



# EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Their Professional Competence After Attending Professional Development for In-Service Teachers

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**Abstract.** A teacher's professional competence is the teacher's ability to master content and knowledge beneficial. The professional competence of teachers is essential so that teachers master the scientific substance that overshadows the material. It correlated with the government's role in preparing in-service teachers' professional development. This study explores the perceptions of English teachers' professional competence after participating in the teacher professional education program at Unismuh Makassar. This study was responded to by 47 English teachers who passed the selection through Indonesia's teacher professional education program. Of those, 27 teachers came from junior high schools and 20 from high schools. This study used a Likert scale, classifying one (1) to five (5). It had a questionnaire survey to collect data. This study used percentages to analyze quantitative data collected from the questionnaire. The study results show that most English teachers positively perceive professional teacher education. The professional knowledge of English teachers is increasing after participating in the teacher professional education program. Therefore, it indicated that the teacher professional education program effectively improves the professional competence of teachers. This study recommends continuing professional education to help teachers enhance their professional potential in teaching English as a foreign language.

**Keywords:** English teacher · professional education program · teachers' professional competence

## 1 Introduction

A teacher's professional competence is the teacher's ability to master content and knowledge. Professional competence is considered the central competency as it covers the other competencies [1, 2]. It is essential that teachers master the scientific substance that overshadows the material. It correlated the role of the government that prepared professional development (PD) for in-service teachers. Therefore, competent instructors are required, and the government has responded favorably by establishing the teacher professional development (PD) program, which focuses on improving the teaching staff's competency [4, 5]. Teachers should possess the required knowledge, skills, and attitude

to encompass the knowledge of the subject's content and how to teach these contents to the students. Knowledge of their students and how they learn, knowledge of lesson planning, knowledge of administering assessment and reporting for effective learning, knowledge of effectively communicating with students, colleagues, and even communities, creating and maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment through the use of classroom management skills, and continuously improving their professional knowledge and practice, as well as being a teacher [5].

One strategy to increase the quality of English instructors in the Gowa regency is to improve their competence by providing scholarships to great teachers to continue their studies to meet the needs of the area's development of quality education. In particular, to strengthen a good teacher's ability to develop professional and educational competence. Teachers' performance in Gowa, particularly English Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, is not ideal, as indicated by the results of teacher competency examinations, which remain below average [6, 7]. This refers to Article 1 of Law No. 14 of 2005 Concerning Teachers and Lecturers, which outlines educators' responsibilities to carry out their duties professionally, improve learning processes and outcomes, and uphold the rights of teacher welfare and the dignity of the teaching profession [7, 8].

The government expected that a professional development (PD) program would improve students' quality, but in reality, teachers still forget the quality of education [7]. The ideal realm of certification policy is present as a guarantee of teacher welfare and improving the quality of education. This is a concern, so a survey can see the perceptions of teachers who have participated in the teacher professional education program, especially in the field of English studies, whether they have forgotten their duties to improve the quality of education implementation of certification program policies, but no one has discussed the perception of English teachers after attending teacher professional education. Improving the quality of education is the main goal of establishing a certification policy for teachers [9]. In terms of educational problems, which are often caused by teacher negligence and teachers' lack of skills and competencies as educators [10].

The position of Indonesia's human resources quality compared to other countries is quite apprehensive. According to the 2002 UNDP Human Development Report, it revealed that the Human Development Index (HDI) value for Indonesia in 2000 was 0.684, which was ranked 110th below Vietnam. Other ASEAN countries rank far above Indonesia, such as the Philippines (77th), Thailand (rank 70), Malaysia (rank 59), Brunei Darussalam (rank 32), and Singapore (rank 25). HDI is a mixed index that is an important measure of average achievement on three basic human development dimensions, namely a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living [10]. To improve human resources, education has a different strategic role and task. Through education, people will learn to understand alive and be able to plan their life in the future carefully. Education is essentially a fundamental act in the form of interpersonal communication and in communication [10]. The process of humanizing humans, young, in the sense of the process of hominization (the process of making someone a human) and humanization (the process of developing human humanity). Thus, education must help people so that someone knows and is willing to act like a human being and not just act instinctively.

With the growing relevance of teacher quality and profession, as well as the challenges of societal development [11, 12], teacher professional development (PD) programs have become increasingly important in improving the quality of teacher education [11, 13]. It is also critical for educational reform. Furthermore, professional development for teachers is an opportunity for them to improve their knowledge and methods [14]. It has the potential to help teachers enhance their skills. It is also critical to improve student learning and educational institutions [11, 15].

## 2 Research Method

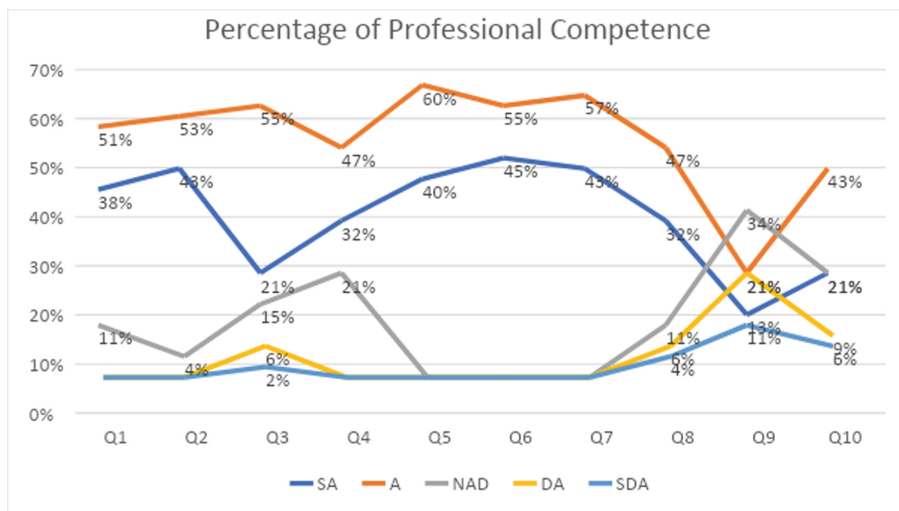
This study was analyzed using quantitative methods. There were consisting of 27 teachers from junior high schools and 20 teachers from high schools in Gowa regency, South Sulawesi participated in this study. All of the teachers have attended a professional development (PD) program for in-service teachers. Questionnaires were given to investigate the perception of EFL teachers toward their professional competence after following a professional development (PD) program for in-service teachers. In quantitative research, a survey research design is a technique in which a researcher distributes a questionnaire to a sample of the population [16–18]. This questionnaire was analyzed in percentages categorized as SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, NAD = Neither Agree nor Disagree, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly Agree. There were ten items in the questionnaires distributed using Google Forms. The result of the study was analyzed in percentages.

## 3 Findings and Discussion

### 3.1 Findings

Data collection started with distributing the questionnaire to all EFL teachers who attended in-service teachers' professional development (PD) programs. The content of the questionnaires consisted of: asking whether the EFL teachers have knowledge of various aspects of the language, whether EFL teacher able to speak English both orally and in writing, receptive and productive in all communicative aspects: linguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse, and strategies, whether EFL teachers speak English in the classroom and outside the classroom with the students, whether EFL teachers mastered the standards of competence and core competence of English teaching, whether understand the purpose of learning English, whether EFL teachers choose English subject matter according to their level student development, whether or not EFL teachers do classroom action research with colleagues, supervisors and lecturers to improve their learning, whether EFL teachers were actively participating in workshops, conferences as a presenter or participant, whether they used information and communication technology to download and upload writings, articles, English course materials. The result of investigation could be seen in Fig. 1 as follows:

The figure showed that almost the entire respondents perceived the EFL teachers understand the purpose of learning English from the answer agreed (60%), and strongly agree (40%) those item became highest percentage, the second one (57%) and (43%)



**Fig. 1.** Indicates the percentage of EFL teachers toward their professional competence after attending professional development for in-service teachers.

respondents agree and strongly agree about EFL teachers develop subject matter creatively according to the developmental level of their students, the third one (55%) agree and (45%) strongly agree, respondents perceived choose English subject matter according to my level student development, the fourth one, respondents said use English in the classroom and outside the classroom with their students (55%) agree, (21%) strongly agree, (15%) neither agree nor disagree, (6%) disagree and (2%) strongly disagree, the next one is (53%) agree, (43%) strongly agree, (4%) neither agree nor disagree of respondents who were able to speak English both orally and in writing, receptive and productive in all communicative aspects: linguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse, and strategies, also mastered the standards of competence and core competence of English teaching in school (47%), (32%) strongly agree, (21%) neither agree nor disagree, beside that (43%) agree, (21%) strongly agree, (21%) neither agree nor disagree, (9% & 6%) disagree and strongly disagree to use information and communication technology to download and upload writings, articles, English course materials, then the lowest one as in agree (21%), strongly agree (13%) in asking whether they were actively participating in workshops, conferences as a presenter or participant. From the figure also, it can be seen clearly that most respondents have high scores in agreeing and strongly agreeing. It can be stated that the professional development program for in-service teachers was being very vital to helping the EFL teachers' professional competence.

### 3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that the professional development program for in-service teachers was paramount important. Most EFL teachers affirmed that they have competencies in professional competence in teaching after attending that program. They perceived that having the ability to communicate in English both orally and written, both

productive and receptive skills within all communicative aspects was the most important element [19–21] literacy is important in teaching, and it could be given in textbook evaluation to improve the students English learning. The EFL teachers in Gowa believe that having these competencies is very important. An ability to communicate in English well is certainly the ability that the English teachers must own as English as their content knowledge. This refers to EFL teachers' topic knowledge, which includes their English ability as well as formal features of English such as syntax, phonology, and so on. Content knowledge, as defined by Richards, relates to what (language) instructors need to know about what they teach (including what they know about language teaching itself) and is knowledge that is not shared by teachers of other subject areas. The teachers also had improvement using artificial intelligence, and teachers applied evaluation for reading skills [21, 22]. EFL teachers argued that in-service teachers improve their creativity by entering professional development programs. One of them proves that they can use and enlarge the usefulness of textbook evaluation. It includes all of the 2013 curriculum's primary and fundamental competencies. It also used the student-centered teaching technique, which the 2013 curriculum encourages [20, 23]. EFL teachers also attended the seminar or workshop, which was in line with Kravarusić [24].

## 4 Conclusion

The EFL teachers of Junior High School and Senior high School perceive that the professional development (PD) program for in-service teachers is very beneficial in improving their professional competence. The EFL teacher can execute their task and responsibility as a professional educator, which has been achieved in the professional development program (PD). Having a very good perception of the importance of professional competence will affect the attitude and instructors' actions when doing their tasks and responsibilities. In other words, the more the teachers perceive the importance of professional competence as a teacher, the more persistent the teacher strives to prepare for their performance.

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