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Integrating language as a core component of professional development programs for English language teachers at public schools in Qatar

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Abstract

   Professional development needs for English language teachers at public schools in Qatar have not been extensively examined. Thus, this paper sets out to explore the perceptions, opinions, and attitudes of English language teachers at public schools in Qatar towards professional development in general, and towards the integration of language as a core component in professional development programs. It also aims at investigating the impact different identities of English language teachers may have on the perceptions of professional development needs. A questionnaire has been used to collect data from 79 non-native English language teachers at different public schools in Qatar (34 male teachers at schools for boys and 45 female teachers at schools for girls). Three key findings have emerged in this study; first, results show that there is generally a positive attitudes towards professional development sessions. Second, the study reveals that focusing on other aspects of teaching and professional development such as "students' proficiency level" or "differentiation in teaching" could be perceived by participants as more important than "language improvement" or "language awareness" for teachers. Third, it is found that different identities of English language teachers may not necessarily have a direct impact on their perceptions of professional development needs.

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1. Chapter 1: Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with an overview of the thesis. It, therefore, briefly discusses the identification of the problem, the origins of the topic and the reason behind tackling this issue. It also refers to the research aims and research questions, and the significance of this research. Finally, it provides an outline of how this research paper is structured.

1.1 Identification of the Problem

Recently, there has been great interest in the recruitment, preparation, and development for teachers in Qatar. This is, indeed, is reflected in the existence of continuous preparation programs and professional development sessions offered not only by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar, but also by other educational institutes in the state of Qatar such as College of Education at Qatar University, Qatar Foundation and Teach for Qatar Institution. Despite this growing interest in preparing and developing teachers professionally, there remains a lack of research in the area of professional development for teachers in the Middle East region generally, and in Qatar particularly. In addition, the research scope of professional development perceptions and needs for English language teachers in particular, is indeed limited. In fact, few studies have been conducted to investigate professional development for teachers at Qatari schools; yet, most of those studies focused on exploring professional development for teachers in general, without special consideration to language teachers (see Abu-Tineh, & Sadiq 2018). As for the studies investigating professional development for English language teachers, there has been a specific focus on exploring the opinions of female English language teachers only (see Al-Obaidli 2010, Qadhi 2018).

Therefore, this research aims at addressing this gap in professional development research by empowering English language teachers in Qatar through considering their attitudes, opinions,

and perceptions of their needs for effective professional development. Accordingly, this is estimated to help providing insights into better understanding of this area, and thereby better equipping English language teachers in Qatar with the sufficient skills and knowledge they need for professional growth and effective learning process for students.

1.2 Research Aims and Research Questions

The general aim of this paper is to explore English language teachers' attitudes towards the integration of language performance and language awareness in professional development sessions. Therefore, three main research questions were posed under the assumption that there is a connection between perceptions of professional development, perceptions of language performance and language awareness, and perceptions of identity of English language teachers:

RQ1. What are the attitudes of English language teachers towards professional development sessions at public schools in Qatar?

RQ2. What are the attitudes of English language teachers towards integrating language improvement and language awareness as part of their professional development sessions at public schools in Qatar?

RQ3. Do perceptions of self-identity of English language teachers at public schools in Qatar have an impact on their perceptions of professional development needs?

1.3 Significance of the Research

The significance of this research rises under a personal assumption of mine, that excellent education and learning process for students start with great value and consideration for teachers. Therefore, empowering teachers by listening to them, appreciating their opinions, and

considering their needs is of great importance. Accordingly, before designing professional development programs, which aim at the first place to provide and equip teachers with the knowledge and skills they need for better teaching practices, it is important to address their perceptions of what they think make effective professional development sessions which meet their target needs.

1.4 Origins of the Topic

My personal experience studying English throughout my entire life and becoming an English language teacher later on at public schools in Qatar have determined the choice of this topic for my thesis. The reason behind discussing professional development and its connection to language performance and language awareness arises, indeed, from my personal experience as a teacher who did not receive sufficient professional development sessions at school. Interestingly, this was also suggested by different scholars (Ahmed & Abouabdelkader, 2016; Eslami, Reynolds, Sonnenburg-Winkler, & Crandall, 2016), as cited in Qadhi (2018): "English Language Teachers (ELTs) employed in Qatar may not necessarily have the appropriate training, qualifications and experience to enable them to teach successfully" (p.15).

In addition, the motivation behind discussing perceptions of identity of English language teachers and its relation to perceptions of professional development needs arises from my personal experience studying English at public schools in Qatar, where most English language teachers continually reminded their students that they cannot get 100% in English exams simply because they were not native speakers of English. This, in fact, made me think about and reflect upon the impact teachers' perceptions of their self-identity may have on their teaching practice, and on their perceptions of what they need for professional growth.

1.5 Structure of the Paper

Chapter 1: The first chapter of the study introduces to the reader the topic, the aims and objectives of the study, and the origins and significance of this research.

Chapter 2: Chapter two is concerned with the literature review. It is mainly built on three main themes – professional development, language performance and language awareness, and identity of English language teachers. It refers to previously conducted studies in this field, and it attempts to make a connection between the three proposed themes.

Chapter 3: Chapter three discusses the methodological approach used in this research. It describes the research methodology, data collection and data analysis procedures, and it refers to participants in the study. Finally, it provides details regarding ethical consideration and seeking approval for data collection.

Chapter 4: Chapter four analyses and discusses the findings of the research and attempts to connect results to the main research questions.

Chapter 5: Chapter five provides a conclusion of the whole study through summarizing the findings of main themes of the research: professional development, language performance and language awareness, and identity of English language teachers. It also discusses limitations and implications for future research.

2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

With reference to previous studies, this chapter will discuss the nature of professional development and how it is perceived by English language teachers in the Qatari public schools, K-12 education system. It will also focus on discussing language awareness, proficiency level and its association to professional development. Finally, the chapter will draw attention to the impact of teachers' identity and their perceptions of their proficiency and competence level in English, in relation to perceiving professional development programs for English language teachers.

Indeed, this study is built on a conceptual framework which assumes that three concepts/ themes are to be considered when addressing professional development for English language teachers. First, teachers' own perception, understanding and reflection of the nature of professional development. Under the assumption that experience is the basis for creating certain perceptions and understanding towards professional development, this has been reflected in research question 1: What are the attitudes of English language teachers towards professional development sessions at public schools in Qatar? Second, teachers' perceptions of language as a core component of professional development programs, which is reflected in research question 2: What are the attitudes of English language teachers towards integrating language improvement and language awareness as part of their professional development sessions at public schools in Qatar? Third, teachers' perceptions of their own identities as English language teachers. Indeed, it is estimated that factors such as identity or personal emotions could have an impact on teachers' certain attitudes. This is reflected in research question 3: Do perceptions of self-identity of English language teachers at public schools in Qatar have an impact on their perceptions of professional development needs? Figure 1 below illustrates the conceptual framework of this

study, which suggests that identity and experience could contribute to teachers' overall perceptions and attitudes towards professional development.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study

2.1 Professional Development for English Language Teachers

Continuing professional development refers to all the activities and training a person can have during their career to foster productivity and enhance quality of work. In the field of education and teaching, Guskey (2000) has defined teacher professional development as the "process and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitude of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students" (Farrell, 2015, p. 14). There is no doubt that professional development needs (knowledge and skills) may differ according to different stages of teaching career; novice teachers and teachers in their midcareer. Also, modals of effective professional development may differ in accordance with the subject, knowledge or specific skills different teachers teach. However, studies of effective components of professional development for language teachers are indeed limited in scope. Shulman (1987) has referred to

seven different categories of knowledge types in teacher education, which could be argued to be part of their professional development needs: "content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational values" (Qadhi, 2018, p.84). Nonetheless, this raises the question of what exactly is meant by "content knowledge" for language teachers. Indeed, would teaching of language skills be considered different than teaching metalinguistic knowledge? Accordingly, would language skills and metalinguistics knowledge be considered as two different and core components in professional development needs for language teachers?

Significantly, one of the challenges in professional development for English language teachers is deciding for the main essential components which build effective professional development programs for teacher. As cited in Sadeghi & Richards (2021), different scholars including Gebhard (2009), Murray (2010) and Richards (2015) have suggested some guidelines for the aspects English language teachers should focus on in professional development. These include expanding "understanding of language teaching", "teaching skills", and "establishing a learning community" (p.2). In accordance with this, this paper takes into consideration these guidelines and attempts to answer research question one concerning attitudes of English language teachers towards professional development sessions, focusing on skills within this range. For example, participants were particularly asked about professional development sessions within the area of "teaching skills" such as: classroom management, technology training, lesson planning and differentiation in teaching; and sessions within the area "of understanding of language teaching" such as: knowledge about language, strategies for teaching language skills, general language sessions and connecting language research and education.

Additionally, another issue in the field of professional development for teachers in general is the lack of understanding of who is responsible for providing those sessions. According to Sadeghi & Richards (2021):

> "Professional development can be motivated by teachers themselves (independent PD) or regulated through management (institutional PD) and can be done on an informal basis (such as talks with colleagues) or formally (such as attending seminars)" (p.2).

Therefore, asking participants about their willingness or intention for attending professional development sessions outside schools could lead to useful insights into their perceptions of whether schools are the only and main source for equipping teachers with their professional needs. This can, in fact, also help in understanding their attitudes and feelings in general towards the current professional development sessions at public schools; which could help in answering research question 1 of this paper.

The importance of professional development for English language teachers arises from the fact the English language teaching (ELT) is a field which has witnessed different changes and developments of methods; besides language being dynamic and changing in nature. Sadeghi & Richards (2021) have confirmed this by stating that "the field of ELT is subject to constant change, and accordingly, professional development can help teachers become familiar with new developments in the field as well as updating their knowledge base" (p.2) Interestingly, Murray (2010) has referred to another idea regarding the importance of professional development; which is empowering teachers through professional development: "feeling empowered can also manifest leader - ship skills, and teacher empowerment leads to improvement in student performance and attitude" (p.3). Indeed, there is no doubt that professional development does also play a role in

enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills, which in result would be reflected in better teaching practice and better student learning.

2.1.1 Professional Development for English Language Teachers in Qatar

This sections connects to research questions 1 of this paper; actually, looking at the general nature of professional development for teachers in Qatar, Abu-Tineh & Sadiq (2018) have conducted a study to explore teachers' perceptions of the characteristics that make effective professional development, and their perceptions of effective models for providing professional development. The study which included around 1000 male and female teachers from different public schools in Qatar, has not, indeed, focused on certain groups of teachers with specific background, level or context, which could be argued to cause inaccuracy in result. However, it does provide some useful insights into what most teachers in Qatar perceive as good models for professional development: "providing professional support from experienced teacher to new hiring teacher' as the most effective professional development model, followed by 'workshops at schools,' 'study group' and 'peer observation.'" (p.318). Additionally, it has revealed that one of the characteristics of professional development would be to: "enhance teachers' content and pedagogic knowledge" (p.316). Relating to this research, more investigation is suggested to explore what "experienced teacher" means in the field of English language teaching. Also, in regard to "pedagogic knowledge", exploration is needed to clarify the different aspects of knowledge for English language teachers.

The number of studies addressing the needs of English language teachers in Qatar is limited; however, few studies have been carried out to explore female teachers' opinions at different

schools. For example, one study conducted by Al-Obaidli (2010) attempted to explore the opinions of 233 English language teachers at different schools in Qatar; private, international and public schools. Considering that the study included a big number of teachers with different backgrounds and in different contexts, the study has focused on the general educational aspect of professional development "Practical teaching skills", "Pedagogical knowledge (i.e. theoretical)", "Teaching and learning processes", "Attitude and awareness of myself as a teacher". Neither language performance or language awareness were addressed in study; even though it has been reported that: "these teachers wanted more practical workshops and ESL workshops that were focused on the four skills of English – reading, writing, speaking and listening" (p.284).

Similarly, in another recent study by Qadhi (2018), interviews were conducted with 16 English language teachers to explore their opinions about professional development at public schools in Qatar, their relationship with students and colleagues, the curriculum, students' level in English and teachers' needs in professional development programs. Qadhi's study is, in fact, of great significant for this research since the results of the interviews with teachers reveal that there is a need to shed the light more on "language" when it comes to professional development for English language teachers. Indeed, a number of teachers have reported their need and their willingness to improve language performance as part of professional development. Also, based on the interviews with participants, Qadhi has come to a conclusion that "the proficiency level of these teachers is very low" (p.253). Despite the fact that this judgment has not been based on a bias standard test, it is it yet of great relevance to this research which suggests encouraging teachers reflect on their own proficiency level and language knowledge. Accordingly, this could help in understanding whether teachers are aware of the connection between professional development and language improvement.

2.2 Language performance and language awareness as part of professional development

2.2.1 What is it?

To begin with, Andrews (2007) has provided a clear conclusion of the different aspects of language knowledge. Two of the main types of language-related knowledge which he has mentioned, and which are of great relevance to this research: "knowledge of language (i.e. language proficiency)" and "knowledge about language (i.e. declarative knowledge of subject matter)" (p.143). Indeed, language performance, language proficiency, or language ability as it has been described in the *Cambridge English Teaching Framework Competency Statements* are different terms describing people's performance or level in a language. Different international standard examinations have been designed to test language performance such as: The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). These tests aim at investigating a person's performance in different skills of language; reading, writing, listening, and speaking, i.e., how a person show or perform language in these skills.

On the other hand, metalinguistic awareness, language awareness or language knowledge refer to the declarative knowledge about language. It, actually, traces back to 1992 with the formation of both "The Association for language Awareness" and the journal of "Language Awareness". Different attempts have been made to define language awareness; for instance, according to Van Lier (1996), "Language Awareness is a person's sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language…" (Andrews, 2007, p.11). Even though this agrees with Carter's definition of language awareness, Carter (2003) further adds that language awareness includes cognitive reflection upon language. It is wise to consider the concept of explicit knowledge or declarative knowledge. Ellis (2004) defines explicit knowledge as the "declarative

knowledge of 'the phonological, lexical, grammatical, pragmatic and socio-critical features of an L2". Similarly, Anderson (1995) states that "declarative knowledge is explicit knowledge that we can report and of which we are consciously aware". (Andrews, 2007, p.13-14). Therefore, it could be argued that language awareness refers not only to the knowledge about language, but also to the ability of cognitively analyzing, talking about, and reflecting on language.

2.2.2 Language performance and language knowledge in the field of English language teaching

Several studies have been conducted to investigate language performance and language knowledge of teachers in the field of English language teaching. To begin with, Cambridge Assessment English has a significant contribution in shedding the light on the importance of considering language performance and language knowledge. This is achieved through the construction of "*Cambridge English Teaching Framework: Competency Statements*", a framework designed to illustrate qualifications required from English language teachers. In connection to this research, this framework does indeed make a clear distinction between language performance and language knowledge. In fact, it shows that "language knowledge and awareness" and "language ability" are two essential and different components in the teaching framework (appendix A). Little research has been done to investigate how language performance and language knowledge are perceived by English language teachers in Qatar, or what professional development frameworks are used by English language teachers and administrators at public schools in Qatar; therefore, through exploring teachers' perceptions of their own language performance, language knowledge and needs; it is assumed that this could help providing a better understanding of why professional development programs at public schools in Qatar are constructed in a certain way.

Looking at language proficiency of English language teachers, there has been a growth in focus on language proficiency of native and non-native speaker teachers. For example, Benke and Medgyes (2005), have reported some interesting findings of a study they have conducted to explore the relation between proficiency level associated with different groups of teachers, i.e. native and non-native speakers. The results of the survey which included 422 Hungarian learners of English in different institutions have revealed some positive comments associated with native speaker teachers:

"With respect to NS teachers, learners spoke highly of their ability to teach conversation classes and to serve as perfect models for imitation. They were also found to be more capable of getting their learners to speak.".

On the contrary, Llurda (2005) has investigated supervisors' views of non-native TESOL students in North America and has found that even though the proficiency level of most students were perceived as "highly competent English speakers", those non-native students, yet, had some linguistic limitations in comparison to their native speaker counterparts (Andrews, 2007, p.153).

As for language awareness and its relation to native and non-native speaker teachers, different studies have argued that non-native speaker teachers have the advantage of this. For example, Seidlhofer (1999) emphasis that non-native speaker teacher have higher declarative knowledge of language, which is something they have developed as result of their own experience with learning a language. In fact, this is in agreement with Medgyes' (1994) ideas that: "during their own learning process, non-NESTs have amassed a wealth of knowledge about the English language (Andrews, 2007, p.155).

Interestingly, different studies have been conducted to further investigate the relation between language and language teachers. For instance, Wright (1991) has suggested that "[teachers] require a high level of language proficiency, plus linguistic and pedagogic knowledge". Whereas Thornbury (1997) on the other hand has also provided a surprising claim which states that "it is a matter of concern that so many teachers of English seem to have such a limited knowledge of the language they are teaching." (Svalberg, 2007, p.295).

In connection to this research, it is assumed that asking participants questions related to their own proficiency level or language knowledge, it could lead to useful insights into understanding non-native English language teachers' needs in professional development programs at public schools in Qatar, especially with Medgyes' (1994) claim which states that: "non-NESTs are well aware of their linguistic handicap" (Andrews, 2007, p.153). This is, indeed, what Wright & Bolitho (1997) has suggested as a further interesting question: "Do different teacher groups (L1 or L2 or 13) have different training needs? What is the role of needs analysis on training courses?" (p.170). In another article by Wright & Bolitho (1993), "*Language awareness: a missing link in language teacher education*?", a framework for language awareness activities has been suggested to help teachers "develop their sensitivity towards language" (p.302). Yet, what makes this article of great significance and connection to this research is the consideration of language awareness (LA) as part of professional development programs for English language teachers: "LA activities designed for use in an in-service teacher education session." (p.292). Similarly, Bolitho et al. (2003) have suggested implementing a language awareness approach in teaching English, which they claim to "enables [teachers and learners] to get beneath the surface of a language…" (p.257). They further discuss the impact of a language awareness approach on non-native speaker teachers: "engaging in

language awareness work in English has led to important new insights about their [non-native teachers of English] mother tongue" (p.257).

Nevertheless, in their study, Bolitho et al. (2003) have ignored a crucial element which is "language ability". In other words, to implement an approach which tackles language knowledge deeply such as the language awareness approach in teaching, it is expected from teachers to have certain proficiency level and language ability. Therefore, the argue of this research is to make a distinction between language performance or language ability, and language awareness as two different but essential components in English language teaching. However, Andrews (2007) raises a very significant question of great relevance to this research: "How would you rate your own language awareness?" In fact, considering that participants in this research do not have a regular evaluation or reflection on language awareness in professional development sessions, it would be useful to explore methods individual teachers follow to evaluate their own language awareness.

2.2.3 Why does Language matter for English Language Teachers?

In fact, limited research has been conducted to explore why language ability or language awareness could be important, or how it may have an impact on teaching practice and learning experience; however, in his article "*Why Do L2 Teachers Need to 'Know About Language'? Teacher Metalinguistic Awareness and Input for Learning*", Andrews (1999) draws attention to one empirical study which aimed at investigating how language awareness could have an impact on the learning process for learners. The study which has been carried out in secondary schools in Hong Kong has confirmed the importance of teacher's language awareness (TMA) for learners,

"…TMA plays a crucial role in structuring input so that it is potentially of maximum usefulness to learners." (1999, p.175)

Similar to Andrews' (1999) research, Al Balushi (2019) has also conducted a small-scale empirical study which aimed at investigating the impact of teachers' own grammatical knowledge on their teaching practices. Significantly, the study which included 40 male and female English language teachers in Omani schools has revealed that "there is a weak positive correlation, with higher knowledge of grammar associated with positive attitudes towards grammar teaching" (p.46). Despite these findings, other variables such as gender, age or teaching experience may, indeed, play a role in creating a positive or negative attitude towards teaching certain language. Therefore, further research is recommended to assert teachers' metalinguistics awareness of specific aspects of language could have an impact on their teaching practice.

Relevant to this research, it is assumed that through asking teachers questions regarding what aspect of language they like teaching the most, and what aspect of language they think could be one of their strength points; clearer insights may be provided regarding the relationship between metalinguistic awareness and its impact on teaching practice. Additionally, this can also help answering research question 3 of this paper which explores whether identities of English language teachers, especially native and non-native identities, could have an impact on their perceptions of professional development needs and on their teaching practice.

2.2.4 Language and Professional Development Programs for ELTs

Research in the area of language and professional development for English language teachers is, indeed, very limited. For example, one study has been conducted by Omar (2021), "*Improving*

English language and literacy instruction through effective professional development: A practitioner, collaborative, reflective practice workshop in a middle school in Qatar", aimed at discussing meaning and models of professional development for English language teachers in Qatar. However, the main goal of that research was to "investigate and help explore the problems that hindered students' English language and literacy learning." (p.21). The study which included interviews with 15 male teachers at a middle school in Qatar has reveled that participants in general were not satisfied with the professional development sessions they have received. Interestingly, it also shows that "most participants highlighted that students do not possess the necessary knowledge and skills in English and literacy." (p.110). However, in relation to this research, further investigation should be done to firstly explore teachers' own proficiency level, language knowledge and language skills they think are necessary or useful for their students.

Having had experience working with English language teachers at public schools in Qatar, it is a fact that the component of language is actually missing from professional development programs at public schools. Also, there is, in fact, a gap between educators and language researchers at higher educational institutions, which is what Ball & Tyson (2011) have referred to by asserting the importance of "[involving] candidates, cooperating teachers, and university faculty in a process of shared observations, collaborative inquiry, and problem solving based on evidence from classrooms with diverse and underserved students." (p.23).

However, considering that language is not part of professional development sessions for English language teachers in Qatar, this research seeks the exploration of different methods English language teachers at public schools in Qatar may implement to continually develop language professionally. It does so through asking participants of ways and strategies they implement to continue professional development: joining teacher communities, attending conferences and

courses, or simply socializing with other teachers within the same field. Indeed, this could be useful since socialization does not only enhance the growth of teachers professionally, but it also enhances "the ability to teach students from diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds and with a variety of academic needs." (Ball & Tyson, 2011, p.18).

2.3 Teacher's Identity

Different elements such as nationality, ethnicity, gender or beliefs are considered to be elements that contribute in creating the identity of a person; likewise, "language is seen as a marker of group identity" (Llurda, 2005, p.265). Interestingly, this is noticeable in the field of English language teaching and the formation of English language teachers' professional identities. In recent years, there has been much discussions regarding the different identities, and identity formation for English language teachers, in this case, native and non-native teachers. Olsen (2009) has, indeed, referred to the role language plays in understanding identities, and he further adds that "any view of teacher identity should centralize roles of language and language practices in identity formation" (p.26). A general definition of identity has been provided by Norton (2000): "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future"; however, when looking at identities of English language teachers, it is wise to consider that a conflict may arise between teachers' "chosen identity" and their "perceived identity" (Llurda, 2005, p.266). Indeed, it is argued that perceived identities could play an important role in the formation of teachers' chosen, self-identities. In other words, how students, school administrators or community perceive native or non-native English language teachers

could actually affect how those teachers perceive their own self-image, and thereby it can have an impact on teachers' teaching practices, beliefs, attitudes and professional dimensions.

The findings of an interesting empirical study conducted by Zare-ee & Ghasedi (2014) do, indeed, confirm this. The study which aimed at exploring the opinions of 47 student teachers in Iran regarding the factors that can affect the construction of teachers' professional identity, has revealed that "student teachers saw lack of support from administration as the most important limitation in the development of their professional identity". Surprisingly, it has also shown that "lack of training and updating time" and "teachers' insufficient oral competence" can play a role in the formation of teachers' professional identity (p.1994). Relevant to this research, there has not been much previous work in this area on teachers in Qatar; thus, it is wise to mention that more attention should be paid to look into the relation between teachers' professional identity and teaching practices, and how can professional development programs play a role in re-constructing teachers' identities, and thereby improving not only the status of non-native teachers, but also the quality of teaching students would get from their teachers.

2.3.1 Nativeness vs. Non-nativeness in Teaching

For many years, the concept of native vs. non-native speaker has been widely discussed; indeed, different studies have been conducted in attempt to identify what classifies native speakers, and what distinguishes these two categories. Nevertheless, the number of studies investigating the impact this issue, nativeness and non-nativeness, can have on the creation of teachers' own identities, perceptions and teaching practices is limited. Similarly, limited studies have been conducted to explore teachers' different needs in professional development programs,

based on their identities or their own perceptions of the extent to which native they believe they are, or in other words, the extent to which advanced users of language they are. This is to say that the terms native/non-native have been attacked by many ELT scholars for years, as they can imply discrimination amongst different teachers in the field. Thereby, other terms have been suggested such as "proficient users of English" (Paikeday, 1985), "more or less accomplished" (Edge, 1988), or what Rampton 1990 proposed as "expert speakers" (Reves & Medgyes, 1994).

Native language, in general, refers to the first language a person learns. Different scholars have attempted to further clarify this by referring to certain characteristics which they claim are necessary to be present in native speakers. For example, native speakers do have "subconscious knowledge of rules" and should be able to grasp meanings intuitively (Stern, 1983). Davies (1996) states that they should also have the knowledge of differentiating between their own use of language and the standard form of language (Cook, 1999, p.186). Moreover, Davies (2013) further adds that native speakers have the ability to "write creatively" (p.3), which indeed raises the question of whether non-native speakers could become native speakers if they possessed any of those characteristics. Significantly, Davies (1991) claims that learners of language could be considered as native speakers if they meet some criteria such as "discourse and pragmatic control" and "creative performance" (Reves & Medgyes, 1994, p.353). However, in his article Native speakers and Native users, Davies further adds that non-native speakers can acquire the "communicative competence of the native speaker"; yet, acquiring the "speed" or ability to make quick judgments about "grammaticality" may be difficult (2013, 4). Therefore, is it possible to say that non-native speakers can become near native, but not fully native?

Interestingly, in the field of English language teaching, the issue of nativeness and non-nativeness is of great importance. It was, indeed, estimated by Crystal (2003) that non-native

teachers would outnumber native teachers by three to one. Likewise, Canagarajah (2005) has also mentioned that "80 per cent of English language teachers worldwide are thought to be NNESTs [non-native English speaking teachers]" (Selvi, 2011, p.187). surprisingly, this in agreement with what Braine (2010) has asserted that the majority of English language teachers around the world are non-natives (Kamhi-Stein, 2016).

Looking at how native speakers and non-native speakers differ in terms of teaching behavior and practice, Medgyes (1992) has asserted in his article, Native or non-native: Who's worth more?, that both native speakers and non-native speakers have equal chances of becoming successful and effective teachers; however, he also refers to the fact that they can become successful teachers in different ways. In fact, Medgyes (1992) discusses that language could not be the only variable to consider when it comes to evaluating the effectiveness of a teacher. He further clarifies that if language was the only variable to consider, native speaker teachers would obviously surpass non-native teachers. Therefore, other variables that may have a vital and decisive role in the efficacy of teaching are "experience, age, sex, aptitude, charisma, motivation, training…" (p.346).

Indeed, if language was not the only variable to look at when addressing native and non-native teachers, would it be possible then to say that both native and non-native teachers share the similar needs in professional development programs? According to Medgyes (1992), teachers can be "more or less trustworthy models" by their students, depending on their proficiency level in English language. He further claims that "non-NESTs' progress is hampered most of all by a state of constant stress and insecurity caused by inadequate knowledge of the language" (p.348).

In connection to this research, it is assumed that proficiency level in language could play an important role in how non-native teachers perceive their self-image and professional identity.

Accordingly, improvement of language proficiency level could be proposed in professional development programs for non-native teachers as it may have a crucial impact on their confidence, self-image and thereby teaching practice. However, further explanation should be provided regarding what Medgyes (1992) refers to as "knowledge of the language". Apparently, it appears that knowledge of language does not include only "performance of language"; yet, it may include other aspects such as metalinguistics awareness and deep understanding of the structure and use of language. Reves & Medgyes 1994, in their study of how self-perceptions of native and non-native teachers can influence their teaching attitudes, it has been revealed that non-native teachers have deeper understanding of language, whereas "NESTS are not aware of the internal mechanisms operating the acquisition and use of the language…" (p.361). That being the case, it is yet the question of differences native teachers and non-native teachers needs in professional development programs. In other words, to what extent do native and non-native teachers need continuous professional development sessions in language knowledge and awareness? Concerning this research, it is useful to consider Holliday's (2006) concept of "native speakerism" which suggests that it represents a "western culture". Indeed, looking at the fact that participants in this research do not come from western cultures, this research does also attempt to investigate whether Holliday's concept of "native-speaker-ism" relate to language teacher's identity in Qatar, through including questions in the questionnaire that aim at understanding participants' own perceptions of whether they consider themselves to be native or non-native teachers.

Interestingly, Llurda (2005) has also addressed the issue of whether "language awareness is a necessary component of teaching expertise" (p.124). In his comparative study of native and non-native teachers of English language, an attempt has been made to reveal the extent to which

native and non-native teachers can predict learners' lexical difficulties in a pedagogical text. The study which included 65 native and non-native teachers, and 200 students has revealed that non-native teachers "demonstrated a very high level of awareness of learners' vocabulary difficulties" (p.124). In fact, this is in alignment with Medgyes' idea which states that non-native teachers are more capable of anticipating "language difficulties", and thereby helping students overcome those issues (1992, p.347). Nevertheless, in relation to this research, the number of studies conducted to explore teachers' own perceptions of their language awareness and criteria used in professional development to measure and evaluate teachers' language knowledge is indeed limited.

Little research has been done into the needs of both native speaker and non-native speaker teachers in the field of teachers training courses. Yet, one recent empirical study conducted by Anderson (2016) aimed at exploring native and non-native teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards 2 short initial teacher training they have been enrolled in "The Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA)" and the "Trinity College London CertTESOL". The study which included 41 native speakers and 38 non-native speakers attempted to explore the reasons behind taking part in these training courses for both native and non-native speakers, it also shed the light on participants' own perceptions of their needs in these training courses and how satisfied they were with the components of the course. Surprisingly, the findings have revealed that the majority of non-native speakers chose to participate in these training courses for the sake of "professional development"; whereas only one non-native participant chose "to improve my English" as a reason behind taking part in the course. As for most useful course components, it appears that unlike native speaker participants, only 16 non-native participants found that "improving language awareness" to be useful. A possible justification for this could

be that of Medgyes, "NNSs has studied or taught the explicit rules relating to syntax or morphology, they are likely to have high levels of declarative knowledge about the language" (Anderson, 2016, p.269). Another surprising finding shows that the majority of non-native participants found that "learning about lesson and course planning", methodology and "learning about teaching", and "learning about skills" to be the most useful components of the course.

Indeed, Anderson's (2016) findings are in contradiction with the assumptions of this research which estimates that non-native teachers at public schools in Qatar might be more interested in language component in their professional development programs, and less interested in methodology component. Anderson's study targeted participants with different backgrounds: "to ensure responses came from a wide variety of contexts, course providers included both further (FE) and higher education (HE) institutions and private course providers from 15 countries worldwide" (2016, p.364). However, in connection to this research, it is assumed that shedding the light on participants' needs within the same context and backgrounds could lead to useful insights into the accurate needs of teachers in a specific context.

2.3.2 The different identities of English language teachers

In connection to this research, the implications of researching nativeness and non-nativeness in English language teacher for this research suggest that different identities do ineed exist, and should be considered, besides the commonly known identities of native vs. non-native teacher. In fact, considering that all participants in this research are non-native speakers, would it be wise to restrict English language teachers' identities to either native or non-native? Relating to my personal experience in dealing with English language teachers and students in Qatar, there is an

obvious support from community to categorize English language teachers as either native speakers or non-native speakers, with preference for native speaker teachers to teach language. However, looking at teachers within the same background or culture, consideration should be given to other types of professional identities for English language teachers. Interestingly, Bernstein (2000) argues that professional identities could either be "retrospective" or "prospective". He further explains that retrospective identities are shaped by culture, religious, nationality and narratives of the past, whereas "prospective identities are launched by social movements, and engaged in conversion through their engagement with economic and political activity to provide for the development of their new potential" (p.79). Similarly, Chan, Ross & Keyes (2017) further add that "the prospective identity of a teacher should be open, negotiated and shifting based on the culture and the present need of how students should be taught" (Qadhi, 2018, p.68).

Accordingly, the implication of this for this research is that teachers' professional identities may differ in accordance with different factors in their context. One example of this could be found in higher education institutions in Qatar, Qatar University and Qatar Foundation Universities, where language teachers have specifics titles or roles such as writing instructor, instructor of English for academic purpose or instructor of English for foundation program. Likewise, it is assumed that English language teachers at public schools in Qatar may form their professional identities according to what they think their roles as teachers are, or according to their students' specific needs at different levels (primary, middle and high schools). Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the questionnaire specifically asks participants about their perceptions of their own identities, or what they feel describes them the best as English language teachers. Accordingly, it is estimated that this could contribute to answering research question 3

of this paper. Some of different identities suggested in the questionnaire are highly related to

proficiency level of the teacher: native teacher, non-native teacher, expert speaker of English,

and proficient user of English. Indeed, this research assumes that connecting self-identity to

proficiency in language, and perceiving ones' self-identity on the basis of that could affect how

teachers would percoeve their own needs in professional development. In other words, it is

estimated that teachers who perceive their identities as "native English language teachers" may

not necessarily think that they need language sessions to be part of their professional

development programs. Other identities suggested in the questionnaire are related to general or

specific language skills: grammar teacher, writing teacher, English language teacher, IELTS

teacher, listening teacher, reading teacher, and speaking teacher. The reason behind classifying

these as different identities is that assumption that some teachers focus on teaching certain areas

of language, and thereby they may not think they need to get improvement in other areas. In the

Qatari context, it is estimated that some teachers may consider themselves to be grammar or

writing teachers; since there is a great emphasis on these skills at public schools in Qatar.

Accordingly, research questions 3 of this paper aim at confirming this hypothesis and

investigating the relation between identities and professional development needs through asking

participants in the questionnaire not only about their perceptions of self-identity, but also about

their professional development needs. As a consequent, this could lead to useful insights into the

perceptions of professional development needs for English language teachers in Qatar, based on

perceptions of different self-identities. Notably, another identity suggested in the questionnaire is

"linguist/ Researcher in language and language teaching".

3. Chapter 3: Methodology

The aim of this research is to explore male and female English language teachers' opinions, attitudes, and perceptions of professional development sessions at public schools in Qatar. The study was built on the discussion and connection of three related concepts: professional development, language performance and language awareness, and identity of English language teachers. This chapter starts by presenting the research questions of this study, and it gives a description of the methodological approach that was used to answer those questions. It also provides some information about the participants in this study, and it explains the procedures of data collection and data analysis. Finally, it refers to ethical consideration.

3.1 Research Questions

This research aims in general at exploring English language teachers' attitudes towards professional development sessions at public schools in Qatar. Accordingly, three main research questions are posed to achieve this purpose. Additionally, to answer the research main questions, sub questions and concepts were considered in the literature review section and in the research instrument, the questionnaire (Appendix B):

RQ1. What are the attitudes of English language teachers towards professional development sessions at public schools in Qatar?

- Components of professional development programs for English language teachers at public schools in Qatar.

- Teachers' perceptions of effective and useful professional development sessions.

- Teachers' perceptions of their needs in professional development sessions.

RQ2. What are the attitudes of English language teachers towards integrating language improvement and language awareness as part of their professional development sessions at public schools in Qatar?

- Teachers' perceptions of their own proficiency level and language awareness.

- Factors behind willingness/Unwillingness to integrate language as a core component in professional development programs:

- The relation between teachers' language performance/ language awareness and their teaching practice.

RQ3. Do perceptions of self-identity of English language teachers at public schools

in Qatar have an impact on their perceptions of professional development needs?

- Teachers' perceptions of their self-identity as English language teachers.

- Nativeness/Non-nativeness in the identity of English language teachers.

- The relation between teachers' identity, teaching practice and perceptions of professional development needs.

3.2 Methodological Approach & Data Analysis

This research implements a mixed-methods approach, quantitative and qualitative. For the quantitative approach of this study, data resulted from close-ended and Likert scale questions will be illustrated in charts and tables for the purpose of giving clear representation and comparisons of data. Whereas qualitative approach on the other hand would be implemented through asking participants to answer some open-ended questions to investigate their opinions about the topic. An inductive thematic approach would be used to interpret participants' responses in the open-ended questions. This would be achieved through implementing a reflexive thematic analysis which would help identifying patterns and themes across the dataset.

3.3 Participants in the study

Data in this study were collected from a number of 79 non-native English language teachers (34 male teachers teaching at schools for boys and 45 female teachers teaching at schools for girls) at different public schools in Qatar. 28 participants are teachers in primary schools, 13 are in middle schools, and 38 are in secondary schools. Participants were randomly invited to take part in this study, without the consideration of specific characteristics, backgrounds, or experience. Random sampling has been used in this research for two reasons: first, it allows for unbiased estimations, and second, it could help in acheving accuracy in results since no previous information about the

participants is provided.

3.4 Data Collection

The research instrument used for collecting data in this research is an electronic questionnaire created via Microsoft Forms. Having gained ethical approval, contact has been made with around 10 different public schools in Qatar to recruit teachers who would want to take part in this research, and thereby sending them the link to the electronic questionnaire via e-mail and contact number.

The questionnaire consists of 25 required questions and was built for the purpose of investigating three main themes – professional development, language performance and language awareness, and identity of English language teachers. The questions in the questionnaire were designed and written in accordance with these themes, and in connection to concepts discussed in the literature review.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

Before starting to collect data from participants, ethical approval was requested and granted by the Ethics Committee, (Appendix C). Also, contact has been made with the authority of public schools in Qatar, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, to seek approval for accessing schools and collecting data from teachers (Appendix D).

Additionally, participants in this study were presented with the ethical issues regarding this research. Accordingly, before filling in the questionnaire, they were provided with an electronic copy of the Participant Information sheet (Appendix E), which gives detailed information about the title and purpose of the study, completing the questionnaire, confidentiality and data management, termination of participation in this study, risks of taking part, and finally contacting

the Principal Investigator for further questions or concerns. Following that, participants who were willing to take part in this study were asked to read and sign an electronic copy of the Participant Consent Form (Appendix F) as an indication for their agreement to participate in this research.

4. Chapter 4: Findings & Discussion

This chapter will present the findings obtained from analyzing data collected from 79 participants in a questionnaire, that aimed at exploring English language teachers' attitudes towards integrating language performance and language knowledge as part of their professional development programs at public schools in Qatar. The questions in the questionnaire were built around four themes which are related to the main research questions of this paper:

- Professional development needs for English language teachers

- Language performance & knowledge about language

- Different identities of English language teachers

- Nativeness/non-nativeness in English language teaching

Therefore, this chapter will start by presenting the analysis of data under each related research

question, accompanied by discussion of the results in accordance with literature, and conceptual framework of this paper.

4.1 RQ1: What are the attitudes of English language teachers towards professional development sessions at public schools in Qatar?

4.1.1 Analysis

To help answering research question 1, several questions regarding the nature of professional development for English language teachers were posed in the questionnaire. To start with, figure 2 shows the number of professional development sessions English language teachers get at public schools in Qatar. It appears that the majority of participants (69 respondents) get at least 2 professional development sessions in a semester, with 35 respondents (44%) saying that they get more than 4 sessions in a semester. Interestingly, only 10 respondents (13%) reported that they get one session in a semester.

Figure 2: Number of PD sessions teachers get at school

■ one session in a semester ■ 2-4 sessions in a semester ■ more than 4 sessions in a semester ■
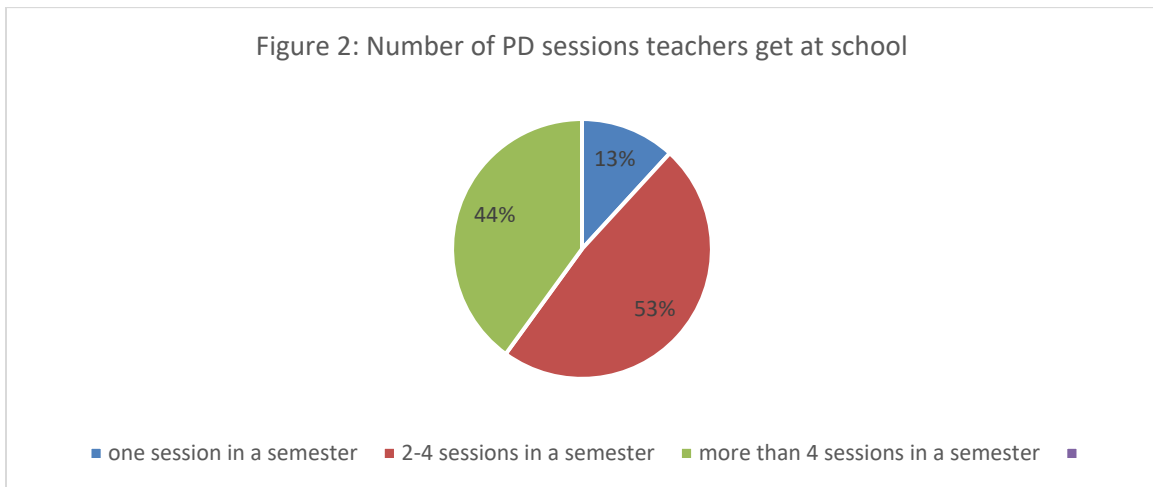
This, indeed, gives an indication that authority of schools in Qatar gives attention to the importance of continually providing teachers with professional development sessions, and

equipping them with skills and knowledge to help with professional growth. Therefore, in attempt to understand the nature of professional development sessions which teachers of English language usually get at public schools, figure 3 shows that more than half of the participants agreed that they usually get sessions related to "strategies for teaching language skills" (56 respondents), "sessions for differentiation in teaching" (56 respondents), and sessions for "technology training (70 respondents). Surprisingly, a few number of participants reported that get sessions related to language: "language improvement" (23 respondents), "knowledge about language" (21 respondents), and "connecting language research and education" (16 respondents).

Yet, when asked about the sessions English language teachers think they need to get more training in, it appears in figure 4 that there is, still, a preference to get more of the same sessions they usually get: "differentiation in teaching" (36 respondents), "strategies for teaching language skills" (27 respondents), and "technology training" (23 respondents). Interestingly, it also appears that "connecting language research and education" is one of the areas many teachers would want get training in (29 respondents).

Figure 3: PD sessions teachers usually get at school

Figure 3: PD sessions teachers usually get at school

Legend:
- differentiation in teaching
- strategies for teaching language skills
- general language sessions
- connecting language research to teaching
- lesson planning
- knowledge about language
- technology training
- classroom management

Figure 4: PD sessions teachers want to get more training in

Legend:
- differentiation in teaching
- strategies for teaching language skills
- general language sessions
- connecting language research to teaching
- lesson planning
- knowledge about language
- technology training
- classroom management

One possible justification of why teachers still want to get more training in the same areas they already receive training in at school could be that of the effectiveness of sessions delivered at school. Indeed, figure 5 shows that 89% of participants reported that they have joined or are

willing to join professional development sessions outside school, which raises the question of whether participants are satisfied with the quality of sessions they get at school.

Figure 5: participants who have joined/ are willing to join PD sessions outside school
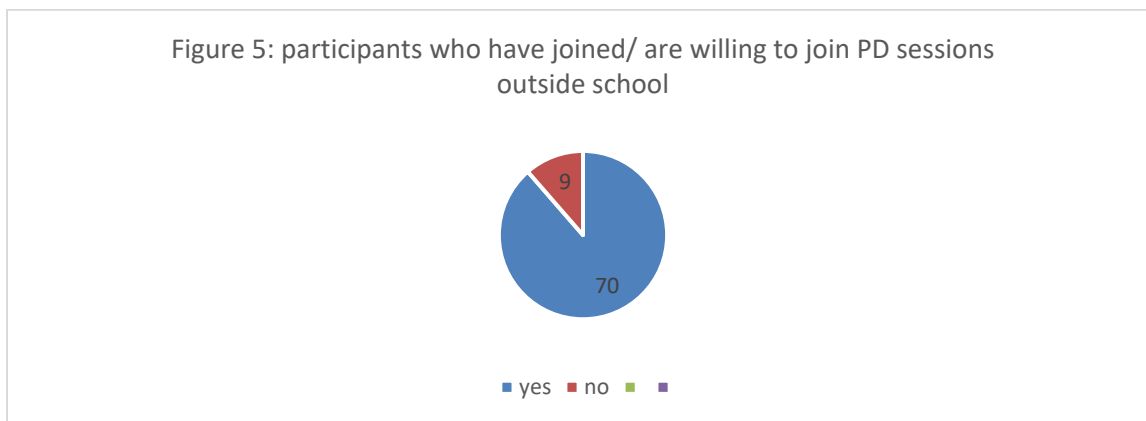
Notably, this is in agreement with the results of another question that aimed at investigating teachers' rates of the importance of different professional development session. Data show that more than half of the participants (53%) have rated both "strategies for teaching language skills" and "differentiation in teaching" as the most important sessions in professional development. Surprisingly, the number of respondents rating "general language sessions" and "connecting language research and education" as most important sessions is very little. This, indeed, raises the question of teachers' perception of language as an essential part of professional development sessions, and it connects significantly to research question two and three of this paper.

4.1.2 Discussion

Questions in the first part of the questionnaire attempted to explore English language teachers attitudes towards professional development programs in general. Different main themes have emerged from data analysis of this part:

- Providing teachers with professional development programs.

- Teachers' satisfaction with the quality of professional development sessions at school.

- Teachers' perceptions of their professional development needs vs. teachers' perceptions of the significance of different areas of professional development.

To start with, data shows that the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar gives value to the importance of providing teachers with professional training. Indeed, when looking at the number of English language teachers who receive more than 4 professional development sessions in a semester, (44% of respondents), it shows agreement with the results of a study conducted by Al-Obaidli (2010) to explore professional development for female English language teachers in Qatar: "40% of the women ESL teachers reported having professional development 'on a regular basis' " (p.251). Interestingly, this is reflected in the existence of different educational institutions that aim at helping teachers with professional growth: Education Development Institute (EDI), Teach for Qatar, and National Centre for Educational Development at Qatar University.

Nevertheless, participants in this research reporting that they still want to get more training in the same areas already focused on at school raises the question of whether teachers are satisfied with the quality of sessions they get. Actually, 89% of participants in this research (70 teachers) expressing their willingness to join professional development sessions outside schools indicate that the majority of English language teachers at schools in Qatar have a positive attitudes towards receiving professional development sessions in general; yet, this area may benefit from further exploration since more specific information is needed regarding teachers' attitudes towards professional development sessions provided at different places; school, Ministry of Education, or other educational institutes. Surprisingly,

these findings are broadly in line with the findings of Al-Obaidli (2010): "almost three-quarters of the women ESL teachers in this study usually participated in professional development activities in schools, while more than half of respondents actually preferred to participate outside school". Al-Obaidli has proposed one possible justification for this, "this may be due to their personal roles as mothers and wives and the need to balance their roles with their professional role" (2010, p.253). However, considering that this research does not target female participants only, another probable justification for the willingness to join sessions outside school could be concerning the quality of sessions provided at schools.

The last theme emerging theme from this part of the questionnaire is concerned with what teachers need to get training in, versus what they think is or is not important. Indeed, results show that the context where teachers teach may have significant impact on their perceptions of what they need, despite their own beliefs about what components create the most effective professional development program.

4.2 RQ2: What are the attitudes of English language teachers towards integrating language improvement and language awareness as part of their professional development sessions at public schools in Qatar?

4.2.1 Analysis

Several questions were posed in the second part of the questionnaire to help answer research question 2 which concerns language as a component of professional development programs. Yet, to answer this question it was useful to ask some other questions to explore perceptions of English language teachers' regarding language performance and language knowledge in general; which could thereby help in justifying their attitudes towards the integration of "language" in

professional development programs. Therefore, questions in this part of the questionnaire fall under two main themes:

- Teachers attitudes towards language in general
- Teachers attitudes towards language in teaching and in professional development

To begin with, figures 6 & 7 illustrate participants' perceptions of their own levels in language proficiency and language knowledge. Apparently, it looks that there is a general agreement in the level of language knowledge among all participants, whereas few variations appear in the proficiency level of participants.

Figure 6: Teachers' perceptions of their proficiency level
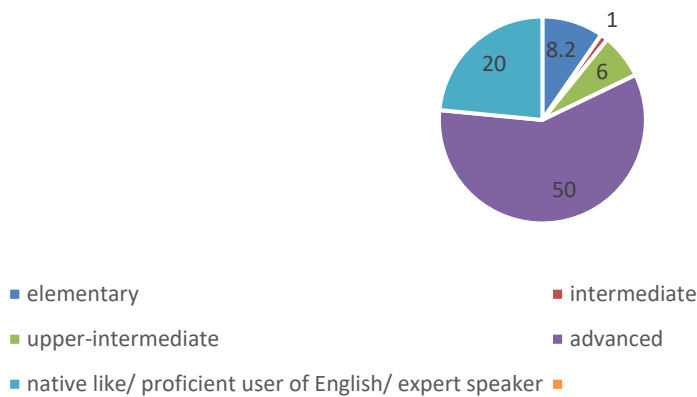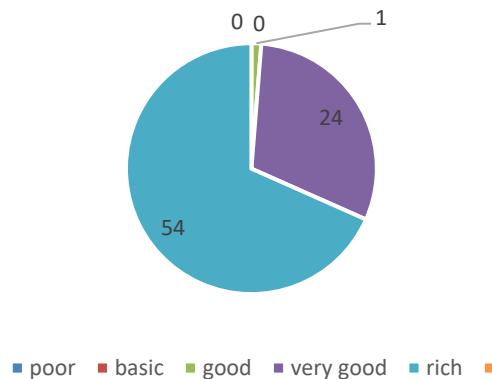
- elementary
- intermediate
- upper-intermediate
- advanced
- native like/ proficient user of English/ expert speaker

Figure 7: Teachers' perceptions of their level in language knowledge

- poor
- basic
- good
- very good
- rich

Data show that there is a general positive attitude towards language improvement. Indeed. It has been found that, whether optionally or mandatorily as part of professional development requirements at school, 72% of participants have claimed their attendance to language improvement sessions in the past couple of years. This is actually reflected in the results which show that more than half of the participants (67%) believe it is important for non-native English language teachers to continually practice and improve language. Accordingly, it appears that participants implement different strategies to keep practicing English, with "watching news, shows, and movies in English" on top of the list (table 1).

Table 1: strategies used by participants to practice English

strategy	frequency
I don't do anything to practice English	2
I attend courses, talks, webinars, workshops, conferences…	35
I practice English with colleagues at work	46
I read articles, blogs, newspapers, books…etc. in English	47
I watch news, shows, movies, online videos…etc. in English	57

Surprisingly, data analysis shows frequency in the appearance of "native speakers" when participants were asked about other strategies they implement to practice English.

As for Language and professional development programs at public schools in Qatar, it is shown that more than half of the participants (62%) reported they have received professional development sessions which aimed at improving their language knowledge and helping them teach certain areas of language. Additionally, it appears that there is a positive attitude towards

integrating language knowledge sessions as part of professional development (figure 8).

Figure 8: participants want to integrate language knowledge sessions in PD programs
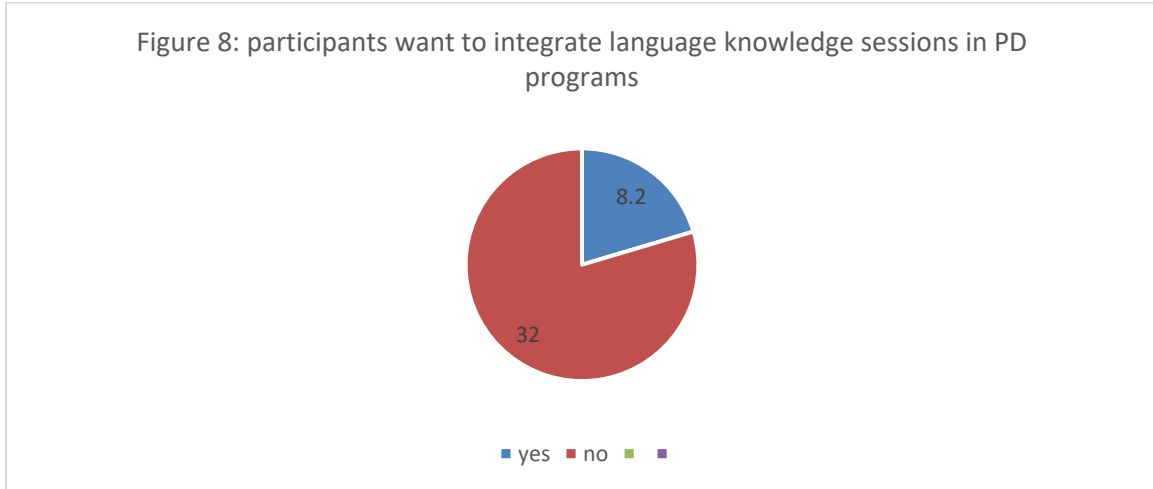
Similarly, 56% of the participants reported their willingness to have professional development sessions that help them improve their proficiency level and language skills in general.

Qualitative analysis of data shows some themes that have emerged when asking participants about the area of language skills or language knowledge they would want to get more training or improvement in. The most significant finding as shown in tables 2 & 3, there is agreement in participants willingness to improve "writing" both as a language skill, and as part of knowledge about language. Whereas "reading skills" appear to be at the bottom of the list for both language skills and language knowledge.

Table 2: Areas of language knowledge participants want to improve

Area of language knowledge	Frequency
Writing	20
Grammar	14
Speaking and pronunciation	6

Reading	3
Vocabulary knowledge	5

Table 3: Language skills participants want to improve

Language skill	Frequency
Writing skills	20
Speaking skills	12
Reading skills	3
Listening skills	3

Interestingly, this is reflected in teachers' ratings for their own performance in language skills. Indeed, it is shown that the majority of participants (81%) rated their performance in teaching "reading skills" as (excellent performance), and their confidence about teaching this skills as (extremely confident). On the other hand, participants who selected (excellent performance/ extremely confident) for "writing skills" are only 57%.

In order to understand whether teachers' language performance/ knowledge about language could be a reason behind difficulty in presenting certain areas of language to students, participants were asked to choose what reasons they think could affect teaching language skills. Surprisingly, it appears that teacher's experience, teacher's knowledge about language, and teaching resources may not necessarily be the reason. This is to say that 56 respondents agreed that "Students can't recognize equivalent in their first language" could be a main reason (figure 9).

Figure 9: why could it be difficult to present certain areas of language to students?

- studetns can't recognize equivalent in their first language
- teacher may lack experience in teaching
- teacher may lack sufficient knowledge about language
- 4th Qtr
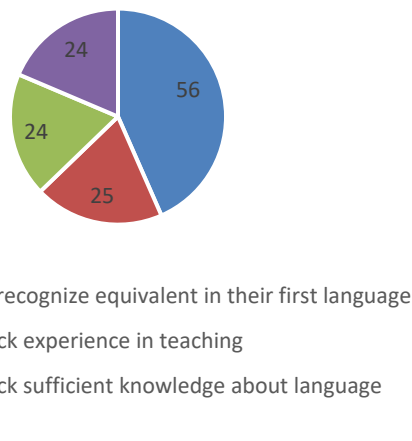
4.2.2 Discussion

It has been estimated, indeed, that most participants would rate their language knowledge as "good" or above, since they are qualified English language teachers who have received the adequate training in education and language teaching. Therefore, it is not surprising that more than half of the participants (68%) rated their language knowledge as "rich". However, it is interesting to notice that there is a slight difference in terms of ratings of one's own proficiency level in English. The majority of participants have rated their proficiency level as "advanced" (50 respondents, 63%), whereas only 25% of participants (20 respondents) have rated their language performance as "native like/ Proficient user of English/ Expert speaker". Data analysis shows that 9 out of the 20 participants who claimed their proficiency level to be "native like" have a master's degree qualification in teaching. Interestingly, all these respondents have language teaching experience at different contexts.

Additionally, it has been noticed that 6 respondents have rated their proficiency level as either elementary, intermediate, or upper-intermediate. What makes this interesting is the fact that these

respondents were all teachers at primary schools. One possible justification for this could be the fact that teachers at primary schools deal with students with lower levels, and simple English coursebooks, and usually find themselves obliged to simplify the use of English at classrooms, or sometimes even use first language. Indeed, if this was the case in most primary schools in Qatar, it is then useful to raise the question of how important the role of teacher communities/ associations, or language sessions are for teachers at primary schools. Indeed, this suggests the need for further research in the area of professional development for English language, particularly at primary schools. I am quite aware that these ratings may not necessarily be accurate since they are not based on standard language tests, but they are merely based on participants own perceptions of their levels; yet, this still raises the question of whether English language teachers need to have a certain level of English in order to be qualified language teachers. Most importantly, do language teachers need to sustain a certain proficiency level throughout their career, or is it expected from them to simplify their language at certain point in order to meet students' specific needs at school? This, in fact, is supported by Wright's (1991) suggestion which was discussed previously in the literature review, that teachers need to have "a high level of language proficiency". Nevertheless, more investigation is needed into how high, or advanced should language teachers be in proficiency level? Also, does the context play any role in defining the required proficiency level of language teachers?

Indeed, it appears that perceptions, attitudes and needs of language teachers may differ based on the level of students teachers deal with. This is to say that while most participants claimed that they implement different strategies to keep practicing English, there were only 2 participants who reported that they "don't do anything" to practice English. There is no doubt that this cannot be generalized; however, data analysis shows that one of those participants is a teacher with

bachelor's degree in teaching, who teach at primary school (Kg-6). Interestingly, this teacher has also claimed to have "intermediate" level in language proficiency. Notably, data shows another primary school participant who has reported that it is "not very important" to keep practicing and improving English language. This, in fact, leads to the need for more exploration through qualitative research methods to investigate whether teaching primary, lower-level students could be a reason behind teachers not willing for further improvement. As for the other participant who reported "not doing anything to practice language", data shows that this participant is a teacher with master's degree in teaching, and who has self-rated proficiency level in English as "native-like/ proficient user of English/ Expert speaker). This, indeed, raises the question of what it means to be native-like in terms of proficiency level, and whether "nativeness" was the highest level teachers should reach in order for them to be excellent teachers who need no further improvement.

Surprisingly, the theme of "nativeness" emerge again in the strategies participants claimed implementing to keep practicing and improving English language. Participants have suggested some strategies such as:

- *"follow some native speakers on Instagram or tick tock"*

- *"socializing with native speakers"*

- *"have native speakers friends"*

- *"communicating with foreigners"*

In fact, the repetition of "native" in these statements raises the question here of how English language teachers, in general, perceive the concept of "nativeness". Different western studies have been conducted to investigate the issue of "nativeness vs. non-nativeness"; yet, further research in this area would be useful to investigate perceptions and attitudes towards the concept of

"nativeness" in the middle east region generally, and in Qatar particularly.

Other significant findings of this research are concerned with language improvement needs for English language teachers at Qatari schools. It was estimated that English language teachers at public schools in Qatar would show more desire in improving listening and speaking skills, since these two language skills are not quite emphasized in English curricula. Indeed, generally, most English classes and examinations at public schools give more attention to grammar, reading, and writing skills. However, it was surprising to find out that most participants did not show interest in improving listening or speaking skills. On the contrary, data analysis shows great interest in improving writing skills. Interestingly, it is shown that participants are willing to improve their language proficiency, especially in "writing skills", and they also want to improve their language knowledge about writing and how to teach writing. One possible justification for this could be lack of opportunities for language teachers to write academic articles, reports, or reflective blogs. Also, continuous exposure to lower-level writings of students could be another cause affecting teacher's own performance in writing.

Results also show difference in terms of what participants want to improve in language proficiency and language knowledge. For instance, regarding proficiency level, data analysis shows that participants are not willing to improve "grammar", but it is also shown that 28% of participants want to improve their knowledge about teaching "grammar". This, in fact, is relevant to the topic discussed earlier in the literature review, regarding language knowledge/ language awareness and its relations to native vs. non-native speakers. The fact that participants in this research are non-natives means that they have probably had the adequate learning and "declarative knowledge" of grammar that they no longer need to improve it (see Seidlhofer 1999 & Medgyes' 1994). However, they may, on the other hand, lack knowledge/ awareness about methodologies of

teaching grammar.

In attempt to understand why it could be difficult to present certain areas of language to students, data analysis shows frequent repetition of "students" as a reason:

- *Some students don't have prior knowledge of language.*

- *Students aren't native speaker, some of them don't know the basics.*

- *Students willingness*

- *Students' level, poor learning environment, lack of motivation.*

- *They [students] are not keen on learning.*

- *Students take too many lessons in a short time, which is difficult to achieve certain structures/objectives.*

- *Students are very weak in English and there is no basics at all.*

- *Lack of foundation; some students reach grade 6 with no basics that can allow them even to read or write a single word.*

- *Some students in upper grades don't know how to read or write.*

- *The academic level of students is way beyond the syllabus.*

- *The students weakness in English, for example: in the writing skill, students needs to have a good base and foundation in English such as vocabulary, grammar ti be able to express ideas and opinions.*

Interestingly, this finding is in agreement with those of Omar (2021) in his research *Improving English language and literacy instruction through effective professional development: A practitioner, collaborative, reflective practice workshop in a middle school in Qatar*, as discussed earlier in the literature review, "most participants highlighted that students do not
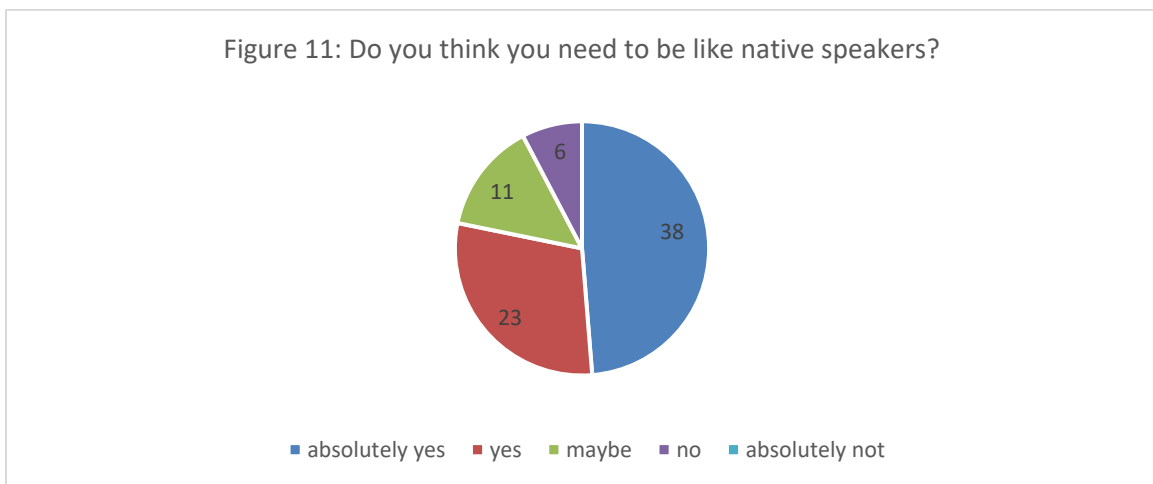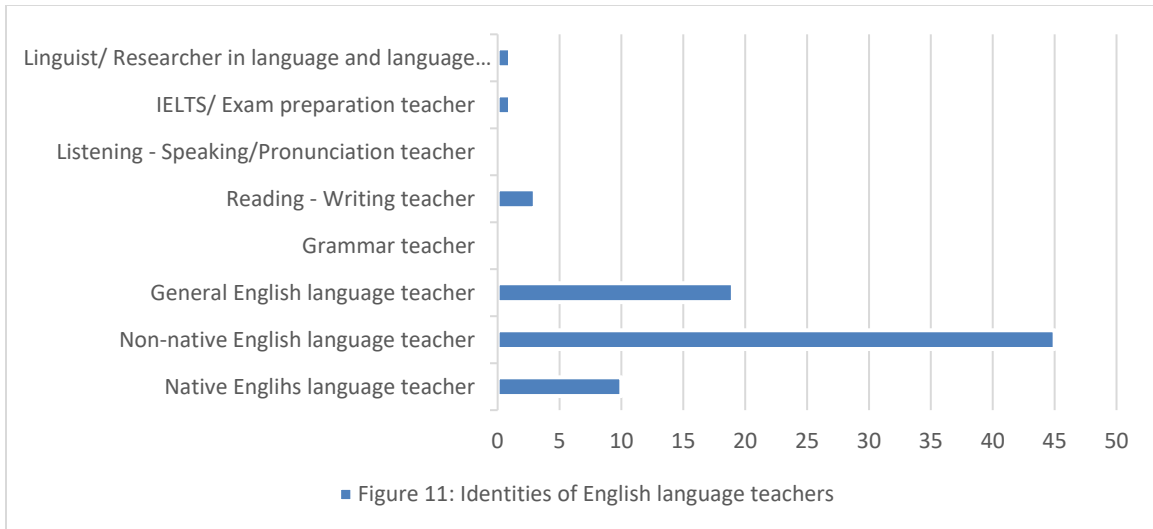
possess the necessary knowledge and skills in English and literacy." (p.110).

4.3 RQ3: Do perceptions of self-identity of English language teachers at public schools in Qatar have an impact on their perceptions of professional development needs?

4.3.1 Analysis

The last part of the questionnaire attempts to investigate whether perceptions of one's self-identity as an English language teacher could affect perceptions of one's professional development needs. This section, does indeed, provide useful insights into understanding the previous sections of the questionnaire (attitudes towards professional development and language) through connecting perceptions of self-identity with perceptions of professional development needs. Therefore, questions in this part are concerned with understanding how participants would view their identity as English language teachers. Additionally, one theme this section focuses on is "nativeness/non-nativeness as an identity for English language teachers"; thus, questions regarding attitudes towards "nativeness" were also posed in this section.

To begin with, concerning how participants viewed and described themselves as English language teachers, figure 10 shows that the majority of participants (45) chose to describe themselves as "non-native English language teachers". It was also surprising to find out that most participants believe that they need to be like native speakers in terms of proficiency level and knowledge about English language (figure 11).

Figure 11: Identities of English language teachers

Figure 11: Do you think you need to be like native speakers?

■ absolutely yes ■ yes ■ maybe ■ no ■ absolutely not

Concerning the same issue of nativeness/ non-nativeness in language teaching, results show that

54% of participants reported their approval of giving their students a score of 100% in English

exams, even if students were not native speakers. Whereas 34% of them chose "maybe", and only

11% of participants did not approve of giving their students a score of 100% in language exams.

Additionally, an attempt has been made to investigate whether there was a relation between the

concept of nativeness and reasons behind teachers not willing to improve language. Figure 12

shows that most participants (39 respondents) reported that having "long experience in language

teaching" was a reason for them not to have further language improvement sessions.

Figure 12: Reasons hindering language improvement for teachers

Legend:
- I will never be like natives
- I teach lower-level studetns
- lack of time
- I think that improving methods is more important
- I have long experience in teaching
- I already have a permanent teaching job
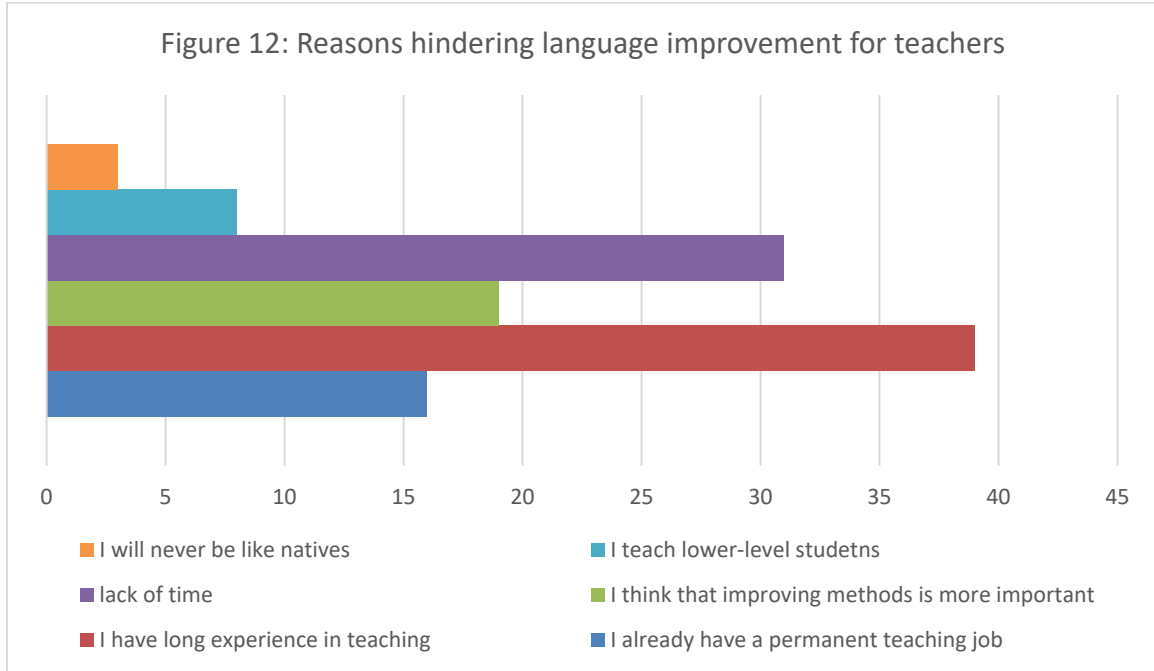
4.3.2 Discussion

It was surprising that most participants believed they were best described as "non-native English language teachers". In fact, it was estimated that participants might link their perceptions of their self-identity to their roles as teachers, and thereby it was a hypothesis of this research that a number of participants would perceive their identity as "reading and writing teacher" or "grammar teacher"; considering that these two language skills are highly emphasized in English curricula at public schools in Qatar. However, this finding indicates that most English language teachers at public schools in Qatar might actually perceive "nativeness/ non-nativeness" as an identity they can describe themselves with; Thus, connecting language to identity formation. This, in fact, is an align with Olsen's (2009) ideas, as discussed earlier in the literature review, which asserts the role language plays in identity formation. Additionally, this has also been confirmed by Pennington & Richards (2016): "the identity of a language teacher cannot be detached from issues related to

language knowledge proficiency…" (Qadhi, 2018, p.120).

Another interesting finding is the relation between qualification level and identity formation. Considering that this is a small-scale study, generalizations could not necessarily be accurate; however, it has been observed that amongst participants who chose to describe themselves as "native English language teacher", "IELTS/ Exam preparation teacher" or "Linguist/ Research in language and language teaching" are 6 participants who possess master's degree qualification in language teaching. Therefore, more investigation would be useful in the area of identity formation among teachers with different qualifications, and whether this could play a role in confidence building. In fact, what makes this finding interesting is that those participants did not refer to themselves as "native teachers", but they referred to their proficiency level as "native like". This also suggests the need for more research to look into understandings of "nativeness" as an identity, and "nativeness" as a criteria for language evaluation.

Despite the majority of participants describing themselves as "non-native English language teachers), they still believed that they need to be like natives in terms of proficiency level and language knowledge. Indeed, it was surprising to find that 48% of participants have selected "absolutely yes" in response to the question. Actually, this observation raises another question: are English language teachers in general, and English language teachers in Qatar, in particular, aware of research conducted in the areas of language abilities and differences of both native and non-native teachers? Indeed, as discussed previously in the literature review, considering that different studies have claimed that non-native teachers have the superiority over native teachers in terms of language awareness (see Seidlhofer 1999 & Medgyes 1994), would this have an impact on teachers' confidence and affect how they think they need to be like?

It was estimated that one of the main reasons behind English language teachers in Qatar not willing to get further sessions for language improvement is related to the issue of nativeness/non-nativeness. However, data analysis shows this not to be the case. Actually, other themes have emerged in participants' responses regarding this topic (table 4):

Table 4: Other reasons hindering language improvement for teachers

Theme	Qualitative data
Nature of work	- *"filling too many reports and plans, activities and responsibilities as a coordinator"* - *"school and work"* - *"working"* - *"we are overloaded with work"* - *"workload"* - *"most workshops aren't practical"* - *"poor exposure and limited language policies would really hinder any progress in that regard"*
Time	- *"lack of time"* - *"no time for improvement"* - *"lack of time"* - *"lack of time"* - *"lack of time of improvement sessions"*
Students	- *"the level of the student"*

Personal	- *"I 'm a native speaker"*
	- *"I have already enrolled in some courses and I prefer the free studying. I read books and I study whatever I feel that I need freely"*
	- *"daily routine"*

Table 4 shows that two main reasons hindering English language teachers in Qatar to continually get involved in language professional development sessions are the nature of work and lack of time. This finding, in fact, is consistent with that of Qadhi (2018), as discussed in the literature review. In her exploration of "*Female English Language Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences of Continuing Professional Development in Qatar*", it has been found that "a major concern of the teachers was the extensive requirements made by the SEC [Supreme Education Council] that cannot be managed with their current workload…" (Qadhi, 2018, p.135). Furthermore, this also supports those findings of Al-Obaidli (2010) in her research about "*Women ESL Teachers' Perceptions about their Roles and Professional Development Needs in Qatar's Education for a New Era*" in which the issue of work policies has also been mentioned and suggested by participants in the study: "some of the teachers in this study argued that their workload should be decreased to allow time for planning, curriculum development and innovative pedagogy" (p.218).

5. Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter briefly summarizes the purpose, methodology of the study, and major findings. It also discusses the limitations of the study and implications for further research. Finally, the chapter ends with a personal reflection of this research project.

The purpose of this study has been to explore the perspectives, perceptions, and attitudes of

English language teachers at public schools in Qatar towards professional development, and towards integrating language as a core component in professional development programs. The study has also aimed at exploring the impact different identities of English language teachers may have on their perceptions of professional development needs. As such, three main research questions have led the investigation and built the structure of this paper:

RQ1. What are the attitudes of English language teachers towards professional development sessions at public schools in Qatar?

RQ2. What are the attitudes of English language teachers towards integrating language improvement and language awareness as part of their professional development sessions at public schools in Qatar?

RQ3. Do perceptions of self-identity of English language teachers at public schools in Qatar have an impact on their perceptions of professional development needs?

As for the methodology of this research, a mixed-methodology approach has been implemented. In fact, the study was partly qualitative in nature, as themes and patterns were investigated and further analyzed to understand participants' responses. Also, quantitative approach has partly been implemented to provide clearer representations and generalizations of the findings. Collecting data for this research has been carried out via an electronic questionnaire distributed to 79 male and female English language teachers, teaching at different schools in Qatar (primary schools k-6, middle schools 7-19, and secondary schools 10-12).

The findings of this research are categorized under three main themes:

5.1 Theme 1: Professional Development

Under the theme of "professional development", the researcher attempted to explore the

perspectives and attitudes of English language teachers at public schools in Qatar towards

professional development programs in general. The study reveals that there is generally a positive

attitude among most English language teachers towards receiving professional development

sessions. Nevertheless, the key findings of this investigation are concerned with the type of

sessions teachers get at schools. In fact, in contrast to the hypothesis of this research which

suggested that teachers would probably want to get more integration of language improvement

sessions in their professional development programs, it has been, surprisingly, shown that most

teachers agreed on the need for having more professional development sessions related to

"differentiation in teaching language to students with different proficiency levels".

5.2 Theme 2: Language as part of Professional Development

The second research question falls under the theme of language and professional development.

An attempt has been made to explore the attitudes of English language teachers at public schools in

Qatar towards considering language as a core component of professional development programs,

and thereby integrating it in their training sessions at school. Notably, the study has focused on two

aspects of language: language performance, and language awareness. Interestingly, despite the

general positive attitude towards continuous improvement of language, two further themes have

emerged regarding this topic. First, the study has estimated a willingness among teachers to get

more language improvement sessions focused on speaking and listening skills; since these two

skills are not emphasized in English curricula at public schools in Qatar. However, it was

surprising to find out that "writing skills" and "grammar" are what have been frequently repeated

in participants' responses. Second, results show that language teaching is highly related to

students' proficiency levels. Indeed, different topic related to students such as lack of motivation

and low proficiency levels were mentioned by many participants as reasons causing difficulty for

language teachers to teach effectively.

5.3 Theme 3: Identity of English Language Teachers

Under the last theme of this study, identity of English language teachers, the researcher attempted to investigate whether different identities could have an impact on the perceptions of English language teachers at public schools in Qatar of their professional development needs. Two key findings have emerged; first, it has been found that there is a tendency for English language teachers at Qatari schools to appreciate "nativeness" of teachers in language teaching. Second, the results show that different identities of English language teachers may not necessarily have an impact on teachers' perceptions of their professional development needs. Indeed, it has been shown that other factors such as nature of work, time, and students could affect teachers' perceptions of their training needs.

5.4 Limitations

The major limitation of this study was the instrument tool used to collect data from participants. In fact, using electronic questionnaires may lead to inaccuracy in results since trustworthiness issues in responses may appear. The researcher could not verify whether participants responded to the questions truthfully, especially that no personal contact has been made with them. Another issue with questionnaires is the human's nature of responding to please and satisfy the researcher. Indeed, it is also well acknowledged that some types of questions in the questionnaire may act as a guide for participants to answer in a certain way. Nevertheless, it is hoped that some lessons could be learned through shedding the light on English language teachers' opinions and voices regarding professional development, and the integration of "language" as a core component in professional development programs.

5.5 Implications for Future Research

While it is acknowledged that results from this study may not necessarily be accurate due to limitations of the methodology of this study, and thereby these results cannot be generalized, this research does still provide some significant results. In fact, it has led to useful insights into understanding the challenges and needs of English language teachers at public schools in Qatar. Considering that this study involved teachers at public schools only, it could be beneficial to replicate this study in other contexts such as private and international schools in Qatar and then compare it with studies conducted at public schools. This is believed to provide better understanding of language teaching polices at different contexts in Qatar. Indeed, since there is a general tendency for people in Qatar to prefer enrolling their kids in private and international schools as many language teachers there are native speakers of English, it would be fair enough to understand English language teachers' perceptions, needs, and challenges in different contexts.

Furthermore, as this study has highlighted, different themes regarding professional development for English language teachers have emerged and can help in guiding future research: workload, differentiation in teaching language skills, and proficiency level of students and its impact on teaching practices.

5.6 Personal Reflection

I have earlier described the motivation behind conducting this research, which was my unpromising career as a language teacher who did not receive adequate professional development training at school, besides the impact "nativeness and non-nativeness in language teaching" I believe could have on teaching practices. In fact, it is probable that I may have investigated the wrong issue regarding professional development for English language teachers in Qatar, as results show that teachers are concerned with other aspects such as students and general pedagogy of

teaching than being concerned with language improvement. Additionally, my contribution to the understanding of this topic may be modest, but significant. I have argued that positive change in education would always start with the empowerment of teachers. Reflecting on my own teaching experience, teachers at public schools in Qatar may not have the power to change major policies, and this has also been, indeed, confirmed by Qadhi (2018) in her investigation of *Female English language teachers' perceptions and experiences of continuing professional development in Qatar*: "it was also noted that teachers are forced to focus on preparing students for tests and examinations and have little or no control over the content and methodologies they use to teach." (p.244). Yet, I believe that empowering teachers through listening to their voices and encouraging them to get involved in reflective practices for the sake of change, would be the first step towards establishing teacher communities in Qatar that aim at achieving positive change gradually.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Cambridge English Teaching Framework Competency Statements

The Cambridge English Teaching Framework would be found in this link:
https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/professional-development/cambridge-

english-teaching-framework/

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Version 5, 16th November 2021
Title of the research project: Integrating Language Improvement and Language Awareness as part of professional development for English Language Teachers in Qatar.
Name of researcher: [Student]

<u>**Section 1**</u>

1. What is your gender? *
   - Male
   - Female

2. What is your qualification in teaching English? *
   - Diploma
   - Bachelor
   - Master
   - PhD
   - Other (CELTA, DELTA, Teach for Qatar Program, teacher preparation programs…)

3. What is the level of students you are currently teaching? *
   - Primary school students (Grades 1-6)
   - Middle school students (Grades 7-9)
   - High school students (Grades 10-12)

4. How many years of language teaching experience do you have? *
   - Less than 2 years
   - 3-5 years
   - More than 6 years

5. How many years of language teaching experience in different contexts do you have? (i.e. teaching at different countries, schools with different education systems, different curricula) *
   - Less than 2 years
   - 3-5 years
   - More than 6 years
   - None

6. Do you think of yourself as: (Please choose what you think describes you the best)*

   - Native English language teacher/ Proficient user of English/ Expert speaker of English

- Non-native English language teacher
- General English language teacher
- Grammar teacher
- Reading - Writing teacher
- Listening - Speaking/ pronunciation teacher
- IELTS/ Exam preparation teacher
- Linguist/ Researcher in language and language teaching

Section 2

7. What professional development sessions do you usually get at your school? Please select all that apply: *

- Classroom management: Setting classroom rules, building positive teacher-student relationships, time management, giving instructions, motivating students, effective communication with students, monitoring activities, delivering constructive feedback.

- Technology training: Using OneDrive, using Microsoft Teams, using the interactive smart board in classroom, using iPads in classrooms, using educational websites in teaching (e.g. Kahoot, Quizlet…)

- knowledge about language: Sessions aimed at raising teachers' awareness and helping them improve their knowledge about: syntax, grammar, structure of language, phonology (the study of speech sounds), morphology (the study of words), semantics and pragmatics (the study of meanings of words)

- Lesson planning: Writing lesson objectives, anticipating challenges, designing activities, selecting authentic materials and supplementary resources for students, reflecting on the lesson plan.

- Connecting language research and education: sessions aimed at updating teachers with the latest research in language and language teaching.

- General language sessions: Sessions aimed at helping teachers improve their own language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, pronunciation)

- Strategies for teaching language skills: How to develop students' fluency in language, how to teach listening, writing, reading, speaking, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary.

- Differentiation in teaching: How to teach students with different learning styles, students with higher levels in English, and students with lower/basic level in English.

8. How many professional development sessions do you usually get at your school?*
   - One session in a semester
   - 2-4 sessions in a semester
   - More than 4 sessions in a semester

9. Which area of professional development do you think you need to get more training in? please select all that apply. *

   - Classroom management
   - Technology training
   - knowledge about language
   - Lesson planning
   - Connecting language research and education
   - General language sessions
   - Strategies for teaching language skills
   - Differentiation in teaching

10. Rate the following professional development sessions according to what you think is most/least important: *
    5 is most important
    1 is least important

    - Classroom management
    - Technology training
    - knowledge about language
    - Lesson planning
    - Connecting language research and education
    - General language sessions
    - Strategies for teaching language skills
    - Differentiation in teaching

11. Have you joined/ are you willing to join any professional development session/course outside school? *
    - Yes
    - No

Section 3

12. How would you rate your proficiency level in English: (performance in language skills – reading, writing, listening, speaking): *
    - Elementary
    - Intermediate
    - Upper intermediate
    - Advanced
    - Native like/ Proficient user of English/ Expert speaker

13. How would you rate your knowledge about English language: (knowledge about grammar and structure of language, phonology, vocabulary, semantics, analysing language…): *
    - Poor
    - Basic
    - Good
    - Very good
    - Rich

14. Rate yourself from 1-5 according to how good you think your performance in these skills is, and how confident you feel teaching these skills: *
    5 represents excellent performance/ extremely confident teaching this skill
    1 represents basic performance/ extremely unconfident teaching this skill

    - Reading skills (skimming, scanning, identifying the purpose, summarizing, finding facts and opinions, making inferences, making predictions, making connections, evaluating a text, locating key ideas, analysing…)

    - Writing skills (organizing and outlining the text, cohesion, coherence, linking words, spelling, punctuation, different sentence types, editing, writing for different genres, paraphrasing…)

    - Listening skills (taking notes, requesting clarification, summarizing, recognizing different accents, listening for details, identifying the general idea, monitoring and evaluating one's listening performance…)

    - Speaking skills (pronunciation, speaking accurately and fluently, using response token such as right/exactly/yeah, using appropriate language in different contexts, taking turn to speak, managing conversation, accurate production of sounds/stress/intonation, using pause fillers such as well/so/you know/ I mean…

- Presenting new vocabulary (abstract words, part of speech, homophones, words with multiple meanings, words in different contexts, collocations, idioms, technical words…)

- Grammar

15. In the past couple of years, have you joined any courses, talks, workshops, webinars… that aimed at improving your language skills? *
   - Yes
   - No

16. How important do you think it is for non-native English language teachers to continually practice and improve English every day? *
   - Extremely important
   - Very important
   - Important
   - Somewhat important
   - Not very important

17. What do you usually do to keep practicing English? Please select all that apply *
   - I don't do anything to practice English
   - I attend courses, talks, webinars, workshops, conferences…etc.
   - I practice English with colleagues at work
   - I read articles, blogs, newspapers, books…etc. in English
   - I watch news, shows, movies, online videos…etc. in English

18. Please, specify if there are other strategies you implement to keep practicing English:
   ……………………………………………………………………………

19. Would you like to get language improvement sessions at your school, as part of professional development? If yes, what area of language would you like to improve (speaking, writing, reading, listening)? *
   - Yes: ………………………………………………………………..
   - No

20. Why do you think it might be difficult to present certain aspects of English language to students? Please select all that apply. *
   - Students can't recognize equivalent in their first language (for example, there is no equivalent for articles a/an in Arabic language)
   - Teacher may lack experience in teaching certain language
   - Teacher may lack sufficient knowledge about language

- Lack of appropriate resources and materials

21. **P**lease, specify if there are other reasons you think might make presenting certain areas of English language to students difficult?
………………………………………………………..

22. In the last couple of years, have you had any professional development sessions at school, which aimed at helping you teach certain areas of language (grammar, writing, reading, pronunciation, presenting new vocabulary…)? *
- Yes
- No

23. Would you like to get language awareness sessions at your school, to help you better teach certain areas of language (grammar, writing, reading, pronunciation, presenting new vocabulary…)? If yes, what area of language knowledge would you like to get more training in? *
- Yes: ……………………………………………………………………
- No

Section 4

24. Do you think of yourself as a good English language teacher? *
- Yes
- No
- I don't know

25. Do you think you need to be like natives in terms of proficiency level and knowledge about language? *
- Absolutely yes
- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Absolutely not

26. Is it possible that you give your students a score of 100% in writing/speaking exams? *
- Yes
- No
- Maybe

27. I don't want to improve proficiency level or knowledge about language because: Please select all that apply. *
- I already have a permanent teaching job.
- I have long experience in teaching.

- I think that improving methods of teaching is more important than improving language.
- Lack of time for improvement sessions.
- I teach lower-level students (primary school), so I don't need to be advanced in English.
- I will never be like a native.
- Other, please specify: ……………………………………………………

Appendix C: Ethical Approval

<div align="right">School of the Arts Research Ethics Committee</div>

25 October 2021

Dear [Supervisor]

I am pleased to inform you that your application for research ethics approval has been approved. Application details and conditions of approval can be found below. Appendix A contains a list of documents approved by the Committee.

Application Details

Reference:	12345
Project Title:	MA Applied Linguistics: integrating language improvement and language awareness as part of professional development for English language teachers in Qatar.
Principal Investigator/Supervisor:	[Supervisor]
Co-Investigator(s):	[Student]
Lead Student Investigator:	-
Department:	English
Approval Date:	25/10/2021
Approval Expiry Date:	Five years from the approval date listed above

The application was **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

Conditions of approval

Please note: Any research ethics approval granted will be subject to the University's Policies on research during the pandemic.

Please ensure you are familiar with the latest guidance on conducting research during the pandemic. The guidance is available on the   .

- All serious adverse events must be reported to the Committee in accordance with the procedure for reporting adverse events.

- If you wish to extend the duration of the study beyond the research ethics approval expiry

date listed above, a new application should be submitted.

- If you wish to make an amendment to the study, please create and submit an amendment
- form using the research ethics system. If the named Principal Investigator or Supervisor

changes, or leaves the employment of the University during the course of this approval, the

approval will lapse. Therefore it will be necessary to create and submit an amendment form

within the research ethics system.

- It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator/Supervisor to inform all the investigators
of the terms of the approval.

Kind regards,

School of the Arts Research Ethics Committee

Appendix D: Approval from the gatekeeper in Qatar to collect data

Approval to Access School

19/092021

Respected Schools principals,

Please note that the researcher / [Student]

whose information are attached, will be conducting a field study in your school. Therefore, you are kindly requested to facilitate the researcher's mission noting that data will be regraded as confidential and for research purposes.

Yours Sincerely,

Director Of Educational Policy And Research Department

Appendix E: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Form

Version 1, 12th September 2021
Title of the research project: Integrating Language Improvement and Language Awareness as part of professional development for English Language Teachers in Qatar.
Name of researcher: [student]

Invitation
You are invited to take part in the above research being conducted by [student], a student at [University]. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done. Please, take time to read the following information about the research carefully, and feel free to contact the principal investigator, if you have any further questions or concerns before you decide to take part. Thank you for reading this. If you would like to participate, please move on to the next page and start filling in the questionnaire.

Completing the questionnaire
The link to the questionnaire will be made available for one week only after receiving it, and completing the questionnaire could take around 15 minutes. It is designed to explore English language teachers' attitudes and opinions regarding their professional development, improving language proficiency level and improving language knowledge. If you have any queries while filling in the questionnaire, please do contact the Principal Investigator

What is the purpose of the study?
This research aims at exploring English language teachers' attitudes and opinions regarding the consideration of improving language proficiency level, and of improving language knowledge as part of their professional development at public schools in Qatar.
The results of this research will help us have a better understanding of professional development for English language teachers at public schools in Qatar; and thereby further suggestions and studies could be proposed in line with the results of this research; to help provide teachers with excellent professional development programs in accordance with their needs.

Why have I been chosen to take part?
This research aims at recruiting 50 male and female, non-native English language teachers who teach English as a second/foreign language at public schools in Qatar (primary, middle and high schools).

Do I have to take part?
No. You are welcome to take part by filling in the questionnaire, and you are also free to withdraw from the project, simply by not completing the questionnaire, at any time, for no reason and without any disadvantage to you.

What will happen if I decided to take part?
You will proceed to the next page in which you will read and agree to a consent form before giving your final decision of taking part in this project. You will kindly be asked then to fill in an electronic questionnaire which consists of 3 sections, and may take around 15 minutes to complete.

How will my data be used?
Information on how your data will be used can be found in the table below:

How will my data be collected?	Data will be collected by asking you to provide a written form answers to some close-ended and open-ended questions from which we can further investigate certain patterns of answers, make predictions and draw conclusions.
How will my data be stored?	Data (texts you provide in the questionnaire) will be stored on secure computer servers, which only the researcher and the supervisor have access to.
How long will my data be stored for?	Data will be stored securely in line with the University policy for 10 years, and then will be deleted.
What measures are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of my data?	The data is stored on secure computer servers to which only the principal investigator and the supervisor have access.
Will my data be anonymised?	Yes You will not be identifiable since no personal information will be collected.
How will my data be used?	Data will be looked at to explore English language teachers' opinions regarding professional development at public schools in Qatar.
Who will have access to my data?	Data can only be accessed by authorised people; the principal investigator of this research and the supervisor.
Will my data be archived for use in other research projects in the future?	No
How will my data be destroyed?	Data will be stored securely for 10 years and then permanently deleted from all servers.

Are there any risks in taking part?
There will be no risks to you from taking part in this project. No personal information will be collected from you, and you will not be identifiable in the results of this study. Also, there are no sensitive topics or information (race, religion, politics, ethnic origin…) to be asked for while filling in this questionnaire, and you are completely free to decide whether to take part or not.

Are there any benefits in taking part?
There are no additional benefits to you in taking part in this project.

What will happen to the results of the study?
The findings of this research will be disseminated as an MA dissertation

Since the data will be anonymous, you will not be identifiable in the results of this research.

What will happen if I want to stop taking part?
Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to stop taking part and withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without your rights being affected. If you would like to withdraw from taking part, you can simply stop answering the questionnaire before submitting it. Accordingly, no information will be collected from you. However, after submitting the questionnaire it will no longer be possible to destroy your data; yet, you will not be identifiable since data will be anonymised.

What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?
If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to contact the Principal Investigator, [student], If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Research Ethics and Integrity Office. When contacting the Research Ethics and Integrity Office, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

The University strives to maintain the highest standards of rigour in the processing of your data. However, if you have any concerns about the way in which the University processes your personal data, it is important that you are aware of your right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office by calling 0303 123 1113.

How do I reply to this invitation?
You do not have to reply to this invitation; you are kindly asked to proceed to the questionnaire page and start filling it in if you wish to take part in this project.

Who can I contact if I have further questions, concerns or if I would like to have some more information?
If you have any further questions please contact the Principal Investigator:

[student]

Appendix F: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Version 1, 4th September 2021
Title of the research project: Integrating Language Improvement and Language Awareness as part of professional development for English Language Teachers in Qatar.
Name of researcher: [student]

*Please read and tick the following statements to indicate that you consent to participate in this research:

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated 12th September 2021 for the above study and that I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions before deciding to take part in this project.	
2. I understand that the link to the questionnaire will be made available for one week only after receiving it.	
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that completing this questionnaire could take around 15 minutes. Also, I understand that I am free to stop taking part and can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason.	
4. In case I would like to withdraw from the research, I understand that data I provide before submitting the questionnaire will not be stored; however, after submitting the questionnaire it would no longer be possible to delete the data I have provided. I also understand that my responses would not be identified since personal information such as names will not be asked for in this questionnaire.	
5. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my fully anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report that results from the research.	
6. I understand that the information I provide will be held securely on the university's secure M drive, and in line with data protection requirements at the University for ten years.	
7. I agree to take part in the above study.	