

**SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH
LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT NEEDS, EXPECTATIONS AND
PRACTICES IN MALAYSIA**

by

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LIST OF SYMBOLS

$\%$	Percentage
α	Alpha
∞	Infinity
$<$	Less than
$>$	Greater than

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EL	English Language
INSET	In-Service Training
TEP	Teachers' Education Programmes
MOE	Ministry of Education
SED	State Education Department
DEO	District Education Office
MELTA	Malaysian English Language Teachers' Associations
PELTA	Penang English Language Teachers' Associations
TED	Teacher Education Department
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MUET	Malaysian University English Test
PMR	Peperiksaan Menengah Rendah
SPM	Sijil Peperiksaan Malaysia
MBMMBI	Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia dan Memperkukuh Penguasaan Bahasa Inggeris
CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
TESL	Teaching English as Second Language
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations

KEPERLUAN, JANGKAAN DAN AMALAN PEMBANGUNAN PROFESIONAL DALAM KALANGAN GURU BAHASA INGGERIS SEKOLAH MENENGAH DI MALAYSIA

ABSTRAK

Keperluan pembangunan profesional yang tidak memuaskan, jangkaan yang tidak ditepati dan amalan pembangunan profesional yang tidak mencukupi menjadi halangan kepada guru Bahasa Inggeris (BI) untuk ikut serta dan berjaya dalam pembangunan profesional BI (2007-2009). Justeru, kajian ini mengenalpasti keperluan, jangkaan dan amalan pembangunan profesional dalam kalangan guru BI sekolah menengah, di samping mengenalpasti perbezaan di antara gender guru BI dan pembangunan profesional. Kajian ini merupakan suatu kajian deskriptif yang menggunakan soal selidik tadbir-diri ($n = 915$). Soal selidik, temubual secara bersemuka, dan laporan pembangunan profesional BI digunakan untuk mengumpul data kajian. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa item keperluan pembangunan profesional adalah berdasarkan keperluan pelajar dan guru; jangkaan pembangunan profesional pula menyumbang terhadap pembelajaran pelajar, di samping saranan pembangunan profesional BI yang bermakna adalah item penting untuk merancang, mengelola dan membangunkan pembangunan profesional BI yang berkesan. Selanjutnya, guru BI tidak sepenuhnya bersetuju bahawa mereka mendapat manfaat daripada amalan, ikut serta dalam pembangunan profesional BI dan tidak begitu berpuashati dengan sistem sokongan penyertaan dalam pembangunan profesional. Di samping itu, dapatan juga menunjukkan bahawa keperluan dan jangkaan pembangunan profesional dalam kalangan guru BI wanita adalah lebih tinggi jika dibandingkan dengan guru BI lelaki. Suatu senarai semak telah dibangunkan berdasarkan dapatan kajian ini.

SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS, EXPECTATIONS AND PRACTICES IN MALAYSIA

ABSTRACT

Unsatisfied professional development needs, unfulfilled expectations and insufficient professional development practices became the stumbling blocks for the English Language (EL) teachers to successfully participate in EL professional development (2007-2009). Hence this study examines the secondary EL teachers' professional development needs, expectations and practices besides to identify the differences between the EL teachers' gender and professional development. This study is a nationwide descriptive survey, implemented using self-administered questionnaires (n = 915). An open ended questionnaire, face to face interviews and EL professional development reports were utilised to comprehend the survey data. Findings indicated that professional development needs' items based on students and teachers needs; professional development expectations that contribute towards students learning, besides meaningful EL professional development suggestions provided were essential items to plan, organise and develop effective EL professional development. The teachers partially agreed that they have benefited from the reflective practices, seldom partake in EL professional development and slightly satisfied with the support provided to participate in EL professional development. The findings revealed that female EL teachers' professional development needs and expectations were higher as compared to the male counterparts. A criteria of checklist was developed based on the study's findings.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

English is the language of international business, diplomacy, science and professions, (Melchers & Shaw, 2003; Wright 2004) profoundly the English Language (EL) teachers play vital roles in developing their personal growth and teaching professionalism. Ubiquitously teachers being the agents of transformation that contribute in a country's socioeconomic expansion, teachers need to sustain their continuous growth or professional development practices throughout their career. Furthermore, Strong and Tucker (2000) stated that teacher effectiveness is not an end product but rather deliberate processes and teacher success is a lifelong pursuit.

One cannot deny the importance of teachers' growth through effective professional development for improving the educational arena (Guskey, 2002; Carey, 2004). On the other hand, the quality of school achievements and students' performances (Goldhaber, 2002; Guskey, 2003) evidently rest on the shoulders of effective teachers. Thus teacher-learners relationship is referred as an on-going process with the aim to benefit oneself with well-equipped competencies to tackle today's teaching demands and challenges. Researches increasingly have identified the continuing progress and learning of teachers as one of the keys to improving the quality of schools in the United States of America (Thompson & Zeuli, 1999).

The quality of education, schools' improvements and students' performances could be enhanced if teaching dimension is strengthened (National Board for Professional teaching Standards, 2003) through effective EL professional development. Professional development is the only essential mediators in the effectiveness of policy for meaningful teachers and teaching practices (Smith, Desimone, & Ueno, 2005; Desimone, Smith, & Frisvold, 2007).

Professional development is regarded as an important way of supporting teachers development but it has not received the same level of attention as many other areas of literary research (Anderson, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000). The literature has revealed that current professional development is ineffective to provide meaningful professional development (Kent, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Moeini, 2008). Nevertheless, effective teachers are produced from meaningful professional development (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) that would provide valuable experiences to upgrade teachers' skills and knowledge per se.

The desire to regulate a memorable experience through professional development practices is every teacher's dream and expectation including Malaysian EL teacher. The EL teachers in Malaysia are in quest for more meaningful In-Service Teachers Training (INSET) or professional development (Kabilan, Vethamani, & Chee Suet Fong, 2008). Reflectively, Malaysian EL teachers understand the burden that they carry is geared towards a dichotomy of personal touch in heightening the country's educational status in eyes of the world.

Malaysia aims to offer world class education (Ministry Of Education [MOE], 2011) and therefore, the necessity for excellence in professional development is a niche area of interest that should be ventured in (Kabilan et al., 2008) to enrich the emerging

literature on the EL teachers' professional development in Malaysia. Knowing the importance of teachers' professional development in providing quality teaching and learning experiences, the Malaysian EL teachers should be exposed to effective professional development that would offer memorable experiences to fulfil the contemporary professional development demands and educational challenges for the betterment of the future generation of the nation. Therefore, this study is carried out with the aim of identifying EL teachers' professional development needs, expectations and practices.

Besides, the study also intends to identify the characteristics of gender and its differences with the EL teachers' professional development needs, expectations and practices. This study is a nationwide project funded by-Universiti Sains Malaysia under the Research University (RU) grant scheme (1001/PGURU/816010), 2007-2009. Eventually, seven lecturers, two doctoral candidates and a research officer from the School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia were involved in this project. The project was entitled *A Nationwide Research on English Language Teachers' Professional Development*.

This study had particularly focused on the EL professional development conducted from the year 2007 to 2009. The reason to focus in the particular years was because the Ministry of Education (MOE) had implemented some guidelines to conduct effective professional development allies with 9th Malaysian Plan to focus on developing the Human Capitals besides to enhance the teaching professional as whole (MOE, 2009). In spite of it, through the professional development conducted the teachers were expected to be competent in the aspects of: content knowledge, pedagogical skills, soft skills and classroom practices (MOE, 2009). Therefore, theses aspired competent skills

would be achieved through effective professional development as an ongoing professional development agenda in Malaysian schools. Hence, based on the MOE's (2009) professional development guidelines the educational authorities, schools and teachers were expected to involve rigorously in the ongoing programmes conducted. Thus from the year 2007 to 2009 it was expected that EL professional development was an ongoing vital agenda in Malaysian schools especially the secondary schools. This study is expected to shed some light to provide the insight especially looking into the secondary EL teachers' professional development practices, needs and expectations from the EL teachers' perceived experience participating in the EL programmes conducted from the year 2007 to 2009.

1.2 Background of the Study

1.2.1 Professional Development for Secondary English Language Teachers in Malaysia

In general, professional development in Malaysia is divided into two divisions: pre-service Teacher Education Programmes (TEP) and In-service Training (INSET). However, for this study, the research is only intended to focus on INSET carried out for secondary EL teachers in Malaysia. INSET is also known as continuous professional development or professional development (Cooper, 2008). Professional development is carried out by educational authorities such as Ministry of Education (MOE), State Education Department (SED), District Education Office (DEO), schools, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and professional bodies such as the Malaysian English Language Teachers' Associations (MELTA), Penang English Language Teachers' Associations (PELTA) and British Council.

From time to time, short term EL professional development is being carried out for secondary school EL teachers. The short-term professional development encompasses various themes which are EL pedagogy and teaching methodology, Information and Communicational Technology (ICT) related programmes, and professional and assessment related programmes (Kabilan et al., 2008).

Most of the EL programmes' themes are courses related to EL pedagogy and teaching methodology. For example, the revamping of English courses, and courses conducted by the PELTA while ICT programmes include courses such as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) courses as well as multimedia and language learning courses. Professional programmes encompass national level English development programmes such as EL refresher courses. Assessment related courses are EL examination related courses. The professional development programmes are planned, designed and implemented by educational authorities such as MOE, SED, DEO, schools, English panels in schools, self-initiated by teachers and professional bodies (Kabilan, 2010). The provision of professional development opportunities is insufficient to upgrade teaching quality (Van den Akker, 2006).

Besides the EL professional development studies conducted by Kabilan et al. (2008) in Malaysia, Koroush Khandehroo, Mukundan and Zhinoos Kamal Alavi (2011) had conducted a study in the area of professional development needs among the EL secondary school teachers in the states of Melaka. Koroush Khandehroo, Mukundan and Zhinoos Kamal Alavi (2011) study extensively focused on EL teachers demographic characters such as: EL teachers years of teaching experiences, levels of instructional skills, teaching schools levels, teachers' educational level and their professional development needs. However, these studies conducted by Kabilan et al. (2008) and

Koroush Khandehroo, Mukundan and Zhinoos Kamal Alavi (2011) did not specifically focused on any gender perspective and EL teachers professional development expectations and practices pertaining to the teachers' experiences participating in professional development per se. Thus, the researcher expectes this study to shed some light in the looking into the male and female EL teachers' perceived experiences (professional development need, expectations and practices) participating in EL programmes from the year 2007 to 2009.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Less meaningful EL professional development needs was one of the problems that has to be addressed in Malaysia. Every EL teacher has different needs for effective professional development practices. For instances, teachers from different stages of working experiences require different types of professional development practices and needs with the aim to improve teachers' skills and knowledge (Zuraimi, 2008). Thus, to accomplish meaningful experiences, professional development should be designed and planned to satisfy EL teacher specific needs (Zakaria & Iksan, 2007). EL professional development designed in accordance to teacher-identified needs will produce desired outcomes. Professional development will be successful in fulfilling teachers' expectations if they are catered in accordance to teachers' needs (Westchester Institute for Human Services Research, 2008). Therefore, this study is expected to address the EL perceived professional development needs in Malaysia.

Furthermore, less meaningful EL professional development expectation is another problem that has to be taken into consideration in this study. An individual

teacher's expectation for effective professional development differs from one perception to another (Guskey, 2003). There may be various factors that lead to ineffective professional development but only the teachers themselves will be able to address the lacking and hindrances of meaningful programmes (Kent, 2004). Every individual possesses his or her own expectations based on his or her meaningful experiences engaging in specific professional development practices (Hammel, 2007). On the other hand, Malaysian EL professional development is reported to be ineffective due to the lack in quality of the EL programmes (Sharifah, 2000). In today's fast paced world, EL teachers have to keep abreast with current updates of educational transformation trends such as; pedagogical skills, knowledge, understanding, values and teaching techniques. With that, this study is aimed to examine the perceived EL professional development expectations in Malaysia.

Experiences play a vital role in satisfying teachers' practices; however, the EL professional development in Malaysia has failed to bridge meaningful and satisfying practices per se (Kabilan et al., 2008). Literature findings have reported that EL professional development has failed to satisfy teachers to keep abreast with increasing demands (Sharifah, 2000; Zakaria & Ikhsan, 2007; Kabilan et al., 2008). Nevertheless, the respective studies have failed to consider the general feelings of the EL teachers concerning their experiences partaking in EL programmes in Malaysia. Hence, this study intends to highlight the secondary EL teachers perceived reflective practices, amount of time spent and support system received to partake in secondary EL professional development in Malaysia.

The EL teachers' reflective practices upon participating in EL professional development practices require urgent attention because there are very limited literatures

reported in this aspect. With that, this study is expected to examine and identify the Malaysian secondary EL teachers' reflective practices upon participating in EL professional development. Upon identifying the EL teachers' reflective practices, it is expected that this study will provide an overall scenario of Malaysian secondary EL perceived reflective practices.

Conversely, the amount of time spent in EL professional development is reported to be insufficient. In fact, 82.9% of the Malaysian EL teachers demand that more time should be allocated for professional development practices in Malaysia (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2009). The programmes conducted are unable to provide sufficient time for meaningful professional development practices. For instances, the EL programmes are condemned to be carried out in short terms and time allocation is limited (Kabilan et al., 2006). Therefore, the time spent by EL teachers participating in EL professional development requires immediate attention because there is insufficient report on the amount of time spent in EL professional development.

In addition, EL teachers also claim to obtain insufficient supports to partake in EL professional development in Malaysia. According to Sharifah (2000), EL teachers do not receive the expected support from educational authorities, schools and the society. However, the types of supports received in terms of permissions to attend EL programmes, motivational factors, encouragement, recognition, rewards and other support systems were not reported in-depth (Sharifah, 2000). This support system will provide specific types of support required by the teachers in order to achieve meaningful EL professional development practices. Nonetheless, it is crucial to examine and identify EL teachers perceived professional development support system in Malaysia. In short, it is essential to identify the EL professional development practices (reflective practices,

amount of time spent, support system). In addition, this study also aims to provide suggestions for meaningful secondary EL professional development practices (reflective practices, amount of time spent, support system) in Malaysia.

As to identify the ineffectiveness EL professional development needs, expectations and practices based on the literature (Zakaria & Ikhsan, 2007; Kabilan, et al., 2008), the researcher carried out a small qualitative survey (n=20) among secondary EL teachers. The aim to carry out a survey was because there were limited studies reported specifically on EL teachers' professional development needs (Khandehroo, Mukundan & Alavi, 2011) and no studies reported on EL teachers' professional development expectations and practices. Hence when the researcher has problem to get an instrument for the study thus survey is implemented with the aim to design new sets of instruments for the particular study per se. Modifications of the instruments (questionnaires) after the survey study will make the instrument applicable for the samples (Khandehroo, Mukundan & Alavi, 2011).

The survey was carried out in two secondary schools in Penang. The study revealed that the EL professional development have failed to cater for teachers' deficiency in knowledge, skills and pedagogy, inadequate value, ethical perspectives, experiences, level of education and the necessity to keep abreast with current practices. Furthermore, these programmes are referred to as boring because they exclusively focus on a particular type of activity, lack of expected support, a waste of time, ineffective and irrelevant.

The teachers from the researcher's study also claim that they know best of their needs and expectation, thus, neglecting to listen to teachers voices means the teachers are not professional enough to decide on their own practice. Staff development

programmes are too general as in many cases whereby EL professional development programmes do not cater for individual and school needs (Kofi, 2007). Based on the researcher's survey, the teachers felt unworthy and disheartened participating in the professional development. In conclusion, the teachers expect future EL professional development to be catered for teacher's personal needs with the aim to grasp the essential competency (skills, knowledge, motivation and values) required for personal and professional growth per se.

Besides, there are limited researches being carried out to address EL teachers' demographical characteristic (gender) and EL teachers' professional development needs, expectations and practices (reflective practices, amount of time spent and supports system). On the other hand, Mak (2010) has conducted a study on the EL professional development reflective practices and EL teaching experiences among EL teachers in Hong Kong.

Koroush Khandehroo, Mukundan and Zhinoos Kamal Alavi (2011) conducted a survey among the male and female EL teachers' professional development needs in the state of Melaka. However, his study encompass (n=1098) samples from primary and secondary schools professional development needs. The total of sample were 190 male and 845 female EL teachers. Nevertheless this study focused on the EL teachers years of teaching experiences, levels of instructional skills, teaching schools levels, teachers' educational level and their professional development needs but did not focus specifically in gender perspectives.

Thus, in Malaysian context pertaining to the researcher's knowledge there is no study reported on EL teachers gender perspectives and limited studies reported on the EL teachers' professional development needs, expectations and practices. In short, this

study aims to examine and identify the respective secondary EL teachers' demographical characteristic (gender) and the EL teachers' professional development needs, expectations and practices (reflective practices, amount of time spent and support system) with the aim to enhance EL teachers' competencies.

1.4 Objectives of the Research

The research objectives stated below will address the research questions in this study.

- To examine the EL teachers' perceived professional development needs.
- To identify the difference between male and female EL teachers' professional development needs.
- To examine the EL teachers' perceived professional development expectations.
- To identify the difference between male and female EL teachers' professional development expectations.
- To examine the satisfactory level of the EL teachers' professional development practices.
- To examine the EL teachers' perceived professional development reflective practices.
- To identify the difference between male and female EL teachers' professional development reflective practices.
- To examine the amount of time spent by the EL teachers participating in EL professional development.
- To identify the difference of the amount of time spent on EL professional development between male and female EL teachers.

- To examine the EL teachers' perceived professional development support system.
- To identify the difference between male and female EL teachers' professional development support system.
- To identify the suggestions for effective/meaningful professional development among the secondary EL teachers' in Malaysia.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed to answer the first part of the research objectives of the study :

RQ 1: What are the EL teachers' perceived professional development needs?

RQ 2: Is there any significant difference between male and female EL teachers' perceived professional development needs?

RQ 3: What are the EL teachers' perceived professional development expectations?

RQ 4: Is there any significant difference between male and female EL teachers' perceived professional development expectations?

RQ 5: How satisfactory was the professional development practices?

RQ 6: What are the EL teachers' perceived professional development reflective practices?

RQ 7: Is there any significant difference between male and female EL teachers' perceived professional development reflective practices?

RQ 8: How often do the EL teachers spend time participating in EL professional development practices?

RQ 9: Is there any significant difference in the amount of time spent by the male and female EL teachers participating in EL professional development?

RQ 10: What are the EL teachers' perceived professional development support systems?

RQ 11: Is there any significant difference between male and female EL teachers' perceived professional development support system?

RQ 12: What are the EL teachers' views to improve the EL professional development in Malaysian secondary schools?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

To answer the Research Questions (**RQ 2, RQ 4, RQ 7, RQ 9 and RQ 11**) the following null hypotheses are formulated.

To answer Research Question 2, null hypothesis 1 is formulated:

H₀ 1: There is no significant difference between male and female EL teachers' professional development needs.

To answer Research Question 4, null hypothesis 2 is formulated:

H₀ 2: There is no significant difference between male and female EL teachers' professional development expectations.

To address Research Question 7, null hypothesis 3 is formulated:

H₀ 3: There is no significant difference between male and female EL teachers' professional development reflective practices.

To answer Research Question 9, null hypothesis 4 is formulated:

H₀ 4: There is no significant difference in the amount of time spent by male and female EL teachers participating in EL professional development.

To address Research Question 11, null hypothesis 5 is formulated:

H₀ 5: There is no significant difference between male and female EL teachers' professional development support system.

1.7 Rationale of the Research

This study would provide the platform for the the secondary EL teachers to voice out their EL professional development needs, expectations and practices. Based on the EL teachers' perceptions, EL teachers themselves would address the key elements for effective EL professional development needs, expectations and practices, pertaining to their experiences participating in EL professional development in Malaysian secondary schools. Malaysian EL professional development from the EL teachers' point of views is regarded as less meaningful (Kabilan et al., 2008). Thus, this study shall offer empowerment and ownership for EL teachers to address the needs for meaningful EL

professional development. A self-tailored EL professional development in accordance to EL teachers' needs, expectations and practices are expected to boost teachers active participation. Teachers' empowerment is expected to initiate teachers representation in professional development (Sawyer, 2001).

Furthermore, this study is conducted with the rationale that the current practice deficiencies shall be identified. This study will identify the differences between demographical and dependent variables. In other words, this study shall identify any significant differences between demographical characteristic of gender and the EL teachers' professional development needs, expectations and practices. This would provide an insight for the programme developers to identify EL teachers' specific objectives, the amount of time spent on different types of activities and support systems in place for the EL teachers to be efficient educators.

Besides the support system received from the educational authorities (MOE, SED, DEO), the support received from school administrators and peers are also equally important for EL teachers to participate in professional practices. Nevertheless, this study it is expected to examine the supports system required to design, plan and organise EL programmes such as: financial stability and other types of supports with the aim to increase the number of EL professional development with the aim to sustain teachers' personal and professional growth.

Diversity and globalization is also concurrently vital besides financial support. This study should be an eye opener for MOE to sustain a diversified EL professional development with globalised thinking beyond the boundary of school-based practices. Nations around the globe, including Malaysia is paving towards world-class education thus teachers in Malaysia should not be neglected in this race. Well taken care teachers

with adequate skills and knowledge, pedagogical practices will reflect on students' achievements (Lee, 2005) and the country's development. Teaching professions mature along the years and the contemporary expectations of professional development practice also rapidly change. Thus, the EL professional development is expected to adjust and embrace EL teachers' various needs at different levels of their career.

With this study, a new paradigm shift may emerge. The less meaningful practice may rejuvenate and engrave effective EL professional development that shall create valuable, meaningful, relevant and memorable experiences. Experiences gained from fruitful practice will harvest feelings of satisfaction among EL teachers. Furthermore, EL teachers' professional development findings and identification of significant differences of the dependent and independent variables may be used to develop a theoretical framework that can be utilized by the educational authorities and professional development planners as a guideline for meaningful practices. As a conclusion, this study would create a path for successful and meaningful upcoming EL programmes in the history of secondary EL professional development in Malaysia.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The proposed study will examine and identify the EL teachers professional development needs, expectations and practices in Malaysia. In addition, this study also aims to identify the EL teachers' professional development practices (reflective practices, amount of time spent and support system) based on the experiences participating in EL professional development. In addition, this study will also provide suggestions to improve the EL professional development in Malaysian secondary schools. Besides, this

study also intends to shed some light to identify the significant differences between EL teachers' demographical characteristic (gender) and EL teachers' professional development needs, expectations and practices.

The outcome of the EL teachers' inputs will enable the educational authorities such as MOE to develop theoretical framework (in the shape of a Professional Development Matrix). It is expected in the future that Professional Development Matrix can be utilized by MOE, SED, DEO and schools to plan, develop and evaluate effective EL professional development. For instance, the Professional Development Matrix can be integrated and infused in the *Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia dan Memperkukuh Penguasaan Bahasa Inggeris* or known as MBMMBI programme. One of the major pre-requisites of MBMMBI is to provide effective professional development programmes for secondary EL teachers in Malaysia.

Furthermore, the findings of this study would provide a clear picture for EL professional development organizers to produce effective EL professional development. The findings are expected to benefit professional development planners to develop theoretical frameworks or Professional Development Matrix. Therefore, this study would assist the professional development planners such as the educational authorities to plan, develop and evaluate effective EL professional development.

In line with the Professional Development Matrix, this study will overcome the shortcomings in the EL professional development provided by the educational authorities. Besides, the budget to conduct effective EL professional development should be persistently allocated at the national, state, district and school levels. Recently, most of the EL professional development programmes are carried out at school levels.

Therefore, this study hopes for active participation and support of educational authorities in lieu to produce effective EL professional development.

Moreover, the outcome of this study is expected to shed some light on EL teachers' voices and autonomy. The EL professional development officers elected at every DEO are expected to act actively and be rigorous in guarding the Malaysian professional development. The elected EL professional development officers should draw a baseline for upcoming EL professional development or programmes, and implementation based on individual EL teachers' needs.

Furthermore, the gender perspective (demographical characteristic) in this study is expected to provide significant insights as guidance for EL professional development planning in Malaysia. Thus, every single programme ought to keep the gender perspective demographic as a benchmark to satisfy and provide meaningful EL teachers' professional development needs, expectations and practices.

The outcome of the study and suggestions can be put forward to upgrade EL competency. It is expected that through this study, valuable insights and useful guiding principles will be laid out to produce effective EL teachers in Malaysia. Finally, it is also expected that the valuable findings from this study will aid the future EL professional development to be more purposeful, for example, to provide effective EL professional development for teachers located in both rural and urban schools regardless of geographical boundaries.

This study is also expected to shed some light in providing good quality EL teachers who will produce quality EL learners in Malaysia. The reason to produce quality teachers is essential due to the global and Malaysian markets' demands. The global and Malaysian markets are looking forward to enhance the quality of education

nationwide, thus it is vital to take into account the quality of EL professional development catered for students, in lieu to produce marketable young generation who are able to master the EL with the aim to fulfil the rapidly expanding socioeconomic expansions and demands (The Star, 2006). Therefore, it is essential to take into account the quality of EL professional development in Malaysia. In fact, students' achievements rest on the shoulders of teachers. An educated society will be the backbone of a country's pride in upbringing the education to world class status and contributing towards instilling good values and holistic growth in terms of intellect, spiritual, emotional and physical individual developments.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations in term of the samples chosen. The samples are limited to in-service EL teachers who teach in Malaysian national secondary schools. The replacement EL teachers (non EL trained teachers teaching English) and student teachers were not involved in this study. For the purpose of this study, only randomly selected national secondary school EL trained teachers would represent the population therefore stratified sampling technique was not implemented in this study.

However, this study would not be looking into the differences between urban and rural EL teachers' needs, expectations and practices. The study would document the EL teachers' needs, expectations and practices of professional development throughout Malaysia. The researcher would only look into the main and sub constructs of this study. Hence, other extraneous variables will not be explored and considered to be non-influential in this study.

This study is not an experimental research, but rather a survey to identify and examine the aspects of EL teachers' voices pertaining to EL professional development needs, expectation and practices (reflective practices, amount of time spent and support system). As this study is based on the teachers' autonomy to voice out the EL teachers' perceptions regarding their professional development needs, expectations and practices, therefore, an observation technique was not implemented in this study. Furthermore, based on the research objectives and research questions, an observation technique was not applied in this study. The study does not cater the definitions or description for the five levels of Likert scale (e.g. never, seldom, sometimes, frequently and all the time) because EL teachers are expected to select the scales based on their experience and perceptions participating in EL professional development. Therefore, the researcher has no say to decide and fix the meaning for these Likert scale descriptions. Finally, the researcher does not utilize the findings of EL professional development essential elements to develop a Professional Development Matrix. Developing a Professional Development Matrix is time consuming. Thus, the Professional Development Matrix is recommended as a suggestion for future research. Lastly the significant differences between the EL teachers' gender and professional development needs, expectations and practices were carried out with the aim that future researchers will explore these findings in depth.

1.10 Operational Definitions

1.10.1 Professional Development

As for this study, professional development is defined as all types of structured learning programmes that are undertaken by the teachers before, during and after school to

enhance and impose positive attitudes, develop new insights into teaching and competency such as: inculcate skills, enhance knowledge and inculcate values that aims to gain meaningful and relevant experience which promote teachers' personal growth and professionalization. Professional development in this study will be measured in terms of needs, expectations and practices.

1.10.2 Effective English Language Professional Development

The effective EL professional development definition varies according to the EL teachers perceived needs, expectations and practices. Hence, the researcher will come up with a new definition of effective/meaningful/fulfilled EL professional development based on the study's findings. The essential elements for effective EL professional development will be identified and highlighted at the end of this study.

1.10.3 Needs

Needs is defined as desired expectations to overcome an existing problem pertaining to conditions of what one thinks as important experiences to be attained. The elements of needs are measured using the 5 level Likert scale. The 5 level of Likert scale is measured using five descriptions of the needs ranging from 'Not At All Important' to 'Extremely Important'.

1.10.4 Expectations

Expectation is defined as relentless energy for settling and meeting challenging targets and as information seeking to quench the intellectual curiosity and initiative of teachers that drive to act on current needs to gain expected meaningful experiences and effective practices (Hay McBer, 2000). The elements of expectations are measured using the 5 level Likert scale. The 5 level of Likert scale is measured using five descriptions of the expectations ranging from ‘Not At All Important’ to ‘Extremely Important’.

1.10.5. Practices

As for this study, the researcher defines practices based on personal experiences, as a repeated action by indulging in thoroughly planned EL professional development with sufficient amount of time spent on EL professional development that was yielded to provide meaningful experiences to reflect upon teachers’ personal and professional growth and satisfying support received. The practices are measured using 5 selection options ranging from ‘Strongly Disagree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’.

Based on these definitions of practice, it would allude to what teachers do in terms of their professional development. For the purpose of this study, there are three subsections of levels of EL professional development practices that encompassed, teachers’ reflective practices, the amount of time spent and support system received to participate in EL professional development.

Reflective practices are measured using the 5 point Likert scale that included ‘Strongly Disagree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’. The amount of time spent is measured using

the 5 point Likert scale also, ranging from ‘Never’ to ‘All the time’. Support system is also measured using the 5 point Likert scale ranging from ‘Not Satisfied’ to ‘Extremely Satisfied’.

1.11 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study (Figure 1.1) displays the nature of the study entitled the secondary school EL teachers professional development needs, expectations and practices. Based on the literature review, the EL professional development is lacking in quality to produce effective, meaningful or fulfilled EL professional development. Hence, this study is expected to examine the key elements to plan, organize and conduct effective EL professional development with the aim to provide meaningful learning experiences for the secondary EL teachers in Malaysia. Therefore, the dependent variables of this study consist of needs, expectations and practices (reflective practices, amount of time spent and support system). The independent variables encompass the demographical variables of gender. The study is expected to provide a platform for the secondary school EL teachers to maximise their potentials besides to gain respective teacher competencies such as: knowledge, skills, values, attributes for personal and professional growth. At the end of this study, the researcher has concluded and embraced the key items (checklist) for promoting effective and meaningful EL professional development in Malaysian secondary schools.

