S9	Educational superordinate	BA in Arabic, more than 6 years
S10	Superordinate of English	BA in English, more than 10 years
S11	Trainer on ITE program	BA in Islamic education, teachers' diploma in education, more than 8 years
S12	superordinate of English	BA in English, teachers' diploma in education, Master Degree in Linguistics, more than 12 years

S13	Superordinate of English	BA in English, teachers' diploma in education
S14	Works at local education center	BA in education, teachers' diploma in education
S15	Head teacher of a state school in the city	BA in social science, Diploma in Arabic language, almost 3 years
S16	Head teacher of a state school, in the city	BA in Arabic, Masters' Degree in Arabic, 6 years
S17	Head teacher of a state school in the countryside	BA in national Education, teachers' diploma in education, 6 years
S18	Teacher trainer on ITE course	BA in science, teachers' diploma in education, 7 years

Appendix I: Table 5.3 relevant to RQ2 and RQ3

Table 5.7 List of PD activities reported by Syrian teachers with summary of responses concerning time, place, freedom of choice.

List of activities	Future (F), current (C), or past (P)	Imposed (I), or self-chosen (SC)	Done while in relation to: -state school (SS) -private school (PS) -private home classes(PH) -private institute (PI) -university (U) -Home (H) -no specific/other location (NS)
Reflection after class N/A (T6, T13, T14)	**C**: T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T15, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20	**SC**: T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T15, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20	**SS**: T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T15, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20 **PS**: T5 **PI**: T5, T1
Reflection on previous term	**C**: T2, T3, T5, T7, T9, T10, T13, T15, T17, T19, T20	**SC**: T2, T3, T5, T7, T9, T10, T13, T15, T17, T19, T20	**SS**: T2, T3, T5, T7, T9, T10, T13, T15, T17, T19, T20

Keeping a diary / Lesson report	**P**: T1, T2, T8, T10, T14, T17, T18, T20	**SC**: T1, T2, T8, T10, T14, T17, T18, T20	**SS**: T1, T2, T8, T10, T14, T17, T18, T20
Self-recording	**P**: T1, T2, T5, T6, T7, T8 **C**:T1, T6, T12, T15, T19	**I**: T6 **SC**: T1, T2, T5, T6, T7, T8, T12, T15, T19	**SS**: T15 **PH**: T6, T19 **U**: T1, T2, T5, T7, T8 **H**: T12
Observing colleague	**C**: T1, T13, T19 **P**: T2, T4, T7, T8, T9, T10, T12, T15, T16, T17, T20	**I**: T1, T2, T4, T7, **S**: T1, T7, T8, T9, T10, T12, T13, T15, T16, T17, T19, T20	**SS**: T1, T8, T9, T10, T12, T13, T15, T16, T17, T19, T20 **U**: T1, T2, T7 **PI**: T4
Observed by colleague	**C**: T1, T9, T10, T12, T13, T19 **P**: T1, T2, T4, T6, T7,T8,T16, T17,T18,T20,	**I**: T2, T4, T7, T1, T6, T8 **S**: T1, T9, T10, T12, T13, T16, T17, T20, T18, T19	**SS**: T1, T2, T9, T10, T12, T13, T19, T20, T16, T17, T18 **PS**: T4 **PH**: T6 **PI**: T6, T4 **U**: T1, T2, T7
Observed by P.D. provider / anyone else	**C**: T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T8, T9, T10, T11, T13, T14, T15,T16,T17,T18, T19, T20	**I**: T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T8, T9, T10, T11, T13, T14,T15, T16, T17, T18,T19 T20	**SS**: T2, T3, T4, T5, T9, T10, T11, T13, T14, T15,T16, T17, T18, T19,T20 **PS**: T4

	P: T4, T6, T8	**SC**: T4, T12, T1	**PI**: T4, T6, T8 **U**: T1, T17
Staff room talk	**C**: T2, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20	**SC**: T2, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20	**SS**: T2, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20 **PI**: T4
Co-operative teaching	**P**: T1, T2, T4, T5, T6, T7, T16, T17, T20 **C**: T15	**I**:T1, T2, T4, T5, T6, T7, T16 **SC**: T15, T17, T20	**SS**: T16, T17, T20 **PS**: T4 **PH**: T7 **PI**: T15 **U**: T1, T2, T5, T6
Workshops	**P**: T3, T4, T5, T7, T10, T13, T15, T16, T20 **C**: T1, T17, T19, T18	**I**: T3, T4, T10, T13, T15, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20 **SC**: T1, T5, T7,	**SS**: T3, T10, T13, T15, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20 **PS**: T4 **U**: T1, T5, T7
Conferences	No one	N/A	
Internet: Facebook or Whats up communication programmes	**C**: T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20	**SC**: T1, T2, T3, t4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20	

Internet: information, websites	C: T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20	Ss: T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20	
Students' feedback	P: T4, T5 C: T6, T12	SC: T4, T5, T6, T12	SS: T5, T12 PS: T4 PH: T6
Watching T.V	P: T10	SC: T10	SS: T10
Training	P: T2, T4, T5, T6, T7, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17, T19 C: T1	I: T1, T2, T4, T9, T10, T11, T18, T20 SC: T5, T6, T7, T9, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17, T19	SS: T2, T6, T9, T10, T11, T20 LI: T4 PH: U: T5, T1, T9, T12, T13, T14, T15, T17, T16 NS: T2, T7, T19
Parents' Evening	P: T4 C: T7, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T16, T17, T18, T20	I: T4, T7, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T16, T17, T18, T20	PS: T4 SS: T7, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T16, T17, T18, T20